Severe Weather Photography

2nd Amateur Meteorologists Conference - 15th September 2013

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Why & Where?

- Photography is our hobby
- Love of nature
- It’s our holiday
- US storms
- Tornado Alley
- Mid May to early June
Equipment

- Car
- Cameras
- Tripods / bean bags
- Wide angle lenses
- Laptops
- Compact cameras
- Timers / remote controls
- GPS, Radar via satellite and Mobile Internet

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Wide Angle Lenses

- Needed to capture the scale of storms
- Typically fast lenses for a dark subject
- More forgiving of movement / vibrations
- Hardly ever take them off the camera!
Benefit of Wide Angle

24mm (full frame)
Benefit of Wide Angle
Using ISO

• Useful tool when light is low and colours are varied
• Need to balance shutter speed and grain
• Even latest kit isn’t forgiving in low light
• Stick to 100 when dark / flat colours
Using ISO

Taken with 800 ISO on Canon 5d Mk III
Focus

- Hard in low light and flat subjects
- Mostly need to keep it on infinity
- When possible use ground and auto focus lock
- When dark take photos and use preview
- Don’t be complacent!
Timelapse

• A good way to convey the energy of storms
• Able to apply standard SLR tools
• Use fully manual setup
• Options for timing – 2, 3 or 5 seconds, consider how long you’re likely to be in a place
Tornadoes

• Rare and often brief
• The key target of many chases
• Unpredictable
Tornadoes
Hail

- Driving hazards
- Green hail core
- Still striving for the hailstone shot!
Hail
Lightning

• Dangers / mitigations
• Luck
• Metering challenges
Lightning
Mammatus

- Often observed in more peaceful moments
- Hard to frame in photos as often dark
Mammatus

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• Typically best from South East of storm
• In the thick of it versus staying at a distance
Structure
Structure
Post Production

• Storage issues – thousands of photos!
• Selecting the best
• Tinker on the day, complete at home
• Photo manipulation
• Photo enhancement
• Tools (Lightroom / Photoshop)
Photo Manipulation

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Photo Enhancements
Photo Enhancements
Photo Enhancements

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Weather Studios

- Full catalogue
- Last 3 years
- Blog
- Digital Images
- Framed prints
- Support
  - RMetS
  - The Weather Club