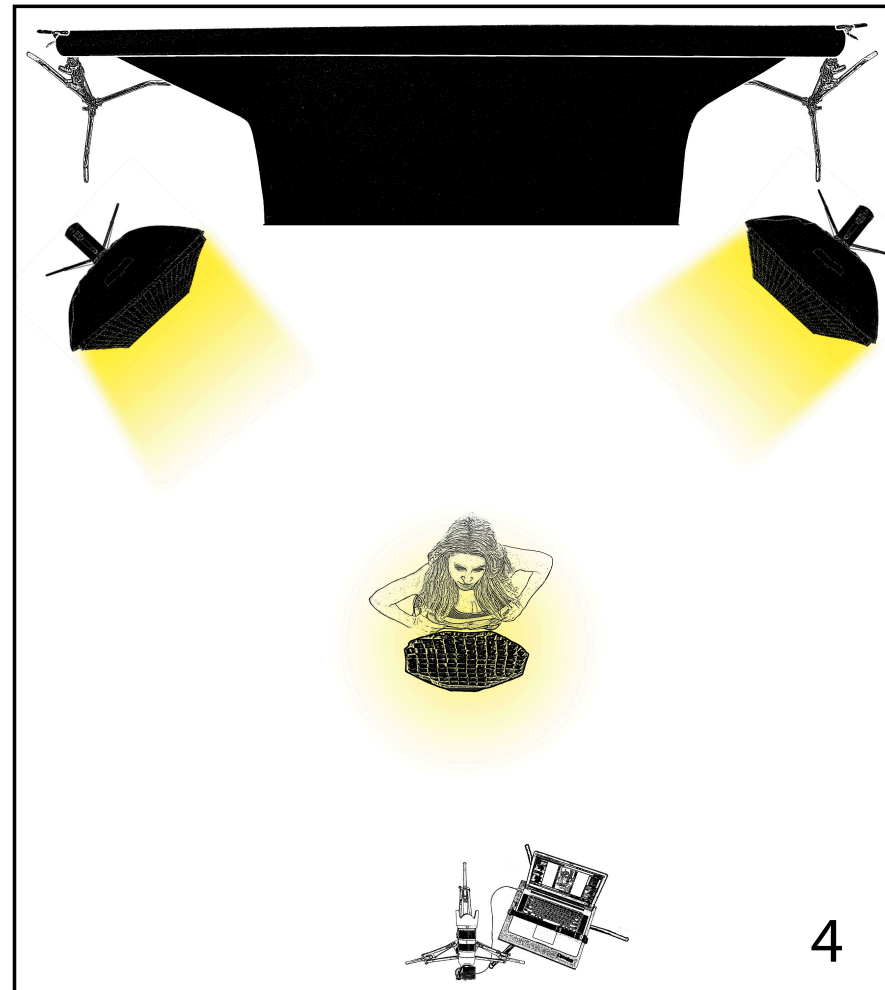


The past two months have been a pretty interesting time for me; it started with a fun but gruelling five-day workshop I presented at the Professional Photographers of America's Texas School in Dallas, Texas followed by a tour in Europe starting in France. However, things didn't quite go as planned; day four in France found me with food poisoning – from a 5-star hotel restaurant no less – which caused me to black-out while trying to stand up and then awaking with a badly broken ankle followed by a week in a Bordeaux hospital where a five-inch metal plate with six screws no less, bolted the mess together. While lounging in the hospital I had lots of time to contemplate EVERYTHING! One of which was, "Do the world-famous French cuisine standards apply to French hospital food?" The answer is a big fat NO! Perhaps we can blame it on globalisation; these meals were pretty much identical to what one can expect in North American hospitals – food-like dishes masquerading as breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Everything else was really top notch, they gave me a private room and were very friendly and attentive. Strangely enough, I felt like I was in a French version of an American hospital soap-opera where all the characters are played by young, fit, and attractive actors, or maybe that was the morphine talking or perhaps that it was a university hospital! As it turned out, my hospital stay and the following six weeks of being immobile, turned out to be the most relaxing peaceful time in my life! I convalesced in Villereal, a tiny French medieval village situated just two hours out of Bordeaux and which is home to my wife Sylvianne's relatives. It was actually a pretty fun time, despite the disappointment of having to cancel my European tour, or at least it was fun once I learned how to play the pity card, never having to lift a finger to do anything! Part of what made this Zen time possible was having really good travel insurance – the flight home for Sylvianne and myself was \$20,000 Canadian (£12,000) for business class which was necessary so that my leg could be kept elevated and so that Sylvianne could administer anticoagulant shots, all covered by the insurance. This plus the hospital costs and all of the follow up, bit a good-sized chunk out of \$75,000 Canadian (£45,000). The cost of this minor mishap could ruin a business and it made me think of how important loss of business insurance is. Years ago this three-month down time could have put me out of business; that was before I saw the light and bought a policy. My outlook is, protect yourself from what your business cannot survive – it is worth it for the peace of mind alone; that extra worry is just one more background draw that taxes your energy eating away at your ability to grow your business plus it puts a damper on life, how else could one enjoy downtime from an injury!

Well, enough of my little woe-is-me tale and on to some lighting. Images 001, 002, and 003 are from a shoot I did on stage at Texas School. This stage presentation was part of a school-wide evening program called "Texas School Shootout" where each of the 24 instructors, including myself, had 30 minutes to execute a shoot on one of 10 impromptu stages set up around the convention centre. That 30 minutes included set-up time, your demonstration/talk, and tear down. Naturally the best thing to do would be a simple set-up, and that is what most of the other instructors did. I, not always being that sensible, opted for a shoot that was rather complex considering the time constraint; not really the smartest choice, or so you might think, because it's not much fun falling flat on your face on stage. But there was method to my madness, I had a plan. These shootout demonstrations were intended to showcase the instructor's shooting and teaching styles to entice the attendees to sign up for their class next year. With that in mind, I decided to do something that was the opposite from what most instructors might do to really try to stand out from the crowd – shake 'em up so to speak! I decided on lighting an attractive sweet-looking model from underneath with very dramatic demon-lighting and then process (see Image 005) with really harsh B&W settings. This is not something this group is used to and so caused quite a buzz! I think I can attribute no small amount of my success in photography to this way of thinking – stand out by doing things differently. To make it



work I planned it out carefully with my assistant John Watson and five of my students who volunteered to help out. Each person had a few pieces of equipment they were responsible for, and John over saw the placement of these, based on a detailed sketch I created which included distances and heights for everything, see call-out box "Image Specifications" as well as Image 004. All gear was assembled as much as it could be, off stage. Literally in four minutes we were set up, metered, and ready to shoot the first shot. I started with a short intro talk then directed my Texan model Kaitlyn Toohey and snapped an image (see Image 001). In just five minutes we had set up, shot, and nailed it on the first image! How exciting! The crowd actually said, "Ohhhh!" as the image jumped up on screen through my Tether Tools set-up. Part of the impact was possible because the image appeared instantly with my crazy B&W process settings applied – I insist on creating my lighting to my process settings and so tethered shooting is an integral part of that process; this allows me to really see what is going on and greatly speeds up the lighting process. At any rate, the success of this first shot really sold the audience on metering, tethered shooting, shooting to a plan, and hopefully coming to one of my workshops. One loose thread in this Shootout scenario is the fact that you don't know who your model is until moments before the shoot. With this year's crop of Texas School models, I, as usual, found some to be great and some that needed a lot of direction, the latter being something the time-frame of this shoot wouldn't allow for if one was to create something



dave MONTIZAMBERT'S creating with light



Shoot-outs and Broken Ankles

decent. I had used Kaitlyn before and she is a real 'natural', she has talent! I ran into her on the trade show floor the day before and found out that she wasn't modelling for the Shootout so I asked her to model for me and to wear the great outfit she was currently wearing – planning the look, feel, and concept of an image is pretty hard if you don't know the subject and wardrobe. Once I okayed her use with the organisers, I had one of the biggest variables nailed down! – a talented subject I could work with quickly. So, it isn't just having a plan, sourcing great talent is important too! I think that planning ahead is essential not just on stage but for every shoot you do, and just as important, for your business too, so that something like a broken ankle doesn't ruin your business or your holiday!

P.S. My blog of lighting tutorial videos and articles is now free to all! Check it out at montizambert.com.

5

Basic

Treatment: Color Black & White

Profile: Adobe Standard B&W

WB: As Shot

Temp: 5,950

Tint: +10

Tone

Exposure: +1.35

Contrast: +35

Highlights: -99

Shadows: -22

Whites: +25

Blacks: +1

Presence

Texture: 0

Clarity: +66

Dehaze: 0

Vibrance: 0

Saturation: 0

Tone Curve

Channel: RGB

Point Curve: Strong Contrast

B & W

Black & White Mix

Red: +7

Orange: -4

Yellow: -9

Green: -20

Aqua: -23

Blue: 0

Purple: +13

Magenta: +12

Auto



- Shoot Specifications**
- Camera Exposure: F 8.0 at 1/125th at 100 ISO.
 - Camera: Full frame mirrorless.
 - Lens: 70–200mm set to 70mm.
 - Camera Distance: 7.5 feet from subject.
 - Camera Height: 3.5 feet from floor to imaging sensor.
 - Background Distance: Black 9 foot seamless paper sits 9 feet behind subject.
 - Main-Light Source: Profoto B1X 500W mono-block studio strobe fitted with a 36" Octa-box & 40" soft grid was placed on floor at subject's feet, pointed straight up to subject's face.
 - Main-Light Source Brightness: An incident meter reading with back of meter against subject, dome pointed at source read F 8.0.
 - Separation Light-Source Distance: Two 1x6 foot Profoto RFi strip-light soft-boxes – fitted with 40" soft grids were placed vertically & behind subject on both right & left sides, each sat 6 feet away from subject. These two back-light sources sat 2 feet from floor to bottom of strip-light.
 - Separation Light-Source Brightness: I typically set these back-lights to 1 to 2 stops below camera setting using an incident meter reading with back of meter against subject and the white dome pointed at source in question.

Bio
Dave Montizambert lectures internationally on lighting, digital photography and Adobe Photoshop. He is also a published author having written two books on lighting and digital photography (www.montizambert.com) plus numerous magazine articles on these topics in North America, Europe, Russia and Asia. Dave also creates lighting and Photoshop tutorial DVDs for www.software-cinema.com & www.PhotoshopCAFE.com/video and authors 'Dave On Demand' (www.montizambert.com) lighting tutorial based photo-training. Dave is available for lectures and workshops in your area and can be reached through www.montizambert.com.

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