

## Composition Case Study #06

# ADVANCED COMPOSITION

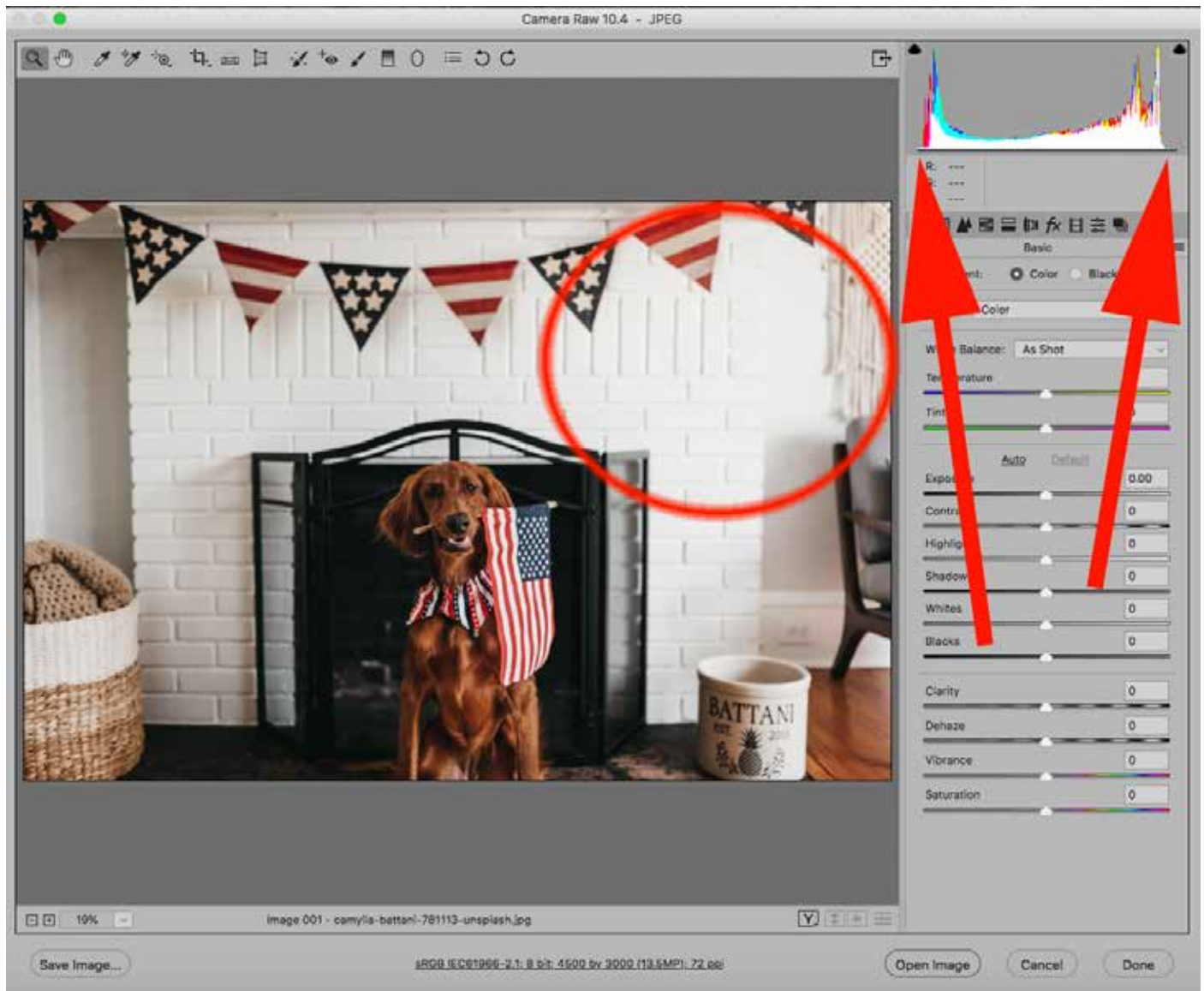
This image is a nice example of a pet portrait with a sense of story behind it. This is one patriotic puppy!

Overall, the image is pleasing and the composition is relatively on track.

However, there are some problem areas, so let's dissect what the issues are and what we can do about them.

Before you read on, jot down on paper what you think the problems are, and then let's see how your diagnosis compares to mine.





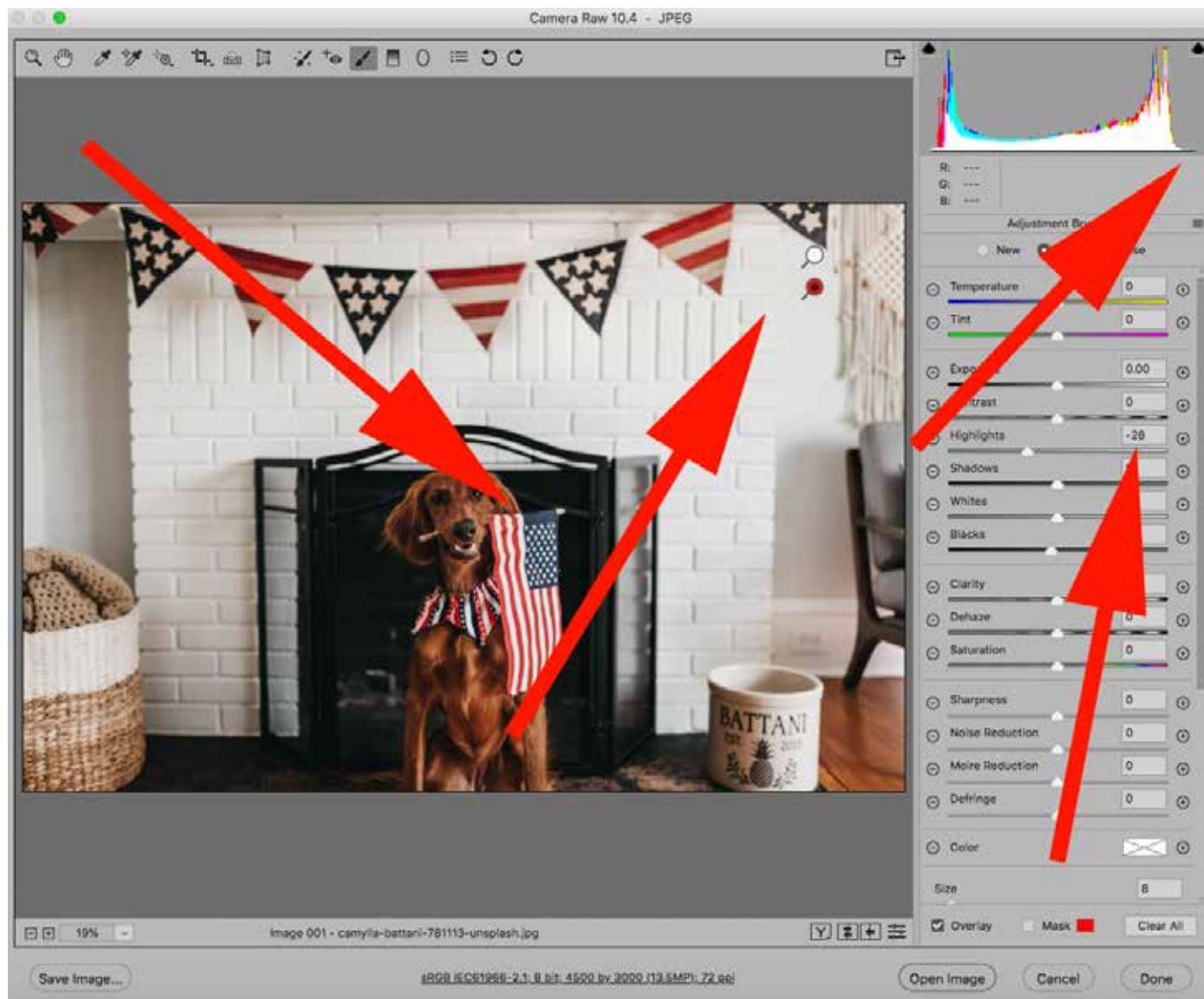
When doing a case study on an image, one of the first items that I look at is the histogram.

This histogram indicates a proper exposure without any clipping.

However, it's always a good idea to combine a review of the histogram with a review of the preview image.

In this image, there is no clipping on the highlight end of the scale. However, there is a loss of detail within the red circle. A visual examination of the preview image reveals this.

That's one problem that will need to be addressed.



The highlight issue was addressed in the Camera Raw window using the Adjustment Brush tool.

If you look at the upper-right corner, you will see that there are two pins that have been placed.

That's because one mask was created for the wall and another was created for the brick fireplace mantle. Each mask was adjusted separately to allow a delineation of detail between the two elements.

However – and this is really important – take note of how the highlight side of the histogram has not changed at all!

**You can make minor tone adjustments using the Adjustment Brush with the critical eye of a fine art painter.**

Lastly, look at the red arrow pointing at the flag. This is now the brightest highlight in the entire picture. Where is it positioned? Right next to the subject!

This is important, because a viewer's eyes will tend to lock onto the brightest spot within a photograph.



Next, I'm looking at an eye snag near the edge of the frame and an ill-placed, high contrast line emerging from behind the dog's head.





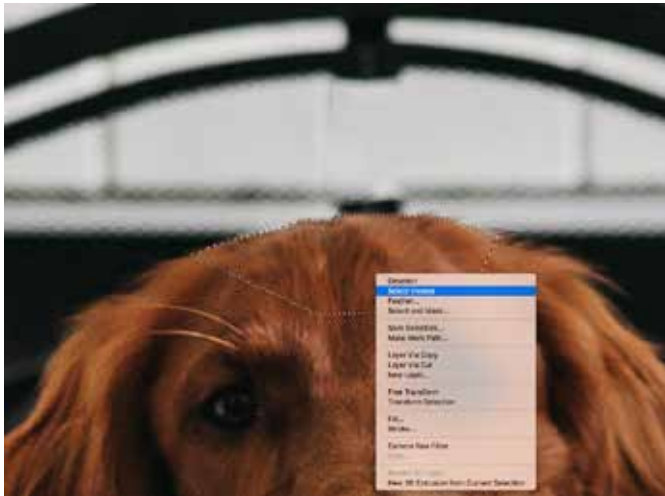
I'm going to address the distracting black line behind the dog first.

I selected the area using the polygonal lasso tool in Photoshop. I'm going to "Fill" the area using the "Content-Aware" setting.

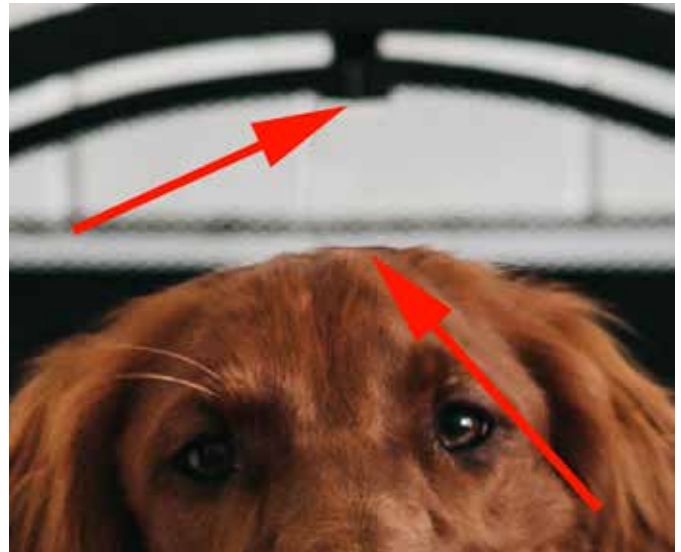
Please note that I do not expect a perfect correction with the click of a button. The Content-Aware function is great for getting started on an edit, but these edits often need cleaning up.



The first click of the Fill function did a pretty good job. Now I'll clean up the line next to the dog's head.

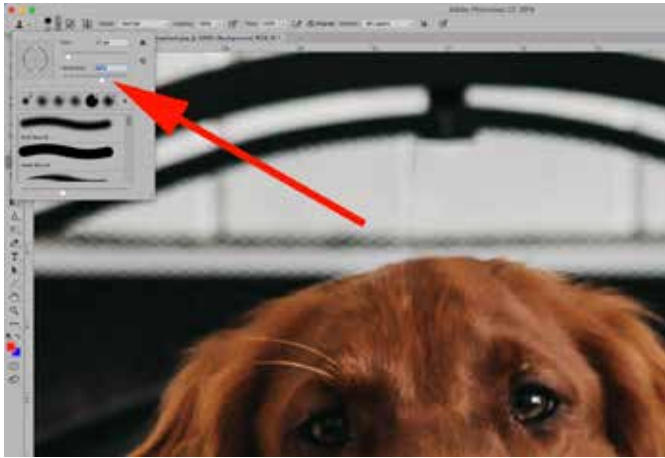


I selected an area of the dog's head that I do not want affected by my next edit. After making this selection, I will do a "Select Inverse." This means that the dog's head is now protected, and any editing that I do will only affect the rest of the picture.



Using the "Clone Tool," I removed the black metal bar near the dog's head. I decided to leave the little bit of metal bar at the top, as it looks quite natural.

I still need to work on the dog's head, as there is an unnatural-looking black line. This is known as an artifact.



I deselected the entire image. I chose a small clone brush with a medium hardness. I then made a sample selection from the dog's head and painted out that line (the artifact) to leave a natural-looking spot along the head.



For my next edit, I straightened and cropped out that eye snag in the upper-left corner of the image.





Here is a before and after comparison. The 'before' image is on the top. The post-production edited version of the photograph is on the bottom.



After reviewing the image for several minutes, I felt that a crop could be beneficial to the composition. It would bring the dog into more prominence by making him larger within the frame.

It would also get rid of some unnecessary details along the edge of the frame that were more of a distraction than a helpful addition to the composition and story.



This is my final version.