



GITTINGS

GLOBAL

PHOTOGRAPHERS CONFERENCE 2025

Chicago, Illinois





Portrait Demo



Steve Silverman for Lathrop GPM - Minneapolis

SIMPLE RULES

Simple rules allow us to thrive as creatives. Too many choices can paralyze the creative process.

Shooting portraits for global clients is all about understand that your portraits are part of a global brand that has been curated and crafted to show consistency from person to person, city to city, country to country and year to year.

- Every headshot is valuable to the subject and the company
- Every headshot is an opportunity to elevate the confidence of the subject and the brand
- What we do as photographers matters and we need to dedicate ourselves to making ever subject look their natural best

SIMPLE RULES: HOW TO THRIVE IN A COMPLEX WORLD

KATHLEEN EISENHARDT AND DONALD SULL (2016)

Rules can accelerate creativity. In the span of two years, the White Stripes produced two albums that are widely considered among the best of the 2000s, and the British newspaper the Guardian called the rock duo “the key band of their time.” “The whole point of the White Stripes,” according to founder and frontman Jack White, “is the liberation of limiting yourself.” Their breakout album, 2001’s White Blood Cells, which is featured on many lists of the decade’s best albums, follows five simple rules:

- 1) no blues
- 2) no guitar solos
- 3) no slide guitar
- 4) no covers
- 5) no bass

These rules constrained the band to a box — **but it was their box, and staying in that box helped enable their rapid-fire creativity.** By restricting their creative process, how-to rules freed the White Stripes to follow a short, clear path to creativity.

SETTING THE MOOD AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Details about how we do what we do

- Main light on camera Left or Right or either
- Main light placement – 1ft/30cm above the subject's head
- As close to the subject's face as possible without entering the frame
- Adjust the height of the main light for each subject. Adjust the background to match if needed
- Have the main light in front of the subject for a gentle feathering of the light for the most flattering look
- Avoid split lighting at all cost, make sure there is light on both sides of the face

3-LIGHT STANDARD SETUPS

The vast majority of Gittings Global shoots, follow a simple set of rules with a 3-light set up shot on a standard gray or white background.

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3-LIGHT STANDARD SETUP



4-LIGHT SETUPS

4-light set ups are typically variations on the standard 3-light set up with the addition of a rim light or a hair light. Again, both are typically shot on a standard gray or standard white background.

- You'll need additional gear, so make sure you pack accordingly
- You may need to mount a strobe head, particularly high, if it's a hair light or over the center of the set, which would require a boom
- Typically, the fourth light is used to create a clean modern look that will blend with the background and look organic

4-LIGHT SETUP



2-POSE CLIENTS

Increasingly, clients are asking for two different poses per subject. Sometimes the two different poses are dramatically different, other times they're variations on expression and energy. Also, different clients have different names for these poses, and we match the terms used by our clients so you may see two poses described as Formal/Casual, or Expert/Bio, or some other variation. This is not meant to be confusing for photographers, but simple for clients.

The new GMS system takes full advantage of XMP Metadata tags enabling a fast and efficient workflow. Images that are color-tagged and star-rated correctly, according to the specifications of each photography brief, will automatically be designated with the correct pose type in the Photographer Portal. If however, the tags are not imported automatically, any image post type can be changed manually, allowing for infinite customization.

SESSION IMAGE TYPE COLOR TAGS

The following are the standard XMP metadata fields we recognize in GMS uploads:

- 5-Star / Second Pose
- ★-Ratings
- Color Tags
 - **Red** = Gray Card
 - **Blue** = Subject Support (Glass Glare etc.)
 - **Green** = Session Background Plates
- Multiple Poses
 - Pose 1 = 5★ **PURPLE**
 - Pose 2 = 5★ **YELLOW**

2-POSE CLIENT



- Multiple Poses
- Pose 1 = 5★ PURPLE
- Pose 2 = 5★ YELLOW

REVIEW IMAGES AT 100% FOR FOCUS

Checking the focus of images zoomed in at 100% allows you the confidence to say without that the photo the subject selected will result in the best possible outcome, making each person look their natural best. Not checking focus at 100% while the subject is still in the room can create cascading issues for the lab and ultimately the deliverables.

It's critical that you check focus of the subject selected picture before you let them leave. If, in the unfortunate event, the image is not tack sharp, then you have the opportunity to go back in and shoot additional photos.

Well sharpening can salvage some photos, the ones on the razor's edge or being sharp to begin with, it simply is not adequate for the premium quality headshots our clients expect.

CHECK FOCUS AT 100%



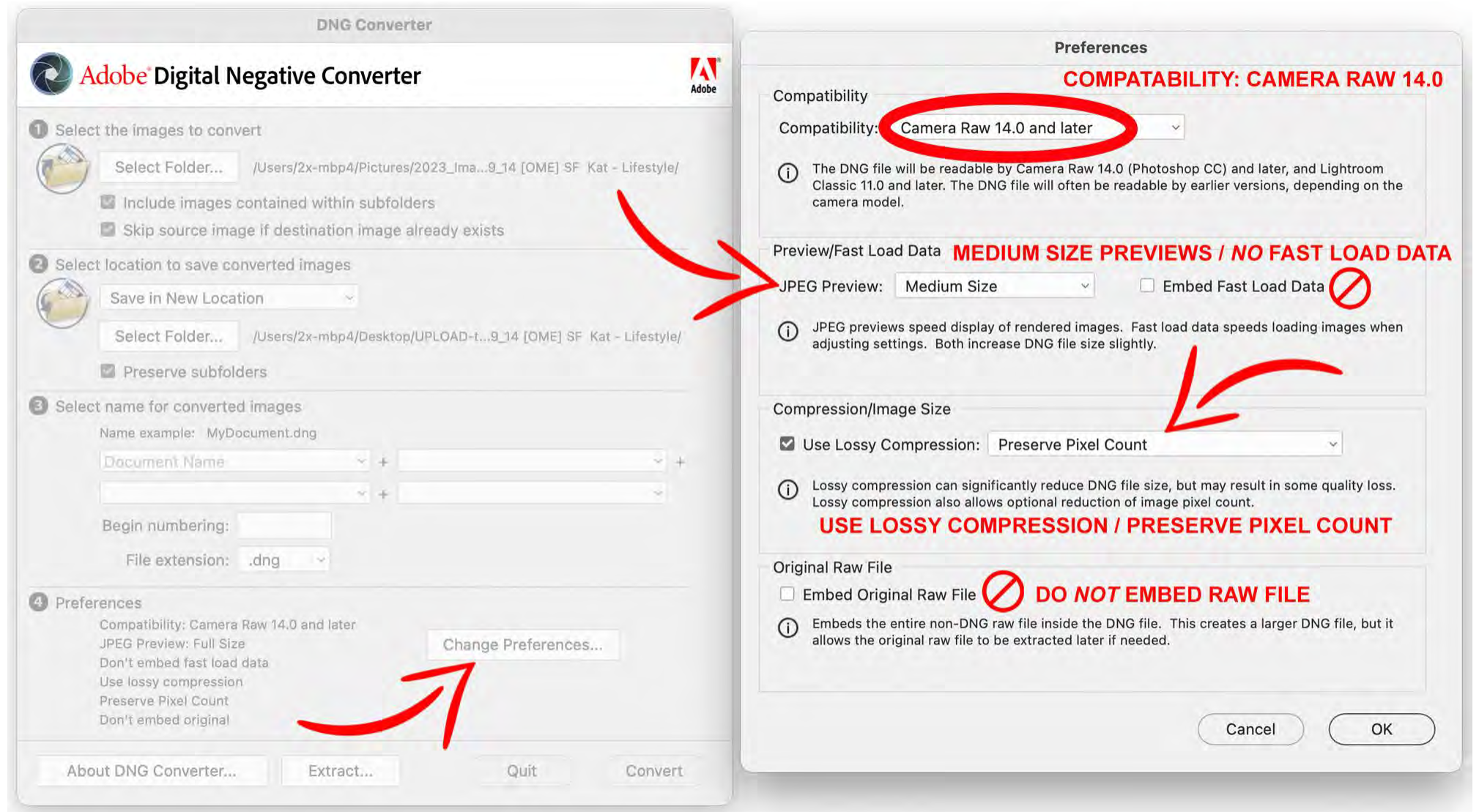
GMS WORKFLOW & UPLOADING AS YOU GO

If you have your workflow set up and **Adobe DNG Converter** setup you can process images and upload as you go. For GMS, make sure you use the (3) following settings

- DNG Compatibility 14.0
- JPEG Preview MEDIUM
- Use Lossy Compression

You can **upload images to the Photographer Portal in a separate tab**, and the system is smart enough to only upload new images. GMS will ignore images it already has, allowing you to upload as you go/

ADOBE DNG CONVERTER



5-MINUTE SESSIONS

An increasing trend is for clients to ask us photograph staff, paralegals, and other team members within the organization, so the quality of the photos matches what we produce for associates and partners. Our goal is to provide high-quality headshots for staff, but the client is not willing to pay the same fee which means the workflow and deliverables must adjust.

- These sessions are 4 to 6 photos per person maximum
- The subject does not get to choose the photo, the photographer chooses the best image
- There is a 10-minute gap every hour to allow photographers to catch up
- If a subject is running two minutes late, and the next subject is two minutes early that leaves no time in between 5-minute sessions to accommodate. We know this happens.
- We will do our best to stay on schedule, but must photograph the people who are on time
- Some subjects may feel rushed, but the amount of time per-person has been established by the client, not Gittings. We are doing our best in the time we have.

5-MINUTE SESSIONS (4 TO 6 PHOTOS – PHOTOGRAPHER PICKS)



ENVIRONMENTAL SETUPS

The last category of headshot set ups are environmental. Meaning, the subject will be photographed within their natural space. The specifics of what the backgrounds look like vary from client to client so it's critical that you read the photography brief to understand the look, architecture, and total value of environmental backgrounds.

- The most important piece of equipment for environmental shoots is a **tripod**
- Environmental shots also add the complication of different colored lights that you may not have any control over which means you may need to gel your lights to match
- Environmental shots can also be complicated because you may need ND filters to balance inside and outside exposures

SUPPORT IMAGES

Shoot an empty out-of-focus background plate for every subject and upload to the Photographer Portal along with the client-selected image. Color Tag the Subject Support image with a **BLUE** color tag so GMS can identify it correctly. Keep the focus the same by turning off Auto Focus for the background plate. This will speed up retouching.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETUP



<< **Subject Select**
Unavoidable window reflection



An example of a **support plate** created in the same place at the same time as the portrait, using a tripod to remove the reflection of the lighting equipment from the windows. For the best support plates, turn off strobe transmitters and auto-focus.

Retouched FINAL Image >>

<< **Background Support Plate**
No strobe = no reflections
Consistently out of focus
Shot at the same f-stop



Color Tag the Subject Support image with a **BLUE** color tag

RETOUCHING NOTES VS SUPPORT NOTES

The moment you are done shooting you should be almost done with the session report. Double check retouching notes, add expenses and submit as soon as you are done. **Jobs should be uploaded the same day they are shot**, from the client's office.

RETOUCHING NOTES, EXPENSES, SUBMIT THE SESSION

There are (3) kinds of notes for any time slot:

1. **Retouching Notes** for the entire time slot – The advantage of these notes is you can add them before you upload any photos.
2. **Client Support Notes** for the CS team. Leaving a note in this section will send the job directly to the CS team for investigation, not to the lab for retouching. Be cautious about how and when you use CS Notes
3. **Individual Image Retouching Notes** that relate to a single image – You can only add these notes once an image has been uploaded

Ensure all **Images are Uploaded**, all **Retouching Notes** for the session have been entered and **Expenses** have been entered before you Submit the Session

Once the job is submitted there is no way for photographers to change the session report in any way. **Double check everything before you Submit Session.**

If there is a mistake with anything on the Session Report, and you have submitted it, you must email support@gittingsglobal.com to request a change.

Q&A AND BEST PRACTICES

What if you get a new assignment and realize it is booked as a studio session, but the brief says to shoot it environmentally?

Match the lighting to the original brief in terms of direction and ratios, the best you can, but please shoot vertical at f/5.6 with the subject in the center of a gray background so we have as much of the person as possible, resulting in a better overall composite image.

**Thank you so much for attending
Photographer's Conference 2025!**

