



**PHOTO TRADE SECRETS**

ZEKE KAMM

VOL. 1

**STROBIST**  
**PHOTO TRADE SECRETS**  
VOL. 1

EXPERT LIGHTING TECHNIQUES

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TRADE SECRET  
CARDS 



**PEACHPIT PRESS**

**STROBIST PHOTO TRADE SECRETS VOL. 1  
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**EDITOR:** Zeke Kamm  
**PRODUCTION EDITOR:** Lisa Brazieal  
**PROJECT EDITOR:** Rebecca Freed  
**COVER AND INTERIOR DESIGN:** Mimi Heft  
**COVER PHOTO:** Danny Ngan  
**COMPOSITOR:** Zeke Kamm

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***“While passionately  
photographing life,  
don’t forget to live  
life passionately.”***

Photo of author and son  
taken by wife

## INTRODUCTION

**PHOTOGRAPHY IS ABOUT** light, simple as that. Learning to control light is a critical step in becoming a better shooter.

You are holding in your hands a book of inspiration: The work of two dozen photographers who know how to use light. Flip each page over and see how they created these dynamic photos, so you can make images like this, too.

The very first thing in your tool kit should be a willingness to experiment. *Photo Trade Secrets* is designed to help you do just that.

— David Hobby  
Photographer & Editor, Strobist.com

**THERE'S A SECRET** in photography: Learning how to light isn't hard. It doesn't take thousands of dollars worth of gear. Not even hundreds. You don't need to memorize complex theorems or massive texts.

All you need to light your photos like an expert is a few concepts, a few tools—many you already have, and a few minutes to think about the image you want to take before you take it.

The best thing about the techniques in this collection is they easily scale up or down. Whatever situation you're in, you can use this knowledge to make your photographs better. Tear out an image or technique that inspires you. Bring it to your next shoot. And give it your best shot!

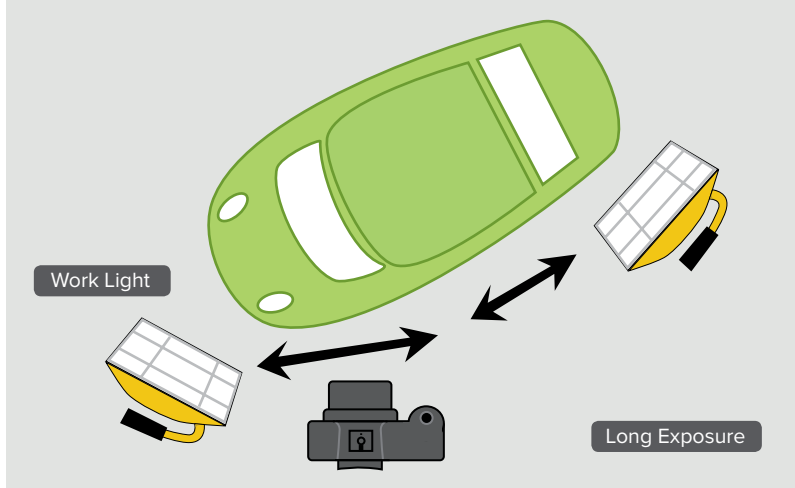
— Zeke Kamm  
Editor, NicePhotoMag.com



**KEN BROWN**

**61 Aston Martin GT Zagato**

**THINK YOU DON'T** have enough lighting gear to take great images? Ken Brown borrowed a \$20 hardware-store work light to photograph this \$5,000,000 Aston Martin Zagato. How did he make it look so good with just one light? Working in a pitch-black room, Ken left the shutter open for 21 seconds while he waved the light around the front and down the side of the car, creating a huge virtual softbox. With a little trial and error you can use this technique to get big-budget results for little to no money.



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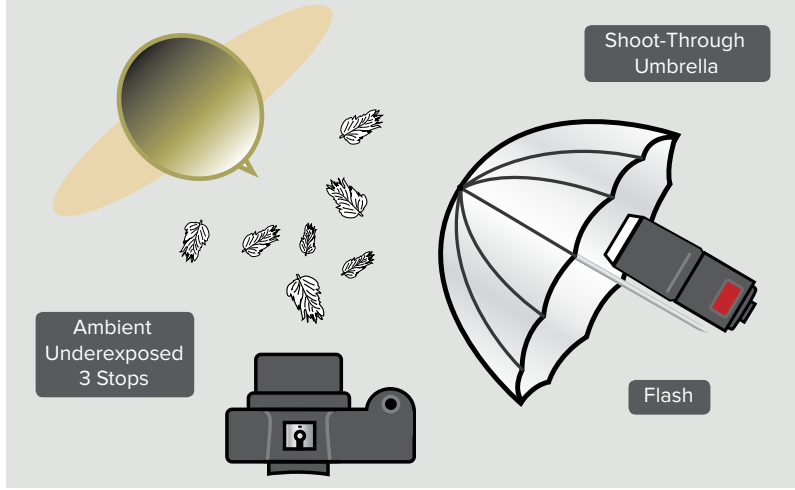
Photo © Ken Brown





**STEPHANIE BELL**  
*Letting Go*

**WAY BACK IN** 2006, Stephanie Bell from Emerging Design & Photography took the image “Letting Go” in her first attempt at off-camera lighting outside the studio. She started by overpowering the daylight with a fast shutter. Then she used a single flash set to full power and blasted it into a shoot-through umbrella. By keeping the ambient light low, she was able to stop the motion of the falling feathers with the flash and create an image worth holding on to.



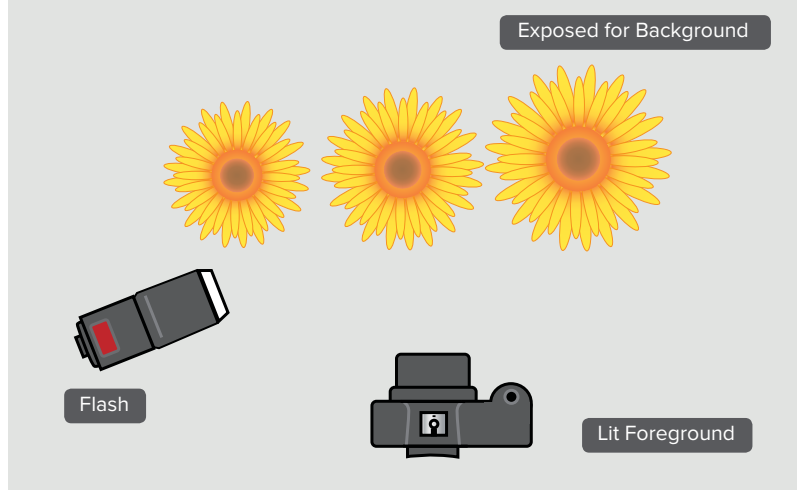
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Photo © Stephanie Bell emergingphoto.ca



**GARY WILLIAMSON**

*Sunflowers*



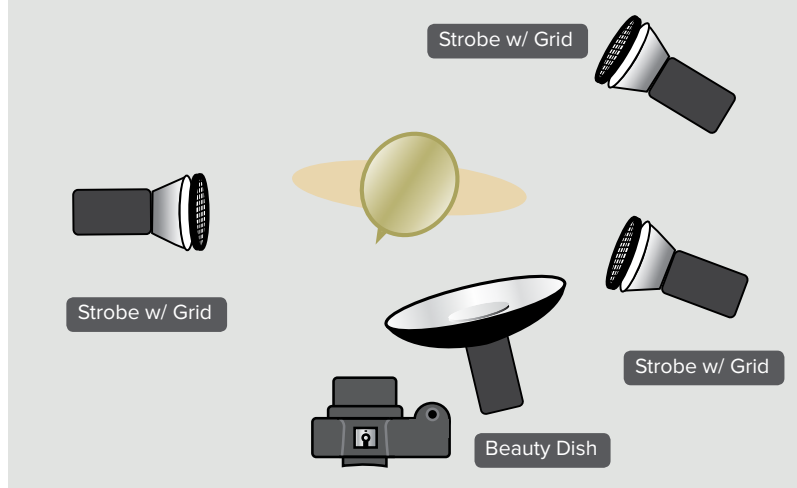
**THIS DREAMLIKE IMAGE** by Gary Williamson was taken in a field just outside the airport in Geneva. He slowed the shutter down to 1/25 of a second at a 5.6 f stop to lock in the sky, and then brought up the flowers in the foreground with just a single flash camera left. Exposing for the background and lighting for the foreground can help turn a simple setup into a powerfully good image, especially when Mother Nature plays along.

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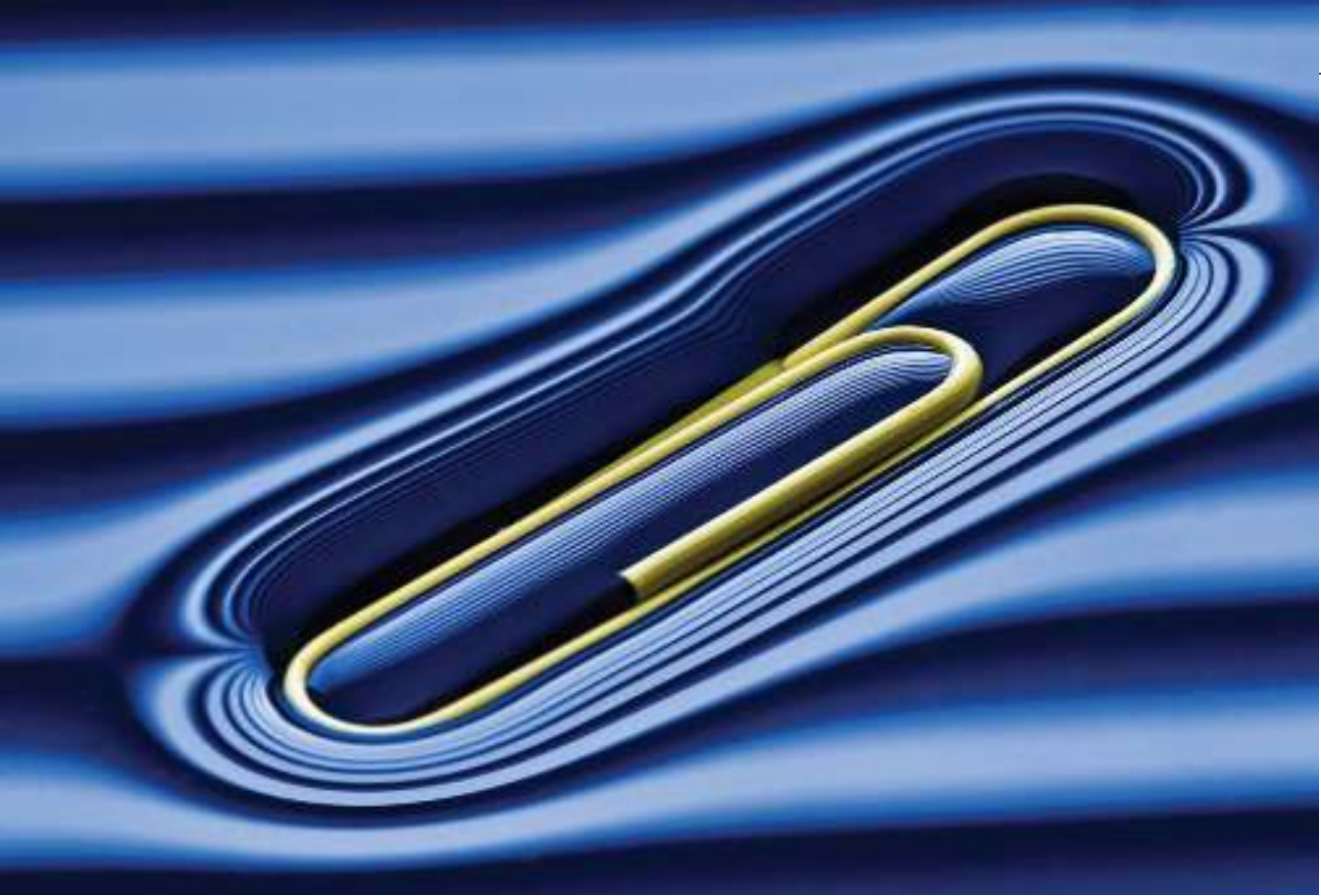
**JEREMEY BARRETT**  
*Soft*



**JEREMEY BARRETT'S IMAGE** titled "Soft" doesn't actually use a soft box. So how does he get such a soft light? A 22-inch beauty dish, that's how. Pop a decent beauty dish nice and close to your model and you'll get that pretty, soft light, too. Jeremy then brings in three more strobes, each with a grid. By restricting the light with grids, Jeremy gets that sculpted edge along the model's face as well as that circular glow on the background.

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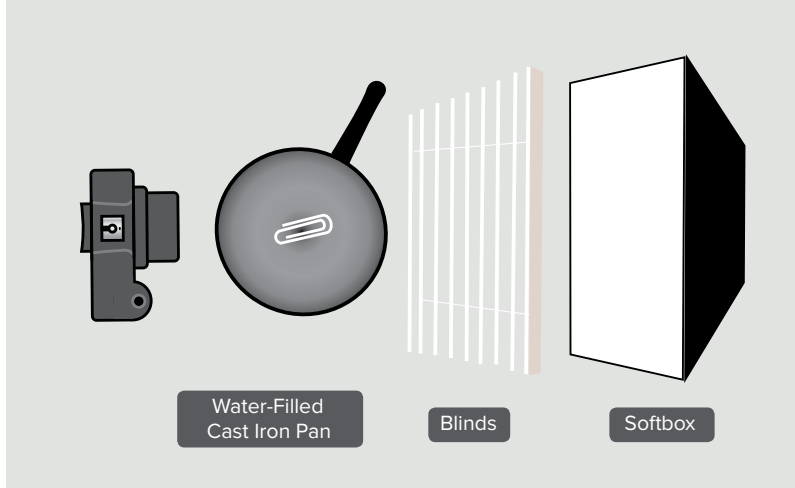
Photo © Jeremy L. Barrett



**JEFF DAVIS**

*Paper Clip in a  
Wind Tunnel*

**PAPER CLIP IN** a Wind Tunnel is another clever example of brains over brawn. Jeff lit this shot with one strobed softbox. But in this case it's not the light that counts so much as the removal of light. By placing a set of window blinds between his subject and the softbox, Jeff created the graphic lines that twist as their reflection rides the curves created by the paper clip dipping along the water's surface.



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Photo © Jeff Davis



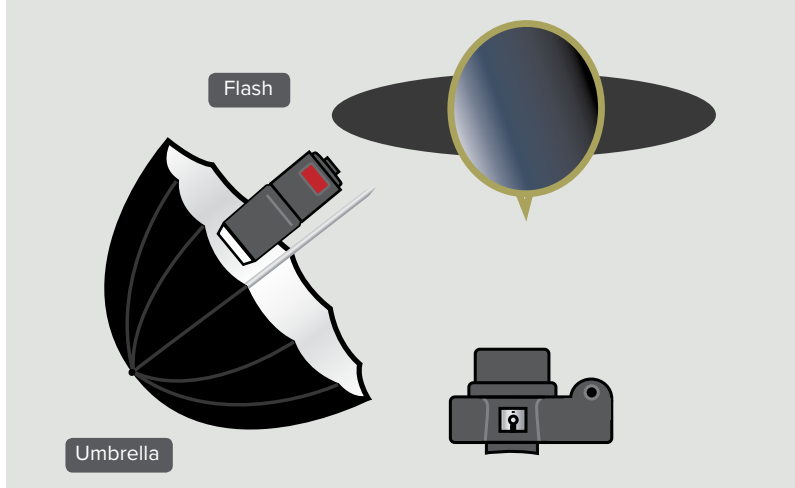




**SEAN O.S. BARLEY**

*Grit*

**IF YOU ARE** going to title a self-portrait “Grit,” you’re going to have to deliver a gritty look. Sean Barley brings that grit to his image with a single flash into an umbrella camera left. The side angle of the light divides the lines of the face mask into sharp highlight and shadow areas, creating that eye-catching pattern. More importantly, by raking the light across his face at an angle, the skin texture becomes sharply exaggerated, dramatically adding to the intensity of the image.



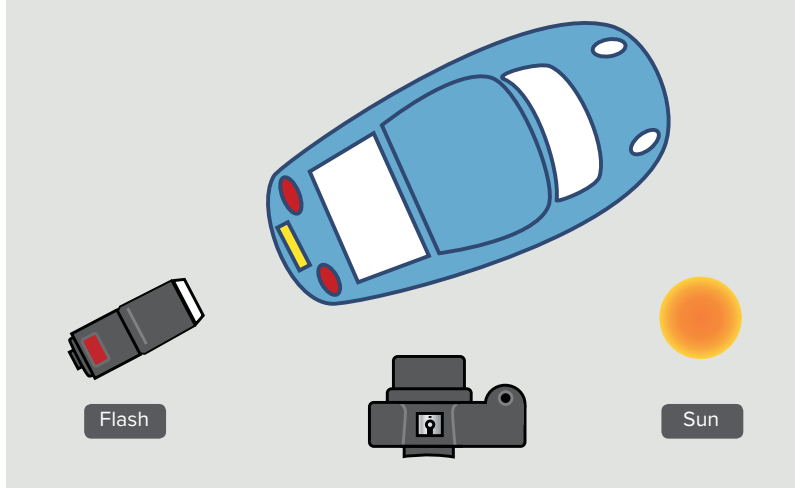
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Photo © Sean O.S. Barley sosb.net



**MARTIJN KOEVOETS**

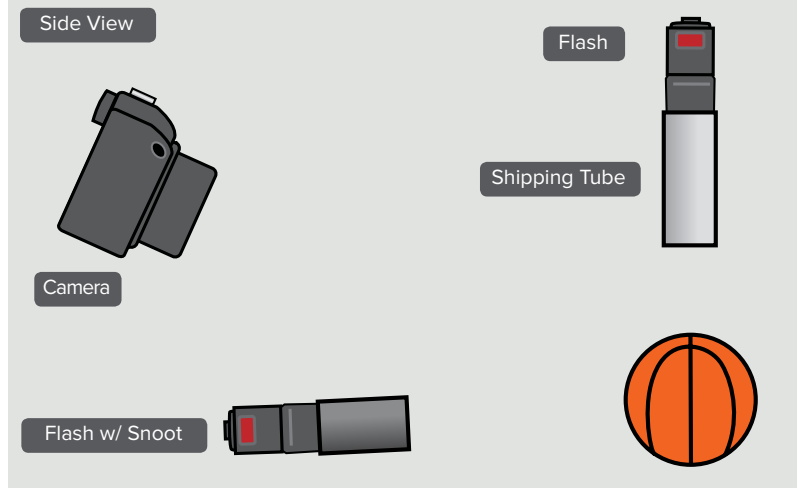
***Audi TT 3.2 Quattro  
S-Tronic***



**WHO SAYS YOU** need a light stand to shoot off-camera flash? Martijn Koevoets shot this car with the sun coming in from camera right. Then he added an off camera flash coming from camera left to bring the back of the car out from the shadows. Only he didn't use a light stand for the flash. He asked the car's driver to hold it. More brains = less gear. Don't let a lack of photo gear stop you from getting the shot you want.



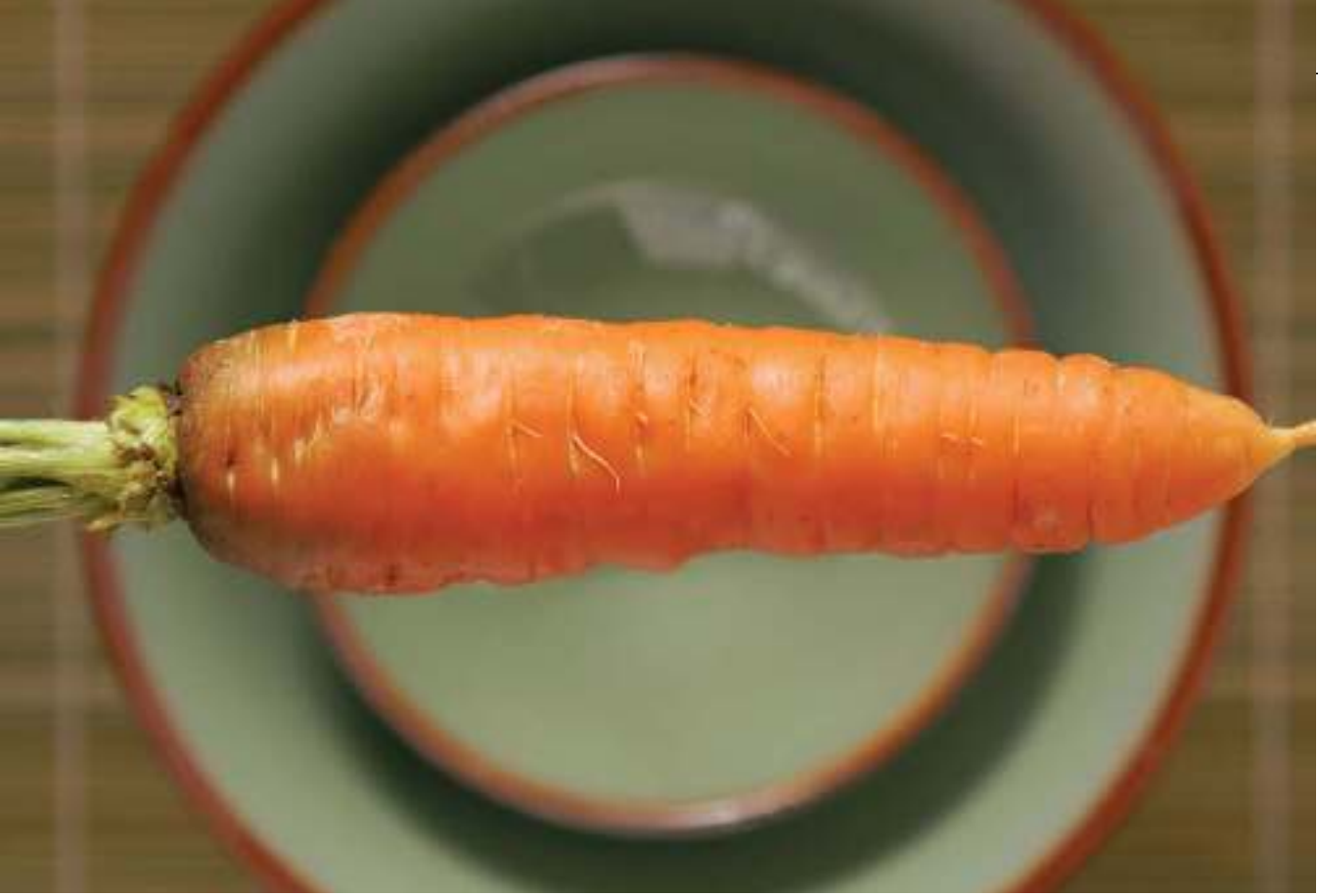
**DAVE HOFFMANN**  
*Basketball*



**DAVE HOFFMANN USED** a shipping tube to deliver a photograph that pops. To create this dramatic image Dave fired one flash straight down through a 15-inch cardboard shipping tube, creating a nice crisp spotlight feel on the basketball. This created a contrast from the hard light that put the lower end of the ball into near darkness, so Dave brought it back up by throwing a touch of fill at the bottom half of the ball from a snooted strobe low and upfront, so he wouldn't lose that spotlight effect.

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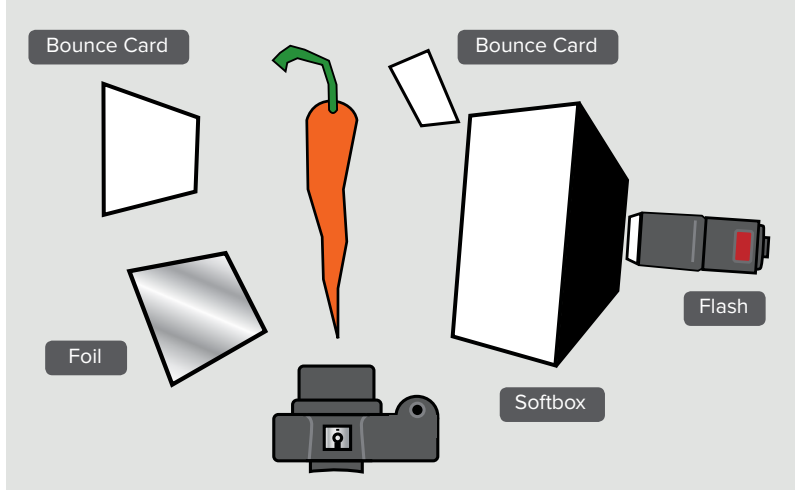
Photo © Dave Hoffmann



**MATTHEW G. MONROE**

*Magic Floating Organic Carrot*

**MR. MATTHEW G.** Monroe turned his boredom with the typical product shot into inspiration for the “The Magic Floating Organic Carrot.” By bringing the carrot away from the background and using a short depth of field, Matthew keeps your eye where he wants it. Just one flash lights the scene. Aimed into a softbox camera right, the light spreads out to hit the bounce cards and a piece of foil. The foil helps bring some snap to the bottom rim of the orange veggie by changing the quality of the light.



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