

# The *Rf* Cookbook

By Christian Lalonde

## *Christian Lalonde's "Bill Kong"*

The whole idea for this image came about when speaking to Bill Hurter before heading down to Vegas for this year's WPPI. Bill mentioned that people were still having a good laugh at the image I did of him two years back during the 2006 convention. I had a thought—why not make a series out of this? Bill was in agreement. I wasn't too certain what I wanted to do, but I let him know that I would come up with something and that we could probably shoot it during my WPPI Plus Class. I figured it would also be interesting for the people attending the class to help with the project. As I pulled into Bally's, the idea for the image came to me.

Why not do a rendition of King Kong, but with Bill? I thought it would be very fitting since this was our last year at Bally's.

After explaining my intentions to those in my class, everyone agreed to help me with the project. All that was left to do was to pitch the idea to Bill.

After the first day of class the group and I went out to shoot the background scene. We set up in front of Bally's and found the perfect angle. To start, I had some of the "student" stand-ins turn back and react as if they were watching Bill rip someone off the sidewalk. (Little did I know that someone was going to be me!) The student-actors did so well that you can imagine bystanders' confusion when they saw this happening in front of the hotels. A small crowd even started to gather. At that point I figured it would be best to do a long exposure to get rid of as many bystanders as possible. With people moving through a long exposure, they wouldn't be visible. I had one person hold a Nikon SB-800 Speedlight to freeze one student in the shot and proceeded to drag the camera shutter for four seconds at f/11. This gave me the exact result I was looking for.

Bring on Bill Kong.

The next day, before Bill arrived to do his part, the class and I set up our lights using Jim Morton from Dyna-Lite as our stand-in model. We used Dyna-Lite heads and packs to act as our main lights and small Nikon SB-800 Speedlights to create little accents.



Since we were 20 or more people in a small hotel suite, we did a lot of improvising, especially when it came to the background. We used a bedcover taped to one of the walls to give us as clean a background as possible. The main light was a Dyna-Lite head with



a Mola beauty dish mounted on it. This light was gelled with a tungsten-to-daylight filter to give us a blue cast (to mimic the light from the sky). A second Dyna-Lite was positioned to the right of Bill, this one gelled with a tungsten filter to give a warm cast, creating the light coming from the Eiffel Tower. We then added a Nikon SB-800 Speedlight very close-up and to the left to create the warm light coming from the Bally's sign to the side of Bill's head. Again this was gelled with a warm filter. Another SB-800 was added close to Bill's free hand, imitating the light from the columns on the sidewalk. I also used several Liteshapers and warm-gelled Nikon strobes to bounce light back into certain areas that were very shadowed as well as the Liteshaper Gobo and stand to block off some of the lights that were flaring the lens.



The initial idea was to have Bill grab someone by the pants—that someone quickly became me! Of course, I was happy to do it. I figured it would make the image event even funnier. We did some modifications to our lighting setup in order to replicate the light from the outside sidewalk location and I painfully balanced myself on a chair and put on my best “scared” expression.

All the images were captured on a Nikon D2X with a Sigma 15–30mm lens directly into a Mac Powerbook. Once the final RAW images were selected and converted, I then spent a little time “cutting out” Bill in Photoshop and making him fit into the image.

I did the same to fit my image into his fingers. After a bit more cleaning up, some burning, dodging and retouching, the image was done. Copies of the image were printed on the spot using an Epson 2400 printer and Moab Entrada BW 300gsm 13x19 paper. I handed out a copy to each person in the class and of course to Bill Hurter, or should I say Bill Kong! He was ecstatic when he saw the result.

Thanks again, Bill, for putting up with my “you have to look a bit angry” and a big thanks to everyone who helped out on the shots! I can't wait to see what we come up with next year!

## INGREDIENTS

- Camera: Nikon D2X
- Lens: Sigma 15–30mm
- Computer: 15-inch Mac Powerbook
- Main lights: Dyna-Lite M1000wi packs with 1015 Mini heads
- Main light modifier: Mola beauty dish
- Accent lights: Nikon SB-800 Speedlights
- Trigger: PocketWizard Radio Slave
- Other: Liteshaper kits, Liteshapers Gobo and stand, Photolux Filter kits
- Printer: Epson Photo Stylus Pro 2400
- Paper: Moab Entrada BW 300gsm 13x19 paper
- Background/props: Bally's bedcover and chair