



PHOTOJOURNALISM PROFESSOR TURNS INVENTOR TO DO AWAY WITH UGLY FLASH PICTURES

New pop-up flash attachment eliminates red eye, harsh shadows, uneven and unnatural lighting for interior photos. “I hate looking at ugly flash photos,” says Professor Ken Kobre.

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San Francisco -- Professional photographer, author and photojournalism professor are just three of the titles used to identify Ken Kobre.

Behind the lectern, Professor Kobre has been educating professional photographers for nearly 30 years, 11 of them in his current post at San Francisco State University. His former students -- which include Pulitzer Prize and World Press Award winners -- work at newspapers, magazines and picture agencies around the world.

Behind the lens, Kobre pursues an active freelance career that has included photo assignments for *Newsweek*, *Time* and the *New York Times* as well as corporate clients such as Hewlett-Packard, Levi Strauss and Apple Computer

And, if that weren't enough, Kobre is the author of the textbook *Photojournalism: The Professionals Approach* (Elsevier/Focal Press), which is the most widely used photojournalism manual/primer in the world. Now in its sixth edition, his text has been translated into Korean, Chinese, Hindi, Spanish and Armenian. In addition, he also co-

authored the seventh and eighth editions of the classic basic textbook *Photography* (Prentice Hall).

Now the seemingly indefatigable Kobre has added a new title to the list – that of inventor.

His new invention is a flash attachment known as the **Lightscoop™** (patent pending), and it provides a professional indoor lighting solution for photographers of any skills level.

The Lightscoop is a simple and inexpensive device which eliminates red eye, harsh shadows and uneven lighting, instantly improving interior shots taken with the pop-up flash on many digital models of Canon, Nikon, Pentax, and Fuji FinePix SLR cameras. Light direct from a pop-up flash looks unnatural and washes out colors and facial features. But owners of these (and soon to be other) cameras can say goodbye to those ugly flash shots forever and produce crisp, well-lit interior shots with the Lightscoop, which bounces light from the built-in flash to a light-colored ceiling or wall and gives a soft, natural light.

For photographers of any skill level using 35mm single-lens reflex cameras with a built-in flash, Professor Kobre's Lightscoop is like a personal short course in photographic lighting in one simple device. Casual users of digital cameras can exploit their camera's potential and produce professional-quality indoor flash photos without having to invest immediately in an expensive external strobe.

More advanced photographers who already own an external flash will appreciate the Lightscoop as a lightweight, simple-to-use alternative for informal shooting when they'd prefer to leave their camera bags at home (The Lightscoop easily fits into a shirt pocket.)

Because the Lightscoop is designed to be used for interior shots, it only works indoors with light-colored ceilings up to 12 feet in height (typical of most homes and offices). It

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cannot bounce light outdoors or off ceilings in gymnasiums, churches, and rooms with dark or cathedral ceilings.

Kobré began experimenting with the pop-up flash units in the prosumer SLR cameras when his students started showing up with those cameras in his classes. Though not the top-of-the-line digital models, such cameras still make a dent in a student budget. Adding the external flash is often cost-prohibitive for beginning shooters.

Admittedly impressed with the technical excellence and light weight of 35mm single-lens reflex cameras with powerful built-in flash units, Kobré and his students were frustrated by the shooting limitations imposed by the harsh direct light emitted by the cameras' flashes.

"I demand that my students NEVER use direct flash," says the Professor. "Of course, normally they are using an external flash unit, and I spend a lot of time teaching them how to bounce the light in order to achieve more natural-looking, even lighting.

"Since the strobes on these cameras are just powerful enough to bounce and still properly expose a picture, I started experimenting with ways to redirect the light from the pop-up flash to bounce it off a ceiling or wall. I finally came up with the Lightscoop. The Lightscoop immediately solves most indoor flash problems. The great results sometimes surprise even me.

"I'm a professional," he says, "but I love it for casual shooting."

Professor Kobré calls his Lightscoop an ideal intermediary lighting tool for beginners who can't yet afford the external strobe.

For non-professionals, he points out, the Lightscoop is the one additional piece of equipment that will instantly improve their photography — a \$29.95 non-technical solution. They may graduate to an external strobe and all its bells and whistles later, but

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they won't have to decide at the get-go between ugly flash pictures and breaking the bank.

“I wouldn't head out for a professional assignment with just the Lightscoop,” he says, “but for most casual shooting situations, it's ideal for creating professionally lit images with the pop-up flash in these cameras.”

The Lightscoop improves flash shots for the following camera models: Nikon D40, D50, D70, D80, D100, D200, D300; Canon EOS 10D, 20D, 30D, 40D, the Canon Rebel XTi or XT, 300D, 350D, 400D, the Pentax K10D and K100D, the Fuji FinePix Pro line, and the Sigma SD14.

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