

Create Intricate Transparency in your Photographs with Keying in After Effects



Designed and photographed by Codify Design Studio.



by [Chris Converse](#)

POSTED ON 03-09-2018

Adobe Products in this article



When shooting subjects that will need to be silhouetted from their background, I recommend putting a solid, contrasting color behind the subject. This can be achieved by using a poster board, a sheet, or even a solid-colored table. I also recommend lighting the scene with two or three lights to help reduce shadows. While this technique is used quite a lot for video, it can also be a big help when your photographs are needed for design projects.

Once you've captured an image you are happy with, we'll use the keying tools in [Adobe After Effects](#) to quickly remove the background. While there are some great tools to do similar work in [Photoshop](#), I'd argue that the Keylight effect in After Effects provides a much faster workflow, as well as tools to help with halos and color contamination due to background reflections.

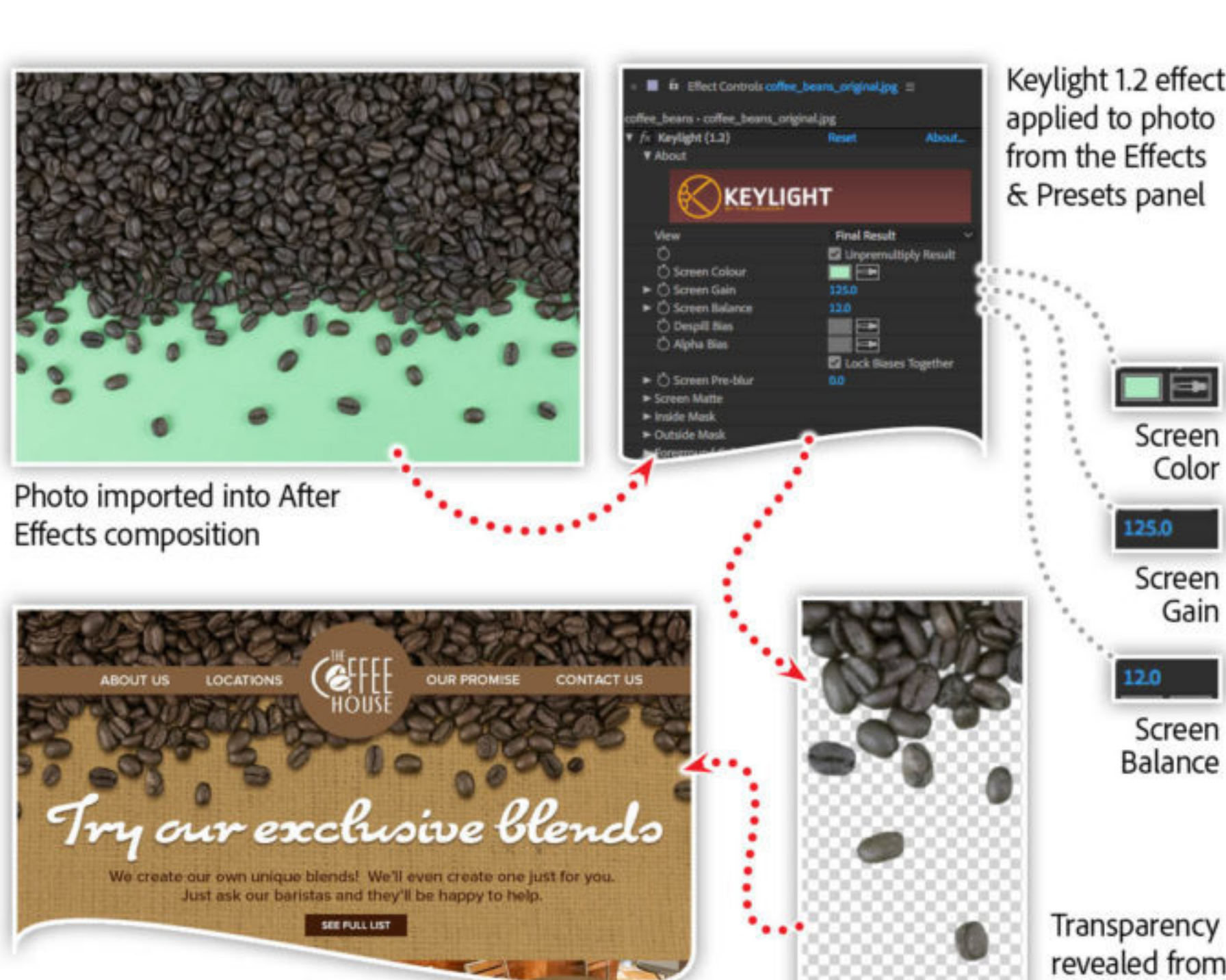


Image source: Codify Design Studio.

After importing the image into After Effects and creating a new composition, it's time to apply the Keylight effect. With the layer containing the image selected, apply the effect by double-clicking on the effect in the Effects & Presets panel, or dragging the effect to the image layer.

Once applied, the effect provides you with an eyedropper tool to select the background color that is to be removed. The Screen Gain option allows you to increase or decrease the keying tolerance for the selected color, allowing you to remove the halo effect from the pixels on the edge of the new silhouette. Additionally, the Screen Balance property allows you to remove the color cast, or reflection, created from the background color onto the silhouetted area.

While there are many more advanced options you can explore, these properties will work for a wide range of images.

Exporting to Photoshop

One of my favorite features in After Effects is the ability to save your composition to a native, layered Photoshop file — complete with transparency. With either the Composition panel or the Timeline panel selected, choose the Composition menu, then click Save Frame As, then select Photoshop Layers.

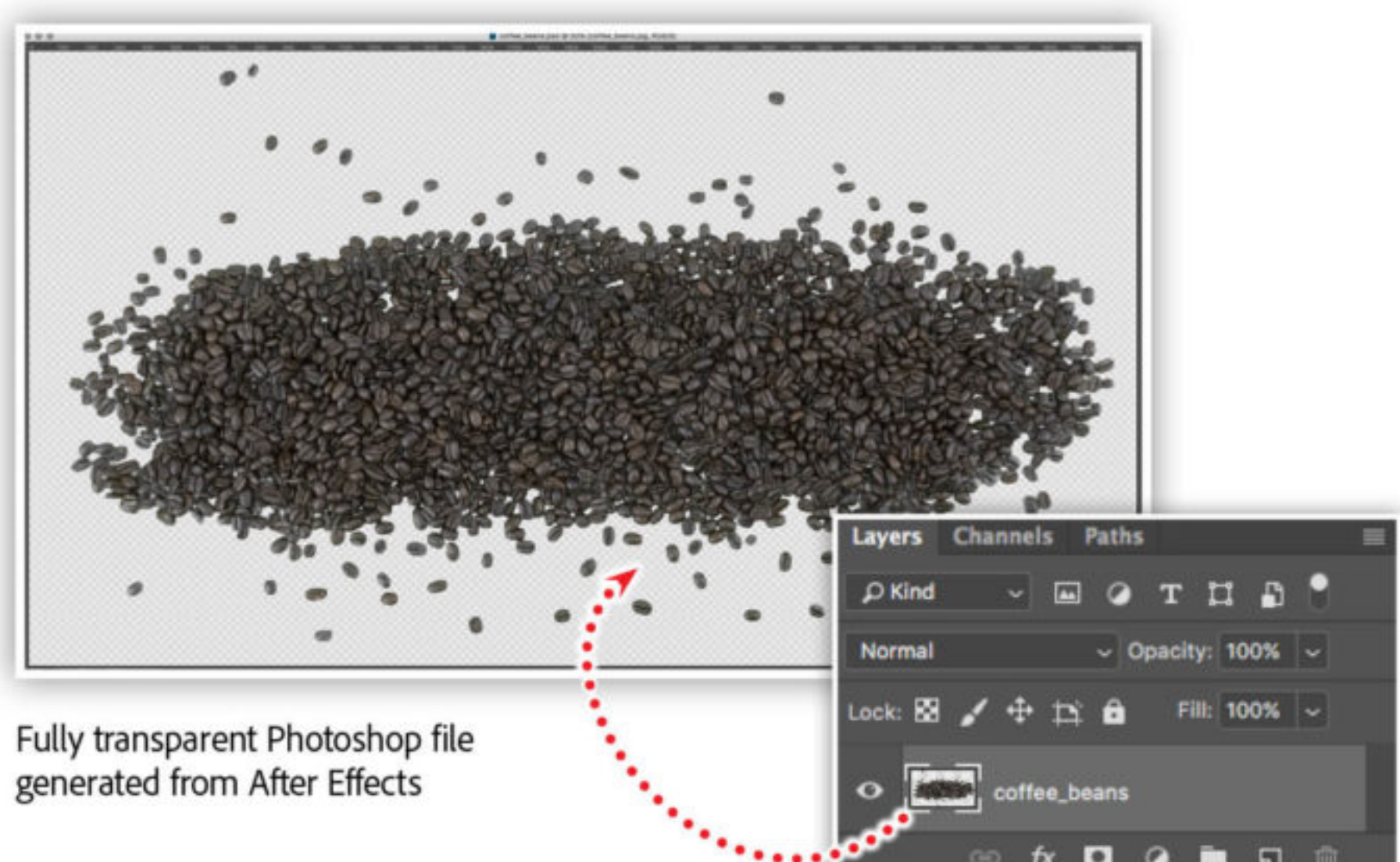


Image source: Codify Design Studio.

Once you choose Save, you'll have a new Photoshop file that's ready to use in any project. (Be sure to watch [the recorded webinar](#) for a step-by-step demonstration.)

More After Effects tips for photography

Want more tips? Check out these related articles that will get your photos looking great with After Effects.

[Dazzling Light Effects for Photography with After Effects](#)

[Editing VR Photography \(360° photos\) with After Effects](#)

Watch these features in action

Join Chris Converse in the [recorded webinar](#) and learn to use the amazing effects in After Effects to enhance your photographs. Make images more dramatic, add special effects, and generate patterns and textures that are simply not possible in other Creative Cloud apps.

In this session you'll learn:

- How [After Effects](#) relates to [InDesign](#), [Illustrator](#), and [Photoshop](#)
- Importing artwork to After Effects and working with effects
- Working with After Effects and Photoshop together
- Creating advanced transparency in your photos
- Adding special effects to your photos
- Editing and retouching VR (360°) photography

[Adobe Creative Cloud e-learning series:](#)

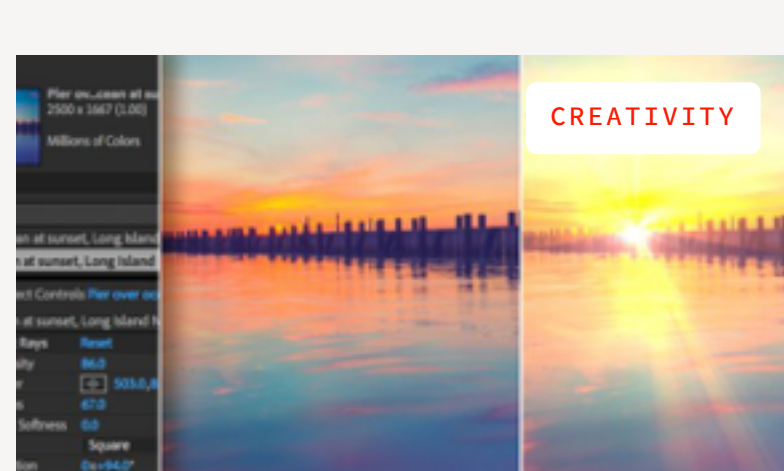
[After Effects for Photography](#)

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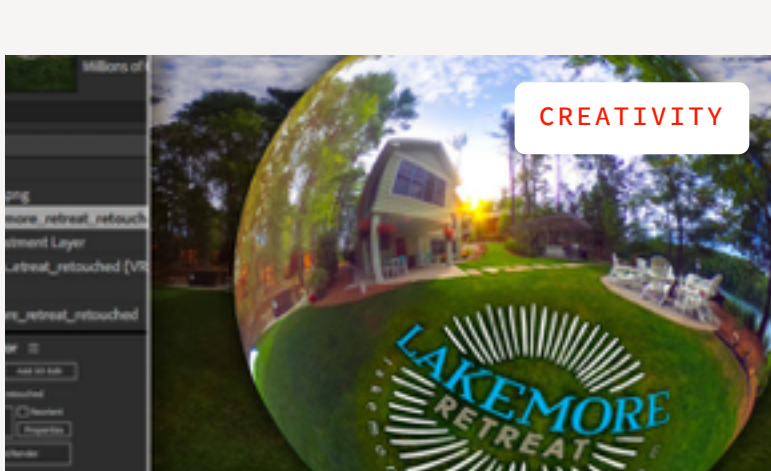


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