

Scott  
Kelby's  
9th Annual

Gonzo  
Holiday  
Gear  
Guide

**W**elcome to my "9th Annual Gonzo Holiday Gear Guide" (yes, last year I brought the "Gonzo" back after a brief break because just calling it a "Holiday Gear Guide" lacked that certain, I dunno, "gonziness.") So, I now bring you my "Gonzo Holiday Gear Guide" whose light burns brighter than a thousand suns (insert dramatic pause here), featuring an unbridled collection of 100% absolutely necessary gear that there's no way we can see clear to live another minute of our hopeless, desperate lives without. (I gotta tell ya, you have to search far and wide to find any holiday gear guide that uses the terms "hopeless" and "desperate" in the opening paragraph, which is more irrefutable proof that this guide truly stands alone.)

Before we get to the list, remember that the holidays aren't about which gifts you get. They're about how many gifts you get, and the person who dies with the most gifts wins. (By the way, you can now add "dies" to "hopeless" and "desperate," making this the most riveting of all gear guides ever!) Also, to make things easy, we put up a webpage ([www.scottkelby.com/14gear](http://www.scottkelby.com/14gear)) with direct links to all the products I picked so you don't have to wonder if you're getting the exact right one. Okay, folks, watch your Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzung, because here we go!

## The Rules

These are my self-imposed guidelines for which products make it into the guide. It's just two rules actually. First, to be listed here they have to be products that I use myself, and that I absolutely love, and now can't live without (well, I could live without them, but I wouldn't want to). Second, if a product makes the guide, it has to be one I would recommend to a close friend without hesitation, especially if my friend is a personal injury attorney (kidding).

### Gear Guide Categories

In sacred Gonzo tradition, I'm breaking things into three distinct categories:

**Stocking Stuffers:** You can also use these as actual holiday gifts if you're not that crazy about the person.

**Great Value Gear:** Stuff that's a really good deal for not a lot of money, but he or she will totally dig it.

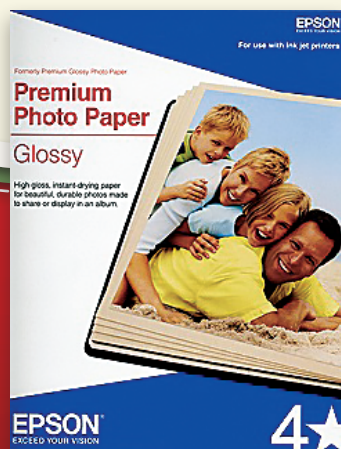
**Cha-chíng!** Stuff you buy for the doctor/petroleum engineer/rap mogul on your holiday gift list. This is the stuff that makes them burst into spontaneous tears of joy. Well, at least I would.

## Stocking Stuffers

### Really Nice Photo Paper

If the photographer on your holiday list has a printer, this is a gift she will truly love because you can never have enough paper (or ink for that matter). Recently, I saw some absolutely beautiful papers from Freestyle Photographic Supplies when I was at Photoshop World in Vegas. You can get an Epson Premium Photo Paper Glossy for \$11.99. Sweet!

[www.freestylephoto.biz](http://www.freestylephoto.biz) Price: Starting at around \$11.99



### Remote Shutter Release (Wireless or Wired)

This is one of those gifts that every photographer at one time or another will need, but it's one of the last things we think to buy, which is what makes it such a great gift. You'll need to know the make and model of his camera so you get the right type of connector. Prices start at around \$18 for a Nikon or Canon wireless release. Sadly, the better DSLR he has, the more the cable release that works for that camera costs, so just hope he has a lower-end model.

[www.bhphotovideo.com](http://www.bhphotovideo.com)

Price: Starting at around \$18







## Spare Battery

I love this stocking stuffer because even if he has a spare battery, he would still love another one. It's one of those can't-go-wrong stocking stuffers. They're usually fairly inexpensive (from around \$40–60), unless of course, he has a high-end camera like a Canon EOS-1Dx (\$165) or a Nikon D4s (\$149), in which case this gift may test the limits of your friendship. Just sayin'.

[www.bhphotovideo.com](http://www.bhphotovideo.com)

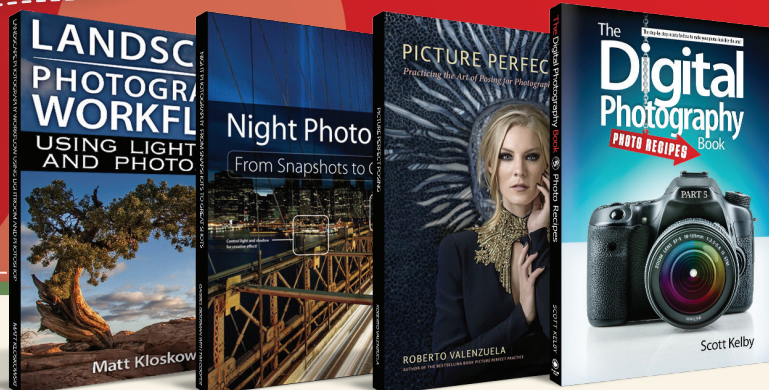
Price: Starting at around \$40

## Collapsible Rubber Lens Hood

This is a really great stocking stuffer because your photographer will love it. They're awesome because they save space while protecting her lens from damage and lens flare, and it looks like it costs a lot more than it did. They start at \$4.95. Of course, the price depends on the size of her lens measured in millimeters. For example, a typical 70–200mm lens uses a 77mm size lens hood, which is still only \$19.95 at B&H Photo if you buy the B+W brand, and less than half that if you buy the General Brand lens hood.

[www.bhphotovideo.com](http://www.bhphotovideo.com)

Price: Starting at \$4.95



## Some Cool Books

He will love *Night Photography: From Snapshots to Great Shots* by Gabriel Biderman and Tim Cooper (around \$16 on Amazon), or how about Matt Kloskowski's awesome eBook *Landscape Photography Workflow Using Lightroom and Photoshop* for \$9.99 on Amazon. (It's an eBook for Kindle or the Kindle app on your tablet or smartphone.) Hey, he might like my new book, part 5 of my *The Digital Photography Book* series (just \$15.80 on Amazon in print or \$9.99 for the eBook version), or if you want to splurge a little (and he shoots portraits), get him *Picture Perfect Posing* by Roberto Valenzuela (around \$30 at Amazon).

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Price: Starting at \$9.99

## Great Value Gear



## Macphun Tonality Pro

The king of black-and-white conversion plug-ins had always been Nik Software's Silver Efex Pro (now part of the Nik Collection by Google), and it's still a great plug-in, but there may be a new king in town. Macphun has created a killer black-and-white conversion tool at less than half of the price of buying the Nik Collection. The Pro version is \$69.99 and it totally kicks butt! If your photographer is into black and white, this will become her new tool of choice. (The only caveat is that it's Mac only, so make sure she uses a Mac first.)



<http://macphun.com> Price: \$69.99

## Think Tank Photo Airport Roller Derby

It's a four dual-wheel roller camera bag that she will absolutely go bonkers over! It holds a ton of gear, and it glides through the airport like it's on rails. Lots of room for lots of gear, and a very well-thought-out bag all the way around (plus, it fits in the overhead bin with no problem). However, fabulous eight-wheeled bags don't come cheap: it's around \$390. Give it to someone you love, or someone you want to love you who doesn't yet, but will after you give her this.

[www.thinktankphoto.com](http://www.thinktankphoto.com)

Price: \$389.75

## MagMod Modular Flash Modifiers

There are a lot of great flash modifiers out there, and MagMod is a new player in this market, but I gotta tell ya, their magnetic system of flash modifiers is so incredibly easy to use that you'll be a hero when the photographer on your list uses this system for the first time. The MagMod Basic Kit is \$89, which comes with the MagGrip, MagGrid, and MagGel (magnetic—it just pops on and off) but then you (or he) can buy accessories fairly inexpensively like \$19 for the Creative Gel Set or \$25 for the MagGel 2 Slot Kit. Cool stuff!

<http://magnetmod.com>

Price: Starting at \$89







## BlackRapid CURVE (RS-7) Strap

I learned about this strap about four years ago on one of my photo walks and I've been using one ever since. The strap wraps across the body (great for safety since a thief can't just grab it off your shoulder and take off), and the camera hangs upside-down at the side ready to slide up the strap and shoot at anytime. Really can't say enough about 'em. Around \$62 at B&H. Totally worth it.

[www.blackrapid.com](http://www.blackrapid.com)

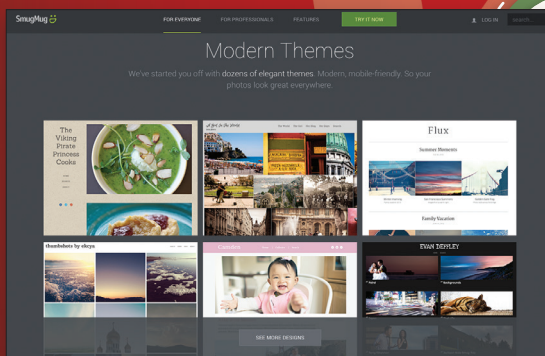
Price: \$61.95

## Cactus Wireless Flash Transceiver V5

These are so inexpensive it probably should have been listed under stocking stuffers, but don't let the low price fool you—these puppies work amazingly well. They're used for firing your flash or strobes wirelessly and they do a great job of it, even if they're not the prettiest wireless units out there. A set of two is around \$75 (and yes, he'll need two—one goes on top of his camera in the hot-shoe mount, the other attaches to the flash itself).

[www.cactus-image.com](http://www.cactus-image.com)

Price: \$74.95 for two



## SmugMug Portfolio

It's never been more important to have an online portfolio, and SmugMug's gorgeous, newly designed templates have taken the world by storm. If the photographer on your holiday list doesn't have an online portfolio yet (or if she does and she has dreamed of selling her work online), this is the ticket. Their Basic plan is just \$40 for a year—so get her a year plan. She'll love you for it!

[www.smugmug.com](http://www.smugmug.com)

Price: Starting at \$40/year



### 3 Legged Thing Punks – VVV Magnesium Alloy Tripod & Airhed

I started using one of these British tripods this year and I really love it, and the photographer on your gift list would totally love one, too! It makes an awesome travel tripod and it comes with a ballhead. It has reversible legs so it folds up really small, and it's super lightweight, but amazingly sturdy. B&H carries it for \$199. You'll get lots of love in return.

[www.3leggedthing.com](http://www.3leggedthing.com)

**Price: \$199**

### Battery Grip

This is one of those gifts that he will love you for forever because it's so handy, and it will make his camera look and feel more like a high-end pro camera. It also gives him a second battery holder and a shutter button for when he's shooting vertical. They start at around \$50 for a third-party grip, but if you buy a Nikon or Canon brand, expect to pay at least two to three times as much, so give the Vello brand at B&H a serious look. You'll be a holiday hero for this one!

[www.bhphotovideo.com](http://www.bhphotovideo.com)

**Price: Starting at \$49.95**



### MPiX Modern Metal Print

Want to really make a photographer lose her mind? Gift her one of her own images printed on metal—it's like seeing her image in HD for the first time. Just remarkable! (By the way, this isn't metallic paper; this is printing on actual metal.) MPiX rocks at these metal prints and you will rock for giving them. They start at \$33.99 for an 8x10 (the 12x18 is a good deal at \$59.99).

[www.mpix.com](http://www.mpix.com)

**Price: Starting at \$33.99**



Scott Kelby

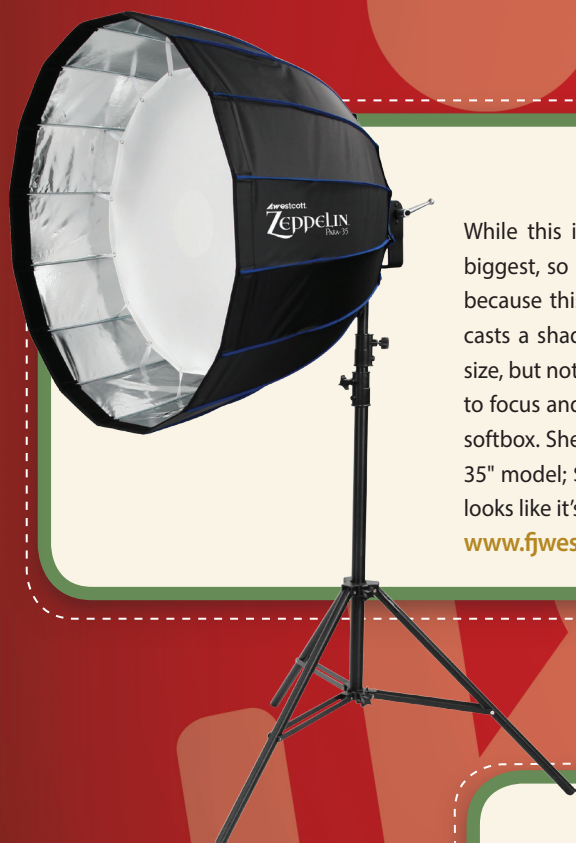




## B&H Gift Card

Not sure exactly what to get him? Yes you do. Get him a B&H Gift Card. I don't know anyone who doesn't want something from the greatest photo store on earth, plus this way he can get whatever he wants (within the limit of how much you put on the card, of course). You can order them directly from the B&H site. They send a card and a catalog so it looks pretty substantial.

[www.bhphotovideo.com](http://www.bhphotovideo.com) Price: Starting at \$20



## Westcott Zeppelin

While this isn't nearly the most expensive gift in this gear guide, it's the biggest, so it may have the most physical impact. It's quite properly named because this mammoth softbox will give you maximum impact as it slowly casts a shadow over the studio space. Okay, I may be overdramatizing the size, but not the impact. Through a clever design, this new softbox allows you to focus and shape the beautiful light by sliding the actual strobe inside the softbox. She will love you for it. Westcott Zeppelin lights cost \$399.90 for the 35" model; \$499.90 for the 47" model; and \$699.90 for the 59" model, which looks like it's the actual size of the Goodyear Blimp when you see it live.

[www.fjwestcott.com](http://www.fjwestcott.com)

Price: Starting at \$399.90

## Lightroom + Photoshop CC Photography Bundle

For around \$120, you can get her a one-year subscription to Adobe's Creative Cloud Photography Bundle where she'll get the latest versions of both Photoshop and Lightroom, plus Lightroom mobile (for iOS), as well as some other goodies. Love will rain down upon you for this gift!

<https://creative.adobe.com/plans/photography> Price: \$119.88



## Profoto B1 500 AirTTL

Every photographer who shoots studio strobes on location dreams of two things: working on location without hauling around a battery pack, and shooting Profoto gear. The new Profoto B1 500 AirTTL fills both dreams at once because the battery is built into the sleek body (so no hauling a separate battery pack around). Profoto is the cream of the crop for performance, and they're gear is built like a tank (which is why most rental houses offer Profoto as their main line). But the price of the B1 500 AirTTL isn't for just anyone at \$1,995—definitely for pros or for the Wall Street insider on your holiday gift list.

<http://profoto.com>

Price: \$1,995

Cha-Ching!

## Synology NAS (Network Attached Storage) Backup

This is a very important and powerful gift because this will house your holiday photographer's entire photo collection in a safe, rock-solid storage system (the same one I use myself), plus it will give her access to her images no matter where she is (via the Web). I've been looking for a kick-butt backup and archive system for years, and this is the one! A totally mind-blowing gift. Use their NAS Selector to find out which one is right for the photographer on your list. This may be one gift where you tell them up front, "I'm getting you a Synology NAS," so you get the right one for her needs (and the outpouring of unconditional love may start before the actual holiday does).

[www.synology.com](http://www.synology.com)

Price: Starting at around \$380



## Canon EOS 7D Mark II

I know I've been something of a cheerleader for this camera since Canon announced it in late September, but it's because I think Canon did something really special with this camera aimed at sports and wildlife shooters. They put pro specs into an affordable camera body, so you no longer need to have NFL-sideline-quality gear just to get great photos of your kids' high school sporting events. With 10 frames per second, a 20.2-megapixel sensor, and much improved high-ISO noise performance over the older 7D that it replaces, I think it's an amazing camera at a brilliant price. He will follow you around like a puppy for the rest of his life if you buy him this.

[www.usa.canon.com](http://www.usa.canon.com)

Price: \$1,799





## Tamron 28-300mm f/3.5-f/6.3 Di VC PZD (for Full-Frame DSLRs)

This is the lens I use as my all-around travel photography lens. It's lightweight, compact in size, and you can't beat the price as far as value goes. Will it be the sharpest lens in his bag? Nope. Will it be the lens he turns to again and again because it covers everything from wide-angle to super-telephoto? Yes it will. Will you be showered with affection for giving a lens as a gift? Yes you will.

<http://www.tamron-usa.com>

Price: \$849

## DJI Phantom 2 Vision+ Copter

The popularity of these DJI copters is exploding because, quite simply, they let your camera fly in the air for stills or video, and photographers have absolutely flocked to them in the past year. This isn't just photography, this is fun! It's \$1,229 with a spare battery, and it's worth every single penny. This may be the coolest gift ever.

[www.dji.com](http://www.dji.com)

Price: \$1,229



## A One-Year KelbyOne Membership

Wanna give him a gift that he'll remember all year long? How about world-class online training on everything from Photoshop to Lightroom to photography? It's \$249 for an entire year (with 24/7 access to literally thousands of lessons), or just \$25 a month. Not only will he love you for it, so will I.

<http://kelbyone.com>

Price: \$249/year; \$25/month

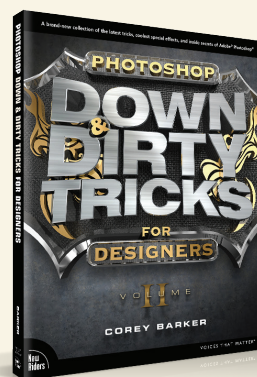
Stuff  
From  
Us

## Corey Barker's Photoshop Down & Dirty Tricks for Designers, Volume II

The name says "for designers," but since just about every project in the entire book starts with a photo, it's really a special effects book for designers, photographers, or anybody who wants to learn how to create amazing effects in Photoshop.

<http://kelbyone.com>

Price: \$33.99



## Treat Her to a Seminar

Buying someone a ticket to one of these full-day seminars would make an awesome gift. My "Shoot Like a Pro" tour, Matt Kloskowski's tour for learning Lightroom, or Joe McNally's "The Power of One Flash" tour are among the choices.

<http://kelbyone.com>

Price: Starting at \$89; \$79 per person for groups of five or more

## Treat Him to Photoshop World Vegas

Give him a full conference pass to the Photoshop World Conference & Expo. It's a three-day Photoshop, Lightroom, and photography love-fest. If you buy it for him now, you can get \$100 off with the Early Bird discount. If you want to get a one-day pass instead, it's just \$249.

<http://photoshopworld.com>

Price: Starting at \$599

