

Workflow 2026

It's a great common question, "What's your workflow?" The editing process, saying which you keep and which are deleted, as well as which are finished or not, it a vital part of our photography. It's how we grow so to me, doing it consistently is vital! I've often asked just how fast do I go through my images? A 4000 image air-to-air shoot shot in the afternoon will be by bedtime, edited, filed, renamed, keyword and backed up. I've always operated this way because I want to relive those visual stories as soon as I can and be able to share. It's just the way I'm wired.

How do I get through so many images so fast? There are two main factors, the first and key one is, I only take those images I like. This is really, really important. Second, I use computers to do what they do best, sort data. Here's how I go about dealing with images and thoughts you might consider incorporating in your workflow. Speed, quality and flexibility are a must in the whole process.

Workflow starts at the camera! Like I mentioned, I only take those photos I want. Shoot for the subject, finish for the light! The stories are captured as finished as possible at the time the camera goes click. Exposure, white balance, B&W or color, captured as finished as the camera can create and not left for to post to do. The camera has the greatest amount of data to work with, so use every single drop of data possible! Most importantly, all the "cropping" is done in camera with physical placement and lens selection. I wrap this all up in one word, craftsmanship. This makes the workflow so much faster and more rewarding. The speed in my workflow starts at the camera then in my case, the Z 9 / Z 8 / Zr. Inserted in them are [ProGrade 1.6TB Iridin CFExpress cards](#), cards I depend on and that have never let me down!

At the end of a shoot, I do a number of things. I start by removing cards from the cameras and placing them in [ProGrade Pro Card Caddy](#). Loosing track for camera/card or ingested/not ingested or worse, loosing card for a time (which has happened) is prevented with this simple tool. Then I launch [Photo Mechanic](#) before a card and/or reader is connected to the computer. I depend on the [ProGrade PG05.7 USB4](#) Dual Slot Reader, dang fast! With PM launched, I either plug in the loaded reader or push in the card and begin the Ingest process. PM automatically ingests when it recognizes the cards. ([All my PM Settings](#).) Photo Mechanic is the fastest DAM on the planet, period! It will Ingest (upload) the NeFs and display accurate thumbnails (based on the Raw & Instruction Set) so we see instantly exactly what I captured. Second, I put the batteries from the camera in a charger. Lastly, I check camera sensor and if needed, I clean it. Before I've all of done this, Photo Mechanic has ingested all the photographs, soft formatted the CFExpress Card and unmounted it so I can reinsert it back into the camera.

I'm a Mac guy with a MacBook Pro M2 for on the road and an iMac M4 back in the office. Both machines are loaded so they go as fast as a computer can go.

It's now time to sit down and go through the ingested photographs. I have created a [video with all my Photo Mechanic settings](#) that help me go as fast as I can. What you see at the top of this page is the Photo Mechanic light table and what it will look like when I'm finish with my sort. I start by selecting the very first image (top left corner), hit the Space Bar and then hit the F key twice. This makes the workspace fill with just the image. I want to see the image full screen and none of the text or filmstrip. With the workspace all set, the sort begins. For me it's real simple, if the image is sharp, I keep it and if it's not, it's deleted. With my right hand, index finger is on the delete key and the thumb is on the right arrow key. As fast as I can hit those two keys, I move through all the images. With a big shoot like an A2A, I use an [external keypad](#) for this process so as to not wear out the keypad on the MacBook. (I go fast and click with probably too much zeal!)

As I go through the Nefs, I often take a moment to finish an image or two. I encourage folks to do this. I might finish an image to see if I have a huge dust issue to deal with (normally an air-to-air shoot) or apply the finishing approach I thought about when I took the photograph. I will hit the ESC button (image was full screen, this brings PM back to light table) and with that image still selected, I hit Cmd+E which launches Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) where I do the lion share of finishing. If I finish an image and save it as a PSD, in PM I will hit the 1 key which gives the image a Red Tag. While going through the images I come across one I want to finish later, I hit the 2 key and tagging it with another color. When I'm done with the entire sort, I can bring up just the tagged images, so I know what I have finished and what I need to finish. Once all the images in that folder have been finished as PSDs, I tag them all by hitting the 1 key (Cmd+A then Cmd+1).

I save all the finished Nefs as PSDs. I save all my Nefs using PM to keep them organized. All the Nefs are organized into their assigned folders and each individual image having an unique Alpha Numeric number assigned which carries through from the Nef to the PSD. All the Nefs are stored on their own drives and those drives are all backed up on other drives. PSDs or the finished files are stored on other drives and those backed up to other drives. Finished PSDs are organized into their own folders such as Birds, Locations, Products, etc. To sort through and select my finished PSDs I use Adobe Bridge (not PM). I do this for many reasons all coming down to speed. Workflow for us is not only about getting the images captured, sorted and finished, but also getting them out to the client. Bridge is a fast portal to Photoshop and all that's needed, be it for editorial or prints, to the client fast.

At the end of the shoot and before I'm finish for the day, the drives are all backed up using SuperDuper. I use the [ProGrade Digital Pro Mini SSD | USB 4.0 \(PG10.5\)](#) drives on the road for my drives (screaming fast and small). The primary drive resides in my briefcase. The backup drive resides in my camera bag. Since the camera bag never leaves my side, I know that all those images I've captured are with me sorted, filed, numbered and finished. When I get back to the office, the primary drive is plugged in and the Nefs and PSDs are moved over to the main library which is backed up and the end of the process. And that's my basic workflow. Hope it helps!