

NEWSLETTER

# MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SUMMER 2014



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SUMMER 2014 NEWSLETTER

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Cover Image: An elder of the Matis tribe walking back to the main Maloka on a foggy morning in the Matis village in the Vale do Javari, Brazil. Opposite Page: An image of the Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles, California on a cloudy morning. Newsletter edited by [Katherine Mast](#).







# Out of Control

*Updates on the latest news & expeditions in this issue of the Newsletter*

**A**s you might have noticed, there was no Spring 2014 Newsletter this year. This spring was out of control busy and I just never had the time to put it together. Hence, I will make up for it here with another longer form Newsletter. This issue of the Newsletter is jam-packed with updates on my latest trips, news about recent awards, my upcoming workshops, an interview with photography consultant Peter Dennen aimed specifically towards working photographers, and a book review.

This spring I found out that my website was featured in the PDN Photo Annual (for the 2nd time in three years) and just last week I found out that one of my ice climbing images was featured in the Photo District News (PDN) Great Outdoors Issue, which comes out this month. Read more about these recent awards starting on page 6.

As you can see from the cover image and the landscape image of an indigenous village on the opposite page, I have been on some pretty wild adventures this spring. I was traveling non-stop for over a month and had the opportunity to photograph three indigenous tribes deep in the heart of the Amazon in the Vale do Javari, Brazil. A short synopsis of that trip, which might be the most intense of any I have ever had in my entire career, starts on page 16.

Previous to the Amazon expedition, I taught a few workshops—one in Austin, TX and another in Los Angeles, CA. While teaching the Los Angeles workshop I was able to shoot the Walt Disney Concert Hall in downtown Los Angeles. As it turns out, dark cloudy days happen to be perfect conditions for photographing the Disney Concert Hall. Under these conditions, reflections are minimized and the building takes on a wild, abstract mystique as shown on the previous page and in the Portfolio section on page 34.

It is also a great honor to introduce you to Peter Dennen, one of the nicest guys in the photo industry, who is now working as a photography consultant. Peter was formerly the Art Director at Aurora Photos and has teamed up with photo editor Jackie Ney to create a solid duo, who together can help take your career to the next level. My in-depth interview with Peter starts on page 26.

*Opposite Page: The view of a maloka and its surrounding huts in the Marubo village of Boa Vista, which is a beautiful village in the heart of the Amazon in the Vale do Javari, Brazil.*

**Recent Clients:** Red Bull, Pictureline, New Mexico Magazine, PeachPit Press, CauseCentric Productions, Wolverine Publishing, Middlebury College, International Corporate Art, and the Santa Fe Workshops.







# PDN Photo Annual Honors Website

*Michael's website recognized in the May 2014 issue of Photo District News*



I am honored to announce that my website was recognized in the 2014 Photo District News (PDN) Photo Annual as one of the top photography websites. In 2013, I updated my website using the Design X template from APhotoFolio.com and kept a similar design aesthetic as the previous version of my website, which also won a PDN Photo Annual award for website design in 2011. My thanks to the folks over at APhotoFolio for all of their help

in making this come together and of course, my thanks to PDN for including my website in the Photo Annual. Having had my website featured in the PDN Photo Annual twice in three years is a huge honor and confirmation that it is a great marketing tool for my work. Ever since I switched over to APhotoFolio.com and worked with a graphic designer to create a new logo and a new web presence, my business has kicked into a higher gear. I

have had the best four years of my career since moving to APhotoFolio.com and updating my website in 2010. Of course, this success in the last four years isn't all due to the website but as it is the hub of my marketing it has a huge effect on how clients view my work. I know many of my peers have signed on with APhotoFolio.com since I joined because many of them have called me and asked

about the experience. I have nothing but good things to say about the wonderful team Rob Haggart has assembled at APhotoFolio.com. They are very deserving of all the awards their sites get and they are always looking for ways to improve the sites and their overall usefulness for both photographers and their clients. Check out my award-winning website at [www.michaelclarkphoto.com](http://www.michaelclarkphoto.com).

## PDN Great Outdoors Photography Contest

*Michael's image recognized in the August 2014 issue of Photo District News*



I am honored to announce that one of my images, shown above, was recognized in the 2014 Photo District News (PDN) [Great Outdoors Photography Contest](#) as one of the top adventure images of 2014. The image was the runner up in the "Outdoor Sports & Activities" category and is featured in the August 2014 issue of PDN magazine as well as on their website. This ice climbing image

was created in January 2013 in Ouray, Colorado at the Ouray Ice Park with ice climber Dawn Glanc. This image took a full day to create since I lit the ice climb from above and had to climb down to a ledge on the opposite side of the gorge to get this perspective.

My thanks to the judges including Amy Silverman (Outside), Gaston Lacombe (ILCP), Keith Jenkins (National Geographic), Grant Ellis (Surfer Magazine) and Jon-Paul Harrison (Tandem Stills + Motion) for choosing to include my image alongside those from my peers Keith Ladzinski and Jimmy Chin. And of course, my thanks to PDN for putting on this photo competition and including my image in the latest issue of PDN and on their website.



## workshops

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# Photography Workshops

*An overview of workshops coming up with Michael Clark*

**E**ach year I teach several workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, big-wave surfing photography, camera technology, digital workflow and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshop I will be teaching in February 2015. For the full description of this workshop and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my website.

### **Surfing Photography Workshop**

*Oahu, Hawaii — February 19-22, 2015*

The Surfing Photography Workshop is back! Join legendary surfing photographer Brian Biemann and me for an exciting one-of-a-kind workshop that delves into the world of big-wave surfing photography. Brian is a top surfing photographer who has been shooting the sport for more than 25 years. I will bring my adventure photography skills and knowledge as well as in-depth experience with digital workflow to round out the workshop.

This 4-day workshop combines daily photo shoots at world-class surfing locations on the north shore of Oahu and classroom instruction. We will spend the other half of the workshop shooting in the early mornings and in the late afternoon and evenings when the waves and the light are at their best. The other half of the workshop will be spent in the classroom focusing on image critiques, and

discussing gear, strategies and the business of photography. We will also discuss basic and advanced strategies for shooting surfing and digital workflow in detail.

In late February, when the workshop is scheduled, large waves hit the north shore frequently. Though we cannot predict or guarantee the wave sizes or surfing conditions, the north shore of Oahu serves up sizable waves on a nearly daily basis. We will host the workshop at the Turtle Bay Hilton Resort.

Since surfing photography relies on large lenses, each participant will need to bring a telephoto lens that is at least 400mm. A 500mm or 600mm lens is preferred. If you don't own one of these lenses, please rent or borrow one. Please contact Brian or me with any questions about lens selection and rental options. We also have a special deal with Hawaii Photo Rental Oahu, who have 500mm and 600mm lenses for both Canon and Nikon.

The cost of this workshop is \$1,295 per person. A deposit of \$500 is required to secure your spot in the workshop. You can find more information about the workshop on my [website](#), including detailed information on what we will be doing each day and the equipment you will need for the workshop. This workshop is very unique and it is one of the most exciting workshops anywhere in the world.

As proof of that statement, we have already had several people sign up and take the workshop more than once. If you have ever wanted to photograph surfing, I encourage you to come join us in Hawaii. If you have any questions or would like to register for this workshop please send me an [email](#).

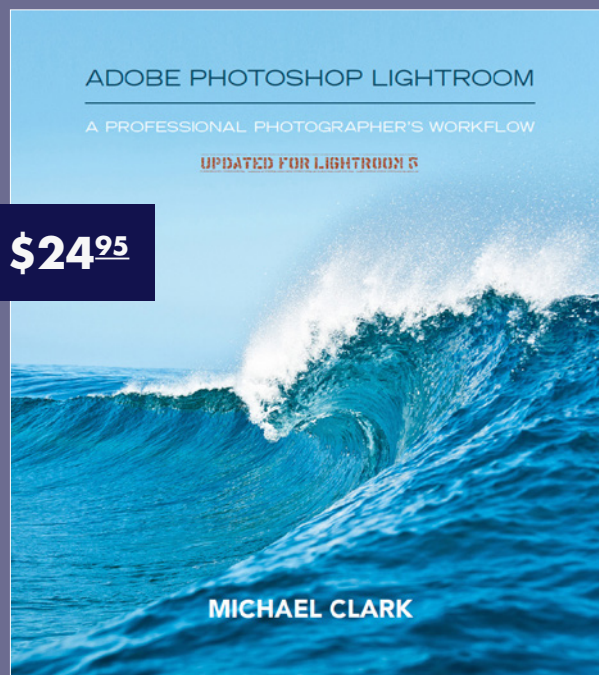
## Workshop Testimonials

"Michael set an incredibly high bar for his workshop. He gave 110%, covered a broad range of topics and did an outstanding job." - Chris Council, Adventure Photography Workshop, Summer 2010

"Thanks for running such a great workshop. I couldn't have chosen better photo shoot locations, and the post-shoot critiques were invaluable. It's the first time I've had my work reviewed, and I learned a ton from each session. While I didn't go into the workshop expecting to pick-up too many marketing and business tips, I've come out of last week inspired to set-up my photo website in earnest." - Jeff Hylok, Adventure Photography Workshop, Summer 2010

"I just finished Michael Clark's Adventure Photography Workshop at the Santa Fe Workshops in April 2013. I had a terrific time with the group of people - one from China, another from Seattle, another from Wyoming, me from Michigan - you get the picture that we came from everywhere. We came because of the Santa Fe Workshop's reputation of presenting an intense learning experience guided by fantastic instructors. We got both. Michael Clark really knows his stuff and has a lot of excess energy, which he

## ADOBE LIGHTROOM WORKFLOW A COMPLETE WORKFLOW FROM CAPTURE TO OUTPUT BY MICHAEL CLARK



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The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Workflow, a 435-page e-book, is a workshop in book form. Updated for Adobe Lightroom 5 and Photoshop CS6, this e-book was completely re-written and presents a workflow that can be adapted by any photographer, professional or amateur. I can honestly say that I have not seen any other book on the market today that includes as much detailed and comprehensive information as this e-book does on digital workflow.

To purchase *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographer's Workflow* click on the website link below. Payments can be made with any major credit card or via your PayPal account. For more information on the workflow and exactly what is covered go to Michael's website.

**[WWW.MICHAELCLARKPHOTO.COM](http://WWW.MICHAELCLARKPHOTO.COM)**



*Derek Dunfee dropping in on a huge wave on a windy and chaotic day at Pipeline. This image was shot during the 2013 Surfing Photography Workshop on the north shore of Oahu. This is one of the most amazing workshops I have been a part of and there are already several people who have signed up to take it again.*

focused on us, and he can also teach. He read our skills and weaknesses quickly and went to work to improve each of us technically. He sorted out our individual goals, even when we couldn't really articulate them. Then he gave us plenty of time to address those goals and ask question after question after question. The rough environments in which we photographed were great fun to explore. Couldn't be better." - Tania Evans

"Thanks again for such a terrific workshop. I have taken one other two-day Lightroom workshop, but your's is the best!" - Vance Thompson, Lightroom Workshop, 2011

"Just wanted you know how much fun I had during the

workshop last weekend! I learned a lot and look forward to doing other workshops with you." - Jason Quevedo, Philadelphia Mentor Series Trek, Fall 2009

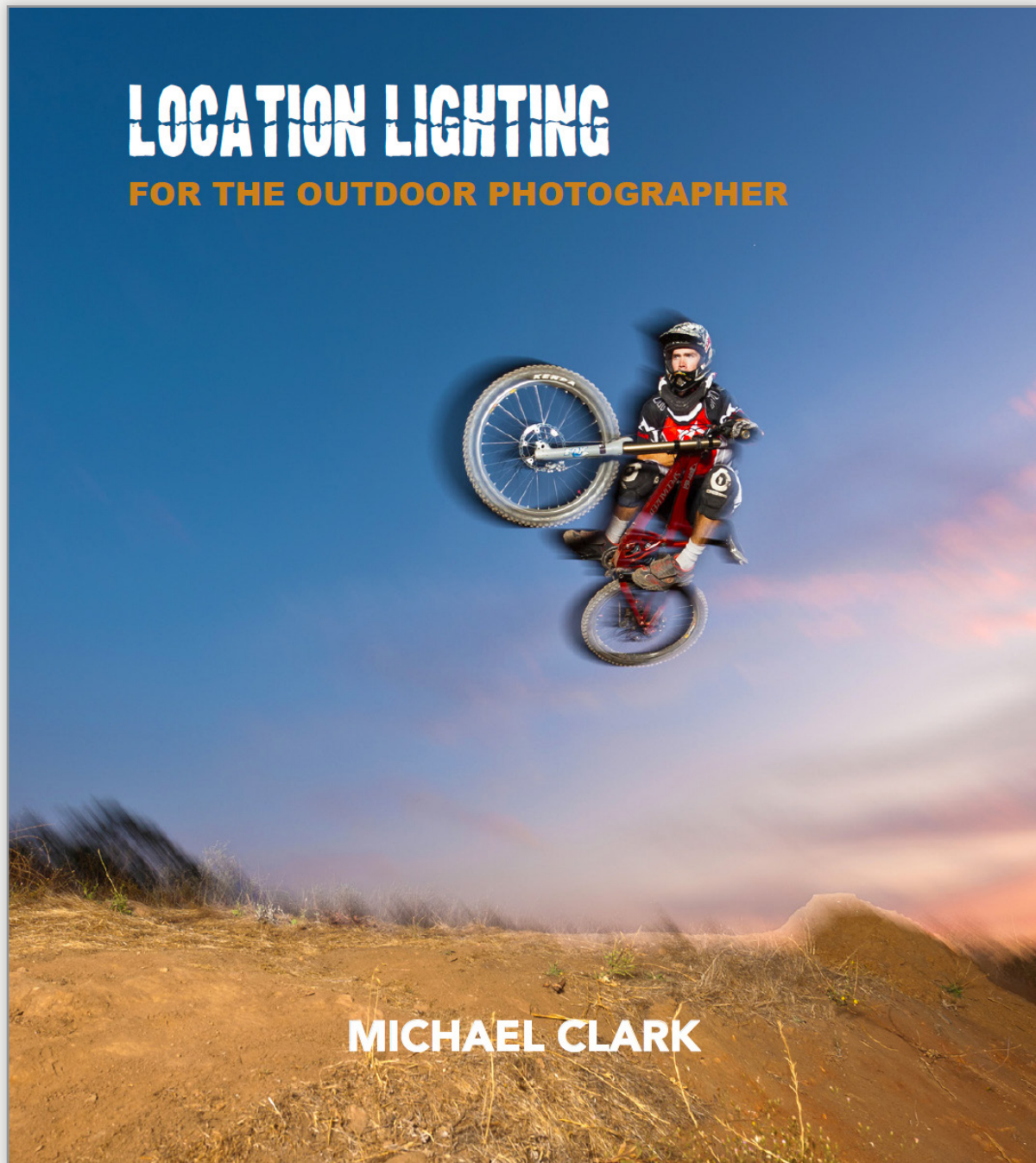
"I really enjoyed the surfing [photography] workshop! It was great on every level. I really can't thank you enough and I hope to take another of your workshops in the near future." - Ben Reed, 2013 Surfing Photo Workshop

For more information on my upcoming workshops, or to read more testimonials, please visit the [Workshops](#) page on my website. Hope to see you at a workshop here soon! If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call or email me.



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## equipment review

# The SmallHD DP4 Monitor

*A stellar accessory for making your life easier when shooting video*

**W**ith motion content being a significant portion of just about every assignment these days, I have been updating some of the key items I use to capture video with HD DSLRs, like my Nikon D800 and D4, and with larger digital cinema cameras like the Red Epic and Scarlet. To that end, I recently acquired the SmallHD DP4-EVF monitor (as shown below). If you haven't heard of SmallHD, they have become very popular in the last few years because they make some of the highest quality and most color accurate video monitors anywhere.

but at the moment a smaller, more agile monitor with the EVF loupe fits my style of shooting a bit better. The DP4 plugs into my Nikon cameras via an HDMI cable and can display all of the information on the back of the camera along with the image or show the image full screen on the monitor. Depending on the scenario, I will use the monitor with or without the loupe. The monitor comes with a flexible neoprene hood that works extremely well in bright conditions if you can't get close to the camera. If it is very bright outside and you want a magnified view of



The DP4 is their smallest monitor with a 4.3-inch diagonal screen, but by no means is that a handicap. SmallHD also offers 7-inch and 7.7-inch monitors. At some point I will definitely add one of their larger monitors to my kit,



the footage being captured, the EVF viewfinder is fantastic. I must say I much prefer this setup to a Zacuto viewfinder mounted on the back of my camera as it offers a lot more flexibility. For those situations where you have the



*Çapkin van Alphen shooting for the Tribes on the Edge documentary using a SmallHD DP4 monitor with the EVF viewfinder (flipped up in this image) in the Vale do Javari, Brazil. As can be seen here the DP4 makes life a lot easier when shooting video by providing a larger, more adjustable monitor when shooting with DSLRs.*

EVF viewfinder on the monitor and just need to look at the screen (sans Loupe) you can easily flip it up, as in the image above, and magnets on the top of the monitor lock the EVF loupe in place.

In terms of specs, the DP4 is an HDMI loop-through monitor with a resolution of 800 x 480 pixels, which results in 217 pixels per inch. The unit weighs 6.4 ounces (182 grams) and is milled out of aluminum, so it is quite durable. It also comes with a screen protector and a battery plate of your choice. I chose the battery plate that

accepts Nikon D800 EN-EL15 batteries. The monitor is powered by two batteries, which mount on the back of the monitor. As usual with video, this is battery intensive and you will burn through the two batteries in a few hours. The screen has a viewing angle of 160 degrees, which is quite nice, and displays 16.7 million colors. The DP4 also has quite a few video features that make life a lot easier when shooting video like a focus peaking mode, a false color mode, and a live histogram.

In actual use, the DP4 is a joy to use. If I am nitpicking, it



would be great to have a little higher resolution, maybe 300 pixels per inch, but it still works just fine as it is. Manually focusing using focus peaking on the monitor, called Focus Assist Plus in the Small HD literature, is very easy and allows you to achieve sharp focus very quickly. The false color mode uses colors to tell you which parts of your scene are overexposed or underexposed, which is very handy. Also, the frame reference guides will help out tremendously if you are cropping the 16:9 image down to a more cinematic aspect ratio. Some might argue that the size of the screen is not that much larger than the LCD on the back of most DSLRs, and they have a point, but this monitor has so many useful features that are not built into any DSLRs (like focus peaking) that it really comes into its own when in use. When looking through the EVF viewfinder, the screen itself, which is magnified, looks much larger than you would think.

The SmallHD engineers have made changing modes and quick navigation relatively easy with a scrolling dial on top of the monitor. You can scroll the dial to go between menus and push down on it to enter the sub-menus. Once in the sub-menus, you simply continue to scroll with the dial and click again to change a setting or enter another sub-menu. There are also two function buttons just next to the scroll wheel that can be customized. I have one set for focus assist (focus peaking) and the other set for false color mode. These buttons make it super easy to get into and out of these modes quickly.

The DP4 also comes with a small ball head, which allows for decent manipulation of the monitor to suit your needs. For a more robust and adjustable articulating monitor arm, the [SmallHD StrongArm Z](#) would be a better option. I have noticed that the regular ball head that is supplied

with the DP4 tends to droop because of the weight of the monitor with the batteries and the EVF finder attached. This isn't an issue when using the monitor just with the hood, but mostly an issue when the EVF finder is attached since it adds weight and torque on the ball head. A stronger articulating arm would alleviate this problem.

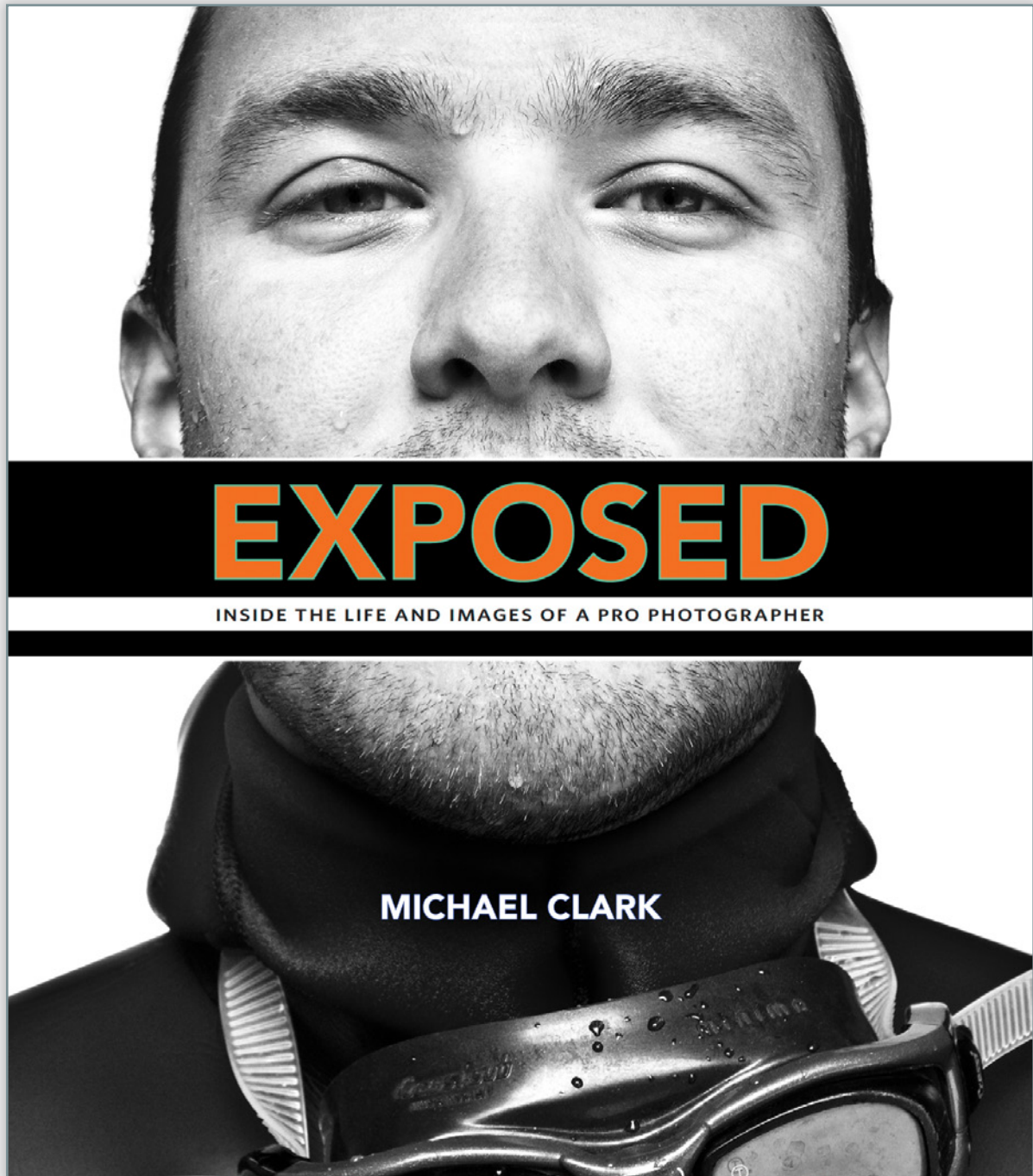
In terms of color, the SmallHD renders colors that match the back of my Nikon D800 almost perfectly. Those of you that have read some of my e-books, know that I can get a bit crazy when it comes to color management. While the color in video can be tweaked in post processing, it is nice to start out with decent color. To get the best possible color straight out of the camera, I always set an in-camera custom white balance using a gray card before I start recording video. In testing, the color on the DP4 screen matches up to my Eizo high-end Adobe RGB monitor quite nicely.

For those of you worried about durability, the SmallHD engineers produced a [video](#) showing many of the features of the DP4. In that video, they drop-tested the monitor by tossing it up into the air (about 20 feet up) and letting it crash onto concrete! They also threw it against a concrete barrier from 30-feet away. After all that they turned it on to show that it still worked just fine. As an adventure photographer, I'm not always easy on gear. Seeing this video with the extreme DP4 bounce test gives me a lot of comfort that it can take a beating.

At \$449 for the base model DP4 and \$599 for the DP4-EVF combo, this isn't a cheap accessory, but it is only a few hundred dollars more than a Zacuto loupe, and much more useful. For more information on the SmallHD DP4-EVF visit [www.smallhd.com](http://www.smallhd.com).

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*on assignment:*

# VALE DO JAVARI

A PROFOUND EXPERIENCE IN THE AMAZON





*A rainbow over the beautiful Marubo village of Boa Vista  
on the Rio Itui river in the Vale do Javari, deep in the heart  
of the Amazon in Brazil.*



**A**s a professional adventure sports photographer, many of the assignments I take on involve risky, intense moments in remote locations. I am often hanging off huge cliffs shooting rock climbing, swimming in big waves while shooting surfing or hiking deep into a remote wilderness with a huge pack. I have hunkered down in some of the worst weather Patagonia could muster, been stormbound in a tent in weeklong blizzards in Alaska and have climbed in the humid jungles of Thailand. But none of these trips could prepare me for the Amazon.

When asked to join my good friend [Céline Cousteau](#) as the still photographer for the *[Tribes on the Edge](#)* documentary film project, I jumped at the chance. I also realized that the Amazon was going to be a tough area to work in due to the high heat and humidity, not to mention the bugs or the wildlife. While this project didn't involve hanging off cliffs or swimming under huge waves, it was every bit as intense as any of my adventure sports assignments. In fact, I would say that this expedition was as intense, if not more so, than any other I have ever been on. Over the course of eleven days we visited three indigenous villages in the Vale do Javari, a protected area of the Amazon just next to the Peruvian border (see the map on page 21). The protected borders of the Vale do Javari enclose the ancestral lands of 51 indigenous tribes. Twenty-three of these tribes are uncontacted, making this area the largest group of uncontacted tribes in the world.

My assignment was to document everything, including the indigenous peoples and their way of life—which had barely changed in thousands of years—as well as capture behind the scenes images of the CauseCentric Productions crew in action. When we landed at each village it

felt as though we were aliens landing on Earth for the first time, with a ridiculous amount of baggage. The tribes we visited had all met outsiders before, but outside visitors are still rare in these villages.

I normally try to avoid hot and humid areas, especially those with an infinite number of mosquitos and no-see-ums. In my 18 year career traveling the world, Thailand was the closest thing I had ever faced that gave me pause about the Amazon. In northern Thailand, near the Golden triangle, the humidity was so overpowering that it literally shut me down on a few occasions. Hence, I was a bit worried about the Amazon and my abilities to work in those conditions. Once we were in the Javari, it wasn't quite as hot or humid as I expected. Towards the end of the trip though, the temperatures did get to 108 °F (42 °C) with 90-plus percent humidity, which made for extremely difficult conditions.

While I will certainly remember the humidity, heat, bugs, snakes and spiders, it was the people themselves that made the biggest impact on me. In Boa Vista, the community embraced us with open arms and made huge efforts to welcome us into their community. Compared to our “modernized” world, I saw a sense of community in these villages that few communities anywhere could rival. Tribal members rely on each other, not unlike astronauts in space, to make life possible in these remote areas. In a sense, we have lost something in our modern world compared to these tightly knit communities in the Amazon.

While these tribes have strong community identities, have abundant food and resources around them, they face several serious issues. Life in the Amazon is fraught







with complexities. The tribes want better access to health care, and diseases introduced by outsiders are taking a serious toll. Over the course of our expedition there was a death from Hepatitis, a 10-year-old boy dealing with his tenth case of Malaria, a shaman healing members of his tribe, and tribes trying to figure out how they will continue to deal with and relate to the outside world. One of our team members was also bitten by a poisonous snake at the very end of our expedition, which showed us first hand what the tribes have to deal with living in a remote corner of the Amazon. Luckily we had access to powdered anti-venom for our team member, which saved her life, but she spent more than two weeks in the hospital after the expedition and is still recovering from the snake bite. Like all native peoples across the world, both past and present, the indigenous tribes of the Vale do Javari face some tough issues and many of the same issues native people have faced over the past several centuries.

The story of our adventure, and of the indigenous peoples that we met, is a complex one. It is difficult to distill our experience into a single article and I have been grappling with how to tell this story since my return over a month ago. The images presented here only scratch the surface. I shot over 8,000 images in eleven days. So far, I have worked up over 300 of those images and while they all help to tell the story, they cannot match the intensity of the experience as I felt it.

I feel greatly honored that these tribes allowed us to come in and document their way of life and the issues they are dealing with. Seeing how they live, the tight community they have built, and the difficulties they face gives me pause in my own life and reminds me of what is truly important. Our materialistic “modern” world stands

in stark contrast to the world of these indigenous tribes. It was obvious that the native peoples want goods from the outside world, and some of those goods, like clothing, have improved their lives dramatically, but this expedition was a wake-up call in terms of my priorities. This experience will be a touchstone that reminds me of what’s important and what is trivial in my own life. This expedition reinforced the fact that family, community, and relationships are truly important, while my ambition for my career, the day-to-day worries and material things are much less important.

As a member of this ongoing project, I hope to return to other villages in the Vale do Javari even though it is a difficult experience, and riddled with objective dangers. It is an honor to help these peoples in whatever way possible, using my profession and my skills to bring awareness of them and the issues they are dealing with. As a photographer, it is rare to use my skills to help someone directly or to bring awareness to a specific issue. Usually it feels like I am ‘taking’ images of athletes, which are used mostly for marketing them and the companies that sponsor them. Hence, it is my honor to introduce you to these incredible tribes and their way of life.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Céline Cousteau, and [Cause-Centric Productions](#), for bringing me on this expedition. I can see now why the Amazon has such a strong hold on Céline, and why she has traveled back to it so many times since her first trip with her grandfather when she was just nine years old. If you would like to donate to the *Tribes on the Edge* documentary film project or to CauseCentric Productions you can do so on the [tribesontheedge.com](http://tribesontheedge.com) website. Please note that this article is intentionally short because this is an ongoing project.



*Previous page: A portrait of Matis elders and their blow dart guns (used for hunting) in the main Maloka at Tawaya in the Vale do Javari, Brazil. Above: Incredible cloud reflections at sunset in the Rio Itaquai on the way out of the Vale do Javari, Brazil. Right: A map of Brazil showing the territory set aside for the Vale do Javari (highlighted in orange). This territory is the ancestral lands of 51 indigenous tribes, 23 of which are uncontacted, making this area the largest group of uncontacted tribes in the world. Following page: The view looking upriver on the Rio Iuti from an old Matis village in the Vale do Javari near Atalaia do Norte in Brazil.*















*Previous Spread: The view looking upriver on the Rio Iuti from an old Matis village in the Vale do Javari near Atalaia do Norte in Brazil. Above: Çapkin van Alphen shooting video for the Tribes on the Edge documentary of a body painting session at Rio Novo in the Vale do Javari, Brazil. Right: The Maloka (a.k.a. the Big House) lit up at night in Rio Novo on the Rio Itui river during a mourning ceremony for a relative who died earlier that day of Hepatitis in the Vale do Javari, Brazil.*





*Right: An elderly Matis woman carrying back Manioc to the Tawaya village in the Vale do Javari, Brazil. Below: Çapkin van Alphen crossing a narrow log, shooting video and carrying all his gear in Boa Vista, Brazil in the Vale do Javari while capturing footage for Tribes on the Edge, a CauseCentric Production.*





## interview

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### Q&A with photo consultants Pedro + Jackie

*An interview with two of the best photography consultants in the Industry.*

**A**bout a decade ago, I met Peter Dennen at the first ever annual meeting for the Aurora Photos stock agency. We hit it off right away. For years we talked weekly about the state of the industry and the stock industry in particular. Peter is a great guy and has seen and done a lot in the photo industry. He is also quite a good photographer himself. I have also worked with Jackie Ney, Peter's business partner in the "Pedro+Jackie" venture. Jackie was the photo editor at Backpacker Magazine for years. Together they make a great pair to work with and have a wide insider's perspective on the photo industry from the art buyer, photo editor side of things. I know several photography consultants, and there are many good ones out there, but I think Peter and Jackie are two of the nicest and easiest to work with anywhere. When I found out that Peter had left Aurora and went out on his own, I asked if he wanted to do an interview for the Newsletter. What follows is an interview that covers a wide variety of topics of interest to photographers looking to build up their careers and improve their work. Before we fully jump into this interview here is a little information on both Peter and Jackie:

*Pedro + Jackie is the dynamic duo photo consulting team of Peter Dennen and Jackie Ney. Our mission is to elevate photographer's careers. Together, we bring decades of real and meaningful work experience helping hundreds of*

*photographers take it to the next level. We engage and guide with sound advice, clear direction, strategic initiatives and infusing our creative minds into those we collaborate with. Our focus is on building top tier portfolios that stand out (both online + print), precision photo editing that brings the best imagery to the forefront, promotion and marketing strategies that lead to new relationships and assignments, creative direction and image production that will bring portfolios and presentations into their prime.*



**Michael Clark:** *Give us a little introduction and some background on your career and experience. How long have you been a photo editor?*

**Peter Dennen:** We have been working in the photo biz for quite some time. Jackie has worked primarily in the publishing world as a Photo Editor and Producer for a variety of great magazines. Currently she is the Director of Photography at Yoga Journal. Until very recently, I worked as a Director of Photography in a variety of photo agencies that represented and licensed photography from top

talent photographers. Our role as photo editors has provided us with the unique opportunity to work with hundreds of amazing photographers from around the world; editing their work, producing new imagery, guiding them towards more successful careers and building long term relationships along the way.

***What do you think of the state of the photo industry these days? I know this is a huge question but I just wanted to get your perspective.***

Indeed, a big question with a variety of answers depending on the specific topic. My perspective is there are all sorts of new opportunities and challenges. They run side by side. The basics involve a new reality of unimaginable numbers of imagery being created and distributed through many platforms. Technology has clearly busted down the doors for easy access of new image creation, but a large portion of it is mediocre. I am strong believer that the crème will rise to the top, along with the careers of those creating it.

***What are the most effective forms of marketing for commercial photographers?***

First comes consistency no matter what form of marketing strategy is put into play. That is key. Creating and sticking with a program that is clearly defined is step one. We custom tailor marketing and promo initiatives based on who the photographer is, what they shoot, and what their overall business goals look like. We develop marketing programs that are individual and customized. Some of the basics are still very relevant; e-promos, direct mail pieces, social media, and stand out promos in a more robust and unique form. We also believe in getting noticed

through sharing content on certain blogs that touch the right people. Then there are sourcebooks and photographer directories that play into building awareness. It's a mix of efforts really.

***When it comes to a photographer's website, what are some of your pet peeves?***

One of my biggest pet peeves is weak website design. With technology and options as they exist these days, there is no excuse for poor design and navigation. There are plenty of options for template sites that are clean and fairly customizable to give a beautiful presentation for photographers. Edits and presentation are critical. A photographer's style and specialty need to be displayed in a clear and concise way. It's ineffective if a potential client shows up at your website and starts scratching his head because he can't figure out what you do and how you might fit into his projects. In most cases, I like to see images big, bold and beautifully processed. These topics all roll into the bigger conversation of identity and branding. So, my top pet peeves are: weak presentation, poor site design and architecture, an edit that lacks clarity, quality and freshness, poor image processing, only having an email form to fill out without also providing location, phone number and direct email link, a poorly written bio, and finally a poorly thought out URL that causes confusion on where the viewer has landed.

***How important is it for photographers to make the effort to meet with art buyers in person? Is this still the best form of marketing?***

I think it's still super important. We encourage and set up our clients with the tools and confidence needed to show





*Nathan Lindstrom and Pedro + Jackie dug in hard for a 3-month session, which included a new website, marketing strategy and promo development, and creative direction that lead to new image creation suited for the commercial market. Above is one of the print promo cards we developed that was used as a direct mail card and a leave behind when meeting with new clients. To see more of Nathan's work visit his website at [www.nathanlindstrom.com](http://www.nathanlindstrom.com).*

their portfolio in person. I am a firm believer in the value of personal, face-to-face, connection. It can make a substantial impact. The people in charge of hiring you for assignments want to know who they are dealing with. It's not only in the way you create imagery, but how you carry yourself and communicate with others. I think as the digital highway only gets more crowded, returning to what feels old school in regards to human connection and face-time will become more important.

***Do you have any advice on how to make promos (email and print) better and more interesting? What are your preferences: e-promos or print?***

We think both methods have a place in a photographer's marketing campaign. Again, it depends on the photographer and his or her specific program, but for many of the photographers we work with, we put both into action. Image selection is critical, but so is the concept of the piece and messaging that goes along with it. Whatever is being sent out is a direct reflection of your identity and talent. Each promo should be well thought-out and not slapped together in haste. They need to stand out among the steady stream of other promos hitting the street. We try to think about why someone would not simply toss it into the recycling bin. You might try asking yourself what would make someone want to tack it up on the wall for a

few days or forward it onto other colleagues. Make them unique, but also clear in message. Put yourself in the seat of the person receiving it and think about what your response would be to the promo.

***When it comes to a photographer's print portfolio what are some of your likes and dislikes in terms of presentation? How many images should they include? Does it matter if they have a fancy custom book or not?***

There are many ways in which to assemble a print book. There are lots of options out there depending on taste and budget. Personally, I love facing pages that tell a story, exude a vibe or simply work really well together in color, composition and mood. The number of images can vary, depending on the layout of the book. There is a sweet spot in regards how much to show, but we only know what that number is once the edit and layout take shape. Books don't have to be "fancy," but they do have to be polished and professional in appearance.

***What is the best presentation platform for still photographers to consider: a Print Portfolio or an iPad or both?***

The most critical presentation platform is obviously a great website. In terms of print portfolios and iPads, it depends on the photographer's objectives. Is it to set-up meetings with agencies and photo editors? Spend a lot of time hitting the streets with their "book"? We still love and appreciate a beautiful print portfolio. We believe that creatives feel the same way. However, they need to be top notch. The book, the printing, the overall presentation needs to be A+ level. If your prints are poorly printed or the book is scrappy looking in any way, the effort will backfire on you. There are situations where both a print

portfolio and iPad make good sense. The print book can be the first line of show and tell and the iPad, if time allows in the meeting, can be a great way to show additional new work or personal projects that did not make it into the print book. iPads show images beautifully, but I would recommend not showing on a mini. I find them too small.

***On the topic of Social Media, what are some do's and don'ts that you can throw out there?***

Professionally speaking, I think it's important to find the middle line of infusing your personality into your posts while also keeping things fairly curated. That middle line can be elusive for some. It's important to think about who your audience is. If it's all friends (personal), then the skies the limits I suppose. But if it's a mix of personal and professional, then posting pictures of your cat rolling around on the floor or photos of the great burger you are eating is something to think about. I air more on the side of caution. Everything you post is a reflection of you. Constant selfies are a no-no in my book when you share a mixed or professional audience. The occasional selfie is fine, but more than a handful of times per month gets stale and vain fairly quickly for me. I think sharing content is great, especially when it's photo related. Share the goodness of those you respect and admire. Put out solid posts (content) and bring the same back in via what stokes you from others. Create a revolving circle of interesting content that is related to your brand, vision, interests and identity.

***How do you build your photography into a brand?***

Brand is derived from consistency, vision, style, and voice.



When building your photography brand and identity it's important that you give all facets of your business similar consideration. No matter what you do, strive to put out a consistent message, vision, vibe. Your brand is you. Or at least it's the you that is connected to your business. Think about how you are perceived by others. Write a little ditty about yourself, for yourself, about what your brand is. This will help clarify where you are and what needs to be done to hone your brand identity.

***As a professional photography consultant, what services do you offer? How would they benefit a photographer looking to move their career forward?***

We offer photo editing and portfolio development (website + print), marketing strategy and promo development, creative and art direction that leads to new image production to build your portfolio with intention and focus, branding advice, curating fine art shows, personal project development, and overall business strategy. We love photography, working with photographers and helping bring their careers to the next level. We are results driven and find incredible satisfaction from seeing others succeed.

***Why would a photographer want to hire a professional photo consultant?***

Photographers hire a photo consultant to break down barriers, gain clarity, build motivation, bring in outside professional perspective, and harness the power that comes from positive collaboration and guidance. A great photo consultant inspires, educates, guides, exudes positivity, provides clarity, extends a hand of trust and puts the well being of the photographer first.

***What do you feel that Pedro + Jackie offers photographers that is different than other photo consultants?***

We are a custom shop that is all about the individual photographer. We don't try to fit photographers into a pre-determined template. We don't up sell services and only suggest services we really feel will benefit the photographer. We do what is needed to get the photographer from point A to B without hesitation and with plenty of gusto. We are kind. We are seasoned pros who are very direct with our clients but with a gentle hand. We bring an energy to the table that is unique and all our own. We don't follow anyone else's program or style. We are confident in ourselves, and the services we offer. We listen with open ears. We blend the best of old school customer service with new school vision. For anyone that is interested in learning more, we offer a free half hour meet and greet over the phone or Skype.

***I see that you also offer productions services. Can you tell me more about how that works? Can photographers call you up for consultation on pricing and estimates?***

Production services are under way, but are still very much in development. Photographers hire us to produce shoots for them personally or for assignments they get hired for. We will be growing and focusing on this service moving forward since we have a lot of experience in this area. And yes, we do help photographers with estimates and pricing.

We talk, listen, engage and make good things happen. To learn more about what we do, plug into <http://www.pedroandjackie.com>. For a free half hour meet and greet, drop us an [email](#) to set up a time to chat.

## book review

### The Rise of Superman

*A book that explains why we do these adventure sports*

About a month ago, I had lunch with New York Times bestselling author Steve Kotler here in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Steven lives just outside of Santa Fe and we met up at a local pub. Since we are both into adventure sports we hit it off immediately and talked passionately about a variety of topics including his latest book, the freelance life, some of our mutual friends (of which there were many) and the latest ski conditions, to name just a few. Earlier this year, Steven released his latest book, *The Rise of Superman: Decoding the Science of Ultimate Human Performance*.

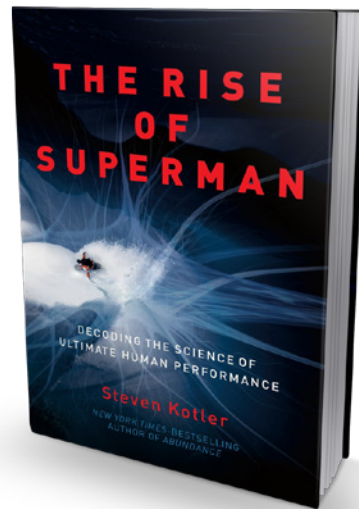
Before meeting with Steven, I had seen quite a few videos and Facebook posts about *The Rise of Superman*, but I hadn't actually read the book. I must admit that I was a bit skeptical when I first heard the term "flow." The theory of "flow" sounded like a "new age" movement more than a science term. After our meeting, I was very curious about "flow" and ordered the book right away. As I quickly found out in the first few chapters of the book, there are more than fifty years of neuroscience and psychological research behind this term.

Let's just put it this way: once I got the book, I couldn't put it down. I read the entire book in two days and I had to force myself to put it down to get some actual work done. This book discusses the rise in athletic prowess in adventure sports over the past three decades as athletes have learned to access this "flow" state. Reading the stories about the athletes was quite entertaining, especially

since I have worked with about half the athletes in the book and have heard many of those same stories directly from them. Of note, the Red Bull Air Force, who regularly pushes the envelope of what is humanly possible, figures prominently in the book, as do quite a few other Red Bull athletes. In fact, Red Bull has been working with several neuroscientists on flow for over a decade to help their athletes' progress in their sports. Amazingly, as someone who has documented adventure sports for the last eighteen

years, I have never heard any athletes use this terminology or specifically reference "flow" states.

Beyond the entertaining stories, Steven goes into great detail describing flow and how both adventure athletes and everyday folks can access this state to improve their







As you might expect, the Red Bull Air Force team, whom I have written about fairly extensively in the last Newsletter and in other issues of the Newsletter, figure prominently in *"The Rise of Superman"* because they take some astounding risks. They know as much about "flow states" as anyone in the adventure sports world.

performance and reach a whole other level. This book is essentially the answer to why we adventure athletes do what we do. I have never fully understood why my passion for these sports was so deeply rooted and why creating images of these athletes is so ultimately thrilling for me, but this book answers that question and then some, like nothing else I have ever read. If you have a girlfriend, a spouse, or a family member that wonders why you do these risky adventure sports do yourself a favor and just hand them this book. After reading it they will understand why you are so passionate about whatever it is you do.

While reading the book, I realized that I have accessed a

"flow state" since I was fairly young, mostly while creating art. Once I got into adventure sports, I was able to access it on more intense level and have been for quite some time now. In fact, I feel like I can access micro-flow (a lower level flow state) quite easily. While working on an interview about my work just a few days ago, I read through the introduction to my book *Exposed: Inside the Life and Images of a Pro Photographer*. In that introduction, I basically described an addiction to this "flow state" in terms that seem apropos for someone who had never heard the term. I even detailed five of the ten signs of flow in the first four paragraphs. So you can see what I am talking about, below are those four paragraphs from the

introduction to Exposed. I have underlined those sections that relate directly to flow.

*Ever since I was a child I have had a feeling of utter enlightenment when I created something. It didn't matter if it was a drawing, a painting, or a sculpture. When I knew it was good, my whole being kicked into high gear. My concentration became laser focused, and the rest of the world faded away. Hours would fly by and I would barely notice. I was in a bubble that was all consuming. That creative spark was a lightning bolt for me.*

*I knew I had some artistic skills early on. As with many children with skills that come to them easily, I took my skills for granted. At an early age, I was able to draw just about anything with very near photographic realism. With the help of my parents, I dabbled in just about every genre of art. Photography was just one of the forms I "tried out." The more I worked at art, the more exhausted I was by "perfect" drawings. As a result, I became very interested in abstractions and quick renderings. Part of that was a curiosity to see what would happen. Hence, an interest in photography wasn't that big of a leap.*

*Often, I'm asked how I made it as a professional photographer. The short answer is that I've worked extremely hard with the help of many photo editors, mentors, and athletes. Alternatively, I don't feel like I've made it at all. I still have a long, long way to go before I can ever think I've "made it." But at the base level, I am an addict. I am addicted to the high that I get when I am creating an image I know is extraordinary. And being able to share that with the world, through my clients, is a supreme pleasure. That addiction to the creative high is the reason for my obsession with photography. It is the reason I am a photographer, and it explains why I work so*

*hard.*

*This creative spark and the gratification I get from sharing it is the essence of this book and the reason I'm willing to share the entire process from start to finish. Reading about the entire process removes the mystery of how certain images were created. Hearing the complete story of an image makes the process logical and understandable. Seeing the whole process laid out makes these images accessible for all so that they can create similar processes of their own to further their photography.*

In short, The Rise of Superman helped explain my passion for adventure sports and documenting them, and it has opened my eyes to exactly what is going on when I am in a "flow state." The science behind flow is compelling. Neuroscience has come a long, long ways in the last few decades and that has allowed the scientists interviewed in this book to really dive deep into what is actually happening in the brain that allows for flow. After reading this book, I did a 180-degree about face from my previous skepticism.

The beauty of this book is that it teaches you how to hack into this flow state and access it for yourself. It gives an all-encompassing view of the state, the upsides and the downsides and everything in-between. And for those of you not into adventure sports, not to worry—most creative people, whether they are artists, musicians, scientists or programmers, all access the flow state from time to time. Do yourself a favor and order this book. I can't recommend it highly enough.

To find out more about the book visit [www.riseofsuperman.com](http://www.riseofsuperman.com). You can order the book online at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).



portfolio







# Great Advice and Hard Truths

by Michael Clark

**S**tarting out in this industry is a daunting task. When I started out, I struggled quite a bit for a few years before I decided to go full-time and when I did, it felt like I was jumping off a huge cliff to see if I could fly. Early on in my career, Marc Romanelli, a mentor and fellow photographer, told me, "Keep your overhead as low as possible." This gem never stops being good advice. There have certainly been times when I let my overhead get out of control and I paid for it literally. Of all the advice I can give, this is perhaps the most critical for staying in business.

If you come out of photo school with \$40,000 to \$80,000 in debt, any career in the photo industry is basically over before it even starts. If you're paying upwards of \$20,000 per year for photography school, my advice is to drop out immediately. You can take an incredible array of photo workshops for less. If you really want to spend money on a degree, get a marketing degree. That will probably serve you better if your skills are up to snuff.

It takes serious passion, motivation, thick skin, and hard work to make a career in this industry. The key phrase in that last sentence is hard work. It doesn't matter how much talent you have or how good your people skills are, if you don't work your buns off, you aren't going to make it in this field. If you don't want a career as a photographer with every fiber of your being, then the bad news is you probably won't ever make it. I know that won't be a

popular statement, but maybe some other pro photographers can back me up on this.

Understand, it takes time. Very few photographers have instant success. It usually takes 3 to 5 years to go full time, then 10 years to gain 90% of your skills and start making decent money and 15 years to really make it big. For some it takes longer and for others it is much quicker. I mention this long view of the process of becoming a pro photographer because it is important to understand that you can't give up in the first few years when it is desperately tough. When it does get tough, I refer you to the previous paragraph.

Lastly, you have to be brutal with your own work. If your images or motion content isn't unique or blowing the socks off your editors then you are going to have a tough time making a living in this profession. And your work has to be continually amazing if you want to have any longevity in terms of a career. So yes, there are lots of issues you will have to overcome, but as always, there is room for those who can create top-notch work and are willing to work extremely hard.

*This is an edited version of a blog post that originally appeared on the [ASMP Strictly Business blog](#). In that blog post, I was asked to give advice to those just starting a career in the photo industry. Click on the link above to read the full post.*



*Fog rolling in over the Rio Bronco near the Matis village of Tawaya deep in the heart of the Amazon in the Vale do Javari, Brazil.*



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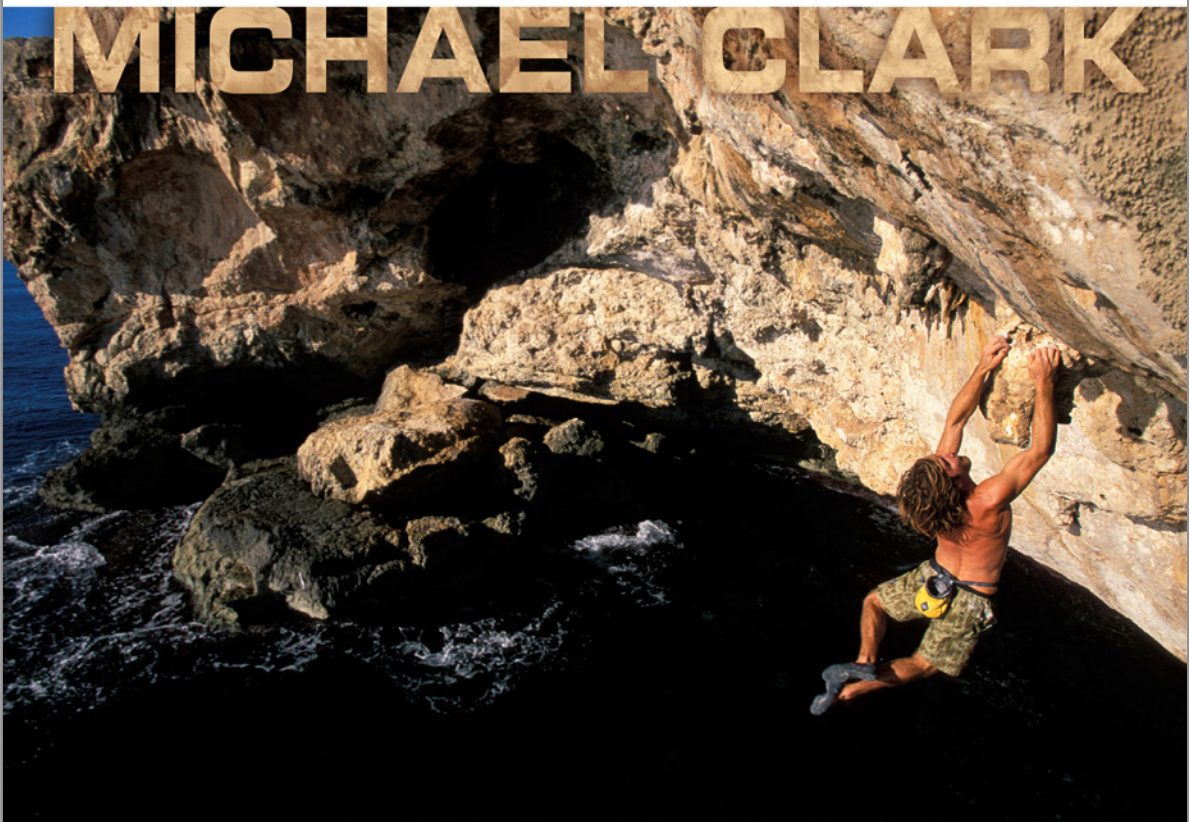


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