

Derek Doar's

Photography and Photoshop



PHOTOSHOP TUTORIAL 17

How to Add a Graduated Filter in Adobe Camera Raw (Photoshop CC 2014)

When taking landscape images it is often found that the dynamic range of the sky and the land is too great to be captured by the camera.

Therefore the photographer has to put a Neutral Density Graduated Grey filter in front of the lens to bring down the brightness range of the sky to within the range that the camera can capture without the highlights in the sky burning out.

One downside of doing this is that a range of expensive ND Grey Grads are needed to cope with different sky brightness conditions.

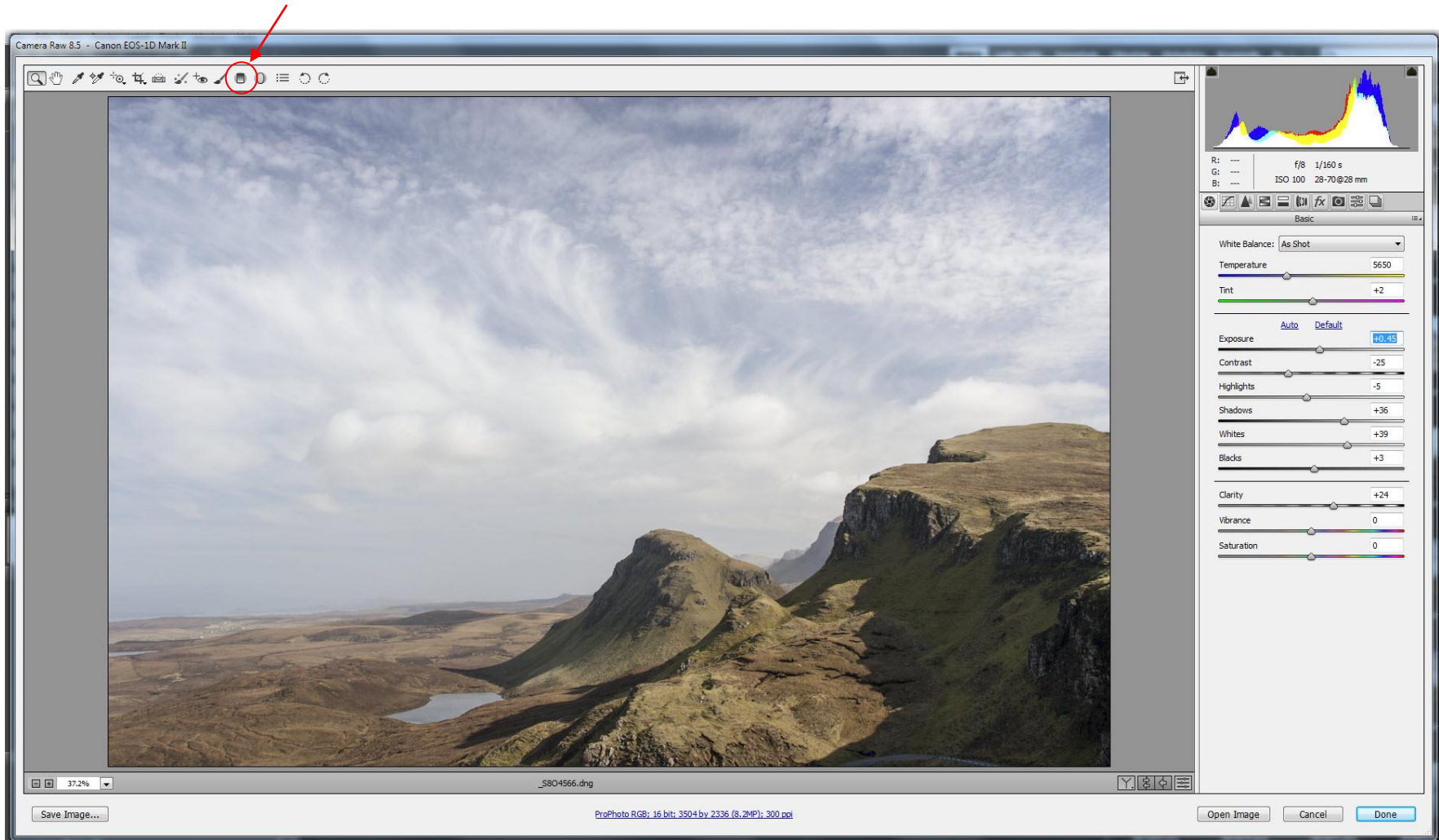
Another downside of using ND Grey Grads is that very often, parts of the image that does not need darkening, such as hilltops are darkened by these grads.

The modern way of dealing with a high dynamic range situation is to take a set of bracketed images which captures the entire dynamic range of the image and to produce a single HDR image from the bracketed set of images.

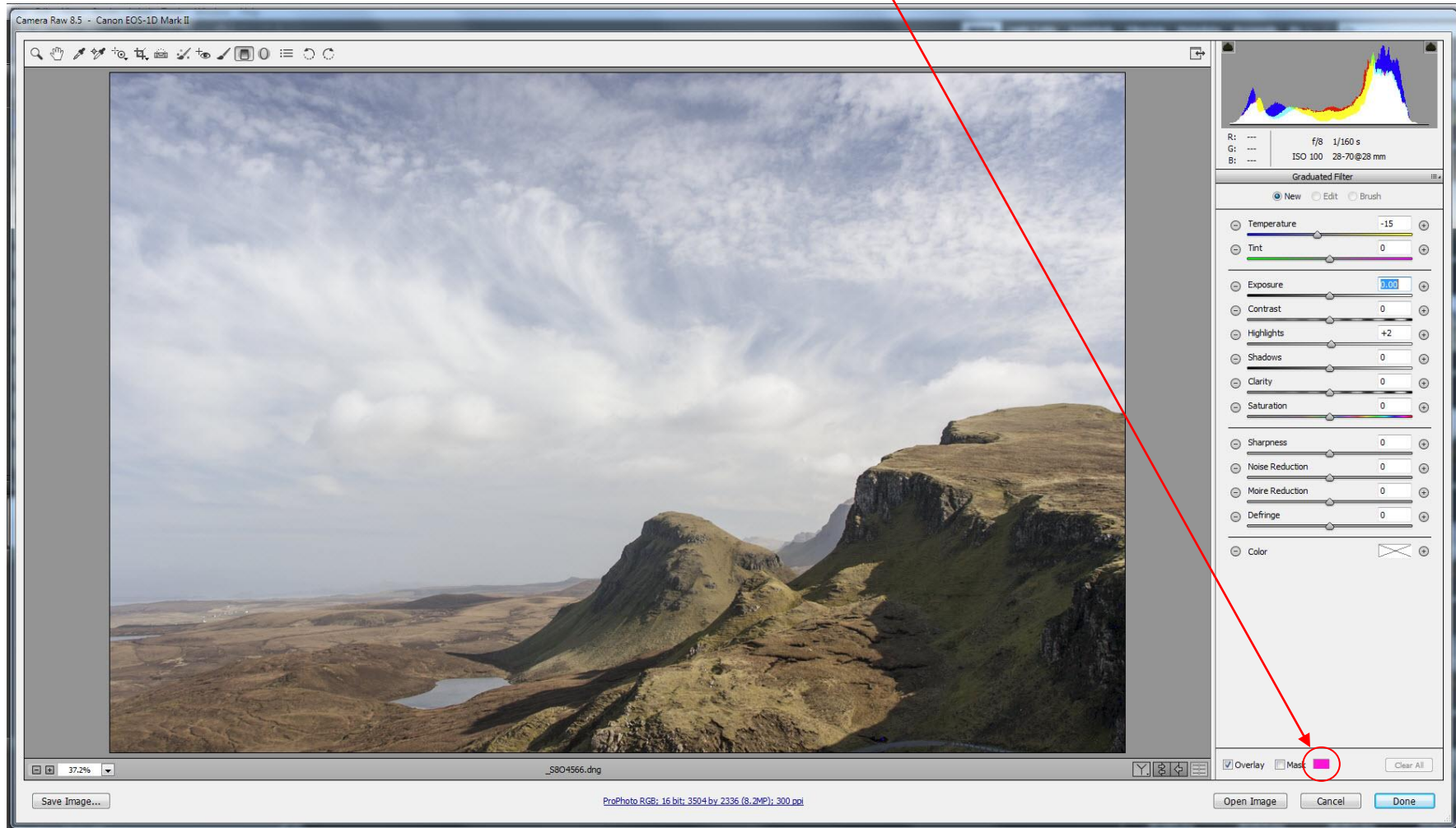
Good images can be produced this way and without the need to carry any ND Graduated Grey Filters around with you, but one downside is that flat looking images can very often result, even though all the information in the highlight and shadow areas has been captured.

The flat looking images can be easily corrected the addition of a graduated filter applied in Adobe Camera Raw.

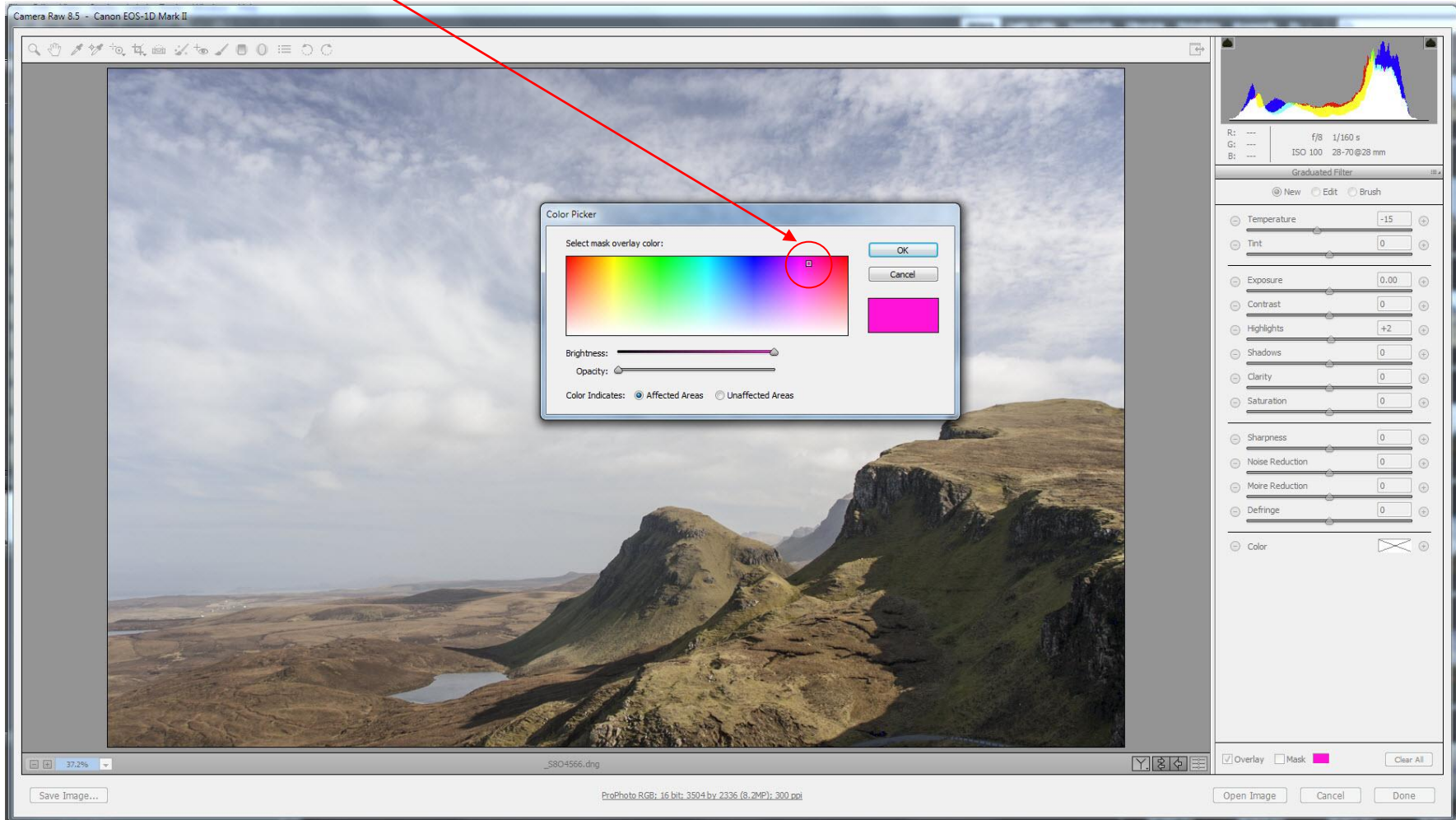
1. Here is my start image in Adobe Camera Raw, with all the processing done to my taste, but I now need to add a Graduated Filter
Select the **Graduated Filter Tool**



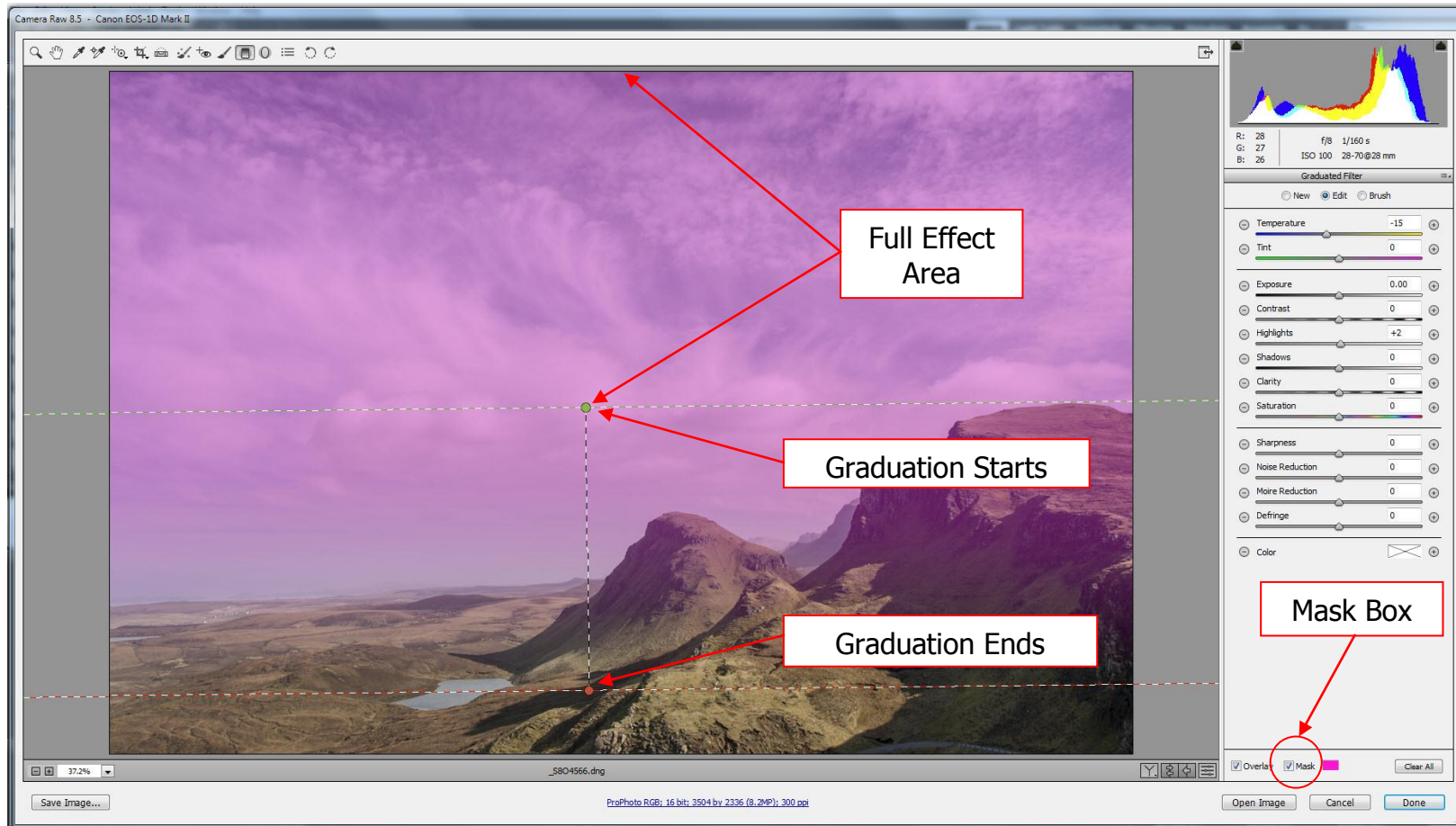
2. You will now see the Graduated Filter Menu. Click on the mask overlay color Box.



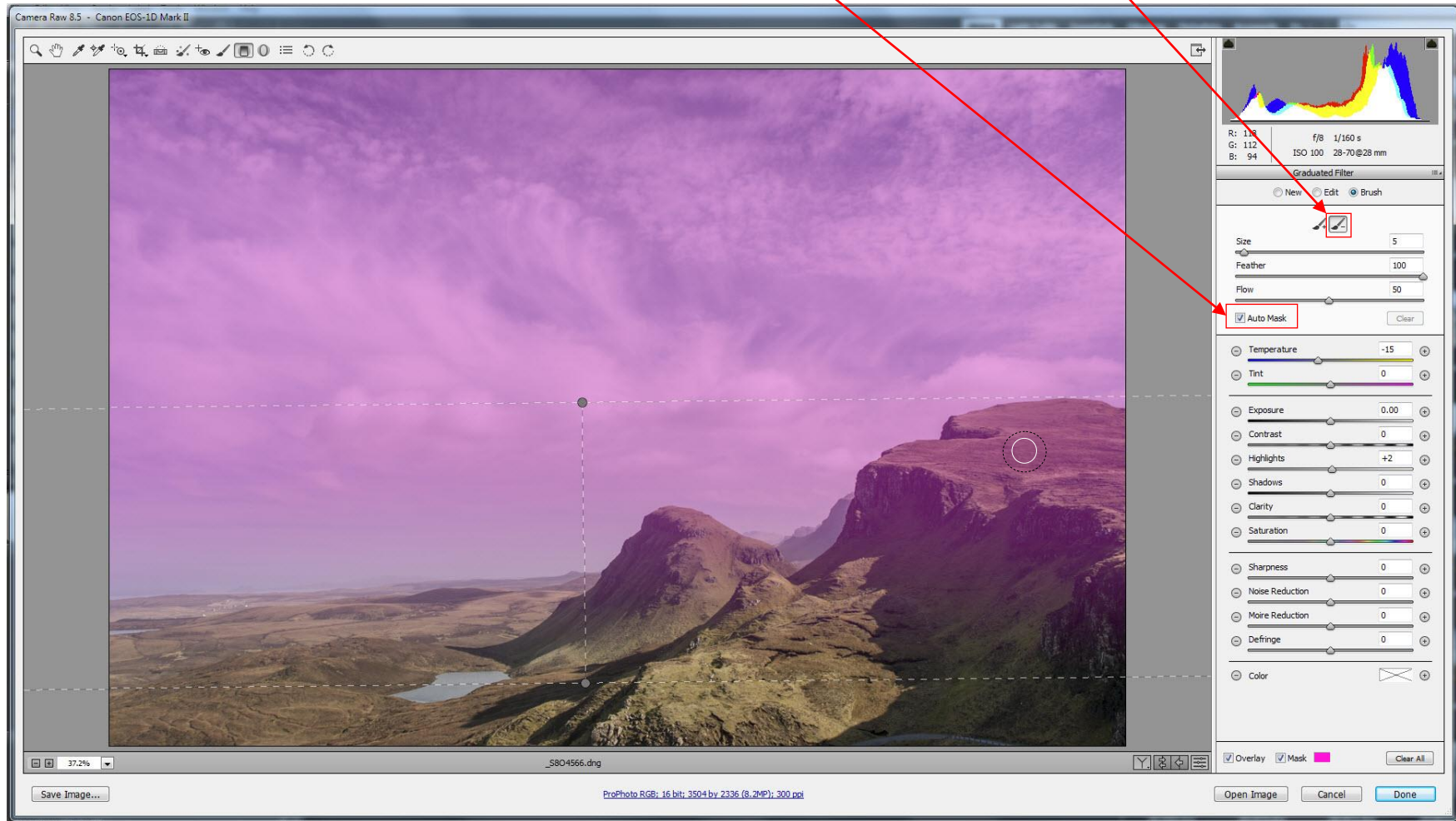
3. Select a Mask Overlay Color, brightness and Opacity that suits the image and can be easily seen. In this case I have selected pink.



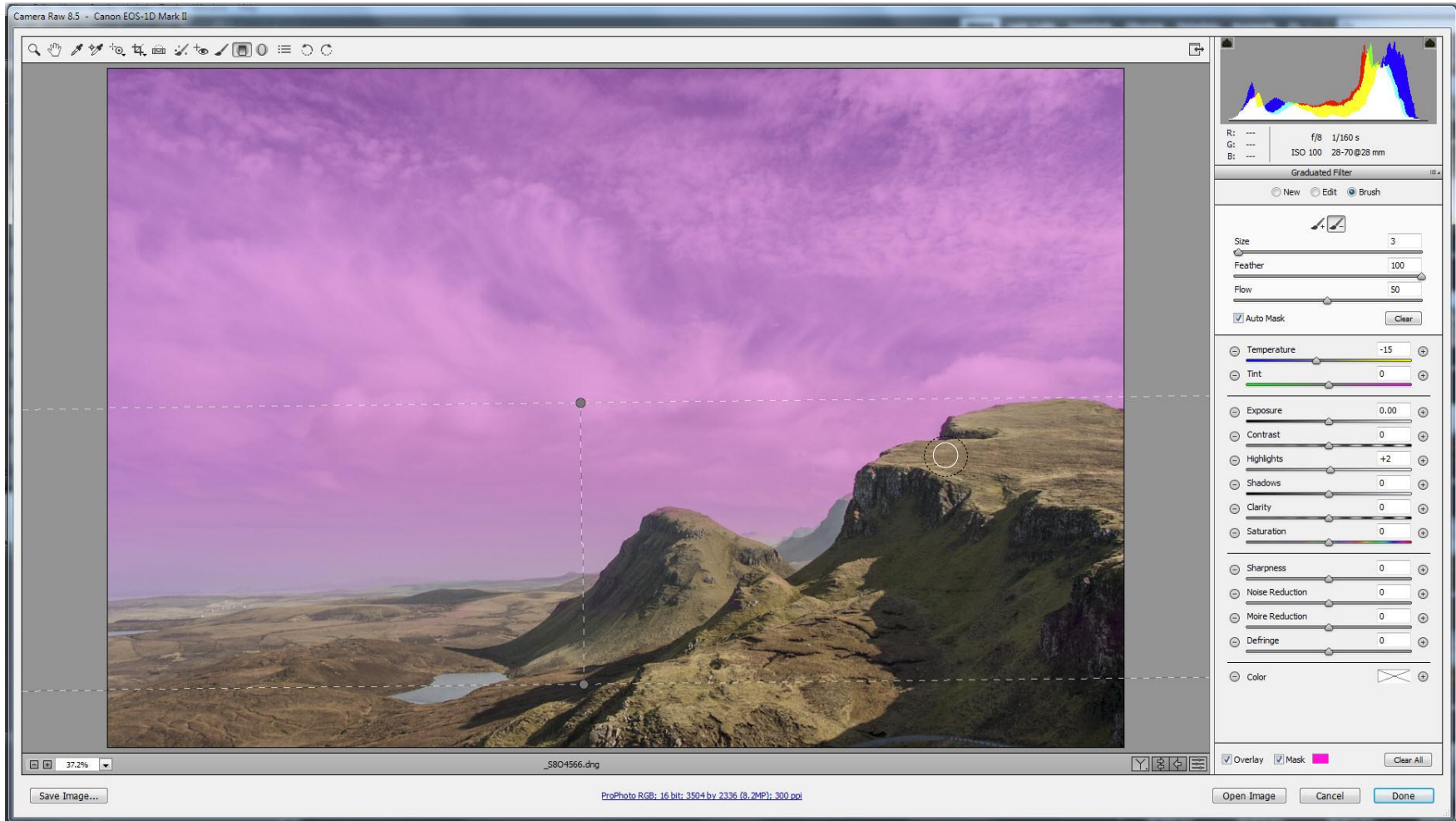
4. Tick the mask box, and then click on the image where you want the full effect of the mask to finish by holding down the left mouse button and drag down to where you want graduation to end.
(If you hold down the Shift key it will keep the mask level)
You will notice that the graduated portion extends into the hills, but this is where we are going to modify the mask to stop any effect applied from affecting the hills.



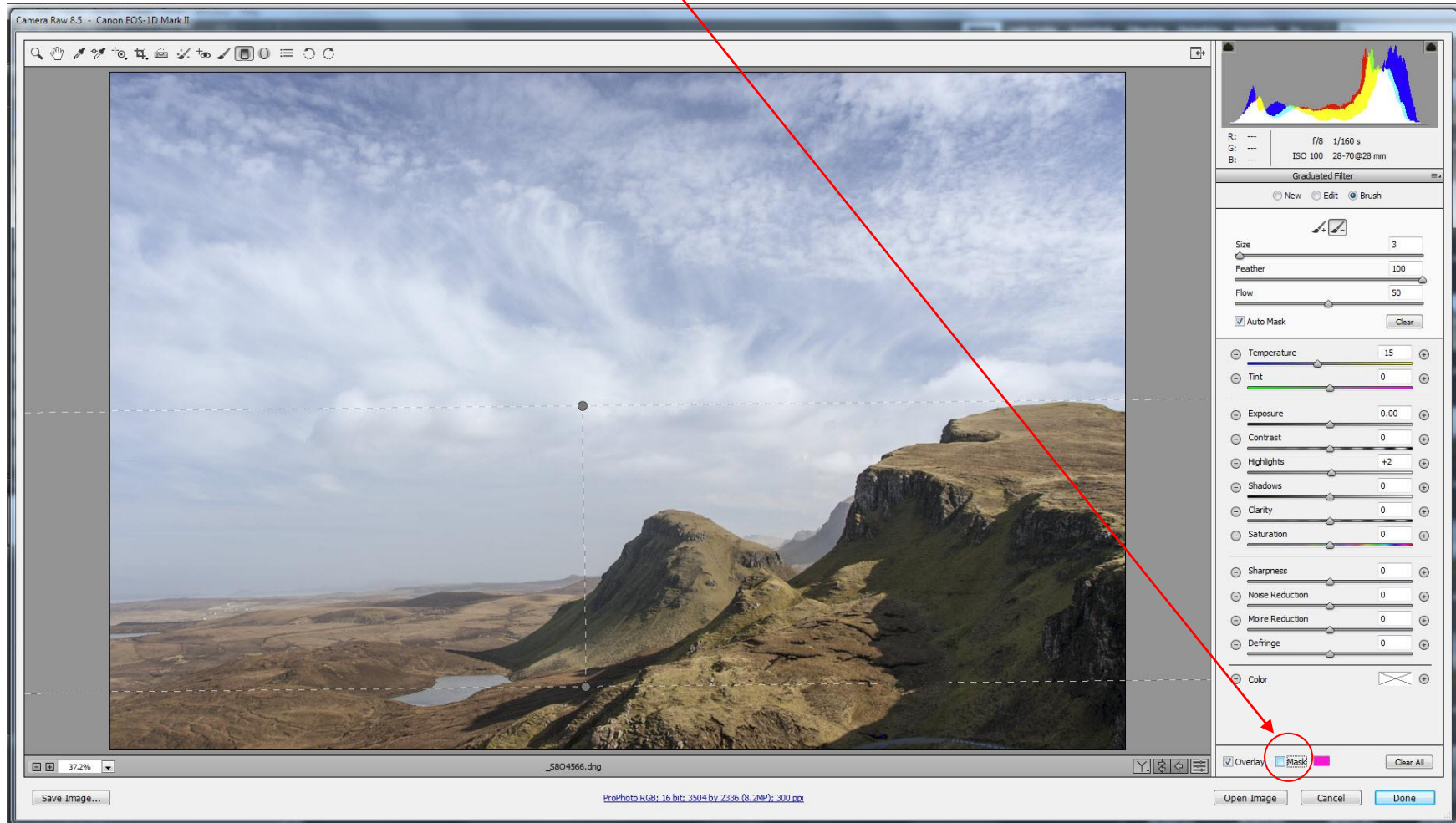
5. Select Brush and alter Size and Feather to suit, then tick the Auto Mask, Then tick on the minus brush.



6. Erase the parts of the mask where you do not want the image to be affected (in this case, the hills)
If you erase too much, just select the plus brush and draw the mask back in.
The pink mask area is the area that you are about to change.



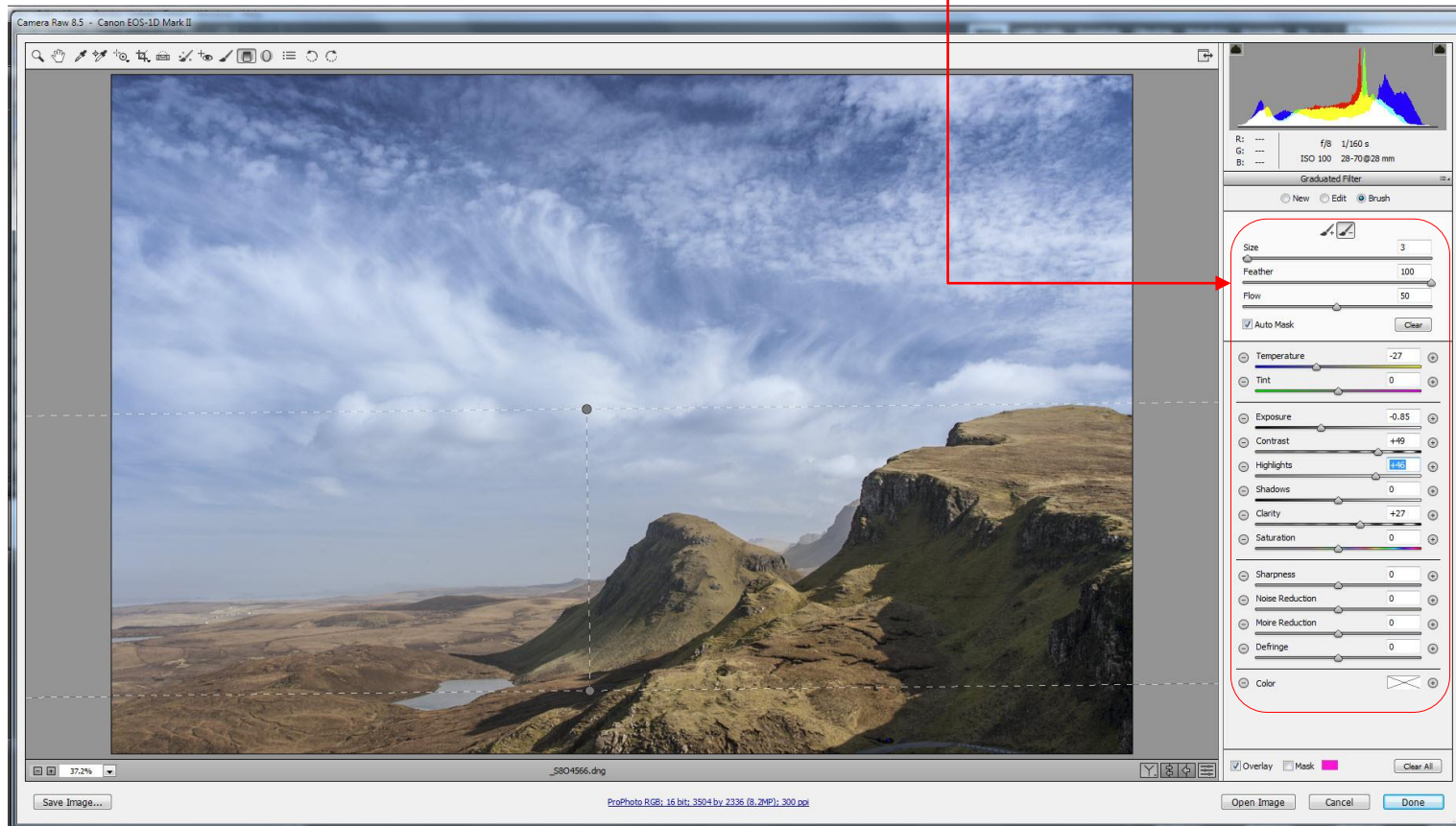
7. Switch off the completed mask by un-ticking the mask box which will now allow you to see any changes that you make to the mask area.



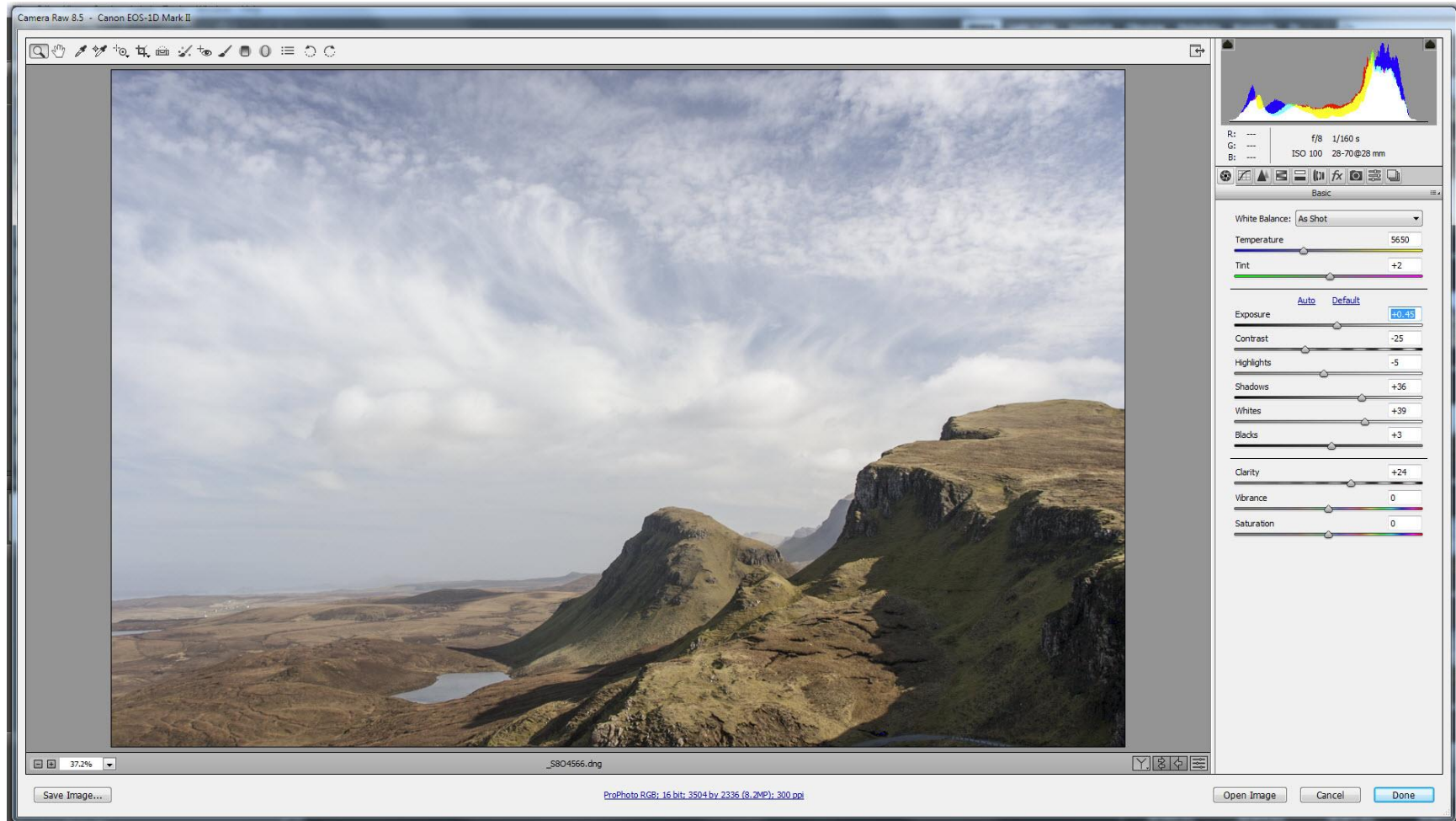
8. I have now made changes to the mask area, which you can see below.

In this Case:

- Temperature: -27 to make the sky bluer.
- Exposure: -0.85 to make the area darker.
- Contrast: +49 to increase sky contrast.
- Highlights: +46 to brighten the highlights.
- Clarity: +27 to increase mid tone sky contrast.



Before



After

Camera Raw 8.5 - Canon EOS-1D Mark II

Graduated Filter

Temperature: -27
Tint: 0
Exposure: -0.85
Contrast: +49
Highlights: +16
Shadows: 0
Clarity: +27
Saturation: 0
Sharpness: 0
Noise Reduction: 0
Moire Reduction: 0
Defringe: 0
Color: [X]

Size: 3
Feather: 100
Flow: 50
Auto Mask: [checked]

Save Image... ProfPhoto RGB; 16 bit; 3504 by 2336 (8.2MP); 300 ppi

Open Image Cancel Done

The image was captured in a bracketed HDR set and has therefore retained excellent sky detail

The image was processed using Photoshop Merge to HDR Pro (32bit) and tone mapped in Adobe Camera Raw. Whilst still in Adobe Camera Raw, I have modified the sky non-destructively by using the Graduated filter.

See my Tutorial 19

**Merge to 32 bit HDR Pro in Photoshop CC
and manually complete the Toning in Adobe Camera Raw**

I do hope that you found this tutorial useful.

Derek Doar

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