Landscapes & Light

How I saw the light
and embraced HDR

What is HDR?

HDR is short for High Dynamic Range. It's a post-processing method for taking a series of images, combining them, and adjusting the contrast ratios to do things that are virtually impossible with a single aperture and shutter speed.

Start with a typical scene…

and finish with this

Processing Methods

- **I.** 1-frame optimum exposure, normal post-processing

- **II.** 1-frame optimum exposure, plus software gradient

- **III.** 1-frame optimum exposure, external neutral density filter

- **IV.** 3-frame in-camera-processed HDR

- **V.** 5-frame bracket with HDR Software

Remember the Basics!

✦ Use a tripod, make sure it's stable

✦ Level the camera and frame the scene carefully

✦ Check if focus is where you wish it to be

✦ Use a remote trigger for the camera to avoid shake

✦ Prepare any extras such as ND gradient filters

✦ Lock up the mirror if you have one or use live view

Method I.
Single-Frame optimum exposure

✦ Make a test exposure

✦ Check the histogram

✦ Adjust the exposure, if necessary

✦ Make another test exposure, if necessary

✦ When the histogram is correct, make final exposure

✦ Repeat as necessary if the scene changes

Optimum Histogram
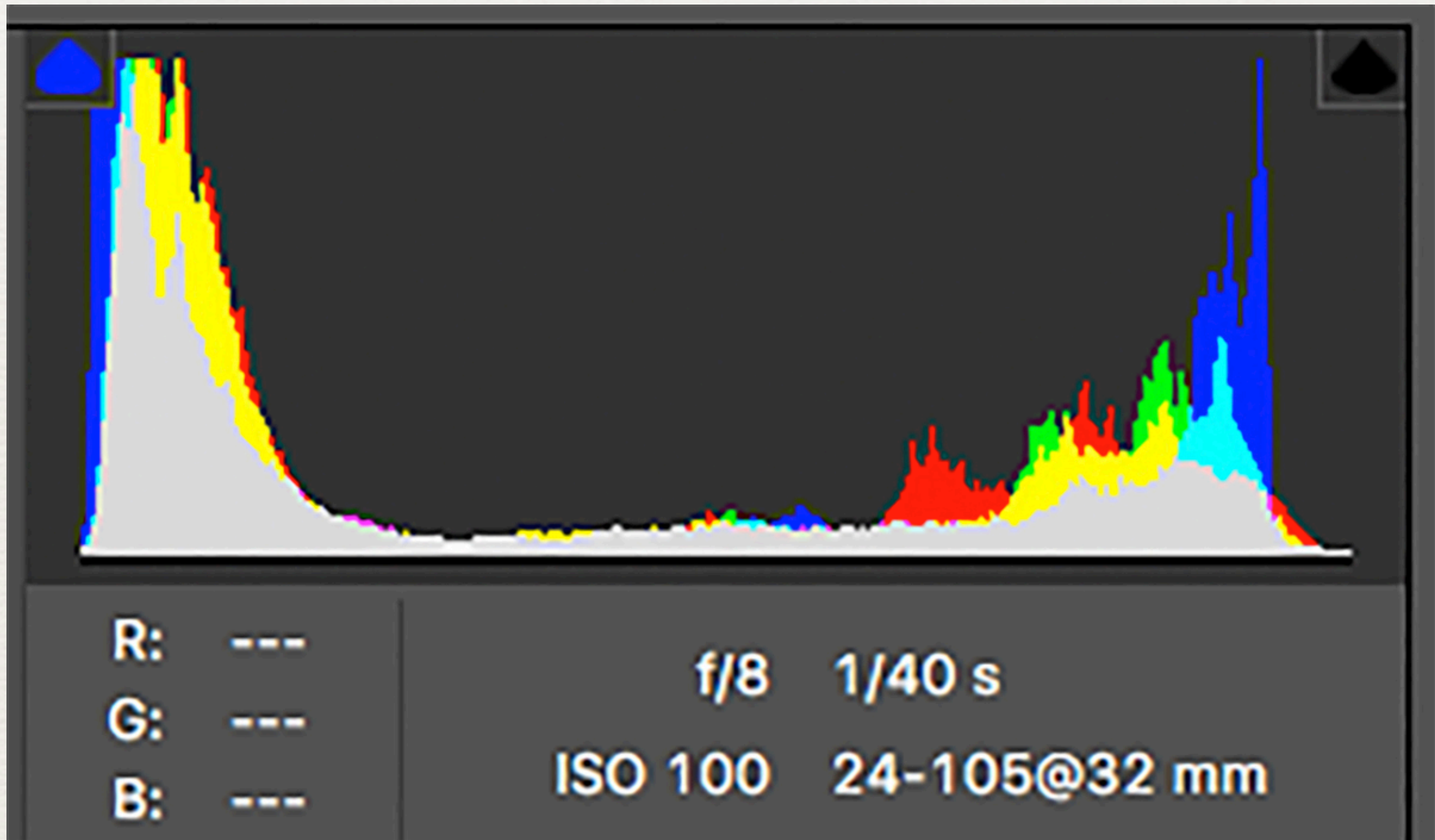
I. 1-Frame Optimum Exposure RAW

I. 1-Frame Optimum Exposure Processed

Method II.
Single-Frame Optimum Exposure
Plus Software Gradient

✦ Same except add gradient in post-processing

✦ **Plus:** Simple to do or undo

✦ **Plus:** Range of density, color and placement

✦ **Minus:** Leaves a dark bar across image

II. Software Gradient Filter
Photoshop ACR or Lightroom Develop

I. 1-Frame Optimum Exposure Processed

II. 1-Frame Optimum Exposure Processed Using Software Gradient

Method III.
Single-Frame Optimum Exposure w/External Neutral Density Gradient Filter

✦ **Plus:** Exposure balance visible while shooting

✦ **Minus:** Leaves a dark bar across the image

✦ **Minus:** It cannot be altered after exposure

Method III.
External Neutral Density Gradient Filter

III. Single-Frame Optimum Exposure Using External ND Gradient Filter

II. 1-Frame Optimum Exposure Processed with Software Gradient

Method IV.
3-Frame, In-camera-processed HDR

- **Plus:** Simple, easy, quick

- **Plus:** HDR image previews immediately

- **Plus:** No dark bar across image

- **Minus:** Image produced is JPEG, not RAW

- **Minus:** Scene may need more range

IV. 3-Frame In-camera-Processed HDR

III. 1-Frame Optimum Exposure w/Ext ND Gradient Filter

Method V.
5-frame bracket processed with HDR Software

✦ **Plus:** Usually captures full dynamic range

✦ **Plus:** Highlights show more color detail

✦ **Plus:** Complete bracket of scene available

✦ **Plus:** No dark bar across image

✦ **Minus:** Can take **lots** of time to process

V. 5-Frame Bracket Processed with HDR Software

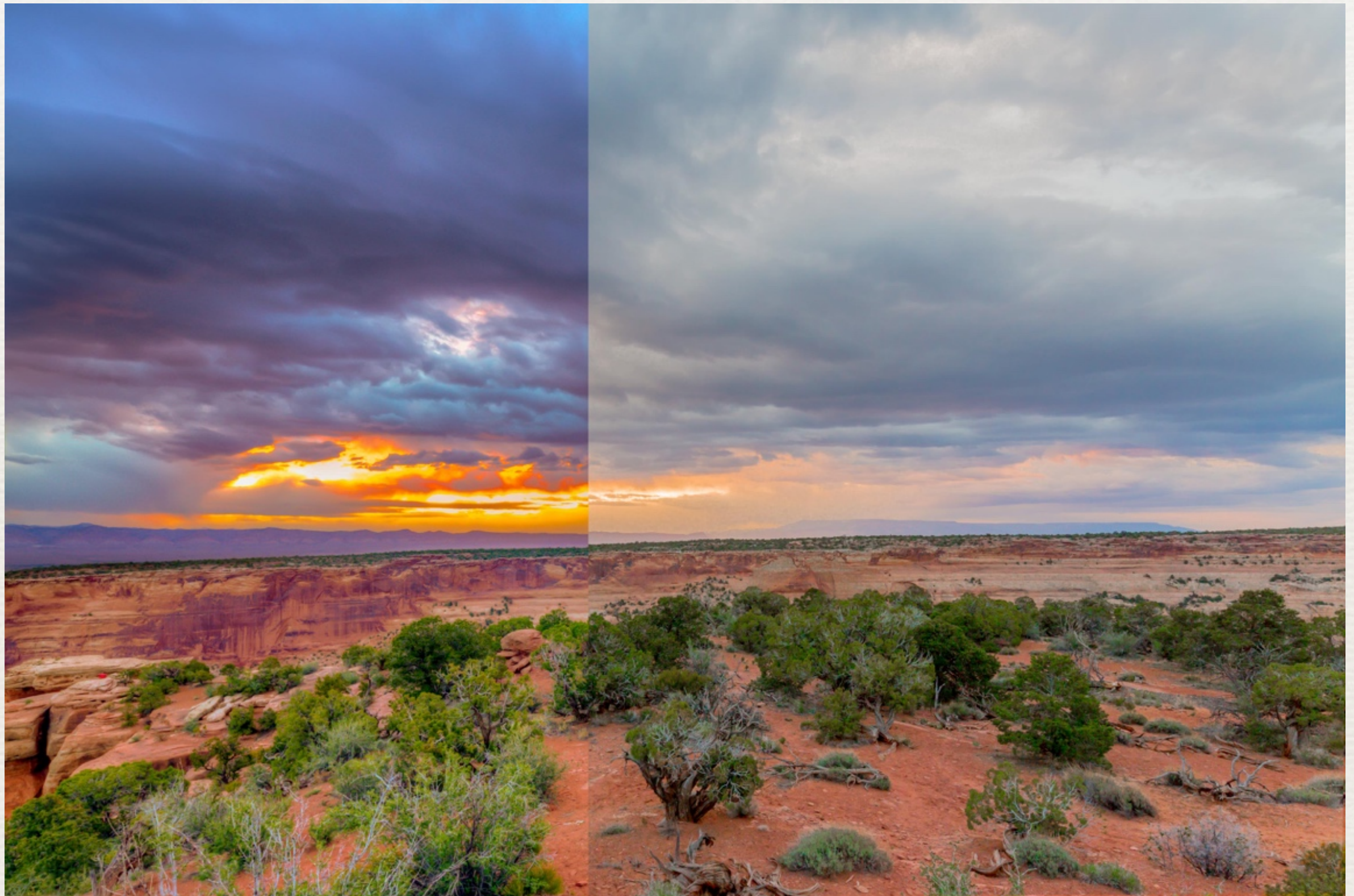# I. 1-Frame Optimum Exposure Processed

5-Frame HDR Sample

5-Frame HDR Sample

5-Frame HDR Sample

5-Frame HDR Sample

5-Frame HDR Sample

5-Frame HDR Sample