Photzy

"THE NEXT STEP TO PERFECT PHOTOGRAPHY" UNDERSTANDING MASKING IN POST-PRODUCTION

Premium Photography Guide
Written by Kent DuFault

CONTENTS

01 INTRODUCTION

Image 001 - Photograph by Kent DuFault

In 2016, this was one of my best selling stock photographs. It has earned me fees that are now totaling into the four-digit mark.
This image was created using a mask. Why? Let me show you what I started with.

I will start out this guide with a brief disclaimer.

You will not learn everything that you need to know about the use of masking in post-production from this guide.

You will, however, learn the fundamentals.

When you're done studying the guide, an entirely new and exciting world of photography and post-processing options will be opened up to you.

Part 1 + Part 2 = Best Selling Stock Photo!

Image 002 - Photographs by Kent DuFault

These are the original images that were combined into my best selling stock photo, Image 001. These two images are good stock photographs as well, but putting them together created a mood that can be applied to a lot of different themes. So, using a mask, I removed the woman from the right photograph and placed her into the left photograph!

You may be wondering why I'm not going to teach you **everything** that there is to know about the art of masking in post-production.

The answer is quite simple. I've been working with masks ever since the 1990s, and I still don't know everything there is to know about the use of masks.

However, here is the exciting part! You don't need to know everything, and you'll still be able to produce amazing photographs that you simply could not create without a basic functioning knowledge of masks.

Masks have even more power when used in conjunction with "Layers." I'm going to cover layers more thoroughly in another guide. We will touch upon the layering concept in this guide.

First, you need to understand what masking is, and how it works. Then, when you apply that knowledge to a training session about layers, it will make more sense to you.

Masking is a broad term that covers a number of functions in the post-production editing world.

Let's define what a mask is.

The term "mask" originates from the graphic arts industry. Printing companies employed workers who were known as "strippers" (no, not that kind of stripper!). They worked with a material known as "rubylith."

Image 003 – Photograph by Josh Tremper

In Image 003, a "stripper" works on a piece of "rubylith."

Rubylith is actually a brand name. However, it became so synonymous with the "masking function" in printing that all masking material became generically known as "rubylith."

Rubylith is a plastic-like material that has a thick, clear layer. Adhered to the top of that layer is a thin, red layer.

Printing plates were made from photosensitive materials. Thus, they were sensitive to white light but not red light. When a printer wanted to expose parts of a layout to a printing plate, and they did not want to expose the rest of the layout, the stripper would cover those parts of the layout with a rubylith mask.

The portion that was left clear exposed the printing plate, while the remaining red rubylith masked portion did not allow exposure onto the printing plate.

The rubylith was a mask.

This is why a mask, as displayed in digital post-processing software, is often portrayed by the color red! Its origins originate within the printing industry.

Image 004 shows you that I've created a mask of my self-portrait using Photoshop. It is the same concept as if a stripper had laid a piece of rubylith over the photograph and then carefully removed the red layer from the background, leaving only the head protected from exposure to the printing plate.

Image 004 - Photograph by Kent DuFault

Image 005 - Photograph by Kent DuFault

In Image 005, you can see what happened when I completed a "Cut Pixels" function. The red mask "preserved" my head while allowing the function to be executed on the rest of the photograph.

◈ **Key Lesson:** A mask allows you to complete editing functions on a portion of an image while leaving the rest of the image untouched, or partially untouched (more on that in a minute).

What You Will Learn From This Guide

- You will understand what a mask is as it relates to the activity of editing photographs

- You will have a complete grasp of how a mask functions

- You will be able to identify the different masking options within Photoshop, Lightroom, and Adobe Elements; and as a bonus, I will also show you how to use masking in the mobile apps Snapseed and TouchRetouch for mobile photography

- You will have entry level skills for the task of creating, altering, and using masks in each of the above-mentioned products

- You will learn to identify some of the artifacts (telltale signs of photo-manipulation) that masking can often leave behind

ⓘ **Important Note:** This guide covers masking techniques in Photoshop, Lightroom, Adobe Elements, and two mobile phone apps. No matter which products you might use, or don't use, please read the entire book. Sometimes I'll include a tip in one section that isn't mentioned in another.

⬇ **Downloads:** Also, I have included some image files that you can download and then follow along on your own computer as we go through the different steps. You can find those files here: Sample Images for Masking Guide.

Take note that the photograph of the woman on the rocky beach has not been included because it is under contract.

02 WHAT IS A MASK?

Image 006

The term "mask" or "masking" is blanketed quite frequently throughout all post-processing software products. For example, did you know that when you're using the "Graduated Filter" tool in Lightroom, a mask is being used? You may not have known that because it's not really mentioned in any tutorials. But in fact, when you employ that tool, you are creating a linear mask that changes in density as you drag the filter across your image. We will talk about that later in the book. It's important for you to understand that masking can be overt, or it can occur in the background. It can be a solid mask, or it can be a gradual mask. Anytime an edit, or change, is partially placed upon the image being worked on, a mask is being employed somewhere.

Image 006 is a beautiful landscape shot of a waterfall and a forest. I'm going to use this shot to demonstrate some different types of masks. I will start with "Layer Masks."

30% Revealed

100% Revealed

0% Revealed

Image 007

In Image 007, I duplicated the background layer of Image 006 using Photoshop. I then turned the background layer into a black and white image. The duplicated layer (which is situated on top of the background layer in the layer stack) was left in color.

Once again, the duplicated layer resides "on top of" the background layer.

Finally, I created a layer "mask" on the color layer (the duplicate layer). I varied the density of the mask from the right side to the left side. The mask is "allowing" the black and white layer to show through the color layer in various degrees.

Think of the stripper cutting away that rubylith masking material. On the right, where I've written 100% revealed, the mask is allowing 100% of the black and white image to pass through.

It's as if the stripper had removed all of the red rubylith material. (It would get printed on the printing plate.)

In the center of Image 007, the mask has been altered to allow only 30% of the black and white layer to pass through. (Our final view is 30% background layer and 70% top layer.) On the left, the mask is at full strength. It isn't allowing ANY of the black and white background layer to pass through.

◇ **Key Lesson:** When thinking about "layer masks," imagine that you're standing over the image and looking straight down onto it. Imagine that the image that you're looking down at is composed of a pile of clear plastic pages. Each plastic page has a portion of the image printed on it. When they're lined up, and you're looking down onto the pile, they form a complete picture looking like Image 007, but each page is providing only part of the final picture. In the example in Image 007, one page (layer) would be providing a 100% black and white view on the right 1/3 of the visible image. One sheet (layer) would have a 70% opacity view of the color layer (the second layer in the stack), which is allowing 30% of the background layer to be visible through it. Finally, one sheet (layer) on the left is completely opaque, and only the color layer is visible. It isn't allowing any of the black and white layer to show through.

Background Layer = Black & White
New Layer called "Color Layer" lives
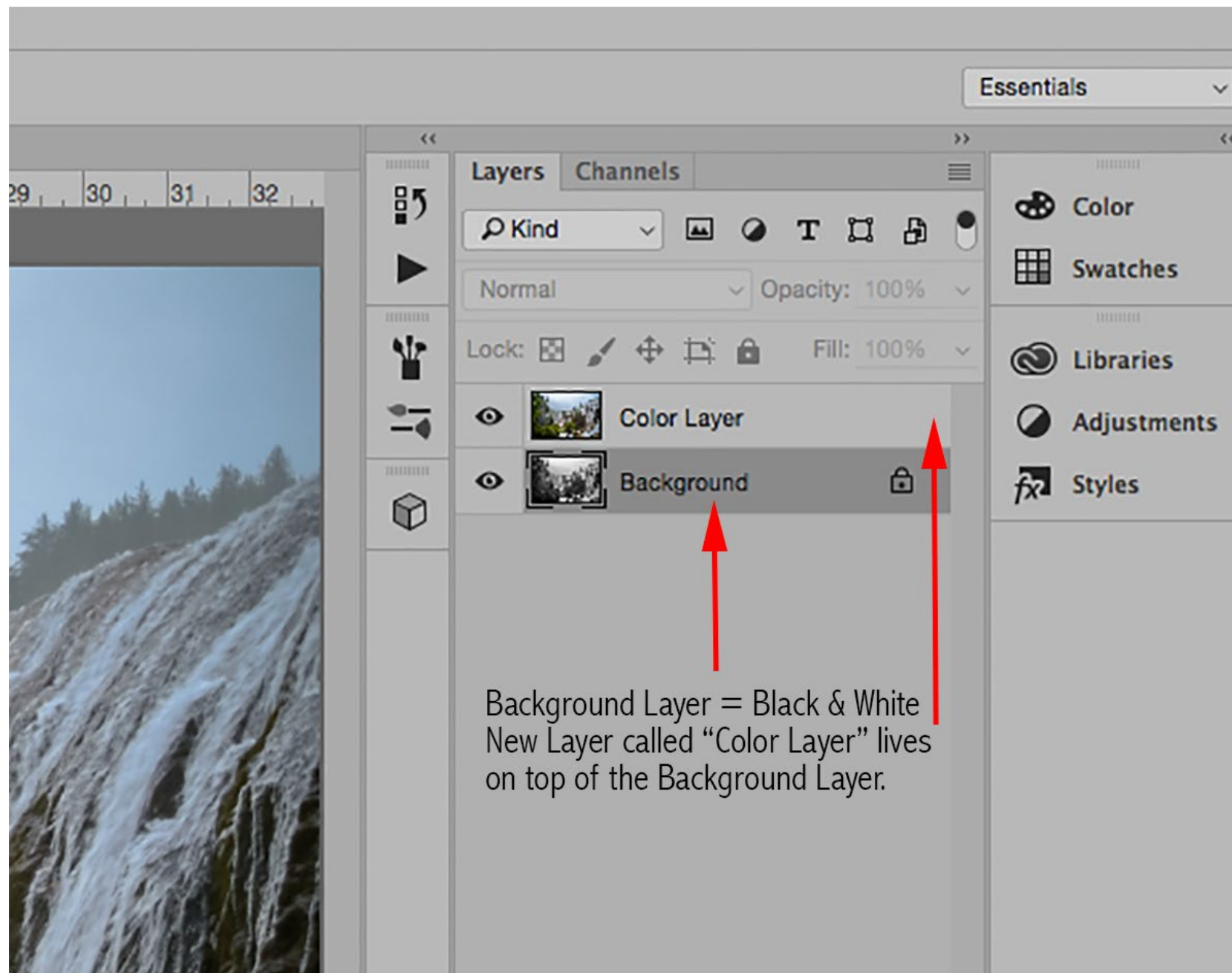on top of the Background Layer.

Image 008 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Image 008, shows you how the background layer and the color layer are stacked one above the other in the Photoshop Layers Palette. Use Image 008 to solidify the concept (in your mind) of looking down onto a stack of layered pieces to see a final image.

◇ **Key Lesson:** Don't get all caught up in the "how" at this point. Do not be worrying about how to make layers, or how to make layer masks. At this point, I simply want you to understand the concept of how layers are stacked, and that through the use of masks, a bottom layer can pass through the layers above it and become visible at the "top" (the final image).
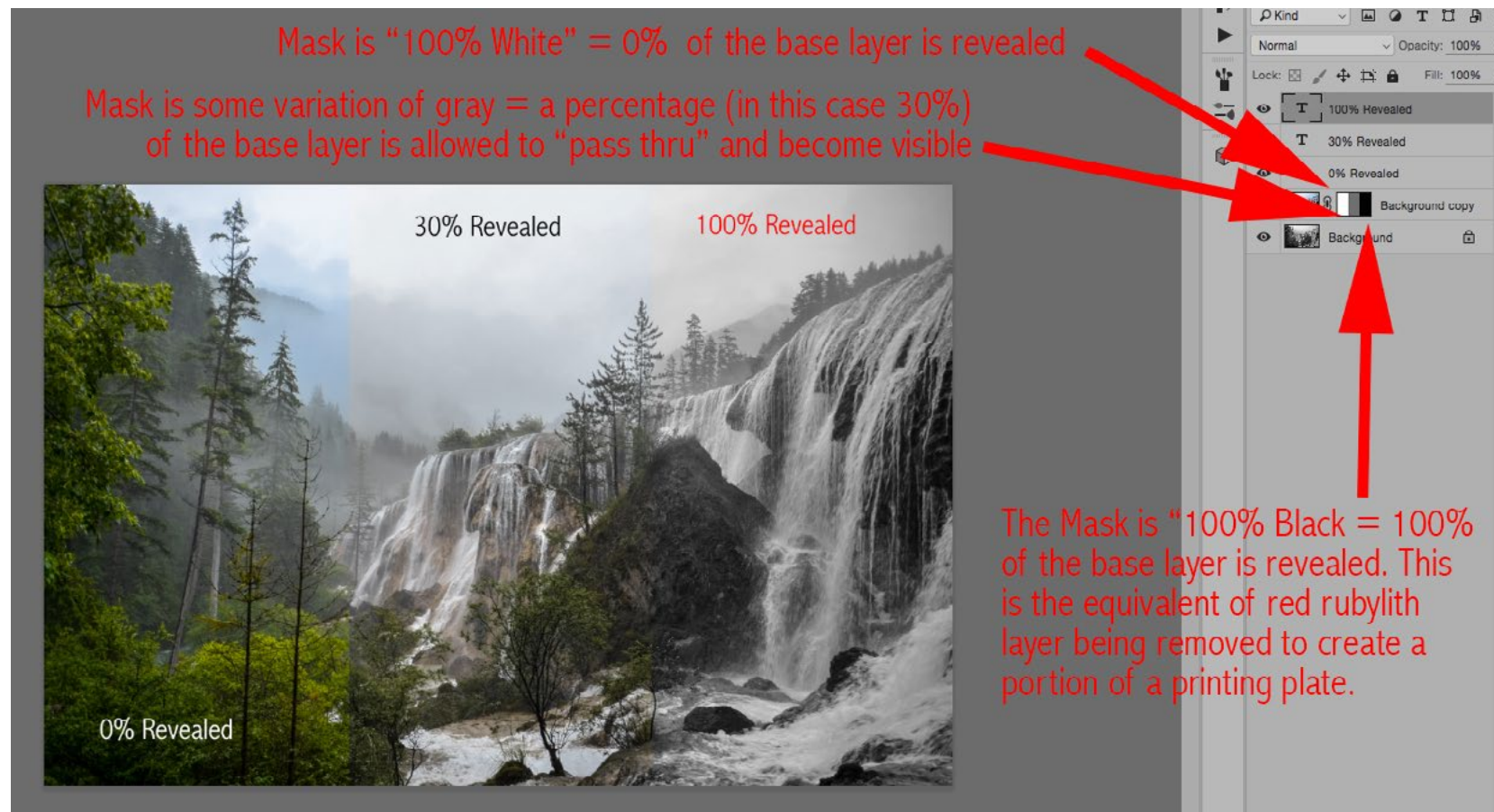
Mask is "100% White" = 0% of the base layer is revealed

Mask is some variation of gray = a percentage (in this case 30%) of the base layer is allowed to "pass thru" and become visible

30% Revealed   100% Revealed

0% Revealed

The Mask is "100% Black = 100% of the base layer is revealed. This is the equivalent of red rubylith layer being removed to create a portion of a printing plate.

Image 009 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Image 009 is meant to give you a level of understanding as to what layer masking looks like in Photoshop. Look at the "Layers Menu" to the right of Image 009. You can see the gray scale background layer. Directly above that is the duplicate layer that I left in color.

To the right of the image thumbnail in the "Background copy" layer (the color layer on the top of the stack) is a box that has three stripes: white, gray, and black. That box indicates that this layer has a layer mask.

Again, don't worry about the "how" at this point. **Simply recognize that when you see two boxes side by side on a**

single layer, the box on the right is a mask. The next important point is to recognize that the color "black" indicates a 100% reveal of the lower layer, and that "white" represents a 0% reveal of the lower layer. Shades of gray represent some degree of a partial reveal of the lower layer.

◈ **Key Lesson:** This is a confusing aspect of masking. Let's walk through this. When you create a "Layer Mask" and you choose the "Reveal All" option, a "White" mask is placed on that layer (a white box on the right side). Given the title of that mask in the "Layers" menu, it would seem logical to assume that the new mask would reveal everything below it. *But it doesn't!* It's the "Black" color that you would paint onto the mask that reveals the layer below it. *So, a "Reveal All" mask isn't saying that the lower layer is revealed.* What it is saying is that the layer that the mask is residing on is fully revealed! Conversely, if you select the "Hide

0% Revealed   30% Revealed   100% Revealed

Image 010 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

All" option when creating a Layer Mask, a black mask icon appears (on the right side of that layer) that allows the entire layer below it to be visible. You would have to paint the color white onto the mask to hide something from that lower layer. I don't want you to get confused. ***As you go through the guide, pay special attention to what color the layer mask is, and what color you have to paint onto it, to get something revealed or hidden.***

Image 010 is an illustration that I created for demonstration purposes. When creating a "Layer Mask" in Photoshop or Elements you WILL NOT see any red color on the preview image **unless** you hold down the "Shift" and "Option" keys (shift and alt for PC) and click on the mask box in the layers panel. This will reveal the red mask. Click again to turn it off.
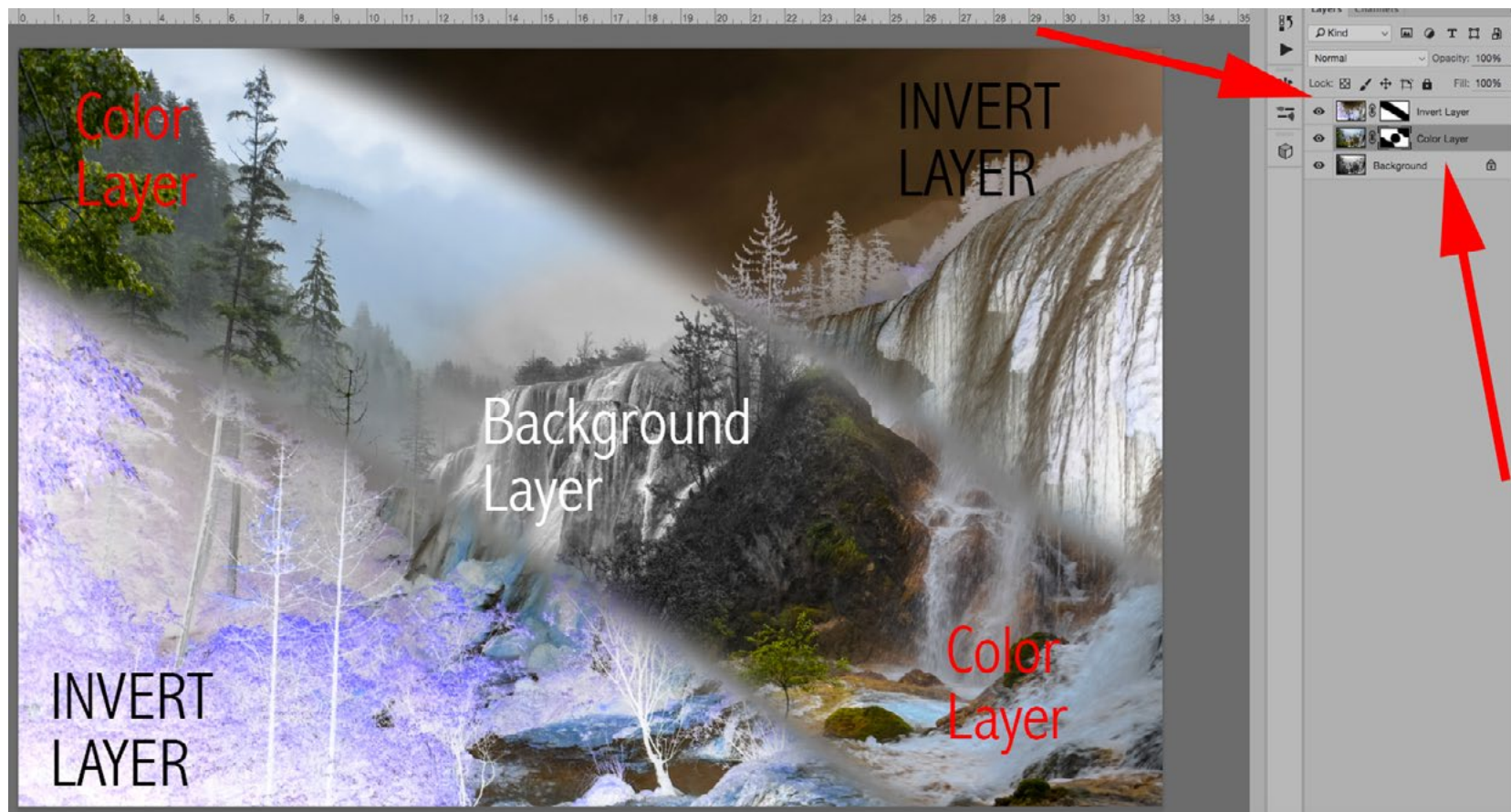
Image 011 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Image 011 probably looks a little confusing to you. I want you to study the image as I lay out the following points one by one.

1. Image 011 has three layers. They are the background layer, which is gray scale. The second layer is a color layer. The third layer has inverted color.

2. The color layer and the inverted color layer each have masks. This is indicated by having two boxes side by side (as we discussed earlier), and the right side boxes each have a mixture of black and white colors.

3. The black indicates 100% transparency while the white indicates 0% transparency.

4. The inverted layer has one transparent stripe that runs from the upper left to the lower right.

5. The color layer (below the inverted color layer) has black masked areas that intersect the diagonal line of the inverted color layer, AND ALSO it

has black masked areas that do not intersect the diagonal line of the inverted color layer.

6. Where the masking of these upper two layers intersects (right in the center of the image), the gray scale background layer shows through all the way through to the top of our stack. Again, imagine that you're looking down at a stack of acetate sheets.

7. Where there is NO intersection of the masks on the second and third layers, only the color of layer two shows through to the top of our stack (upper left and lower right of the Preview Image).

8. Finally, where the third layer mask is at a 0% Reveal (the color white), ONLY the inverted color of layer three is visible at the top of the stack.

◈ **Key Lesson:** A mask only affects the layer directly beneath it. When numerous layers have varying masks, *wherever those masks "intersect" the transparency will pass through from the bottom up.* Disclaimer: remember when I told you that you won't learn everything that there is to know about masking in this guide? Well, this is one aspect where masking can get very difficult to grasp. There are ways to "group" layers and apply a mask, as well as other advanced techniques. I'm not covering those here. And the truth is, you would likely never need to use those super advanced techniques to get the awesome results that you're seeking.
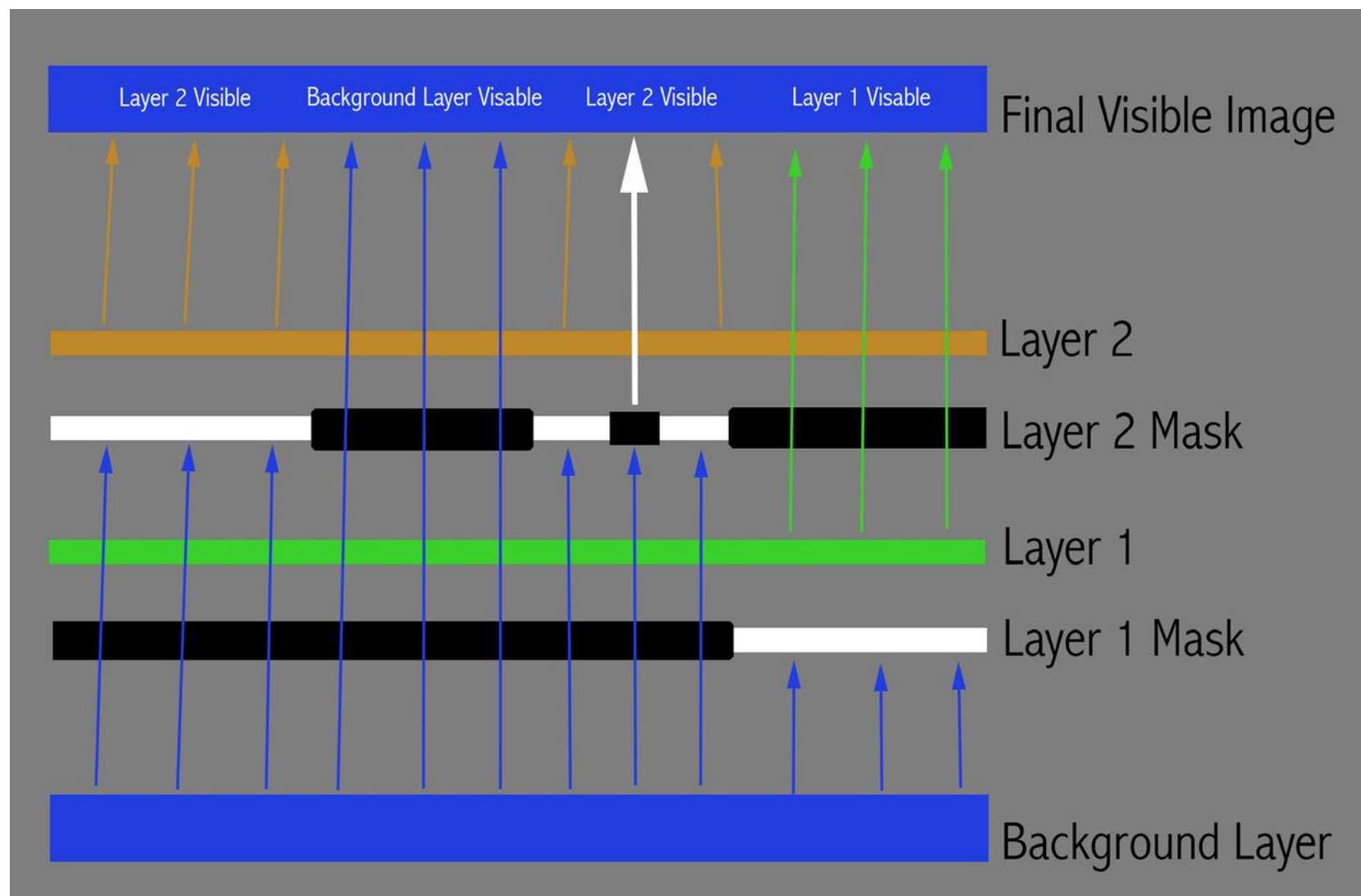
Image 012 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Look at Image 012. The color "Black" on a Layer Mask is a 100% reveal (transparent). The color "White" on a Layer Mask is a 0% reveal (opaque – think red rubylith). The final visible image is the top blue colored bar.

Imagine yourself standing over the stack of acetate sheets, each one revealing part of the full image, and you're looking down onto it.

The orange arrows (touching the blue bar at the top) indicate that Layer 2 will be visible in the final image at those locations along the blue bar. Why is that? The layer mask on that layer is "white" in those locations; 0% of the layers below it are getting through.

The blue arrows (touching the blue bar at the top) indicate that the background layer will be visible in the final image. Why is that? Both Layers 1 and 2 have "black" masking in that particular spot. The Background layer is being allowed to pass all the way through.

The green arrows (touching the blue bar at the top) indicate that Layer 1 will be visible in the final image at that location.

Remember, the color black is allowing the image below it to pass through from bottom to top, and the color white is stopping an image area from passing through from bottom to top.

Given everything that we've studied so far, what layer will be visible where the WHITE ARROW is pointing?

At this point you should have a good basic understanding of Layer Masks. Later in the book we're going to work on some photographs together using layer masks.

Let's do a quiz!

Self-Check Quiz:

1. The concept of red masking began with the _____ industry.

2. Masking in post-production software is often depicted as red because of the well-known graphics arts product called _____.

3. True or False: The red portion of a mask created by a "stripper" allowed that section to be exposed to the printing plate.

4. True or False: If I create a mask in my editing software and then perform a function such as "cut pixels," only the masked red portion will be affected.

5. True or False: A mask is either "on" or "off." There is no such thing as partial (a percentage) masking.

6. True or False: When I'm using a Layer Mask, I'll always know that it is there because I will see it on my preview image.

7. A Layer Mask is present when there are _____ boxes visible on that layer (in the layers palette).

8. A layer mask is 100% transparent, revealing the layer below it, when the color of the mask is _____.

9. To see the layer mask on my preview image, I hold down the _____ key and the _____ key while clicking on the _____ box in the appropriate _____ within the Layers Palette window.

10. When I see a gray color in the layer mask box, it means that only a _____ of the layer below is being revealed.

11. True or False: A layer mask only affects the layer directly above it.

12. If I have multiple layers, with multiple masks, only the sections where the masks _____ will an effect on more than just a single layer below them.

13. True or False: In Image 012, the color where the white arrow points would be orange.

14. True or False: In a layer mask, the color _____ indicates 0% transparency.

15. Referring to a mask as opaque is the same as saying it has ____ % transparency.

(!) Note: The answer for the question posed on Image 012 is: The Background Layer would be visible at the top where the White Arrow touches the Blue Bar. So, the arrow would be blue. Follow the path from the background layer up. Only the color black is encountered, indicating that nothing is hindering the visibility of the Background layer.

◇ **Key Lesson:** Layer masking is available in Adobe Photoshop and Elements as well as the mobile photography app, Snapseed. **It is not** available in Adobe Lightroom.

Now that we've gained some basic knowledge on the concepts of masking and how that masking can work in layers, let's look at the physical process of creating a mask.

In each program that we're going to discuss, there can be a number of ways that masks are created and utilized.

Since this guide has limited space, I'm going to cover the techniques that I use often. That should be sufficient to get you going in the wonderful world of masking.

03 MASKING IN ACR (ADOBE CAMERA RAW)

Image 013 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

(1)

Working in the ACR window – Graduated Filter

1. Look at Image 013. The upper-most red arrow indicates that we are in the ACR window before opening the image within Photoshop.

2. The second arrow from the top is pointing at the "Graduated Filter" icon. I selected that tool.

3. I dragged my cursor from the top of the photograph toward the bottom of the photograph. So far, this may seem like common knowledge to you. However, what you maybe didn't realize is that this "action" is creating a mask. You won't see the mask unless you turn the visibility of the mask to "on." The mask begins at a 100% Reveal at the green dot. Now, what is it revealing? We don't have any layers! It will reveal whatever changes are made in the Toolbox to the right. The mask then

gradually diminishes until it is at a 0% Reveal at the red dot. The more distance you put between the green dot and the red dot (as you drag the cursor across the picture), the more gradual the transition of the mask is, and the further the effect will be, across the photograph.

4. The red arrow pointing downward in the upper-right corner shows you all of the tools that can be used to alter the photograph in the areas where the mask is allowing some percentage of a Reveal.

5. The default setting in the ACR Window will not show you the red "Mask" or the "Overlay"; you must click on those two check boxes at the bottom (as indicated by the red arrow at the bottom right) to turn them on. The "Mask" is the red area. The "Overlay" is the dotted lines with the green and red dots. To adjust the mask, after you release your cursor from the initial drag across the Preview Window, you must turn the "Overlay" on. Then, to see where the effect is being applied, you must turn the "Mask" on. After you are happy with your mask, it's usually best to turn both of these settings off so that you have an unimpeded view of your Preview Image.

Key Lesson: This is a confusing aspect of how Adobe set things up with masks. In layer masking, which we discussed earlier, the color red was a 0% Reveal. But in this case, in the ACR Window, the color red is a 100% Reveal. Nice, huh?
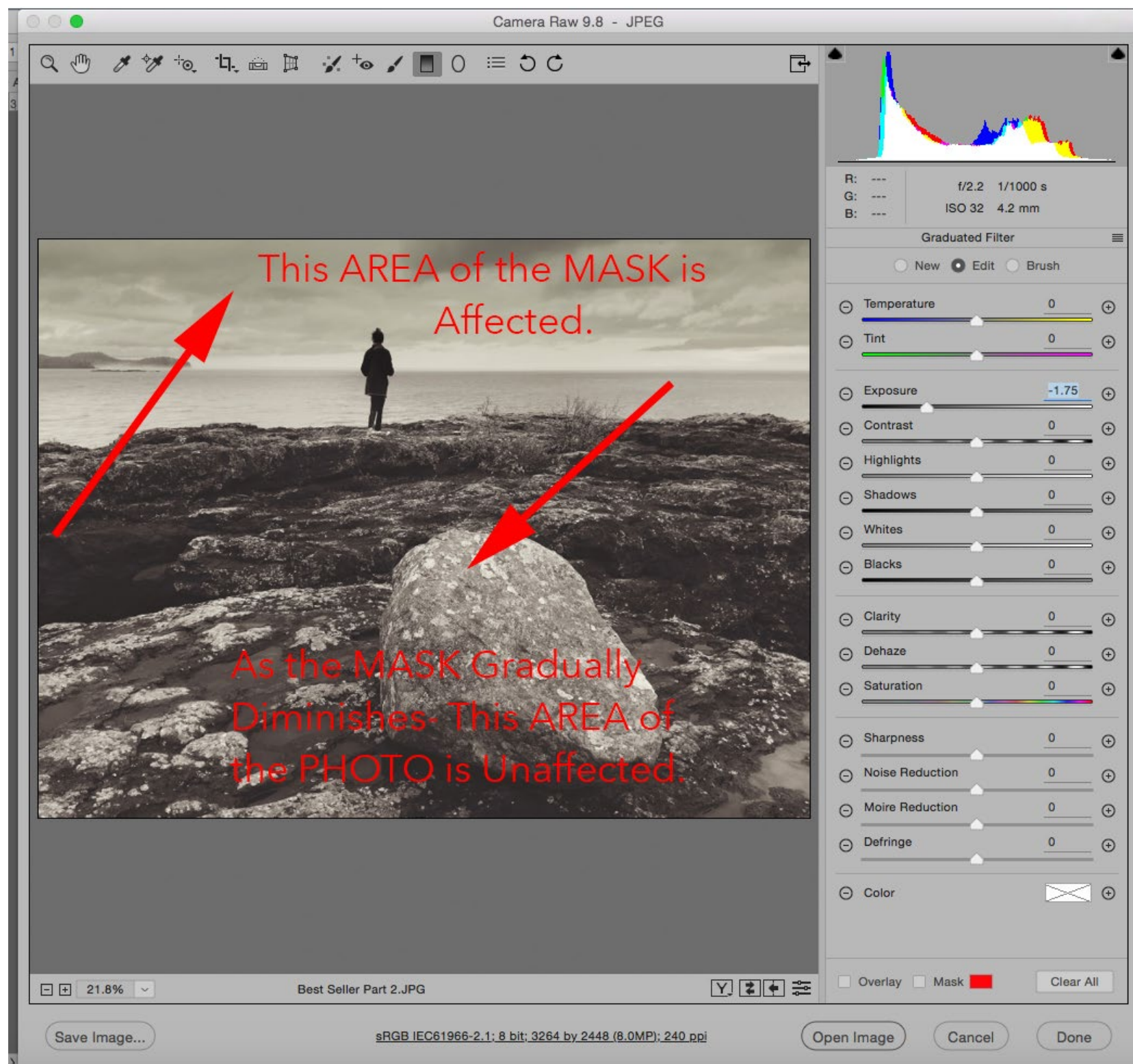
Image 014 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

As you can see in Image 014, the red area of the mask is the area that will be affected by changes in the toolbox on the right. The changes then gradually diminish from a 100% Reveal (full red at the green dot) to a 0% Reveal (no red) at the red dot.

As I said earlier, once you have your mask set, it's best to "uncheck" the "Overlay" and "Mask" boxes so that you can have an unobstructed view of the changes that you will make in your photograph.

When you are satisfied with all of your editing in the ACR window, you would either open the image in Photoshop or click "Done" to preserve your changes.

👥 **Recommended Reading:**

· The Ultimate Guide to Fundamental Editing
· Understanding Post-Processing

Image 015 – Photograph by Kent DuFault
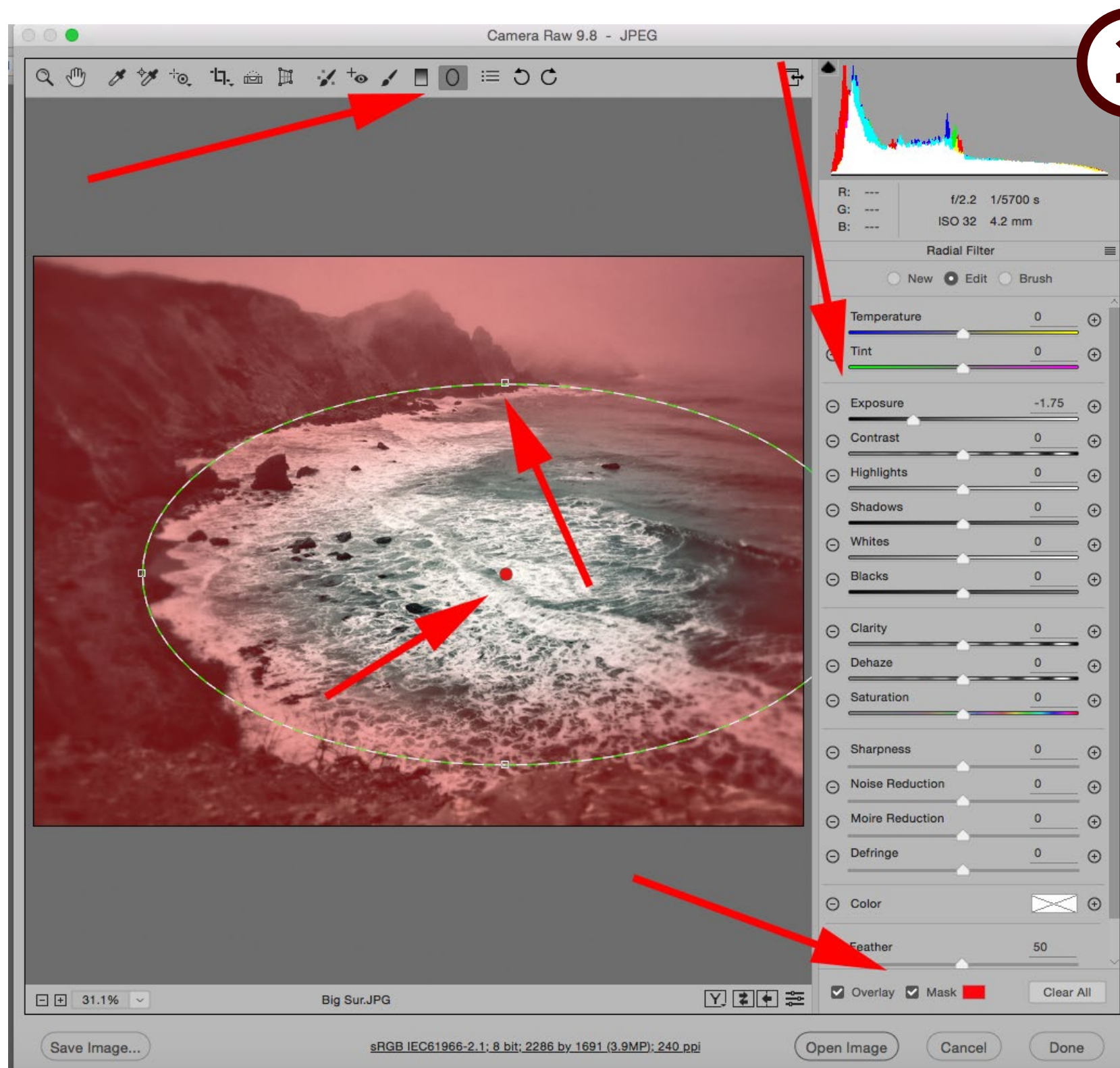
The Radial Filter works similarly to the Graduated Filter that we just discussed. The primary difference is that the Graduated Filter creates a straight-lined mask across the image while the Radial Filter creates an oval-shaped mask.

1. In the ACR window, select the fourth icon from the right, which is labeled the "Radial Filter."

2. Make sure the Overlay and Mask boxes are checked.

3. Click and drag across the Preview Image creating an oval in the approximate size that you desire.

4. The Radial Filter mask begins at the red dot – 0% Reveal – and then gradually extends outward to the green oval, after which the mask is at full strength – 100% Reveal. The red dot is 0% affected. The affect gradually increases toward the green oval. Outside the green oval, the effect is at a 100% Reveal.
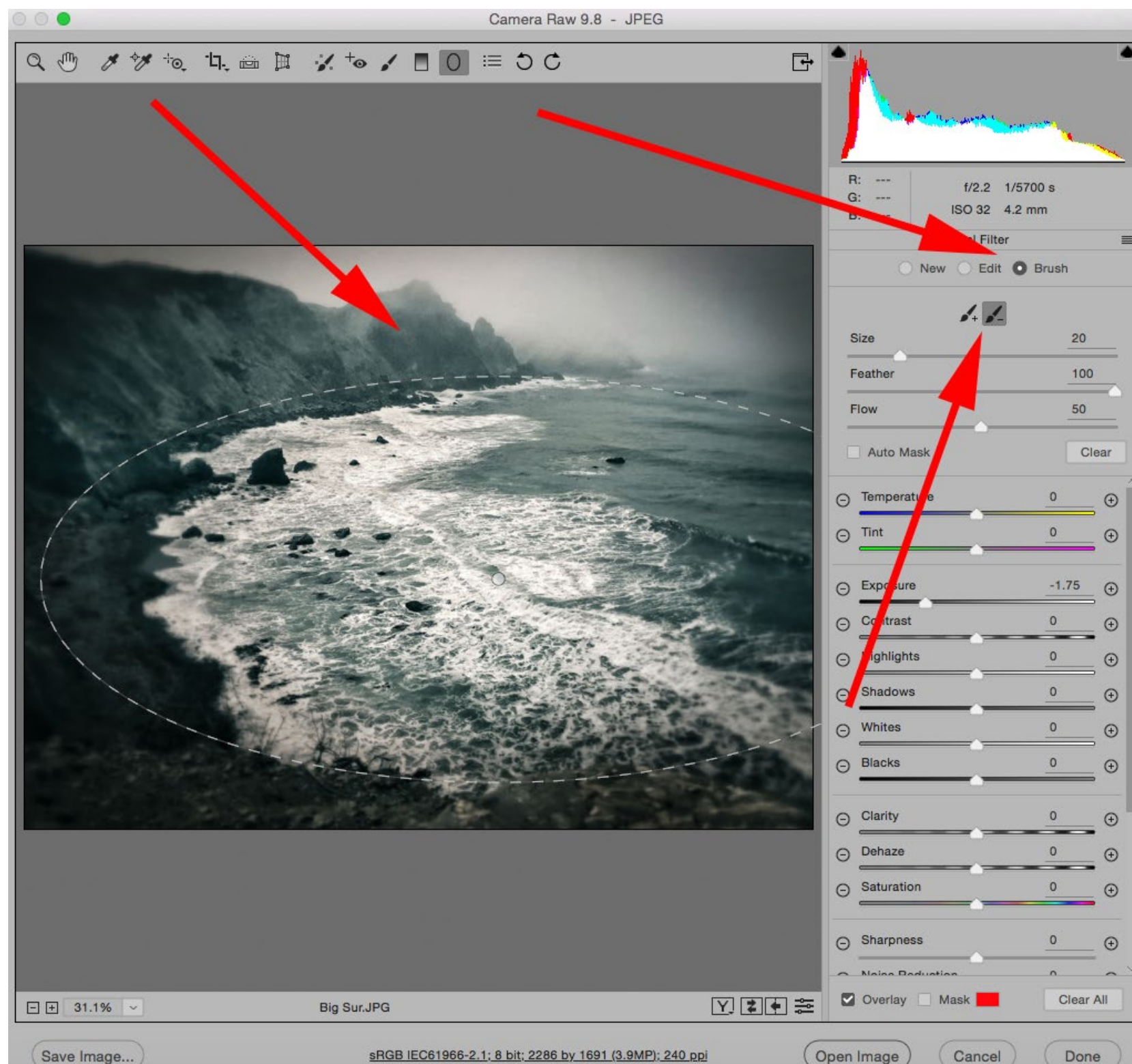
Image 016 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

5. You can change the shape of the oval by clicking your cursor on one of the boxes along the green oval shape and then dragging it.

In Image 016, I want you to take notice that I changed the shape of the green oval. I clicked and dragged the far left box (that was on the green oval Overlay). My mask is now more elongated than when I first created it. I can't see the red mask because I unchecked the box.

Key Lesson: In both the Graduated Filter and the Radial Filter, you can further customize the mask by clicking on the "Brush" radio button (Image 016). Then, you will see two brush icons appear. Click on the right button if you wish to remove some of the mask. Click on the left button if you wish to add to the mask. Remember, the red masked areas are where the effects will take place. Perhaps you haven't ever used a "Brush" in any type of masking yet. I'm going to cover that thoroughly in a moment. At this
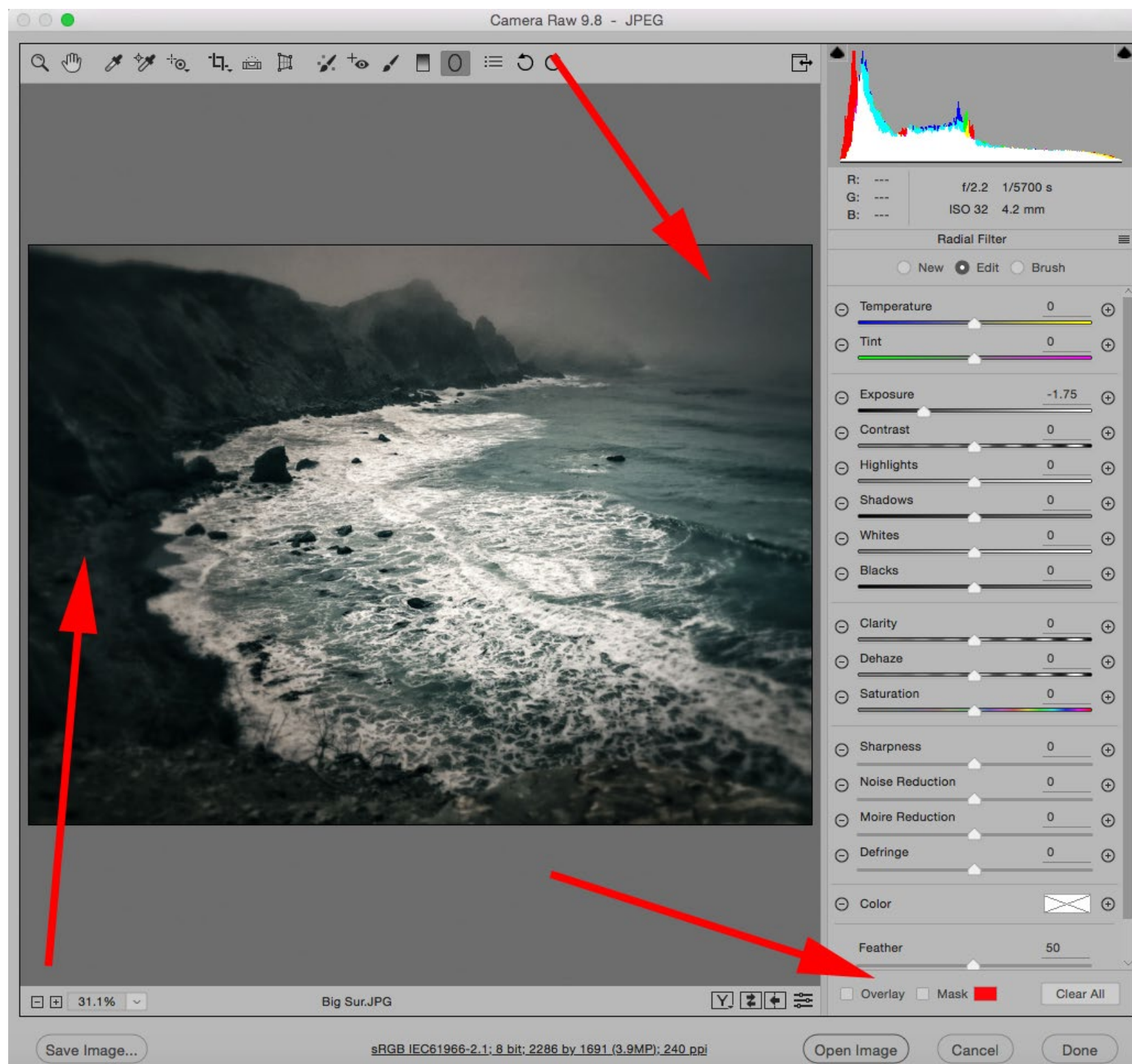
Image 017 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

point, simply realize that you click on the correct "Brush" buttons and then you move your cursor over to the preview window and begin to paint.

(!) **Important Note:** If you want to see the mask, click the Mask box. If you want to see the effect unobstructed, unclick the Mask box.

In Image 016, you can see where I painted with the "-Brush" (to remove the mask) in the upper portion of the photograph (as indicated by the upper-left red arrow outside of the oval).

In Image 017, I have unclicked the Overlay and Mask boxes. This allows me to see my changes with an unobstructed view. It's at this point that I will often make small, minute changes to fine-tune my efforts.

Image 018 – Photograph by Kent DuFault
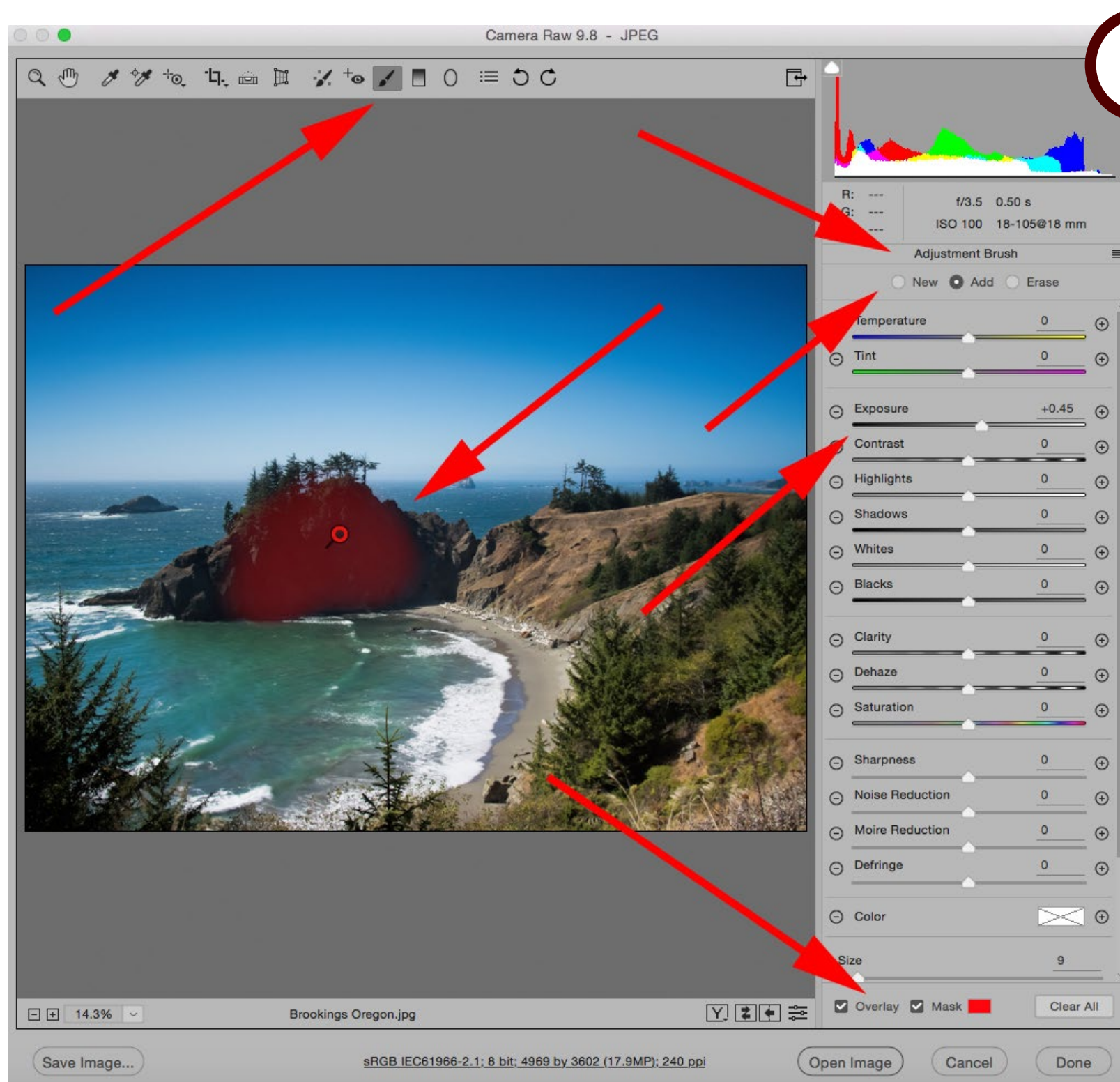
Working in the ACR window – Adjustment Brush

💎 **Key Lesson:** I believe that the "Adjustment Brush," located within the ACR window, is the single most powerful photo-editing tool available to you. If you can master the Adjustment Brush, you can alter the appearance, mood, or feel of any photograph that you create.

🎞 **Recommended Videos:**

· Fixing a Photograph – Woman on a Bridge
· Fixing a Photograph – Baby Ducks

👥 **Recommended Reading:**

· How to Improve a Wildlife Photograph with Post-Processing
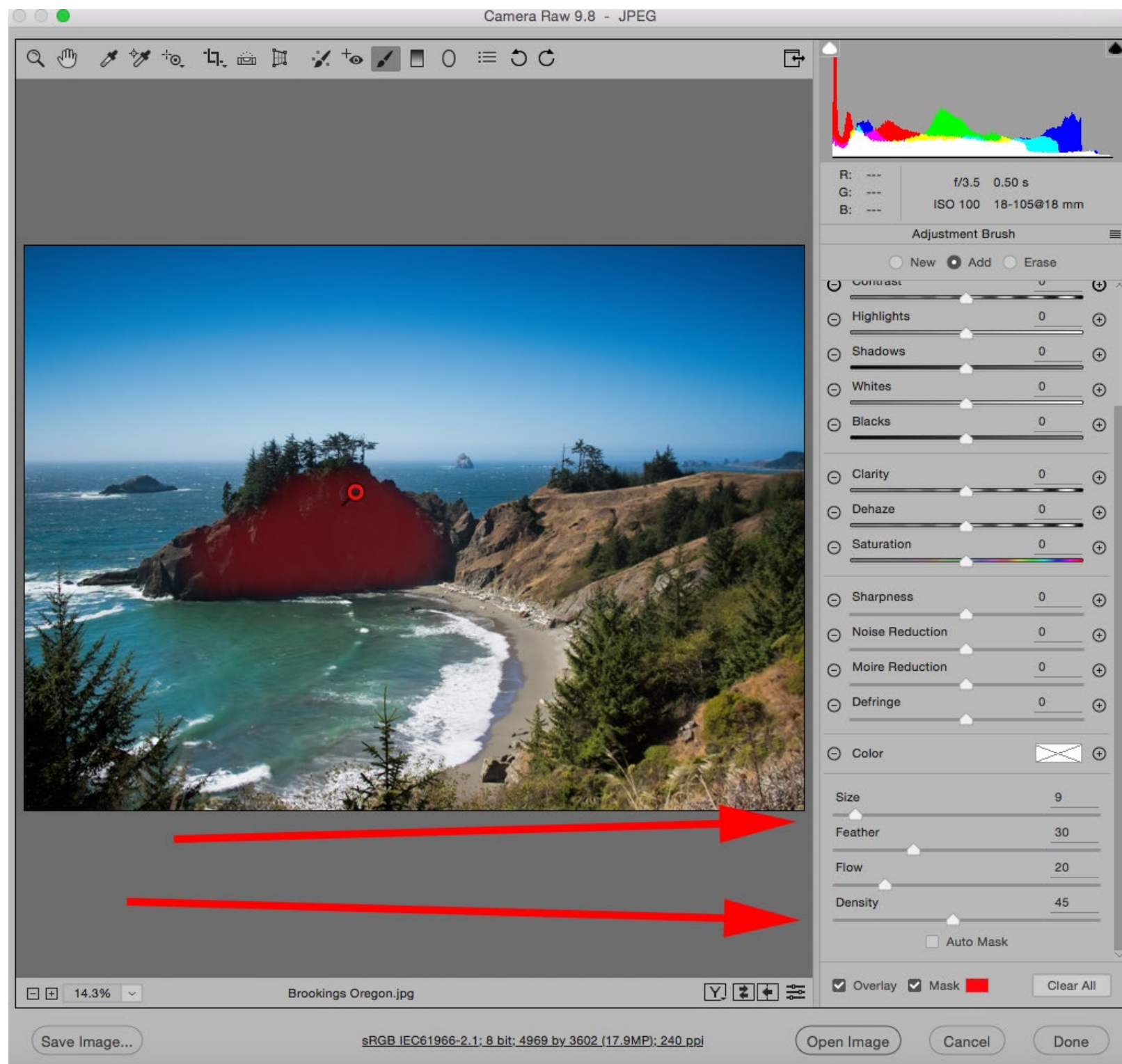· How to Improve a Composition Using Post-Production

Image 019 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

The reason that the "Adjustment Brush" is so powerful is in its ability to place micro-managed edits anywhere within your image. You are truly limited only by your imagination.

1. Select the "Adjustment Brush" icon, which is the fifth one from the right, at the top of the ACR window.

2. If you are just starting to use the Adjustment Brush, the mask will default to "New" (upper-right corner in Image 018).

3. Click the "Overlay" and "Mask" check boxes so that you can see where you're applying the mask.

4. The various editing tools are listed down the right-hand side of the workspace window, as was previously discussed with the Graduated and Radial Filters.

5. Look at Image 018. You can see where I have painted a mask in the shadowed area of the rocks. Take note of the "Red Pin with a Black Dot center." **This indicates that this mask is active.**
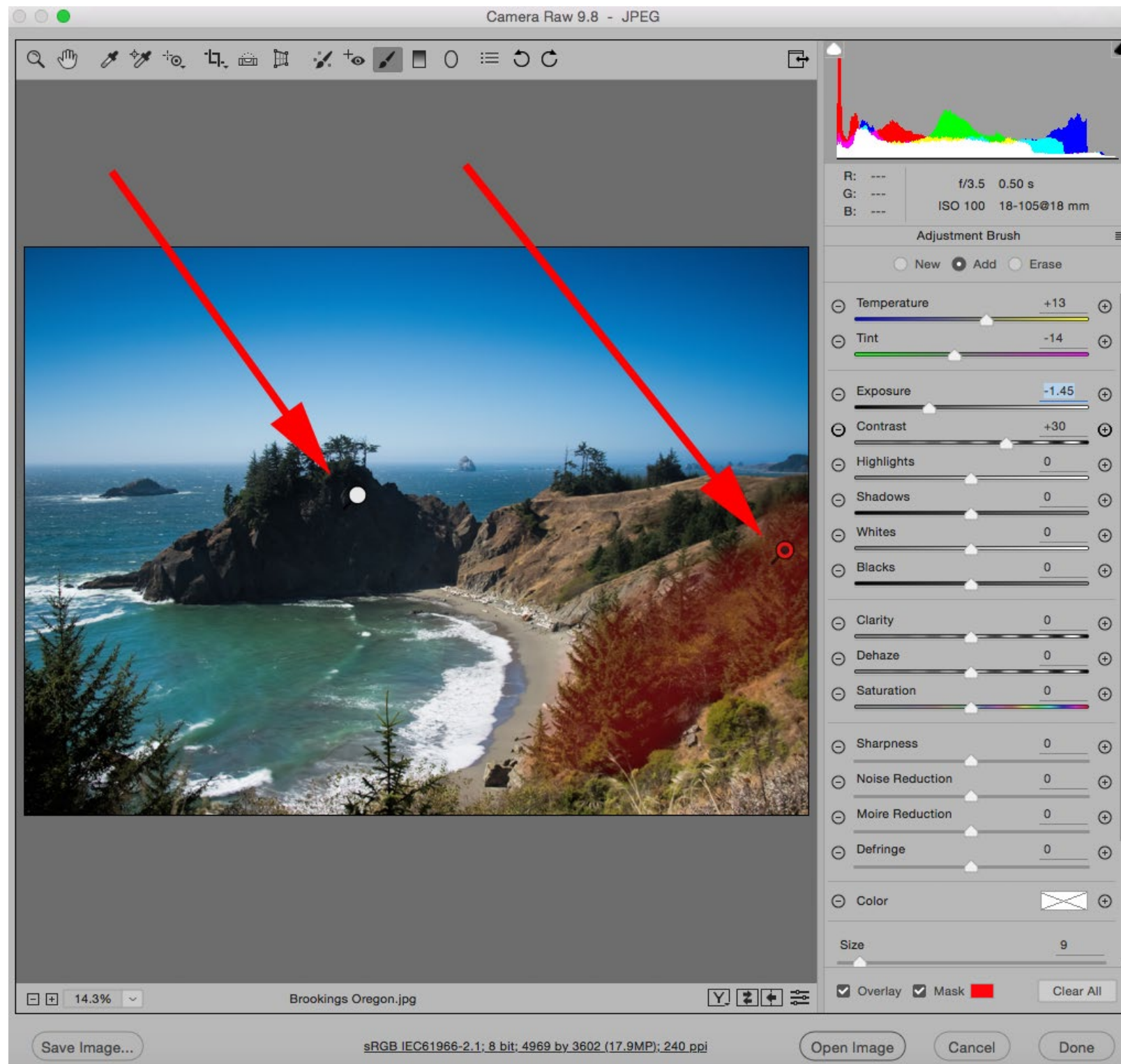
Image 020 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

There are two main reasons that the Adjustment Brush is so powerful. The first one is that you can micro-manage your photograph to your heart's desire by creating as many masks as you want. The second reason relates to the two red arrows at the bottom of Image 019.

Using the tools at this location, you can control how the brush lays down the mask. This feature allows you to create masks of virtually any type: a 100% mask, a 20% mask, a tiny mask, a hard-edged mask. You can also use intersecting masks of varying opacity!

I'm sure you get my point. Any type of mask is possible.

Study Image 020. Take notice that the first mask that I created is no longer visible. However, a white pin is left there.

The red pin is now over on the right-hand side of the photograph where I have created a "New Mask."

If I created a third mask, this second mask would be indicated by a white pin as well, and the New Mask would have the red pin with the black dot. This "Pinning System" keeps track of all of your masks.

> 💎 **Key Lesson:** To move between the masks, you simply click on the pin for the mask that you wish to work on. In the upper-right corner of the workspace, you'll see three buttons: New, Add, and Erase. The Add and Erase buttons work like the plus and minus brushes in the Graduated and Radial Filters. They add to or subtract from a mask. The New button creates a new mask.

Let's do a few quick exercises together using Image 020.

🛏️ Editing Exercises

Exercise #1
1. I want to increase the contrast of the shadowed areas in the rocks (my first mask).
2. I click on the white pin at the rocks.
3. As I'm happy with the existing mask, I unclick the Mask Box so that I can easily see the effects of my changes.
4. On the right side, in the Toolbox, I increase the contrast slider.

Exercise #2
1. I want to make the trees, where my second mask is, a little warmer and a little less red in color balance. However, my mask is not entirely covering the area that needs to be adjusted.
2. I click on the white pin to select that mask.
3. I make sure the box next to "Mask" is checked.
4. I click the "Add" radio button.
5. I adjust the "Paint Brush" to the desired size.
6. I paint on the mask to "Add" to that mask until I'm happy with the coverage.
7. I uncheck the "Mask" box.
8. I adjust the "Temp" and "Tint" sliders until I'm happy with the changes.

Exercise #3
1. I want to make the green water in the cove brighter and more saturated without burning out the white waves.
2. I select the "New" radio button to create a New Mask.
3. I check the Mask Box so I can see where I'm going to lay my mask down.
4. I paint my mask in carefully.
5. I uncheck the Mask box.
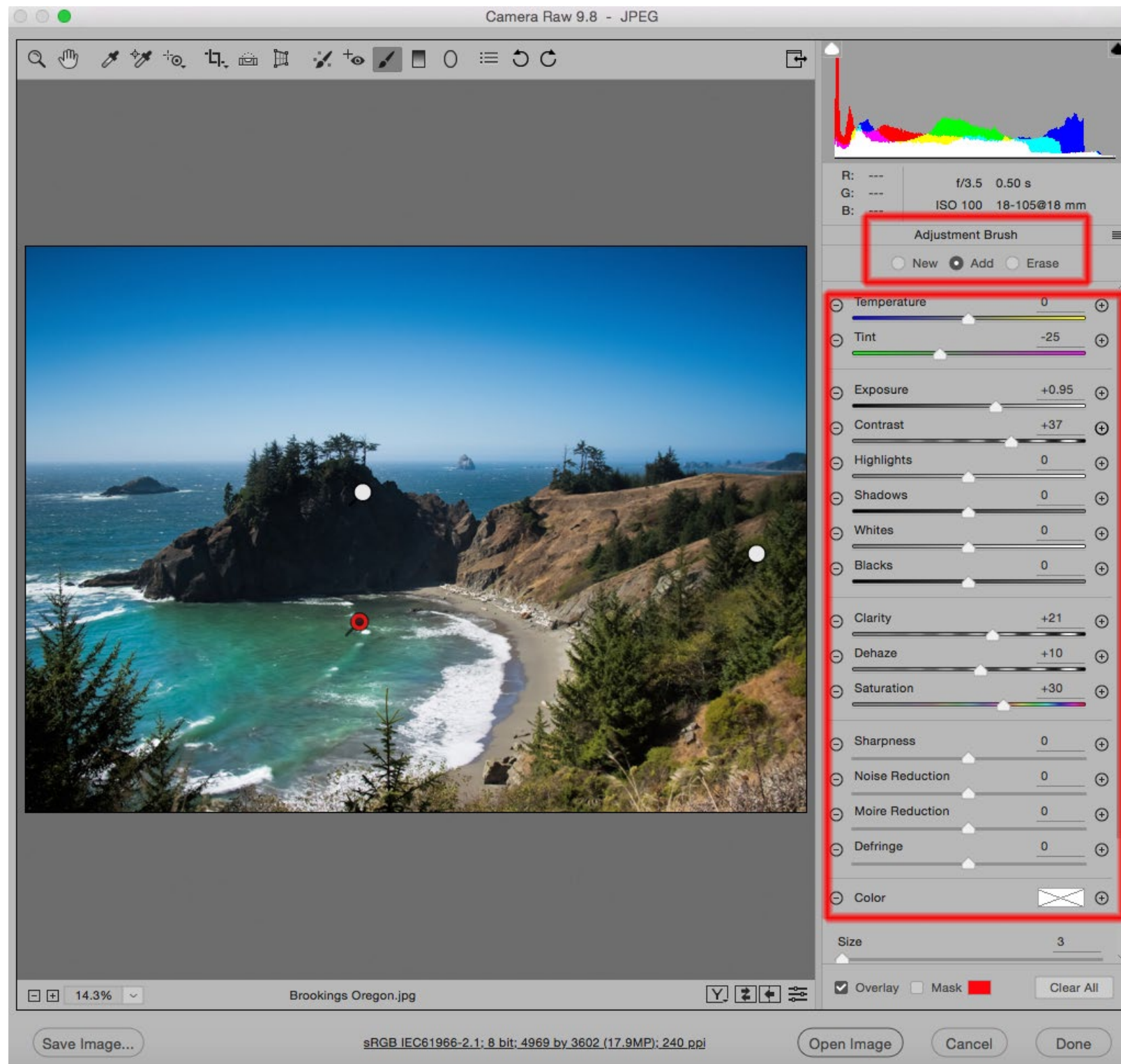6. I make my adjustments with the tools.

Image 021 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

In Image 021, all three masks discussed in the exercises are on the image. Which mask is active? How many masks are there in Image 021?

Key Lesson: Look at the two red boxes in Image 021. The controls in these boxes do NOT default to 0 in between edits. What does that mean? If your desire is to make a new mask, you MUST click the "New" radio button. If you desire to remove a portion of a mask, you MUST highlight that mask (turn the pin red), and then click the "Erase" button. If you then desire to "Add" to a different mask, you must highlight the mask (turn it red), and then click on "Add." All the settings in the Toolbox will stay the same as the last setting in which they were used. If you have worked on a mask and then adjusted the settings of an area of your image, but now you create a "New" mask, all the Toolbox settings are going to remain the same as that previous adjustment. They stay in a default

setting to where they were last used. This is really annoying. ***They should 0 out when you select "New" mask, but they don't.*** Don't laugh! I've messed my editing up pretty good by forgetting to 0 these out these sliders between masks. ***Here is an easy way to reset all of the toolbox sliders to 0. Do a "Command Option R" on a Mac or "Control Alt R" on Windows.*** Another alternative to 0 out a single slider is to double click on the white triangle located on that slider.

♟ Self-Check Quiz:

1. True or False: The Graduated Filter creates a mask in a radial direction.

2. With the Graduated Filter, which colored dot represents a 0% Reveal?

3. True or False: The Radial Filter is limited because you can only create a mask that is in an oval shape.

4. Where in the workspace window is the Radial Filter icon located?

5. True or False: With the Radial Filter, the mask begins at the center of the oval and is labeled with a green dot.

6. Where are the +brush and -brush icons located in the Radial Filter workspace?

7. Which masking tool located in the ACR workspace window is the most powerful because it provides the most versatility?

8. True or False: In ACR, the Adjustment Brush is limited to 10 masks.

9. What color is the pin of an inactivate mask when using the Adjustment Brush?

10. In the ACR workspace window, you wish to make an adjustment on a different area of the photograph. Which button must you click that is located in the upper-right corner of the workspace?

11. You have created two masks. You're going to create a third mask. What three keys do you press on your keyboard to reset all of the tools to 0?
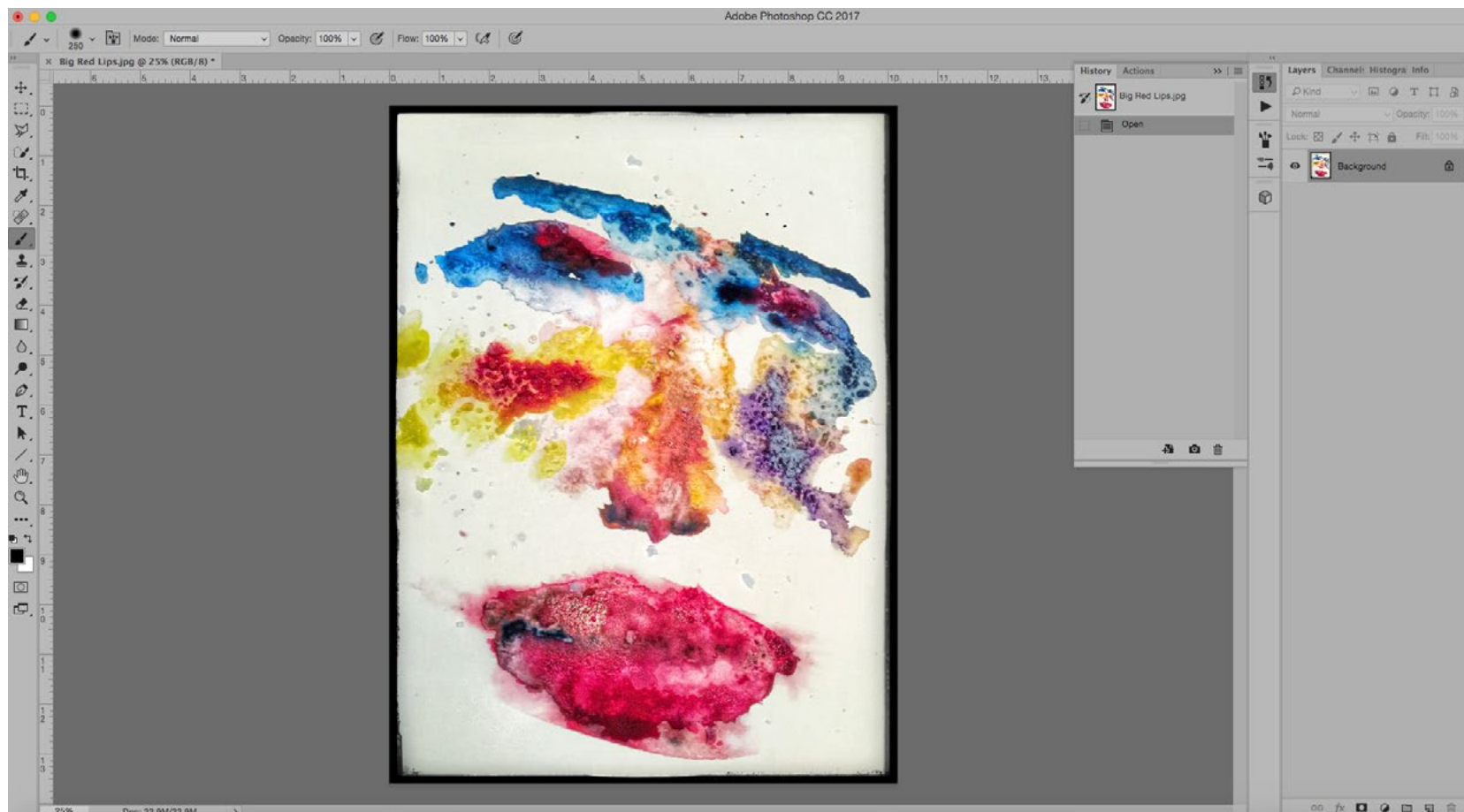
04 MASKING INSIDE PHOTOSHOP

Image 022 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

The masking, which is accomplished inside the ACR workspace, is used to create controlled fundamental edits to a photograph.

The masking that is created within Photoshop can be used for that same reason, but it doesn't make sense to do it that way.

Masking, and the fundamental editing accomplished within the ACR window, can always be altered at another date. Those changes are preserved as a metadata file. If that same work is done within Photoshop, the chance to change your mind is lost (once you have saved a flattened file).

Masking done within Photoshop is primarily for the purposes of cutting, pasting, and blending.

1 Clipping Paths

A clipping path is an easy way to create artistic blending within a photograph.

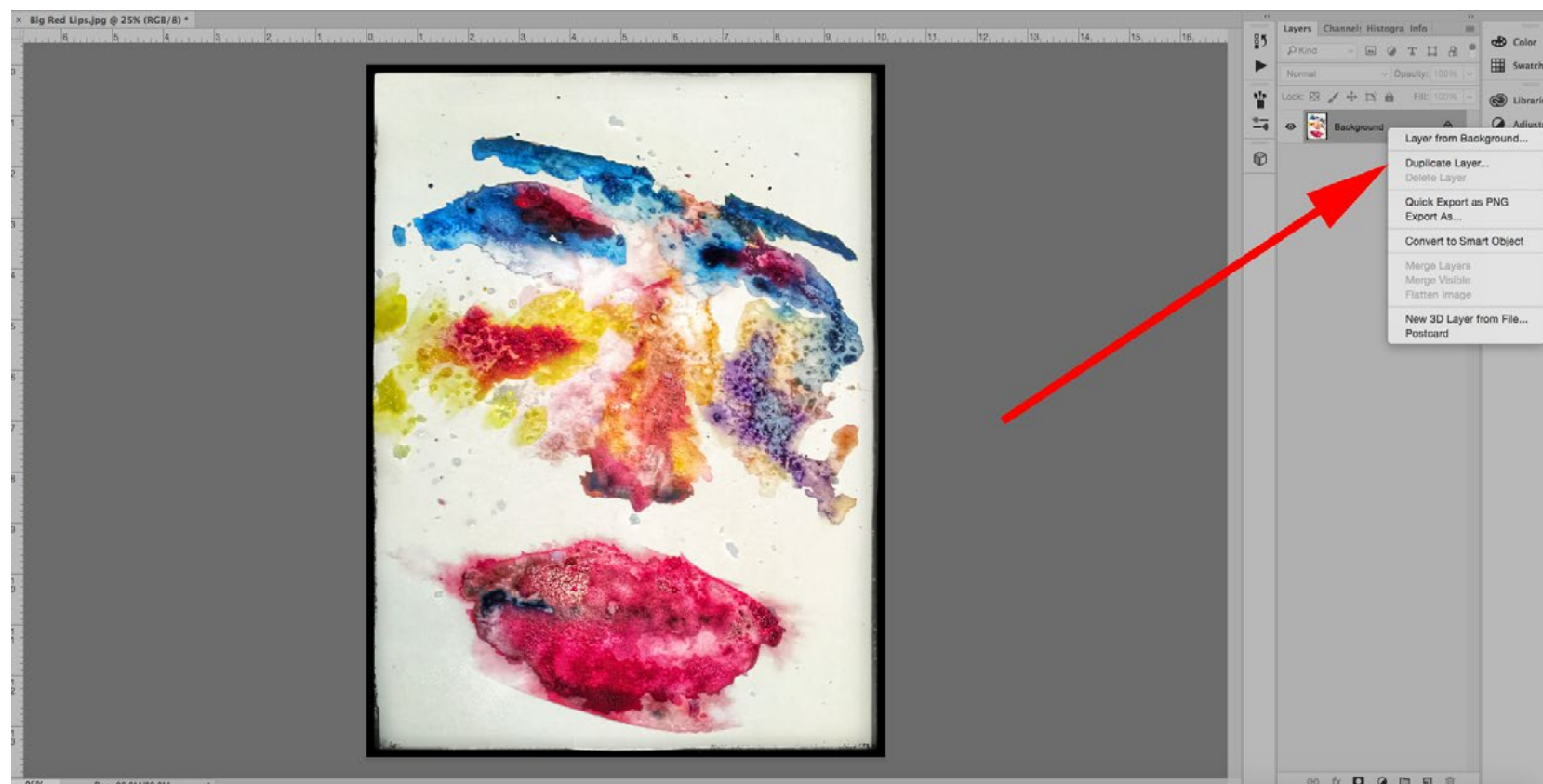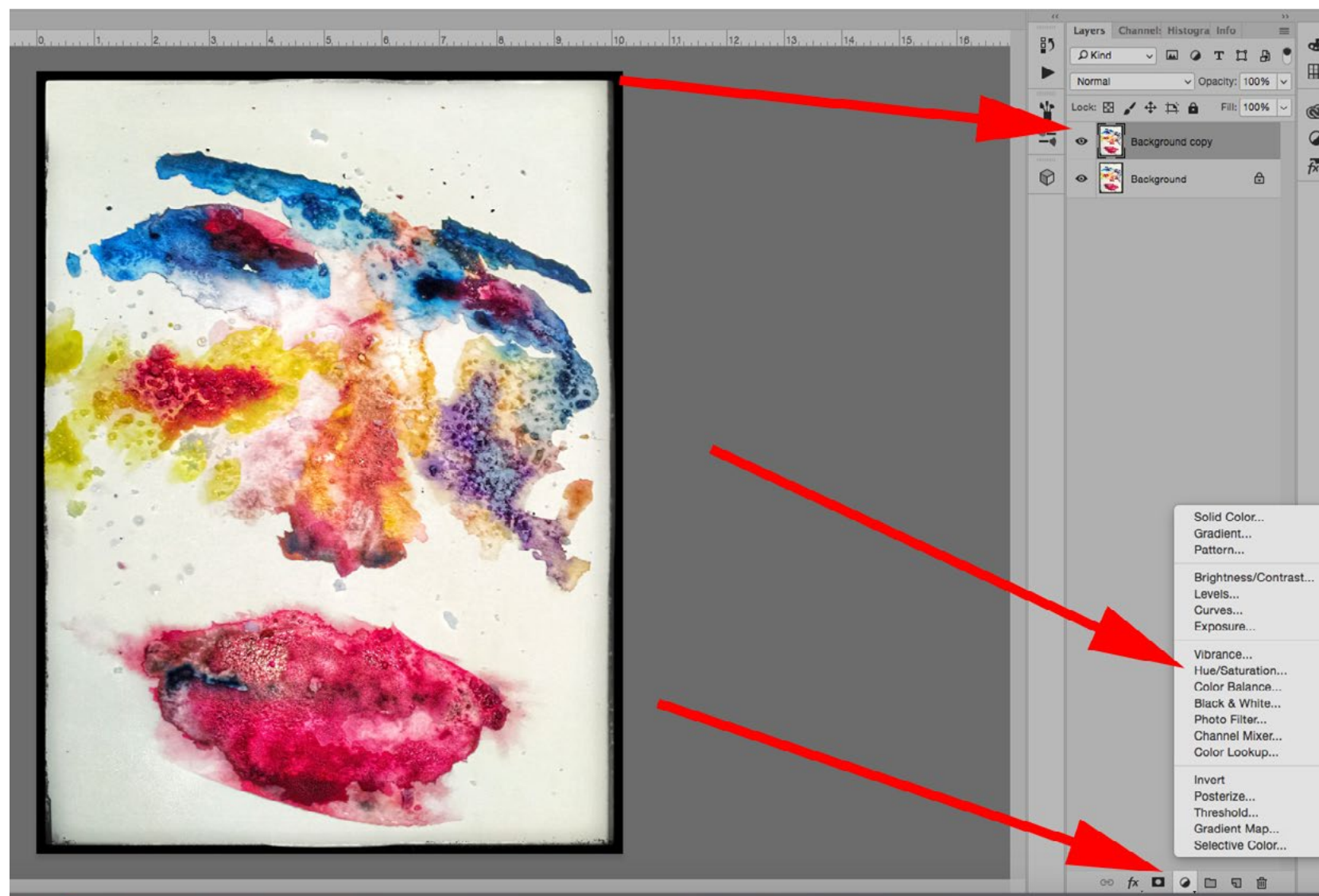Image 022 is a photograph of a painting that I created from watercolor

Image 023 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

paints. (I titled it "Big Red Lips.") I've simply opened the image within Photoshop, and Photoshop has created a background layer.

I highlighted the background layer and did a right-click. I'm going to select "Duplicate Layer."

Image 024 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I have now highlighted the background copy layer. I move my cursor to the bottom right-hand corner of the workspace and select the "Adjustment Layer" icon. This is the fourth icon from the right. For this exercise, I'm going to select a "Hue/Saturation" adjustment layer.
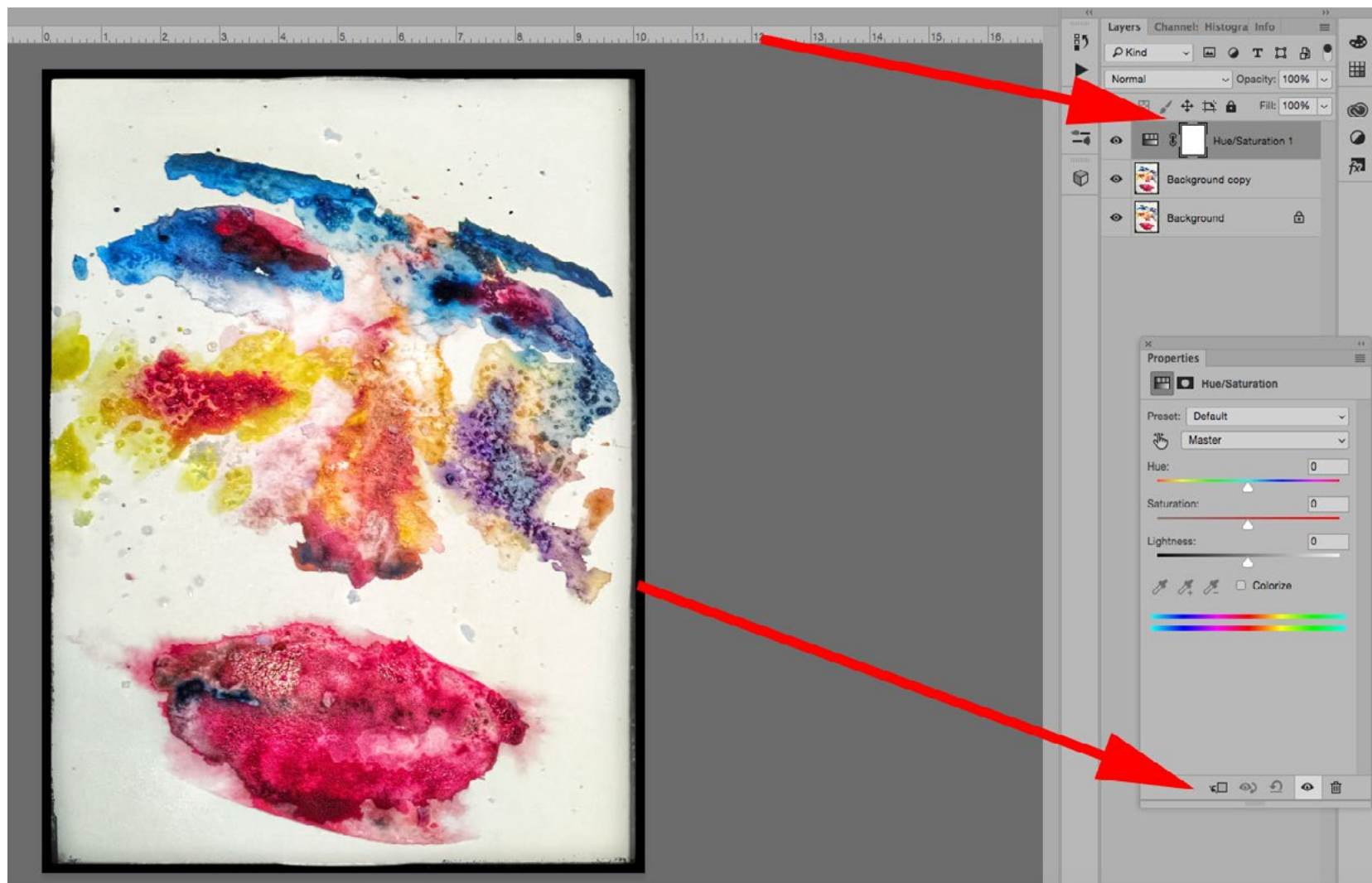
Image 025 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Here is where the important stuff is happening. Look at the upper-right corner in Image 025. The "Adjustment Layer" has been added above the background copy layer, and it has created a "Reveal All" white colored mask. You'll also notice that a "Properties" dialog box has opened.

> ⓘ **An Important Reminder:** On the newly created Adjustment Layer, the right-hand "White Box" is a "Reveal All" mask. With "Adjustment Layers," they will affect **every layer** that is below them, unless…

At this point, I will make changes to the Hue and Saturation settings in the Adjustment Layer. It affects every layer below it. I don't want that.
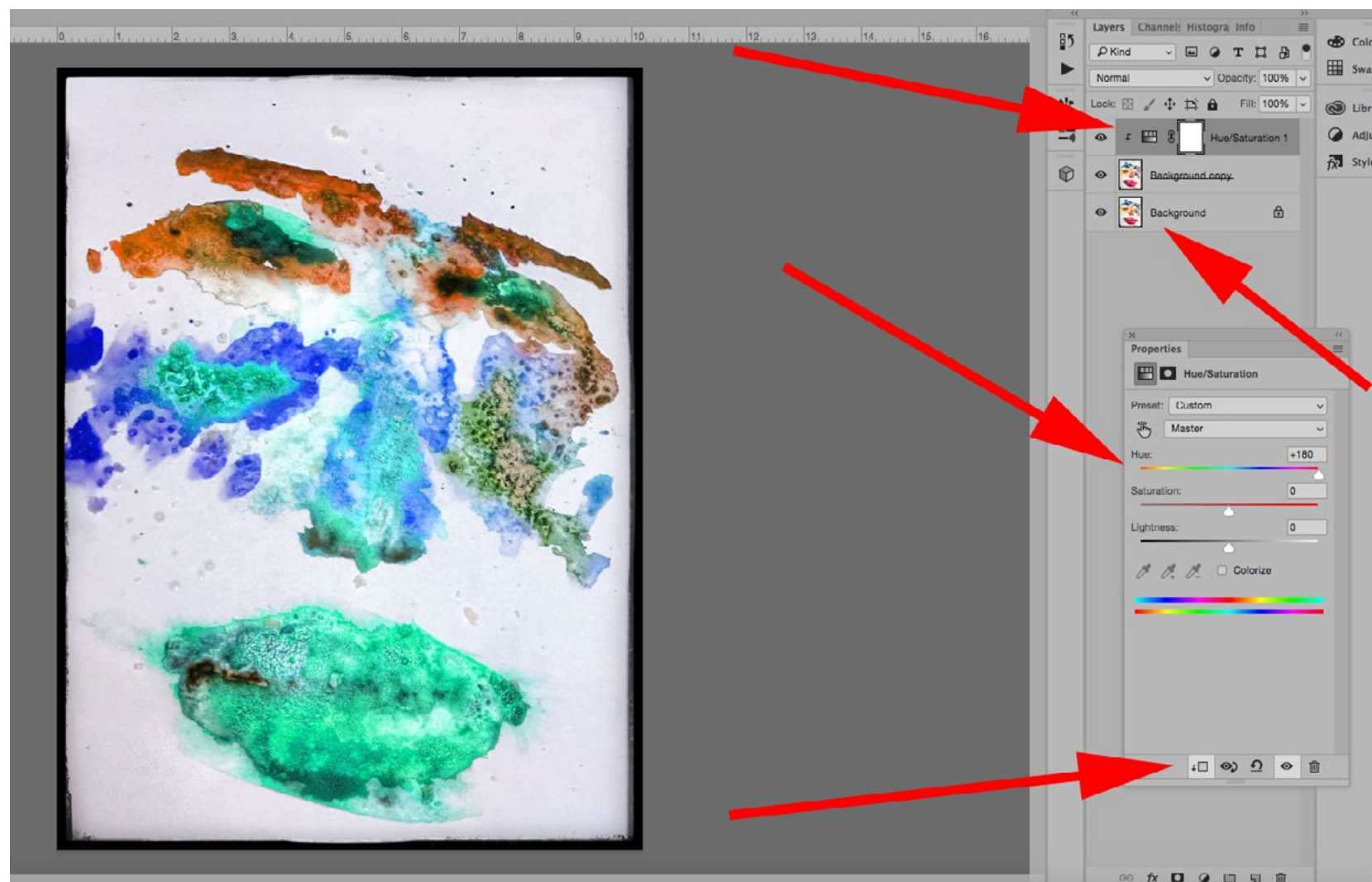
So, I must create a "Clipping Mask."

Image 026 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I do that by clicking the "Clipping Masks" icon, which is the far-left icon at the bottom of the "Properties" dialog box.

By creating a "Clipping Mask," the "Adjustment Layer" is "clipped" to the layer directly below it. It will no longer affect any of the other layers in the stack.

After clicking the Clipping Mask icon, you will see that a downward-pointing arrow appears on the far left of the Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer (upper-red arrow in Image 026). This arrow indicates that the Adjustment Layer is "clipped" to the "Background Copy" layer directly below it. **Adding a Clipping Path always clips the selected Layer to the layer beneath it.**

Now, I had some fun with the Hue slider, and you can see that the image is completely different. However, only the "Background Copy Layer" has been altered. The Background Layer is still the same.
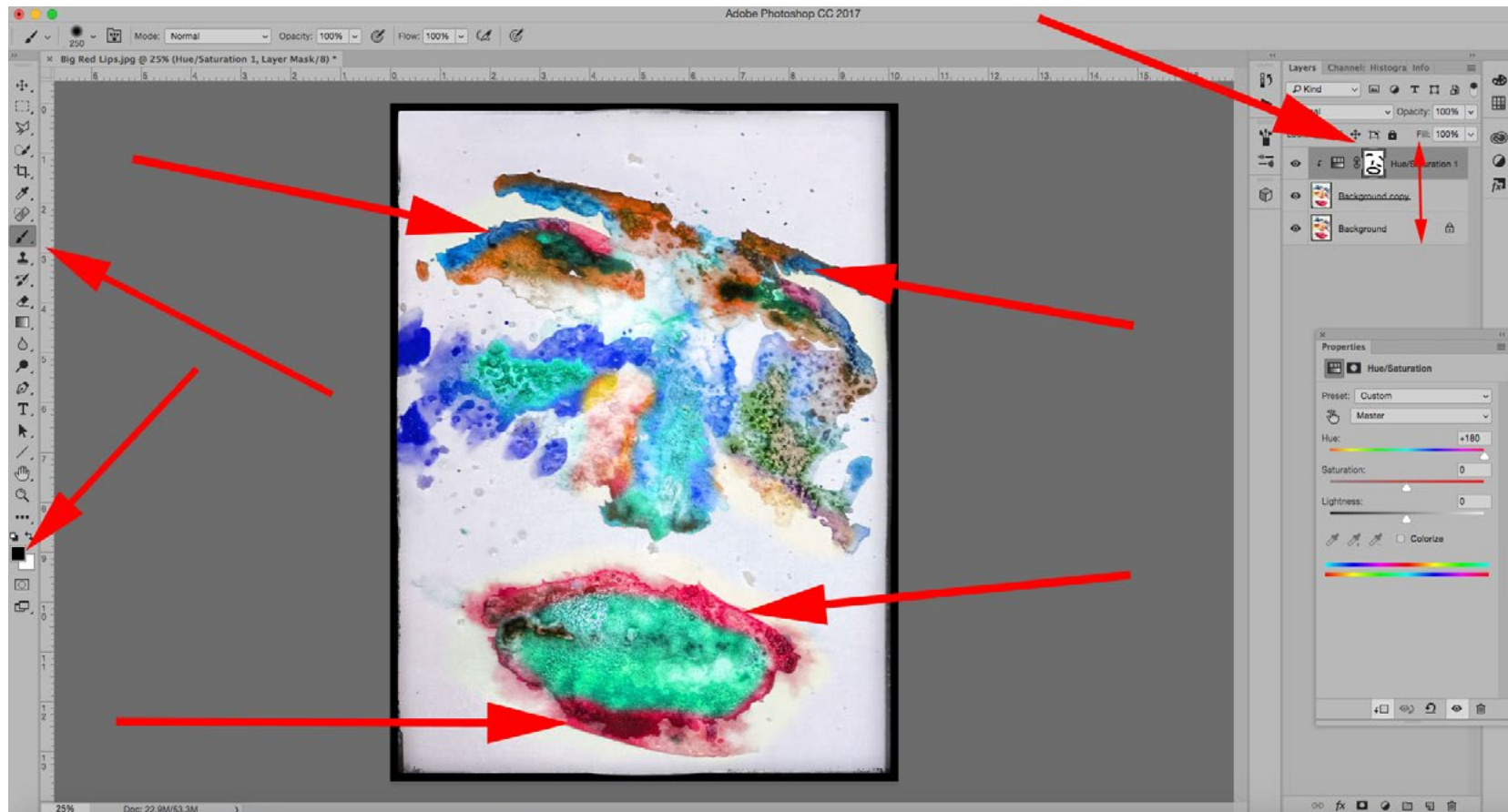
Here is where the Clipping Path comes into play.

Image 027 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

1. I selected the white "Reveal All" mask box on the Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer (far upper-right arrow in Image 027).

2. I selected the "Paint Brush" in the "Tool Box" running down the left side of my workspace.

3. I made sure that the color "Black" was selected and the opacity for my painted color was set to 100%.

4. I began to paint directly on my "Preview Image." My "Painting" is not altering the image itself; it's altering the mask. Notice the black marks that have now appeared in the white Reveal All mask on the Adjustment Layer.

5. The black marks on the mask now **reveal** the lower layer at the top of the stack. The Clipping mask, in the Adjustment Layer, has allowed me to alter **just** the layer it was clipped to, and then blend the Background Layer through to the top of the stack. My final image will be part of the Background Layer and part of the Background Copy Layer.
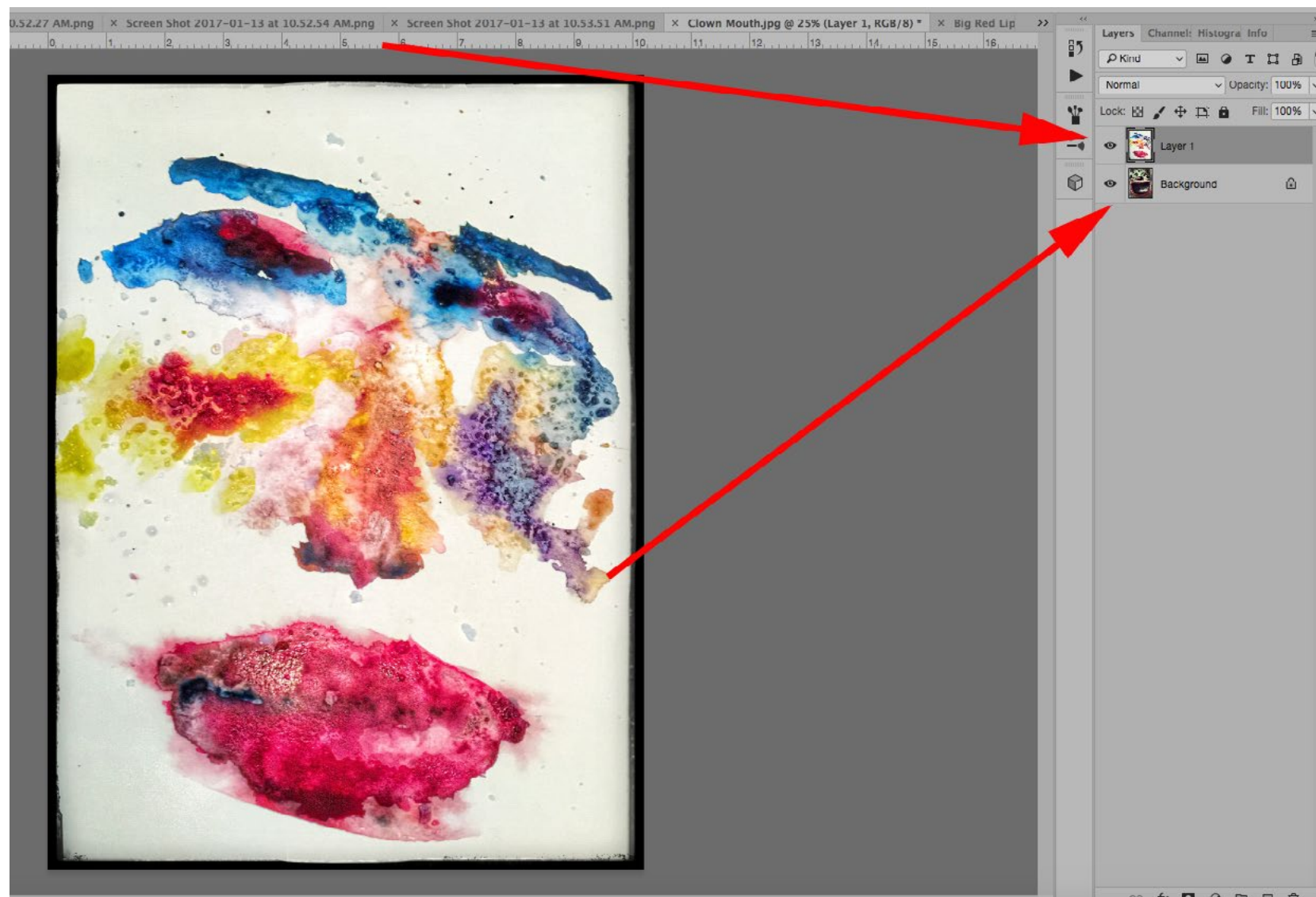
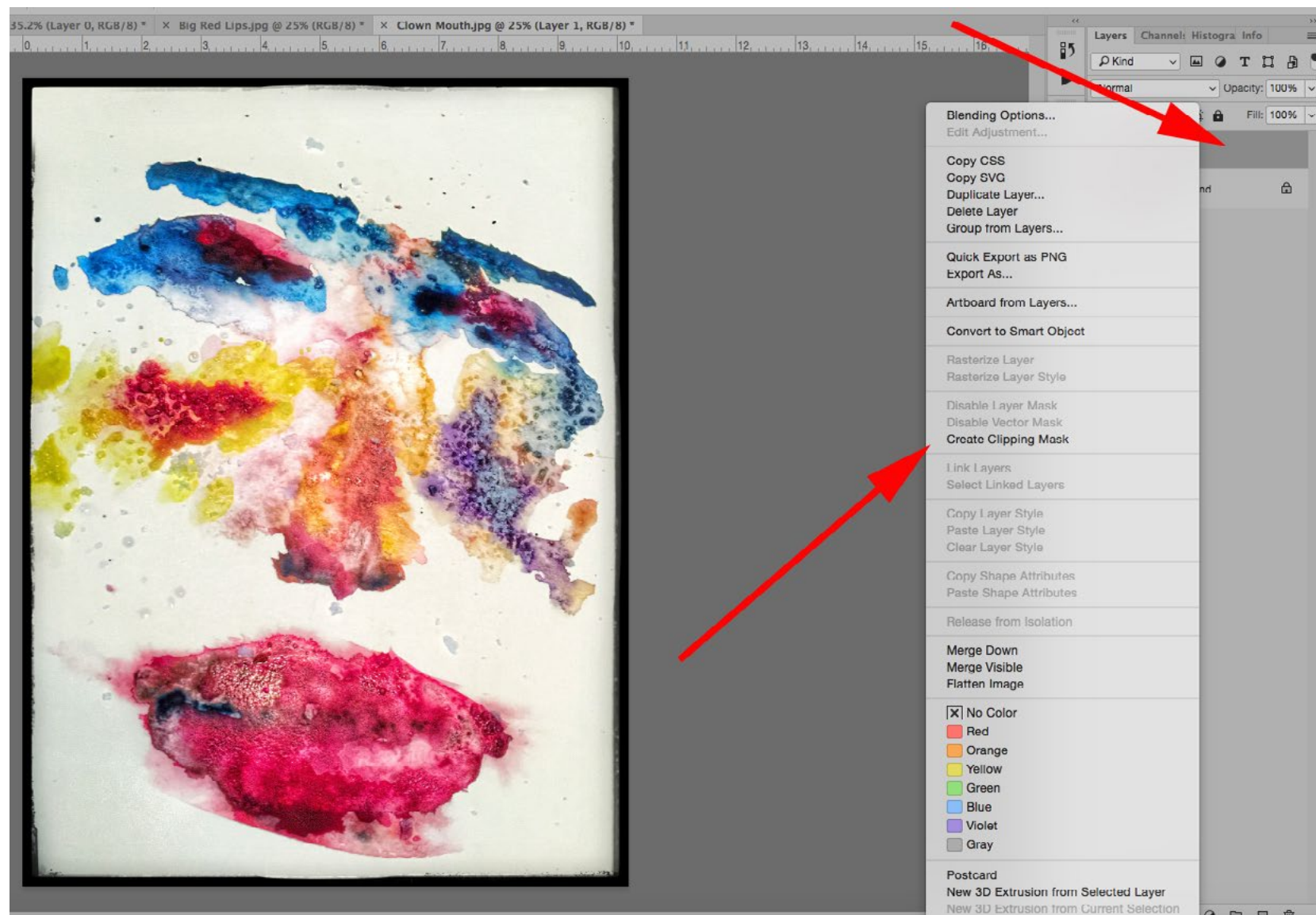Image 028 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

What would happen if I had set the opacity of my paintbrush to 50%? Only a portion of the background layer would have been revealed through to the top of the stack. What portion would have been revealed? 50%!

The use of a Clipping Path is an easy way to create complex montage photographs.

What if you want to use a "Clipping Path Mask" without an Adjustment Layer? You can do that too. This is a great way to mix several different photographs.

In Image 028, you can see that I selected my watercolor image and pasted it into a new layer on a clown face photograph that I took at the State Fair. The clown face is the Background Layer and the watercolor painting is Layer 1.

Image 029 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I highlighted Layer 1 and then did a right-click. The pop-up menu appeared, and I selected "Create Clipping Mask."
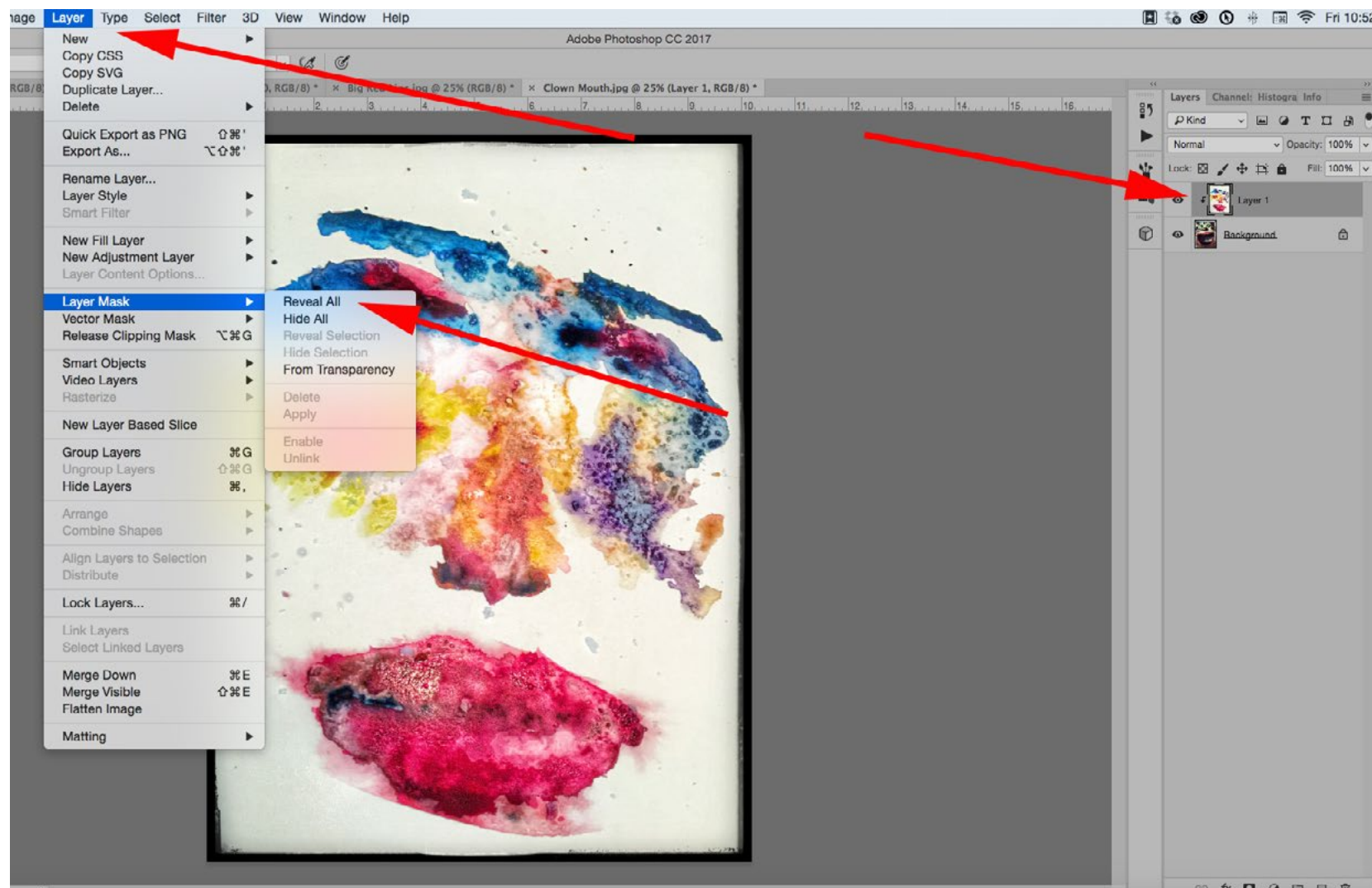
Image 030 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Look at the Layers Palette in Image 030. You can see that a downward-pointing arrow has appeared on Layer 1. This indicates that the layer has been clipped to the layer below it.

However, we don't have a mask yet. We have to create the mask (see Image 030).

1. Make sure Layer 1 is selected.

2. Go to the Layer dropdown menu at the top of the workspace and select it.

3. Select Layer Mask.
   3.1 If we select Reveal All, a white box will appear in Layer 1, and we would paint the color black onto it to reveal the layer below.
   3.2 If we select Hide All, a black box will appear in Layer 1, and the image on Layer 1 will become invisible, fully revealing the Background layer. We would paint the color white onto the mask to conceal portions of the Background layer below it.
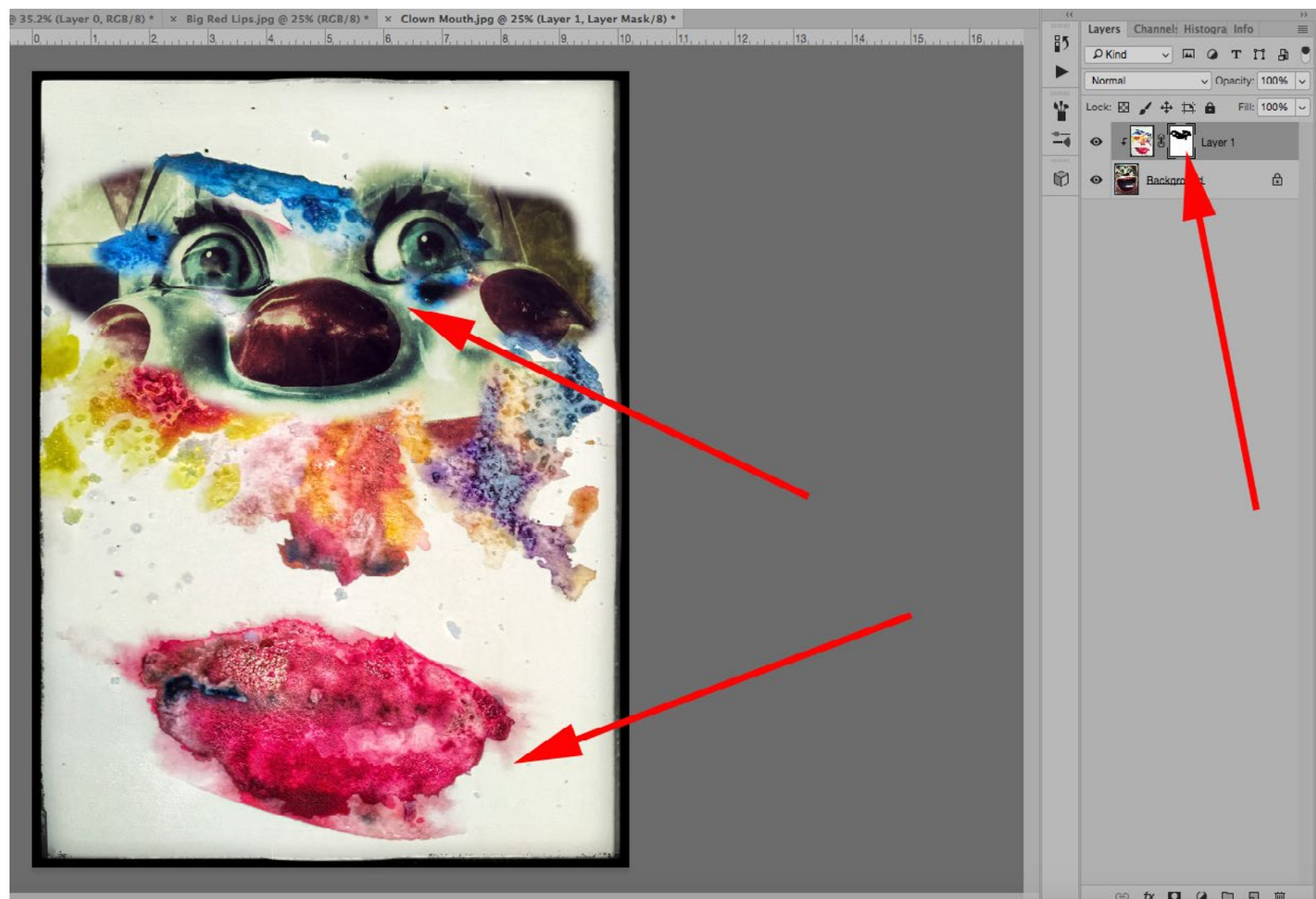
Image 031 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I chose the Reveal All layer mask. I then selected my paintbrush. I made sure that the color black was selected in my color palette, and then I double checked that the "right side" mask box was selected. I then began to paint on the Preview Image revealing the Background layer through Layer 1 at the top of the stack.

Why would we want to create a Clipping Path with layer masks? It allows us to create complex blending of multiple photographs on various layers.

Practice Exercise: Go ahead and try it. Open a photograph and then add four other photographs as new layers above the Background layer. On Layer 1, create a Reveal All layer mask. On Layer 2, create a Hide All layer mask. On Layer 3, create a Reveal All layer mask. On Layer 4, create a Hide All layer mask. Now, play around with painting on the various masks while clipping them and unclipping them. This will help you to see the possibilities of layer masking and clipping paths.
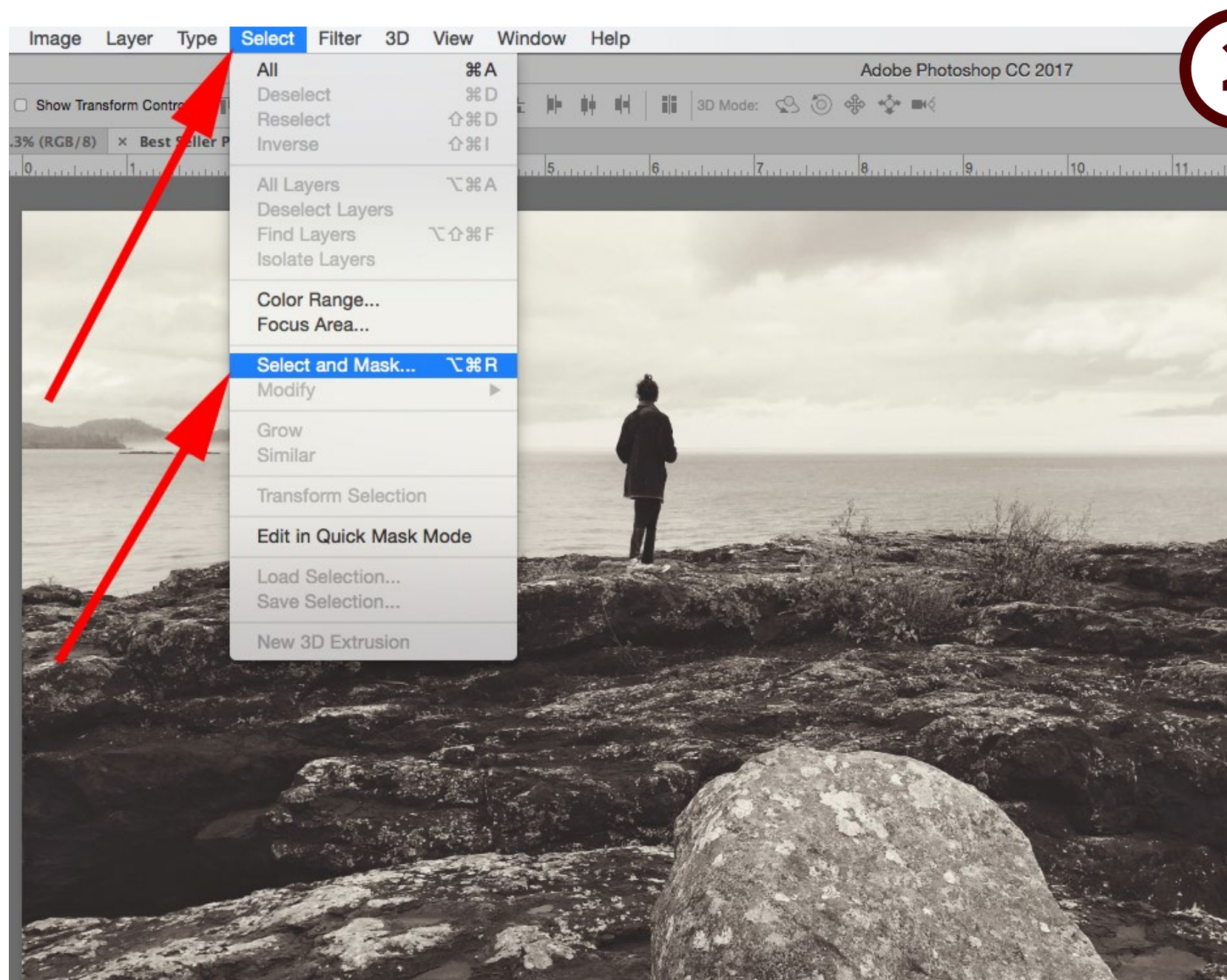
Image 032 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

2 Select and Mask (Photoshop CC 15.5 and Above)

The "Select and Mask" technique replaced the "Refine Edge" tool that was in earlier versions of Photoshop. (I believe the Refine Edge feature was introduced in CS6.)

I'm currently using Photoshop CC 2017.0.1.

Yes, I have the subscription. I believe that the subscription feature is a real value.

I know some photographers don't like the idea of the subscription service and therefore have older versions of Photoshop.

The "Select and Mask" technique that I'm going to cover here is somewhat similar to the "Refine Edge" tool of earlier versions. So, even if your copy of Photoshop is as old as CS6, you should still receive some benefit from this section.
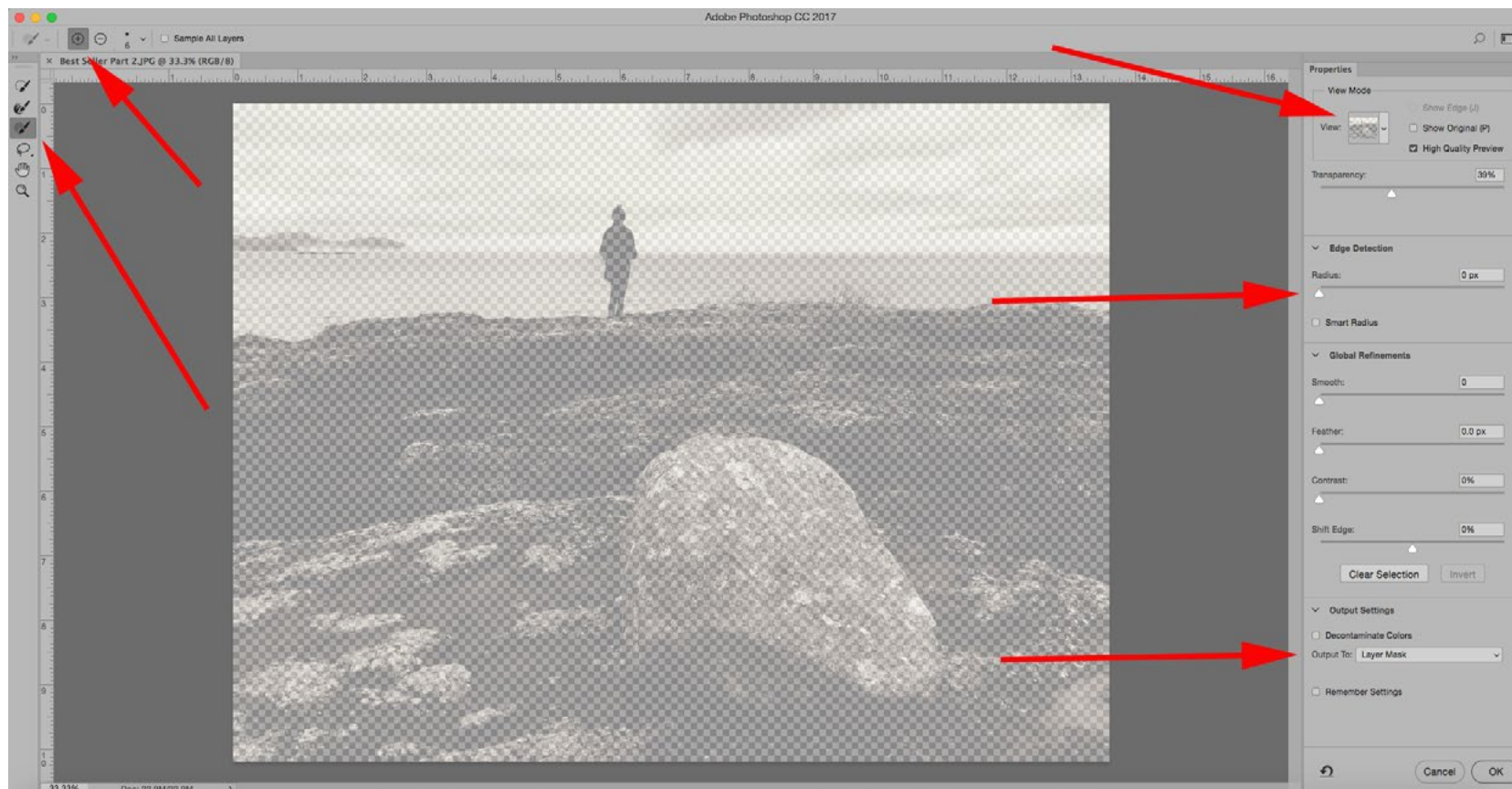
Image 033 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

There are several ways to get to the "Select and Mask" workspace. One method is to select one of the selection tools in the toolbox, such as: the Elliptical Marquee Tool, the Polygonal Lasso Tool, the Magic Wand, or the Quick Selection Tool. The method that I am going to use here in the guide is to go and use the "Select" dropdown menu. I will then click the "Select and Mask" option (see Image 032).

The "Select and Mask" workspace window will open. Look at the upper two left-facing arrows in Image 033. The default settings are the "Brush Tool" and the "+" setting.

Directly above the Brush Tool you will find the "Refine Edge Brush Tool" and the "Quick Selection Tool."

The upper-right arrow (Image 033) shows the "Viewing Mode."

The right-facing middle arrow shows the "Edge Detection" option, and the lower right-facing arrow indicates your output options.
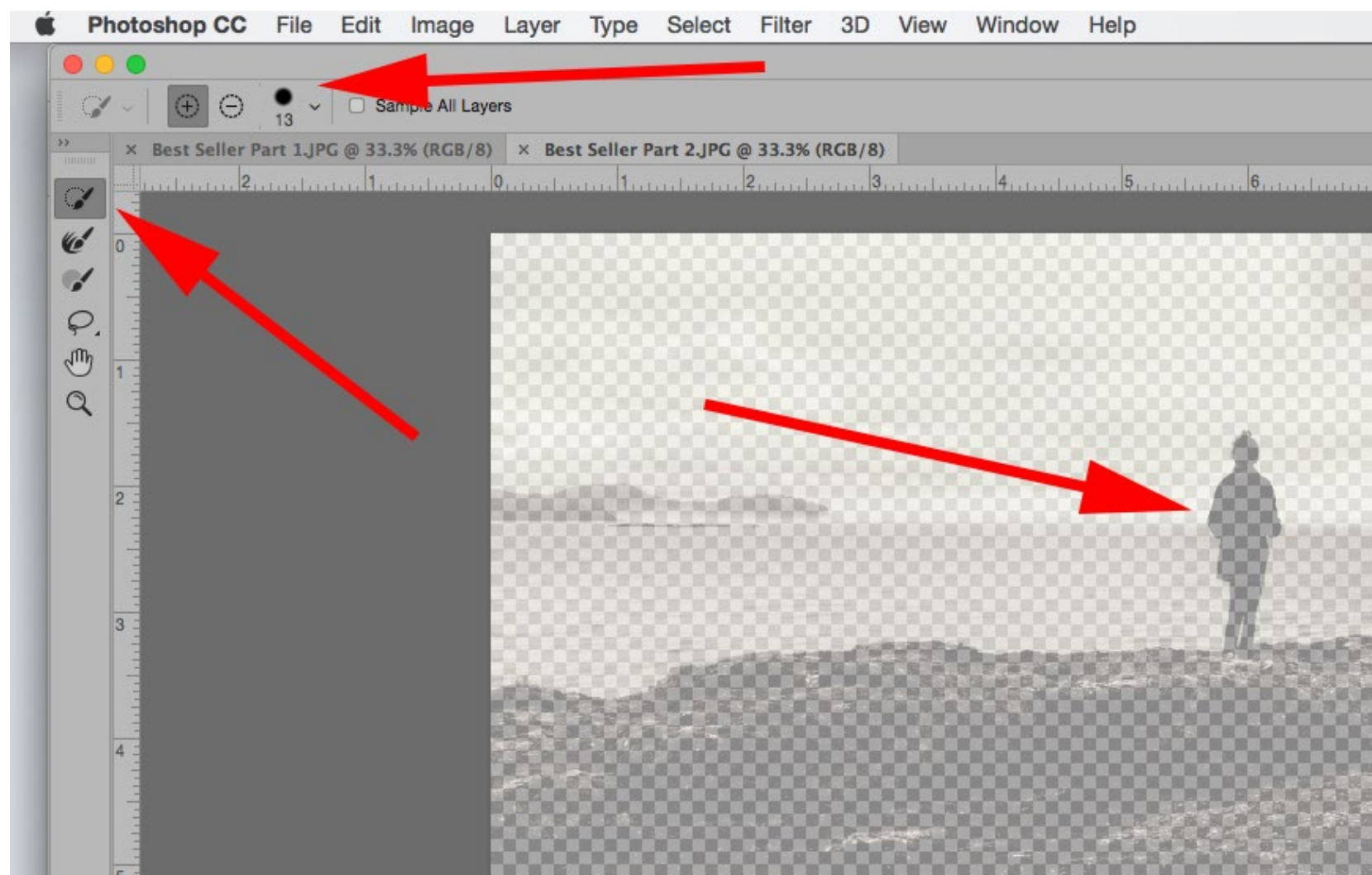
Image 034 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

As you begin to explore this powerful tool in Photoshop, these tools will be your primary concern.

You will want to start the selection process with the tool of your choice. I usually start with the Quick Selection Tool, and then I refine my selection using the Brush Tool or the Edge Detection Tool. **Remember: all of this is for the purpose of creating a mask that leaves no artifacts to be found in our finished photograph.**

AZ **Terminology:** An artifact, as relates to digital photographic editing, is an undesirable visible defect.

The very top left-facing arrow, in Image 034, shows you that the brush tools are adjustable, just like everywhere else in Photoshop.
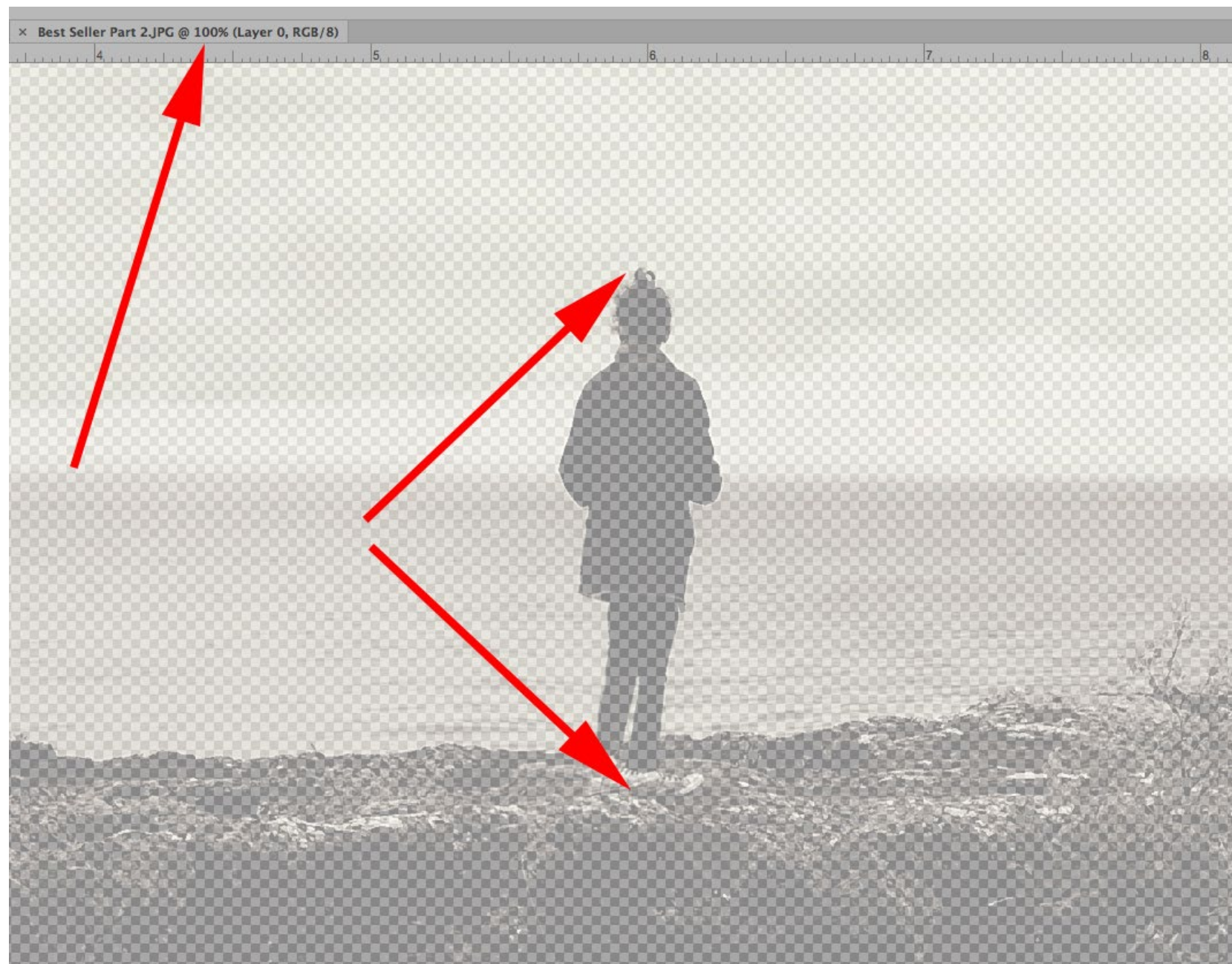
Best Seller Part 2.JPG @ 100% (Layer 0, RGB/8)

When you begin to create the mask, you want to set the "View Magnification" at the highest possible setting, while not cutting off any of the object that you wish to mask.

In this case, as you can see in Image 035, a 100% magnification gave me a full body view of my subject that I wish to mask.

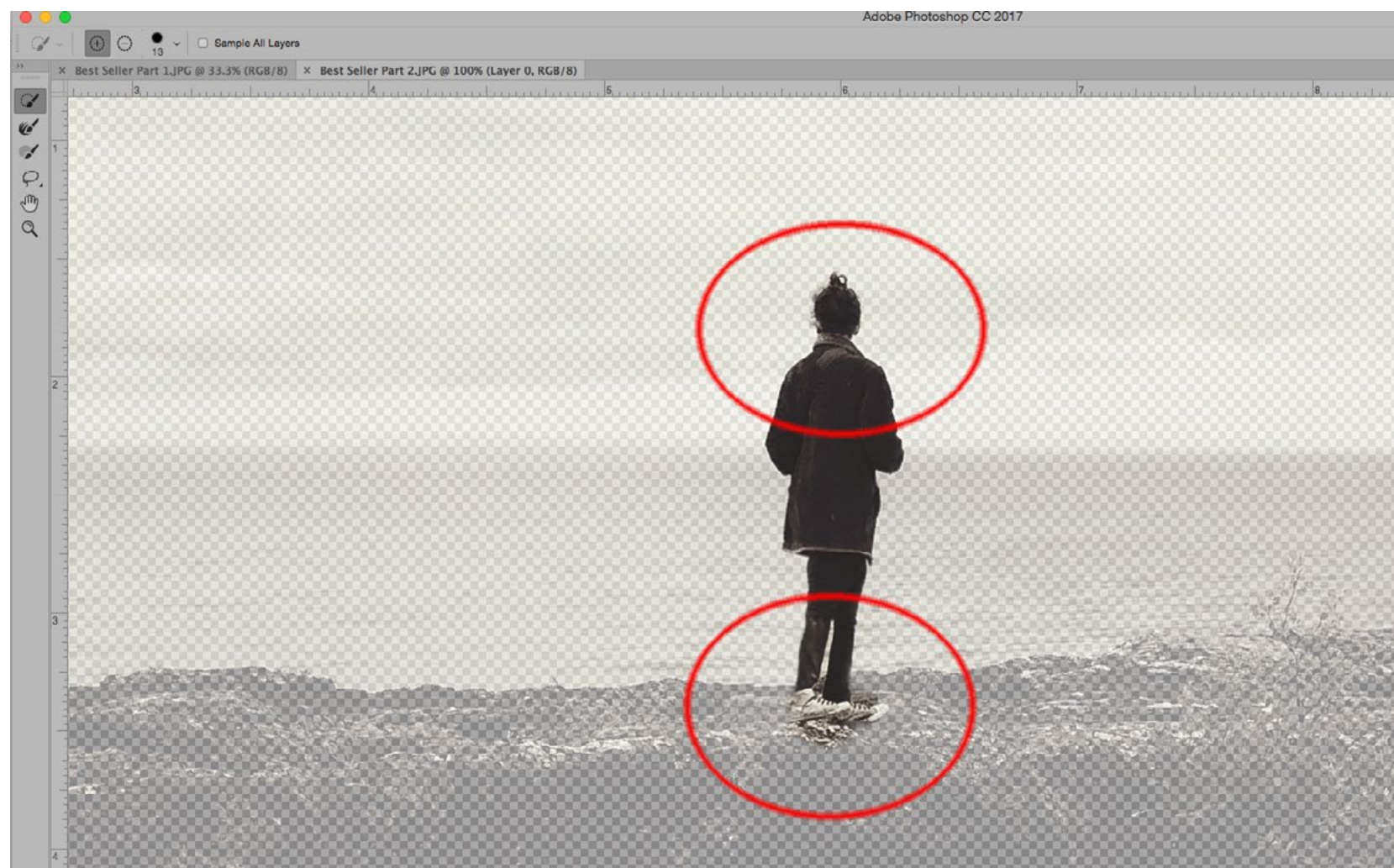Image 035 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Image 036 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I will use the "Quick Selection Tool." Take notice that the "+" icon is highlighted. This is because I'm creating, or adding, to a mask. If I wanted to subtract from the mask, I would select the "-" icon.

◈ **Key Lesson:** If you make a selection in Photoshop and then open the "Select and Mask" tool, there will already be a mask in place. The area outside your initial selection will be inside the mask, and the area inside your initial selection will be outside the mask. If you open "Select and Mask" without first making a selection within Photoshop, the program will create a default Hide All mask. For example, in Image 036, I opened that photograph without any prior selection from within Photoshop. I then used the Quick Selection tool to "grab my model." Was I adding to the mask, or removing from the mask, when I grabbed her with the Quick Selection tool? I was removing her from the mask.

Image 037 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

The Quick Selection Tool did a very good job (Image 036). I have two areas to clean up: her feet and her hair (red circles).

🛠️ **Practice Exercise:** Open a photograph in the "Select and Mask" tool. Do not make a prior selection in Photoshop. The default viewing mode is "Onion Skin." Change it to "Overlay." What do you see? Choose the "Quick Selection" tool and make sure the "+" brush is selected. Start painting on the Preview Image. What happens? At this point, are you adding or removing from the mask?

To clean up the feet, I will select the Brush Tool and the "-" icon. (See the two upper left-facing arrows in Image 037.)

I'm increasing my magnification to 300% to get a good view of what is happening around the feet. The three arrows pointing around the feet and legs indicate the areas that needed cleaning up.
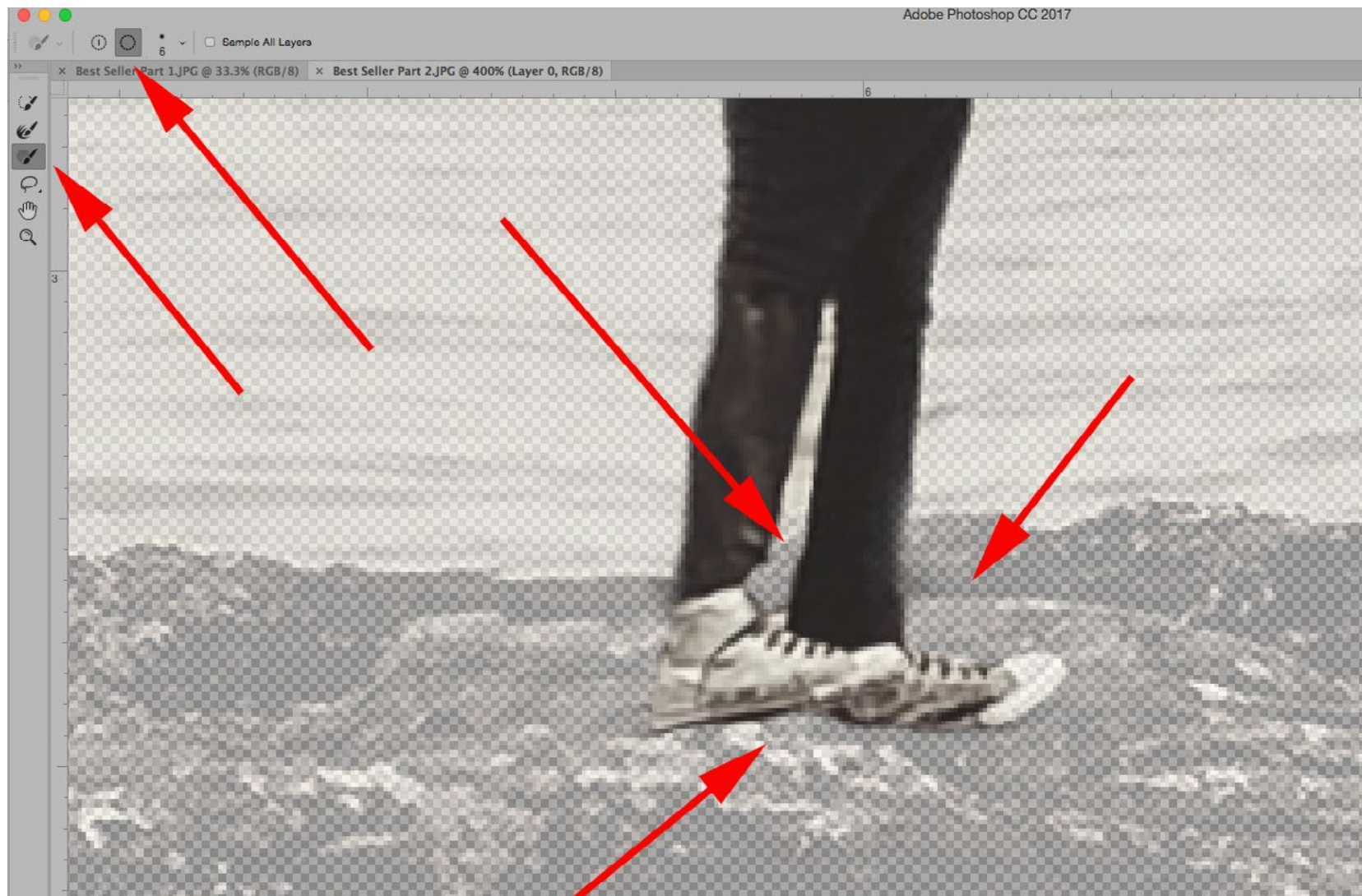
Image 038 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

In Image 038, you can see how the mask has been improved. The unwanted areas have been masked out. (I was adding to the mask.) However, I bled over into the leg on the right (look closely just above the ankle). This is simple to fix. Click on the "+" icon. Make the Brush Tool a little smaller and paint the leg back in. (I removed that little piece of the leg from the mask.)
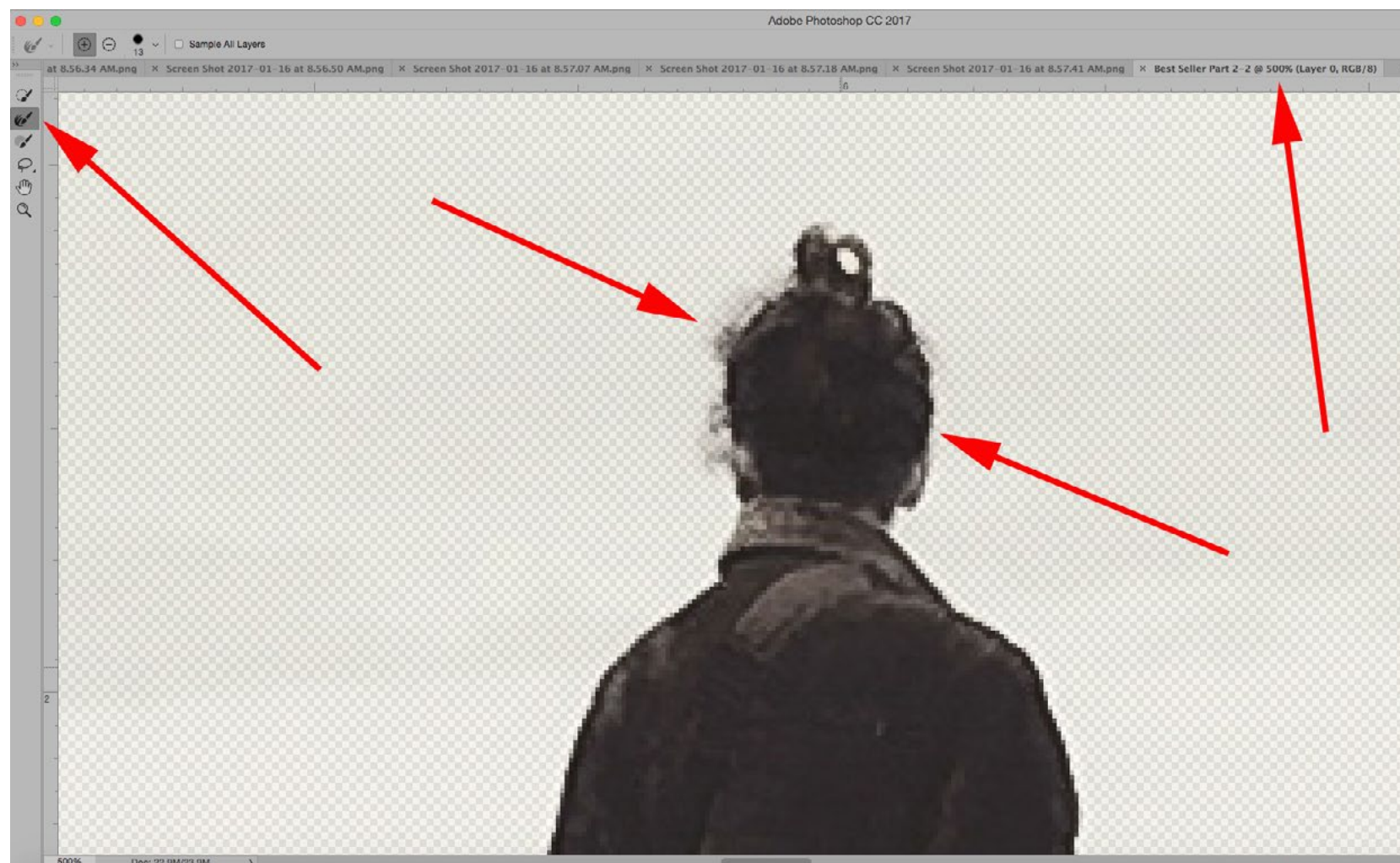
Image 039 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

In Image 039, I have now selected the "Refine Edge Brush Tool." This tool has one main purpose, and that is to mask difficult areas like hair or foliage. I dragged the tool around her head, while holding down on the left-click button of my mouse. You can see how perfectly it has selected the fine wispy hairs.
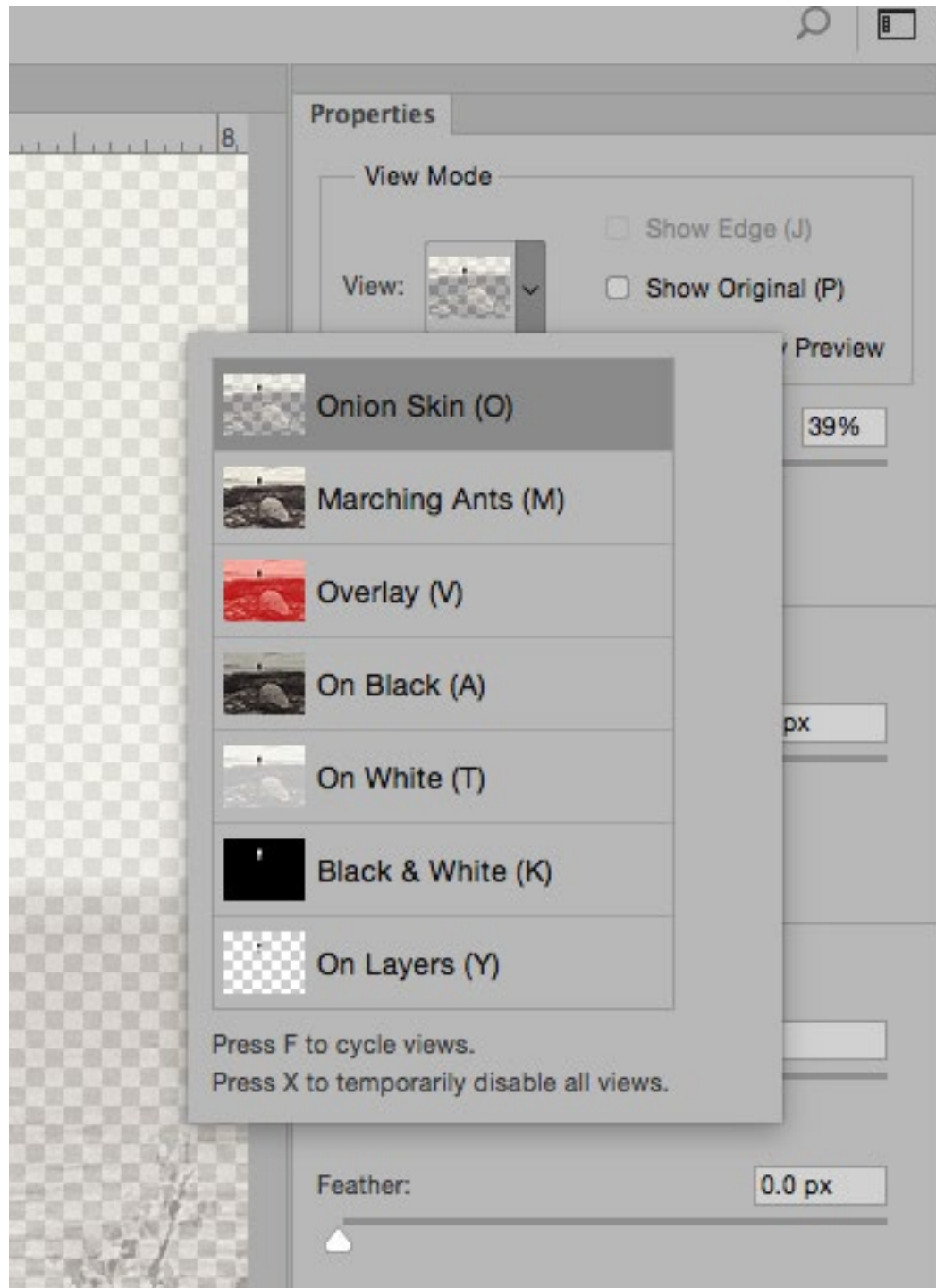
Image 040 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

In the "View Mode" box, located at the upper-right of the workspace, there are several options for you to view the mask that you've created. Play around with it to determine which view you like the best. I like the "Onion Skin" view and the "Overlay" view. I use these two view modes 99% of the time.

When using the Onion Skin view, you can slide the "Transparency" slider left and right. Doing so gives you a very accurate view of how your mask is going to be created when you click the "OK" radio button.
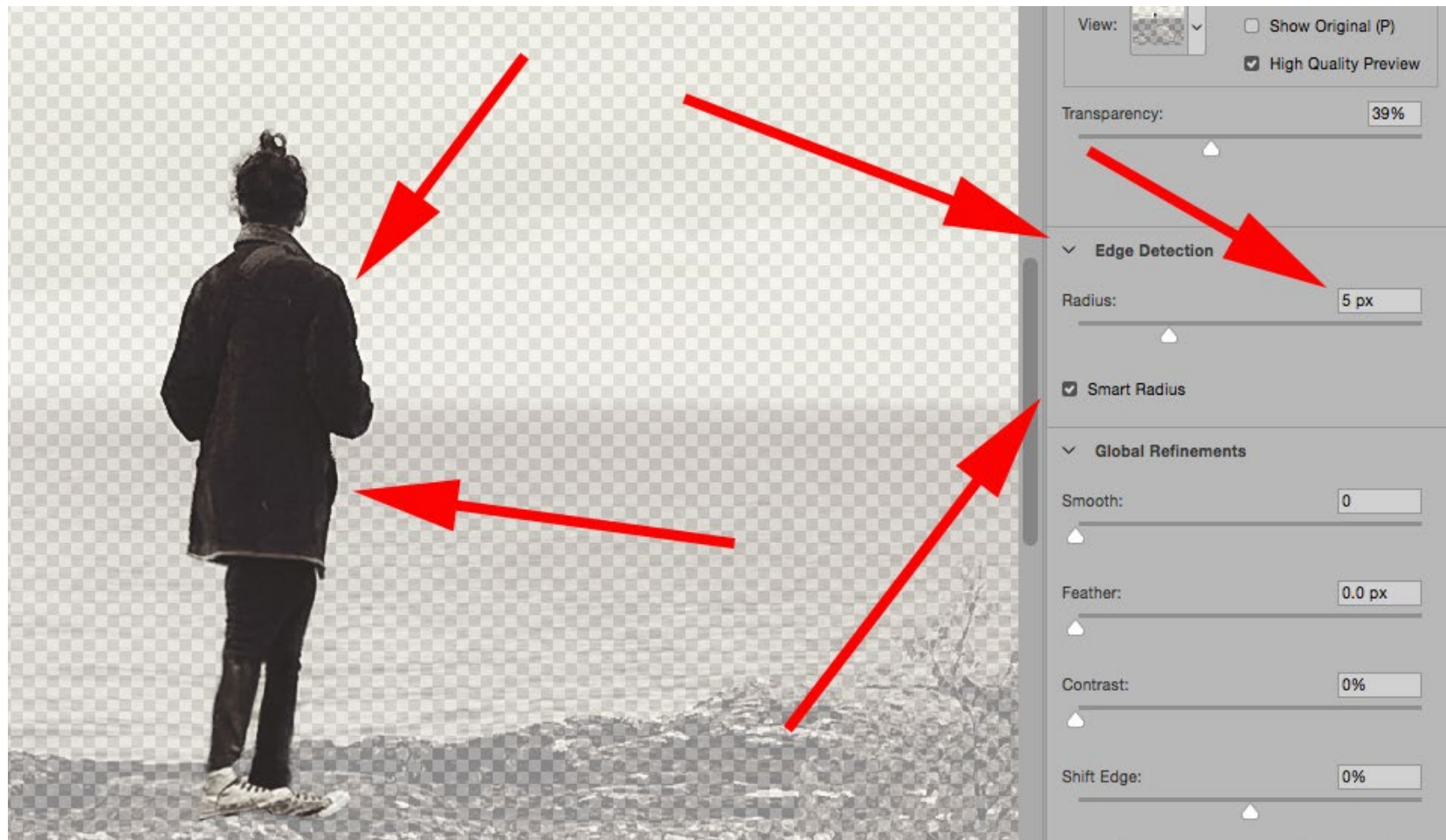
Image 041 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

"Edge Detection" helps the software to determine how to smooth out the edges of your mask. I find that clicking the "Smart Radius" option, and selecting 5 pixels (Image 041), works pretty good most of the time. I rarely have to touch the "Global Refinements." If you decide to play around with it, it's simply another method of refining all of the edges of the mask.
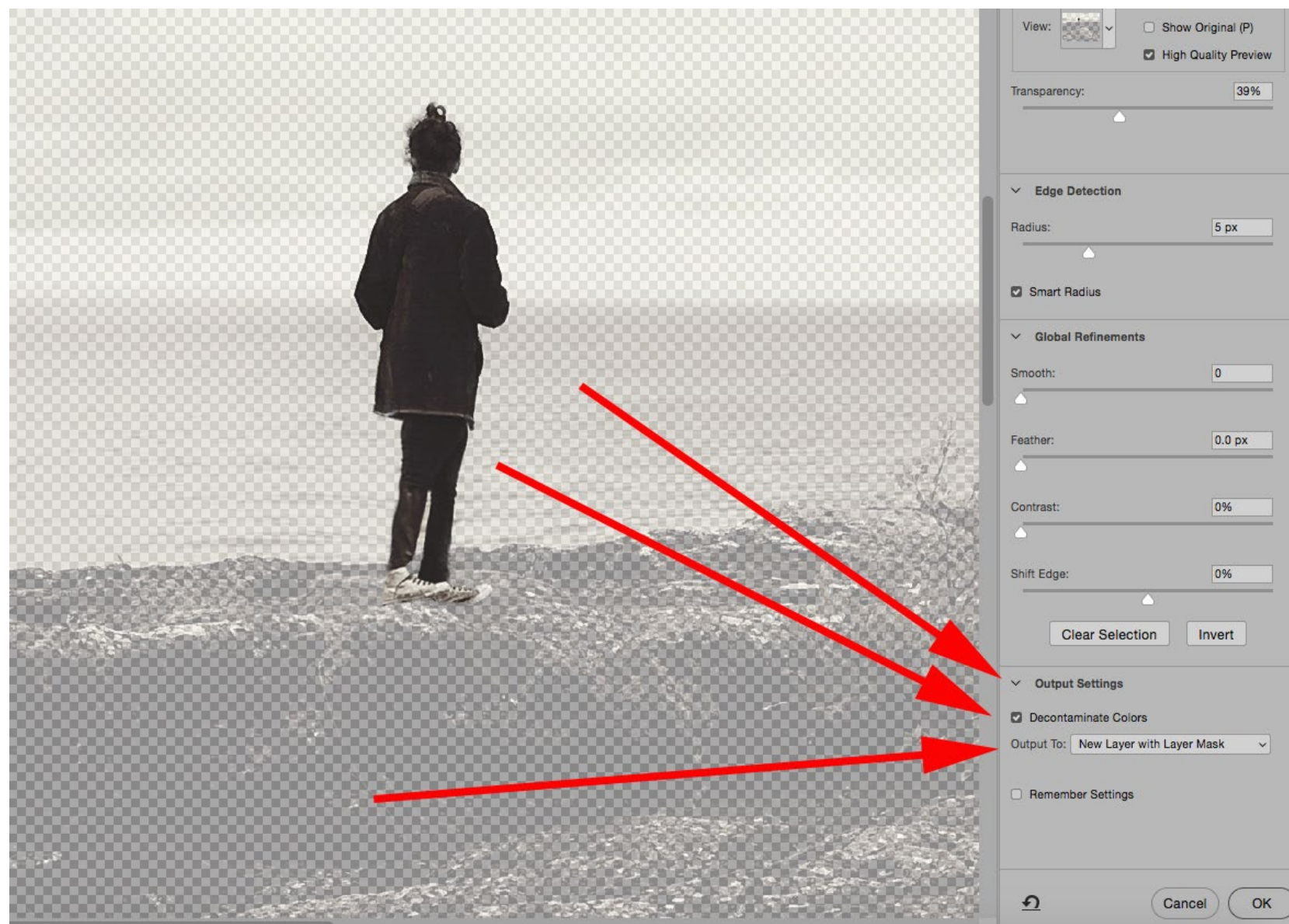
Image 042 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

After you've created the mask, you have to send it back to Photoshop. At this point, you should look at the "Output Settings" (Image 042). I always click "Decontaminate Colors." When creating a mask, it's difficult to get every last little pixel. In some photographs, it won't matter. However, in photographs where the selection occurs between two vastly different colors, there will often be color bleed. This is an artifact that shows up as a halo around your selection. The Decontaminate Colors option works to eliminate this 99% of the time.

I always "Output To:" **New Layer with Layer Mask**.

There are other options, which are fine too. I use this option because it allows me to continue to work with the mask, and the selected area of the photograph, within Photoshop should I choose to.
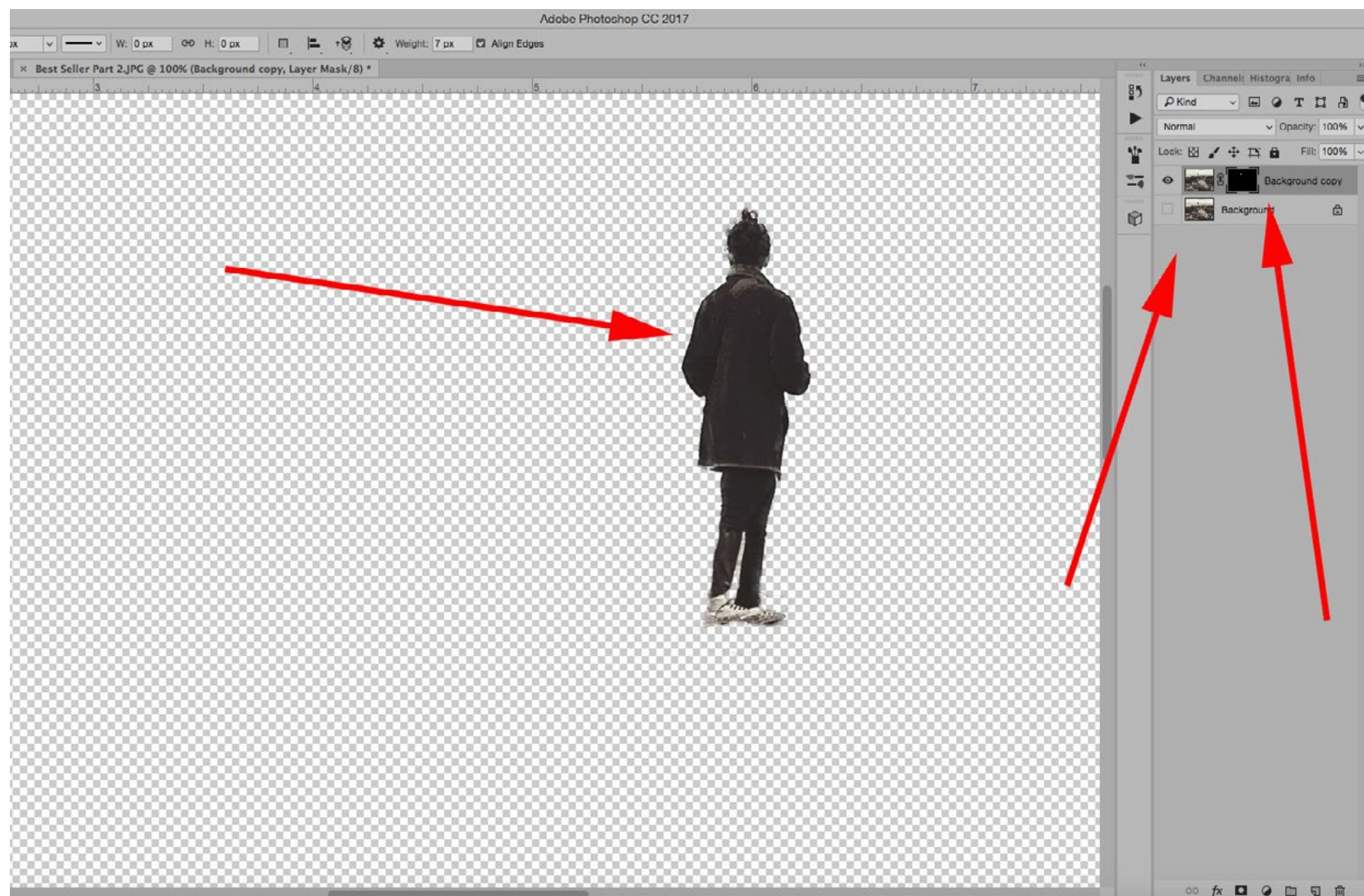
Image 043 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Let's step through it.

- When we opened the Select and Mask tool (without a prior selection) it automatically created a Hide All mask that hid everything in the picture.

- We used the Quick Selection tool to select the woman.

- Our selection of the woman removed her from the Hide All mask.

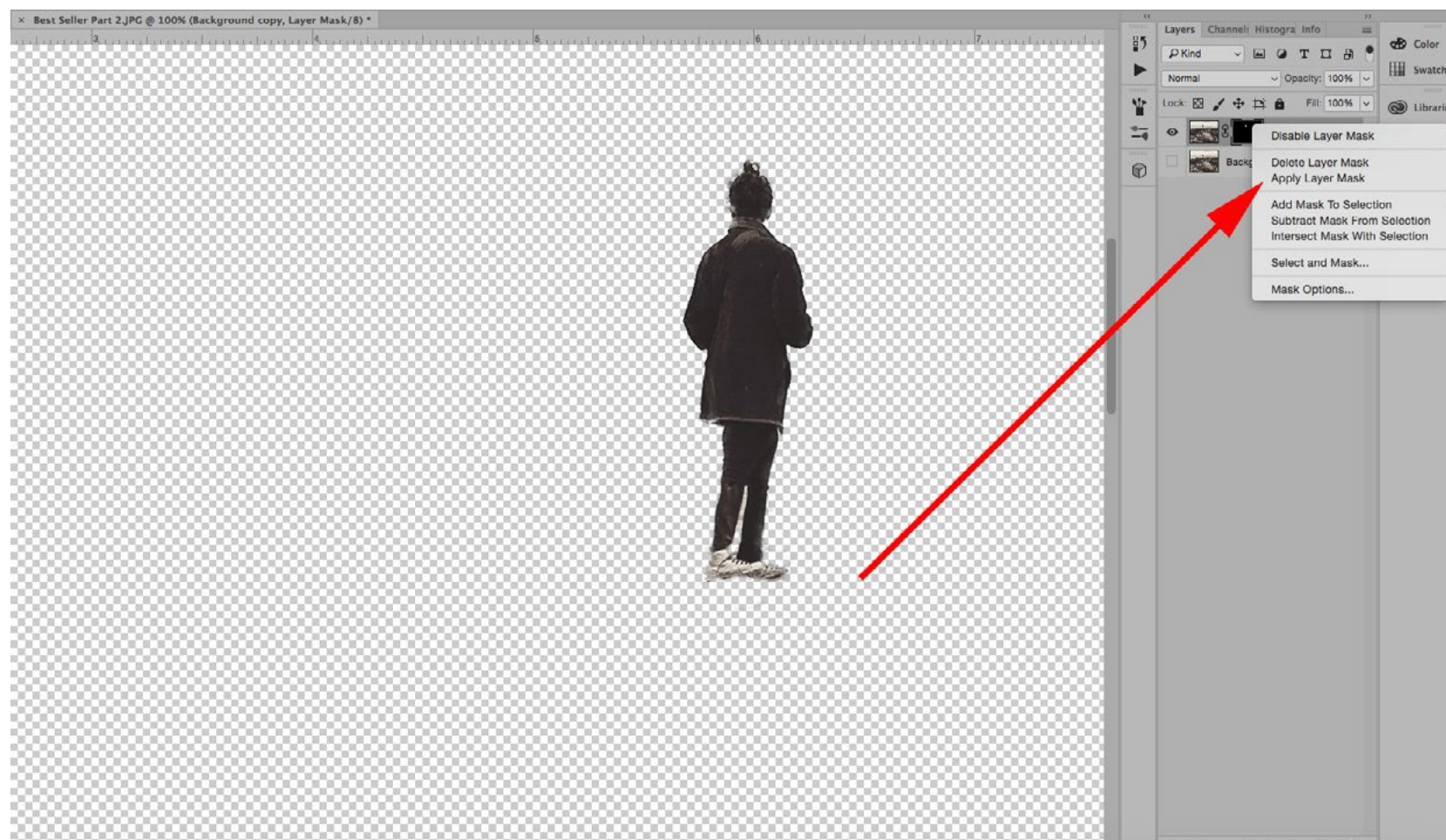- We clicked "OK" and went back to Photoshop.

Image 044 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

- Because it was a Hide All mask, everything that was "Under" the mask has disappeared from the Preview Image. We only see the woman, whom we had removed from the mask.

- However, the rest of the image is still there. It is simply hidden by the Hide All mask.

Look at the Layers Palette (Image 043). If I want to take my selection (the woman), copy her and paste her into another photograph, which is what I did to create my bestselling stock photograph. Am I ready to do that?

No, because what I'm seeing is a "mask" and not a "selection." In order to accomplish that task, I must first place my cursor over the mask icon and right-click. Then, I must select "**Apply Layer Mask.**" Before I complete this step, I must make sure that I'm done with any adjustments to the mask, because once I apply it, the mask can no longer be edited.
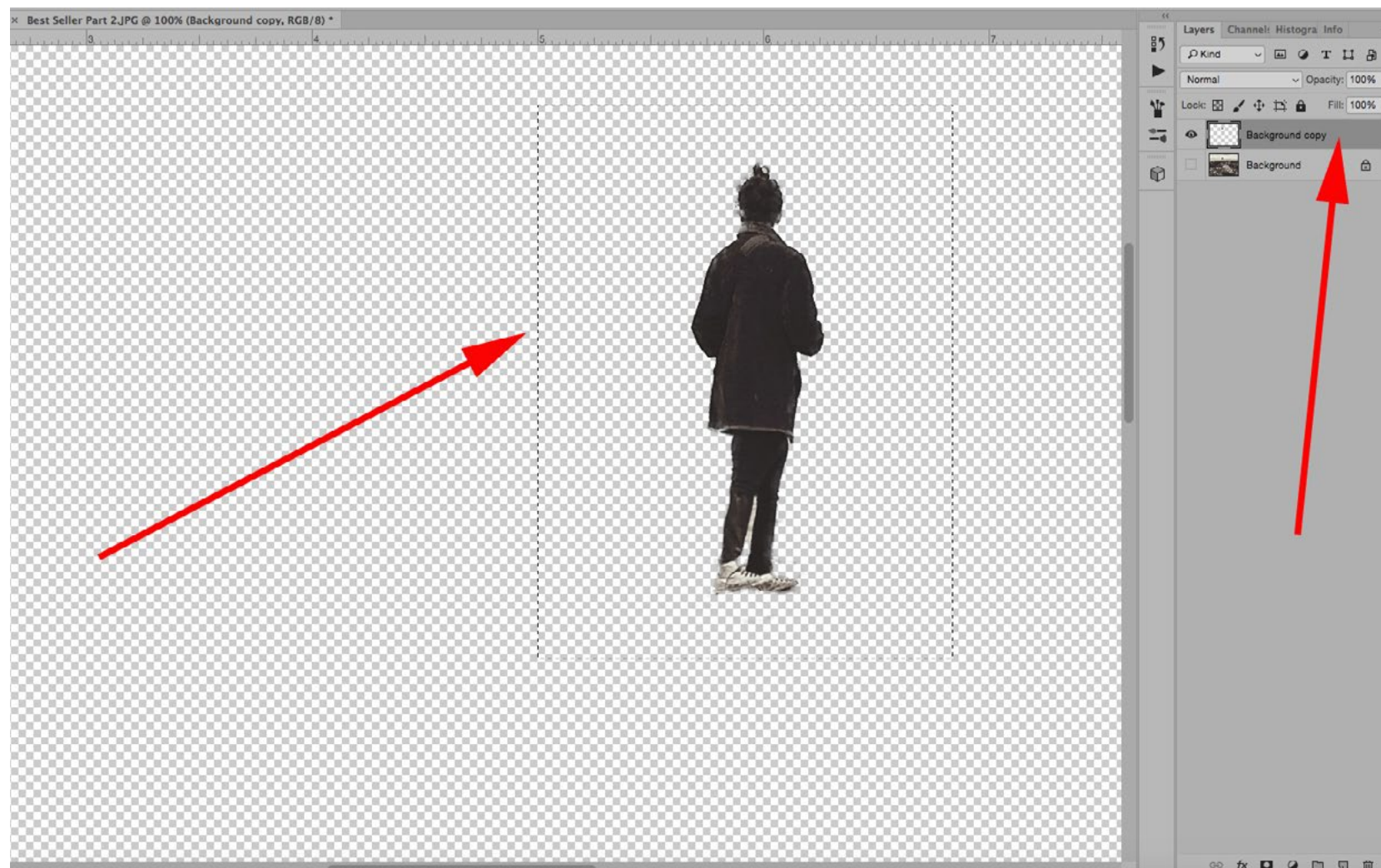
Image 045 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Look at Image 045. I've applied the mask to the Background Copy on Layer 2. What do you see in the remaining preview window? You see just the selected portion of the photograph. The mask, when applied, has now removed the rest of the photograph. Look at how the Background copy layer has changed in Image 045. The right-sided mask box is gone, and the left-sided image box has changed, indicating that only the woman is left on that layer.

Now, if I want to move the woman from this photograph to another photograph, I simply, and easily, select her with the Rectangular Marquee tool. I then perform a "Copy" function. I will then select the window of the receiving photograph and paste her into it.

Image 046 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Congratulations! You've just learned a **major step** toward creating unbelievably awesome photographs. Masking is a powerful tool. Now, as you begin moving things around in your photographs, you must really put your artist's cap on. Otherwise, everyone will know what you're up to! In Image 046, my pasted model is way out of perspective to the landscape around her. If I were to leave it that way, it would be an obvious artifact.

> ◈ **Key Lesson:** Hopefully, you have already started to make this connection. Masking, selecting, and any kind of a visible overlay are closely entwined. A mask is often being generated, whether you are creating the mask yourself or Photoshop is doing it for you in the background. It was my goal, right from the start of this guide, to give you not only enough knowledge to create your own masks, but also to recognize when masking is occurring in the background. It can be confusing to all of a sudden see a rubylith red color all over your image and you don't know why.
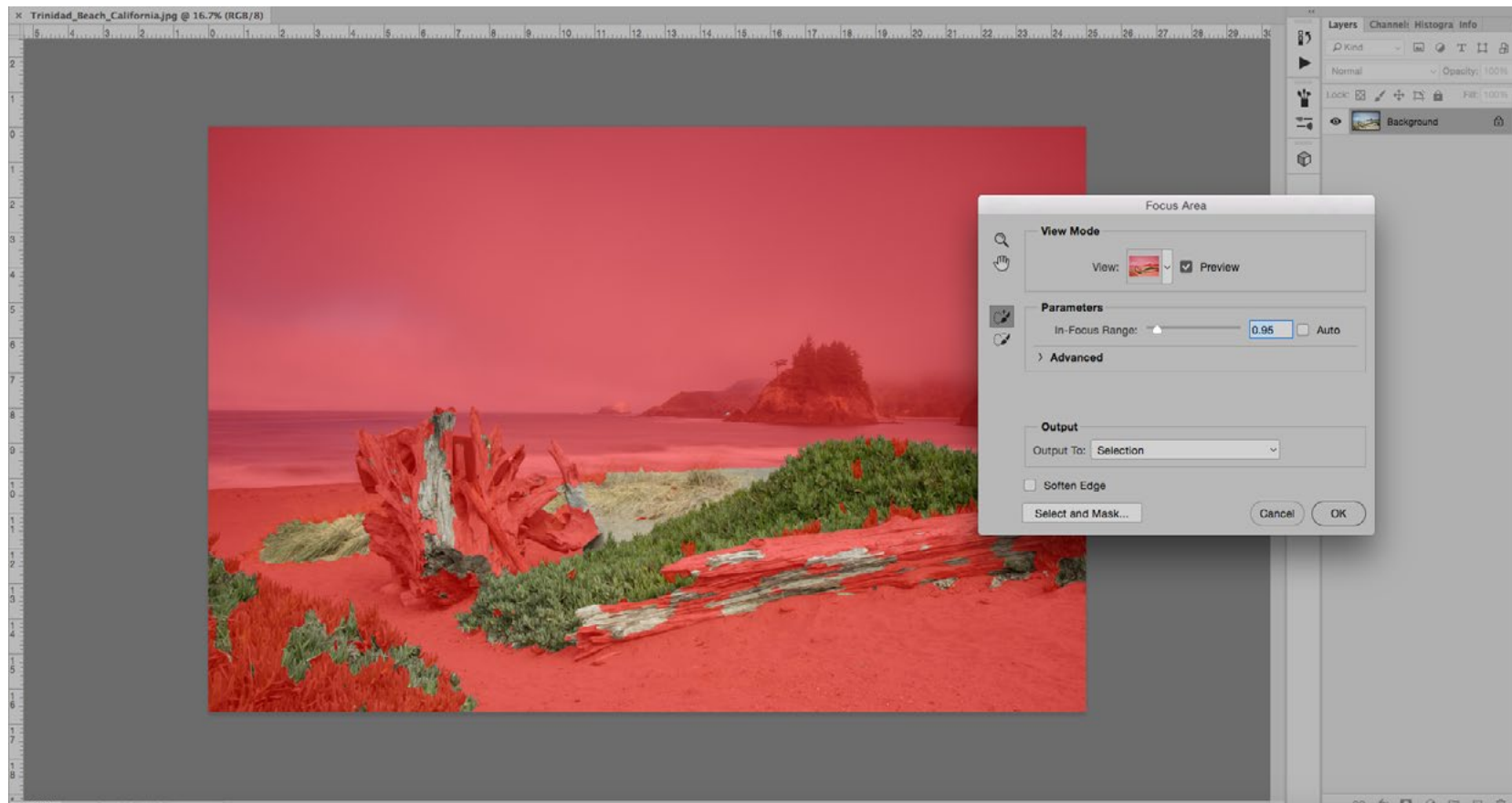
Image 047 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I'm not going to cover every possible option where a mask is being created; it would take too long. We talked about the Graduated Filter and the Radial Filter – both of which are located in the ACR window. They were, in effect, automatically creating a mask.

Masking and the selection of parts of an image go hand in hand.

"Color Range" and "Focus Area" are tools located in the "Selection" dropdown menu at the top of the Photoshop workspace window.

They each use a method to select a portion of a photograph, and then create a mask, based on certain parameters.

The "Focus Area" tool makes this determination based on sharp versus fuzzy pixels. The "Color Range" tool makes this determination based on a range of colors.
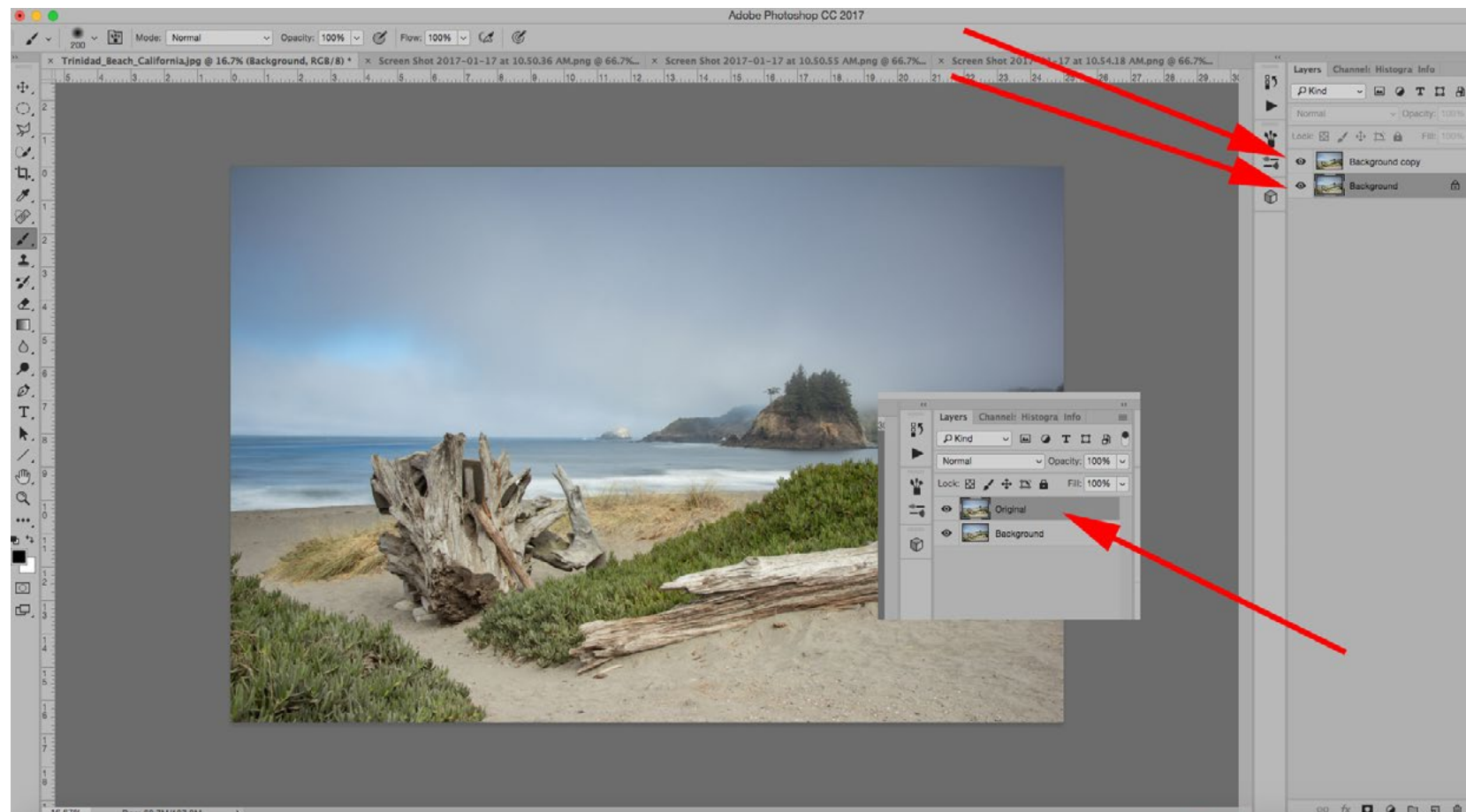
Image 048 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I must be honest: I don't use these tools very often. However, you should know about them, play with them, and most importantly understand how they create a mask, and then ultimately, you must decide if they work for you!

◈ **Key Lesson:** In Photoshop, you have the advantage of layers. When you begin masking, and making large-scale alterations, it's a good idea to create a layer copy of your original photographic file before you begin.

1. Select the Background layer by highlighting it.

2. Right-click on the Background layer.

3. Select Duplicate layer.

4. You can leave it as "Background copy" or double click on the words 'Background copy' and change it to "Original." (This is what I like to do so that I don't get confused down the line as to why that layer is there.)

5. Make sure that the "Background" layer is selected, and that the "Background copy" or "Original" layer visibility is turned off. (You turn the visibility on and off by clicking the "Eyeball" icon. Creating this "Original" layer is important, so that any changes that you make, or layers that you add, build from the bottom up, keeping that Original layer intact at the top of the stack. You must turn off the Original layer visibility so that it doesn't obscure your masking or edits from the Preview Window.
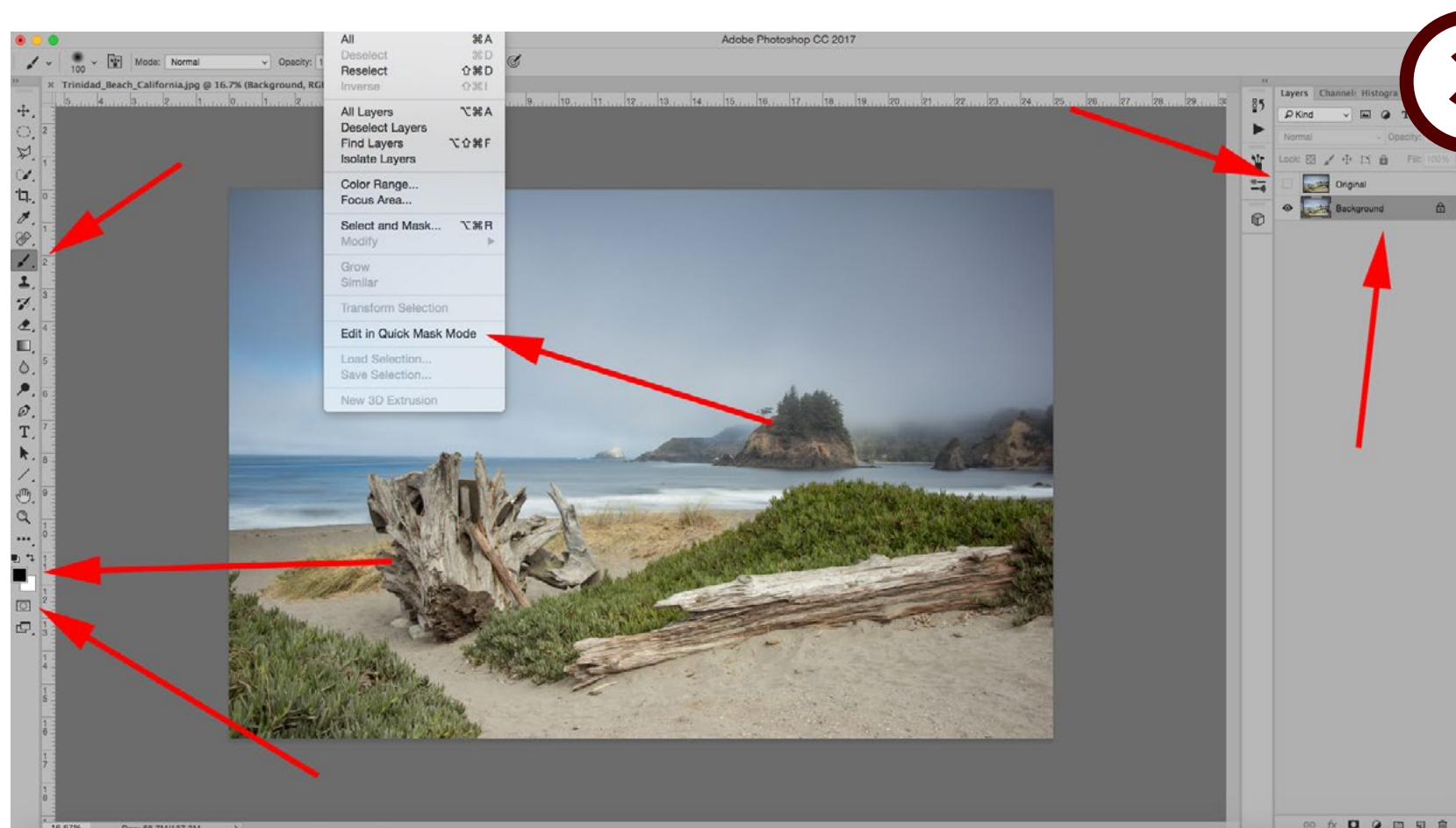
Image 049 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Quick Mask Mode

Quick Mask Mode has been a tool located within Photoshop for many years. It dates all the way back to version CS5 in 2010. For years, it was my main tool for creating masks within Photoshop. I still tend to use it; although, the "Select and Mask" tool has made it a little bit outdated.

However, since it is still included in Photoshop, I'm going to show you how to use it.

When you are going to mask a portion of your image to make an edit, you can access the "Quick Mask Mode" several ways. You can select a portion of the photograph and then select the "Quick Mask Mode" icon (Image 049 – lowest left-facing arrow) to convert the selection into a mask. You can also just start within Quick Mask Mode, which is what I typically do.

Let's examine Image 049 closely.

1. Make sure that you have duplicated your Background layer, and then select it while remembering to turn the visibility of that upper layer (Original) off.

2. You can access Quick Mask Mode from the "Select" dropdown menu at the top of the workspace.

3. You can also access Quick Mask Mode by clicking on the second icon from the bottom in the Toolbox (Image 049 – lowest left-facing arrow).

4. Make sure that your colors are set to black and white. The color black will be used to paint the red rubylith mask. The color white is used to remove from the mask.

5. Make sure that the "Paint Brush" is selected.

If you double click on the Quick Mask Mode icon (second from the bottom in the Toolbox) the Quick Mask Options pop-up box will appear.

· The default setting for "Color" is red at 50%. I've always just left it there.

· If you choose the "Masked Areas" option, you will paint the mask onto areas that you DO NOT want affected by your edit.

· If you choose the "Selected Areas" option, you will paint onto the areas that you DO want affected by your edit.

· This is simply new verbiage saying the same thing as a Hide All mask or Reveal all mask.
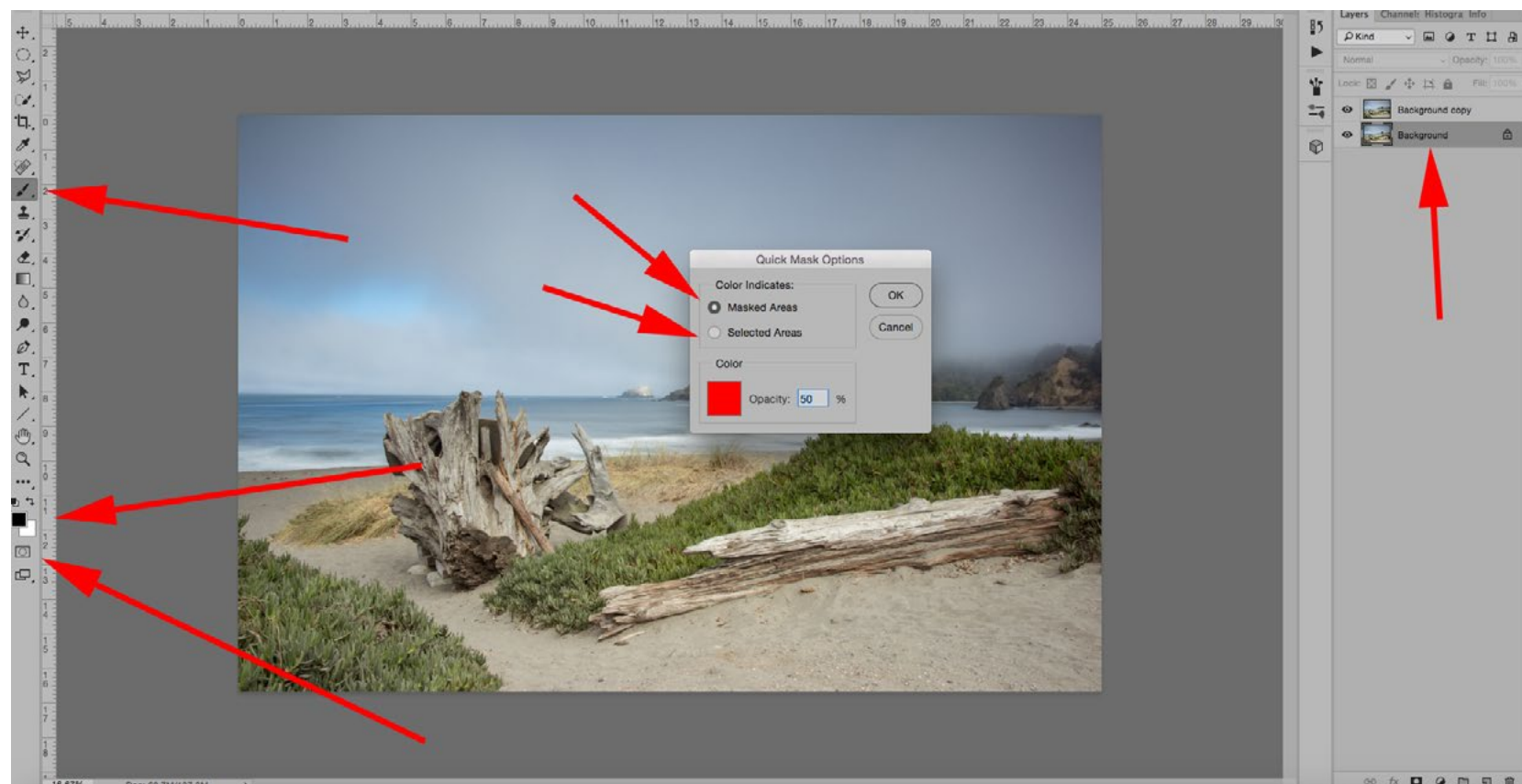
Image 050 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Notice, in Image 051, that when the Quick Mask Mode is selected the Background layer turns red. This indicates that we are going to be working on the mask and not the actual image. If for some reason that layer is not highlighted in red, you are not in Quick Mask Mode, and you need to recheck your settings.
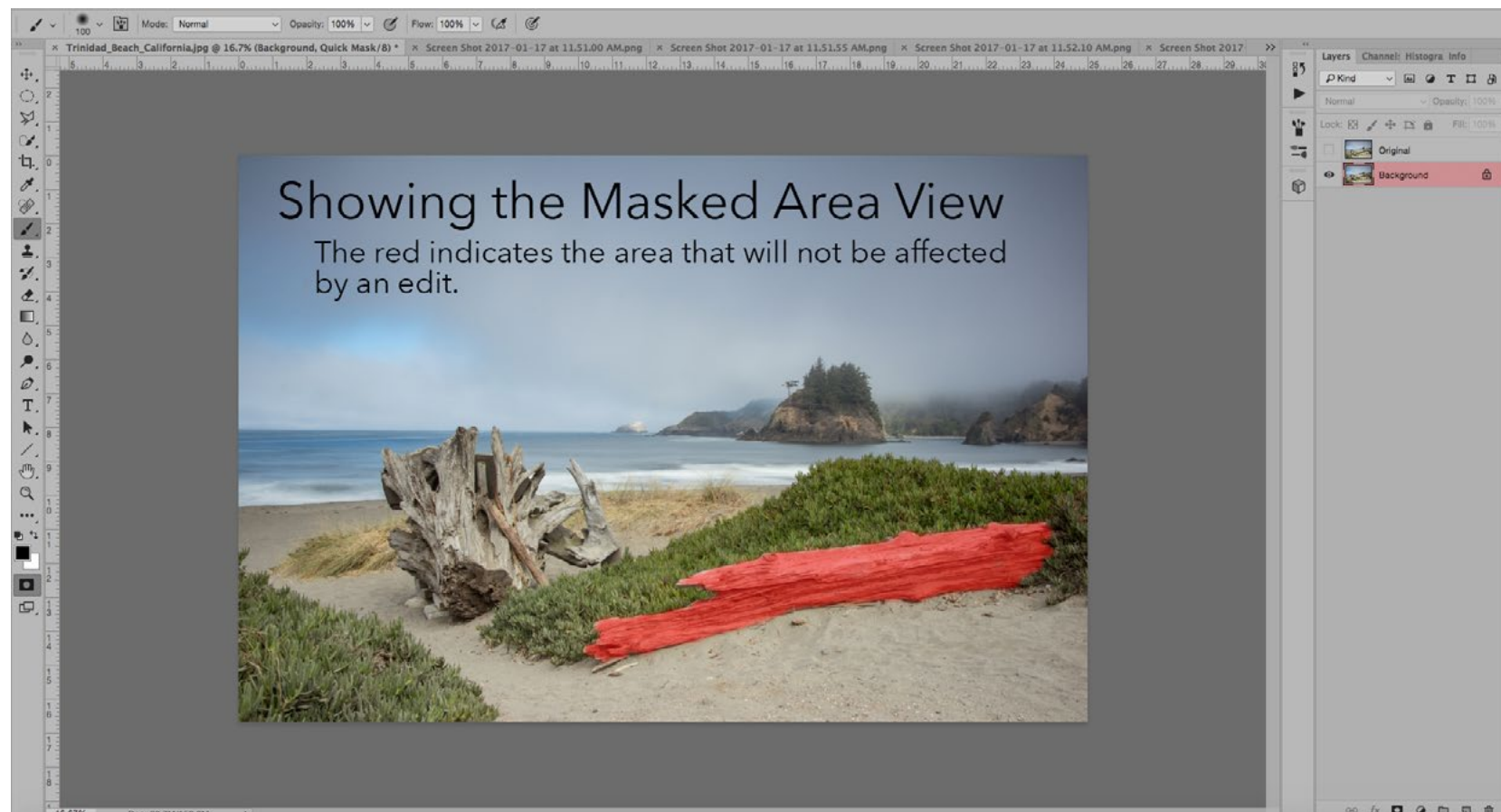
Image 051 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Let me outline what I did to get to Image 051.

- I duplicated my Background layer

- I renamed the Background copy layer to "Original"

- I turned Visibility off on the Original layer

- I highlighted the Background layer

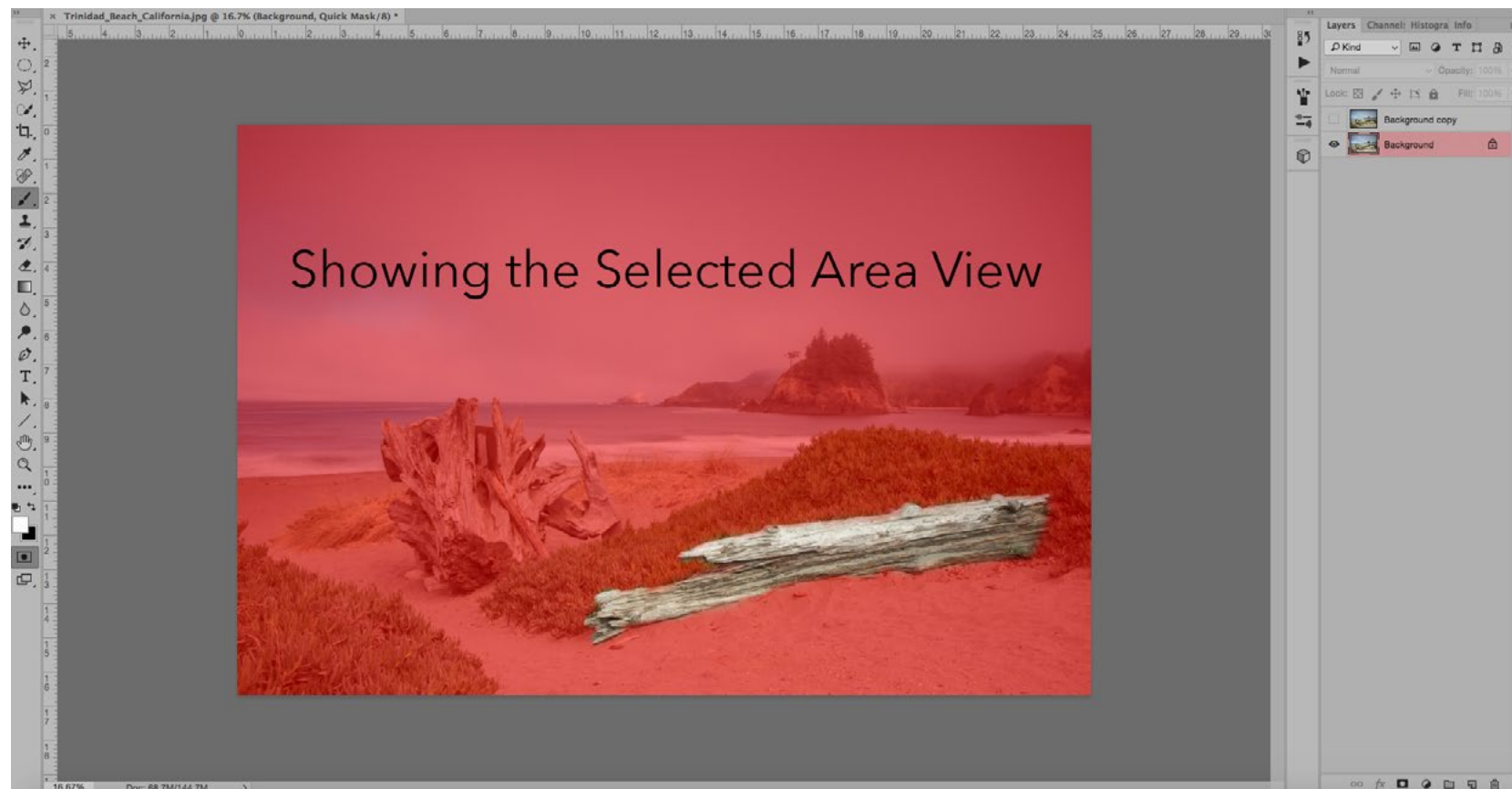- I double clicked on the Quick Mask Mode icon to open the options box

Image 052 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

- I selected "Color indicates: Masked Areas"

- I set my foreground color to black and the background color to white

- I selected the Paint Brush

- I chose a paint brush size and an opacity (in this case 100%)
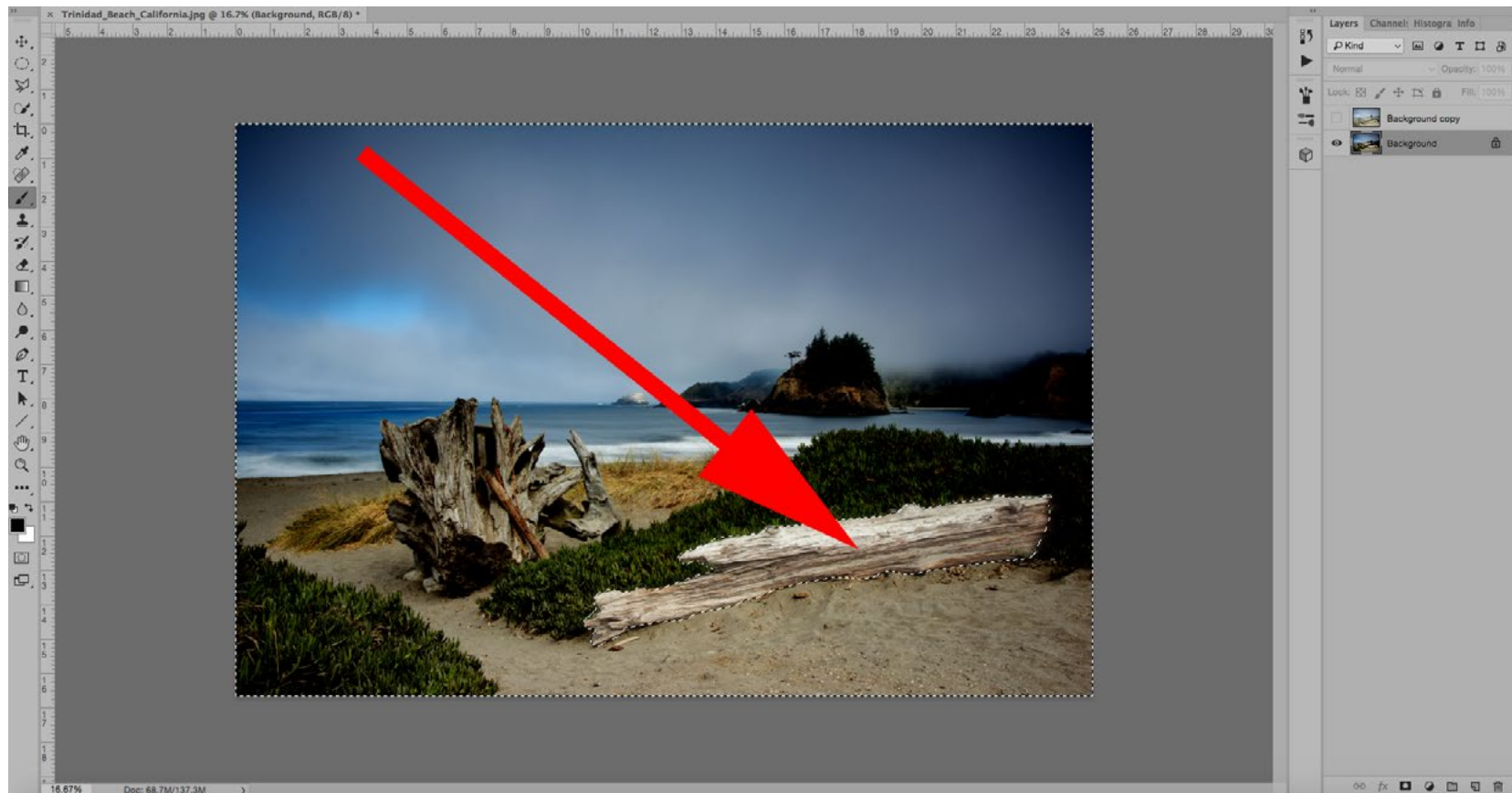
Image 053 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

- I selected Quick Mask Mode by doing a single left-click on the Quick Mask Mode icon

- I made sure my Background layer was selected and turned red

- I painted the log, using the color black with my Paint Brush

- I switched the Foreground color to white

- I cleaned up the edges of the log by painting with the Paint Brush set to white

After I've finished creating the mask, then what?

- Click on the Quick Mask Mode icon once again

- The red mask turns into a selection with Marching Ants

- The Background layer is no longer red

◈ **Key Lesson:** Now that you've created your mask and returned to the editing Preview window within Photoshop, you want to check your work, especially looking for artifacts around the edges of your mask. The way that I like to do this is to make a temporary, dramatic, obvious edit using Levels or Curves. In Image 053, I used Levels to dramatically darken everything in the photograph except my mask area. I then hide the Marching Ants using "Command H in Mac" or "Control H in PC." Then I zoomed into a 100% view and searched around the edges of my mask looking for telltale signs. If I see artifacts, where my mask bled over into areas that it shouldn't have, I will undo my temporary, and extreme, edit, and then I'll go back to Quick Mask Mode and clean them up using either the black color to add to the mask or the white color to remove from the mask.

⛹ Self-Check Quiz:

1. A Clipping Path is an easy way to create _____ _____within a photograph.

2. True or False: A Clipping Path can ONLY be used with an Adjustment layer.

3. Adding a Clipping Path always clips the selected Layer to the layer _____ it.

4. The use of a Clipping Path is an easy way to create complex _____ photographs.

5. In which dropdown menu would you find the option to create a Clipping Path?

6. The "Select and Mask" tool is similar to what tool that was available in older versions of Photoshop?

7. In the Select and Mask tool, name three different options of the Viewing Mode.

8. In the Select and Mask tool, what is the "Refine Edge Tool" primarily used for?

9. What is an artifact (as it relates to digital photography editing)?

10. In the Select and Mask tool, when you want to add or subtract from your mask, you need to pick a Brush tool and then select either the "+" or "-" radio button. Where are those buttons located in the workspace?

11. What do the "Marching Ants" indicate in Photoshop?

12. True or False: A selected area and a mask are basically the same thing. The only difference is how we are going to view it and change it.

13. In the Select and Mask tool, what is the final step (before clicking the "OK" button) that takes you back to the Photoshop Preview window and workspace?

14. After you use the Select and Mask tool, and you want to paste your selection into another photograph, what must you do first?

15. True or False: Any "Selection" process in Photoshop is creating a mask either in the foreground (the user is doing it) or the background (Photoshop is doing it).

16. Why is it a good idea to create a copy of your Background layer?

17. When using Quick Mask Mode, the layer being worked on will turn what color?

18. To hide the Marching Ants in Photoshop, you must press "Command (Mac)" or "Control (PC)" and what other letter?

19. True or False: To turn the Marching Ants back on, you must complete the same task as turning them off.
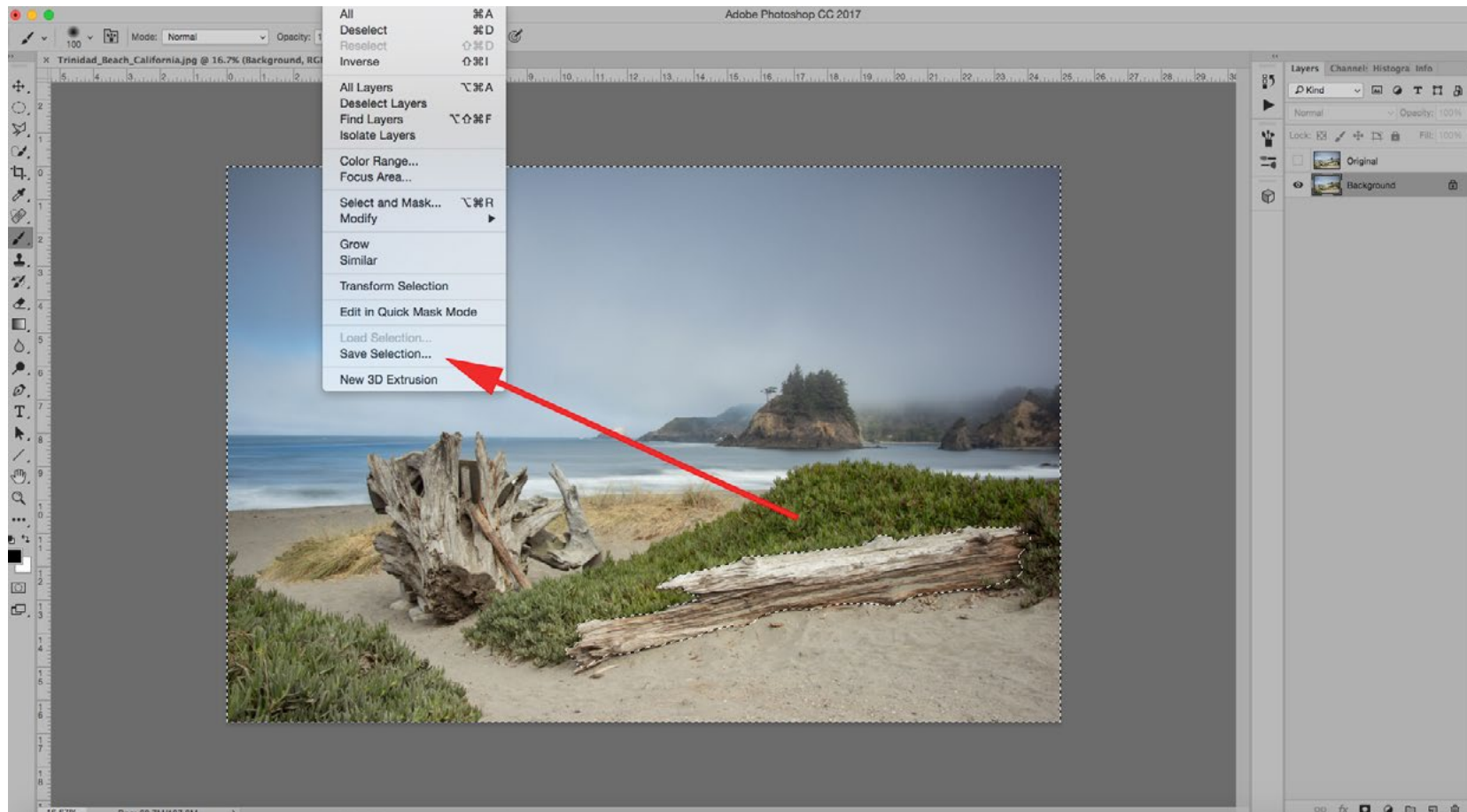
05 SAVING YOUR MASKS IN PHOTOSHOP

Image 054 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

You've gone to a lot of effort to create a mask, or perhaps multiple masks. Once you leave Quick Mask Mode, and deselect the current selection, the process is lost unless you do two things.

1. **Save the mask (selection) into a New Channel**

2. **Save the file in a format that supports Alpha Channels (most likely .PSD or a .TIFF)**

Let me walk you through it.

Here is how you save your masks in a new Alpha Channel.

1. Exit Quick Mask Mode

2. Your mask is now visually presented as Marching Ants

3. Go to the "Select" dropdown menu
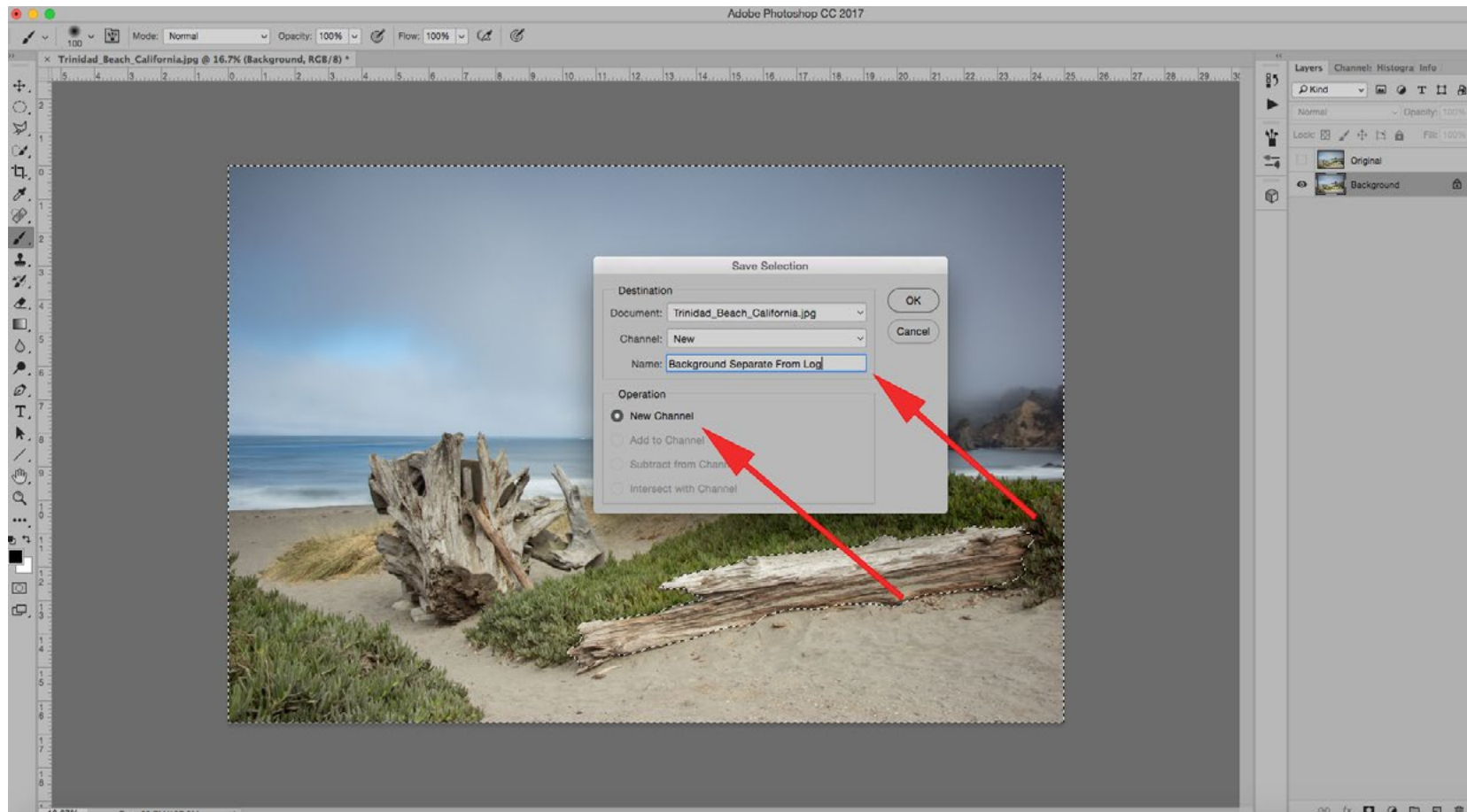
4. Choose "Save Selection"

Image 055 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

5. The Save Selection pop-up window appears

6. The Operation will indicate: New Channel

7. The Document Name will already be filled in

8. In the section "Name," you want to name your mask. (The selection is going to be saved as an Alpha Channel mask.) Name it something that will help you remember what you used it for. This is especially true if you're creating complex images with lots of masks. Notice that I named this Alpha Channel: "Background Separate From Log."

9. Click "OK"

Image 056 – Photograph by Kent DuFault
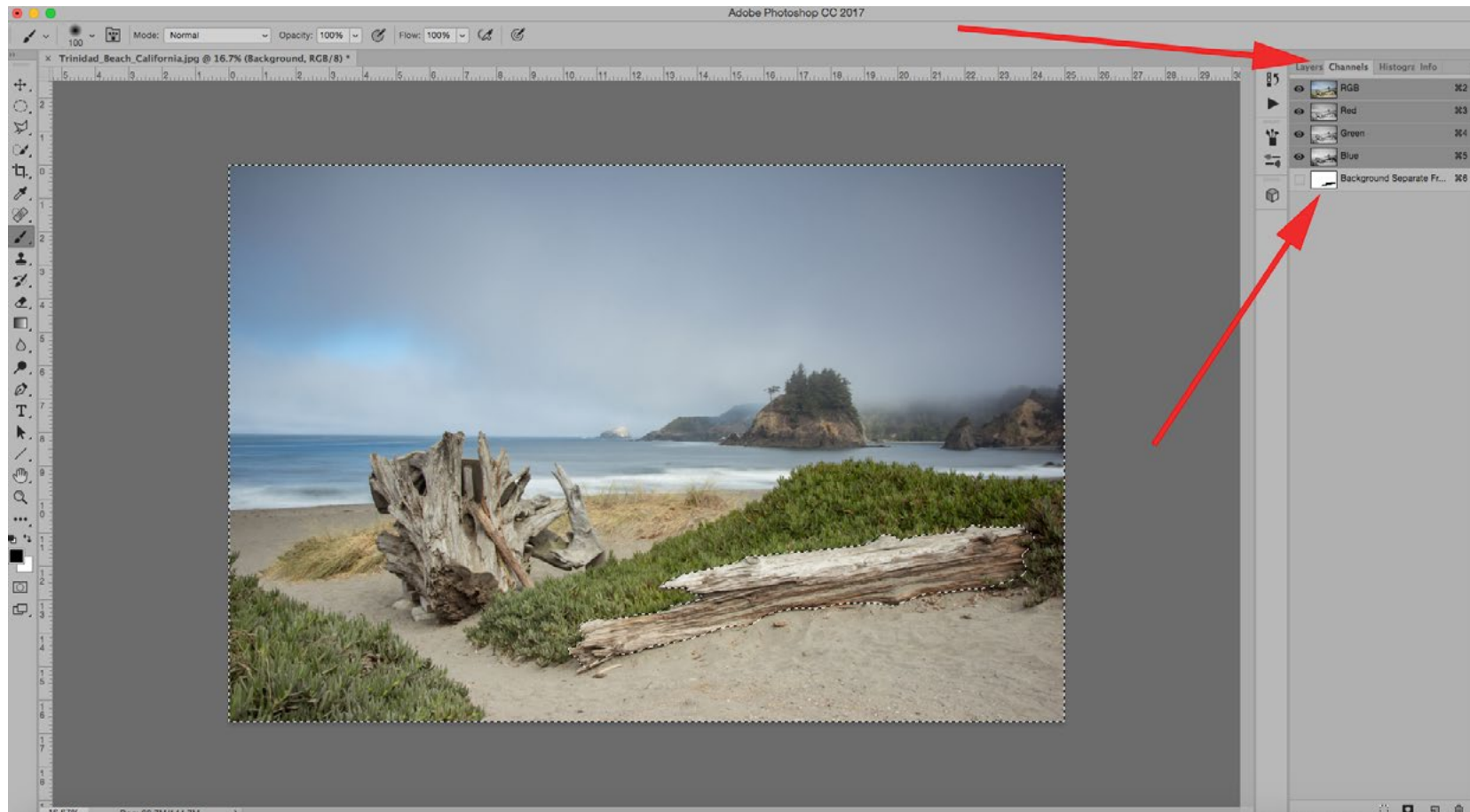
10. View the "Channels" window or tab (don't be concerned if you have no idea what channels are at this point. There will be another guide on that later. Right now, we are simply checking to see that our newly created Alpha Channel is there.)

11. You can see that the new Alpha Channel has been created. It is placed at the bottom of the stack, and the visibility is turned off.
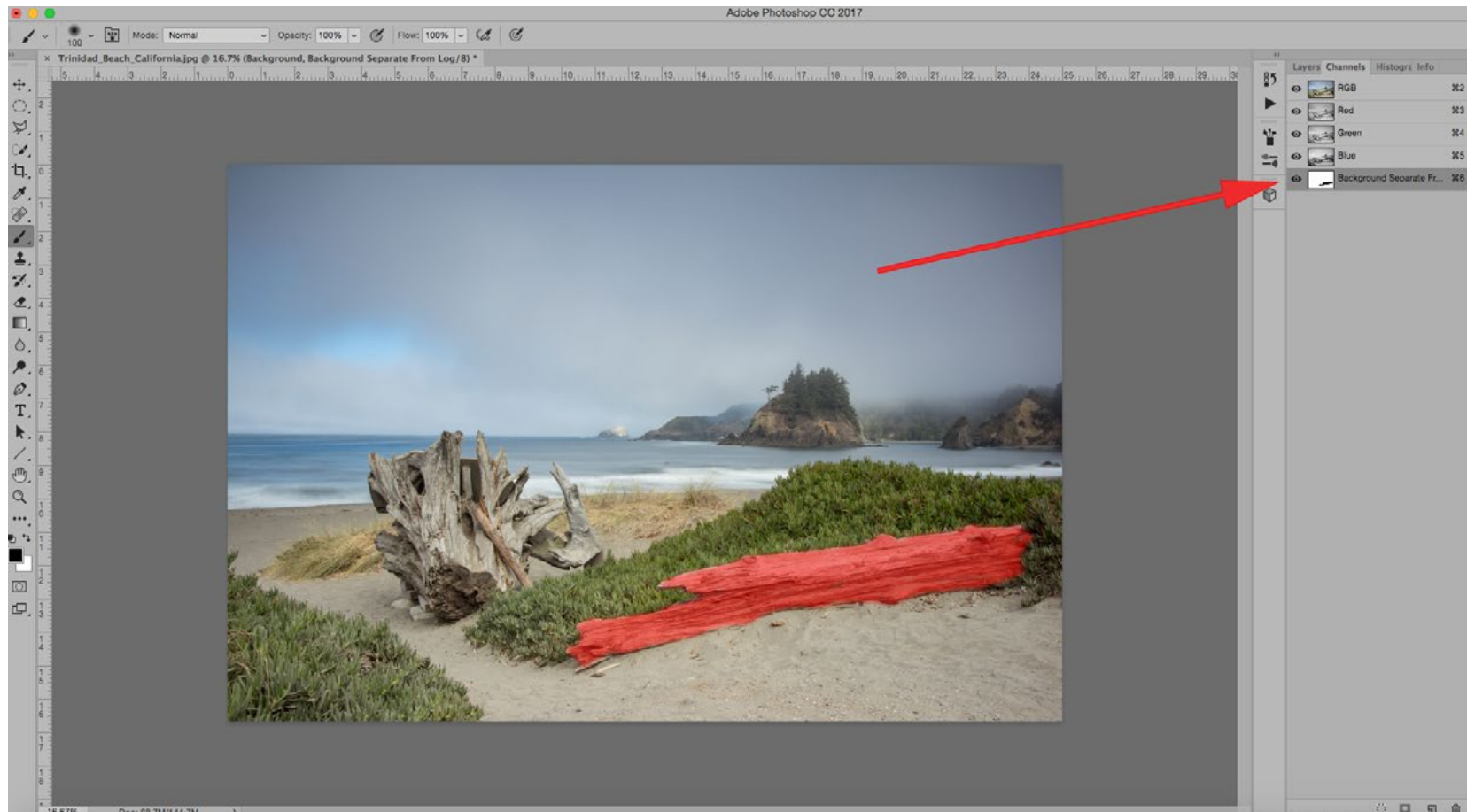
Image 057 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

12. Turn the "Visibility" on to see the mask location

13. If you want to alter the mask, highlight the Alpha Channel that you created

14. Paint onto the Preview Image with one of the painting tools using the color black to add to the selection, or the color white to subtract from the selection

Image 058 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

If you want to use the mask that is saved as the Alpha Channel for additional editing, you must load it back into the program.

1. Go to the "Select" dropdown menu

2. Select "Load Selection"
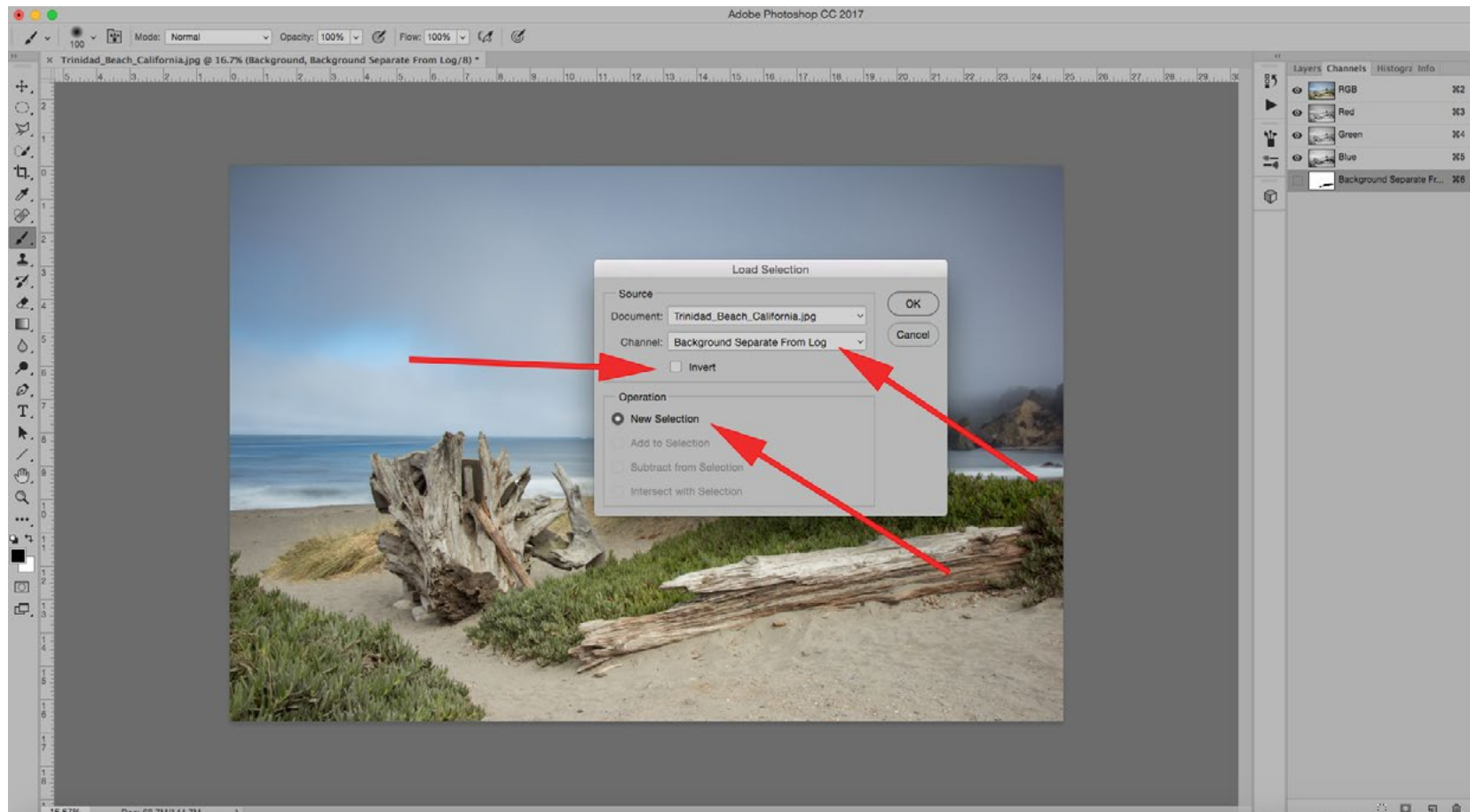
Image 059 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

3. Navigate to the Alpha Channel that you wish to Load and select it
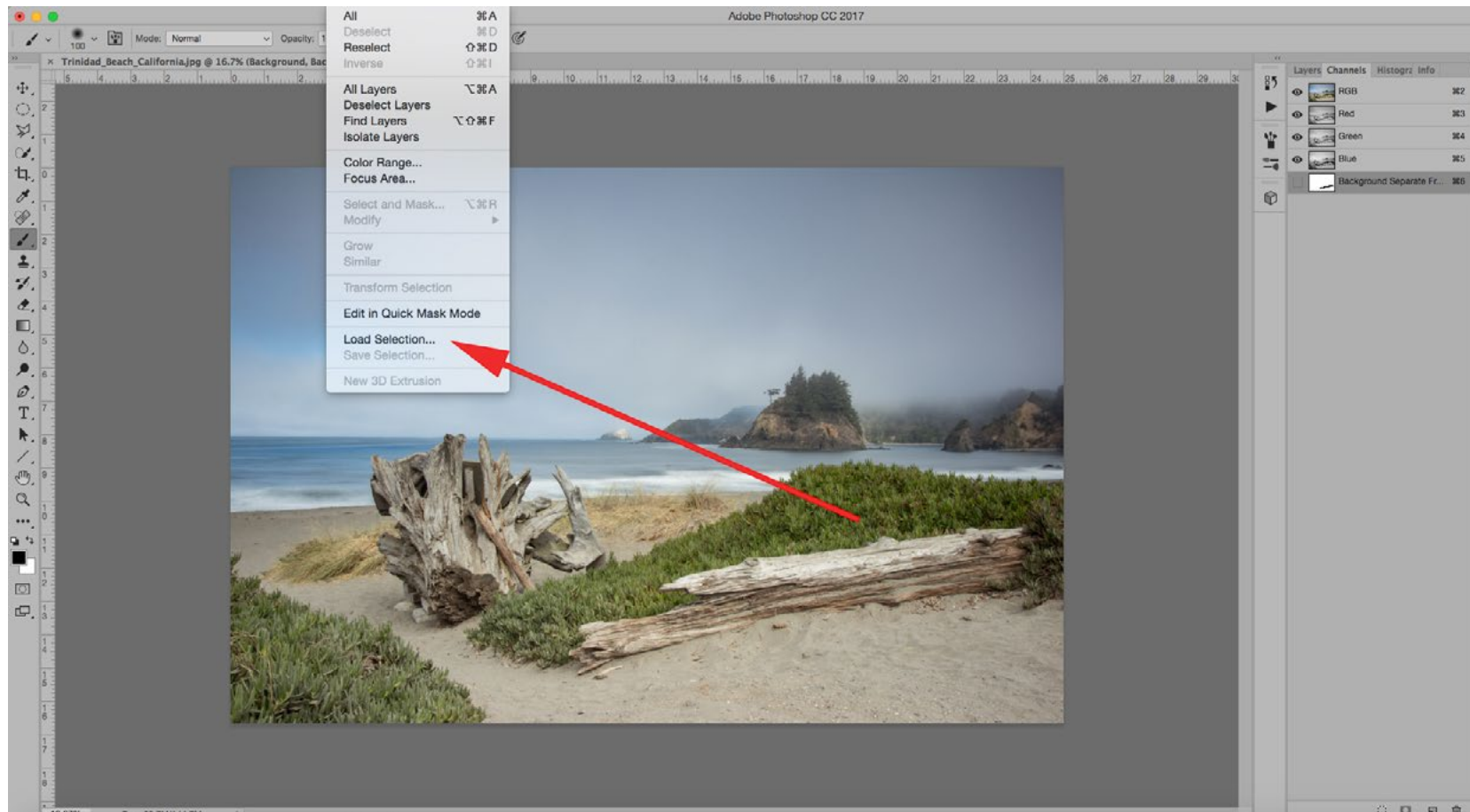
4. If you wish to invert the mask, click the "Invert" box. For example, if I load my Alpha Channel as it was created, the background will be visible for additional editing and the log will be masked out. But let's say I want to lighten the log without affecting the background. If I check the Invert box, now my additional editing will affect the log and NOT the background! The mask (aka selection) has been inverted.
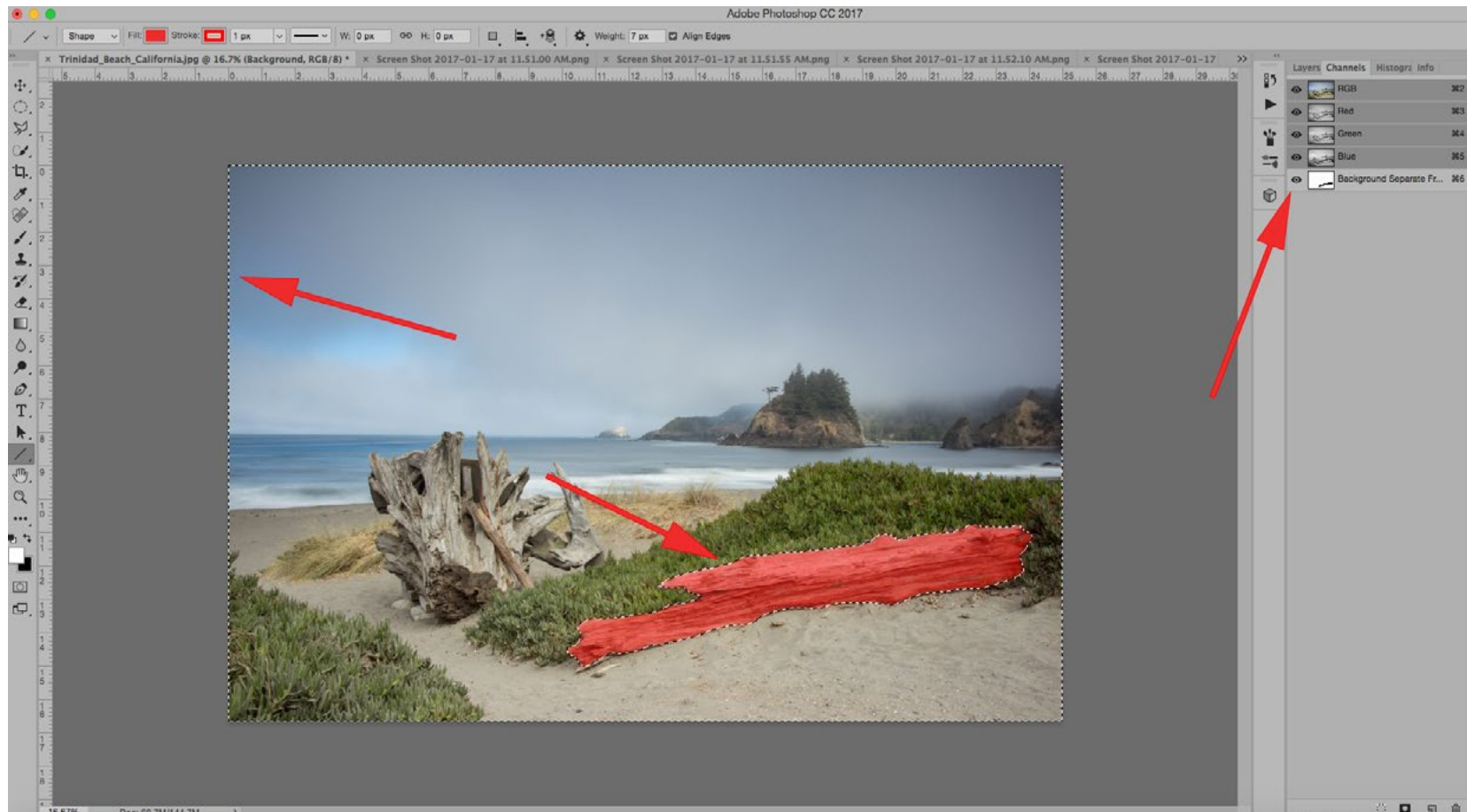
Image 060 – Photograph By Kent DuFault

When the Alpha Channel loads (Image 060), it will appear as Marching Ants. If I want to see the mask, I must turn on the visibility of the Alpha Channel in the Channels window or tab.

If I want to alter the Alpha Channel mask WITHOUT altering the Alpha Channel itself, do the following.

1. Load the Alpha Channel

2. Have the Channels window or tab visible

3. Click the Quick Mask Mode icon

4. Observe that a Quick Mask Alpha Channel has been added below the saved Alpha Channel, and that it is highlighted

5. Notice that the Quick Mask Mode creates a layer that mimics the saved Alpha Channel

6. Using the painting tools and the colors black and white, alter the mask on the Quick Mask Mode layer
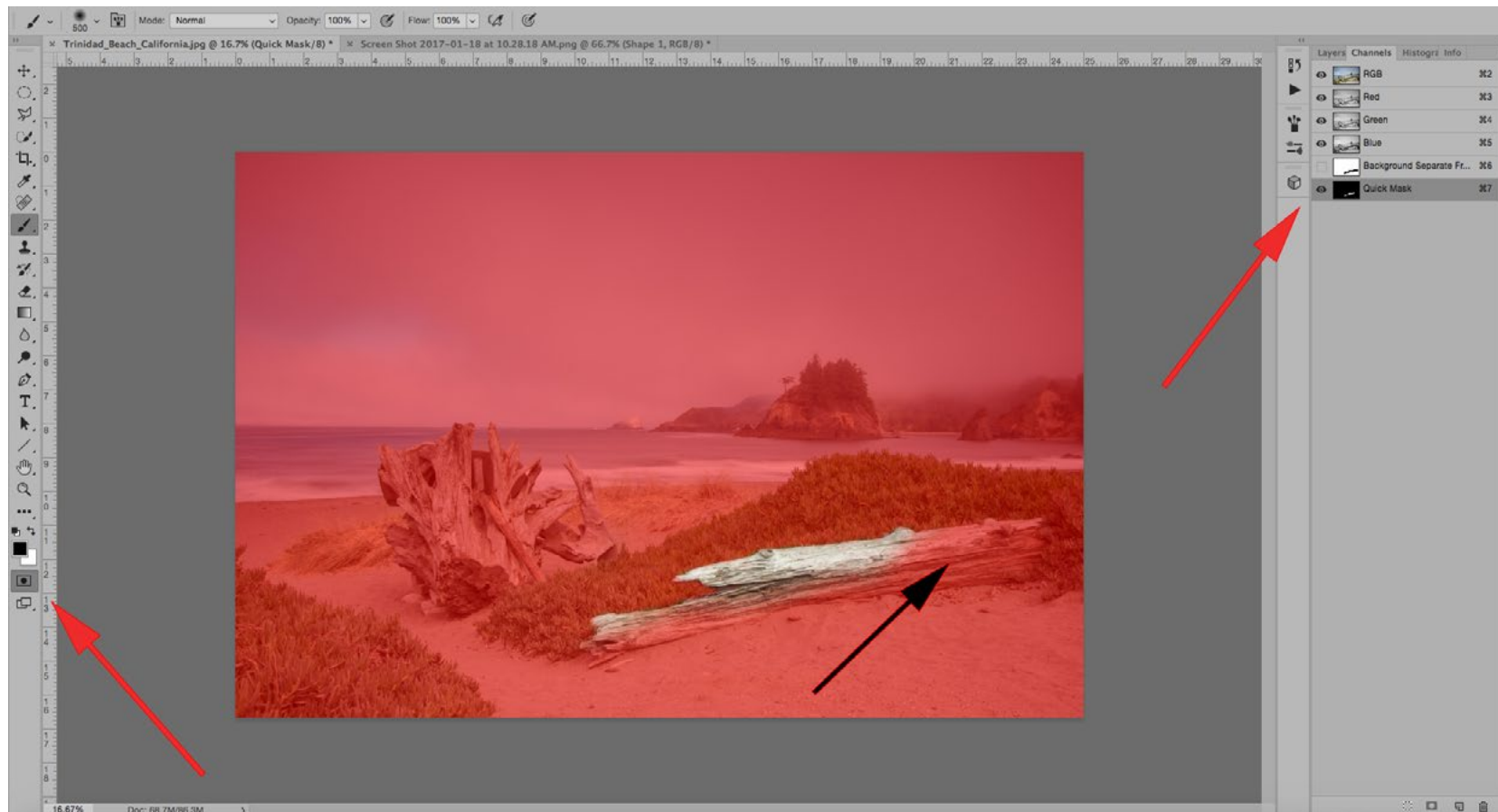
Image 061 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Now you've altered the original saved Alpha Channel into a new mask created in Quick Mask Mode.

What if you want to save the new version?

You would go through the "Save Selection" process outlined earlier. Both Alpha Channels would now be saved.

What if you want to keep the new Alpha Channel but get rid of the older one? Delete the first Alpha Channel.

What if you want to save all of your work, including the Alpha Channels as a .jpg? You can't. You must save it as a .jpeg 2000 (.jpf), which supports Alpha Channels.

What if you want to save all of your work, including multiple layers and Alpha Channels, as a .jpeg 2000 or .jpeg? You can't. Neither of those formats supports both multiple layers and/or Alpha Channels. You would have to save your file as a .PSD or .TIFF.

So, am I telling you that you've done all of this work, and you can't create a .jpeg file?

No. That's not what I'm saying.

The workflow is this:

- Do your multiple layer and channel editing while working in, and saving, the file in .PSD or .TIFF
- To create a .jpeg, when finished with your editing, discard the Alpha Channels and flatten the layers.
- Save the file as a NEW .jpeg file. Don't overwrite your original file with the channels and layers.

Self Check Quiz

1. What are the two steps that you must take to keep your mask intact for future editing?

2. Does a .jpf file support multiple layers?

3. What dropdown menu would you choose to save a selection as an Alpha Channel?

4. True or False: Selections and masks are essentially the same thing.

5. True or False: When saving a selection, it's not a good idea to change the default name for the Alpha Channel.

6. When an Alpha Channel is loaded, does it automatically appear as a Red Mask or Marching Ants?

7. True or False: You cannot alter an Alpha Channel that has been saved.

8. If you enter Quick Mask Mode, and you already have a saved Alpha Channel, the Quick Mask Mode Alpha Channel will appear above, or below, the existing saved Alpha Channels.

9. True or False: If you turn the visibility of an Alpha Channel "on," the red mask appears over the Preview image.

10. True or False: If I want to change a saved Alpha Channel mask, I must highlight that channel in the Channels window or tab and then paint on the preview image with the colors black or white.

11. If I want to alter the Alpha Channel mask that is saved in the Channels window or tab without altering the original, what must I do?

12. What file formats are recommended for saving a file this has multiple layers and Alpha Channels?

13. If your file contains multiple layers and Alpha Channels, what two things must you do to save that file in a .jpeg format?

06 WORKING WITH MASKS IN LIGHTROOM

When working with masks, one of the real difficult aspects to the task, especially in the beginning, is remembering what area of the image is being masked, and what area of the photograph is going to be altered.

I've been doing this a long time and I still get confused sometimes, especially if I haven't used a particular tool in some time.

The reason for this is because there are two ways of looking at a mask and its effect. There is the masked view and selected view. In Quick Mask Mode, within Photoshop, we were given the option to choose our mode of viewing. In Lightroom, we aren't given a choice.

If I'm unsure as to what area is going to be affected, I'll make a quick and dirty mask, and I'll then make a "drastic" edit. This will show me what is being masked and what isn't. Then I'll undo my edit and trash my mask. This technique is good for any of the Adobe Products: Photoshop, Lightroom, or Elements.

I mention this now because the way in which you see masks in Lightroom is a little different than in Photoshop.
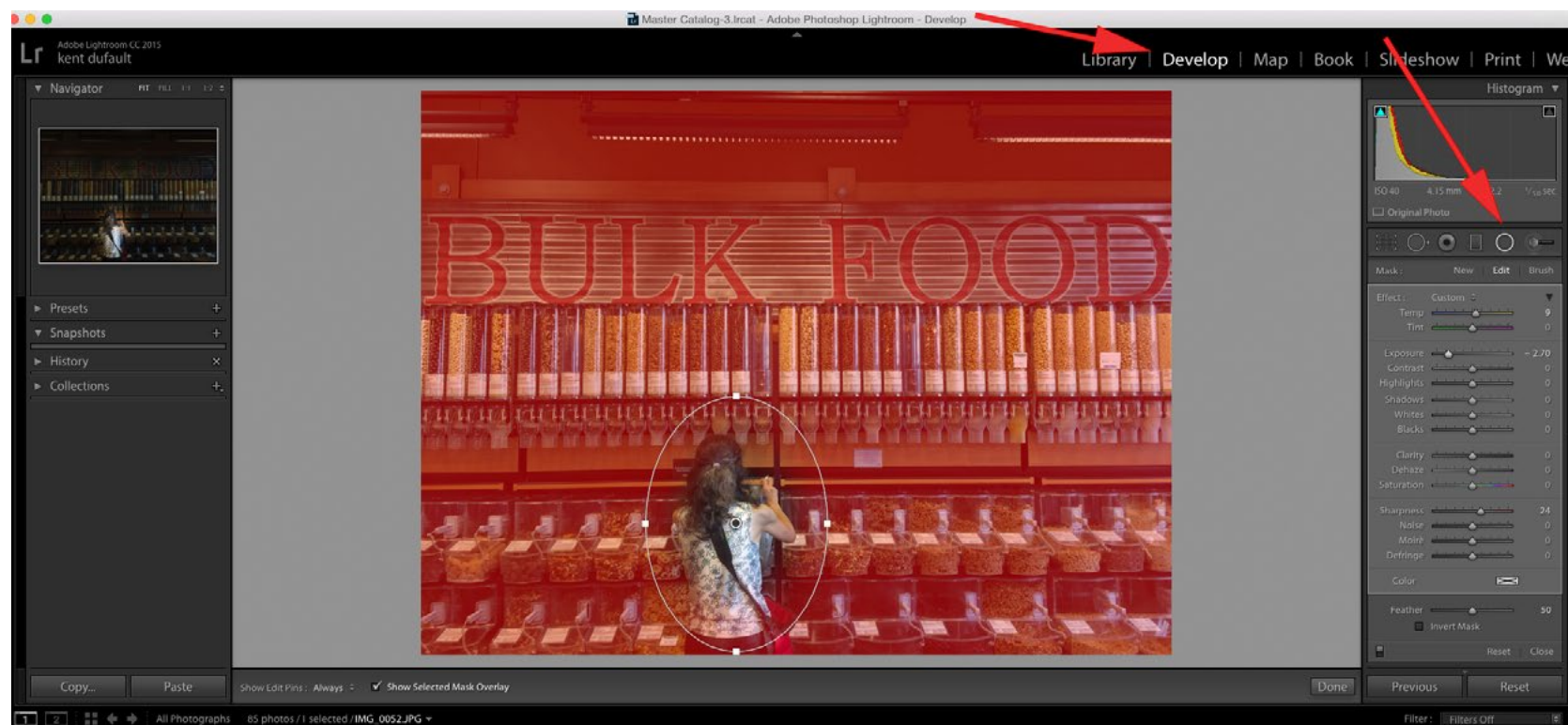
Image 062 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Images 062 and 063 are to show you how you can complete a quick test if you can't remember how a mask works.

In Lightroom, I have selected the Radial Filter. I dragged it into an oval shape on my Preview window and positioned it over my model.

At this point, I can't see the mask at all. It's happening in the background.

If I want to see the mask, I have to go to the bottom of the workspace and check the box next to **Show Selected Mask Overlay**. Or, for a quick alternative, you can press the "o" key to turn the mask on and off.

Now, looking at Image 062, the conventional wisdom would dictate that the edit would affect the model and not the background. Right? The red is the mask.

This goes back to **what is the red overlay illustrating**? Is it showing the "Mask View" or the "Selection View"?
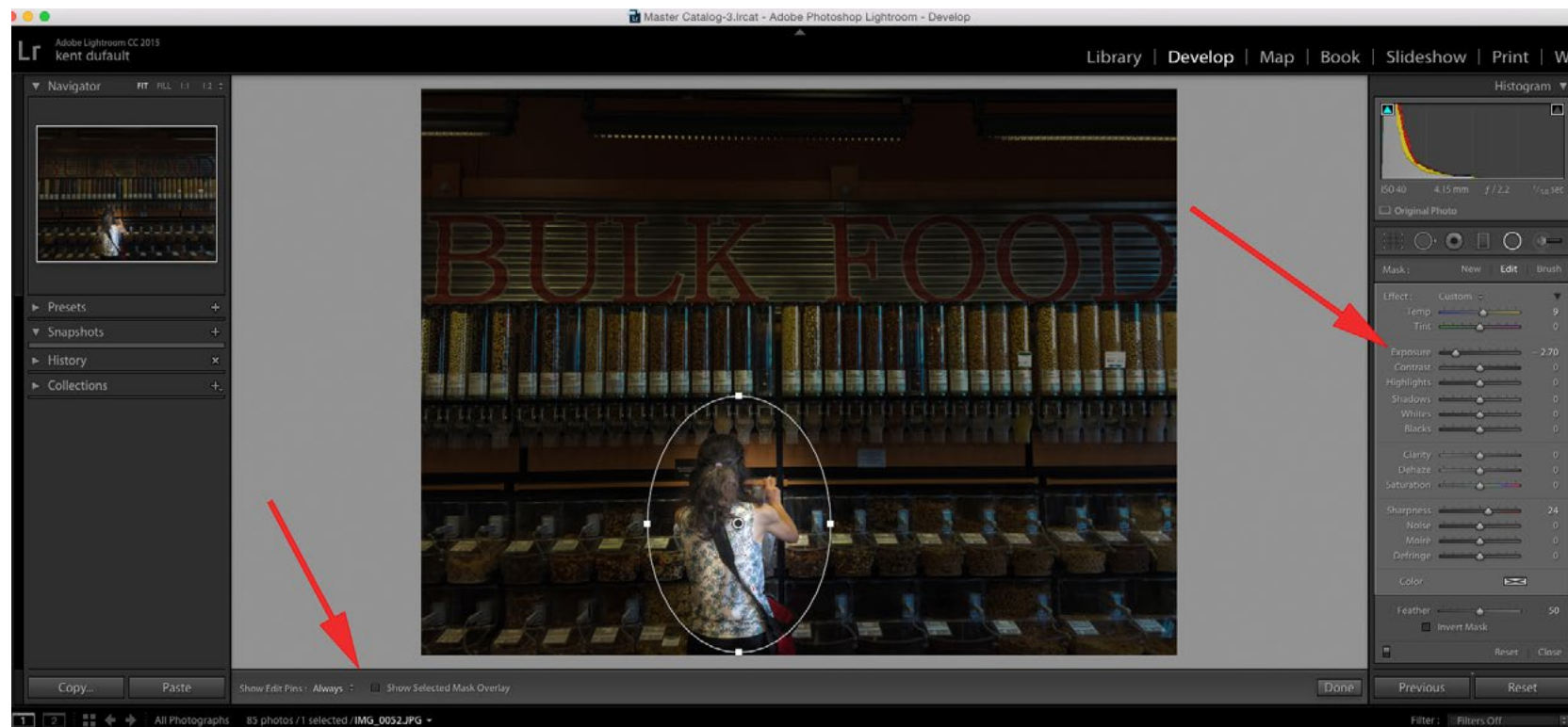
Image 063 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I threw my Exposure Slider way out of whack, and we can clearly see that the red overlay is indicating a selection view, and the area inside the oval will be masked out of the edit. I can now reset my Exposure Slider and delete my Radial Filter.

⬦ **Key Lesson:** Using masking in Photoshop offers a greater degree of possibilities for image manipulation and blending multiple photographs. In Lightroom, masks are used in a similar manner as when we discussed the ACR workspace window in Photoshop. The primary purpose for masking within Lightroom is to provide micro-managed fundamental edits.
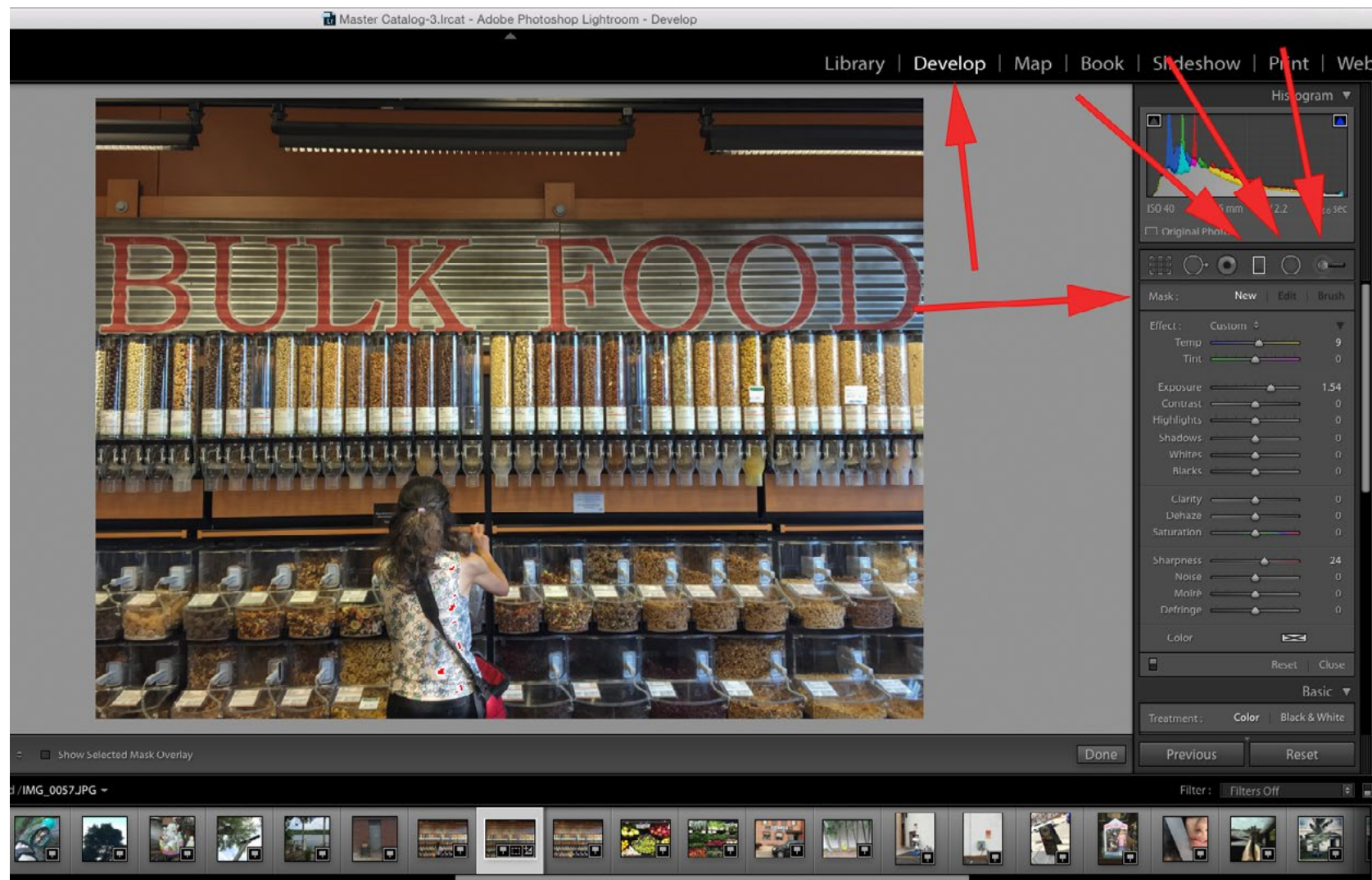
Image 064 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

All masking options within Lightroom occur in the "Develop Module." In Image 064, the three red arrows pointing downward indicate the three tools that use masking.

They are (from left to right): Graduated Filter, Radial Filter, and Adjustment Brush.

It's pretty much just like the ACR workspace, right? However, the way they function and appear to the user is a little different.
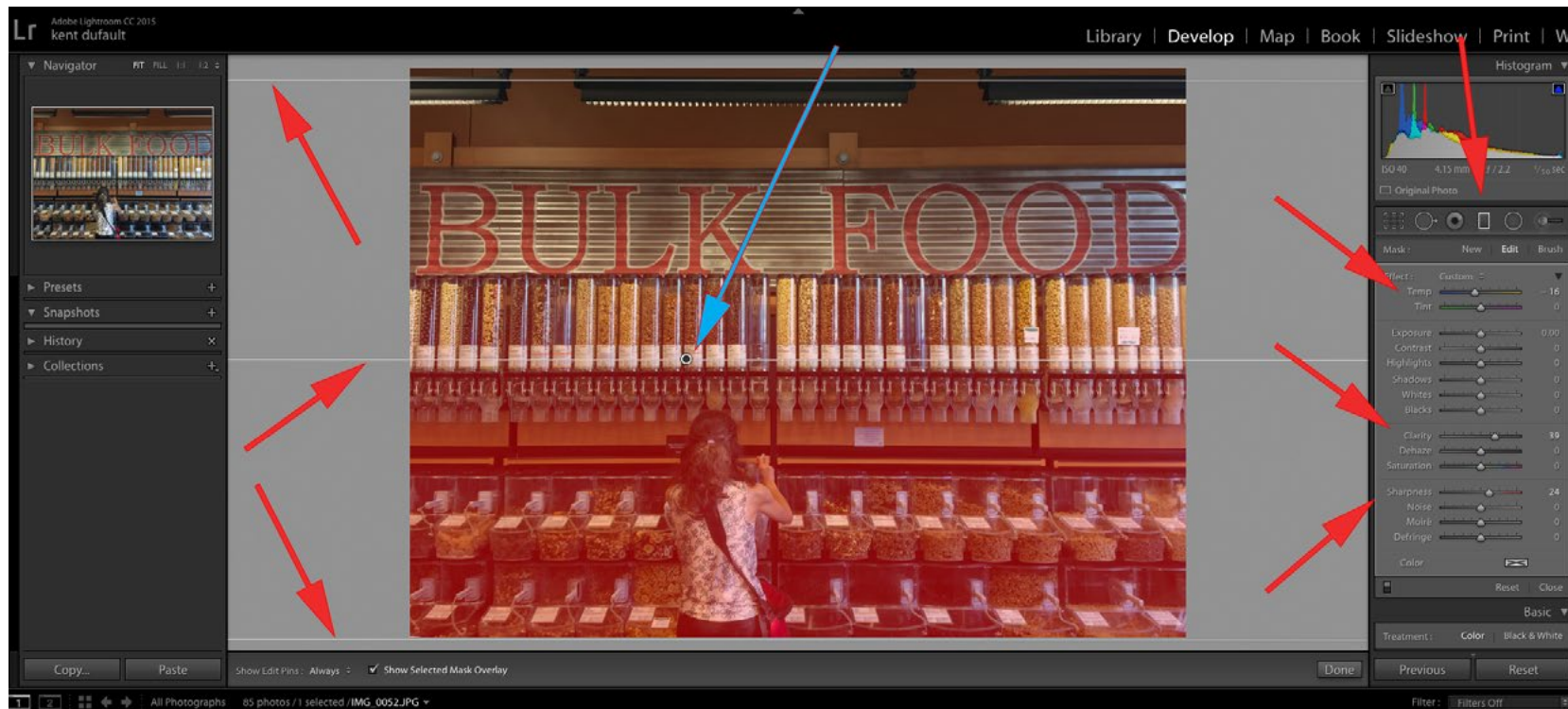
Let's take a look at each tool.

Image 065 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Graduated Filter

Let's dissect what we are seeing here in Image 065.

- The far-right upper arrow, pointing downward, shows the "Graduated Filter" icon. It is the third one from the right. I selected it.

- I placed my cursor at the bottom of the Preview Window, left-clicked on my mouse and held it, dragged to the top of the Preview Window, and released the button.

- The "Mask" is not visible by default, so I turned it "on" by pressing the "o" key on my keyboard.

- The blue arrow points to a small circle with a black dot in the center. This indicates that a Graduated Filter mask has been created. If I created an additional Graduated Filter mask, this dot would become a solid gray, and the new mask would have a black dot. The black dot indicates that the mask is active. If I leave the Graduated Filter tool, these dots become invisible.
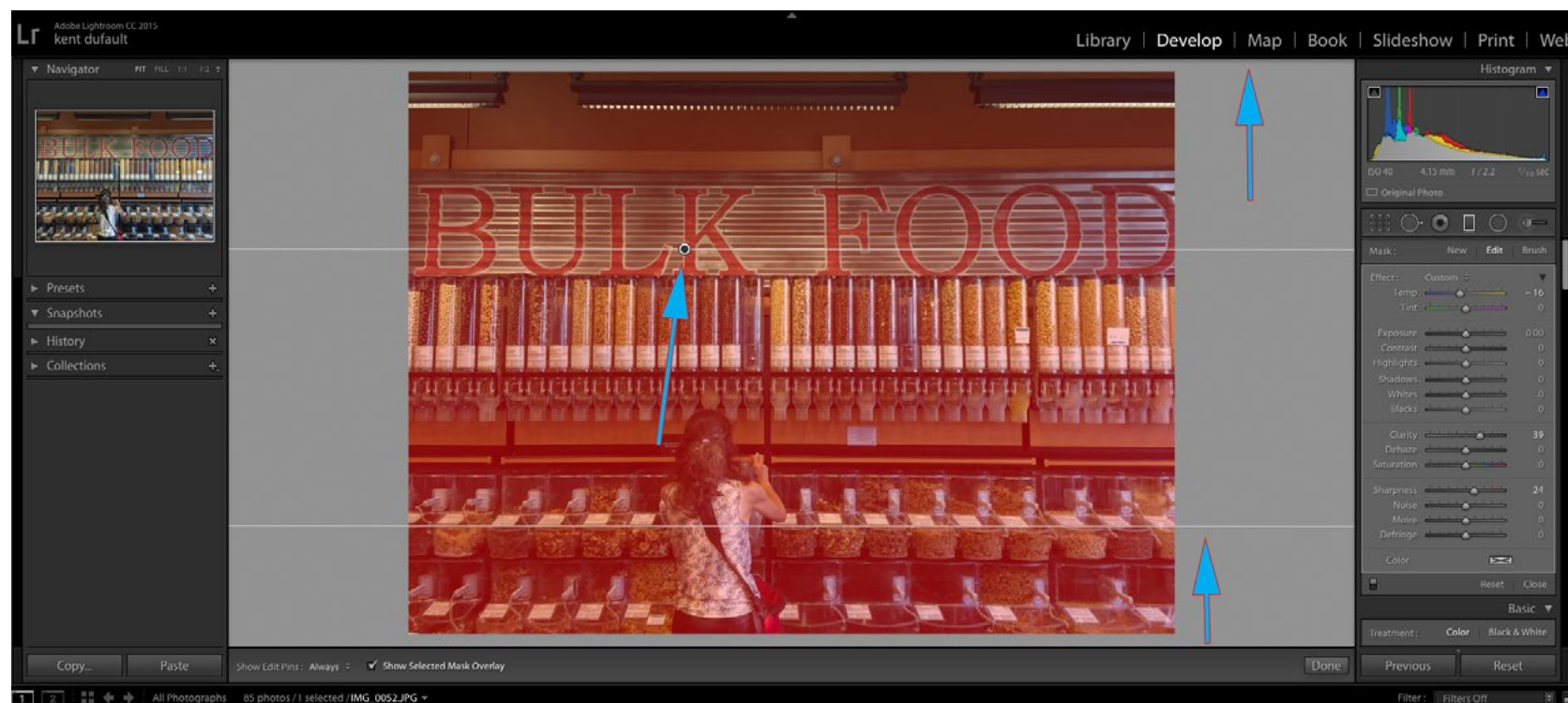
Image 066 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

· The three far-left red arrows, which are pointing at the three light-gray lines, indicate where the mask begins, the center of the transition, and where it ends.

· The three right-facing arrows, on the right side of the workspace, indicate the tools that are available for adjustment within the Graduated Filter. **Remember: the red areas are affected.** If I wanted this filter to affect the top of the photograph, and not the bottom, I would have left-clicked at the top and dragged downward. The 100% masking effect would then be placed at the bottom.

You can move the entire mask by placing your cursor over the black dot. Your cursor will turn into an icon that looks like a hand. Click, hold, and slide it around.

· If your mask was created vertically – from bottom to top or top to bottom – you will be able to slide the mask up or down.
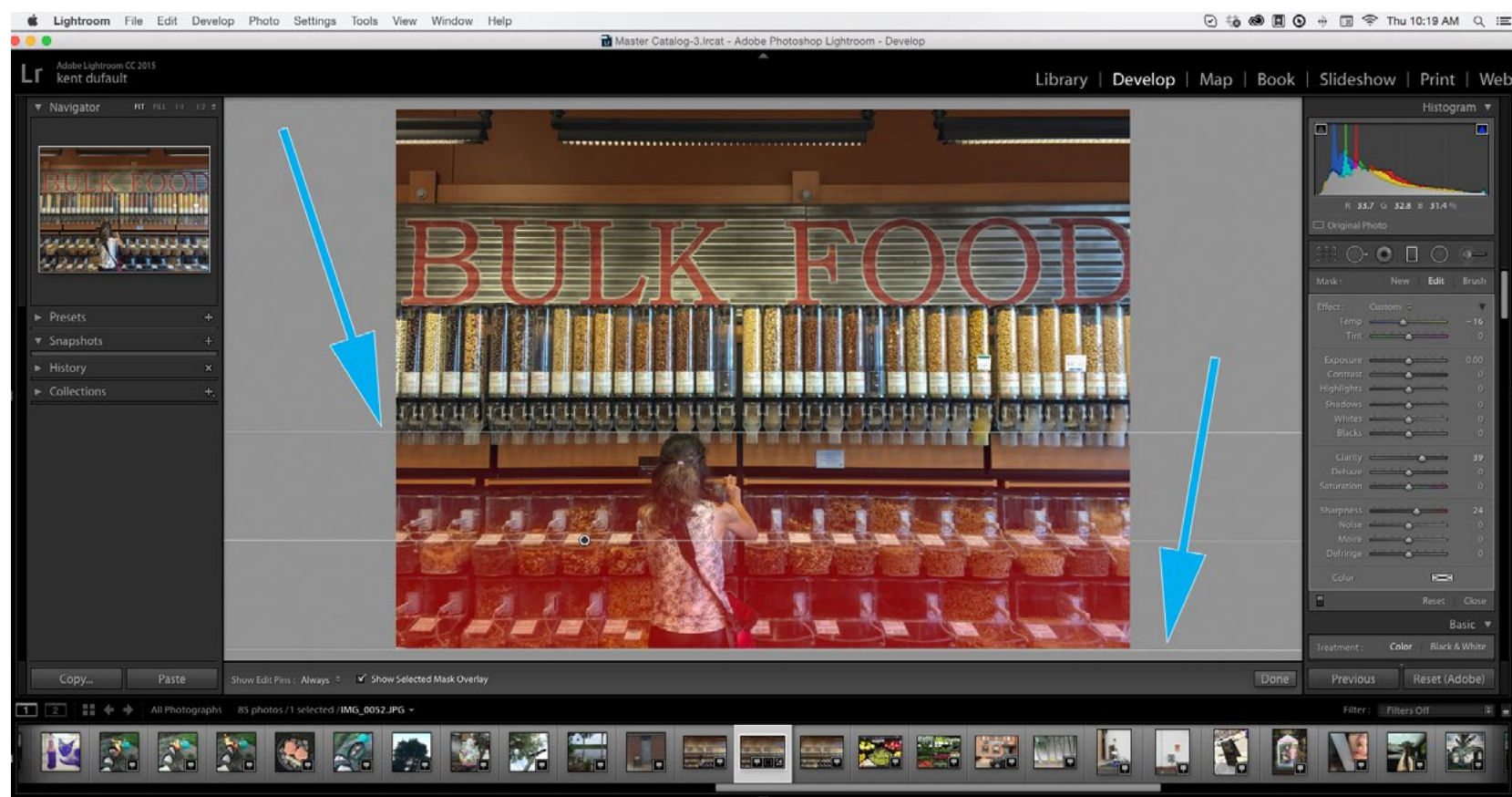
Image 067 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

- If your mask was created horizontally – from left to right or right to left – you will be able to slide the mask left or right.

When making this type of adjustment, all three gray lines will move together. In Image 066, notice how the middle transition line has moved up in the Preview Window. The bottom gray line is now almost 1/4 of the way into the Preview Window, and the top gray has disappeared.

What does this tell you? I moved the mask up.

Look at Image 067. You will notice that the three gray lines have "pushed together." If you place your cursor on the top or bottom gray line, it will turn into a hand icon. Left-click, hold the button down, and move the gray line. This will compress the mask, creating a faster transition from 100% to 0%.
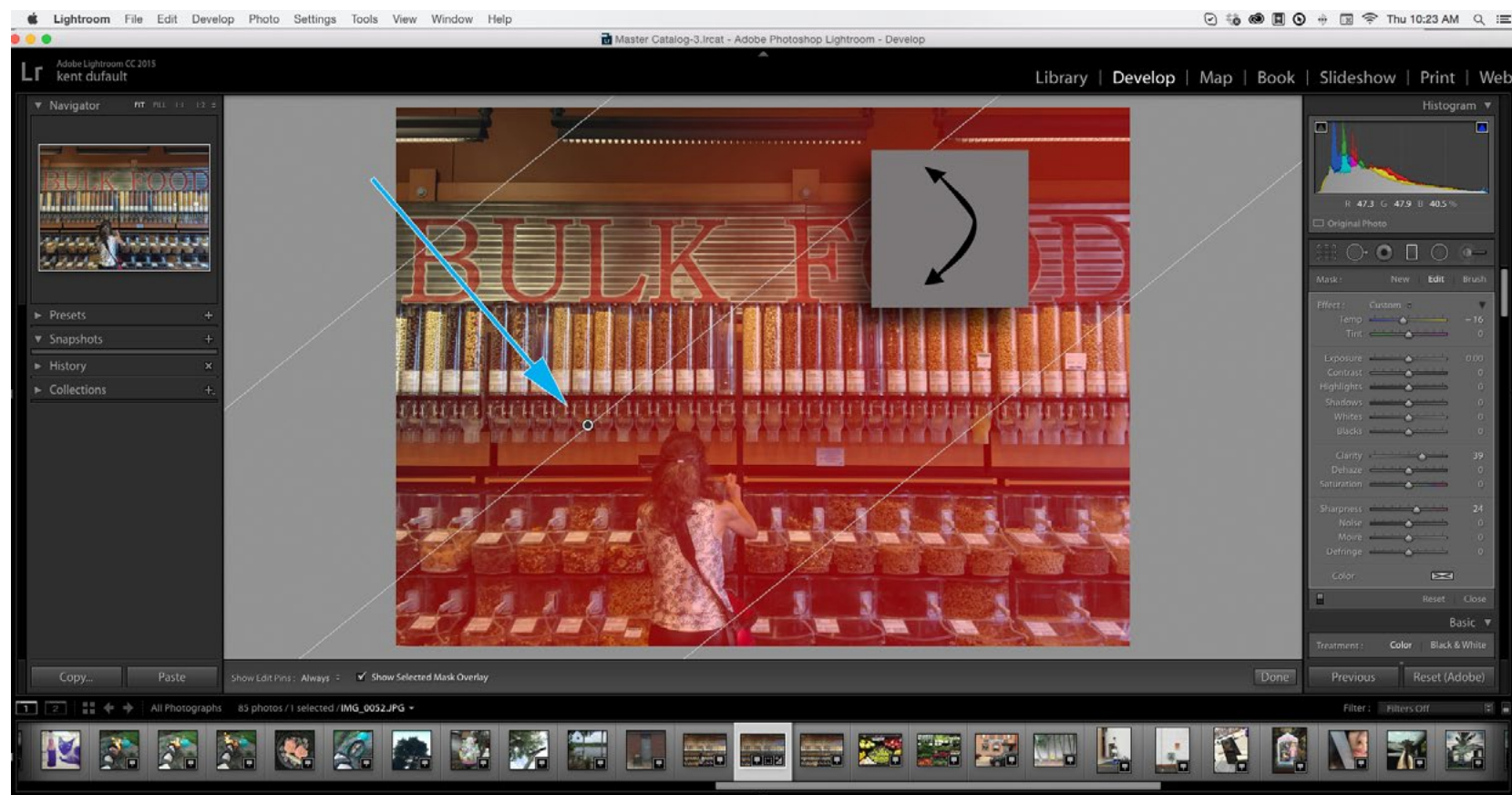
Image 068 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Look at Image 068. If you place your cursor along the center gray line, but **not** on the black dot, an icon will appear that is similar to the one demonstrated in the gray box. Left-click anywhere along that line, hold the button down, and you will be able to rotate the mask clockwise or counterclockwise.
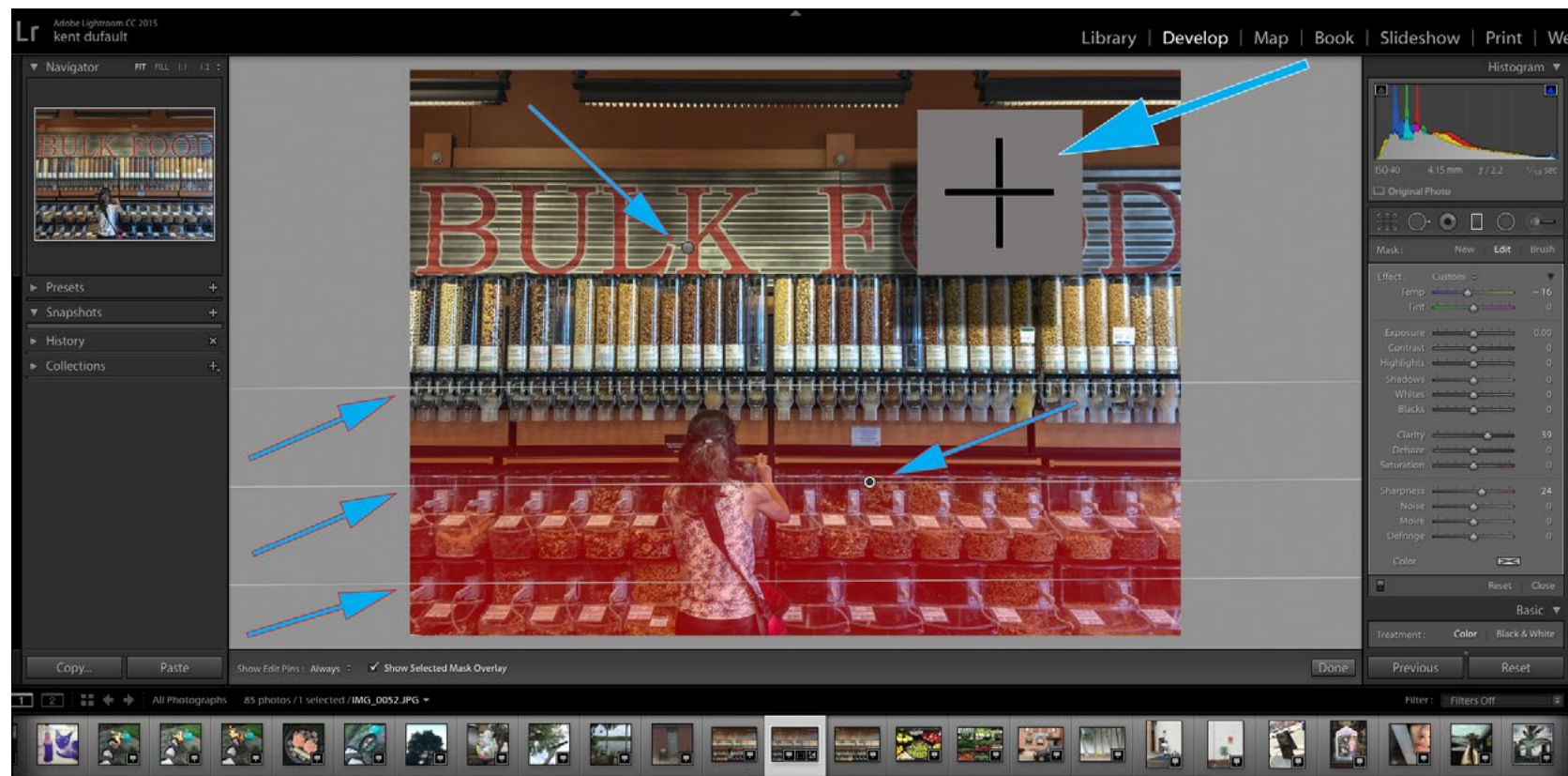
Image 069 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

If you place your cursor anywhere within the Preview Window, but **not** on a gray line or the black dot, your cursor will turn into a "+" sign. Left-click, hold, and drag. This will create a new Graduated Filter mask. In Image 069, take notice that there is now one gray circle and one black dot. The active mask has a black dot in the center. The inactive one does not.

Image 070 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

By creating multiple masks with the various masking tools, you can create a variety of effects within your photograph. However, you can't see all of your masks at once. In Image 070, I created a multi-layer image in Photoshop just to illustrate how two different masks are placed on the photograph. In reality, we could only see these masks one at a time.
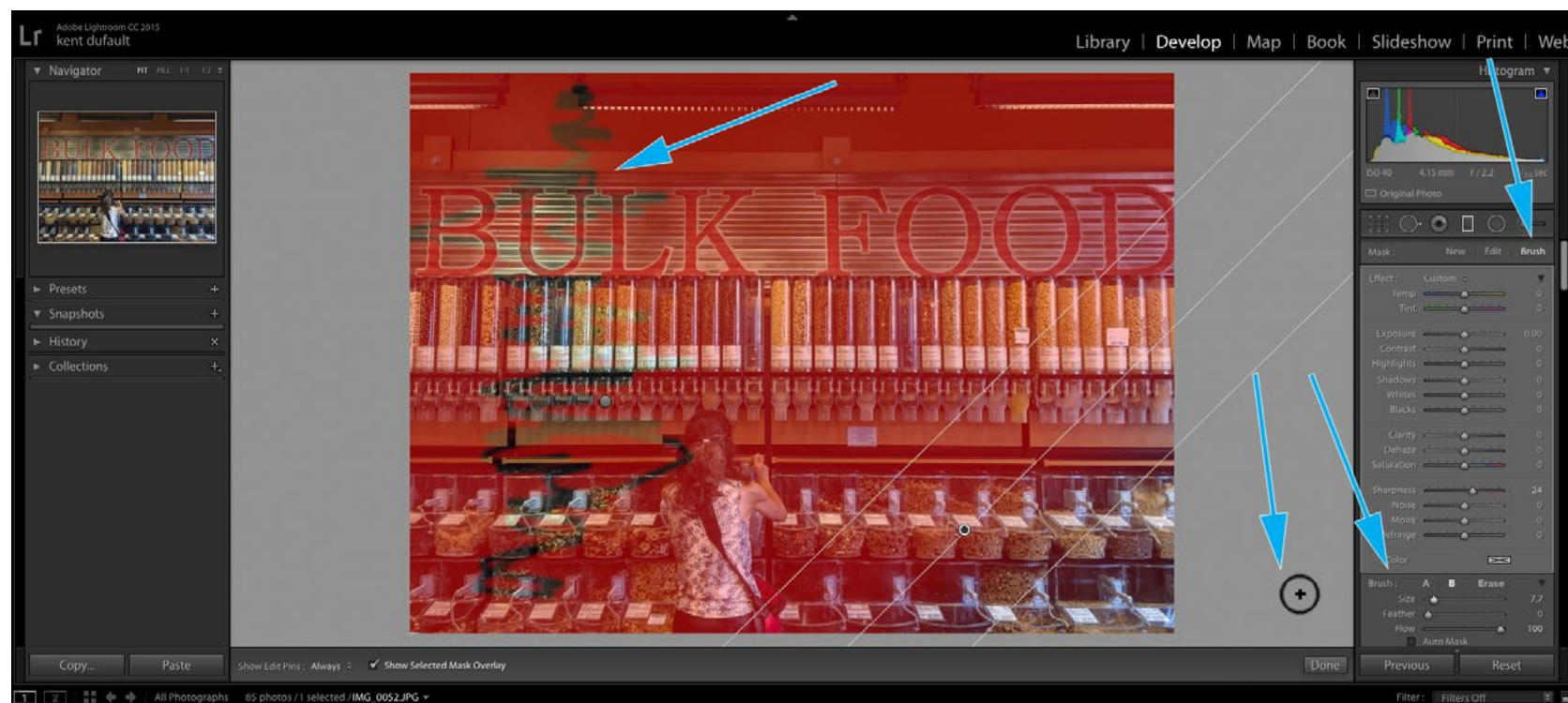
Image 071 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

You can also alter an active mask by using the "Brush" tool.

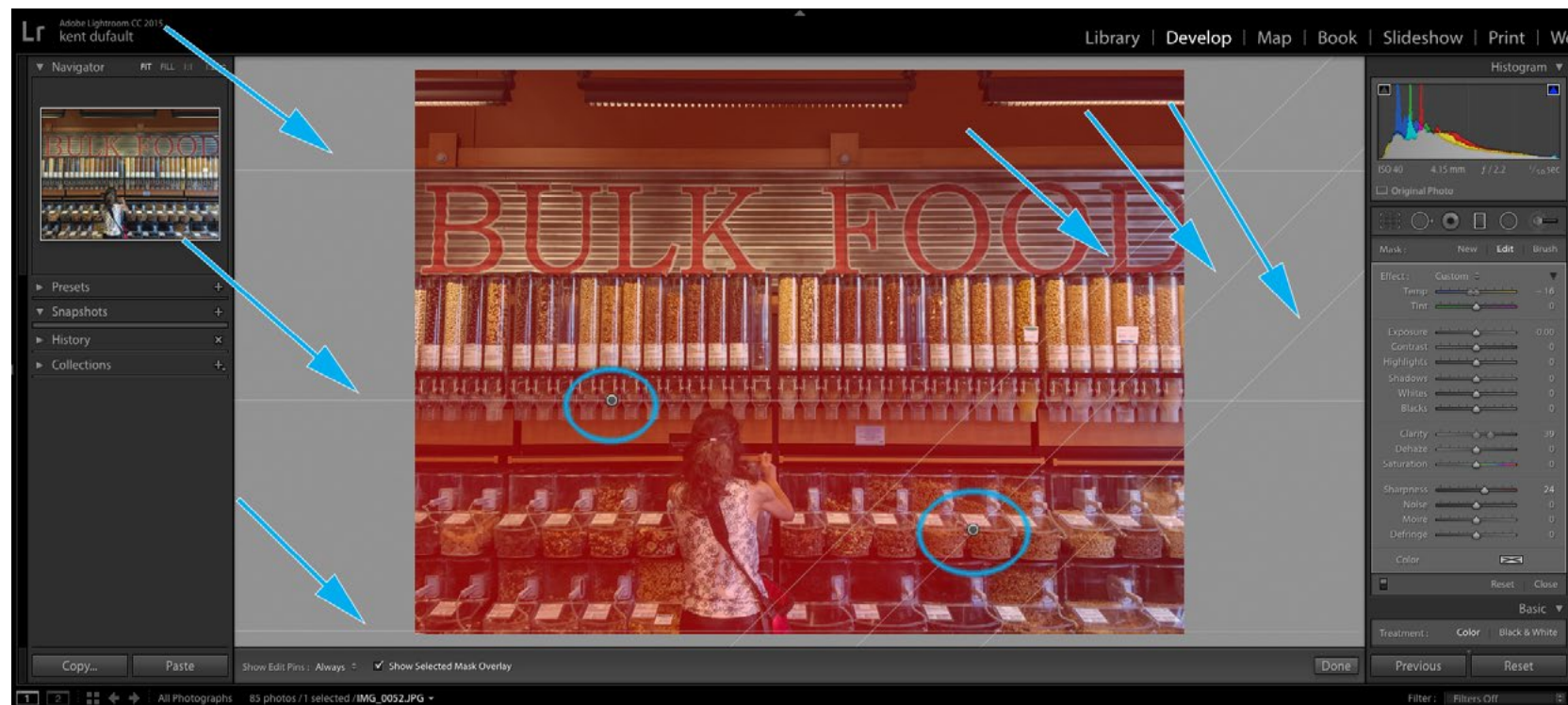·   In Image 071, look at the far-right blue arrow. By clicking on "Brush," you will select the Brush tool. **It's important to remember that this brush will only affect the active mask.**

·   The two downward-pointing arrows (on the right) show you where the Brush Tool adjustments are. You can set the parameters for two Brushes, and then click back and forth between them. These two Brushes, A and B, are used to **add** to the active mask. To remove from an active mask, you would click the "Erase" button (Image 071 – upper-right blue arrow).

·   In Image 071, you can see where I erased part of the mask using the Brush tool.
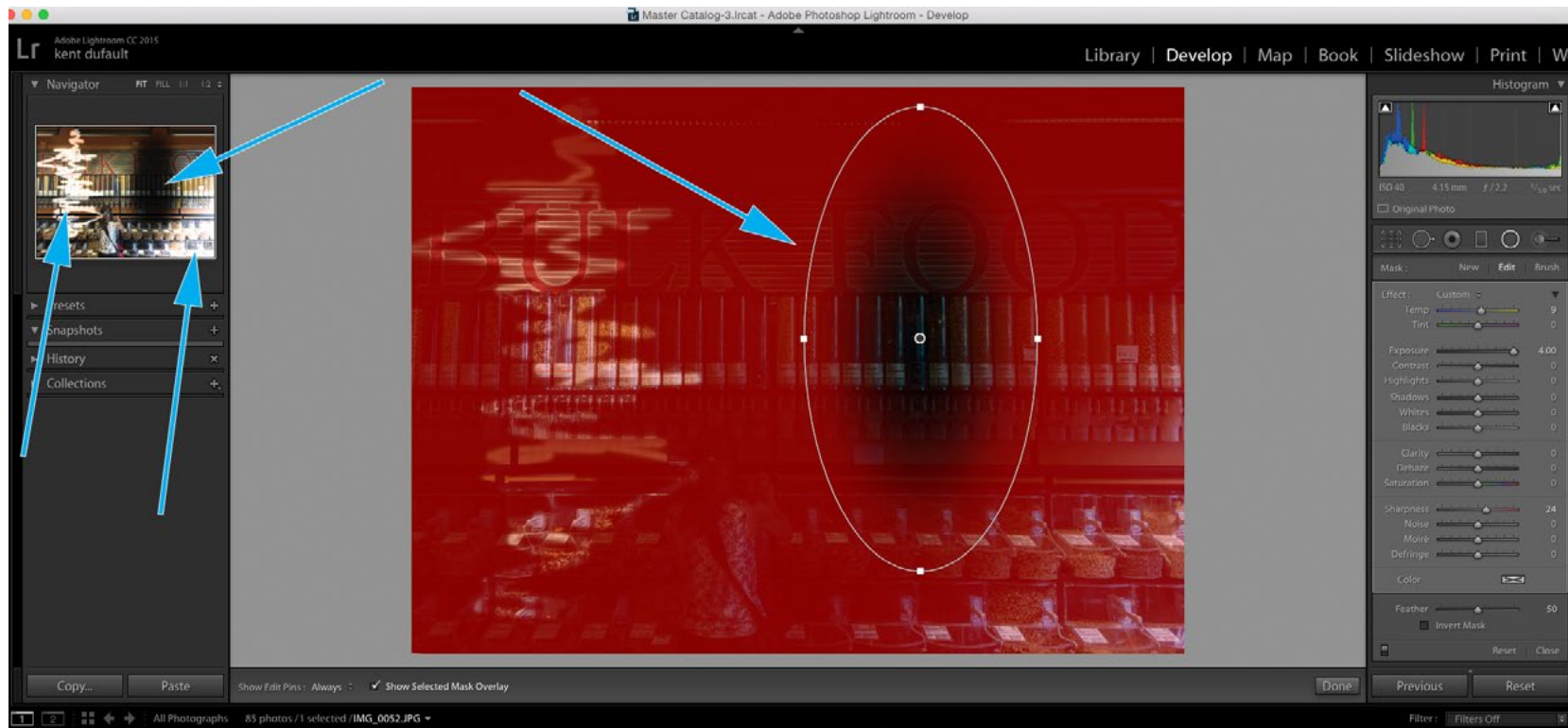
Image 072 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Radial Filter

The Radial Filter works much like the Graduated Filter in regard to managing the masks.

Let's take a look at a few notable differences.

1. In Lightroom, the masks can be layered on top of each other. Look at the smaller Preview Window on the far left of Image 072. You can clearly see where my previous masking with the Graduated Filter tool is affecting the photograph on the left and lower right. You can also see where my new Radial Filter mask is affecting the picture on the right. All of your masking edits are visible in this smaller Preview Window on the left.

2. A Radial Filter mask can be moved by placing your cursor anywhere inside of the oval, left-clicking, holding, and dragging.
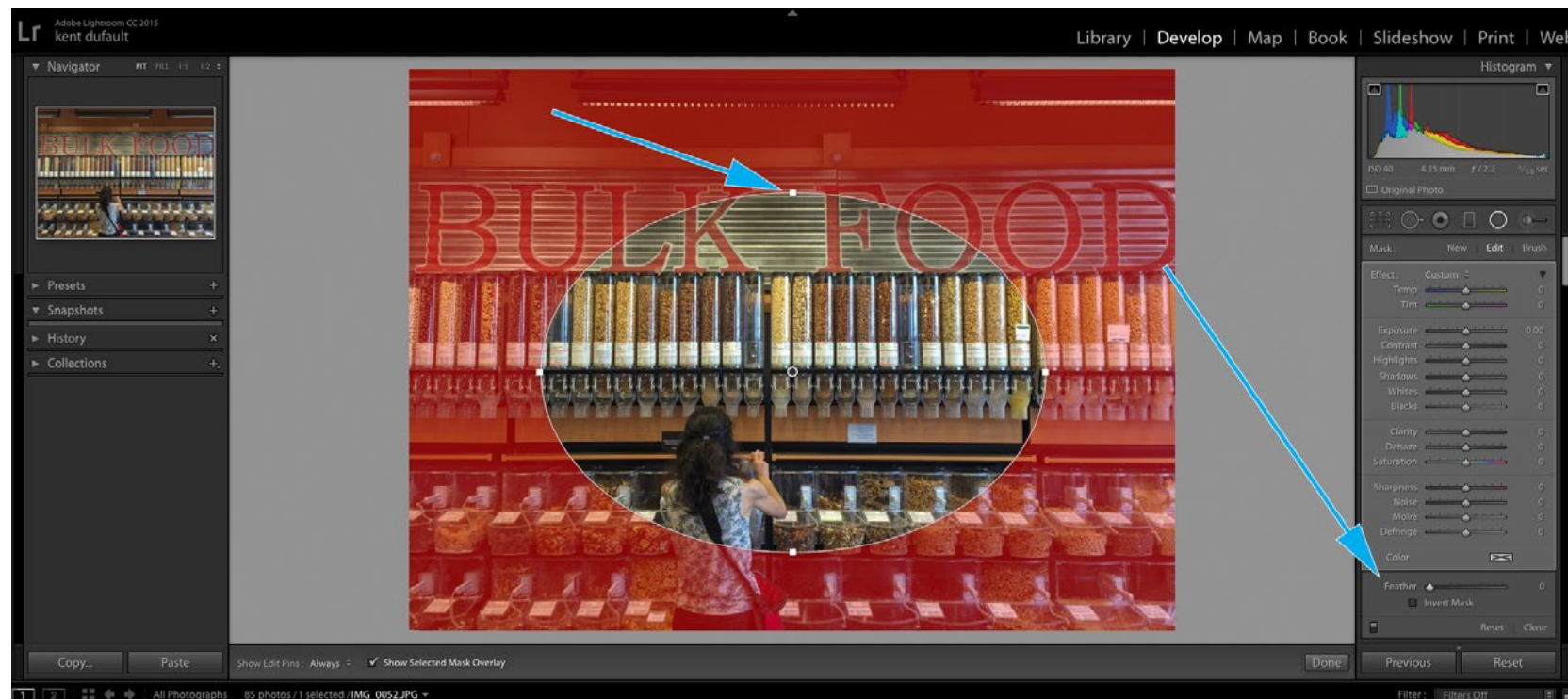
Image 073 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Adjusting the "Feather" slider can change the transition of the masked area. If you place your cursor onto one of the white boxes located along the perimeter of the oval, left-click, hold, and drag, you can change the shape of the oval.

Image 074 – Photograph by Kent DuFault
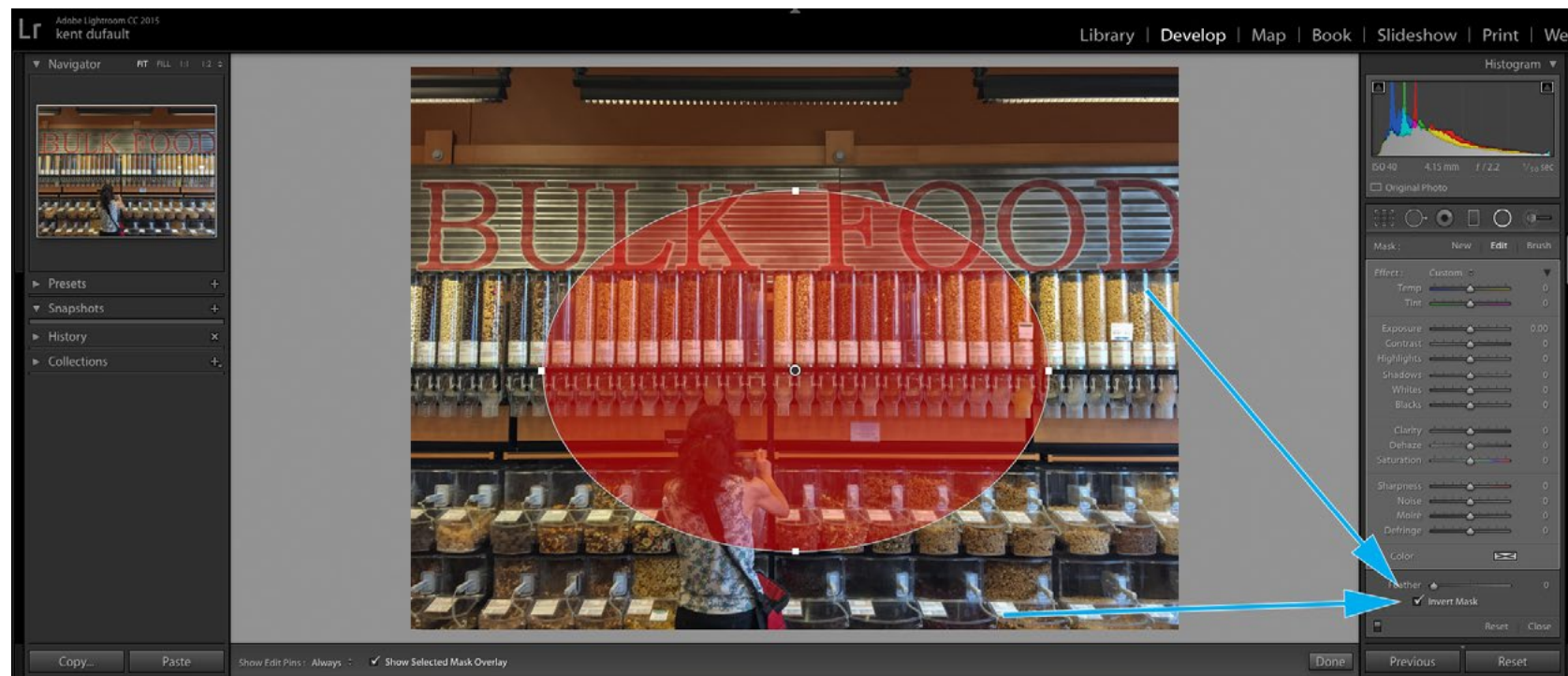
By checking the "Invert" box, the mask will flip from outside the oval to inside the oval.
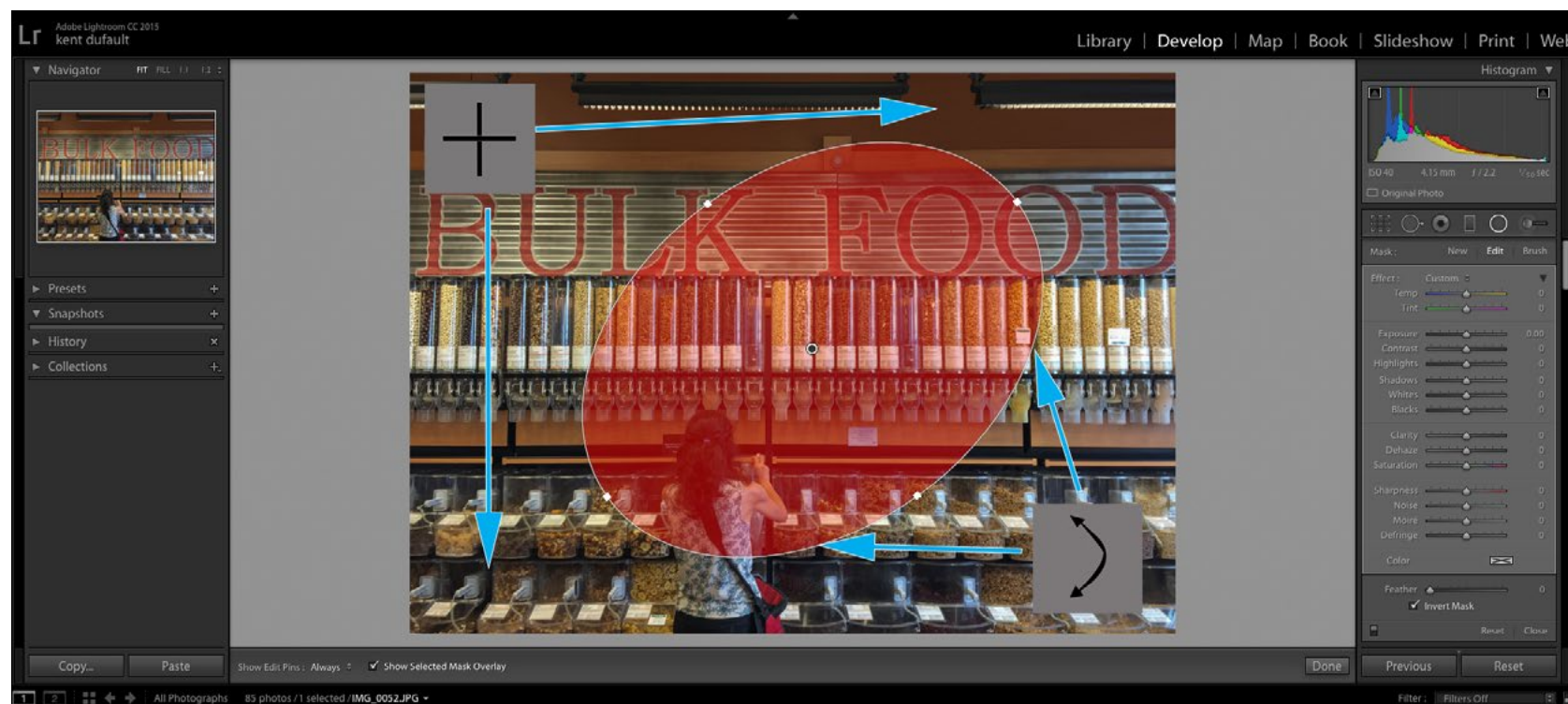
Image 075 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

If you place your cursor outside of the oval, your cursor will turn into a "+" icon (Image 075). As with the Graduated Filter, this indicates you are going to create a new oval mask with the Radial Filter tool.

If you place your cursor along the outline of the oval, but **not** on one of the white boxes, the curved arrow icon will appear (Image 075). Left click, hold, and drag to rotate the mask clockwise or counterclockwise.

> ◇ **Key Lesson:** When using the Brush Tool in either the Graduated Filter or the Radial Filter, checking the "Auto Mask" box can help make it easier to alter the mask.
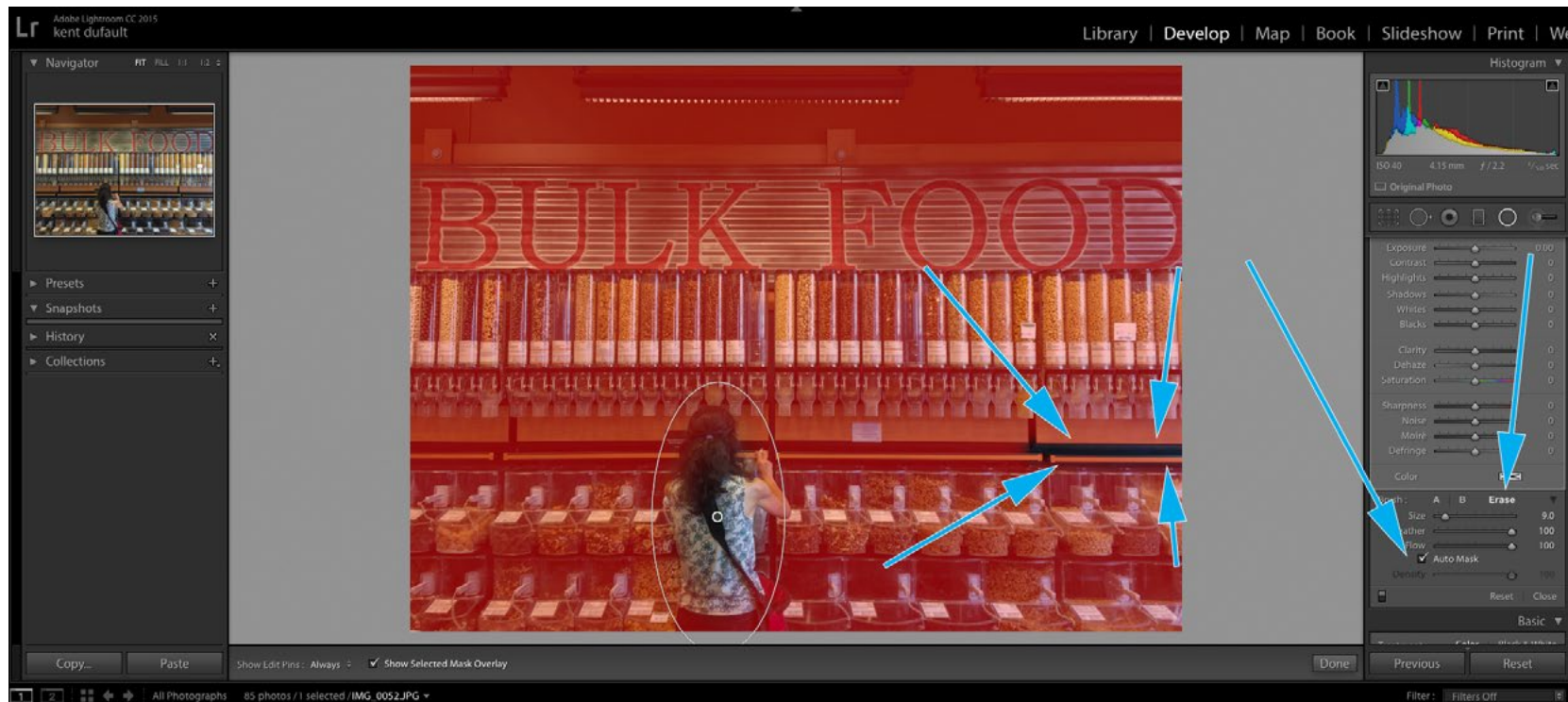
Image 076 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Take a look at Image 076. You can see that I created a mask using the Radial Filter. I then clicked on the Brush Tool within the Radial Filter toolbox. Don't get confused between the "Brush" tool located within the Graduated Filter, the Radial Filter toolboxes, and the "Adjustment Brush, which (the icon) just happens to be located above the area we are talking about.

I then selected the "Auto Mask" box and the "Erase" option. I am going to erase from the current mask.

I dragged my Brush along the section of the Bulk Food display on the right (Image 076).

The Auto Mask feature selected the dark line. This is where the Auto Mask feature can save you time.

Whenever you want to select an object that has a clear outline of contrast, the Auto Mask option works great. In other situations, it doesn't perform as well. So, for example, it works great to quickly mask, or unmask, a building against a blank sky.
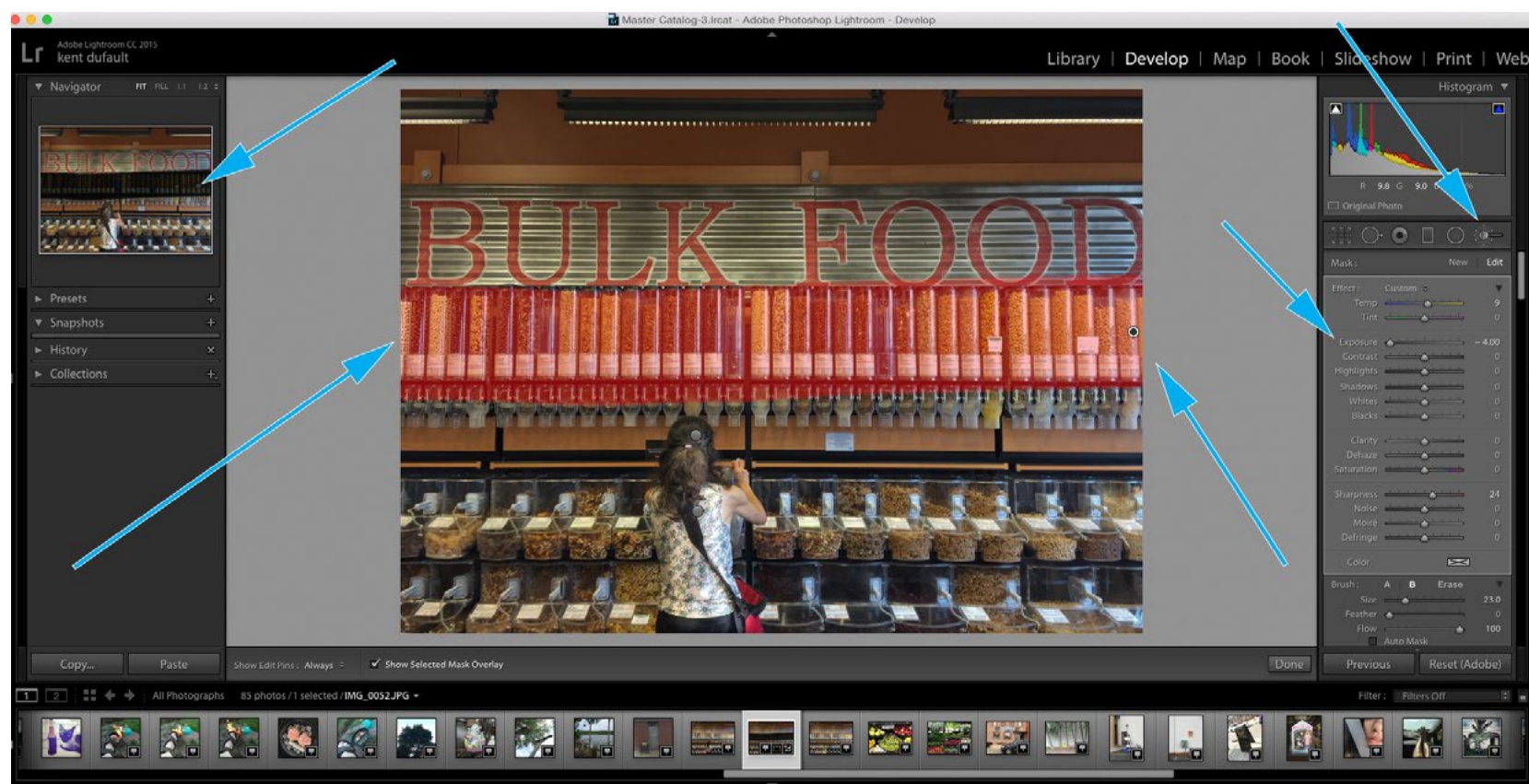
Image 077 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Adjustment Brush

The "Adjustment Brush" is the last of the masking tools in Lightroom. It works in a similar way to the ACR version of the Adjustment Brush that we discussed earlier in the Photoshop section.

· The far, upper-right, blue arrow, pointing downward, indicates where the Adjustment Brush tool can be selected.

· The toolbox is located in the same place as previously discussed, and the brush adjustments are the same as can be found in the Graduated and Radial Filters.

· Look at the two blue arrows on the far left. I made a drastic exposure adjustment, using my currently active mask, so that you can clearly see what I'm talking about. While the mask is visible in the large Preview Window, you cannot see the changes being made. You can see them in the small Preview Window on the upper left. You would have to turn the mask visibility to "off" to see the changes
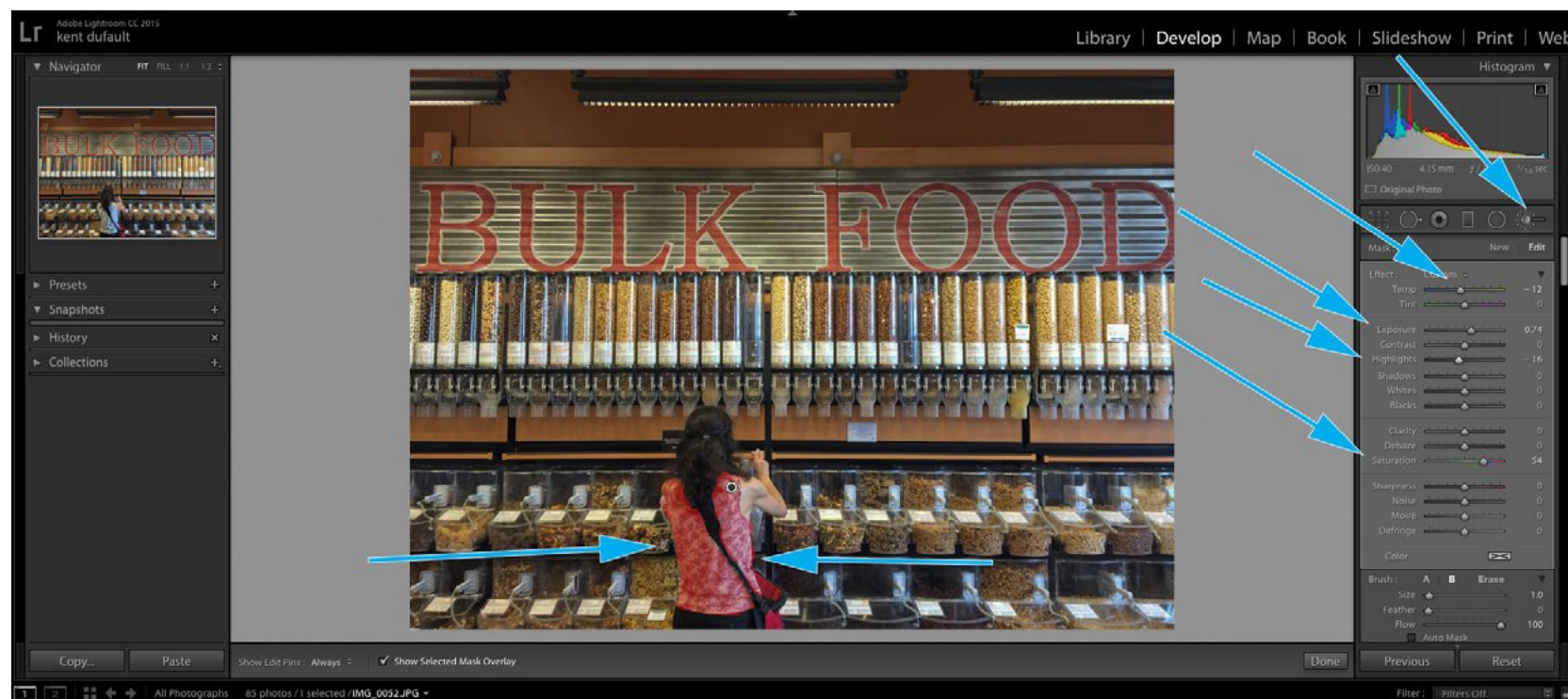
Image 078 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

on the larger Preview Window. Use the small Preview Window to get your adjustment close, and then turn the mask off so that you can fine-tune the adjustment while watching the larger Preview Window.

◇ **Key Lesson:** A good workflow for working with masks, in any of the Adobe programs, is to create the mask and then fine-tune the edges of the mask using a drastic edit to show exactly where the mask is working. Then, reset the drastic edit, turn the mask visibility off, and conduct the real edit.

In Image 078, I practiced this workflow. With the Adjustment Brush, I created a mask over the model's shirt. My intent was to brighten the shirt and add to the color saturation without affecting anything else around it.

After creating my mask and adjusting the edges to my satisfaction, I turned the mask visibility off. I then made my editing adjustments on the right.

Image 079 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

In Image 079, I composited a "before and after" image of the model's shirt; you can clearly see how the mask helped make this photograph a better image, and it did so in a matter of seconds!

🪑 Self Check Quiz

1. In Lightroom, does the red mask indicate a "Mask View" or a "Selection View"?

2. In Lightroom, masks can be used for precise fundamental editing. What can they not be used for?

3. Name the two filters that use masks in Lightroom.

4. Once you've created a Graduated Filter, how do you create a second one?

5. What key do you press on the keyboard to turn the mask visibility on and off?

6. What icon on the Preview Window indicates that you can rotate the mask?

7. True or False: Graduated Filters can only be created from top to bottom or bottom to top.

8. How do you change the transition rate of the Graduated Filter mask?

9. True or False: Once the mask is created, you cannot move it around the Preview Window.

10. True or False: When the mask visibility is on, you can see your editing adjustments on the larger Preview Window.

11. When using the "Brush Tool" inside of the Graduated or Radial Filters, how many brushes can you create?

12. What is the indicator that a mask is live?

13. How do you know if there is more than one mask on an image?

14. If you've created two masks using the Radial Filter, and change over to the Graduated Filter, can you still see the Radial Filter mask indicators?

15. To change the shape of a Radial Filter mask, what do you do?

16. If you place your cursor anywhere inside the Radial Filter mask and left-click, what can you do?

17. What is the tool that adjusts the transition of a Radial Filter mask from a hard edge to a medium-soft edge?

18. To invert a Graduated Filter mask, what do you do?

19. The Auto Mask option is useful under what circumstances?

20. True or False: When you select the "Erase" brush, you are attempting to erase part of your photograph.

21. Go back and look at Image 077. Enlarge the image if necessary. How many masks are currently visible in the Preview Window?

22. True or False: An excellent workflow habit is to create your mask first, then turn it off, and finally make your adjustments.

07 MASKING IN ADOBE ELEMENTS
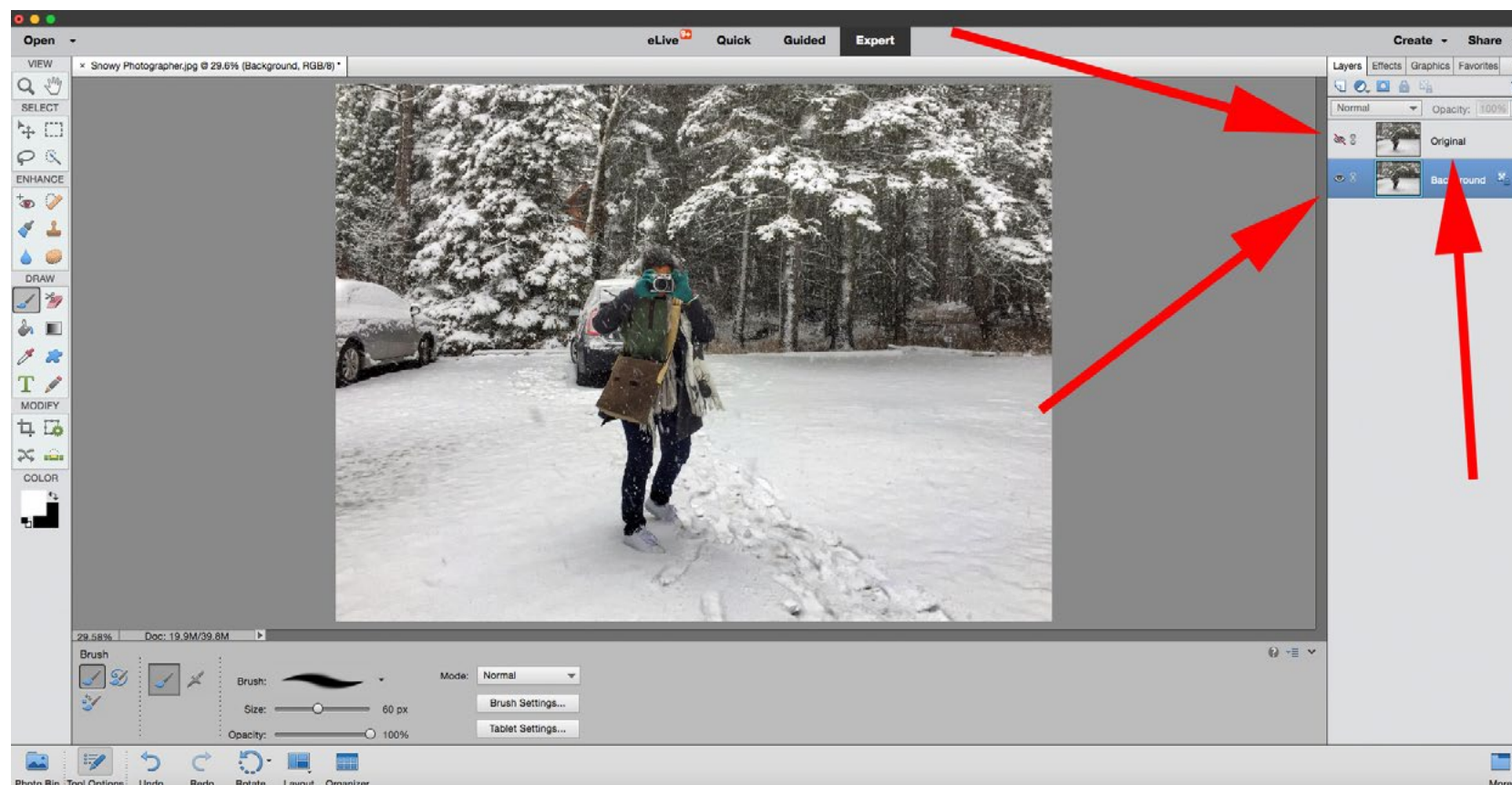
Image 080 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

In some ways, working with masks in Adobe Elements is very similar to Photoshop. The main difference, in the Layer Masking, is the interface and the amount of editing options.

The concept of an Adjustment Brush works quite differently in Adobe Elements as compared to the Adjustment Brush that is located in the ACR Window of Photoshop.

Adobe Elements has no masking options in the ACR window, which is unfortunate.

Adobe Elements does have the ability to create Layer Masks and Adjustment Layer Masks within the normal workspace.

It also has a tool called the "Smart Brush," which does create a mask. Unfortunately, in my opinion, the Smart Brush is silly – and useless – thus making it more confusing than being worth the time explaining it. So I'm not going to get into it here.

I'll give you some ideas on how to work with a mask in Elements without having to touch that silly Smart Brush.
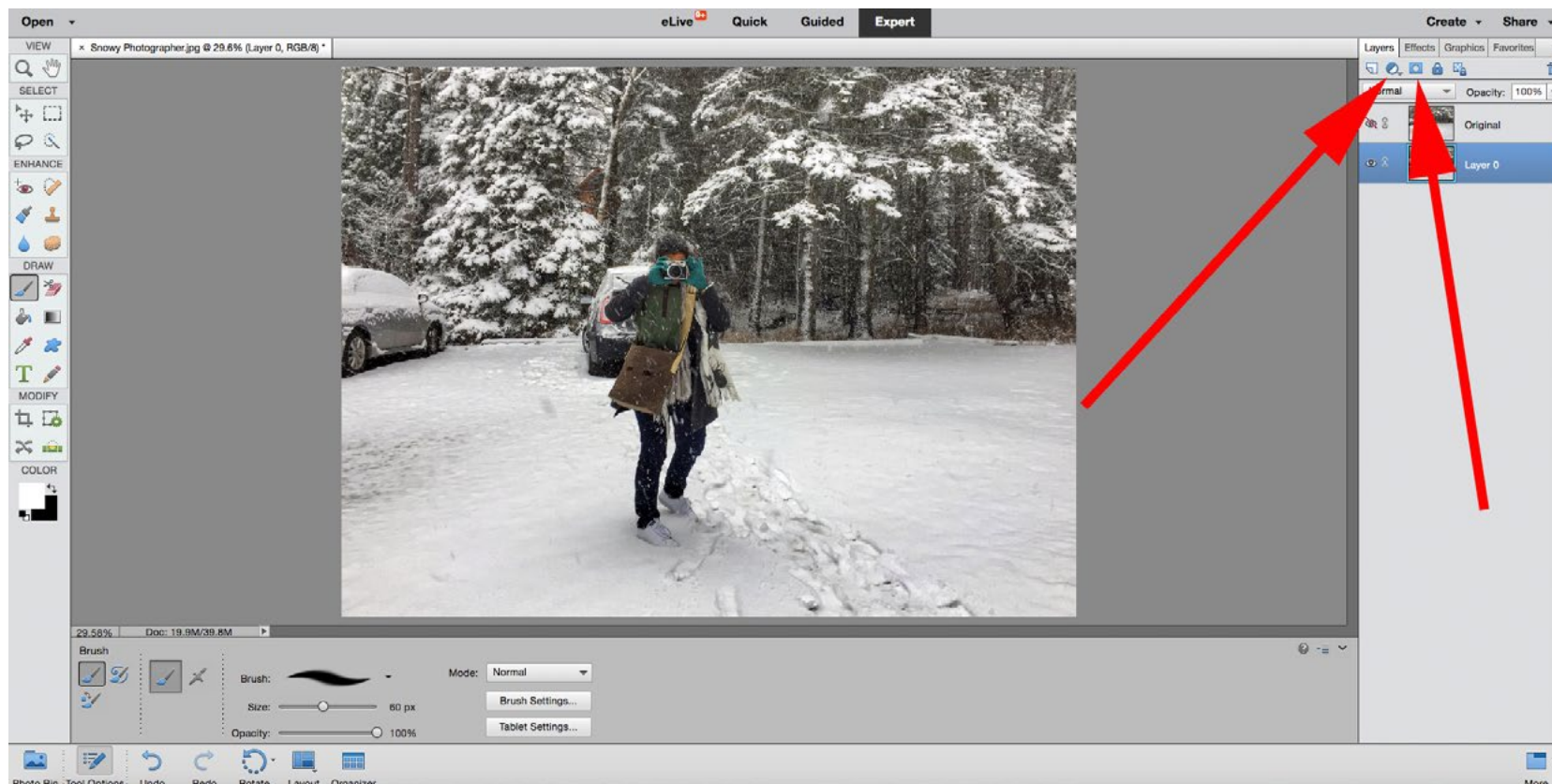
Image 081 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

You can read more about the Smart Brush here (if you insist): [icon] [The Ultimate Guide to Fundamental Editing](#).

As you begin to work with a Layer Mask within Elements, make a duplicate layer of your original file (just as we did in the Photoshop section). This is to preserve your original photograph. You can rename the Duplicate Layer when you create it, or you can rename it by right-clicking on it after you have created it, and then selecting the option "Rename Layer."

I like to name this layer "Original." Then, click the "eye" icon to turn the visibility of the duplicate layer off. Highlight the background layer to select it.

In the Layers Tab, there are two masking options that will be your primary tools. The left arrow (Image 081) is pointing at the "Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer" icon. The arrow just to the right of it is pointing at the "Add layer mask" icon.

Now, if you were to click the other tabs – Effects, Graphics, and Favorites – some of those options also employ masking.
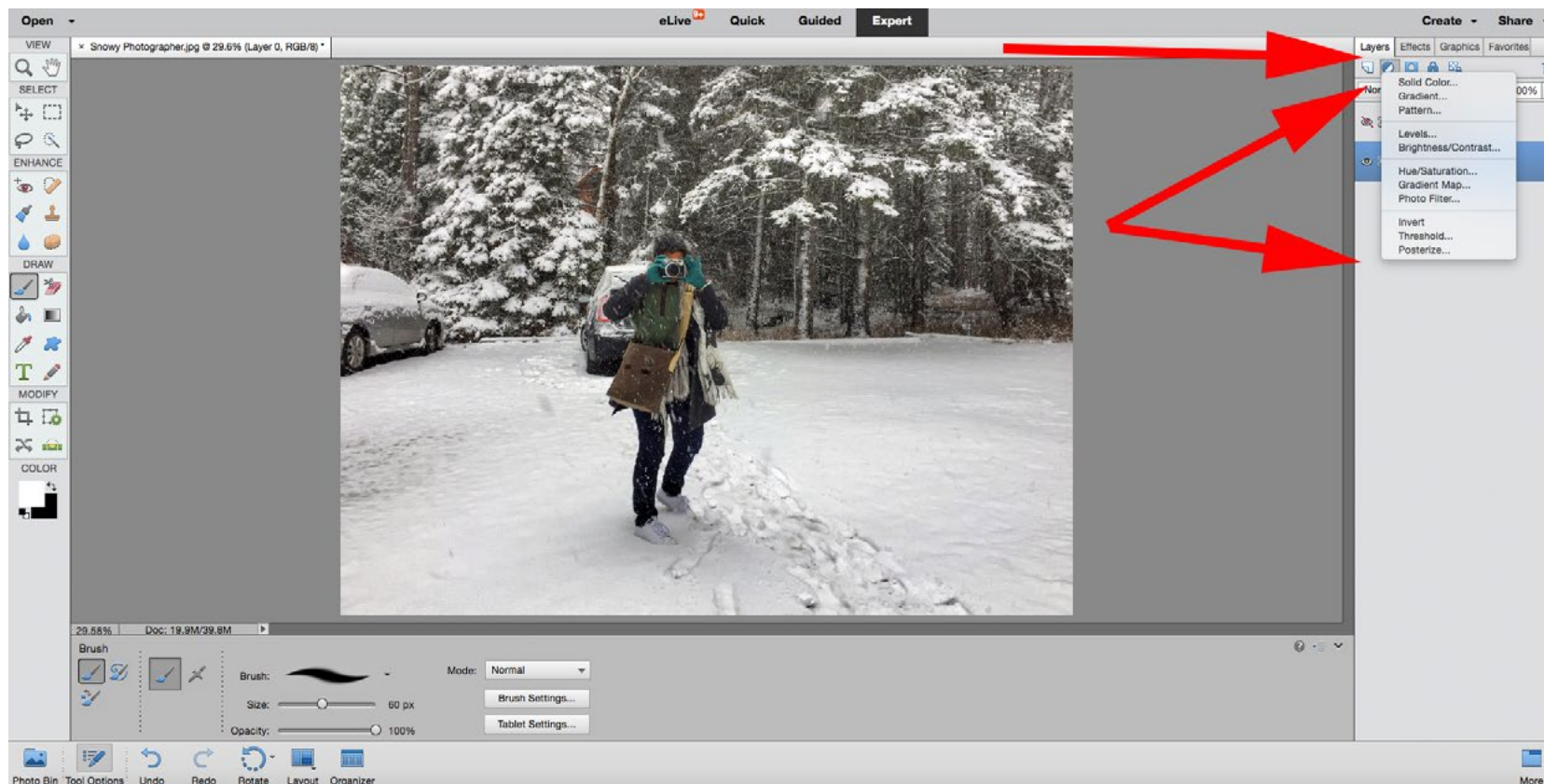
Image 082 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

However, you are given little to no control over how the masking works. Thus, we are not going to talk about those options. Avoid them.

If you click the Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer icon and open the dropdown menu, you will see a list of options. When you click any of these options, a new layer will be added along with a "Reveal All" layer mask.
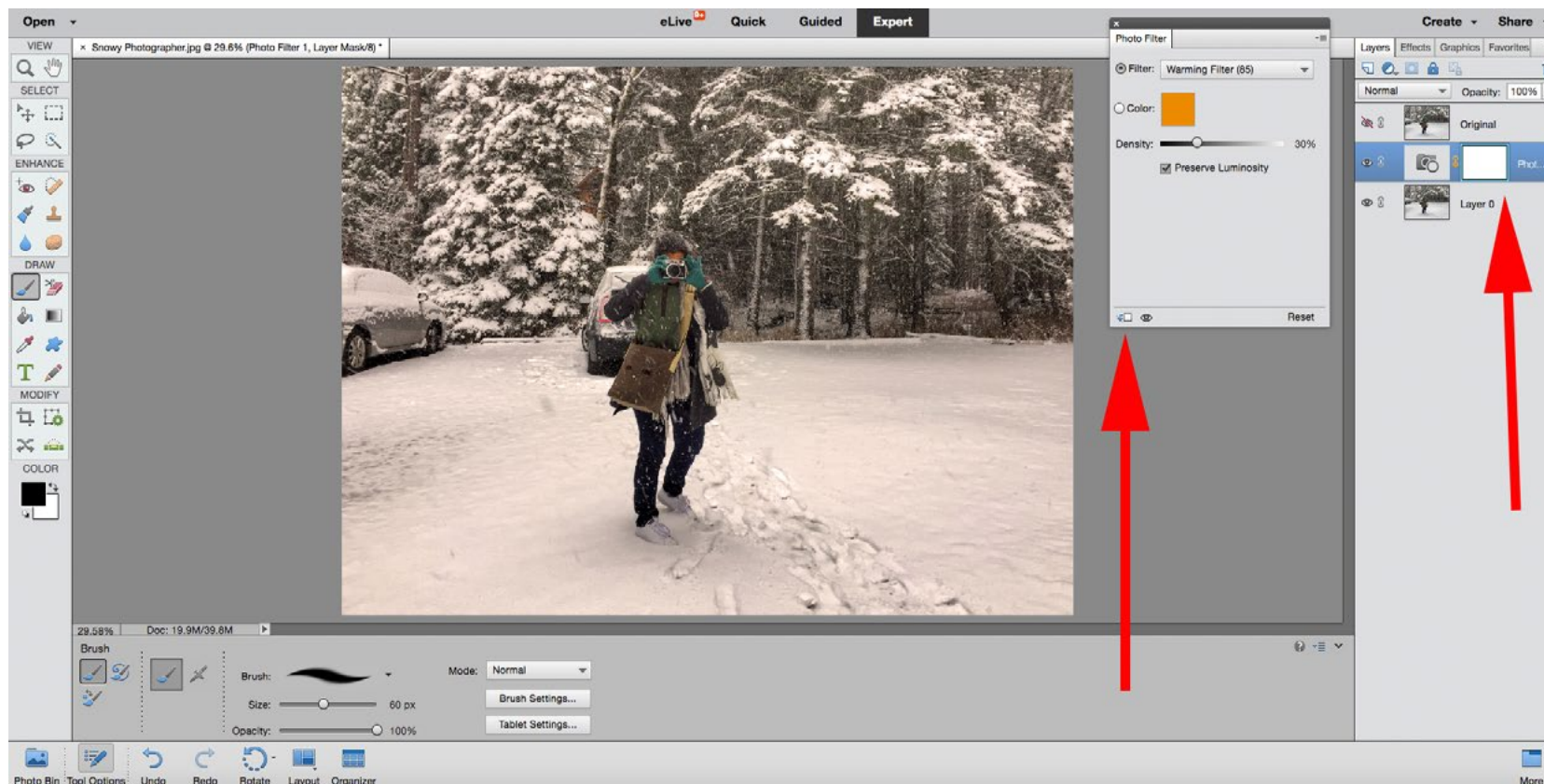
Image 083 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

For the sake of discussion, I chose the "Photo filter" Adjustment Layer option. The far-right arrow, in Image 083, indicates that an Adjustment Layer was added above Layer 0 (the background layer) and that a Reveal All mask was also added within that new layer.

How do we know that this mask is a Reveal All mask? We know because the added icon appears as the color white. A Hide All mask would appear as the color black.

What does the Reveal All mask accomplish on our Preview Image? Whatever adjustment we make is applied to the entire image. The entire effect is revealed.

The left arrow (Image 083) shows you where the Clipping icon is located within the Adjustment Layer toolbox.

In the default state, the Adjustment Layer and the Mask will affect all layers beneath it.

If you check the Clipping icon box, the Adjustment Layer will be "Clipped" to the layer directly beneath it. It will now affect only that layer and none of the other layers in the stack below it.

Notice that the Reveal All mask icon (on the right) in the Adjustment Layer has a blue box around it. This indicates that the mask is selected and "ON." You can alter the mask by painting on the Preview Image using any painting or drawing tool and the color black (or some opacity level of black).

What if the blue box were around the left icon in the Adjustment Layer, which is known as the "Layer Thumbnail"?

You would not be able to alter the mask. If you try to paint on the Preview Image, you will **actually** be painting on your precious photograph.

◇ **Key Lesson:** When you begin getting creative with masking, especially if you're creating multiple masks, it can get confusing as to what is active. This has happened to me many times. I was trying to alter a mask, and it wasn't working. The reason usually was that I didn't have the right layer and mask combination highlighted, aka "Selected." Before you begin to alter a mask, always check that the correct layer is highlighted and that the mask icon on the right side of the layer is also highlighted. If the mask were white, you would change it by painting or drawing on it with the color black (or some opacity level of black). If the mask were black, you would do the opposite and paint on it with the color white (or some opacity level of white). Why do I say "or some opacity level"? Remember back to the beginning of the book when I was talking about how masks work. A mask can work at a 100% effective rate, or it can work at some percentage of an effective rate. If I have a white Reveal All mask and I paint on it with the color black set at 50% opacity, what happens? The mask will only be 50% effective!
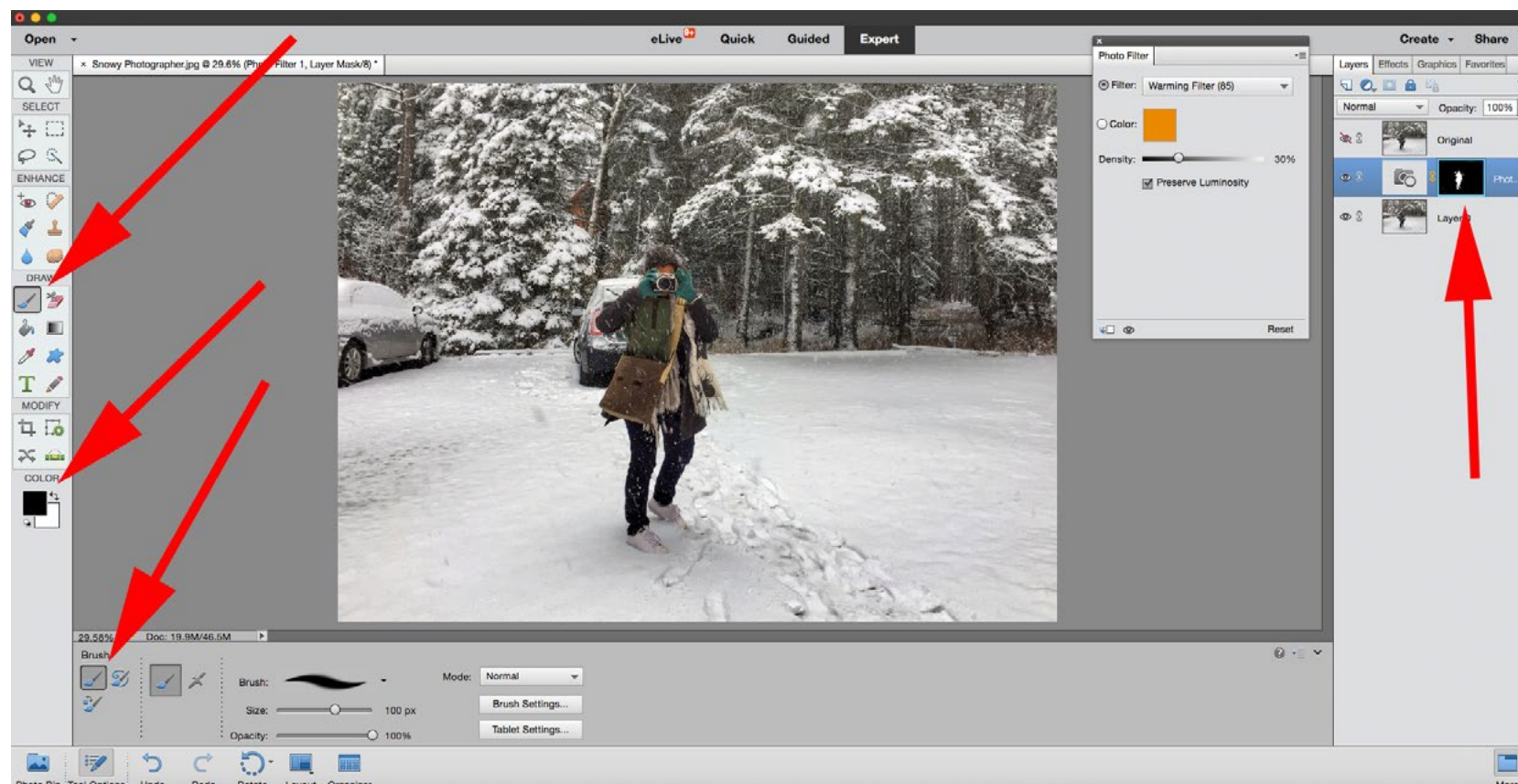
Image 084 – Photography by Kent DuFault

What happens when we highlight the "Layer Thumbnail" on the left? Nothing really. It has one purpose. If you've closed the Adjustment Layer toolbox window, do a double left-click on the Layer Thumbnail to reopen it.

Let's do an experiment so that we can realize the **power** of using masks.

I decided that I liked the Warming filter effect on the model, but not the background. I took the following steps.

· I made sure that my Adjustment Layer and Layer Mask were selected (far-right arrow in Image 084).

· I selected my "Brush" drawing tool (upper arrow on the far left).

· I made sure that my Brush was set to "Brush Tool" in the "Tool Options" box at the bottom of the workspace. (By the way, if you don't see the Tool Options box, the icon to turn it on is at the very bottom, second icon from the left.)

· I then made sure that my color was set to black and at an opacity level
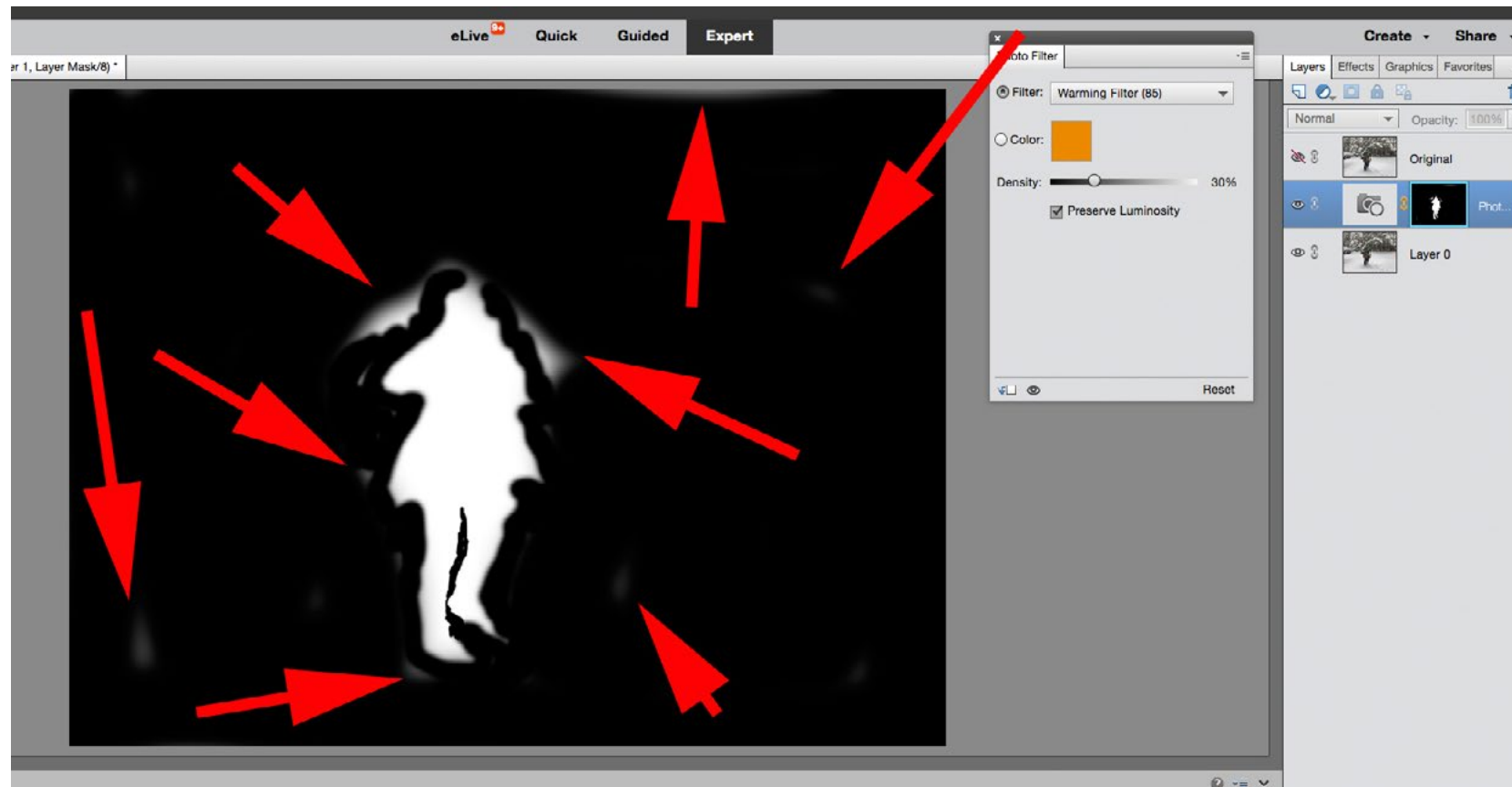
Image 085 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

of 100%. (What would happen if the opacity were set at some other setting? Some of the effect of the Adjustment Layer would bleed through to the layers below it.)

· I then painted all around the model until it appeared that the Adjustment Layer was only affecting her and not the background. Look at how the mask icon has changed (far-right arrow in Image 084 as compared to Image 083).

◇ **Key Lesson:** After you've created a mask, especially a complicated one, it's a good idea to look at the mask carefully so that you can judge if the mask is working in just the places that you want it to. Earlier, we looked at the keyboard strokes to view the mask in three different views. Using Adobe Elements, I prefer to look at it in the black and white viewing mode.
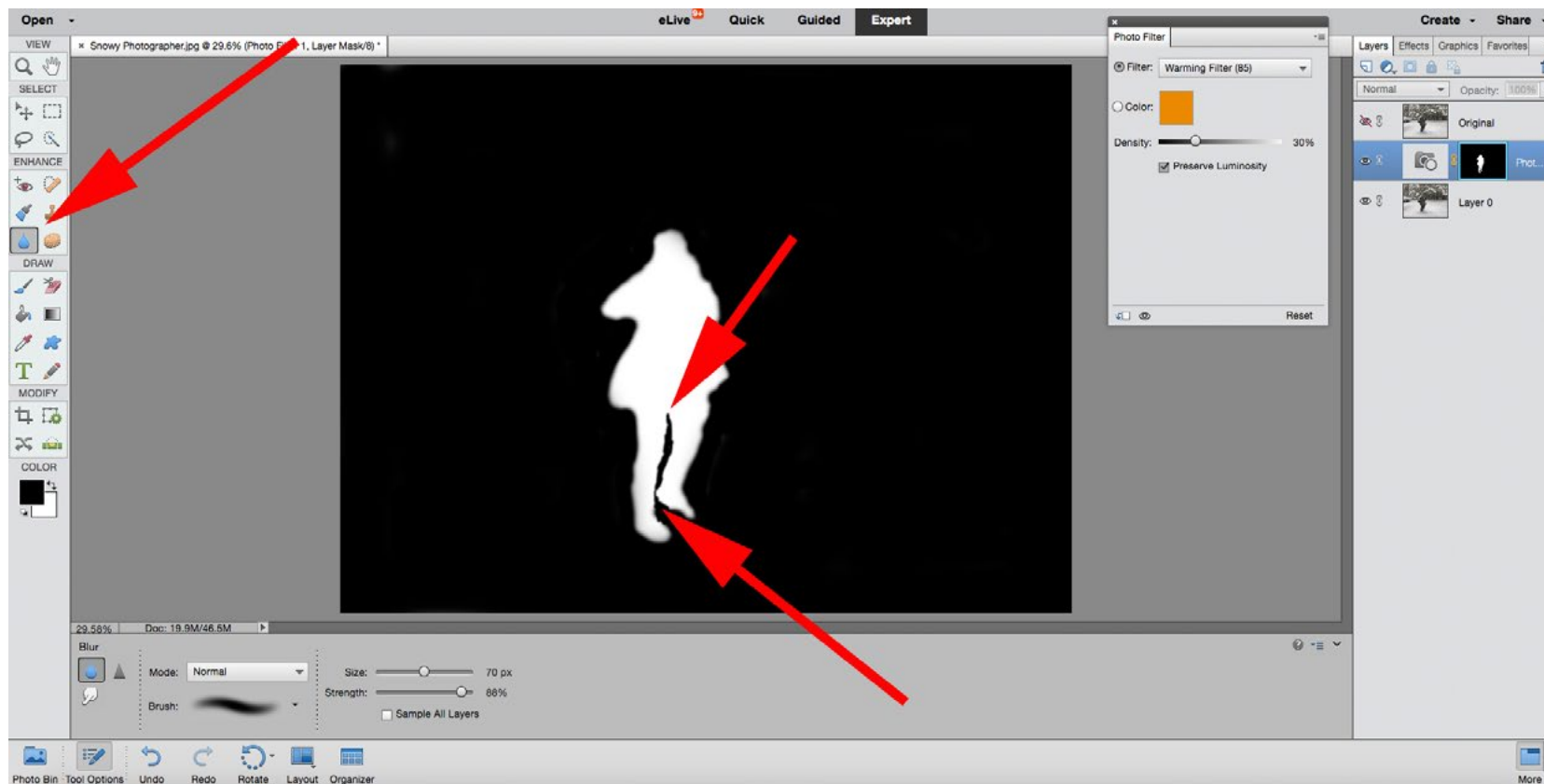
Image 086 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

- To turn on the black and white viewing mode, I left-clicked on the mask icon of the Adjustment Layer while holding down the "option" key (Apple) (alt key for PC).

- You can easily see that my masking job was pretty rough (Image 085).

I cleaned up all the areas of the mask that I missed earlier by using the Brush Tool and painting with the color black (Image 086).

- Here is a cool thing about masks. They can be altered with many of the adjustment tools just like the photograph. My masked area between the model's legs had a very hard edge. When I looked at the Preview at a 100% view, I could see artifacts created by the mask, so I chose the "Blur Tool" (upper-left arrow in Image 086) and I blurred the edges of the mask between her legs. This created a far better transition line.
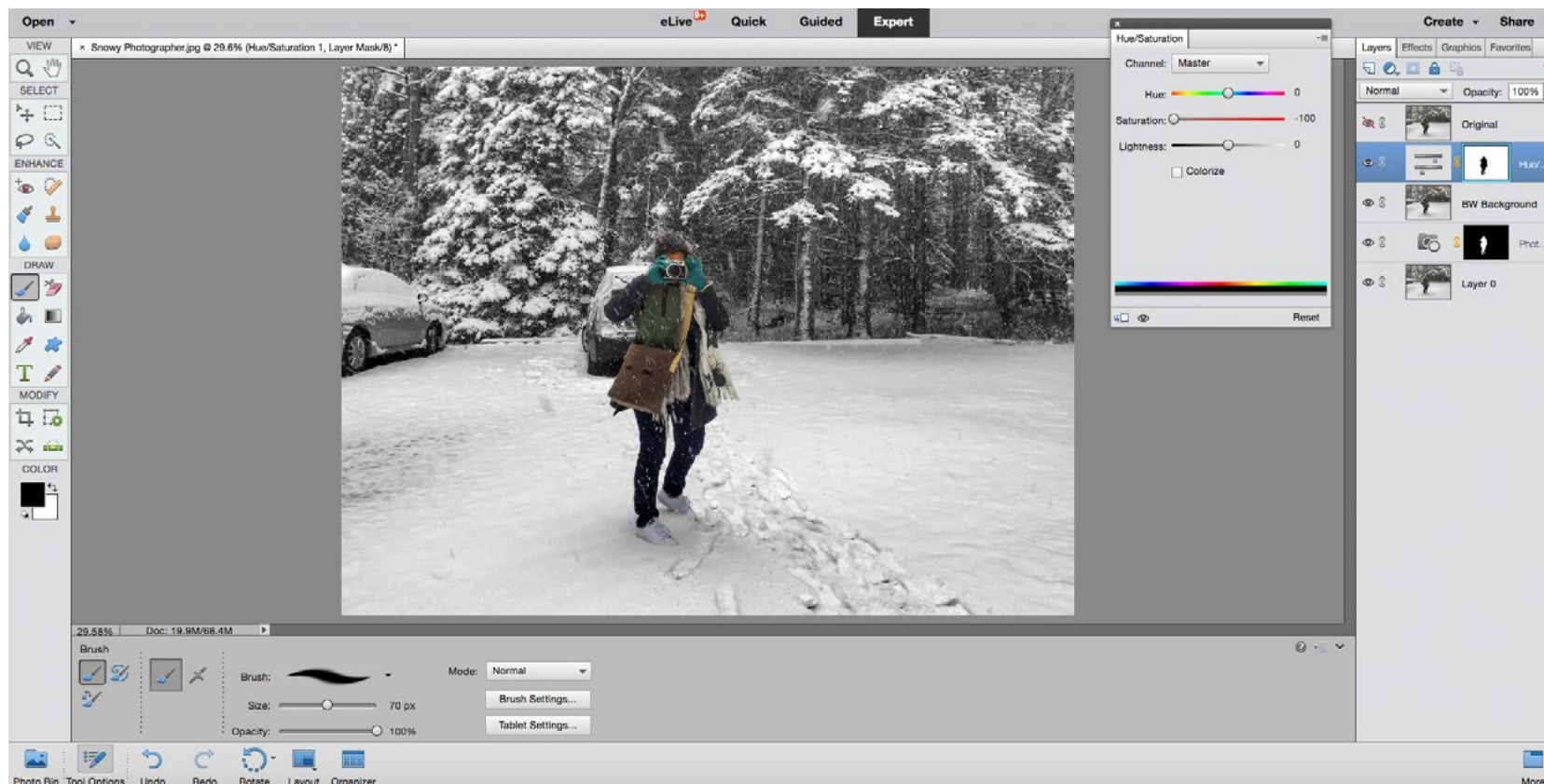
Image 087 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

What if I decided that I wanted to make the background black and white, so that the colors on the model stood out even more in the photograph?

· I duplicated Layer 0 and renamed it "BW Background."

· I moved the BW Background layer above my Photo Filter Adjustment Layer but below my invisible Original layer.

· I clicked on the Adjustment Layer icon and selected "Hue/ Saturation." A "Reveal All" mask was automatically generated (just as before).

· I made sure that the Hue/Saturation layer was selected and that the blue box indicated that my mask was selected.

- I selected my Paint Brush, and I made sure that the correct Brush Tool was selected in the Tool Options Box.

- I made sure the color black was selected and set to an opacity level of 100%.

- I painted around the outline of the model.

- I did an "option" (Apple) (alt for PC) left-click on the mask icon to turn my Preview Window into the black and white viewing mode.

- I finished painting my mask around the model.

- I did an "option" (Apple) (alt for PC) left-click on the mask icon to turn the black and white viewing mode **off.**

- I adjusted the Saturation slider until the background turned into a black and white image.

Tada! I now have a full color image of my model on a black and white background.

I hope that you are beginning to see the power of masks. They give you almost unlimited creative opportunity. Plus! Once you get used to working with them, it will go fast.

Let's look at the next masking option in the Layers Tab.

The third icon from the left, at the top of the Layers Tab, is titled "Add a mask."

The "Add a mask" option will simply add a "Reveal All" mask to whatever layer is selected. Whereas the Adjustment Layer ties a "Tool" to the Layer along with the mask, "Add a mask" simply inserts a mask.

What if you would like to "Add a mask," but you would prefer a "Hide All" mask. Let me show you how…
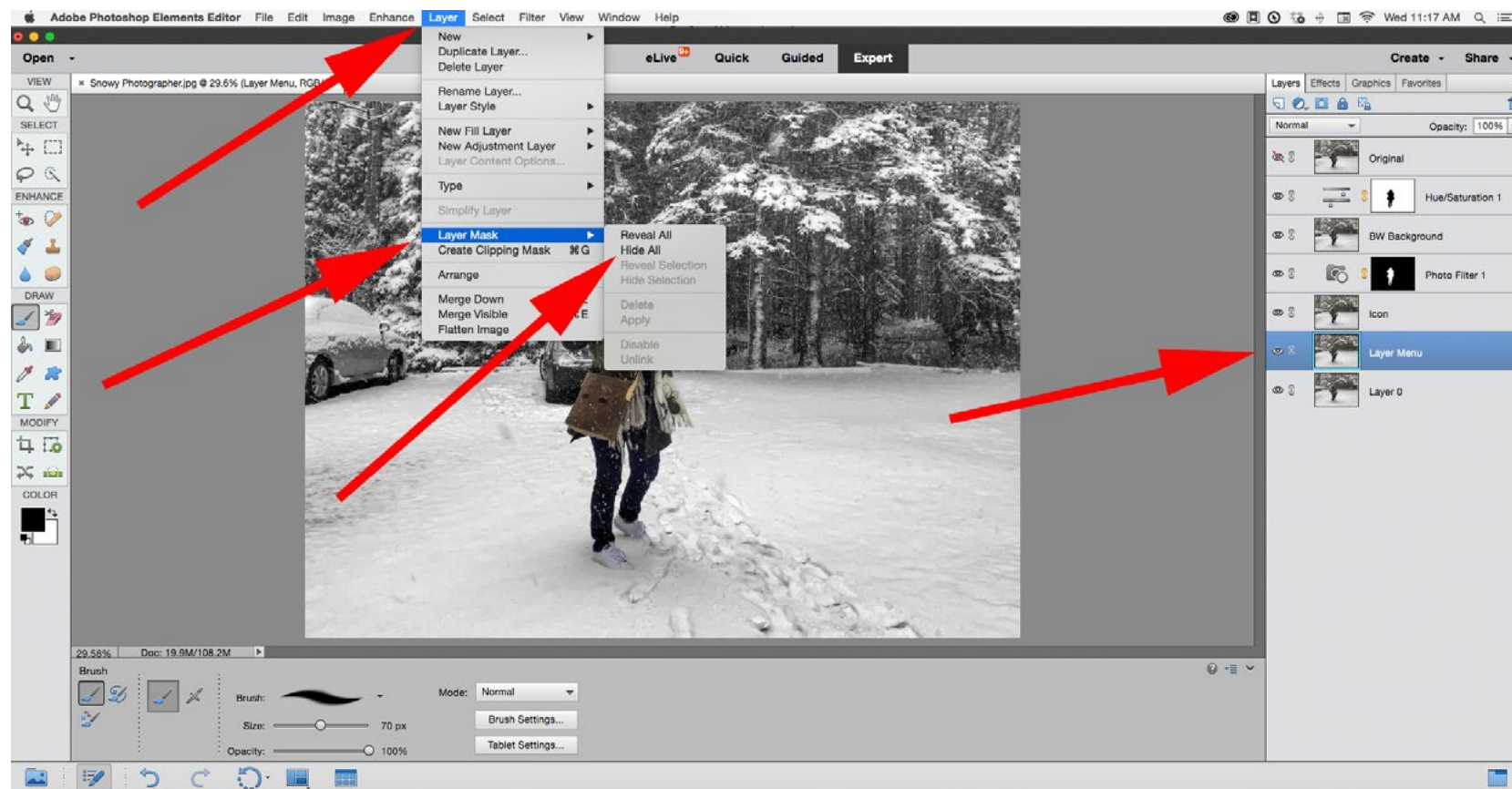
Image 088 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

For demonstration purposes, I duplicated Layer 0 twice. I name one layer "Layer Menu" and the second "Icon."

Notice that "Layer Menu" is highlighted. I want to put a "Hide All" mask on this layer.

I opened the Layer dropdown menu at the top of the workspace (Image 088). I selected "Layer Mask." I selected "Hide All."
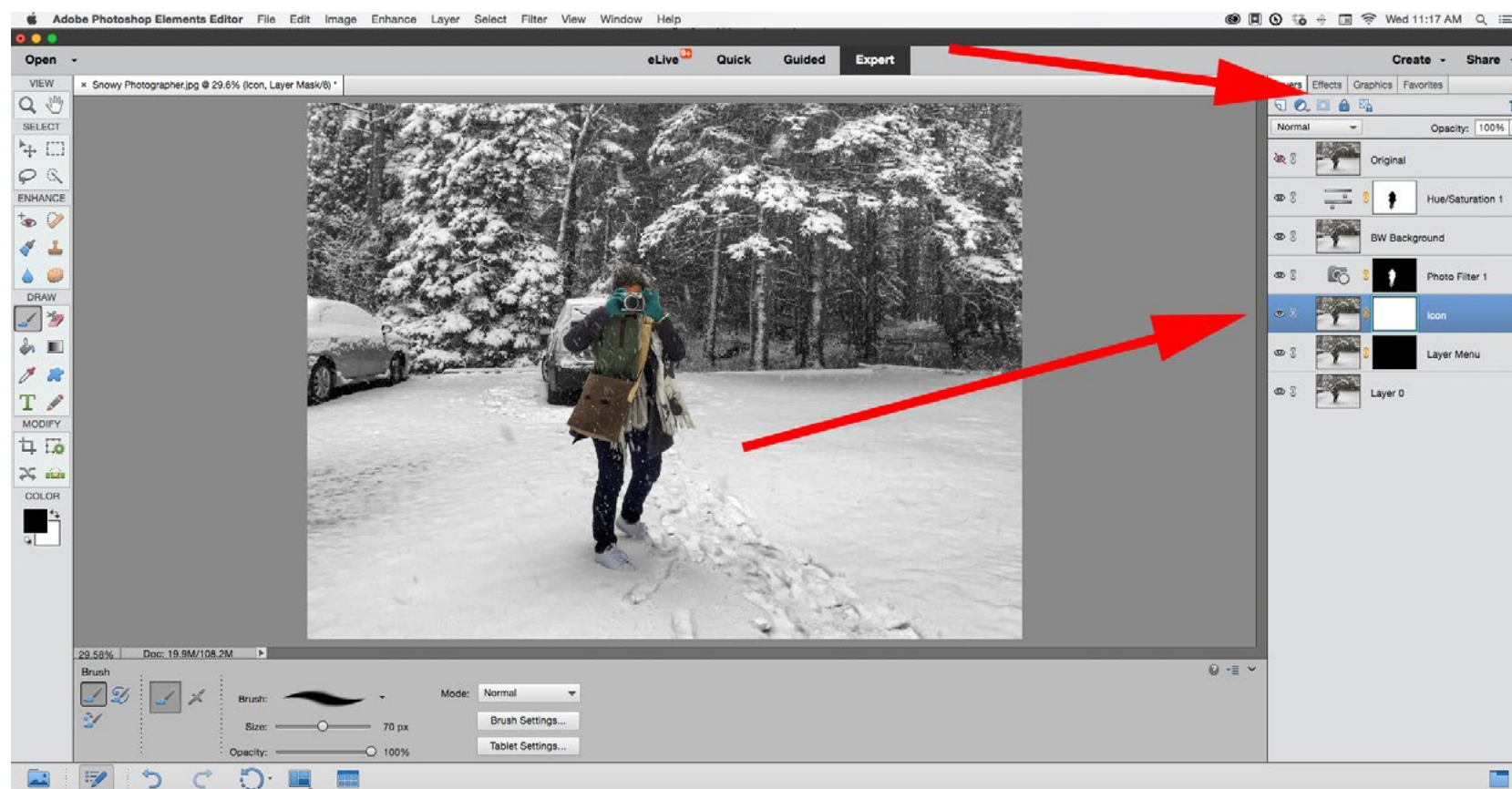
Image 089 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I then selected the Icon layer and clicked on the "Add layer mask" icon at the top of the Layers Tab.

Notice that the Icon layer has a white "Reveal All" mask icon, and that the Layer Menu layer has a black "Hide All" mask icon.

> ◇ **Key Lesson:** Why would you choose a Reveal All mask or a Hide All mask? I imagine different photographers would have different reasons. Here are my thoughts: if I want the edit to affect a large area of the photograph, a "Reveal All" mask seems to work faster. If I'm masking a smaller intricate area, I prefer a "Hide All" mask so that I can see the edit "emerge" as it is painted into the photograph.

Let's look at an example of a Hide All mask application.
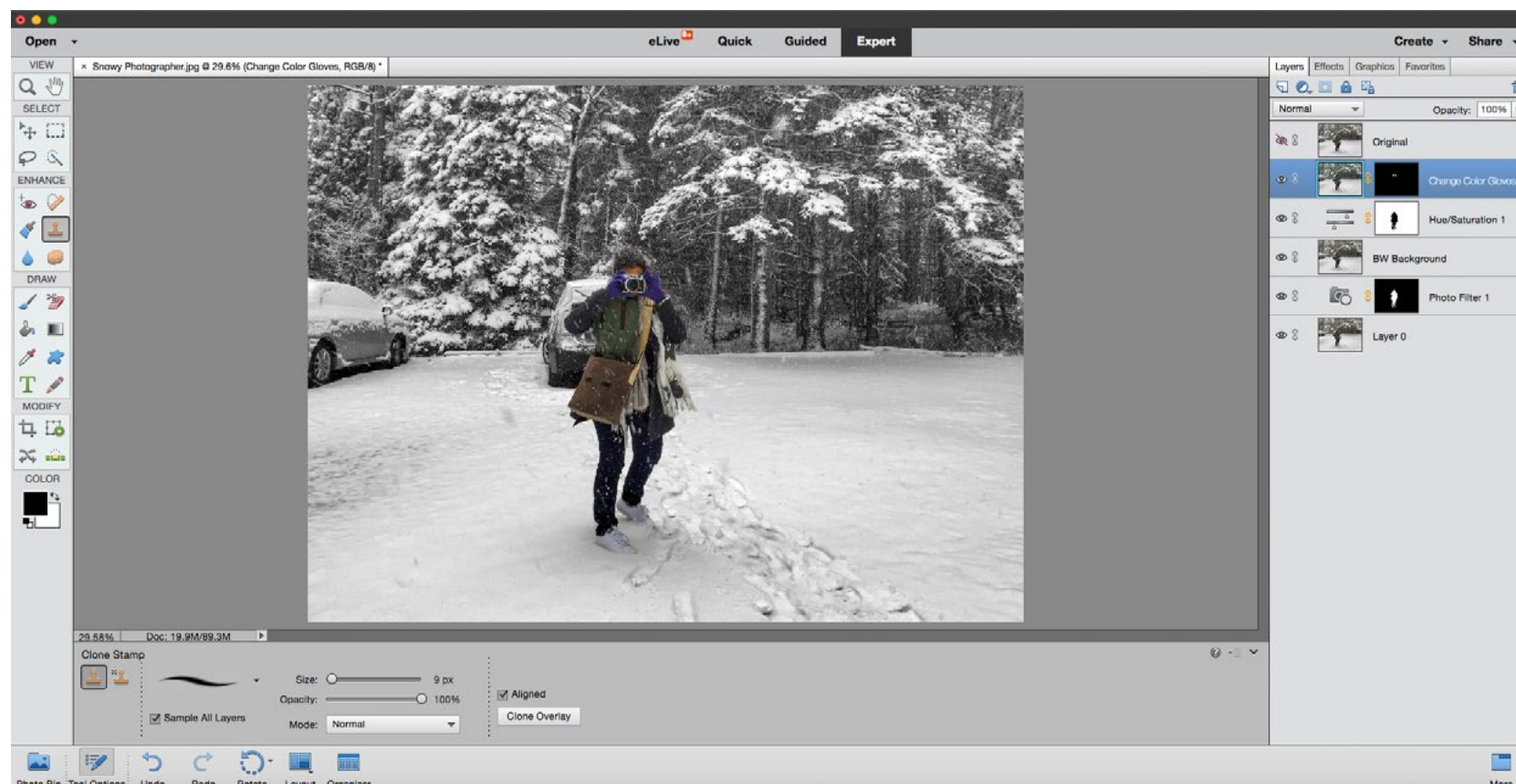
Image 090 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

When working on a fine detail mask, I prefer to set my image magnification to almost fill the Preview Window with my work area.

I'm going to change the color of the gloves (Image 090) for my final photograph.

Look at the Layers Tab on the right in Image 090. I put my Layer titled "Change Color Gloves" at the top of the stack but below the Original layer.

I went to the "Enhance" dropdown menu, at the top of the workspace window, and selected "Adjust color." From there, I selected the Hue/Saturation Tool. I adjusted the "Hue" slider until my gloves turned into a color that I liked.

The problem at this point is that the entire image is affected.

I then went to the "Layer" dropdown menu, at the top of the workspace, and selected "Layer Mask." I then selected the "Hide All" option.
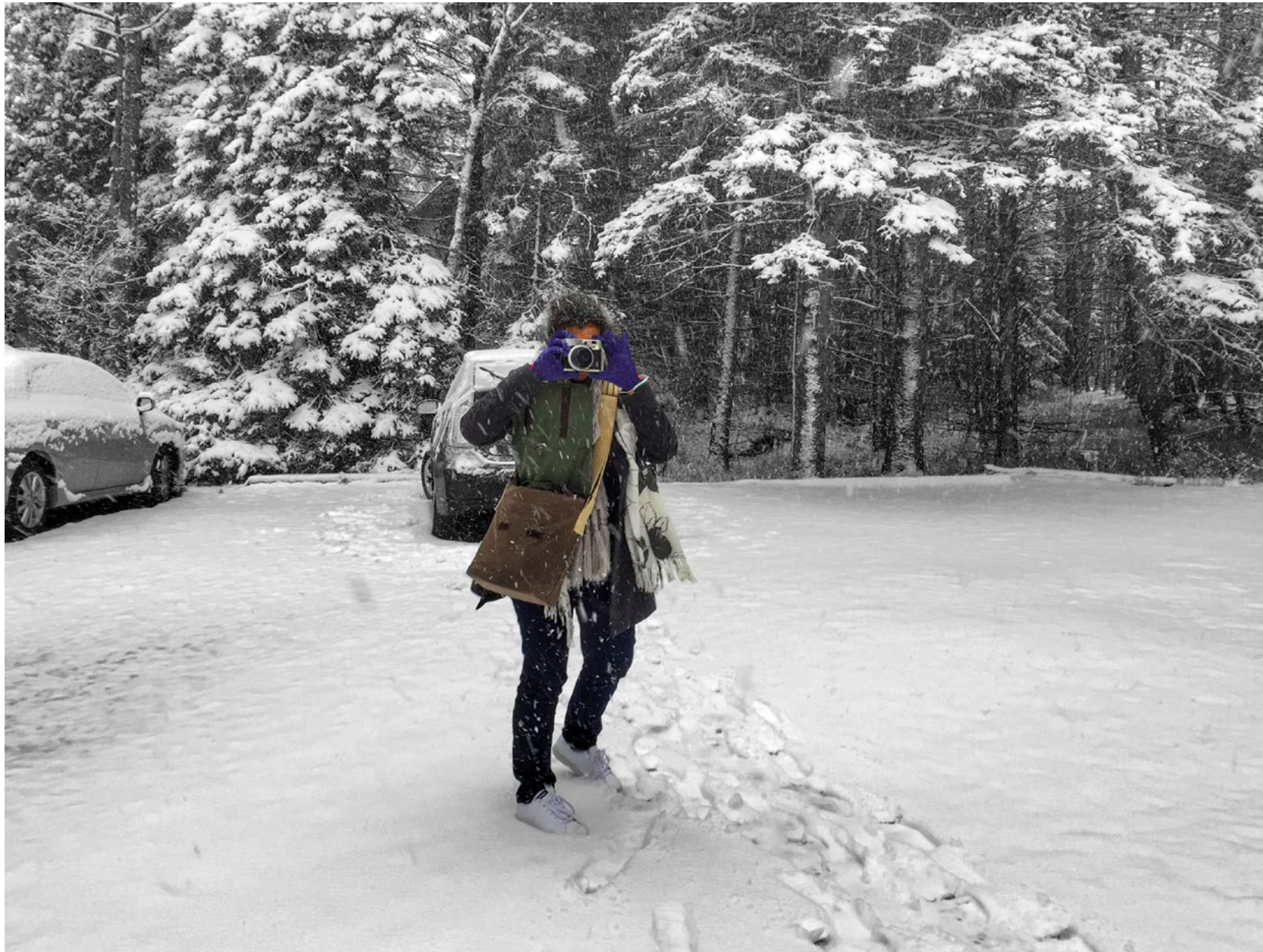
Image 091 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

My photograph then went back to looking normal. The mask was hiding the effect created by the Hue adjustment slider.

At that point, I magnified my Preview Image to 300%. I grabbed the Paintbrush tool and I set the color to white. I made sure that my mask was selected.

I then began to paint on the Preview window where the gloves were located.

Here is the final result…

Even with the limitations of Adobe Elements, the art of masking is one of your most powerful tools.

💎 **Key Lesson:** Plant this in your mind. Masking, and making a selection, is essentially the same thing. I'm sure you're aware of the traditional selection tools that produce the "marching ants." We are all familiar with that term, which is as old as Photoshop itself. Here is the difference between Photoshop and Elements. In Photoshop, it's very easy to switch back and forth between a selection (the marching ants) and the mask. In Elements, you can still switch back and forth, but it takes more steps, and you will have to look at the process a little differently.

In Image 091, we displayed all of our edits, and the photograph looked pretty good. However, upon viewing it carefully at a 100% view (which is something that you should always do when you've completed your editing, so that you can look for artifacts), I felt that the model's skin looked a little too orange. Check it out for yourself in Image 091.

We're going to change her skin tone using two different methods so that you can see how selections and masking are closely tied together.

In the first example, we will make a selection and then refine that selection as a mask. Then, we will do the opposite. We will create a mask and then turn it into a selection for our edit.
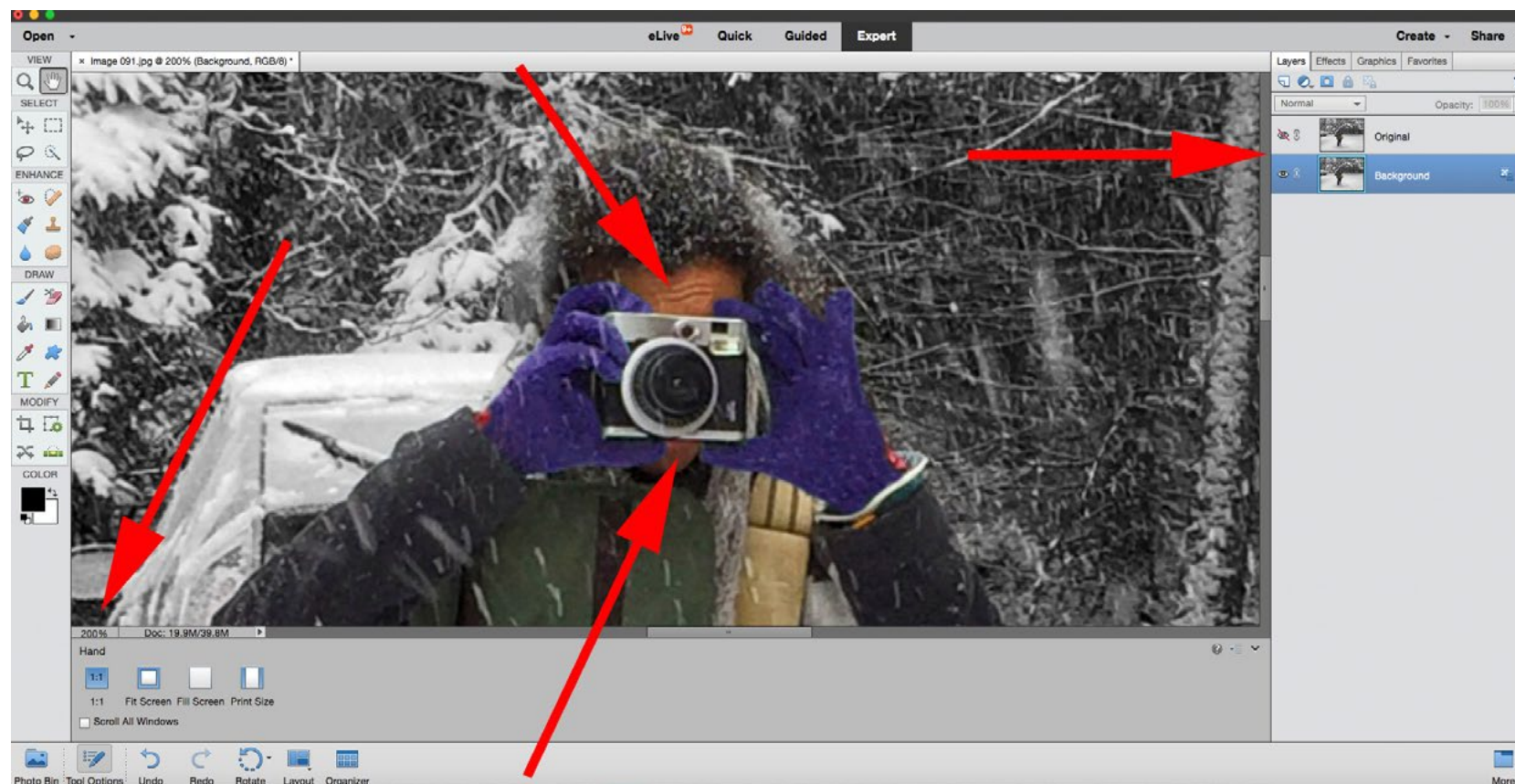
Image 092 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

1. I duplicated my Background layer and titled the new layer "Original."

2. I highlighted the Background layer and turned the visibility of the Original layer to off.

3. The areas that I'm going to adjust (the woman's skin above and below the camera) is a fairly small area. I set my Preview image to 200%.
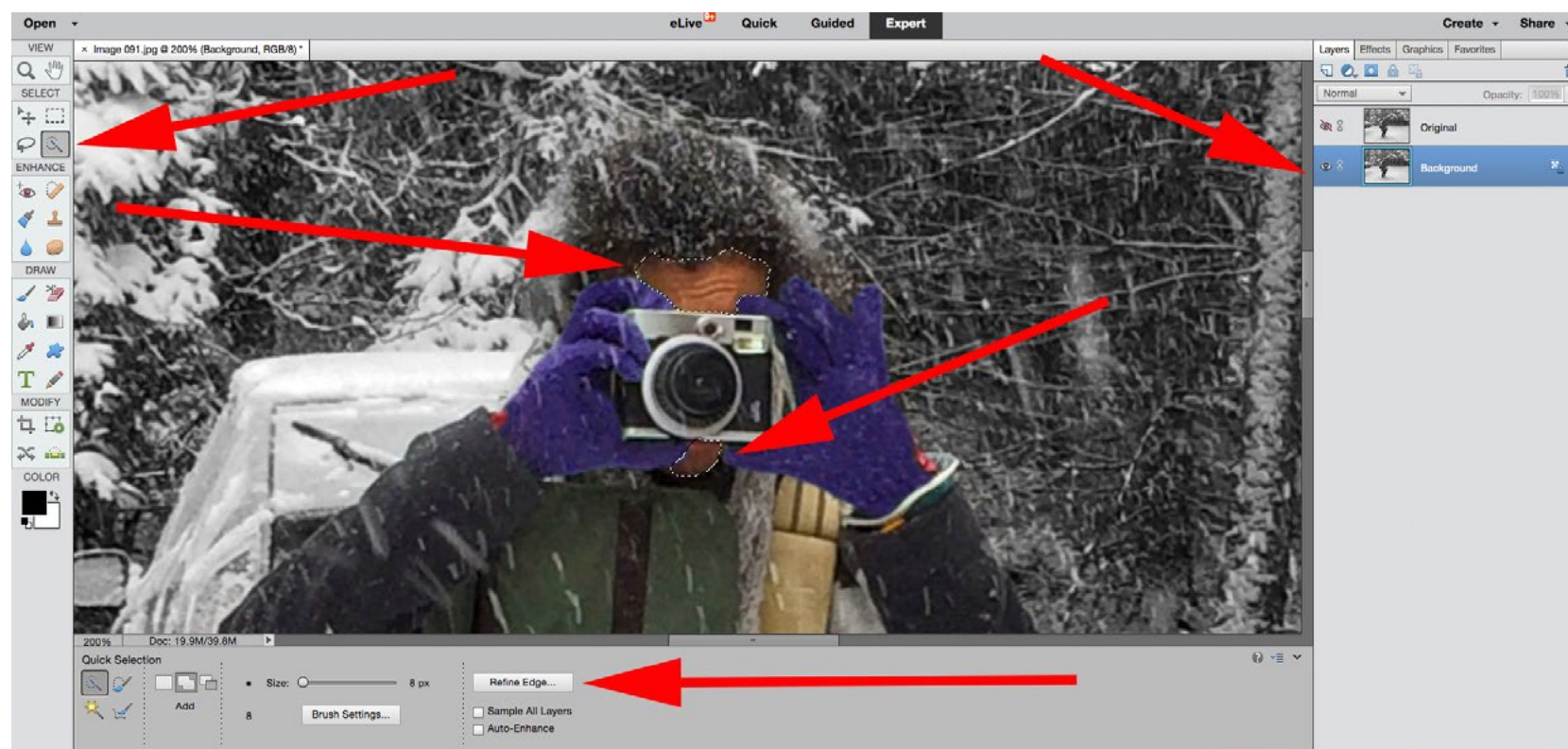
Image 093 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

4. The far upper-left arrow points to the "Quick Selection Tool," which I used to select the model's skin above and below the camera. (You can see the marching ants.)

5. To turn my selection into a "mask," I'm going to click on the "Refine Edge" radio button at the bottom of the workspace.
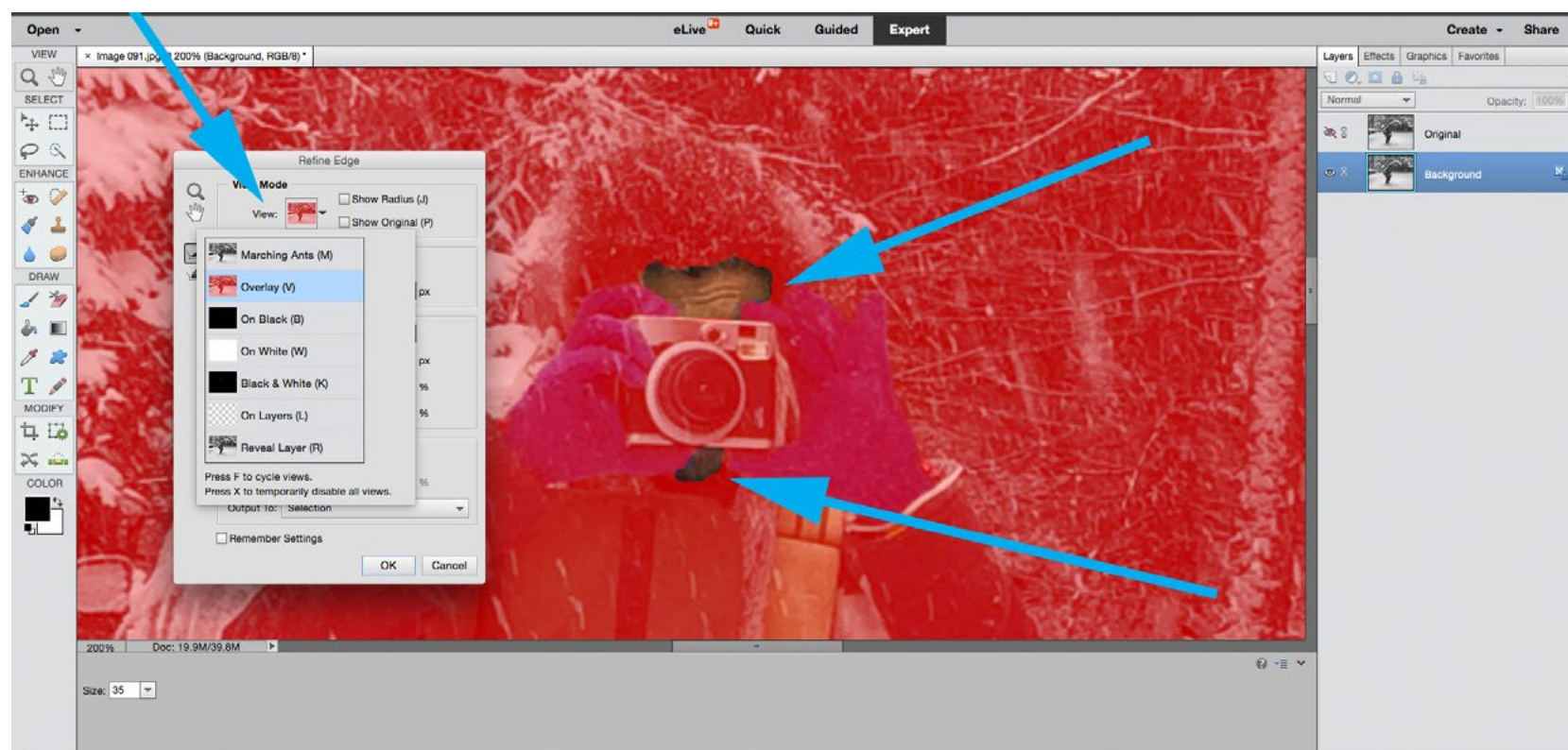
Image 094 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

6. When the Refine Edge pop-up window opens, step one is to select a viewing mode. I always prefer the "Overlay" mode, or what I refer to as the Rubylith Mode. This allows me to see the changes made to the mask, while also viewing the entire image underneath the mask.

7. You can see in Image 094 that my selection now appears as a red mask. You can also see how my selection bled off of the skin and into the surrounding areas.
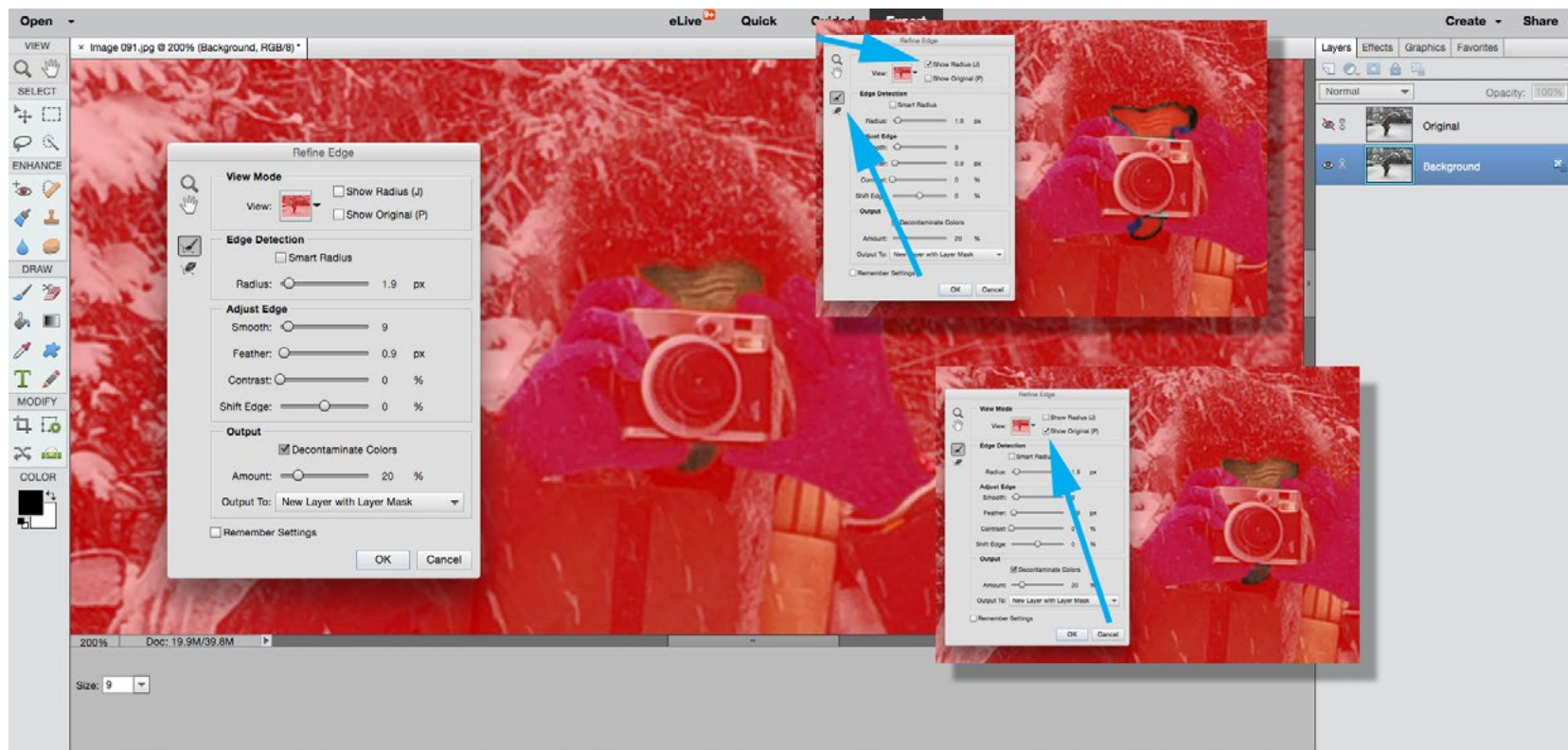
Image 095 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

8. The Refine Edge feature isn't as handy as the Quick Mask Mode in Photoshop because it doesn't show your changes in real time. My first step is to select the "Refine Radius Tool," which is the second icon from the bottom on the left-hand side of the Refine Edge pop-up box.

9. As I paint onto the mask (the red overlay), it's going to remove from the mask. However, in order to see that happening, I must check the "Show Radius" box at the top of the pop-up window.

10. If I get overzealous and remove too much of the masked area, I would change my tool to the bottom icon, on the far left, of the Refine Edge pop-up window, which is called the "Erase Refinements Tool." If I have the "Show Radius" box checked, I will also be able to see this tool at work.

11. Look at the Upper Inlay (top right-hand side) on Image 095. You can see where I drew around my selected skin areas to remove the excess area from my selection (mask). But, it looks like I erased from the mask, not that I added to it. This is the confusing part. **In order to see your changes added to the mask, you must deselect "Show Radius."** When you uncheck it, you'll see the mask fill in where you painted.

12. You may want to see how your changes compare to the original selection. Look at the inlay on the bottom right-hand side of Image 095. You can turn "Show Original" on and off to see the changes to the selection (aka the mask).

◈ **Key Lesson:** You can toggle "Show Radius" on and off very quickly by pressing the "j" key on your keyboard. You can toggle "Show Original" on and off very quickly by pressing the "p" key on your keyboard. As you get better – and faster – with your masking skills, you'll find toggling these back and forth quickly will help you work faster.
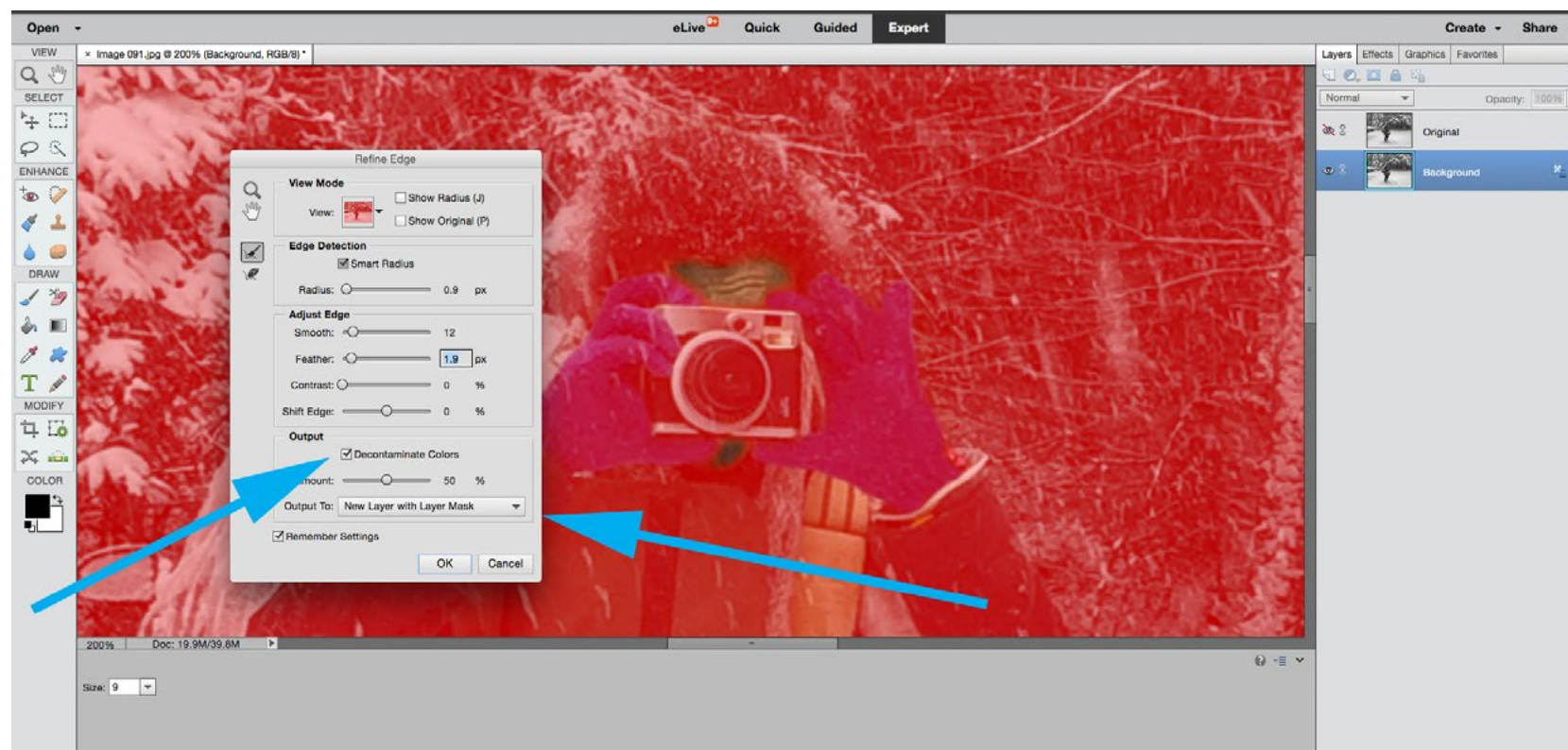
Image 096 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

13. In Image 096, you can that I've used the "Edge Detection" and "Adjust Edge" settings. There are no magic settings for these sliders. They are basically all attempting to achieve the same thing, **and that is to help you create a believable transition from the masked area to the unmasked area.** You'll simply just have to play with these adjustments until you get a feel for it. I will tell you this: rarely will you need to set any of these adjustments very high. Take a look at the skin area and the mask around it. Go back and look at the original mask that was created from the selection. See how the transition has been smoothed out?

14. The final step is to output the work. There are several options. I've never used any option except "Output to: New Layer with Layer Mask." Why? By outputting a new layer with a layer mask, I can still make
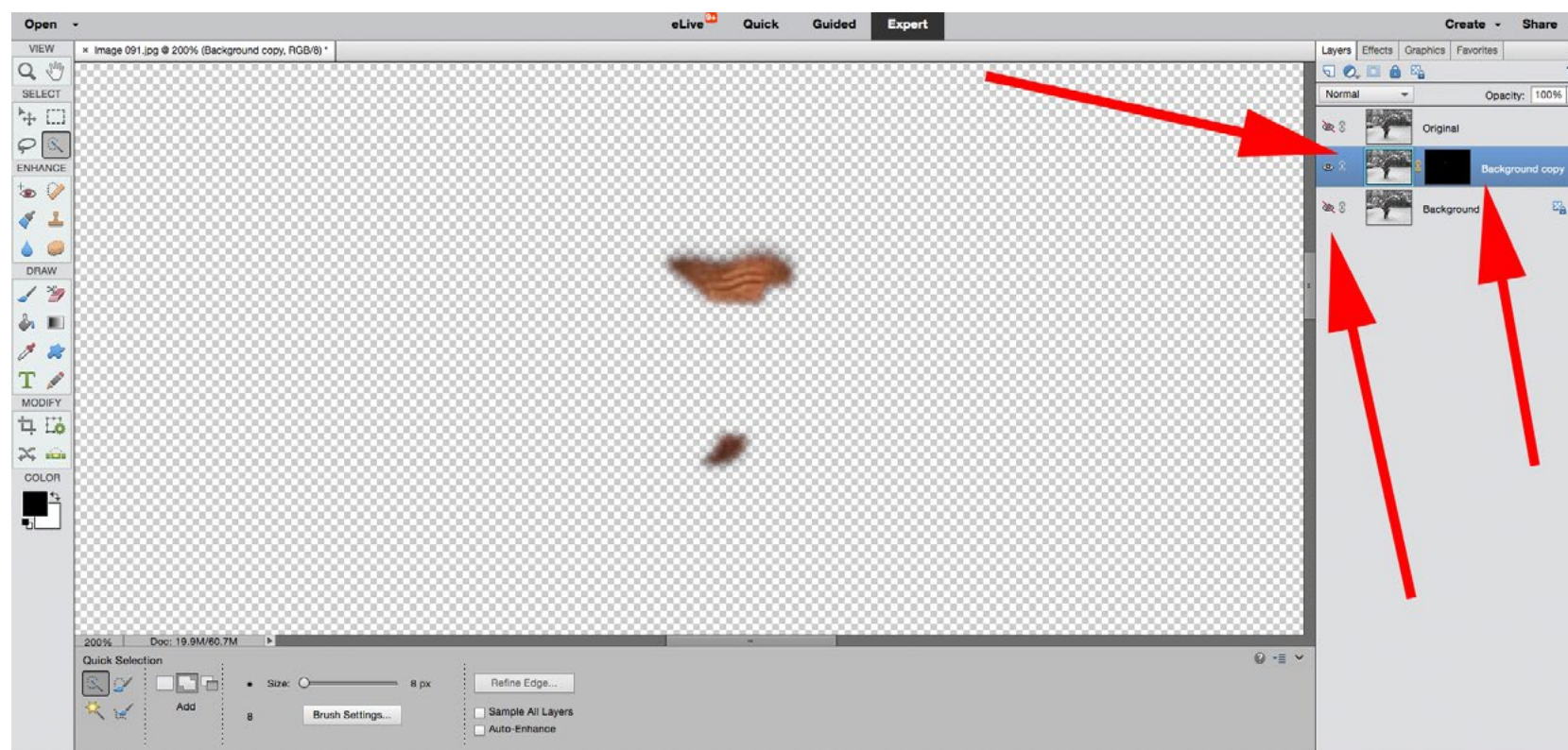
Image 097 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

changes to the mask within the main Elements workspace if I desire to. I always check the "Decontaminate Colors" box. This allows the software to clean up any color issues along the border of your mask. The entire Refine Edge process was simply to get me to the "masked" stage.

15. After you click "Ok" in the Refine Edge box, this is what you will see. The Preview window looks a little strange, doesn't it? Look at the arrows on the right side of Image 097. You can see that a new layer has been created, and that layer is titled "Background copy." If I were doing a complicated image with several masks, I would probably rename that layer to something like "Facial Skin." Also notice that the visibility of the Background layer was automatically turned off. This is why our skin areas look like they are floating in empty space. Now, we need to adjust the color saturation of skin color.
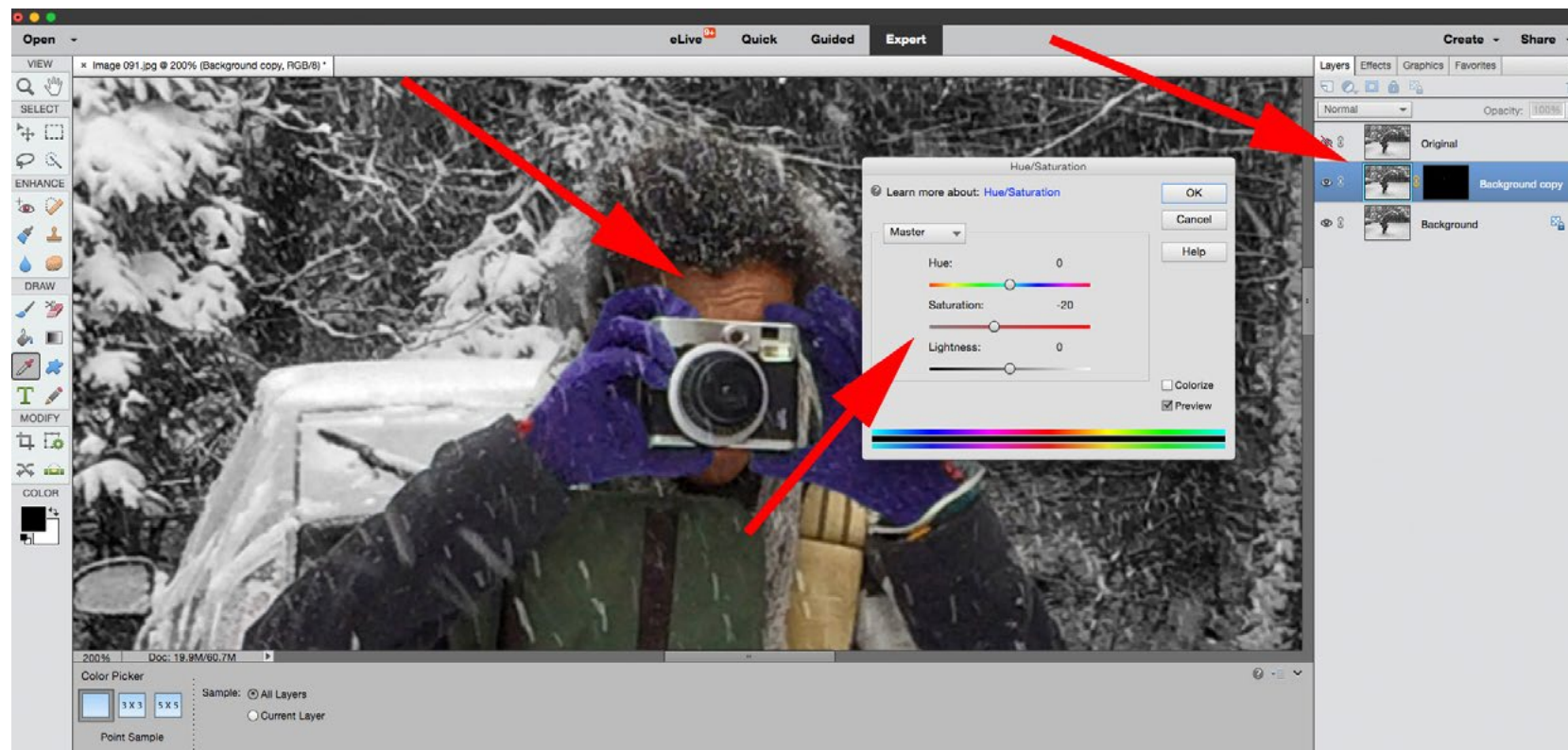
Image 098 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

16. The first thing that I did was to turn the Background layer visibility back to "On." This allows me to see my selected area, within the mask, in context with the rest of the photograph.

17. I then highlighted my Background copy layer and made sure that the Preview icon on the left was highlighted. What would happen if the mask were highlighted instead? Any editing that I did would be trying to affect the mask and not my skin area.

18. I then clicked on the "Enhance" dropdown menu, clicked "Adjust Color," and then clicked Hue/Saturation. This opened up the Hue Saturation pop-up box.

19. While watching my skin areas, I lowered the Saturation until it looked acceptable.

20. The final step would be to save my file in layers, and then flatten the file to save it again in a flattened .jpeg format.
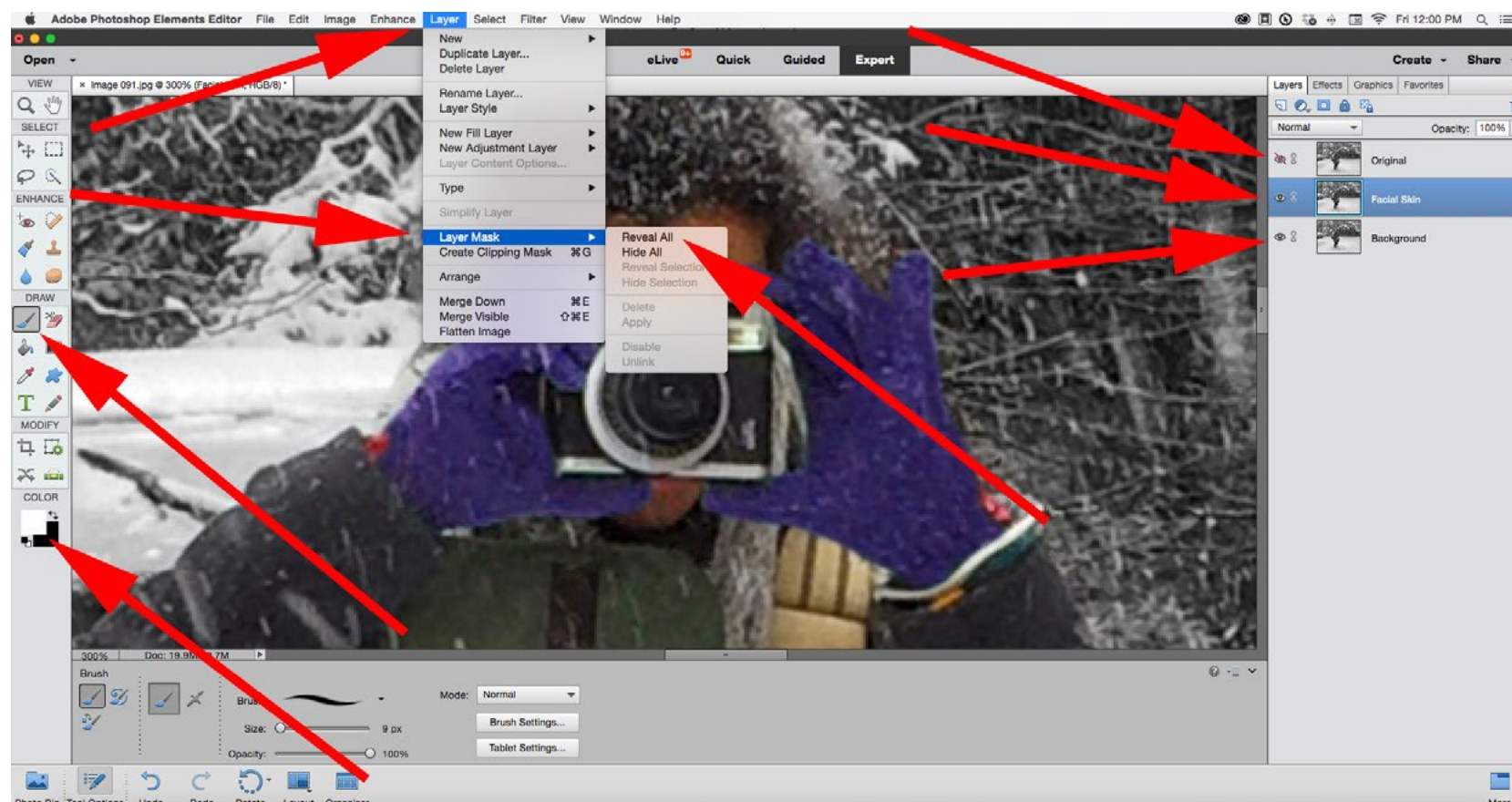
Image 099 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Now let's look at the second method to achieve the same end result.

1. I duplicate my Background layer twice. I rename the top layer to "Original" and turn the "Visibility" off. I then rename the next layer down to "Facial Skin" and make sure the Facial Skin layer is selected.

2. I select the "Brush Tool," make sure the color "White" is my foreground color, and make sure that I have the correct Brush selected in the Tool Options box at the bottom.

3. I select the "Layer" dropdown menu, then select the "Layer Mask" option, and finally select a "Hide All" mask.
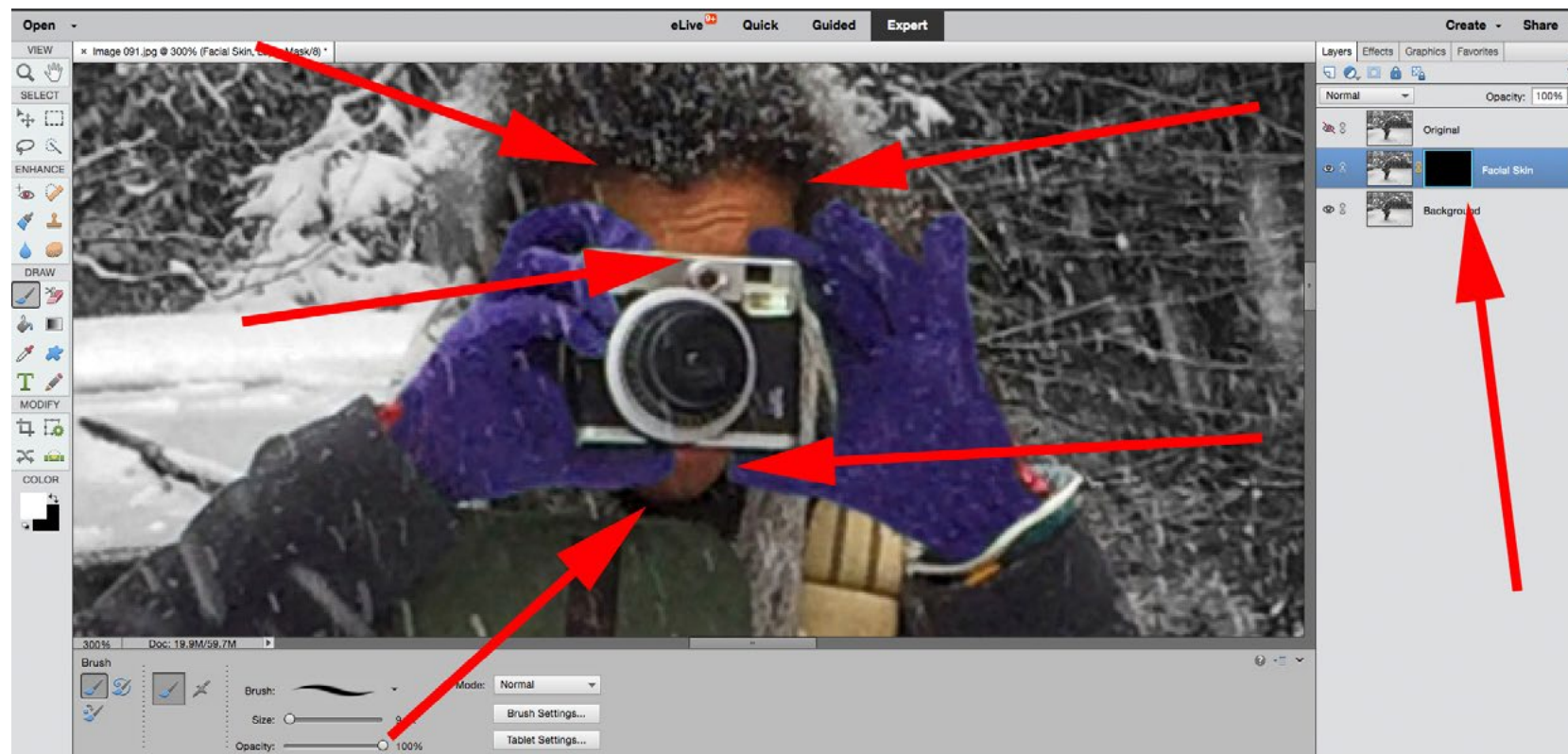
Image 100 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

4. I make sure that the "Hide All" mask is highlighted in the Layers Tab.

5. Using my paintbrush, I drag it around the perimeter of the two skin areas that I want to adjust.
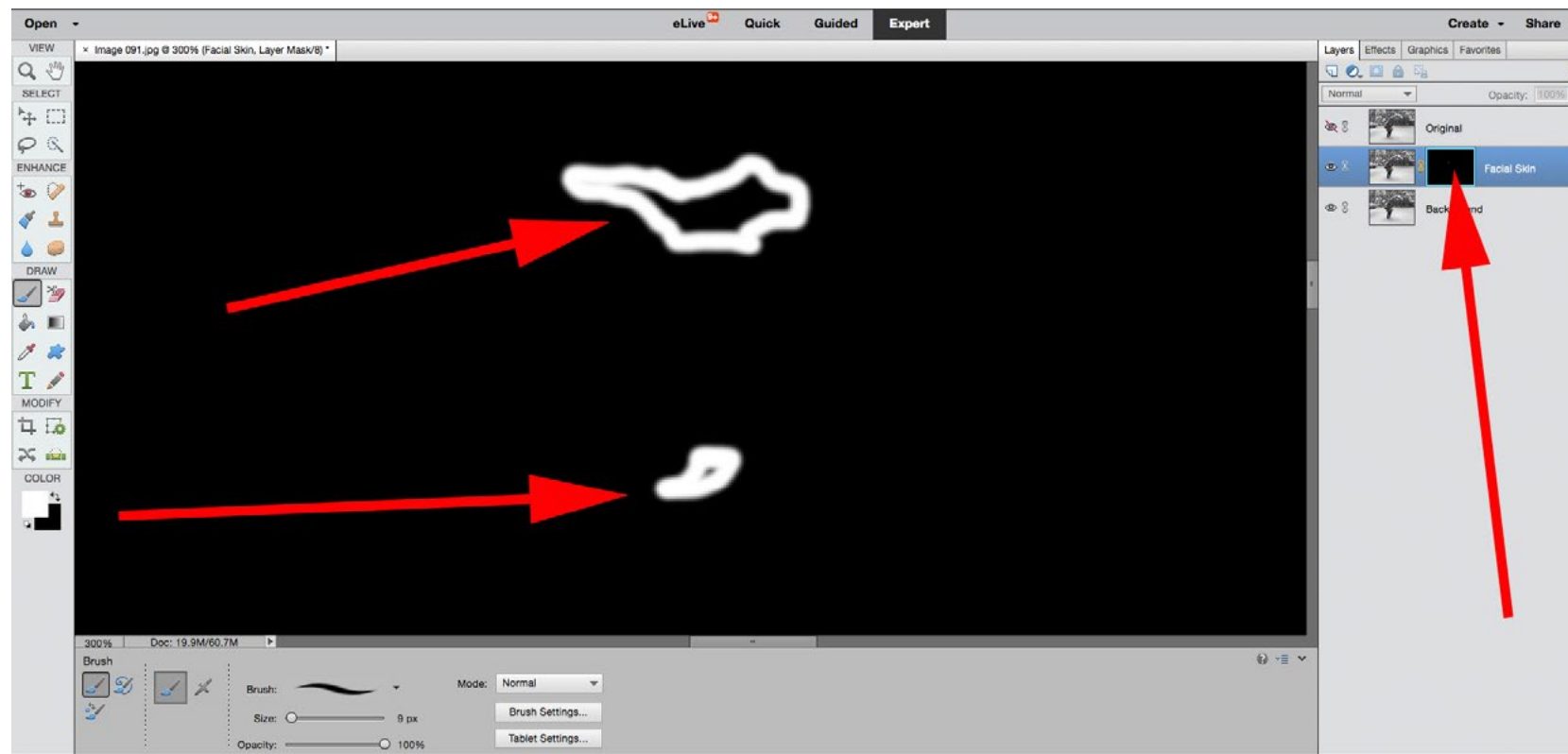
Image 101 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

6. I place the cursor over my Mask icon in the Layers Tab, hold down the "option key" (Apple) (or "alt key" for PC) and left-click. This turns my Preview Window into the Black & White Mask View.

7. I can now clearly see my outline of the skin areas. I fill in the center areas that I missed using my paintbrush.

Image 102 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

8. After painting in the missed areas on the mask, I place the cursor back over my Hide All Mask icon in the Layers Tab, hold down the "option key" (Apple) (or "alt key" for PC) and left-click again. This turns my Preview Window back into the Image Preview View.
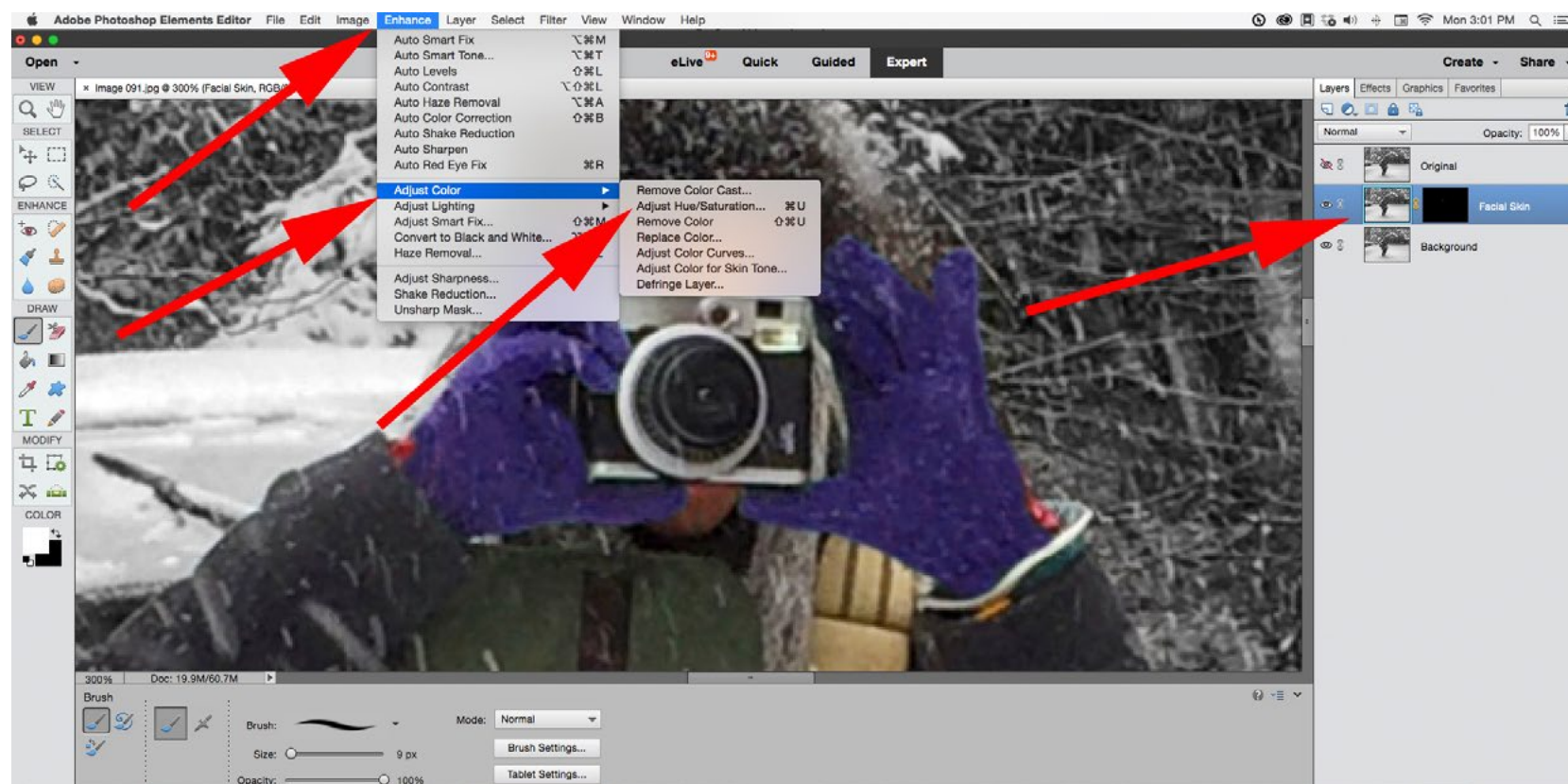
Image 103 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

9. I'm ready to make my adjustment to the skin tones. In order to do that, I must transfer the selected icon from the Hide All Mask (on the right) to the Image Preview icon (on the left) in the proper selected layer (Facial skin) in the Layers Tab. Notice in Image 103 that the left icon box (Image Thumbnail) is now highlighted in Blue.

Key Lesson: I'm not sure if this is a software glitch in all copies of Adobe Elements or just my copy, but I cannot directly click the left Preview icon from the right-side Mask icon. It simply will not transfer over. I have to click one of the other layers first, and then go back to the Preview icon and click on it to highlight it. I'm telling you this in case you experience the same problem. It's frustrating to keep clicking on the icon knowing that it should highlight, and it won't.
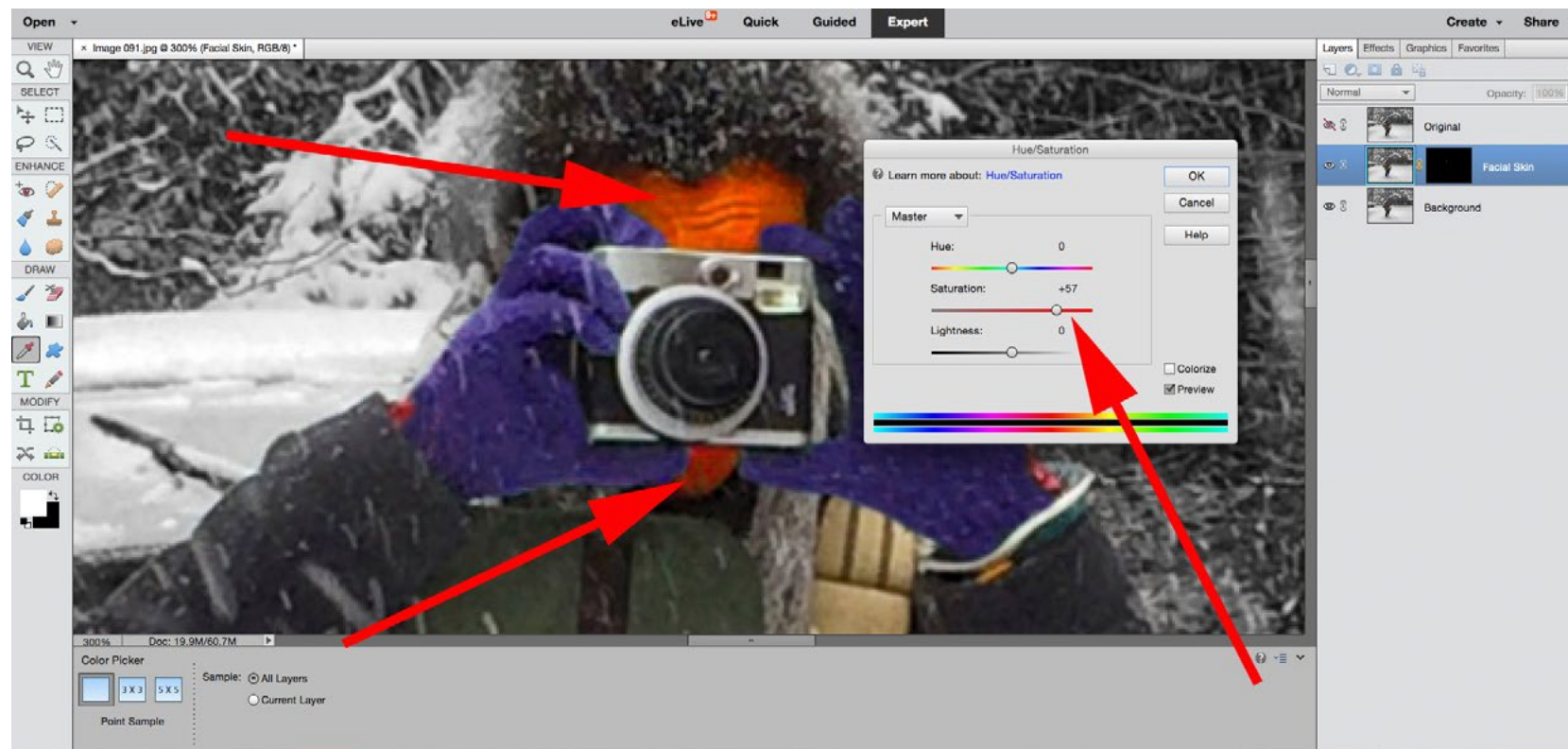
Image 104 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

10. After highlighting the correct Image Thumbnail icon, I open the "Enhance" dropdown menu, select "Adjust Color," and finally select "Adjust Hue Saturation."

11. By throwing the Saturation level way out of whack, I can clearly see my final adjustment is going to work within the mask that I created. If I was not happy with how the mask was functioning, I would go back and edit it before moving forward with the Hue Saturation adjustment. In this case, I'm happy with the mask.
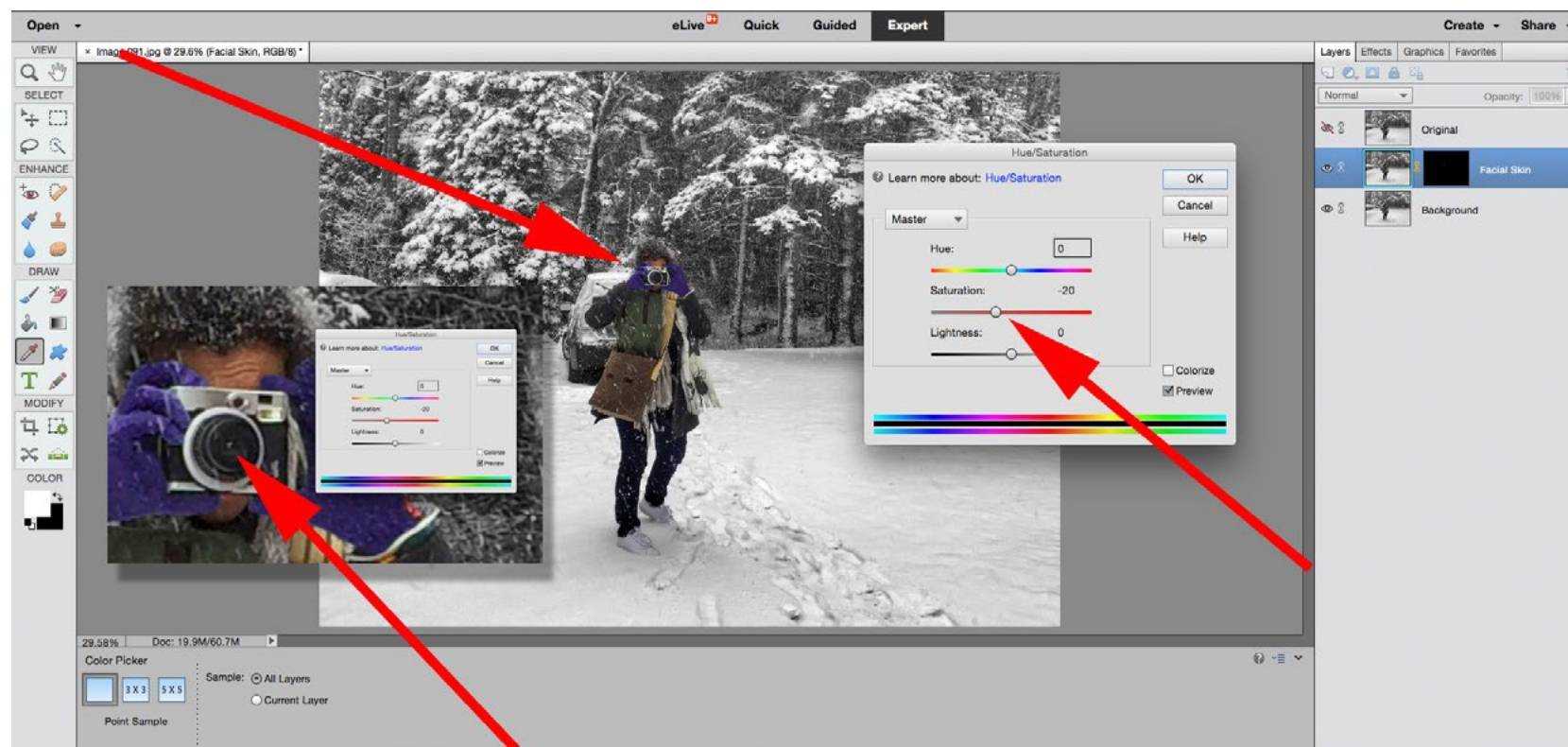
Image 105 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

12. When finishing up a micro-managed (small areas of the image) edit, such as our skin edit, it's always a good idea to start the edit at a highly magnified view (for example 300%), so that the area that you are working on is large in the Preview Window. Then, before clicking "OK," reduce the magnification and look at the Preview Image full frame. This will help you see if your edit does, or doesn't, match with the rest of the photograph (you can see this in Image 105).

We are now done with the facial skin edit using the second method. We can save the result in layers (highly recommended) and then flatten it for distribution as a .jpeg file.

🎬 Self Check Quiz

1. True or False: The author believes that the Smart Brush tool in Adobe Elements is a good option for editing your photographs.

2. Adobe Elements allows you to create "Adjustment Layers," "Layer Masks," and "Clipping Masks." However, it does not have a _____ Brush in the ACR processing window.

3. Why do you make a duplicate layer of the Background layer before beginning your editing?

4. After you Duplicate your Background layer, and rename it, what must you do next?

5. When using a mask in Adobe Elements, your best options occur in the Layers Tab. The Effects, Graphics, and Favorites Tabs also might employ a mask. However, they aren't as useful because_____.

6. When you create an Adjustment Layer, what type of mask is automatically created?

7. If your layer mask icon were white, what color would you paint to mask out parts of the image?

8. If you want to add or remove from a layer mask, how can you tell, by looking at the Layers Tab, if the mask is activated?

9. A "Hide All" mask appears as what color icon in the Layers Tab?

10. If I "option left-click" (for Apple) ("alt left-click" for PC) while positioning my cursor over a Mask Icon in the Layers Tab, the Preview Image will change from Image Preview to what new viewing mode?

11. I have a "Reveal All" mask on my layer, and I have some areas that are not masked which should be. What color am I going to paint onto the "Black & White Preview" window?

12. I want to mask out another area of my Hide All Mask. I want to see the image and not the mask as I'm making my changes. I select the Paintbrush and the color black. I begin to paint. However, the mask is not changing. I'm actually painting black color onto my photograph. What did I miss back in the Layers Tab?

13. True or False: You cannot blur the edge of a mask.

14. What are the reasons behind the author's preference for choosing a Reveal All or a Hide All masking option?

15. True or False: Masking and making a selection is essentially the same thing. The difference is how the program is presenting it to you.

16. When using the "Refine Edge" tool, you must turn "**Show _____**" off in order to see the changes that you've made to the mask.

17. You can toggle "Show Radius" by pressing the "j" key. You can toggle "Show Original" by pressing the "___" key.

18. The entire Refine Edge process was simply to get to the "_____" stage.

19. Clicking on the eye icon within the Layers Tab does what to a layer?

20. If you're having trouble switching from the highlighted Mask Icon to the left-side Image Thumbnail Icon within a single layer, what must you do?

21. When using masks to create awesome edits it's advisable to save your image file in two different ways. What are those two different ways?

08 MASKING IN MOBILE PHOTOGRAPHY

I recently heard the statistic that Android and IOS users now have over 2 million apps to choose from.

Needless to say, it would be highly unlikely that I would know **every** app out there that allows masking within photo editing.

I have two favorites, and these are the ones that I'm going to demonstrate for you. Many of the principles could likely be applied to any mobile app that you're using that has a masking feature.

Let me begin by saying that, in my opinion, these two apps are so powerful that they rival the Adobe products in their ability to accomplish complex masking techniques.

That is saying a lot.

The two apps that I'm going to cover are Snapseed and TouchRetouch.

Snapseed offers a masking ability in layers. It saves changes so that you can always return to the photograph and change it again. It's an extremely powerful tool that I don't believe many photographers take advantage of. If there were any downside to the process, it would be that you're creating the mask using your fingers. If you have

fat sausage-like fingers (like I do), it can make it challenging! However, with some patience, you can learn how to work with it (I did, and so can you).

TouchRetouch offers tools that are similar to the ones that we see in Photoshop: clone, heal, and patch. The algorithm is quite sophisticated, and at times I've found it easier to remove an object in TouchRetouch than in Photoshop!

The workspace in both apps is pretty simple, so I'm not going to go into great detail on that. I'm going to really focus on the masking procedure. It will be easiest to accomplish that by working on a photograph and letting you follow along during the process.

👤 **Recommended Reading:** Landscape Photography With Your Smartphone

When I'm retouching my mobile photography images – and just to clarify, I use an Apple iPhone 6+ currently – I will often work with multiple apps to get my photograph to the desired effect.

As we work through the example, I will be using both apps: Snapseed and TouchRetouch.

Image 106 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

In Image 106, the left example is the photograph as it came out of my iPhone 6+ camera. The right example is the end result, after doing my post-production editing with Snapseed and TouchRetouch. There was extensive masking that occurred in the processing of this image.

Let me show you what I did.

· Removed the bench on the left

· Removed the sign on the post where the bird is sitting (on the left)

· Created separation between the large bird (in the foreground) and the palm tree

· Brightened and increased the color saturation of the man's shirt

· Brightened the bench (horizontal boards) where the man is sitting

· Increased the color saturation in the sky (while not oversaturating the color of the sand, the ocean, or the bench)

Image 107 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Key Lesson: When you begin to think about editing a photograph, especially if you're going to be doing complex masking, it's a good idea to create an editing plan (just as I did above). Sometimes, I'll create a plan and then wait for a while before doing the editing. I do this because occasionally more ideas will come to my mind. I like to let the "ideas" percolate. With the world moving as fast as it does today, I believe the art of "creating a purposeful piece of artwork" (i.e. a photograph) is becoming lost. The mindset has turned toward quantity over quality. Photography really is more fun when you have an end goal and you see that end goal become real.

Image 108 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Step 1: Open the image and check my settings

When processing images in my mobile apps, I like to start with any "Object Removal" items first. I do this first because sometimes you unknowingly create artifacts that aren't easily visible until you get to a later post-processing step. If all the object removal editing is completed first, and then an artifact does become visible at a later point, it is easier to fix knowing that there is no more additional object removal work lying ahead.

We will begin with TouchRetouch to remove objects from the photograph.

Image 108 is a screenshot of the TouchRetouch workspace. Let me outline the tools for you.

· The upper-left "Home" icon returns you to the home page.

· The upper left-facing arrow returns you back one step.

· The upper right-facing arrow moves you forward one step.

· The upper icon that looks like a book (second from the right) will give you a before and after view of an edit as you tap it.

· The far upper-right icon opens a page that gives you options for saving and sharing your finished results.

· The lower-left icon titled "Object Removal" allows you to create a mask using a "Paintbrush" or a "Lasso" tool, and then you can remove the object.

· The next icon to the right, "Quick Repair," works much like the Object Removal tool except it's automated once the mask has been drawn. It works well when you want to remove an object that has clear unobstructed boundaries.
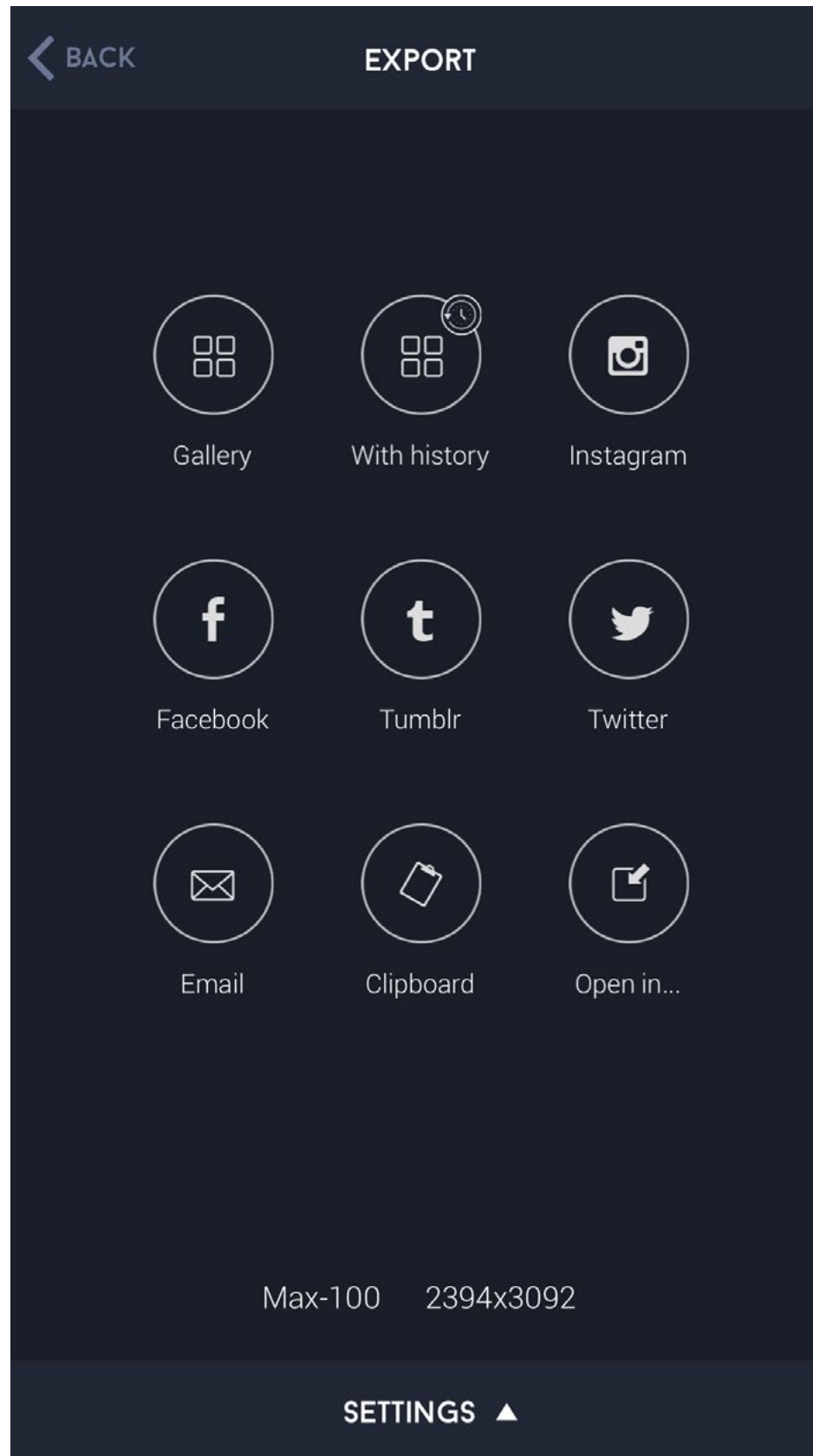
Image 109 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

- The next icon over is the "Line Removal" tool. This tool removes lines, such as power lines. (I have to tell you that this feature works super slick. For this one tool alone, it's worth having the app on your phone.)

- Finally, the far-right icon is the "Clone Stamp," and it works similarly to Photoshop.

⬙ **Key Lesson:** There are two ways to save your post-production editing in TouchRetouch. It's important to understand the difference between them. It's also a good idea to understand how you can move your edited photograph to social media or into other apps.

When you touch the "Saving & Sharing" icon, you are taken to the screen depicted in Image 109.

- "Gallery" will save your image as a **new photograph** at the end of your camera roll. The original photograph remains untouched.

- "With History" saves all of your changes, but it **alters your original file**.

- The other important icon on this page is "Open in…" If you're going to be working in multiple apps and you don't feel it is necessary to save this particular version, you can go directly from this app to another app. Or, you can perform a save function to preserve the file at this particular point and then use the "Open in…" option to move the file to a new app for further editing.

- Finally, at the bottom where it says "Settings," you want to make sure that you've set this to the maximum file size. You can always reduce the file size later. You want all of your post-production work to occur on the largest file size possible.

I almost always do the following when working on my image files in this app.

1. I save the file using the "Gallery" setting (preserving my original)

2. I then do a direct "Open in…" to the next app that I'll be using (in this case it's Snapseed)

Image 110 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Step 2: Remove the bench on the far left using TouchRetouch

All of the tools that we are using in TouchRetouch are creating masks. Sometimes, those masks are created and utilized in the background. Other times we will carefully create the mask ourselves before letting the software do its work.

How do we know which method, or tool, to choose? That really comes with experience. However, considering the app only costs $1.99, learning all of this is half the fun.

To remove the bench, I'm going to use the "Quick Repair" tool. This tool works well when the object you're removing has a clearly defined outline and the surrounding areas aren't too complex.

The one spot that would likely give the Quick Repair tool some trouble is that shadow on the sidewalk (Image 110). I don't want the shadow, so I'll use the line tool to remove it first.

Since we are drawing on a smartphone screen with our finger, it can be hard to see exactly where our finger is doing the work.

TouchRetouch fixed that issue by creating a reticle that opens up outside the area where you working. You watch the reticle as you do the work. You can see the reticle in the upper left of the screen in Image 110.

When I dragged my finger along the shadow, it drew a line. Don't worry about being exact in drawing lines with this tool. The software examines where you drew the line and then calculates what it believes is the line that you want to removed. (It is remarkably correct most of the time!) This line represents a mask that is being created. When I lift my finger, the mask will appear for a moment and then the software will do the work.

In the settings, you can adjust how wide the software will "look" for the line when creating the mask.

Image 111 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

After removing the shadow on the sidewalk, I clicked on the "Quick Repair" tool to remove the bench. Blemish Remover creates a single mask the size of the brush and removes whatever is within that area. It works well for things like dust spots or acne. The Quick Brush allows you to paint a mask.

> ⓘ **Important Note:** If you pick your finger up off the screen during the painting process, the software will immediately begin to remove what it sees within the mask. It works best to outline the object first, and then fill in the rest before lifting your finger from the screen.

Once again, there is a reticle to help guide your movements.

Image 112 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

The left half of Image 112 shows you how the mask and software worked to remove the bench. It did a pretty clean job!

> ◇ **Key Lesson:** When painting a mask using the Quick Repair tool, you'll get better results by slightly bleeding over the boundaries of the object that you're trying to remove rather than being within the boundaries. Look at my mask in Image 111. You'll see that I slightly painted over the boundaries of the bench.

However, if you want to become a very accomplished photographer/image editor, you must notice the details.

The red arrows on the left side of Image 112 show artifacts that were left behind in the process. The sand appears as a smooth, flat tone. This is inconsistent with the surrounding areas.

With the Adobe desktop products, we had more control over not creating any artifacts in the first place. In mobile photography editing, it's often a matter
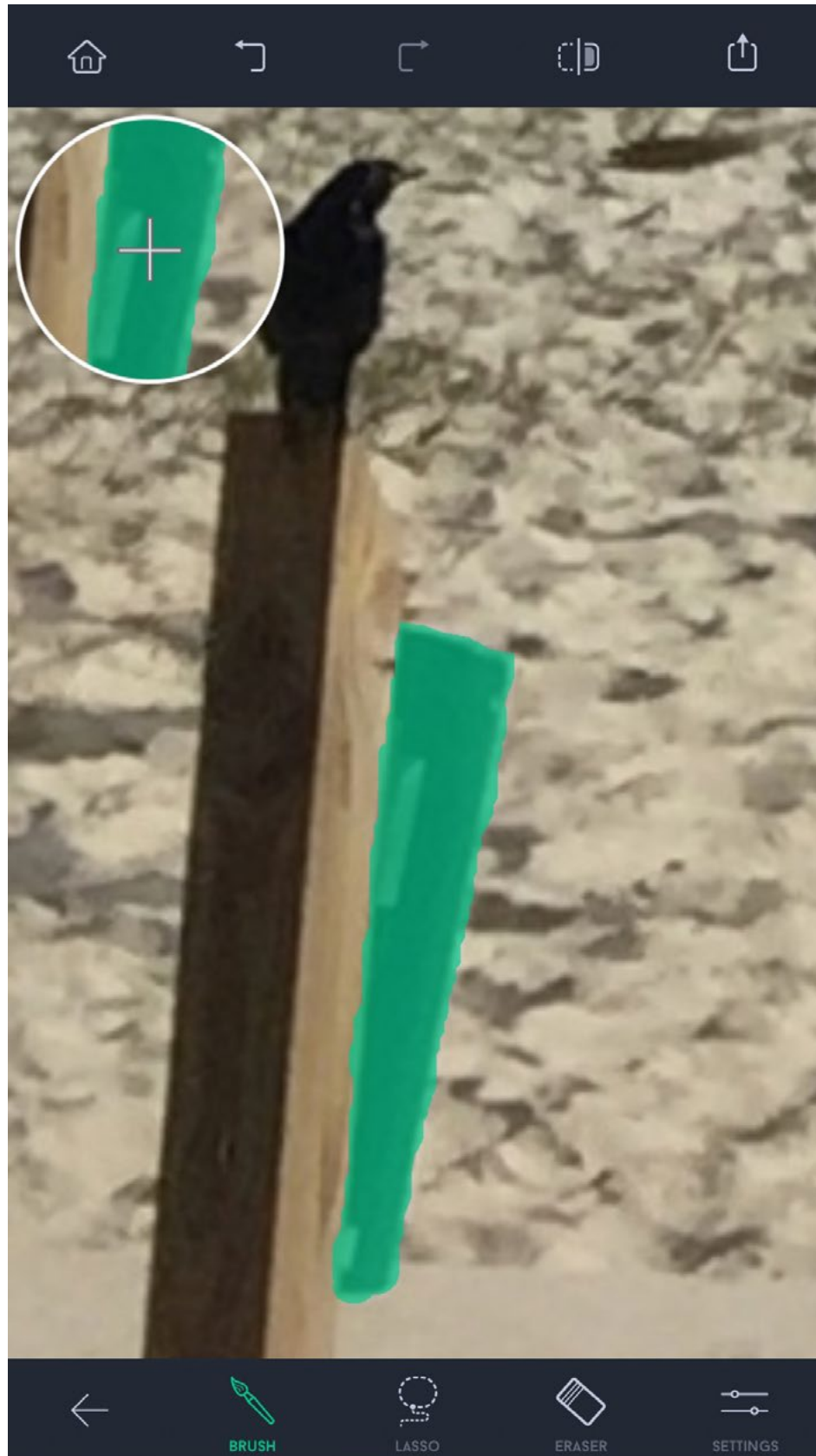
Image 113 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

of figuring out which method creates the least amount of artifacts and then repairing them.

To repair these artifacts, I used the "Clone Stamp." I put the texture back into the sand and I cleaned up the grass along the sidewalk. (More on the Clone Stamp tool in a minute.)

Step 3: Remove the sign from the post

To remove the sign, I went with the "Object Removal" tool instead of the "Quick Repair" tool. Why?

In this case, I wanted the option to carefully fine-tune my mask before hitting the "Go" button and letting the software go to work. The Quick Repair tool would immediately try and go to work when I lifted my finger. So, why did I want the additional control of fine-tuning the mask before letting the software go to work? I wanted the control because the object that I'm removing has complex areas around it. It does have a clearly defined edge, but I didn't want the software to attempt to remove the rest of the post
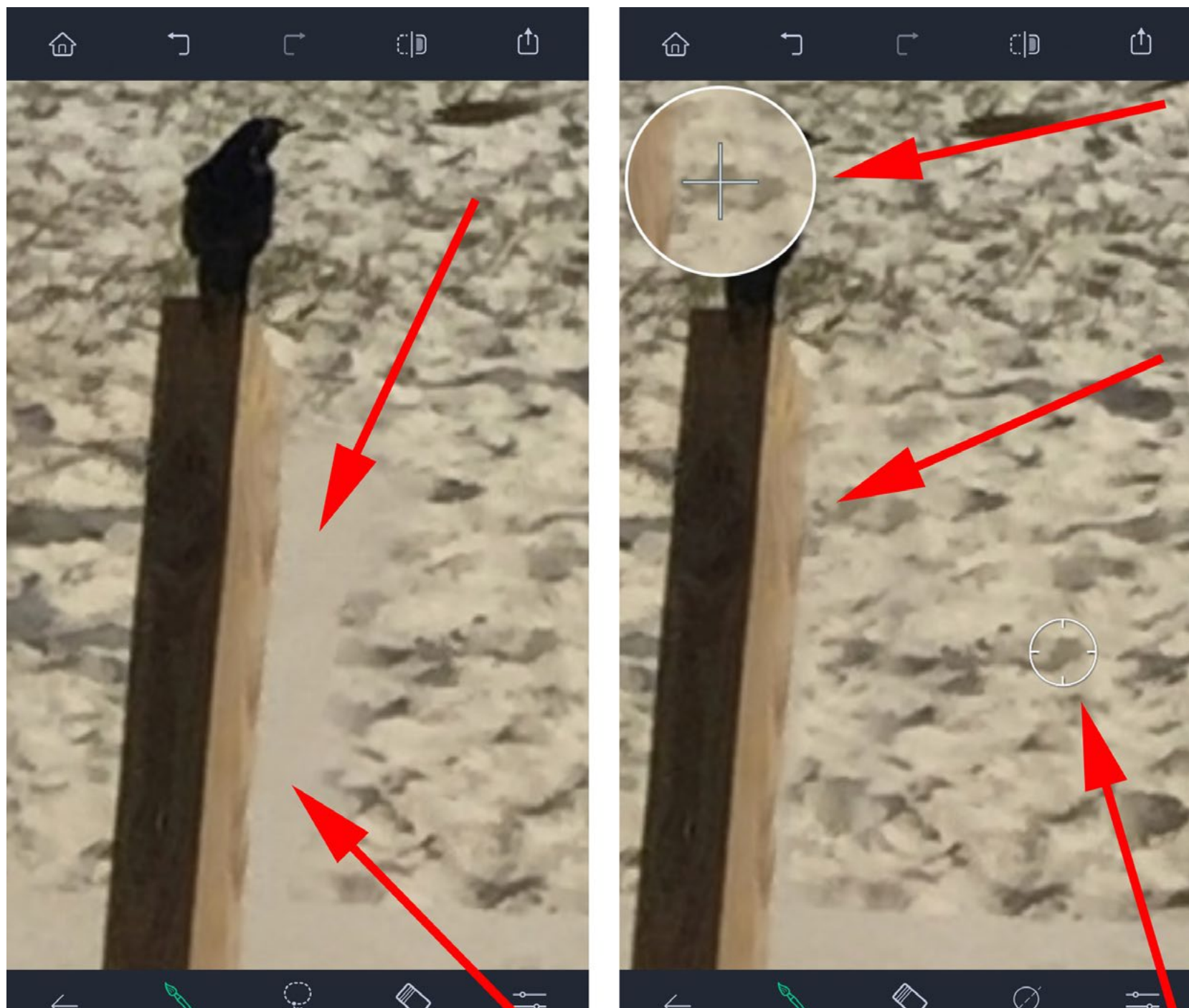
Image 114 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

along with the sign. By carefully painting the mask in "Object Removal," I'm giving the software a clearer set of instructions on what to do.

There are three tools in the Object Removal workspace: Brush, Lasso, and Eraser. They are all used to create and modify your mask. The Brush and Lasso add to the mask, and the Eraser removes from it.

The "Settings" box allows you to adjust the Brush size for painting, or erasing, on the mask.

Key Lesson: Just like in the Quick Repair tool description, I have found that it works best to "slightly" paint over the edge of the object that you're trying to remove. It's better to be a little outside of the edge rather than a little on the inside of the edge (Image 113).

As you can see in Image 114, the mask, and software, did a very good job of removing the sign. However, some of the texture was lost in the sand (creating an artifact).

Take notice that I will now try and fill the screen with the artifact area that I'm going to repair.

Key Lesson: If you're looking at a magnified view, and you want to scroll around the photograph, put two fingers on the screen to make the movement. If you only put one finger on the screen, the software believes that you are trying to do an edit to the mask. Two points of contact tells the software that you are just trying to move the Preview Image around on the screen.

Just like in Image 112 (page 145), I'm using the Clone Stamp to fix the surface texture. When I select the Clone Stamp a small reticle appears (far-right arrow in Image 114). I can move that reticle around the Preview Image by just touching anywhere on the screen. The reticle is the "Selection" point for the Clone Stamp. The higher the magnification of the Preview Image, the smaller the reticle selection area becomes in relationship to the rest of the photograph. Conversely, the lower the magnification of the Preview Image, the larger the selection area of the reticle becomes in comparison to the overall image.

The middle arrow on the far right (pointing at the post) indicates where I placed my finger to complete this cloning operation.

The upper-right arrow shows you the reticle used to guide my finger as I drag it along the post to fix the texture of the sand.

Image 115 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Step 4: Create separation between the bird and the palm tree

Of the three edits that we will accomplish using masking in TouchRetouch, this step will be the trickiest. The reason for this is because of the detail of the palm tree fronds around the bird. It's not hard to go in there and get rid of the foliage that is touching the bird. The difficult part is doing it in a way that looks real.

When doing complex masking operations on your mobile phone, follow these steps:

1. Enlarge the image area to where you're going to be working. Try to fill the screen, while leaving room to see the observation reticle.

2. I find it best to tackle complex edits in sections. I mask, and retouch, each section until I'm happy with it before moving on to the next section. In Image 115, I'm removing the palm fronds from below the bird's wing.

3. For a complex operation like this, I'm going to use the "Object Removal" tool. I'm using this tool because I want complete control over what the mask is touching.

4. I selected a brush size that is just a bit larger than the area that I want to remove, and I painted the mask under the bird's wing.
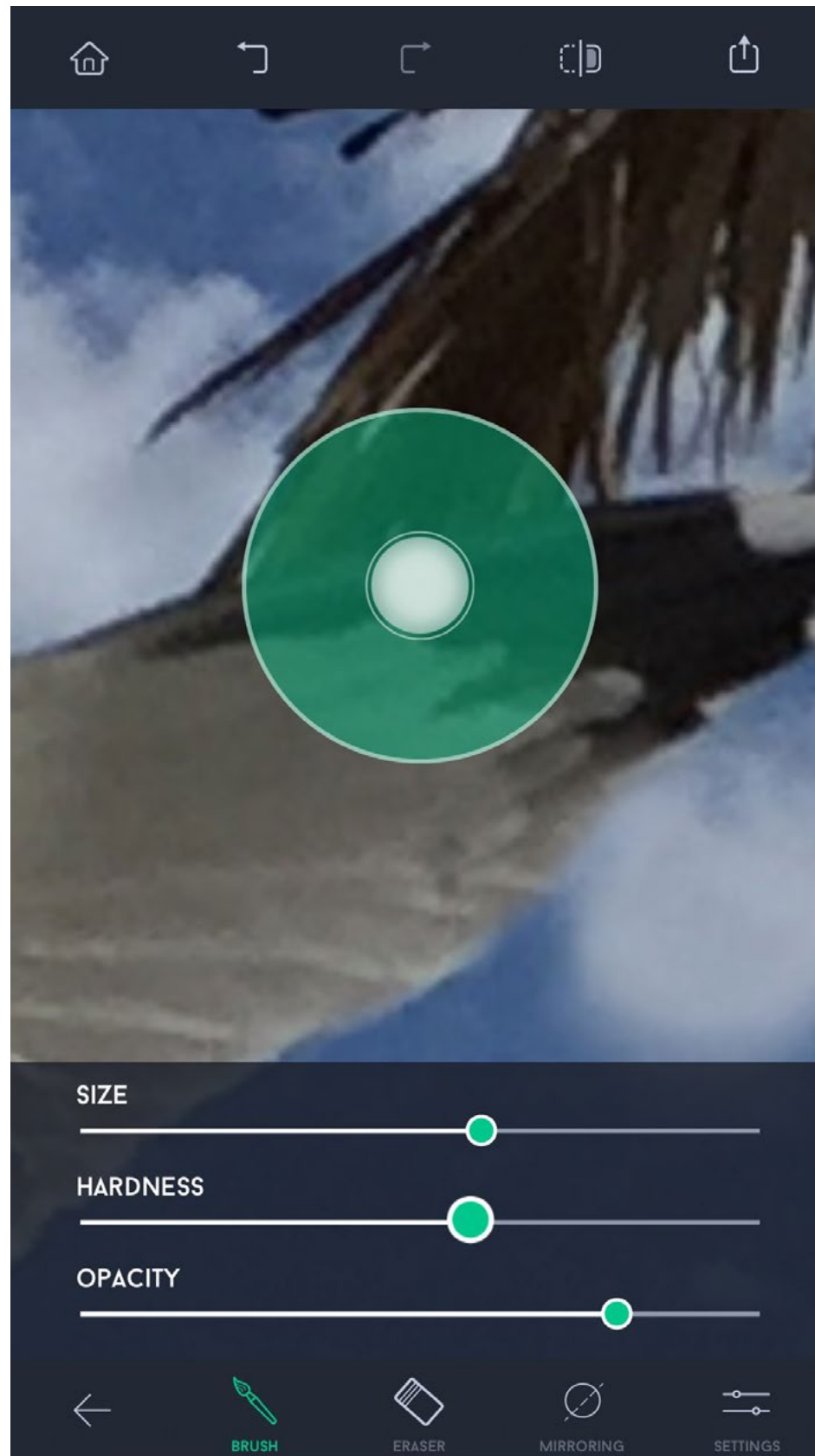
Image 116 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

5. When masking and removing complex shapes, it's rare that you won't create some artifacts that will give away your editing job. Look at the details closely. In this edit, my mask left an unrealistic looking "soft edge" along the wing. Let's fix it.

6. I chose the "Clone Stamp" tool, and I then raised the "Hardness" setting to give my cloning a hard edge.

7. I then worked the edge of the wing from the feather side and the sky side.

Image 117 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

8. After cleaning up my artifacts, I always check my work at a magnified view and at full view.

◇ **Key Lesson:** Masking allows you to "mold" your photograph into exactly what you want your viewers to see. That's why it's the next step to perfect photography. However, masking is an art. Part of your training will be learning not only how to create and apply the mask, but also to make sure the resulting image leaves no telltale signs as to what you've accomplished. Many of the photographers that I see today (primarily on the internet), that attempt complex masking and editing have no skills whatsoever in covering up their tracks. This is my challenge to you. Read this book, study the examples, and work towards becoming a competent post-processing editor. It's not enough just to know the steps; it takes practice and a keen eye.

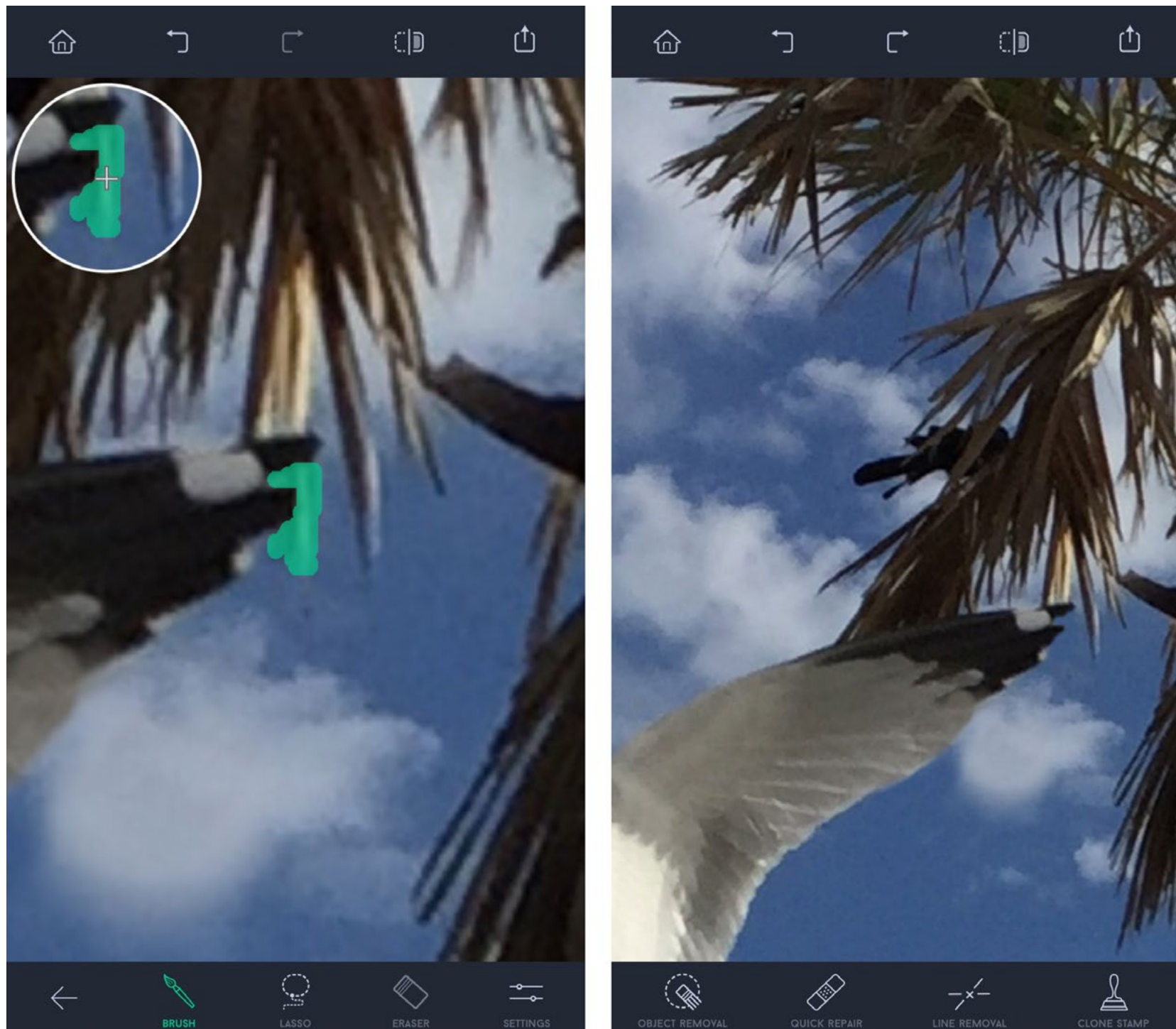**Now, let's tackle a very complex masking and editing job!**

Image 118 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

9. Our final steps involve separating the tip of the wing and the top of the wing from the tree. The tip of the wing was pretty easy.

10. I masked the tip of the wing using the Object Removal tool.

11. I then cleaned up the artifacts with the Clone Stamp. As you can see on the right in Image 118, the edit looks good.

12. In a complex mask/edit, I always begin by evaluating the situation. The wing is a solid object with a defined line. Keeping the wing looking good is easy. The palm frond has a complex shape, and it is in front of varying tones. This will make any use of the software's automation impossible.
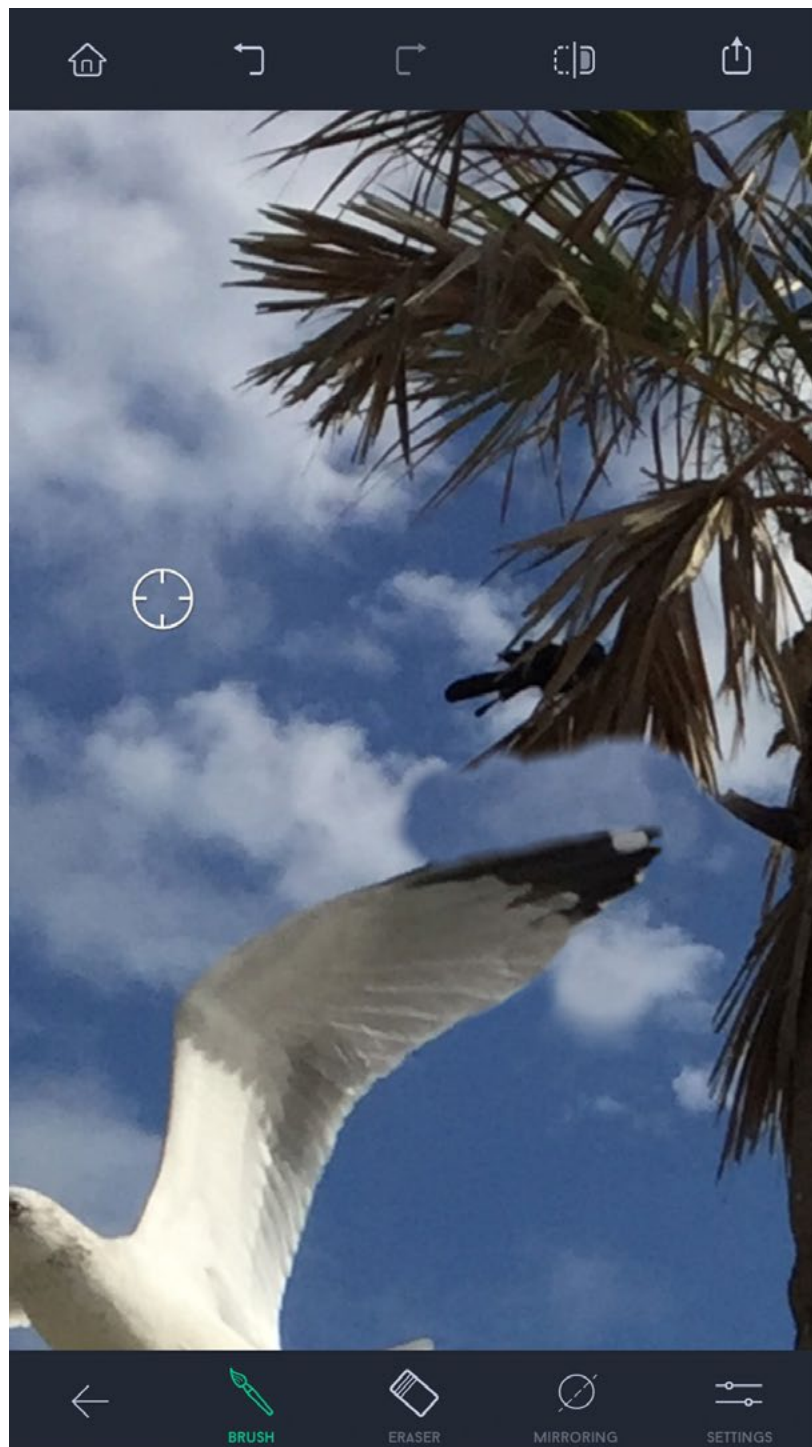
Image 119 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

13. I used the Clone Stamp. I placed my sample reticle over an area of sky that mimicked what was visible behind the palm frond – the part that I wanted to get rid of. I set my "Hardness" to a mid-level setting.

14. My first step, on the left (Image 119), was to remove the palm frond back far enough away from the wing. The wing looks pretty good, but the palm frond looks terrible.

15. I then searched for another palm frond on the tree that somewhat matched the angle, color, and background of the area that I'm fixing (Image 119 on the right side).

16. Once again, I used the Clone Stamp. I reduced the "Hardness" to 0. On the right-hand side of Image 119, you can see where I placed my sample reticle.

Image 120 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

17. I dragged my cursor around until the edges of the palm frond were replaced. It looked pretty good. I then cleaned up some mismatched tones in the sky, clouds, and on the tree trunk.

In Image 120, you can see my results at a 3/4 view and at full view. No viewer will ever be the wiser.

Did you notice how separating the bird from the tree increased its weight in the overall composition? You can alter the composition of your photographs using masks!

The bird almost carries too much visual weight in the composition at this point, which is why we need to take our next steps.

We want the bird to be a focal point and not the subject. We want the man on the bench to be the subject. He needs to be the most prominent aspect of the picture. Everything in the photograph should push the viewer toward him as a final "visual" resting place in the image.

Masking is going to help us accomplish that!

📷 Self Check Quiz

1. Name two mobile phone apps that can help you improve your mobile phone photography through the use of masks.

2. What is it a good idea to do before you begin your editing?

3. True or False: In the author's stated workflow, he likes to begin with a brightness edit first.

4. In the TouchRetouch workspace screen, what does the left-facing arrow at the top of the screen do?

5. In the author's opinion, what one tool located within TouchRetouch makes the app worth having?

6. When saving your work in TouchRetouch, which option saves the file as a new image file at the end of your camera roll?

7. In TouchRetouch, there are four main tools on the home page: Object Removal, Quick Repair, Line Removal, and Clone Stamp. Which of these tools allows you to take your time and carefully create your

mask before clicking "Go" to remove the object?

8. In our sample photograph, which tool did we use to remove the shadow on the sidewalk?

9. True or False: In TouchRetouch, while painting a mask using the Quick Repair tool, you must be careful not to lift your finger off of the screen until the mask is complete.

10. In TouchRetouch, what does the larger reticle on the screen help you to do?

11. What is an artifact (as it relates to post-production editing)?

12. In our sample photograph, what tool did we use to clean up the artifacts that were left behind when we removed the bench?

13. In TouchRetouch, there are three tools in the Object Removal workspace: Brush, Lasso, and Eraser. What are they used for?

14. In TouchRetouch, is it slightly better to over-paint your mask or to under-paint it around the outside perimeter?

15. In TouchRetouch, how many fingers must be placed on the screen to scroll around the Preview Image?

16. True or False: When working on complex masks in TouchRetouch, it's best to tackle the objective in sections.

17. When painting a mask, what does the hardness setting for the brush do?

18. True or False: When creating a complex mask of a small area, it's best to start creating the mask with a full frame Preview Window and then zoom in to clean it up.

Step Five: Increase the color saturation of the sky

It's time to leave TouchRetouch and go to Snapseed. I will save my work using the "Gallery" option and then I will click the "Open in" button. When the next window opens, I will select "Snapseed."

If you remember back to the list we created describing the edits to be accomplished on this photograph, you'll remember one was to increase the color saturation and brightness of the man's shirt. Another one was to increase the color saturation of the sky without over-saturating the color of the sand.

The problem to be solved here is that each of those elements of the photograph require different settings. This means one global setting just won't cut it. Aww… don't we just love masks?!

Here is my methodology:

· I'm going to increase the color saturation of the entire picture (a global change) to get the color saturation of my blue sky to where I want it.

· I will then use masking to remove the color saturation from the areas where I don't want it.

· I'm going to keep the color saturation of the sand at a minimum because that will help the man stand out as the subject of the photograph.

· I'm going to brighten and slightly over-saturate the color of the man's shirt so that a viewer's eyes will come to rest on it. This will also help define him as the "subject" in a photograph that has a lot going on.

· I'm going to slightly brighten the horizontal part of the bench to add visual weight to that part of the photograph.

· I will use a mask to hide the rest of the photograph from the changes that are made to the shirt and the bench.

Image 121 – Photograph by Kent DuFault
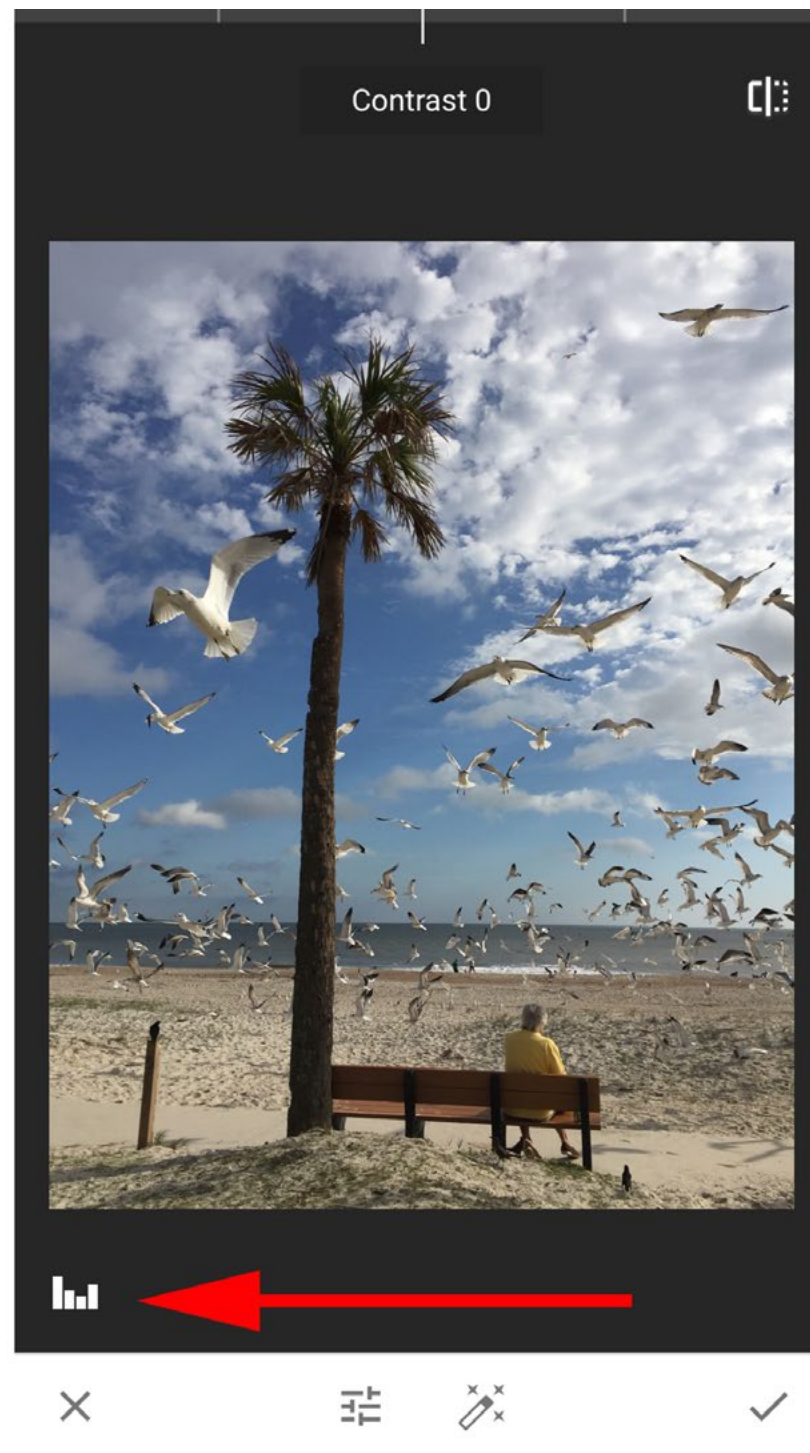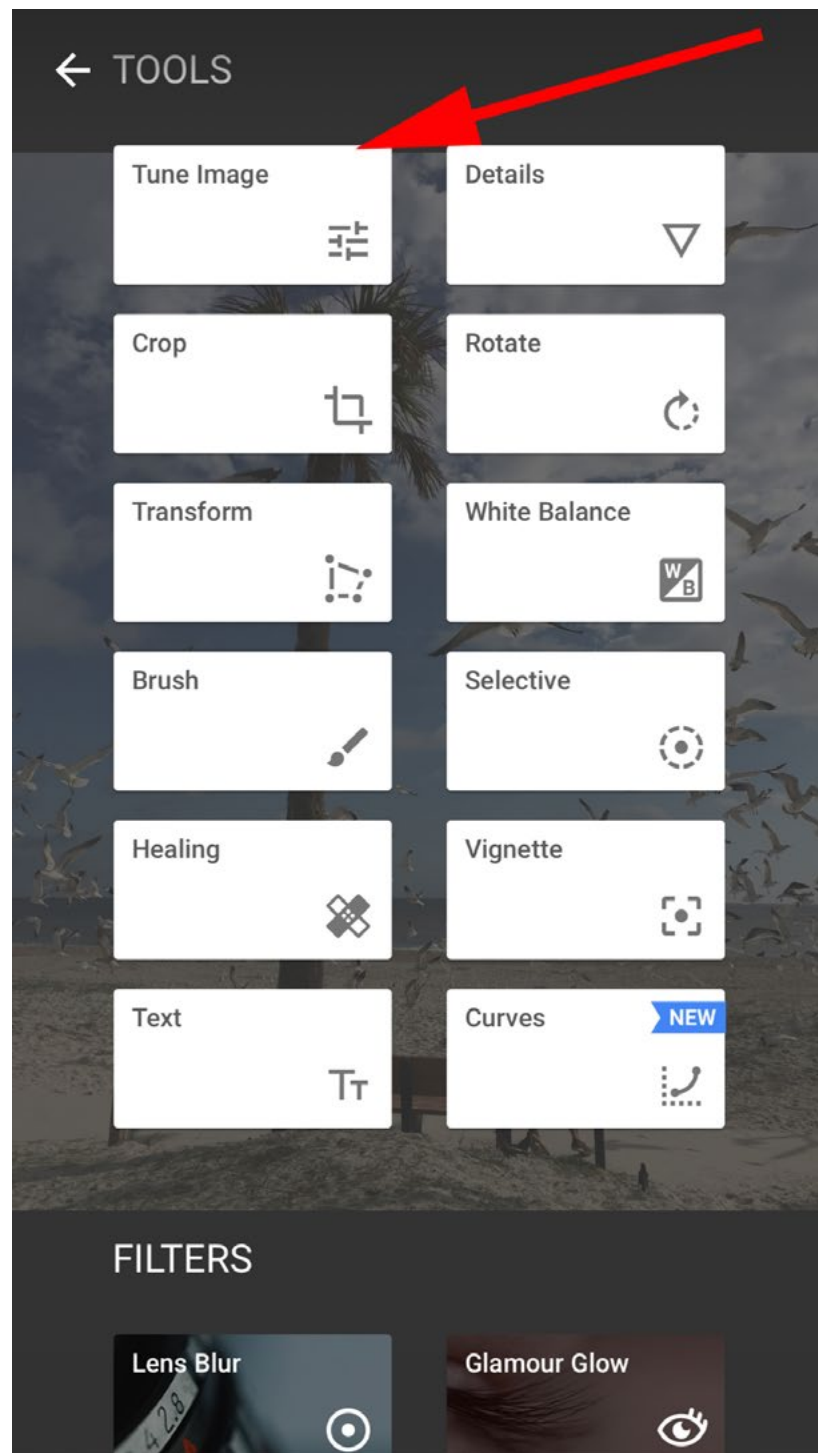
When you open the Snapseed app, there are two visible toolboxes: Tools and Filters. Both of these sections can make use of the masking techniques that I will be discussing here.

For this particular project we will work in the "Tools" section, and we will select "Tune Image" (Image 121, upper-left arrow). The next window that will appear is what you see on the right side of Image 121.

I want you to note the red arrow pointing at an icon that appears to be a bar graph (bottom-right side of Image 121). You always want to click this when performing a Tune Image edit in Snapseed as it opens up a histogram. The default setting for the histogram is set to be off, so always turn it on. The "Tune Image" toolbox area is the only area in Snapseed where the histogram is visible.
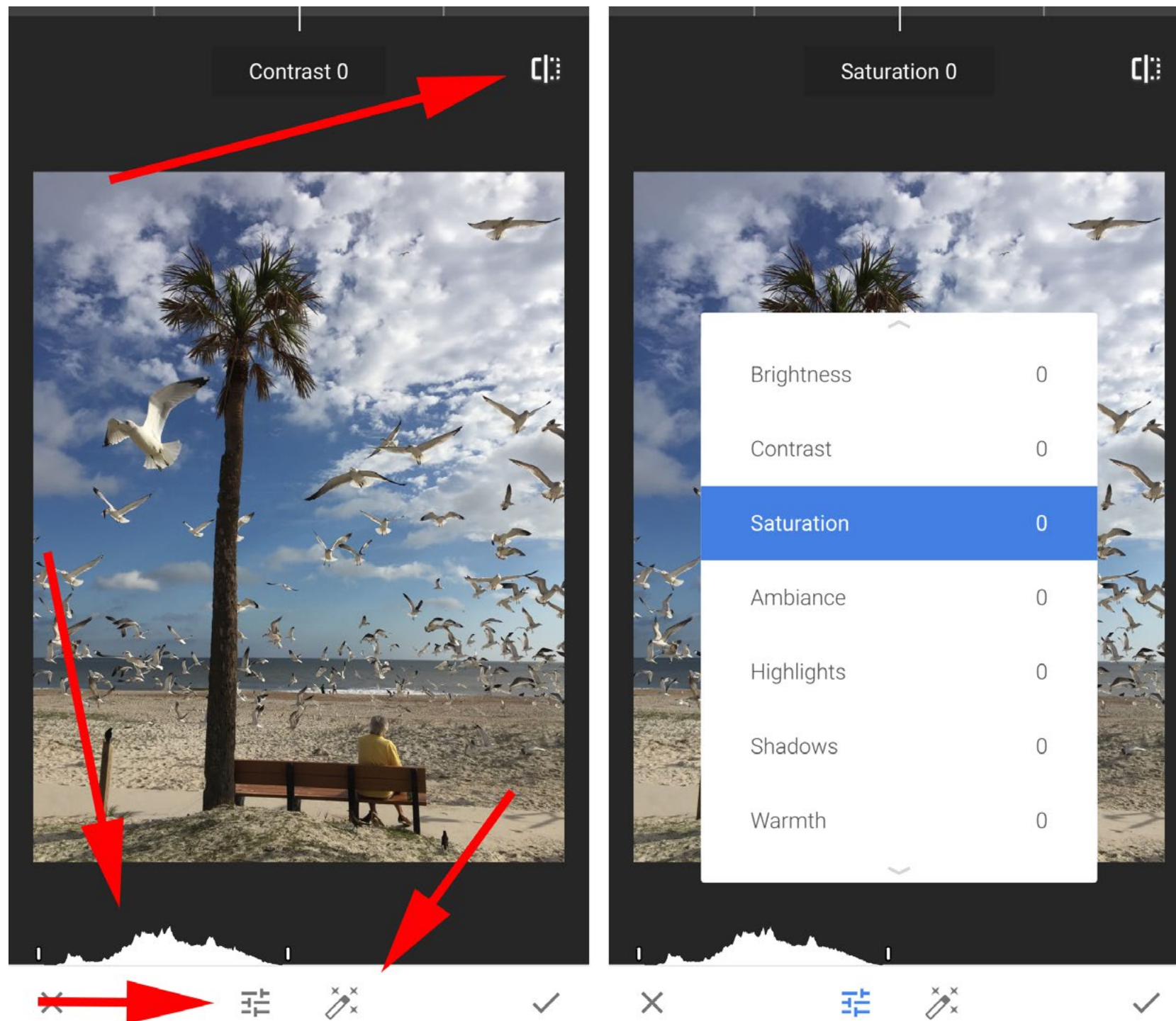
Image 122 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

In Image 122, we see the "Tune Image" interface. Let's look at the left side first. The upper arrow, pointing to the right, shows you the "Before and After" icon. Click this on and off to see how your changes look in the Preview window.

At the bottom of the window, we can now the see the histogram (downward-pointing arrow on the left). Look at the arrow pointing toward the icon that looks like a "wand" with three stars. That icon fires off an auto adjust function. Frankly, I have found it to be worthless, and I never use it.

The last arrow, on the left side of Image 122, points toward an icon that looks like three sliders. This button brings up the tool menu that you see on the right side of Image 122. You can also bring up that tool menu by simply sliding your finger up and down on the screen. The tool menu presents the seven adjustments that can be made within the Tune Image option.

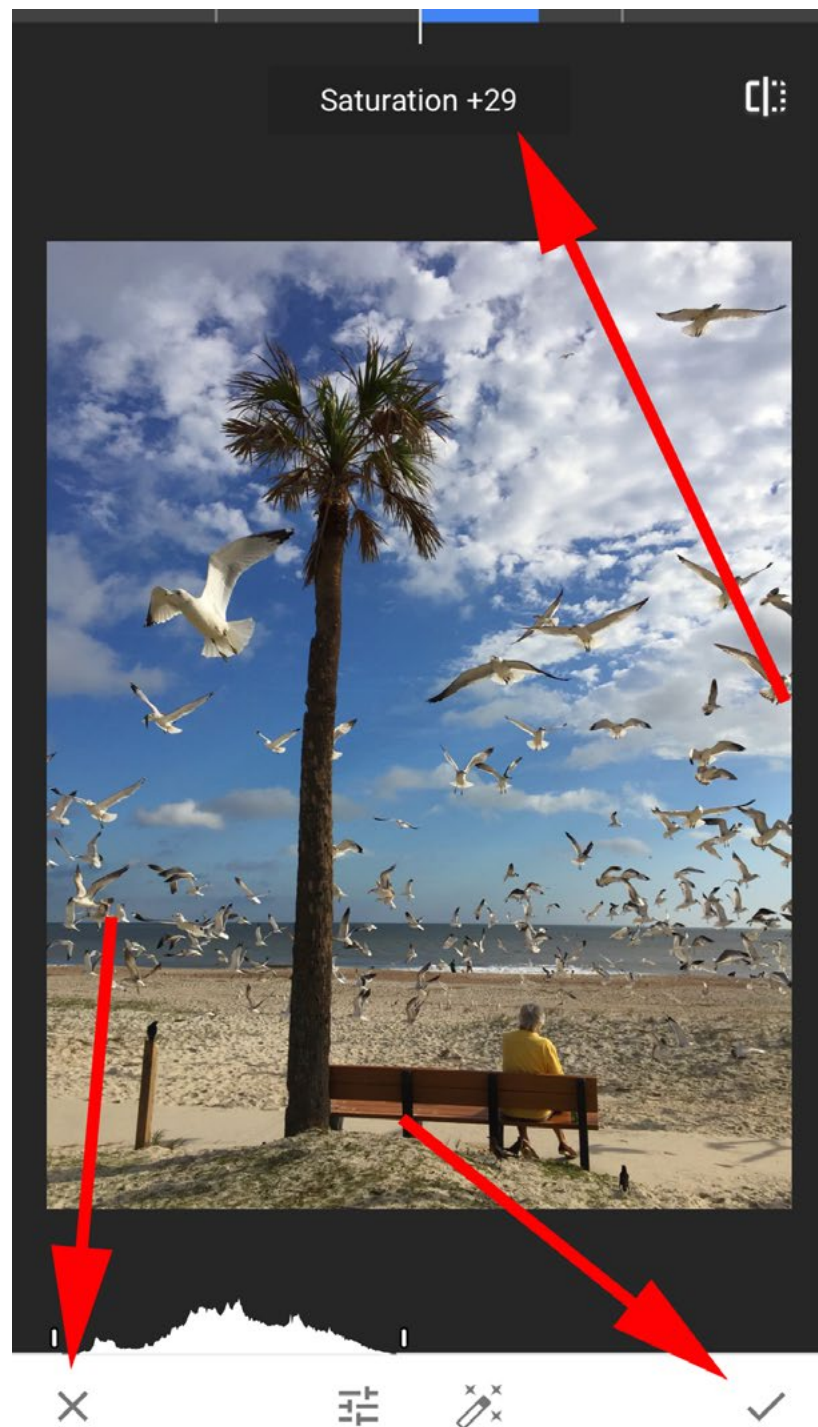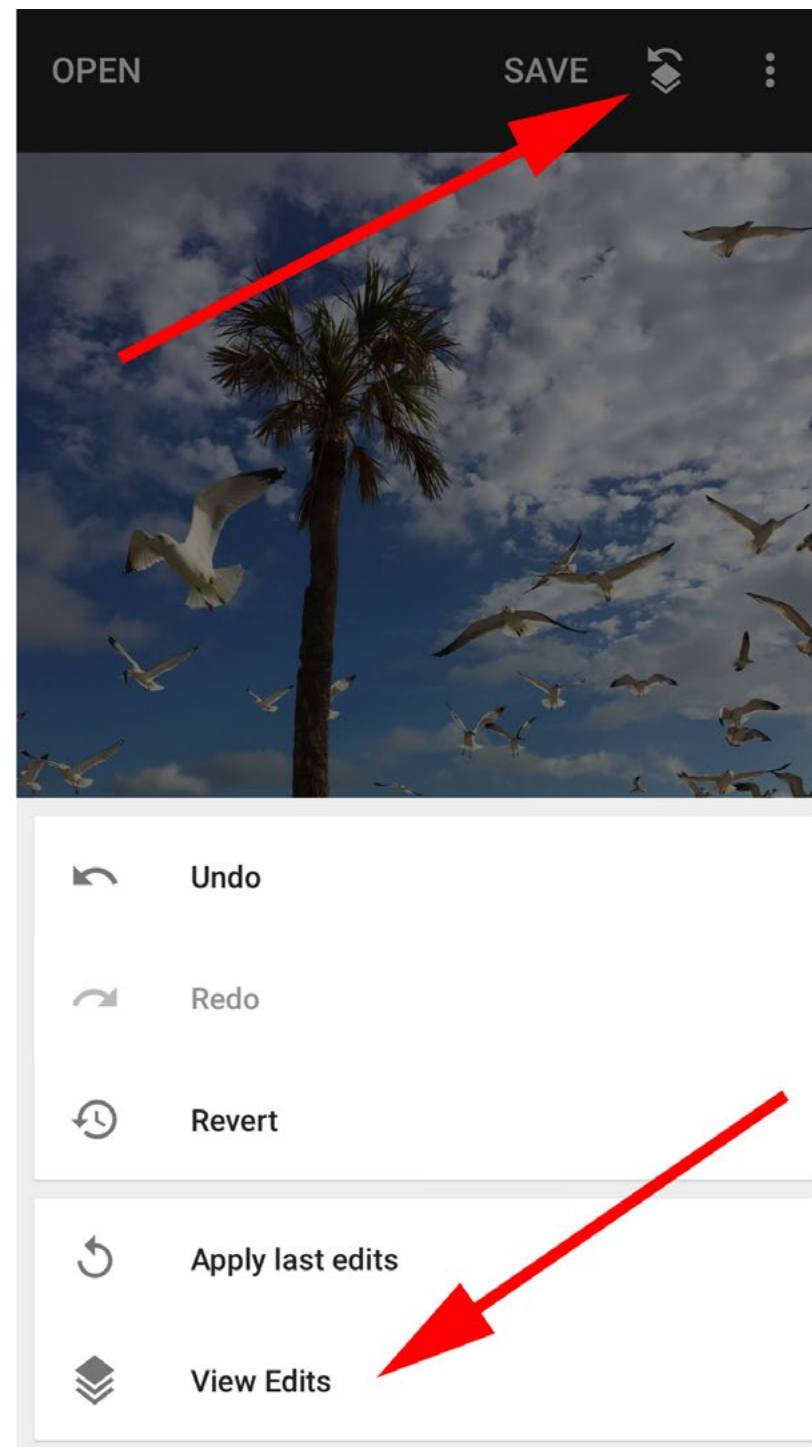We are going to select the "Saturation" tool.

Image 123 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Once we have selected the Saturation tool, we adjust it by sliding our finger left or right across the screen. I decided on a Saturation level of "+29."

Look at the two arrows at the bottom of Image 123 (on the left side). If you were happy with your adjustments you would click the checkmark icon. If you want to exit the tool without applying the changes, you would click on the "X" icon.

I was happy with my changes, so I clicked the checkmark icon.

That took me to the home page of Snapseed. I then clicked on the second icon from the top-right side. That took me to the page illustrated on the right side of Image 123.
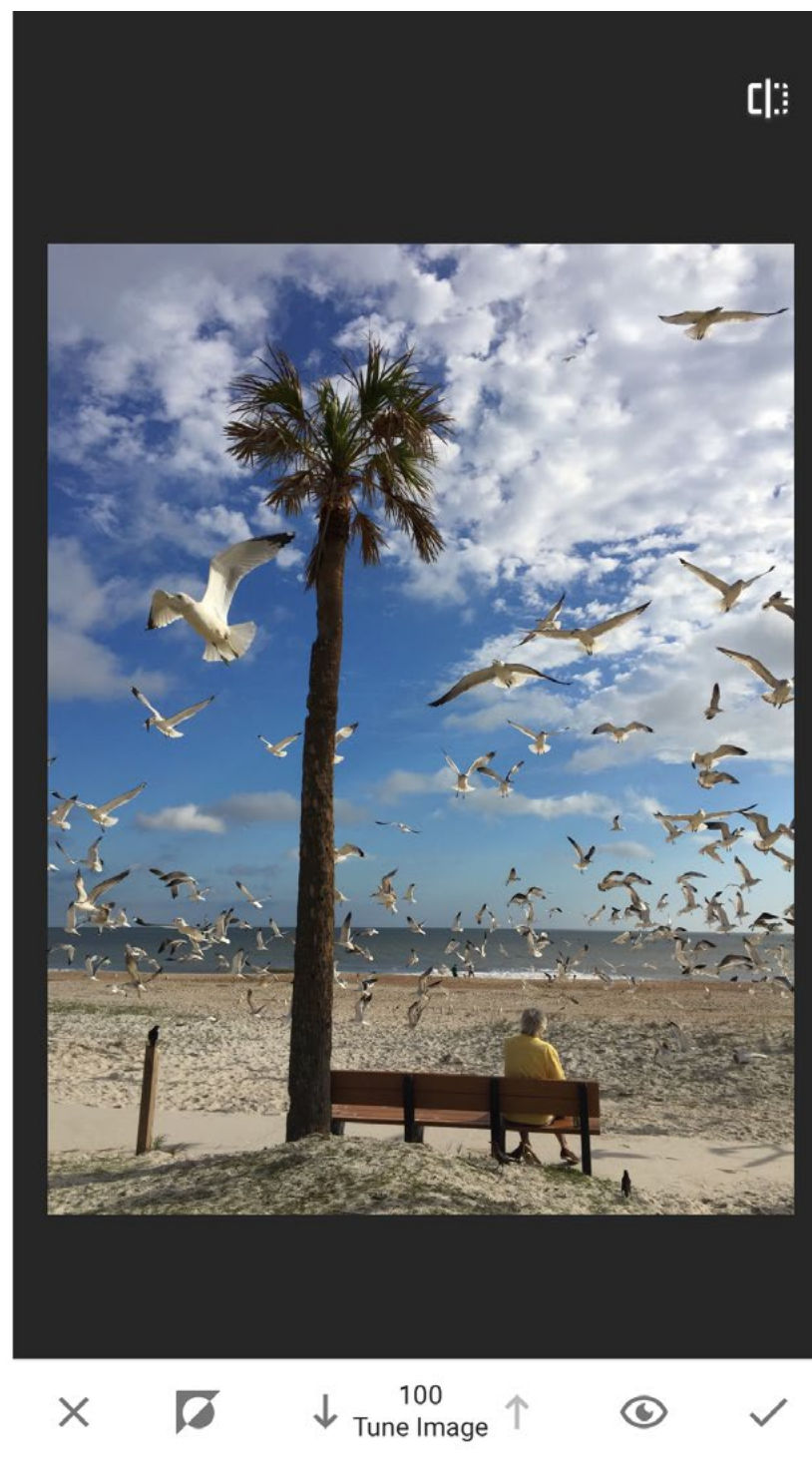
This is where the masking magic begins in Snapseed!

I clicked "View Edits" (bottom of Image 123 on the right).

Image 124 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

After I clicked "View Edits," a stack of boxes will appear that depicts every edit that has been cataloged on this image.

◇ **Key Lesson:** The catalog of edits can appear in one of two ways. If you worked on an image previously within Snapseed, and you saved your work, Snapseed saves the catalog of edits along with the image file. If you've never worked on the image, then you will only see the edits that have been performed since you opened the file.

If I click on one of the "Edit Layers" (the blue boxes on the right) (in this case Tune Image), another box slides open that holds three icons.

- Far left – Trashcan – Delete that edit

- Middle – Paint brush and canvas – Apply a mask

- Far right – Three sliders – Reopen that edit adjustment box to change the settings

In this case, I'm clicking the "Mask" option, and the window on the right of Image 124 opens up.

- The Default mask is a "Hide All" mask. So my edit (that I created in the Tune Image section) is NOT visible when this window opens. However, as I begin to paint (on the Preview Screen), the edit will be revealed wherever I have painted.

Look at the icons at the bottom-right side of Image 124. The "X" and the "checkmark" icons perform the same functions that I described earlier.

The circle with the triangle (second from the left) changes the mask from a "Hide All" mask to a "Reveal All" mask. We discussed earlier why you might select one or the other. While in the Adobe products I tend to favor the Reveal All mask. In Snapseed, I find it makes less difference. It really comes down to the image and your personal preference.

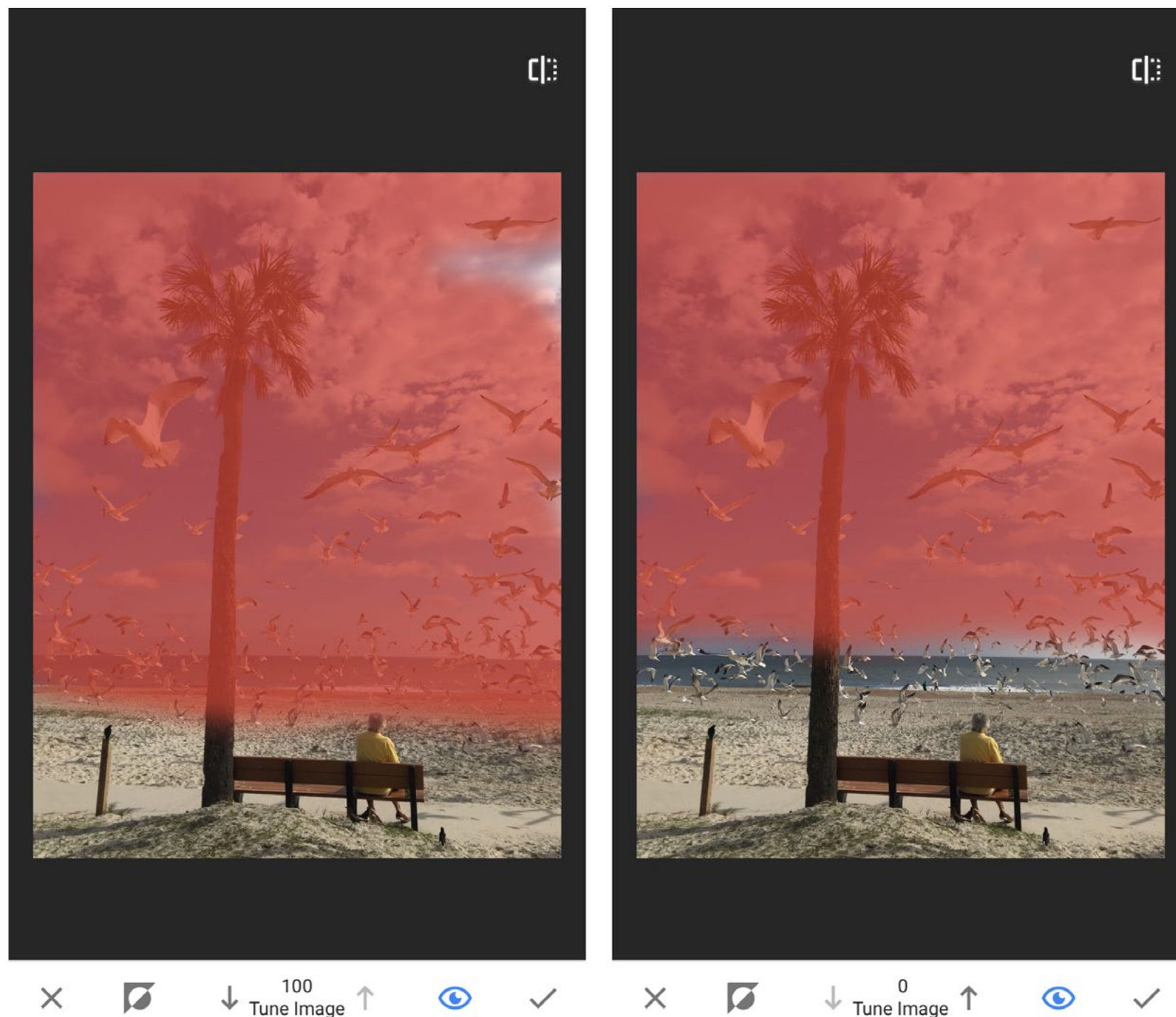For this example, we will use the default "Hide All" mask.

Image 125 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

I dragged my finger across the sky area to begin the masking operation.

If I touch the "eyeball" icon it shows the mask in Rubylith Red.

In Image 125, you can see where I made some mistakes on my mask. I went too far and painted across the horizon line down into the ocean and beach areas. I also missed a couple of places on the right side of the image.

Now that I can see the mask, I'll just paint in the areas that I missed. Why didn't I just turn on the mask to begin with? I could have. It is up to personal preference.

Now, I want to take your attention to the bottom of Image 125. Look in the middle, where it says "Tune Image." You see up- and down-facing arrows as well as a number (currently set at 100 on the left and 0 on the right).

The arrows change the "Masking Brush Opacity" from 100 to 0 in increments of 25.

- · 100 – the mask is at full opacity
- · 75 – the masking brush will paint at 75% opacity
- · 50 – the masking brush will paint at 50% opacity
- · 25 – the masking brush will paint at 25% opacity
- · 0 – the mask is being deleted

Run these exercises through your head to get a handle on this.

1. You initially painted your mask at 100. You then change the setting to 25 and repaint part of your initial mask. What happens? Where you repainted the mask is now at 25% opacity. With a Hide All mask, the areas that you painted with the 100 setting will allow 100% of the effect to be visible. Where you painted with the 25 setting, only 25% of the effect will be visible.

2. You paint your initial Hide All mask with the setting at 50. What happens? Anywhere that you painted the mask, 50% of the effect will be visible.

3. You change your mask setting to a Reveal All mask. When you press the eyeball icon, what will you see? The entire Preview Window will be covered in the Rubylith red color. The effect is 100% visible across the image. Next you paint part of the image with the Mask Brush set at 50. What happens? That area of the image will only show 50% of the effect.

I know this can be confusing at first, especially if you're new to masking. The best thing to do is take the image into the app and play with the masking options until it clicks with you.

When I did this practice, I used an image where I really whacked out the colors, so that I could clearly see what was happening as I changed the mask and turned it on and off.

To clean up my overrun on the mask in Image 125, I set the "opacity" at the bottom to "0," and I then dragged my finger across the areas where I wanted to remove the mask (see the right side of Image 125).

When I'm working on a mask in Snapseed, is the brush opacity setting at the bottom always going to say "Tune Image"?
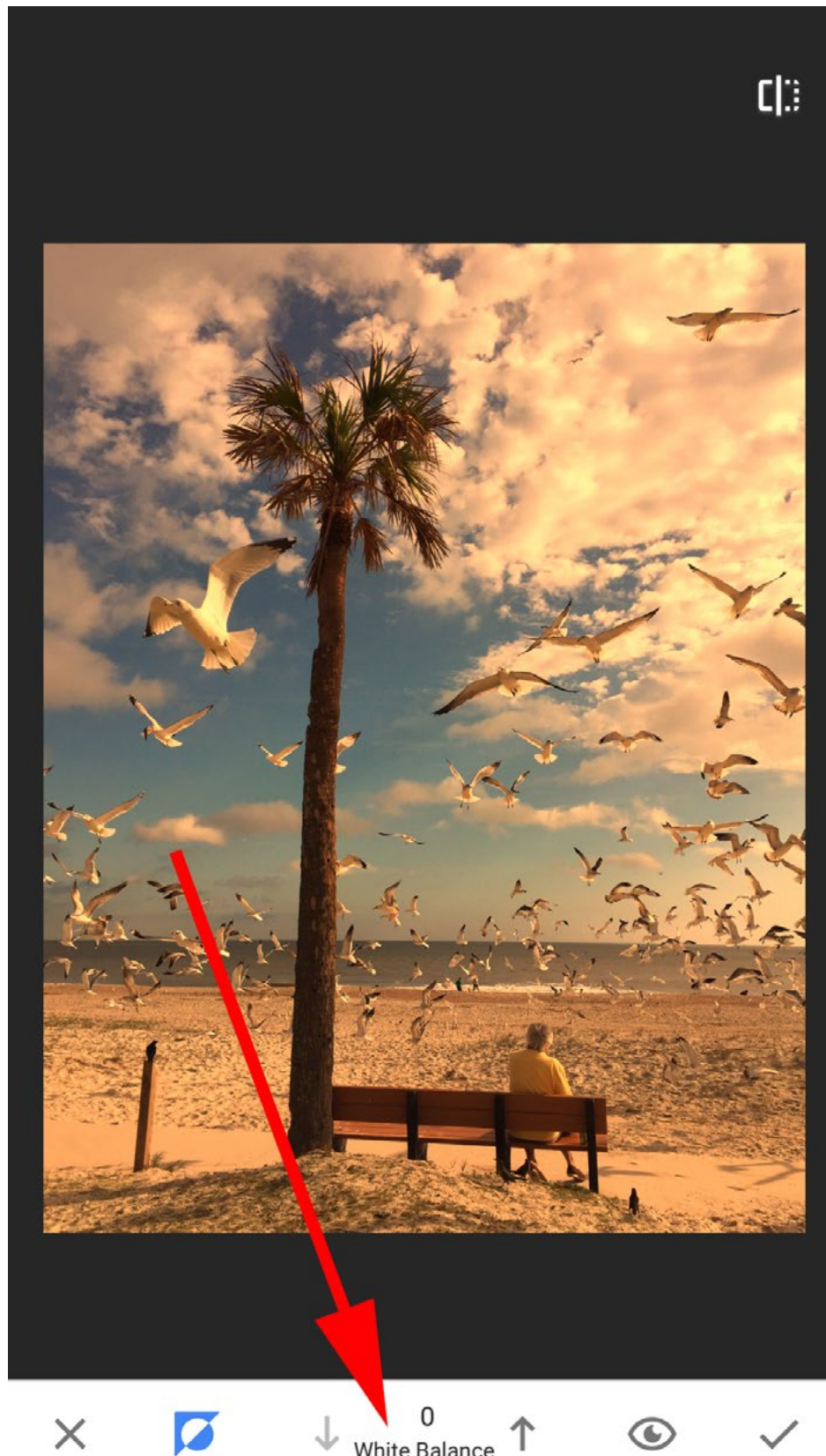
Image 126 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

No. It is going to be listed as the title of the edit that you're applying the mask to. In Image 126, you can see how I whacked out the White balance. The "brush opacity" setting now says "White Balance."

Question: If I haven't made any changes to the mask, and we can see the whacked-out color across the entire Preview Window, what mask is in use? Is it a Hide All mask or a Reveal All mask?

Image 127 – Photograph by Kent DuFault
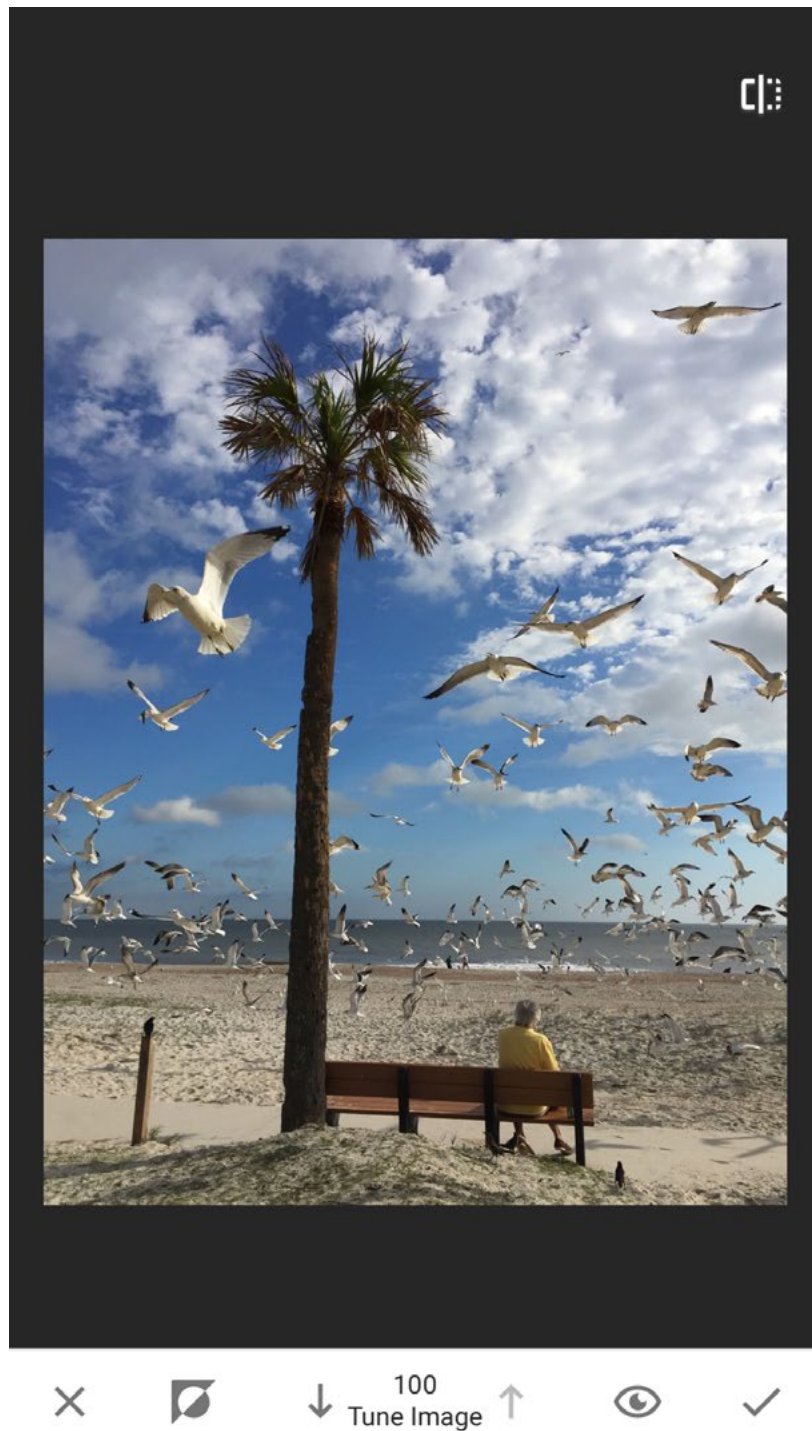
Once we complete our mask, click the checkmark icon to accept the changes. This takes us back to the "View Edits" window. Click the upper-left-facing arrow to go back to the main interface.

Before we do that, look at Image 127 (on the right side). Our sky area now has the increased color saturation while the ocean, sand, and model have remained neutral.

We are now going to repeat these steps to brighten and increase the color saturation of the man's shirt and the bench area that he is sitting on.
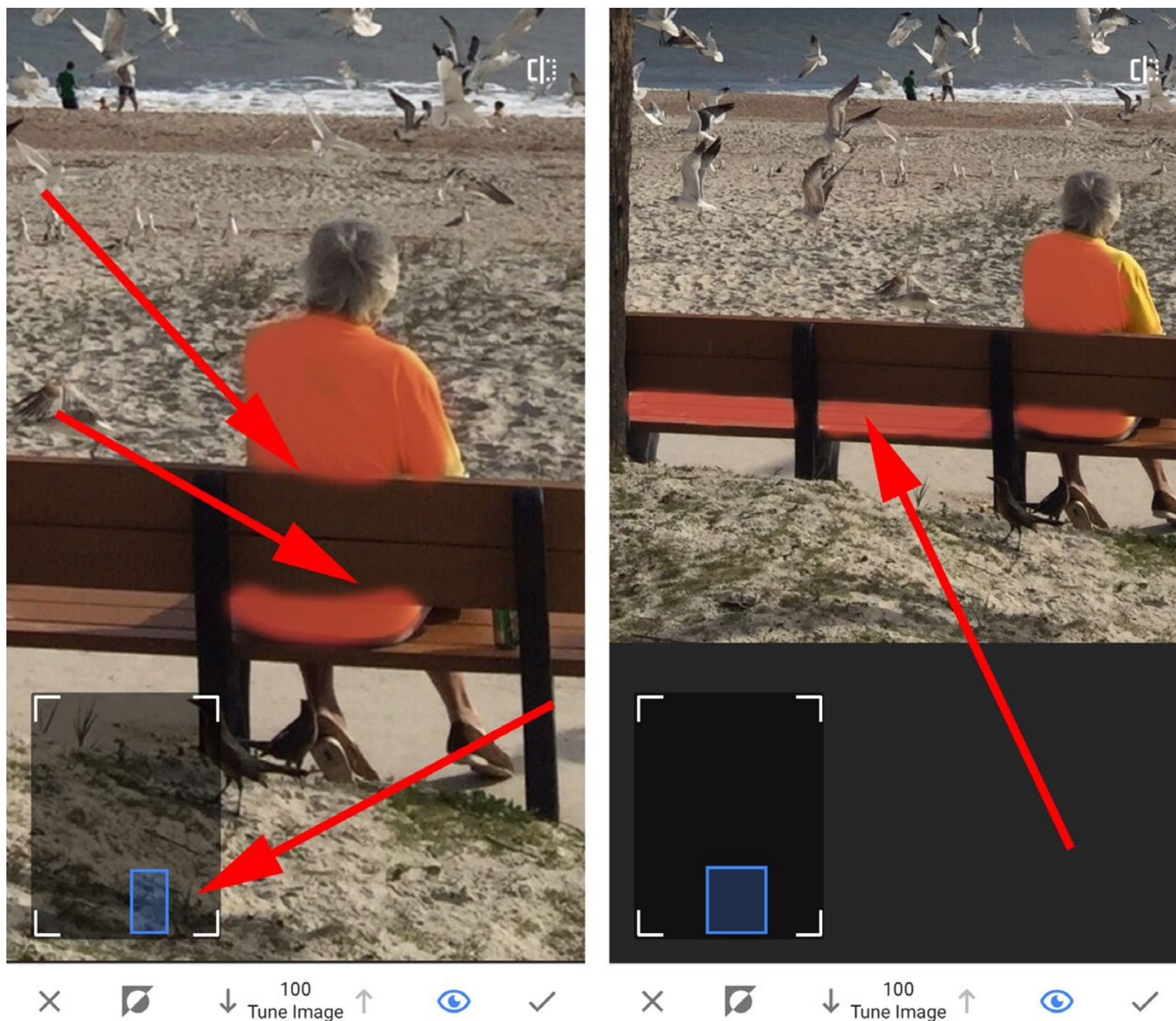
Image 128 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Since I've already given you a complete rundown on all the steps, I'm just going to cover the highlights for these last edits.

· When working with small areas, fill the screen with the area where you're going to create the mask (Image 128, left side).

· When creating a mask in the Snapseed layers, always navigate around the Image Preview by using the navigation box on the lower left. If you try and drag around the image with your finger on the Preview Screen, you may inadvertently create masking in areas that you don't want. (Believe me, this has happened to me a million times.)

· Create your mask and clean up the edges as we previously discussed.

· In Image 128 (on the right), I created the mask with the area filling my screen. First, I did the man's back. I then did the bench area just to the left of him, and then the additional bench area, far to the left of him. I zoomed my Preview Image out a little bit so that I could check the entire mask.
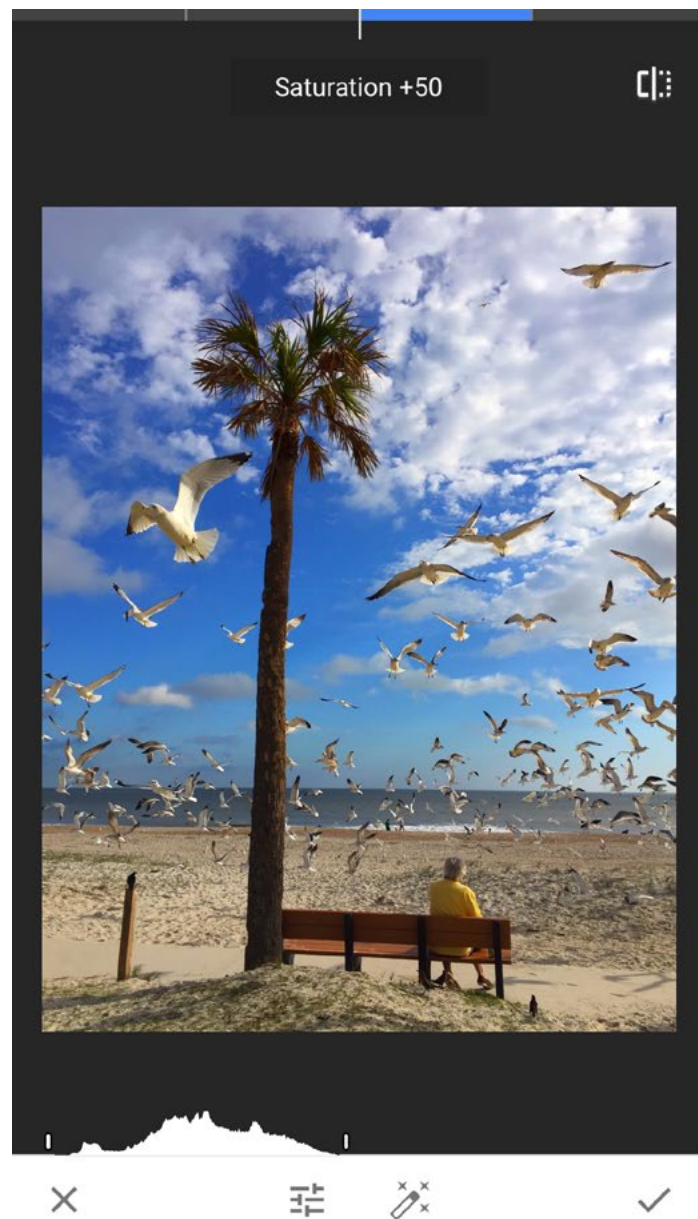
Image 129 – Photograph by Kent DuFault

Now that my mask is complete, I can see the edits that I made in the Tune Image tool for the shirt and the bench (Image 129, left side). I increased the color Saturation to +50 and the Brightness to +25.

The final photograph is on the right (Image 129).

⬦ **Key Lesson:** By incorporating the art of masking into your photographic vision and post-production toolbox, you can vastly change the look, mood, and even composition of your photographs. And that's true, whether you're shooting with a traditional DSLR or a mobile phone camera. Masking is one major step toward releasing unbridled creativity!

Self Check Quiz

1. True or False: One of the key features of Snapseed is that you can apply masks in various layers.

2. Name the two toolbox areas that are located on the main page of Snapseed.

3. Name the one location within Snapseed where you can view the histogram for the image that you're working on.

4. What does the book-like icon in the upper-right corner of the Snapseed workspace accomplish?

5. True or False: The Auto Adjust feature in the Tune Image toolbox works great.

6. Once you've completed an edit in Snapseed, which icon saves your changes: the X or the checkmark?

7. True or False: In Snapseed, to navigate to the "View Edits" layer window, you must press the icon at the top of the workspace that looks like a stack of papers with an arrow.

8. True or False: Once you have opened the View Edits layer window, each edit appears as a box stacked one on top of the next.

9. You've opened the View Edits layer window. How do you get to the masking option?

10. The masking option, within the Snapseed View Edits window, appears in a blue box. There are two other icons in that box. What do they do?

11. Once you've selected the masking option in the Snapseed View Edits layer window, what is the default mask that appears?

12. In Snapseed, you've opened the masking option and set it to a Reveal All mask. You then set the mask opacity setting at the bottom to 50 and paint on the Preview Image. What is the result?

13. When you're in the Snapseed masking window, what does the "Eyeball" icon do?

14. In the Snapseed masking window, how do you completely erase part of a mask?

Question about Image 126: Since we can see the whacked-out color in the Preview Window, what mask is in use? Is it a Hide All mask or a Reveal All mask? **The answer is: a Reveal All mask.**

SUMMARY

I hope you've come to realize the power masking and what it can mean to your photography. It is the equivalent of putting a painter's brush in your hand.

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