Background information from George Steele talk dated 30 July 2009 to SPS

From the book entitled "Scott Kelby's 7 Point System for Adobe Photoshop CS3" (ISBN – 13 978-0-321-50192-9) and all rights are acknowledged.

SCOTT KELBY'S 7-POINT SYSTEM CHEAT SHEET

1   Adobe Camera Raw Processing

1.1   Always start by processing your images in the Camera Raw plug-in (JPEG,TIFF, or RAW).

1.2   Set your white balance first, then set your exposure, and once it's-set, bring back any clipped highlights with the Recovery slider.

1.3   Then use the Blacks slider to bring saturation to your colors in the shadow areas.

1.4   Zoom in to 100% and add some clarity (as long as your subject isn't of a softer nature).

1.5   If the photo needs more contrast, jump over to the Tone Curve panel, and use the Point *Curve* presets to add contrast.

1.6   If you need to add sharpness, go to the Details panel. For landscape shots, increase the Detail amount. For portraits of women or children, increase the Masking amount instead.

1.7   Now open the image in Photoshop.

2   Curves: Adjustments

2.1   You probably won't have color problems at this point Of you balanced the color by setting the proper white balance while you were in Camera Raw), but you can use the presets at the top of the Curves dialog to add more contrast.

2.2   Also, if you choose a Curves adjustment layer, you can use the Brush tool to paint over any areas that you don't want to have added contrast.

3   Shadow/Highlight

3.1   If your subject is backlit, or an area of important detail is in the shadows, switch to Lab color first, go to the Channels panel, and click on the Lightness channel.

3.2   Then duplicate the Back-ground layer; choose Convert for Smart Filters from the Filter menu, and choose Shadow/ Highlight from the Image menu.

3.3   Turn on the Show More Options checkbox, lower the Amount, increase the Threshold a little, and increase the Radius to between 250 and 300 to realistically open up the shadows.

3.4   Switch back to RGB Mode.

4   Painting with Light

4.1   If there are areas of your photo that you want darker or lighter, add a Curves adjustment layer, add a point to the center of the curve, and drag upward to make the photo brighter or down to make it darker.

4.2   Then press Command-I (PC: Ctrl-I) to Invert the layer mask.

4.3   Now paint in white to reveal the brighter (or darker) light right where you want it.

5   Channels Adjustments

5.1   To make the colors really pop, switch to Lab color again.

5.2   Then choose Apply Image from the Image menu. Set the Blending pop-up menu to Soft Light, then look at the Lab channel, the "a" channel, and the "b" channel, and choose the one that looks best.

5.3   If the effect is too intense, lower the opacity only where you want it.

6   Layer Blend Modes & Layer Masks

6.1   To lighten your subject, or darken the sky, or a doorway, or generally control the tonal balance of the photo:

6.2   Duplicate the Background layer; choose the Screen blend mode to make your photo lighter, or Multiply to make it darker;

6.3   Then add a layer mask and paint in black to hide the effect, or Invert the mask Ctrl-I to hide the effect, and paint in white to reveal the effect only where you want it.

7   Sharpening Techniques

7.1   Use the Unsharp Mask filter to sharpen your photo,

7.2   Then choose Fade Unsharp Mask immediately after, and change the Fade mode to Luminosity to avoid color problems.

7.3   Try Amount: 85%, Radius: 1.0, and Threshold: 4 for a general medium amount of sharpening.