

This document is an outline for creating the Photoshop layers in the example image file: JimC-PS-Example-1.psd. Please note that this is a teaching example. There are more sophisticated ways to retouch portraits than the those shown here. But the non-destructive editing techniques shown in this example can be used not only for portrait retouching, but also dodging and burning, foreground emphasis, sky replacement, compositing, and most importantly for putting your heart and soul into your renderings! I hope these techniques expand your creative space and time for art making, and you go on to tweak them to make them, and your artwork, your own.

### ***Fixing the background elements:***

1. Open the raw image: JimC-PS=Example-1.dng (and your camera might make cr2, nef, orf, arw, srf, sr2, etc. Photoshop will present the ACR (Adobe Camer Raw) dialog. Just click Open Image (bottom right). This dialog is very powerful, but not the subject of this note.
2. Create a new (RGB) layer, called "Top Left Corner"
  - a) Select the Spot Healing Brush, Mode: Replace, Type: Content-Aware, Sample All Layers checked, brush size 70 with hardness 66%.
  - b) With the new layer highlighted in the Layers Panel, stroke over the dark rectangle at the top left of the image, then release the mouse button. It should look perfect.
3. Create a new (RGB) layer, called "BG Highlights"
  - a) With the new layer highlighted in the Layers Panel, stroke over each background highlight, one at a time. Adjust the size of the brush using the [ and ] keys.
  - b) If you see some edges on the fixups, I'd use the clone stamp to make them disappear (beyond this workshop).
  - c) Lessen the Opacity of this new layer (slider at the top right of the Layers panel) to make the BG highlights visible again, but dimmer than in the original. NOTE – You can return to this step any time during the edit session, or even after you save, end photoshop, and reopen this image!
4. Create a new Adjustment Layer of type Hue/Saturation, called "Desat BG". Lower the Saturation and Lightness using the properties panel for this adjustment layer. If you double-click on the icon for the adjustment layer (on the left side of the entry in the layers stack), you should see the properties panel appear.

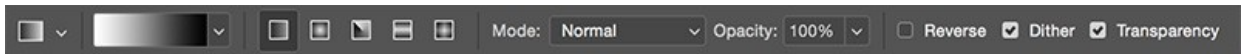
### ***Fixing the foreground elements:***

5. Duplicate the original background layer, and drag it to the top of the layer stack. It will be called "Background copy" by default. That's fine for this example, but in general you should name your layers to indicate how they contribute to the overall rendering.
6. Mask Layna's head and shoulders by creating an all-black mask (menu Layer / Layer Mask / Hide All) on the new layer (called "Background copy"), then paint white paint onto the mask over Layna's head and shoulders using the Paint Brush tool (hardness zero, opacity and flow 100%). Make sure you paint on the Mask and not the RGB pixels. The titlebar for the image should end with "Layer Mask/8" when you're editing the mask). Do the best you can

at the edges. There are many, many ways to do selection and masking. It could be the subject of an entire workshop. I'm not kidding.

7. With the "Background copy" layer highlighted, create a new group (menu Layer / Group Layers), and drag the mask from the "Background copy" layer to the new group. Rename the new group "FG". The mask will apply to all of layers within the group. The little twisty on the group can be used to elide and reveal all of the layers inside.
8. Remove Layna's blemishes.
  - a) Duplicate the "Background copy" layer and call the new layer "Blur Skin". (Extra credit: make the new layer a smart object if you want to change the blur amount later, but not a big deal in this example. Other filters have a bigger pay-off for this approach)
  - b) Menu Filter / Blur / Gaussian blur. Set the radius to something like 7.
  - c) Put an all-black mask on the blurred layer, and paint on the black mask with a white paint brush, to gradually make the new blurred image visible where Layna's blemishes appear. You can lower the brush flow (to something like 5% to 10%) and brush in the effect as desired. Go slightly overboard on the adjustment. If you go too far and just one spot, use black paint to gradually back the visibility off.
  - d) You can reduce the overall visibility of the layer using the Opacity slider now, letting you experiment with more of less "air brushing" or Layna's blemishes. In film days, you paid big bucks for this retouch. It's yours for free now, and to any degree you want.
  - e) What you just did with the Gaussian Blur filter can be done with any filter: built-in or 3<sup>rd</sup> party. This technique lets you blend any filter's effect into your overall image in whatever area and/or degree you want. It's an incredibly powerful technique. We'll do it again with Layna's eyes (below).
9. Sharpen Layna's eyes:
  - a) Duplicate the "Background copy" layer again, call it Sharp Eyes, and drag it to the top of the "FG" group (it should be the layer just under the "FG" group entry in the Layers stack. (Extra credit: make the new layer a smart object if you want to change the blur amount later, but not a big deal in this example. Other filters have a bigger pay-off for this approach)
  - b) Menu Filter / Sharpen / Smart Sharpen. Tune sliders to taste. I used amount: 200, radius 1.0, Noise, 10, remove: lens blur.
  - c) Add a black mask to this new layer, and paint in the sharpened image over her eyes, lashes, eye brows, and lips. The lips are blurry in this image, so don't expect much there. The catch-lights in her eyes should pop however.
10. Warm her skin tone. People generally look better in warm light. Add a new Adjustment layer (called "Warm") of type Color Balance to the top of the FG group. Warm to taste.
11. Darken Laya's neck and shoulders.
  - a) Add a new Adjustment layer of type Curves to the top of the FG group. Call it "Dark Bot". Yank the curve down some so the bottom of the image looks right (ignore what it's doing to her face and hair).
  - b) Add a mask to the Dark Bot layer (white of black).
  - c) Select the Gradient tool (may be under neath the paint bucket).

- d) Make the gradient white to black and Linear on the Option Bar (just below the menu bar). It should look like this:



- e) With the Dark Bot layer mask highlighted (selected) click at the bottom on the image and drag up to just above Layna's chin and release. You should get a layer mask that looks something like this:



You can now tune the mask using paint brush with black and white paint, but lower the flow to 3% or something very low to gradually alter the mask to prevent making unwanted lines in the lighting.

12. Add a Curves adjustment layer, called Brite Eyes, to the top of the FG group. Yank the curve up some, add a black mask, and paint white over Layna's eyes. Fiddle the curve and/or layer opacity to taste.
13. Add a Curves adjustment layer, called Brite Teeth, to the top of the FG group. Yank the curve up some, add a black mask, and paint white over Layna's teeth. Fiddle the curve and/or layer opacity to taste.
14. Brighten the top of Layna's face.
  - a) Repeat what you did above to darken Layna's neck and shoulders, but yank the curve up some and make the layer mask gradient white at the top, and shade to black near her chin. Call the new adjustment layer Lite Top.
  - b) Her hair is too bright now. You can simply paint over that part of the mask (the part over her hair) with black paint, or (extra credit) make a new group with only the Lite Top adjustment layer inside, and add a mask to the new group that has black paint over her hair. The advantage to the later approach is you can go back and fiddle the gradient and her hair will remain masked (because it's masked on the containing group). This is a great way to put a second mask on any layer as long as you want to conceal (but not reveal) more of the layer inside the group.

Note that the foreground layers are above the background layers in the layer stack, so the unmasked portions of the foreground layers hide what's underneath them in the layers stack (which are the background layers).

That's it. You're done. And all of your edits can be tuned at any time, even days later, because each edit is on a separate (usually masked) layer. You can even re-do any one one edit/layer without invalidating all of the other edits/layers.

Remember to friend me on Facebook (I'm the Jim Christensen in Westchester), and check-out my website:  
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