

NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SUMMER 2018



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Cover Image: Scott "Banker" Ind sitting in Jet 6 adjusting the controls of his Aero L-39 Albatros jet just before the Patriots Jet Team take off at the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona. Opposite Page: Looking up through the Aspen forest canopy at night with the stars shining through the trees just off the Last Dollar Road near Telluride, Colorado.





Photography Awards

A year of awards for the Lighting the Spirit Campaign

Over the course of my career, I have won awards for my photography every few years or so. Those awards were for a wide variety of images shot on various assignments, or on my own self-assignments. Never have I gotten so many awards in one year, and from one assignment, as I have this past year from the Lighting the Spirit assignment shot for Elinchrom and Red Bull Photography. As discussed starting on page 6, Communication Arts chose to include one of my whitewater kayaking images from the Lighting the Spirit assignment in the 2018 Photo Annual, which is a huge bit of recognition. This image, and others from that shoot, have won awards from *PDN*, *International Photography Awards*, *Memorial Maria Luisa* and a few other photography competitions.

Amazingly, the image from the Lighting the Spirit campaign that has won most of the awards, the one shown on page 7 here in this Newsletter, is not the one I would consider the best image from the shoot. The image on page 7 is by no means a subpar image but it isn't my favorite. I'd say it is one of the top three or four images from the shoot. My favorite image from that assignment is this one of Liam Fields. I suppose it all comes down to taste. I myself had a very difficult time figuring out which images are the best from this assignment—as did the photo editors at Red Bull Photography and also the folks at Elinchrom. That is a good problem to have.

It is quite exciting to see the Lighting the Spirit images continue to win awards. That assignment took my work to a whole new level—one that requires an intense amount of work to replicate on other assignments. Part of that new level is the Elinchrom ELB 1200 strobes, which have allowed me to push my photography to new heights since they can do things no other strobe has been able to achieve. Pushing these new strobes to the edge of their capabilities stretches me as a photographer.

I don't put a whole lot of stock in photography awards. Having judged several big-time photography competitions myself, I know too much about how political they can be. If the images submitted were widely published and seen by a lot of people, then the odds of them being chosen for an award goes up drastically. Even so, the multiple awards for the Lighting the Spirit campaign reaffirms that I am headed in the right direction; creating images at the top levels of my genre, which is quite exciting.

Opposite Page: The view looking across at the Painted Wall from the Cedar Point overlook on the south rim of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison near Montrose, Colorado.

Recent Clients: Red Bull, Paramount Worldwide, Merrell, MAC Group US, Method Seven, CreativeLIVE, Hangtime LLC, and Communication Arts.



Communication Arts 2018 Photo Annual

Lighting the Spirit whitewater kayaking image wins yet another award

I am very excited to announce that the image on the following page has been chosen for inclusion in the 2018 Communication Arts Photography Annual, which was published in the July/August 2018 issue of Communication Arts (CA). The CA Photography Annual is one of the most exclusive photography competitions in the world. The Communication Arts Photography Annual competition has been held for the last 59 years making this one of the oldest photography competitions in the World. From the Communications Arts press release, "Of the 3,401 entries to the 59th Photography Annual, only 127 were accepted, representing the work of 123 photographers, making the Photography Annual the most exclusive major photography competition in the world."

For those not familiar with Communication Arts, here is a description from the press release of the magazine, which is more like a high-end book than a magazine: "Communication Arts is a professional journal for designers, art directors, design firms, corporate design departments, agencies, illustrators,

photographers and everyone involved in visual communications. Through its editorials, feature articles and the annual competitions it sponsors, CA provides new ideas and information, while promoting the highest professional standards for the field. With a paid circulation of 25,000, CA has a rich tradition of representing the aspirations

of a continually-growing and quality-conscious field of visual communications. Now in its 59th year, CA continues to showcase the current best—whether it's from industry veterans or tomorrow's stars—in design, advertising, photography, illustration, interactive and typography. Everything is reproduced with printing technology and attention to detail unmatched by any trade publication anywhere."



For me personally, getting the email that another one of my images made it into the Photo Annual, and especially this image in particular, is a confirmation of how we knocked it out of the park on this assignment. [My first image to be included in the Communication Arts Photo



Annual was in 2016.] When I got the news I was overjoyed as this image is from one of my best assignments ever—and it has been winning quite a few other awards as well.

The above image was shot for [Elinchrom](#) and [Red Bull Photography](#). It was widely published to promote the Hi-Sync capabilities of the [Elinchrom ELB 1200](#). This image was created during the Lighting the Spirit project, which was described in detail [here on the blog](#). This image was created using two ELB 1200 strobes with the HS Flash heads, a Nikon D810 with a Nikkor 14-24mm lens. To see the rest of the images from this assignment check out the [Lighting the Spirit Gallery](#) on my website. For a behind the scenes video detailing this assignment check out the

[Chasing the Shot](#) video produced by Red Bull.

My thanks to Elinchrom and Red Bull Photography for giving me this opportunity on a major assignment, especially to Bram Dauw and Charlie Pinder who helped put this shoot together, and also to Simon Whittle, the CEO of Elinchrom. Also, my sincere thanks to Communication Arts and the five jurors who chose the winning images: Noah Dash – Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, San Francisco, Todd James – National Geographic, Erin Mayes – EmDash LCC, Jerry Takigawa – Takigawa Design, and Sarah Wilmer – photographer. And finally, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Rafa Ortiz, the kayaker in this image, who worked incredibly hard to help us create an amazing set of images for Elinchrom.

Awayn Interview

Tips and techniques for the aspiring adventure photographer

The screenshot shows the Awayn website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Awayn logo, a search bar labeled "Search Adventure Map", and links for "SUGGEST ADVENTURES" and "LOGIN". The main content area features a large portrait of Michael Clark on the right, with a yellow arrow pointing down. On the left, the text reads: "BY: AWAYN MEDIA", "Interview with Michael Clark", and "INTRODUCTIONS". Below this, there is a paragraph of text about Michael Clark's career and a link "BACK TO STORIES". The footer is a yellow bar containing the Awayn logo, copyright information "© 2018 P.D.R.V.C.", and sections for "QUICK LINK" (LOGIN, SIGNUP), "CONTACT US" (AWAYN FOR BUSINESSES), and "SOCIAL NETWORK" (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube icons).

A few weeks ago, the adventure travel website [Awayn](#) contacted me about doing an interview. Seeing that several of my peers were also featured on the website, I opted in and that interview is now live. Awayn is a website that can help you plan your next adventure, and offers up honest recommendations from other users and also allows users to post information from their own recent trips. This interview includes tips on how I set up images and how I capture the images you see here in the Newsletter as well as the images that accompany the article. There is also a section where they asked, "What advice I would give to aspiring adventure photographers?"

In another section they asked, "What five tips for adventure sports photography could you give to modern photographers?" One of my responses was, "Good photography is directly related to hard work. There are no shortcuts. That isn't to say that every image is difficult to make, but the best ones generally have some serious preparation and sweat behind them that may not be obvious in the image." My thanks to Awayn for the interview. Check out the entire [interview](#) on the Awayn website. While you are there check out the other interviews with Morgan Maassen, Jodi MacDonald, Krystle Wright, Russell Ord, and Savannah Cummins.

Top 10 on Red Bull Photography

The stories behind some of my favorite images



A few months back, [Red Bull Photography](#) posted an article with my ten favorite images that I have captured over the course of my career. Whenever anyone asks which are my favorite images, a few come to mind fairly quickly but in reality there are only a handful of my images that I consider good. Hence, putting together my top ten favorite images was tough. This article was put together late last year and was in the pipeline for publication for six months or so. In that time I have produced a few new images that I would probably add to the mix since I have created some of the best surfing images of my career just this past January at Peahi (see the [Spring 2018 Newsletter](#) for a full accounting of that adventure). Regardless, this selection is a pretty solid grouping of my

better images. Interestingly, the images that have won the most awards, like the whitewater kayaking image on page 7, are not among my top ten favorites. I always find these types of articles with the story behind the images quite fascinating—and I hope readers get a little insight into the process and all the hard work that went into all of these images. Amazingly, four of these images were shot on assignment for Red Bull, which just goes to show how far they as a company go to help us create amazing images.

My thanks to Marv Watson for putting this article together and to Red Bull Photography for publishing this piece. Check it out on the Red Bull Photography site [here](#).

workshops

Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops and online classes with Michael Clark

Each year I teach a few workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, big-wave surfing photography, and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching in 2018 and 2019. For more information on these workshops, and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my blog.

Adventure Sports Photography

Summit Workshops - Jackson, Wyoming

September 8 -13, 2018

Instructors: Lucas Gilman, Sadie Quarrier, Dave Black, Jen Edney, Ryan Taylor, Bo Bridges, Scott Willson, Ron Taniwaki, and Michael Clark

Action and Adventure Junkies Rejoice! Set out on a photography journey in the Grand Tetons with our faculty of adventure photographers and editors from National Geographic, Red Bull, The North Face, and more. Work with the expert photographers and learn the shooting and scouting techniques that they use to land their images in top publications, meet the editors behind some of the world's most daring photography expeditions and learn how they hire photographers, and even spend a night camping with the faculty as you network with them throughout the workshop.

In this workshop, you'll be exposed to every aspect of adventure photography, from adventure and outdoor sports photography to product and outdoor commercial photography. The Adventure Workshop is for any and all photographers, and although some hiking is required, there is no recommended minimum level of fitness.

Cost: \$1,995.00

Go to the [Summit Workshops website](#) for the specifics on what is covered and what isn't. Please note that this workshop is taught by nine outstanding photographers and photo editors and offers an incredible opportunity to learn from not just one but many experts.

Surfing Photography

North Shore, Oahu, Hawaii

February 21 -24, 2019

The Surfing Photography Workshop is back! Join legendary surfing photographer Brian Biemann and I 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 40 years. I will bring my adventure photography skills, including shooting surfing for the last decade, as well as in-depth experience with digital workflow to round out the workshop.



An image created during the Surfing Photography Workshop on the North Shore of Oahu. After a little hiatus, Brian Biemann and I are teaching this workshop again in February 2019. Check out the workshop description on the previous page for more information on this incredibly fun and exciting 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 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 usually serves up sizable waves on a regular basis. We will tailor each day so that we can get the best possible images. We will host the workshop at the Turtle Bay 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 from Canon, Nikon and Sony.

The cost of this workshop is \$2,295 per person. A deposit of \$700 is required to secure your spot in the workshop. You can find more information about the workshop on my [blog](#), 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](#). For more information check out my [blog post](#) announcing this workshop.

Online Workshop Classes

Over the last few years I have taught a number of online classes for CreativeLIVE, which are available for download on their website. These classes are in-depth, online two-to-three day courses. Hence, there is a lot of information and they are a very cost effective way to learn about various photography skills. Below are a listing of my most recent classes.

The Professional Photographer's Digital Workflow

CreativeLIVE (www.creativelive.com)

This digital workflow class covers everything from image capture to the final print. This is not just a class on how to process your images, it is a detailed class for any and all photographers looking to take their photography to a whole new level, stay organized and make sure that they are getting the best possible image quality. This CreativeLIVE class won't cover everything contained in my digital workflow e-book, but it will cover a good portion of the key basics. We are going to take a deep dive into color management, sensor cleaning, image organization, file and folder naming, processing images in Lightroom and Photoshop, printing, backing up your images and much more. To watch or purchase this class visit www.creativelive.com.

Cost: \$99 USD

Note that CreativeLIVE often runs sales so the class might be discounted below this price.

Advanced Lighting for Adventure Photography

CreativeLIVE (www.creativelive.com)

Last Summer I taught a two-day live class on advanced lighting techniques for CreativeLIVE and Red Bull Photography, which was broadcast live on July 17th and 18th, 2017. This advanced lighting class covers Hi-Sync (HS) lighting techniques for outdoor and adventure photography and also includes a section on capturing portraits of outdoor athletes. As part of this course, we photographed rock climbing, cyclocross, and trail running.

This class is available for download on www.creativelive.com.

An image of Kai Lightner climbing Chain Reaction (5.12c) at Smith Rock State Park, Oregon that was created during the CreativeLIVE Advanced Lighting class.



[com](#). While this isn't an in-person workshop, like the others listed here, it is a resource that is available online and can be downloaded and watched anytime.

Cost: \$79 USD

Note that CreativeLIVE often runs sales so the class might be discounted below this price.

Workshop Testimonials

"Within the short time I've been studying and practicing photography, I have had teachers who are good educators, but not great photographers, and vice versa, but few who are both. Count yourself in these narrow ranks...I went through 4 years of college and several careers getting less candid advice and encouragement than I got in 4 days with you. For what it is worth, thank you for that." - Brandon McMahon, Adventure Photography Workshop

"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

"I just finished Michael Clark's Adventure Photography Workshop at the Santa Fe Workshops. I had a terrific time with the group of people. 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 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

"Michael is the best instructor I have taken a workshop from." - Participant, Cutting-Edge Lighting Workshop

"Priceless chance to learn from the absolute best. Every photographer should take this class!" - Jill Sanders, The Professional Photographer's Digital Workflow available on CreativeLIVE

"Michael is a true professional and readily explains all of the nitty gritty issues of a photographer's digital workflow, including important things like Color Management, Lightroom workflows, Printing, and more. He is eager to answer your questions and has a thorough knowledge and passion that he loves to share. He can get way deep into the subject, which I found fascinating. You can tell Michael has great experience in teaching and also likes to learn from his students. He is very authentic, honest, and direct. I highly recommend this class, and look forward to another one of Michael's courses in the future!" - Kristen, The Professional Photographer's Digital Workflow on CreativeLIVE

"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, Surfing Photo Workshop

For more information on my upcoming workshops, or to read more testimonials, please visit the [Workshops](#) page on my blog. Hope to see you at a workshop here soon!

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Elinchrom ELB 500 TTL

A review of Elinchrom's new TTL battery-powered strobe kit



***Disclaimer:** I am sponsored by Elinchrom and work closely with them on some products. I did not work with them on the ELB 500 but I did see prototypes six months before it's release. Elinchrom has been kind enough to lend me an ELB 500 TTL kit to test out and shoot with for a two month period so that I can thoroughly test out this exciting new product. Here in this review I will give my honest thoughts about the ELB 500 and how it stacks up against my venerable ELB 400.*

Earlier this year, Elinchrom announced and launched their first TTL strobe kit, the ELB 500 TTL. It was perhaps a bit of a surprise to many, but they have been getting a lot of requests for a TTL strobe kit for some time. In Elinchrom style, it was natural that it mirrored the

form factor of the ELB 400. Elinchrom loaned me the ELB 500 TTL for a few months so I could test it out and see how well the TTL technology actually worked and how effective the High Speed Sync (HSS) was compared to the Hi-Sync (HS) techniques I have been using for years.

First off, let's talk about the technology. Through the Lens (TTL) metering has been around for decades, most notably in Nikon and Canon speedlights, but it was Profoto who first incorporated TTL into a more powerful strobe when they brought the Profoto B1 to market about five years ago. Since then, dozens of strobe manufacturers have copied Profoto and have brought similar style 500 Ws TTL monobloc-style strobes to market, many of them



This image was captured using the Elinchrom ELB 500 TTL strobe with a Litemotiv Octa 120cm softbox. The strobe was set to High Speed Sync (HSS) mode so I could freeze the motion of the boxer. The TTL worked flawlessly and the HSS was incredibly easy to use. I can see now why TTL/HSS strobes have been so popular—they are just plain easy to use. Tech Specs: Nikon D850, Nikkor 70-200, 1/1,000th sec. at f/5.6, ISO 100.

with similar features as the B1 but at one-third the cost. Until the ELB 500 TTL, Elinchrom had resisted the urge to add TTL to their strobes. This is partly because a TTL strobe uses IGBT flash technology, similar to speedlights, and all of the previous Elinchrom strobes used variable voltage control technology. Variable voltage strobes generate a flash burst by varying the energy (i.e. voltage) introduced into the flash tube and thereby generating different power output levels. In contrast, IGBT technology, which stands for “Isolated-gate bipolar transistor,” uses a high-speed switch to turn the power on and off rapidly. IGBT technology is what allows TTL to work. The IGBT technology allows the camera to register how much light

is reflected from the subject and then turns the flash off instantly for a perfect exposure.

Why would anyone want TTL incorporated into a strobe? For years, those manufacturers that didn’t have a TTL strobe on offer cited the various issues surrounding TTL technology like varying exposures from flash to flash. While those issues still exist, the main reason for TTL is the same as it was with speedlights: ease of use. TTL is essentially an Auto mode for flashes. Without really having to think much, anyone can post up a TTL flash and take a picture knowing that the subject will be well exposed. For many photographers that makes flash

Elinchrom ELB 400 in HS mode



Elinchrom ELB 500 in HSS mode



Above, the image on the left was shot in HS mode with the ELB 400 and the HS flash head and the image on the right was shot in HSS mode with the ELB 500. The red box outlined in the lower portion of the left image shows that area where the gradation is noticeable, when compared to the right image. While this isn't that big of a deal, I just thought I would show the difference here. Adding a simple graduated filter in Lightroom can correct the gradation and balance out the image.

photography a lot easier to learn. I admit, I have railed against TTL strobes for years now. I just didn't see why I needed it. But, after using the ELB 500, I have to say it is quite nice to have the TTL exposure as a starting point because it allows you to get the lighting dialed in much faster than manual flash with a light meter. I can see now why the Profoto B1 has been so popular. A TTL strobe is just plain easy to use.

To get the most out of the ELB 500 TTL, you will have to have either the [Elinchrom Skyport Plus HS](#) transmitter (and upgrade the firmware) or the new [Elinchrom Transmitter Pro](#). At this point, Elinchrom makes versions of the Transmitter Pro for just about every brand of camera. I am sure Elinchrom will be adding versions for those few brands they haven't covered here soon. As a side note here, I upgraded the firmware on my Skyport Plus HS (Nikon) and it works flawlessly with the ELB 500 TTL.

The image on the previous page was captured using the ELB 500 TTL in TTL mode. It was shot in a studio against

a black background. In my experience, the TTL works incredibly well on the ELB 500. It is much better than any other TTL I have used and light years better than the TTL of yore built into my Nikon speedlights. [Side note: While I have shot once or twice with the Profoto B1, I do not have enough experience with it to say how the TTL capabilities of that strobe compare to the ELB 500 TTL.] Of note, the image was also shot in HSS mode. We will get to the HSS mode here in a bit. I will just say that it was ridiculously easy to get a well-exposed image using TTL and HSS together.

Before getting into HSS, let's talk about the form factor and how the ELB 500 is in use. One of the things I really appreciate with the ELB 500, and all of Elinchrom's offerings, is that the flash tube is exposed so that it can fill up a softbox or a beauty dish as it is supposed to. I recently used the Profoto D2 monoblocs on a shoot and those, with the enclosed flash tubes, are a bit of a disaster when it comes to various light modifiers, especially with beauty dishes. Retaining the exposed flash tube, as with the

ELB 400 and ELB 1200, allows the ELB 500 to spread the light evenly in any light modifier, which is one of the major advantages of strobes over speedlights.

I am also a big fan of pack and head style strobes. Monobloc style strobes, like the Profoto B1 or the Elinchrom ELC Pro HD which have the electronics and the flash head built into a single unit, seem to be in vogue now but in my experience they can be a pain to use. Having a pack and head system where the flash head is attached to the power pack with a cable allows for making adjustments on the pack, which is usually suspended from the light stand, much easier. It is also safer when hoisting lights high above your subject. With monoblocs, and I have two of the Elinchrom ELC Pro HD 1000 Ws monoblocs, I often find that I have to lower the flash down to eye level just to change a setting that can't be adjusted from the transmitter. When using heavier monoblocs you also need a much heavier light stand to deal with all of that extra weight compared to a simple flash head. I realize that just pulling a monobloc out of the bag and locking it onto a stand is quite convenient. But the few extra seconds it takes to connect the flash head to the power pack in my experience is worth it. Plus, the power pack can act as ballast when hung off the stand. In most cases the power pack isn't heavy enough to be a full-on sand bag (unless you are working with one of the high-end studio strobes from Broncolor or Profoto that weigh in excess of 25 pounds) but it helps secure the stand. As far as I know, the ELB 500 TTL is the only pack and head style TTL strobe on the market, so if that is your preference, as it is mine, this is the strobe for you.

One other sweet feature of the ELB 500 TTL is that you can plug it into an electrical outlet and use it just like a

studio strobe. Elinchrom calls this feature "Active Charging" and it works very well. For the photographer that works both in the studio and out on location this is a very exciting feature. Without the active charging, the ELB 500 gets 400 full power pops, which is pretty amazing. That is likely more than you will need on any location shoot. In addition to active charging the ELB 500 has full asymmetry, meaning you can dial the A and B flash heads to any power ratio.

Also, at 3.4 Kg (6.92 lbs) the ELB 500 (with a flash head) is still relatively light weight. As with the ELB 400, you will need to use the [Elinchrom Quadra Reflector Adapter](#) to mount the ELB 500 onto larger light modifiers. Unlike the ELB 400, there is only one flash head for the ELB 500. The ELB 400 flash heads will not work with the ELB 500. But, if you have the old ELB 400 flash head adapter it will work on the ELB 500 flash heads.

Now, let's get into the High Speed Sync (HSS) capabilities of the ELB 500 TTL and how they compare to the Hi-Sync (HS) technology found in previous Elinchrom strobes. For those of you who are not familiar with HSS and HS and how they differ I highly recommend that you check out this article I wrote for the Elinchrom blog, [HS vs HSS: What's the Difference?](#) One of the issues with Hi-Sync (HS) was that it created a gradation from the top of the image to the bottom since this technology takes a slice of the light emitted from the flash. While the gradation was easy to correct, using a graduated filter in Lightroom, it was noticeable in some situations. With HSS, because the light is pulsing extremely rapidly to light the entire sensor evenly, there is no gradation. On the previous page is a comparison. The image on the left was shot in HS mode with the ELB 400 and the HS flash



To see just how efficient the ELB 500 TTL's HSS is compared to the HS mode on my ELB 400 I set up a little backyard test. Both strobes were set up approximately 15-feet away from the subject here, which is a Christmas ornament. Both images were shot at ISO 200, 1/2,000th second at f/2.8. The image on the left was shot with the ELB 400 at full power (424 Ws) in HS mode and the image on the right was shot with the ELB 500 at full power (500 Ws) in HSS mode. It is easy enough to see that the image shot in HS mode with the ELB 400 is brighter, and hence there is more light output from HS than with HSS.

head and the image on the right was shot in HSS mode with the ELB 500. The red box outlined in the lower portion of the left image shows that area where the gradation is noticeable, when compared to the right image.

When using the HSS mode on the ELB 500, the transition to HSS is seamless (at least with my Nikons). When using both HSS and the TTL modes, you can essentially set your camera up however you want and the transmitter will produce a good exposure for your subject if the flash has enough power. Switching into TTL mode and out of it is as simple as pressing the TTL button on the transmitter, and when switching to manual from TTL, the last flash output settings are retained so you can easily adjust the lighting as you want.

For much of my work the last few years, I have been using

the HS technology to light up athletes who are far from the strobe. The HS technology has allowed me to overpower the sun from 20-feet away with the ELB 400 and close to 60-feet away with the ELB 1200. Hence, I wanted to see just how efficient the HSS is compared to my trusty HS. To figure this out, I set up both the ELB 400 and the ELB 500, both with the Elinchrom High Performance Reflector mounted on the flash heads, and placed them 15-feet away from the subject, which in this case was a Christmas light in my backyard. [I realize the image above is total crap, but it was just a test so I could understand the differences here.] Both images were shot at ISO 200, 1/2,000th second at f/2.8. The above image on the left was shot with the ELB 400 at full power (424 Ws) in HS mode and the image on the right was shot with the ELB 500 at full power (500 Ws) in HSS mode. It is easy enough to see that the image shot in HS mode with the

ELB 400 is brighter, and hence there is more light output by HS than with HSS. I have always known that HS is more efficient than HSS but how close they are here is the surprise. When I pulled these two images into Lightroom and equalized the brightness I found there was about a 1-stop difference. When taking into account the power output of each strobe, since the ELB 400 is 76 Ws less powerful than the ELB 500, the difference between the HS and the HSS is approximately 1.3 stops. Personally, I was blown away that there wasn't a much bigger difference. Elinchrom has managed to make the HSS much more efficient than I would have thought possible. In their marketing materials, Elinchrom talks about this being the "Most Powerful TTL light ever" and I have a feeling how they have optimized the HSS functionality is what they are talking about. I did not have a Profoto B1X to test out how their HSS compares to the ELB 500 but that would be a very interesting test.

After I tested the ELB 500 HSS mode, I sent my results to Elinchrom and was told that the HSS is even more efficient with Canon cameras so your mileage on this test might vary depending on which camera you use. Note that Hi-Sync (HS) also seems to be more efficient on Nikon cameras in my experience. Regardless, the fact that Elinchrom has been able to make HSS so efficient is quite remarkable.

While reading the FAQs on the Elinchrom website regarding the ELB 500 TTL, I noticed a question about using HSS and HS simultaneously. The answer from Elinchrom was surprising. You can indeed use HS on one pack (like the ELB 400 or the ELB 1200) in tandem with HSS on the ELB 500! The fact that I can use one strobe in HS mode and another in HSS mode is a huge selling point for

the ELB 500 in my mind. It means my older gear is not obsolete but can be used right alongside the newer ELB 500 even when shooting in High Speed Sync mode. As far as I know, Elinchrom is the only strobe manufacturer to make strobes that use both HS and HSS flash technologies and they have optimized them both to work incredibly efficiently and in tandem.

At this point in the review, you might be thinking the ELB 500 TTL is the do-it-all strobe solution. But, as with all of these IGBT 500 Ws TTL strobes, there is one chink in the armor that I have found. That chink is flash duration. As with the Profoto B1X, and many of the other 500 Ws TTL moonlights, they have wicked fast flash durations at low power settings. The B1x has flash durations as fast as 1/19,000th second. The ELB 500 TTL has a flash duration as fast as 1/20,000th second. The Godox AD600 Pro has a flash duration as fast as 1/10,100th second. These units achieve these wicked fast flash durations at the lowest power settings. But at full power the flash durations are quite slow. At full power, i.e. 500 Ws, the flash duration of the ELB 500 TTL is 1/250th second (t0.5), which is very, very slow as far as flash durations go. At 250 Ws, one stop down from full power, the flash duration is 1/854th second (t0.5) in the Action mode. At 125 Ws, two stops down from full power, the flash duration is 1/1,886th second (t0.5) in the Action mode. The Godox AD600 Pro has a similarly slow flash duration of 1/220th second at full power. Interestingly, the Profoto B1x has a flash duration of 1/1,000th second at full power (t0.5), which is faster than the ELB 500 and the Godox but still not fast enough to freeze motion reliably.

Why am I making a point here about flash durations? For most photographers, this won't matter at all. If you need

to freeze motion just jump into HSS mode and shoot at a high shutter speed to freeze the motion. But, if you are trying to freeze the motion with the flash and overpower daylight at the same time the flash durations matter. For a long time now I have shot motion blurs of athletes blasting by me and then froze their motion using a fast flash duration. One of the hallmarks of Elinchrom strobes is that they offer multiple flash heads (for most of their battery-powered strobes) and have the Action flash heads that have fast flash durations even at full power. Hence, with an ELB 400 and the Action flash head, I can use that setup at full power (424 Ws) to freeze the motion of the subject even when shooting with a 1/10th second shutter speed. With the ELB 500 TTL, I would have to drop down to 125 Ws to get a fast enough flash duration to freeze motion reliably. For some photographers this won't be an issue, for others this will be a limitation for the ELB 500 TTL.

When shooting with leaf shutters, like with my Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi, I can sync at all shutter speeds up to 1/800th second. On other Hasselblad's, like the X1D and H6D cameras, they can sync at up to 1/2,000th second. But, the catch here is that the flash duration needs to be shorter than the shutter speed. Hence, at 1/800th second (the top shutter speed on my H5D) the t0.5 flash duration needs to be around 1/2,000th second minimum to work with my H5D. Otherwise I would be clipping the flash and/or have issues with how quickly the transmitter triggers the flash. When using the Hasselblad, the ELB 500 TTL is fairly limiting because of the slower flash durations at the higher power settings. I realize for most photographers this won't be an issue.

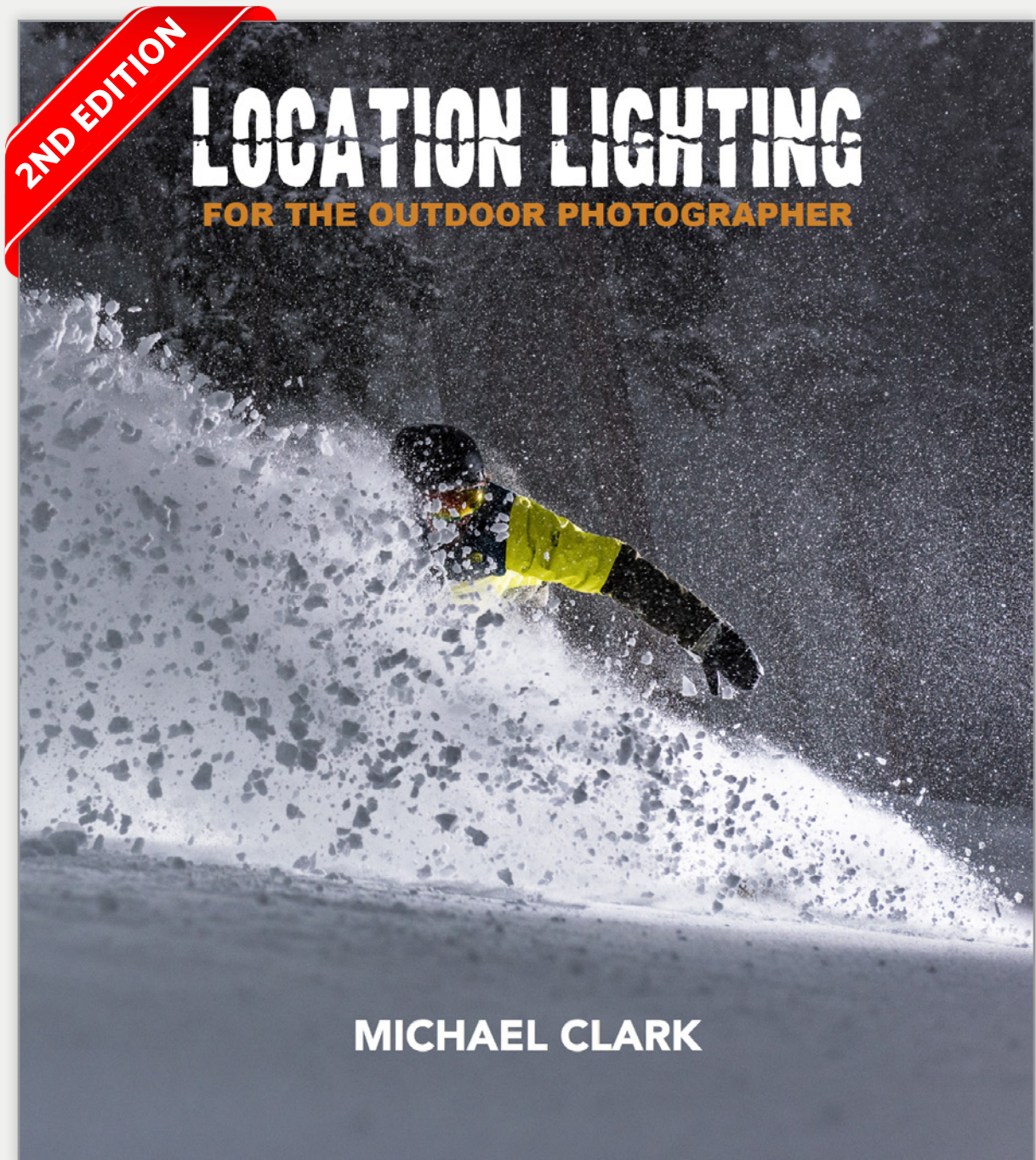
Who is the ELB 500 TTL designed for? In my mind, and

as seen on the marketing images put out by Elinchrom, the ELB 500 is designed for portrait, lifestyle, fashion and wedding photographers where the flash head is relatively close to the subject. And by close, I mean that the flash head is not more than 10 or 12 feet (3 to 3.6 meters) away from the subject. That isn't to say that it cannot be used to shoot sports with the HSS mode, but it may not be as versatile as the ELB 400 or ELB 1200 for freezing motion at a distance. I realize that 80% of photographers out there are using a strobe for portraits and will have the strobe relatively close to the subject. The other 20% are trying to shoot action of some sort. So, for the vast majority, the ELB 500 TTL will be their best option for a battery-powered strobe within the Elinchrom line up.

In conclusion, I am very impressed with the ELB 500 TTL. I am not a fan of TTL in general, but I have to confess, it makes life much easier when trying to dial in the lighting on location. Not only that, it also negates the need for a light meter. On location, I typically start in TTL mode with the ELB 500 to get a base exposure and then I push the button on the Skyport transmitter to go into manual flash mode and adjust the settings from there. Flash on location really can't get much easier. Add in the fact that I can use HS and HSS modes on different strobes simultaneously and that is icing on the cake. So, will I be upgrading to the ELB 500? I will not be selling my ELB 400s because they are so versatile and they are still stellar strobes. Hi-Sync (HS) is still the way to go for the vast majority of my work. The ELB 1200 is still my go to battery-powered strobe because I often need the extra power and versatility that it offers. But with that said, I can definitely see adding an ELB 500 to my kit for those shoots where it will work well and can help me be more efficient. For more info check out the [Elinchrom](http://Elinchrom.com) website.

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on assignment:



METHOD SEVEN



The Czech-built Aero L-39 Albatros jet used by the Patriots Jet Team sitting on the tarmac at the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona.



An assignment working with the Patriots Jet Team, the only civilian aerobatic jet team in the United States, composed of ex-Thunderbird and Blue Angel pilots.

The farther I go along this adventure photography path, the wider it seems the “adventure” part seems to spread into other genres. Earlier this year, [Method Seven](#), a cutting-edge sunglasses company, reached out to see if I could do a shoot for them. The owner had seen some of my adventure sports images that are lit with strobes and wanted that look for Method Seven’s advertising. Method Seven makes a variety of sunglasses aimed at both the burgeoning marijuana growing business in many states here in the USA and they also make sunglasses specifically dialed in for pilots. For this assignment, the emphasis was on aviation—specifically jet pilots. Method Seven sponsors the [Patriots Jet Team](#), which is the only civilian aerobatic jet team here in the United States, composed of ex-Air Force Thunderbird pilots and ex-Navy Blue Angel pilots.

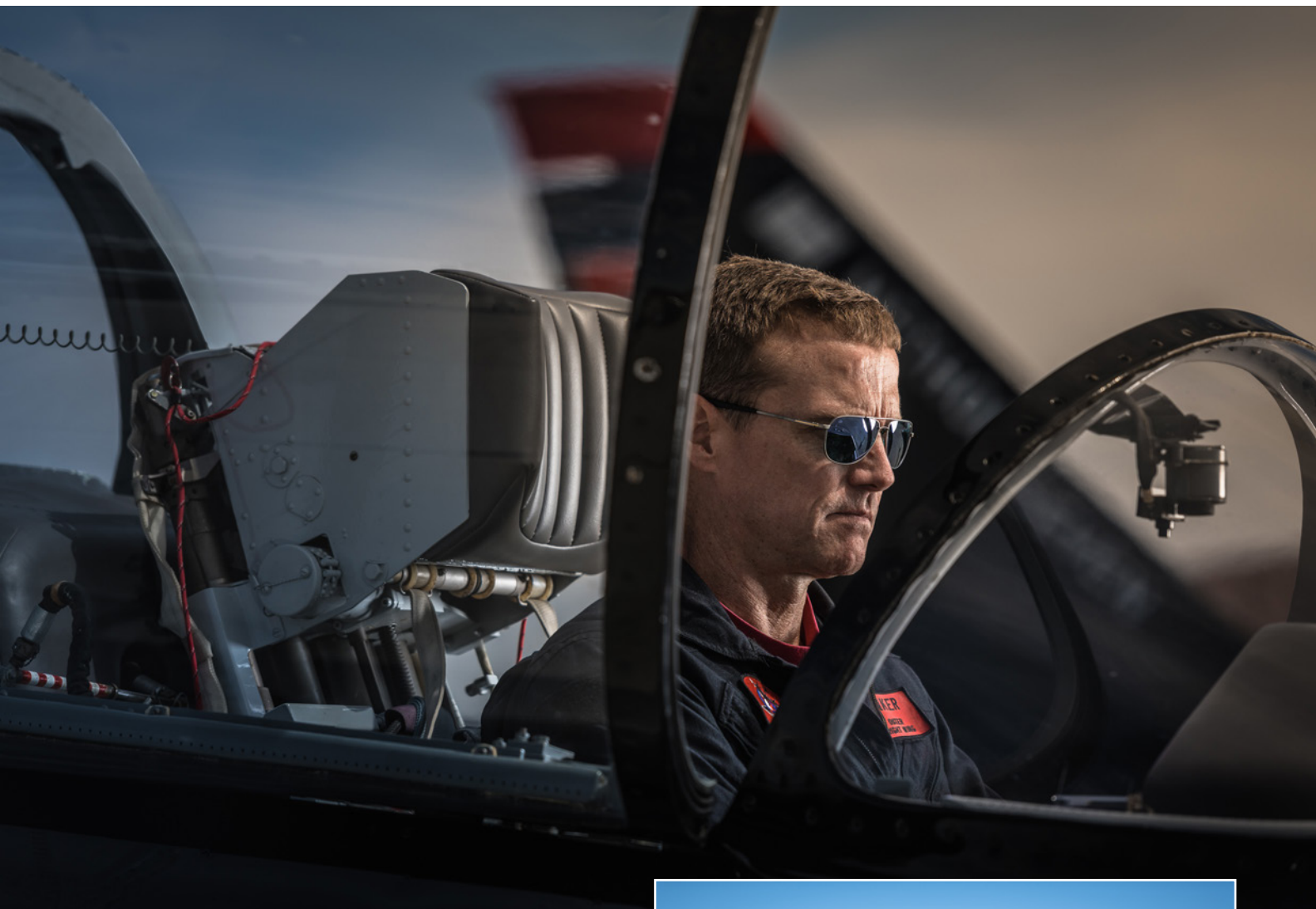
If you have ever attended an air show here in the USA where the Thunderbirds or the Blue Angels performed then you have a pretty good idea of what the Patriots are capable of. They put on a very similar heart-in-your-throat style show. To be able to go behind the scenes and work with pilots of this caliber is fairly rare from what I know. Hence, it was quite exciting to get this call and have an assignment with the Patriots at their next air show in Yuma, Arizona. Luckily the assignment was in March, so it wasn’t blazing hot in southern Arizona, which can be ridiculously hot in the summer.

For this shoot, the client was aware that the jet team was there to put on an air show. We did not have full control over the timing of the shoot and worked with the pilots and the ground team to step in when we could to create specific portraits. The planes had the Method Seven logo in several places so that helped out on visuals and the

pilots all had Method Seven sunglasses as well. As a fast-paced, two-day shoot we were only able to create a few artificially lit images and spent the rest of the time capturing behind the scenes footage and aerial action images to go along with the more stylized advertising images. The aerobatic aerial action images would be used in the advertising to help support the more stylized portraits.

The story behind Method Seven’s sunglass technology is quite interesting. They resurrected German airplane technology that was almost lost after World War II. Apparently, as I was told by the owner, instead of building eye wear for their pilots, the German scientists in 1936 created canopies for their airplanes that used rare-Earth elements—baked into the glass of the airplanes canopy—to block both harmful UV rays as well as provide better visibility for their pilots. By building on this old technology, Method Seven has created a new style of sunglasses where the coatings are molecularly bonded with the German crystalline lenses. This makes wearing them quite stunning as the clarity is next-level with these sunglasses—just what is required when flying a jet at crazy fast speeds. I dare say these sunglasses are pretty cool for outdoor activities as well. While Method Seven is specifically going after the aviation market, I hope they branch out and start making sunglasses for the outdoor adventure market.

I hadn’t been to an air show since I saw the Thunderbirds as a kid. I had forgotten how wild it is to see the latest fighter jets (like the F-35 shown on page 35) tearing across the sky right in front of you. There was no lack of action during the air show and the Patriots were to be the grand finale. We were able to get a couple of pilots in the cockpit before test flights to do some product shots with



Above: Scott "Banker" Ind sitting in Jet 6 adjusting the controls of his Aero L-39 Albatros jet just before the Patriots Jet Team take off at the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona. Right: The vertical stabilizer of the Patriot's L-39 Albatros jet with the Method Seven logo emblazoned on it.



the sunglasses as shown on page 27. Typically the Patriot jet team pilots wear the Method Seven sunglasses before and after take off but during the actual aerobatic show they put their helmet visors down because of the extreme g-forces.

“The Patriots crew has a ton of experience using GoPros. They had GoPro mounts all over the jets and were able to show me exactly what the footage would look like from each mount.”

To capture the action I shot alongside the crew photographer both during training and test flights as well as during the actual show. In addition, the Patriots crew has a ton of experience using GoPros. They had GoPro mounts all over the jets and were able to show me exactly what the footage (both stills and 4K video) would look like from each mount. Watching how they secured the GoPros was also pretty fascinating since a GoPro flying off the plane during flight could easily be a life or death scenario for the pilot flying the plane or the pilot in the plane just behind. To lock down the GoPros, the crew mounted the GoPro cameras into GoPro mounts attached to the various surfaces of the jets and then wrapped wire around the GoPro itself. The wire was then anchored to bolts on the plane. Once mounted, I let some of the GoPros roll video and others were shooting time-lapses at two frames per second. You can see some of the video footage we created in a Patriots montage video on Method Seven’s [Vimeo Page](#). I was incredibly impressed that the GoPro mount system could deal with the speeds and g-forces exerted on them while mounted out on the end of the wing, under the plane and also on the rear vertical stabilizer.

The GoPro footage resulted in some amazing images as

can be seen on pages 29 and 34. The bottom image on page 34 is of rear-seat pilot Jonathan “Huggy” Huggins, who watches out for all the pilots during the air show to make sure everything is going off without a hitch. By placing a GoPro in front of him we were able to get a wide vari-

ety of images where he was using the glasses as imagined—in bright, harsh lighting conditions. As with my assignments photographing the [Red Bull Air Force](#), the GoPro action cameras were able to get some incredible perspectives. For this assignment I used a wide variety of cameras, including the GoPros, various DSLRs and my Hasselblad medium format digital camera.

As you can imagine, air shows of this caliber are extremely dangerous. The Jet team did two rehearsals the day before to dial in their show and after each one they had very focused team meetings analyzing the prior flight. While I had access to just about everything those team meetings were only for the pilots. Since all of these pilots have been flying aerobatic maneuvers for decades, it wasn’t a matter of dangerous oversights but more a matter of dialing in the show to an extremely high degree so the crowd was blown away.

Needless to say, the crowd was not disappointed. Jets were screaming by at near the speed of sound—and in some cases only twenty feet off the deck, as shown on page 33. Tracking and catching the jets with a 450mm lens was tricky to say the least. The jets were coming in

Continued on page 35



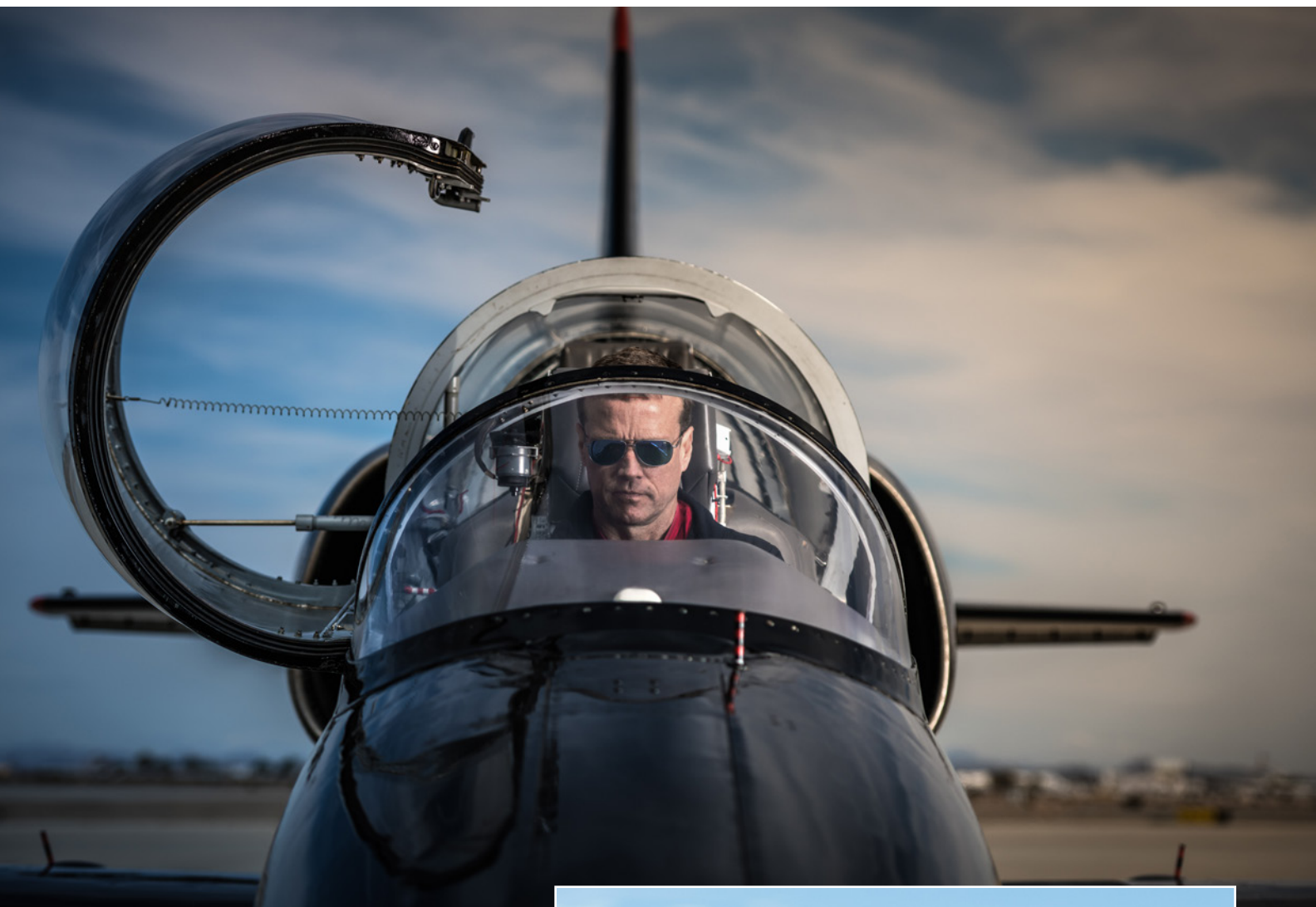
Above: The Patriots Jet Team coming over the top in tight formation during the grand finale at the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona. Right: With a GoPro camera mounted inside one of the Patriot jets we were able to capture some pretty stunning images. This image was captured with the GoPro set to time-lapse mode shooting two frames per second for the entire flight. This makes for tough editing as you end up with thousands of images but there is really no other way to get these types of images.



*The Patriots Jet Team coming in over the tarmac
with full colors trailing at the 2018 Yuma Air
Show in Yuma, Arizona.*







Above: Scott "Banker" Ind sitting in Jet 6 adjusting the controls of his Aero L-39 Albatros jet just before the Patriots Jet Team take off at the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona. Right: As usual for an air show with pilots of this caliber, they do a couple flybys during the show. For this one two jets staid on course while the third came by them within fifty feet or so.



Right: As you can imagine, the crew are a vitally important part of the team. They keep the planes operational and also make sure the pilots are strapped in securely among other tasks. Below: Coming in at high speed, jet #2 flew down the tarmac only twenty feet off the deck at the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona.





Above: A GoPro image captured from a GoPro mounted on the bottom of the jet during the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona. Below: Jonathan "Huggy" Huggins riding backseat in Jet #1 to watch the other pilots and keep the team together and on point during the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona. To capture this image we mounted a GoPro inside the cabin on the dashboard just in front of Jonathan.





Above is a Marine F-35 fighter jet hovering in place at the 2018 Yuma Air Show in Yuma, Arizona. The noise created by the F-35 here was deafening but even so it was quite impressive to see a plane hover just fifty feet off the ground for around 30 seconds.

from every orientation which forced me to keep swiveling every few seconds to make sure I wasn't going to miss an oncoming jet. As can be seen in the images here, there were a wide variety of scenarios to capture. For Method Seven, we definitely needed a variety of images showing the pilots wearing the sunglasses, but since we were limited on how much time we could get with them the action images help to build out the story. As can be seen on the previous page the GoPro cameras were key to getting im-

ages we could not have gotten any other way.

My thanks to Method Seven for the assignment and also for the introduction into the world aerobatic jets. My thanks also to the entire Patriots Jet Team for their hospitality. This was a fascinating and exciting assignment and I hope to work with the Patriots Jet Team again here in the future. Check out the spectacular sunglasses on offer from Method Seven on their [website](#).

portfolio





The Changing Face of Advertising

by Michael Clark

While doing research and working up a presentation last month for ASMP entitled, "Staying Relevant in the Current Economy," I was quite amazed to find out just how drastically the advertising world has changed in the last decade. There are some obvious changes that have affected all of us in the last decade, like the rise of smart phones, social media, and of course the internet, but there were also some other things that have come into play that I didn't even realize. Chief among them was the rising consumer mistrust of brands in general, which has also spurred a giant increase in ad-blocking. This gives rise to the question in the ad world, "How do you advertise to a group that doesn't watch ads, and more importantly goes out of their way to block ads from their entertainment?" The answer: Meet the customer where they are at. This means solve a problem with your product, and or reach out to them with a solution on social media. This is where the "influencer" comes into the equation on social media.

In June 2016, in an article entitled, "The History and Evolution of Advertising," Jose Angelo Gallegos said, "Brands are increasingly aware that people trust other people, not brands. They have discovered that building a loyal following sells products all by itself." Jose also went on to say that, "Brands are now getting consumers onboard to help sell their products. Raving fans are the best advertising

tool a company has." With shorter attention spans, a mobile world, and consumer mistrust, most companies have massively shifted their data driven advertising towards Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and other top social media platforms where they can actually reach potential customers with what I would call sly advertising. By that I mean many companies are copying Nike from way back in the day, creating stories that are interesting and pull the viewer in and have very little if any "advertising" save for the logo at the very end of the video. Yeti's series of three-to-ten minutes videos are a good example.

What does this mean for us as content creators? Most companies have figured out that video gets more eyeballs than stills do, but it is also much more expensive to produce. Hence, if you don't work with video this is the time to start honing your motion skills. For still photographers, it means you have to have a presence on social media and you have to really work at it to create unique and desirable content. A big social media following will definitely help bring in some clients, but remember there are many successful photographers out there working today that have only a moderate number of followers. In the end it is the same as it always has been, to stand out means building buzz around you and your work. The good news is that there is more demand for photography and more opportunities to get your work out there than ever before.

parting shot



A behind the scenes shot of my Hasselblad HSD camera resting on an adjacent tripod during a 34-minute long exposure capturing the Milky Way and night sky above Mount Wilson and Sunshine Peak as seen from the Last Dollar Road near Telluride, Colorado. To create the light streaks I used a flashlight and shined it through my fingers, which created a red glow.

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