A FIRST CLASS OF PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

QIWEI LI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- BASIC CAMERA SETTINGS
- IMAGE COMPOSITION
- SUBJECT ISOLATION
- LIGHTING EFFECTS
- FIGURE AND SURROUNDINGS
- SUMMARY

CAMERA SETTINGS

- Focusing on the closet eyes
  - Set the aperture priority mode: Av (Canon) or A (Nikon)
  - Change the autofocus (AF) mode to ONE SHOT (Canon) or AF-S (Nikon)
  - Aim the single focus point over the nearest eye or the left eye if both eyes are in the same plane through the viewfinder or use the face detection function through the live view screen

CAMERA SETTINGS

[Pictures removed]

CAMERA SETTINGS

- Reflecting the skin tone
  - Choose the most matching white balance: auto, daylight, tungsten light, fluorescent light, etc.
  - Set the exposure value to +0.3 or +0.7
  - Select the Picture Style (Canon) or Picture Control (Nikon) to portrait mode

CAMERA SETTINGS

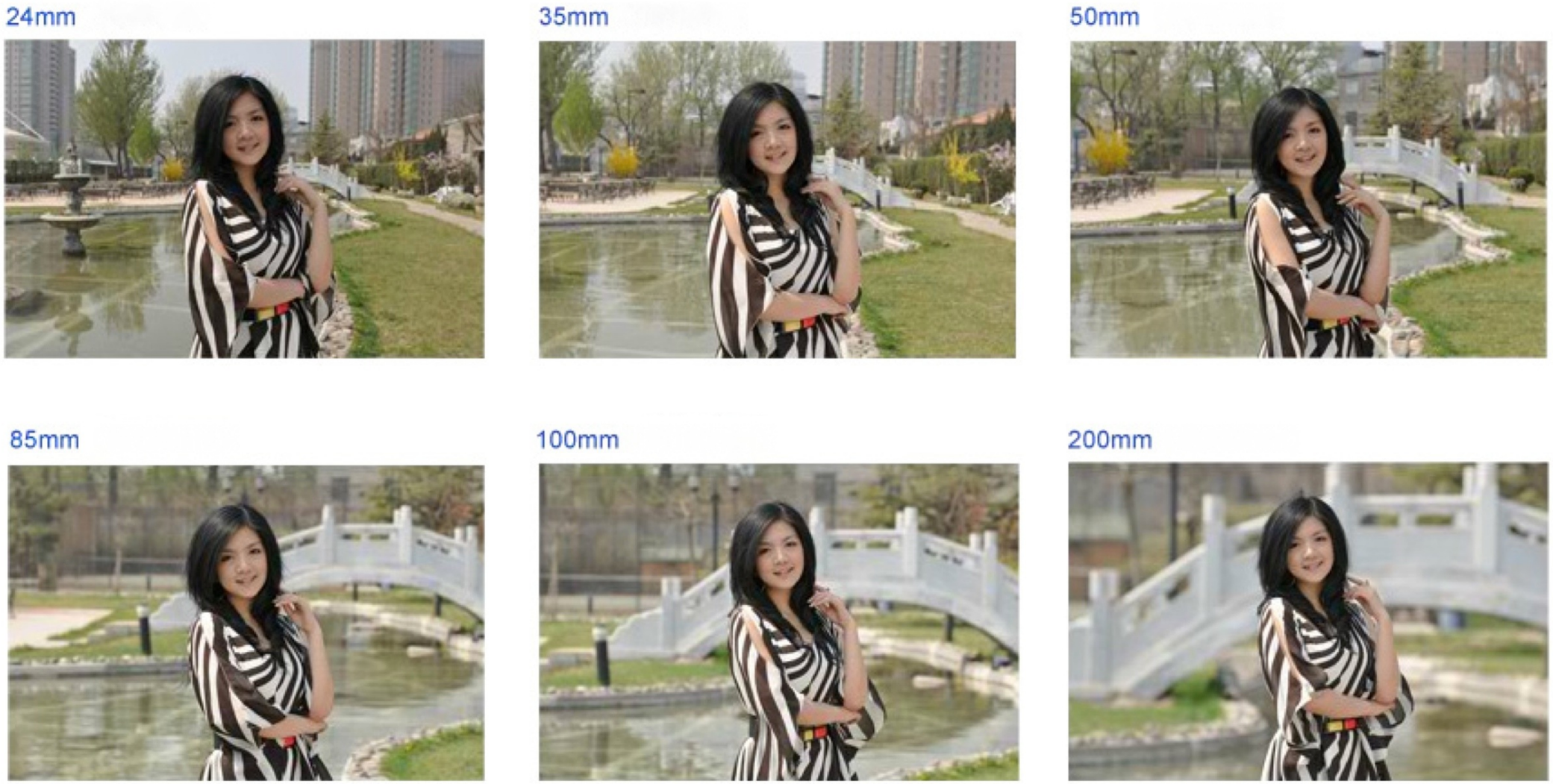
- Freezing the precious moments
  - Set the ISO settings
  - Lower ISO settings takes longer to expose but shows less digital noise

- Recommended settings

	Still	Moving
Outdoor	<200	800
Indoor	800	>1600

IMAGE COMPOSITION

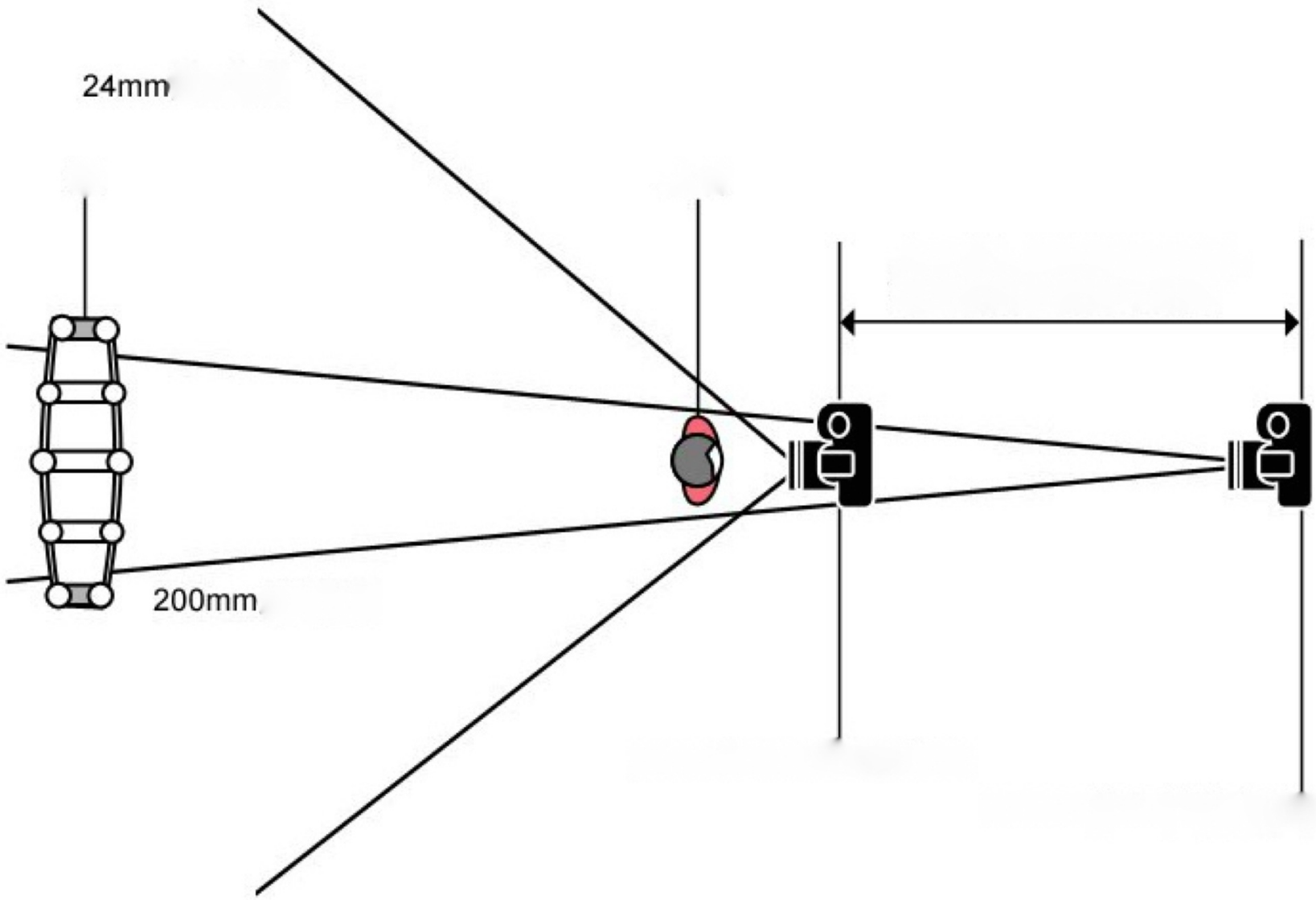
- Focal length (angle of view)



*The illustrated figure is copied from *Nikon Lens World Special Volume 1*

IMAGE COMPOSITION

- Focal length (angle of view)



*The illustrated figure is copied from *Nikon Lens World Special Volume 1*

IMAGE COMPOSITION

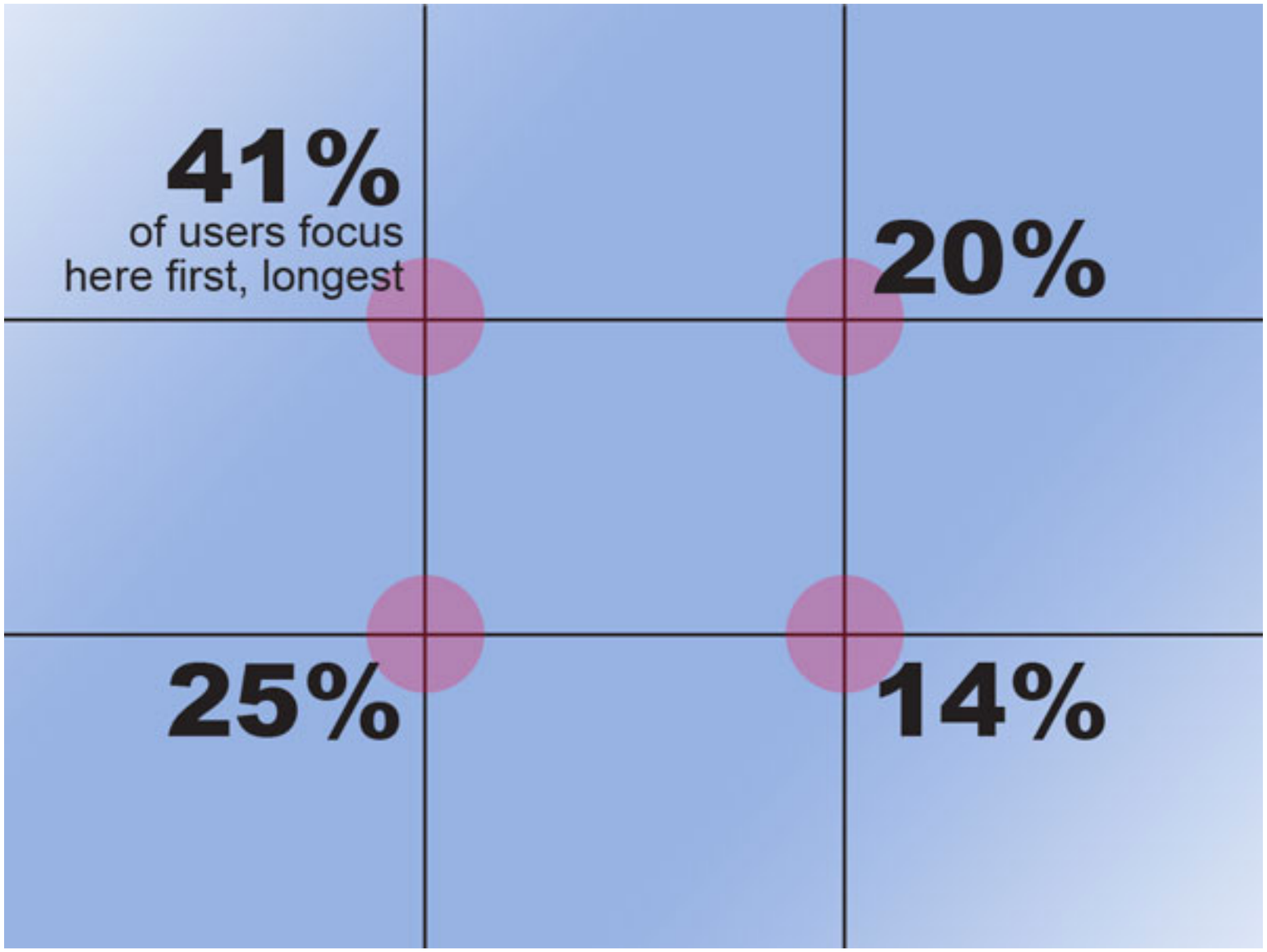
- Focal length (angle of view)
    - 85mm is the best focal length for normal portrait shooting
    - Wide-angle lens can be used to take striking portrait photos as it distort distances
    - Head shot and environment portraits

IMAGE COMPOSITION

[Pictures removed]

IMAGE COMPOSITION

- Rule of thirds



*The illustrated figure is copied from internet

IMAGE COMPOSITION

[Pictures removed]

IMAGE COMPOSITION

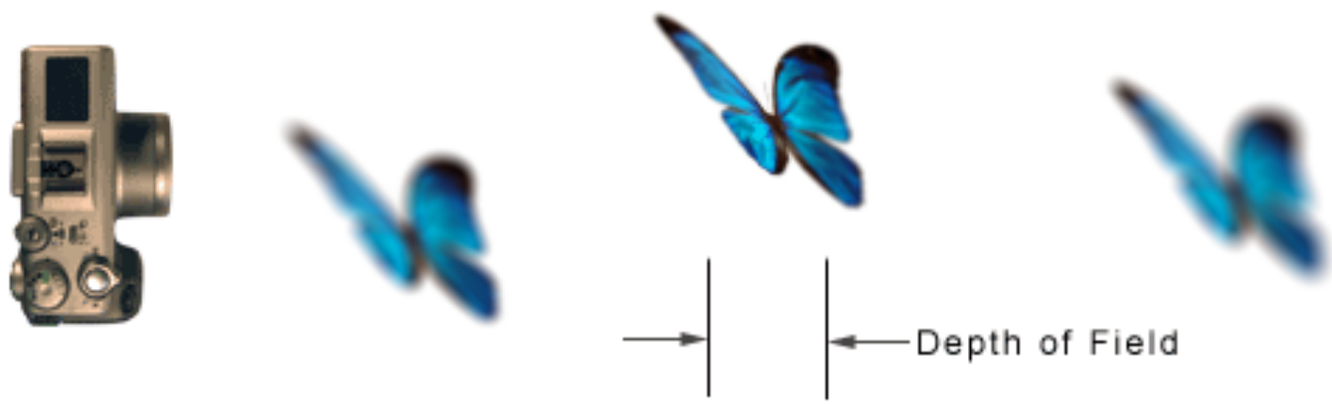
- Geometric shapes (frame)
- Story-telling
- Interesting background
- Other creative ideas

IMAGE COMPOSITION

[Pictures removed]

SUBJECT ISOLATION

- Make less depth of field
  - Increase the aperture (decrease the f stop value: f/2.8 and f/4)
  - Increase the focal length (85mm)
  - Decrease the distance to the subject



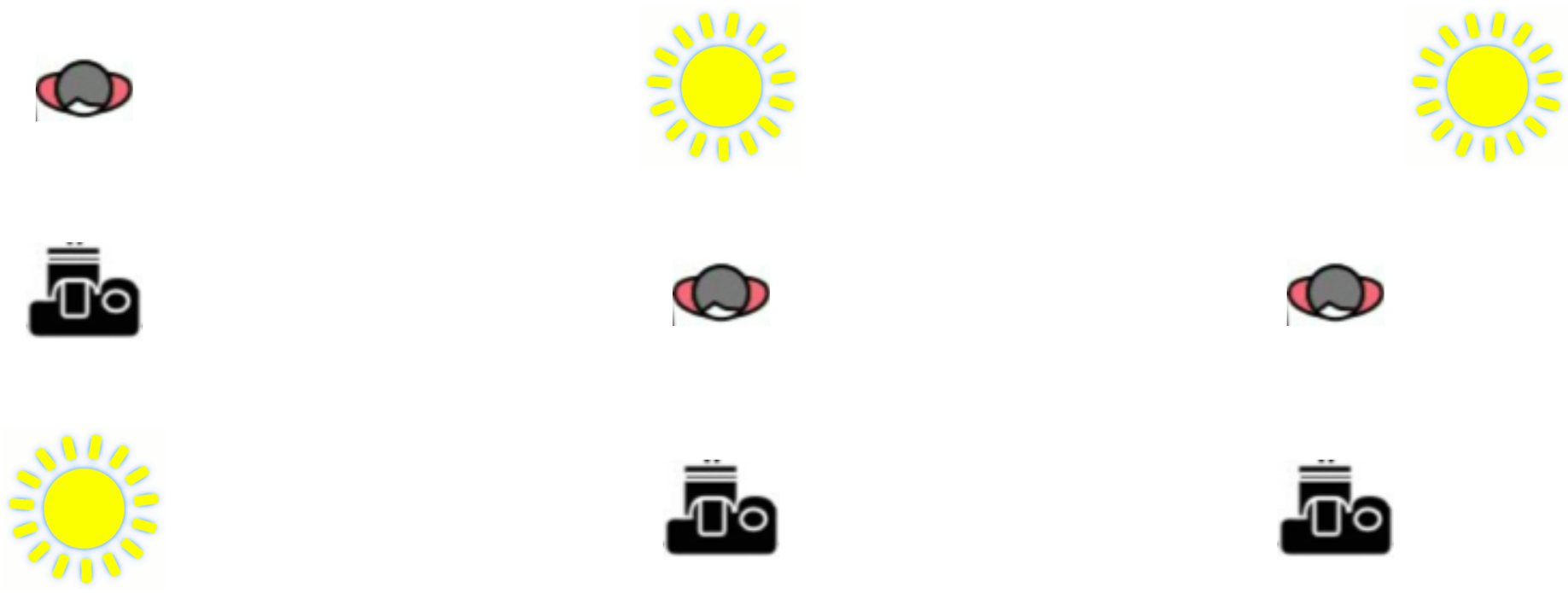
*The illustrated figure is copied from *Wikipedia*

SUBJECT ISOLATION

[Pictures removed]

LIGHTING EFFECTS

- Frontlighting: make brighter skin, but bring in shadows
- Backlighting: make shining hair and soft skin, but overexposure
- Semi-backlighting: most widely used



LIGHTING EFFECTS

[Pictures removed]

MODEL

- Facial expression
  - Cute
  - Cool
  - Smiling
  - Grimacing
  - Hard-looking

MODEL

[Pictures removed]

MODEL

- Body pose
  - Cute
  - Hot
  - Straight
  - Diagonal
  - Onetwofree

MODEL

[Pictures removed]

SURROUNDINGS

[Pictures removed]

COMMUNICATION

- Don’t be shy
- Don’t keep silent
- Do chat
- Do show the photos to your model
- Do get feedback
- Do encourage your model

SUMMARY

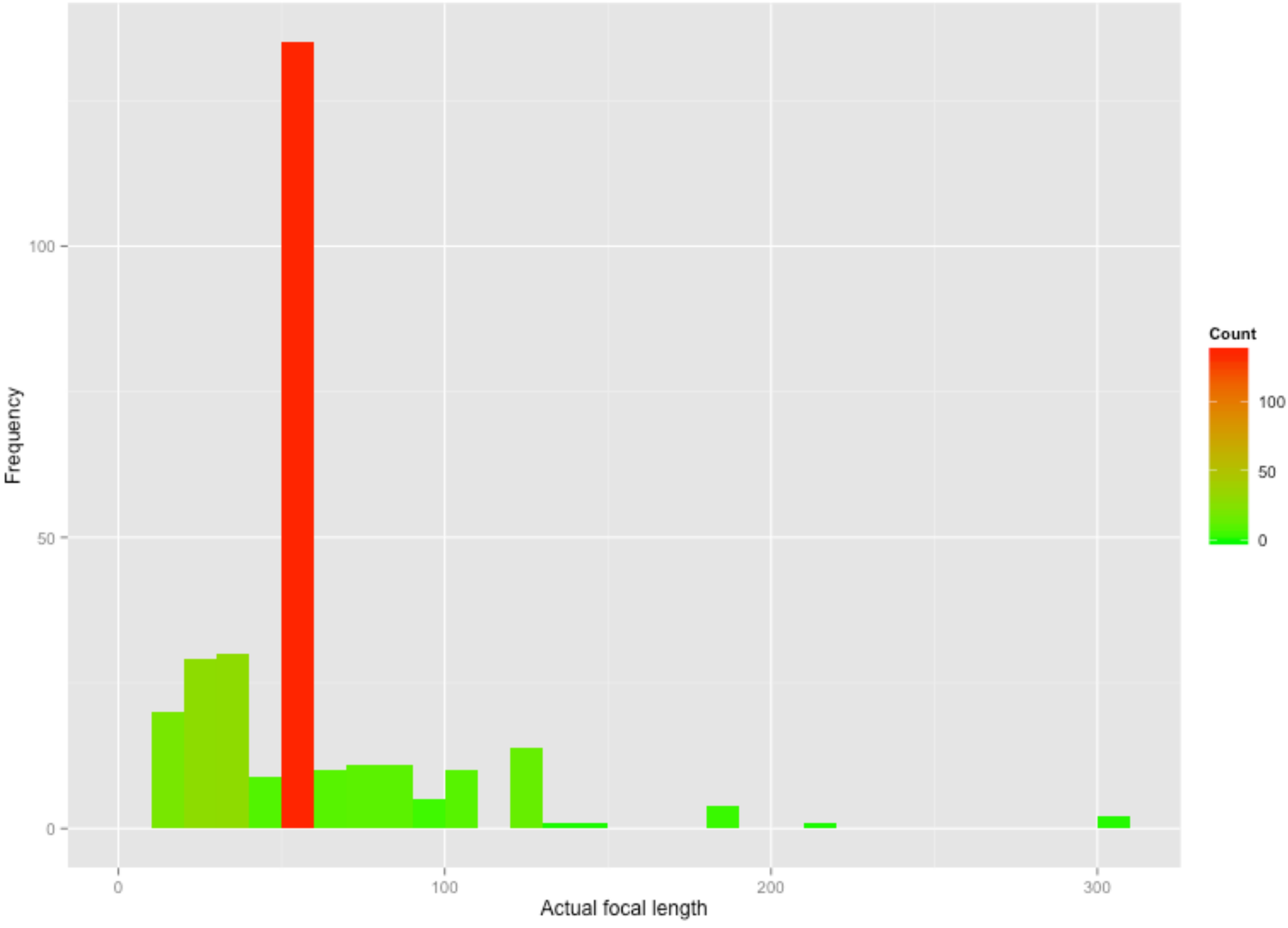
- Camera
    - Change the AF mode to ONE SHOT (Canon) or AF-S (Nikon)
    - Set the exposure value to +0.3 or +0.7
    - Select the subject’s optimal image characteristics to portrait mode
    - Change the aperture f stop value to f/2.8 or f/4
    - Change the focal length to 85mm (full-frame) or 50mm (APS-C) for head shots
    - Select the right white balance
    - Place the subject on one of the four points of intersection through the gridlines in the viewfinder
    - Aim the single focus point over the nearest eye

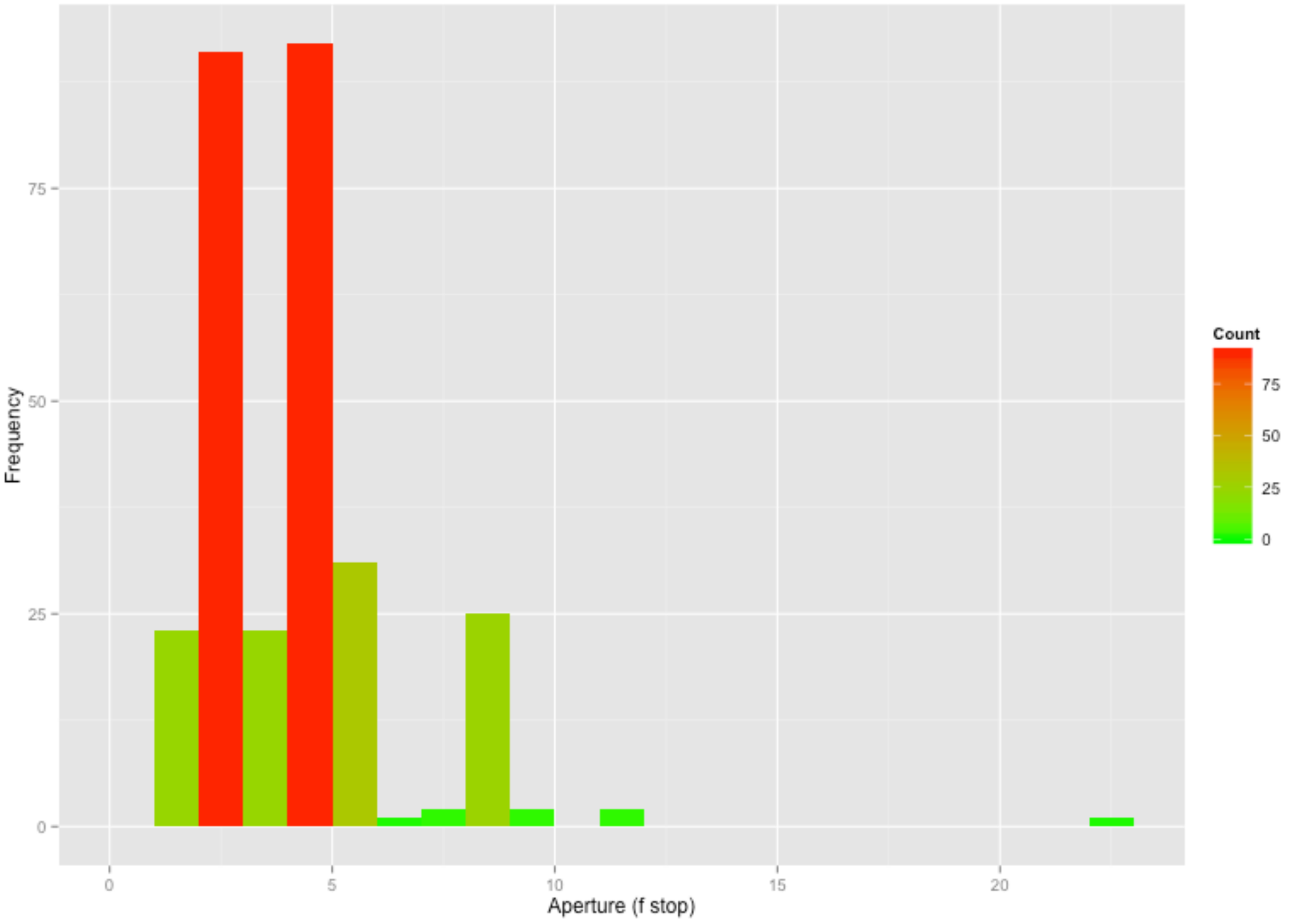
SUMMARY

- Environment
  - Find out the light source and consider the lighting effects
  - Choose the lens
  - Look for the best background or surroundings
  - Move around to get the best distance to subject
  - Test and adjust camera settings
  - Warm-up and communication

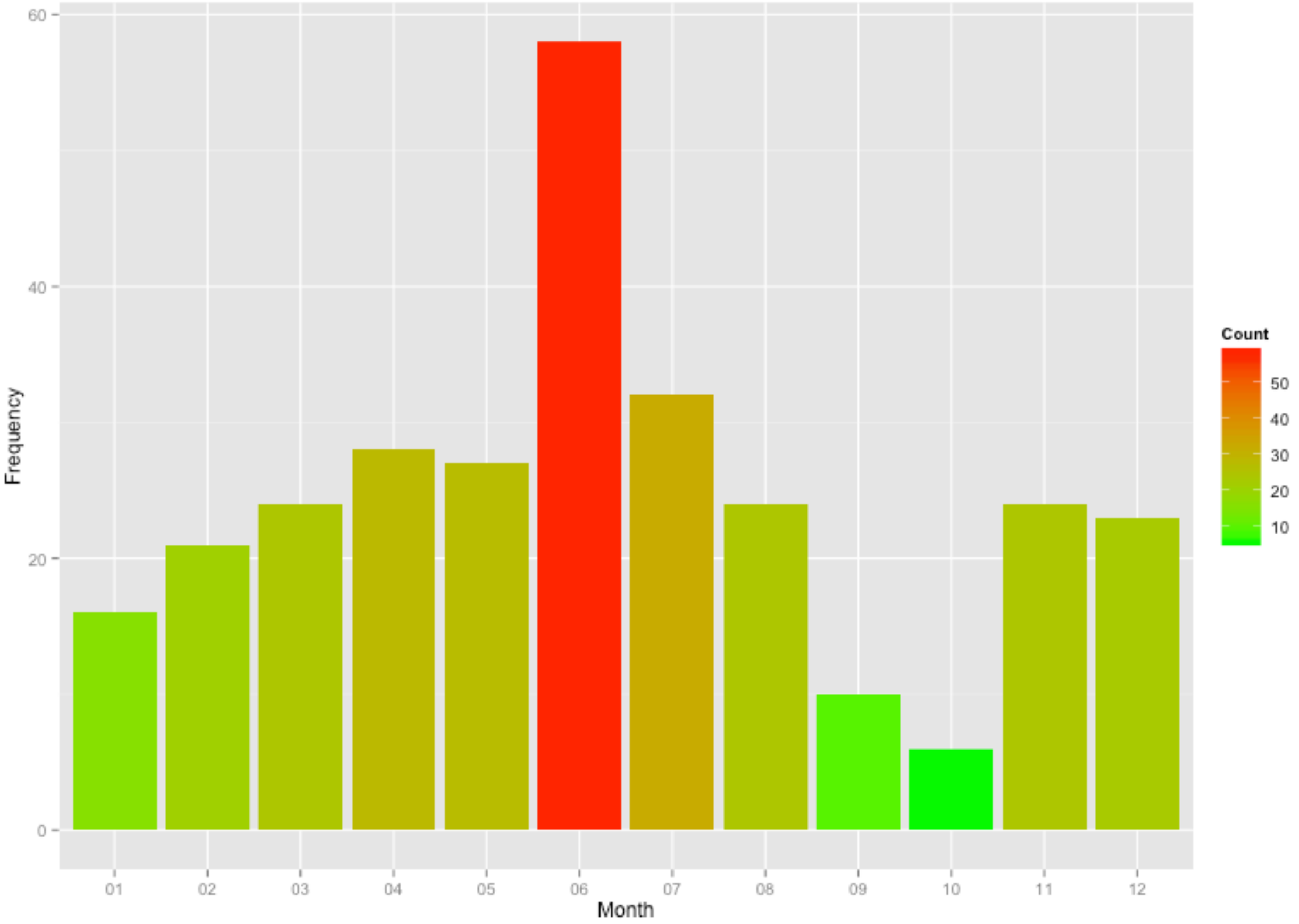
STATISTICS

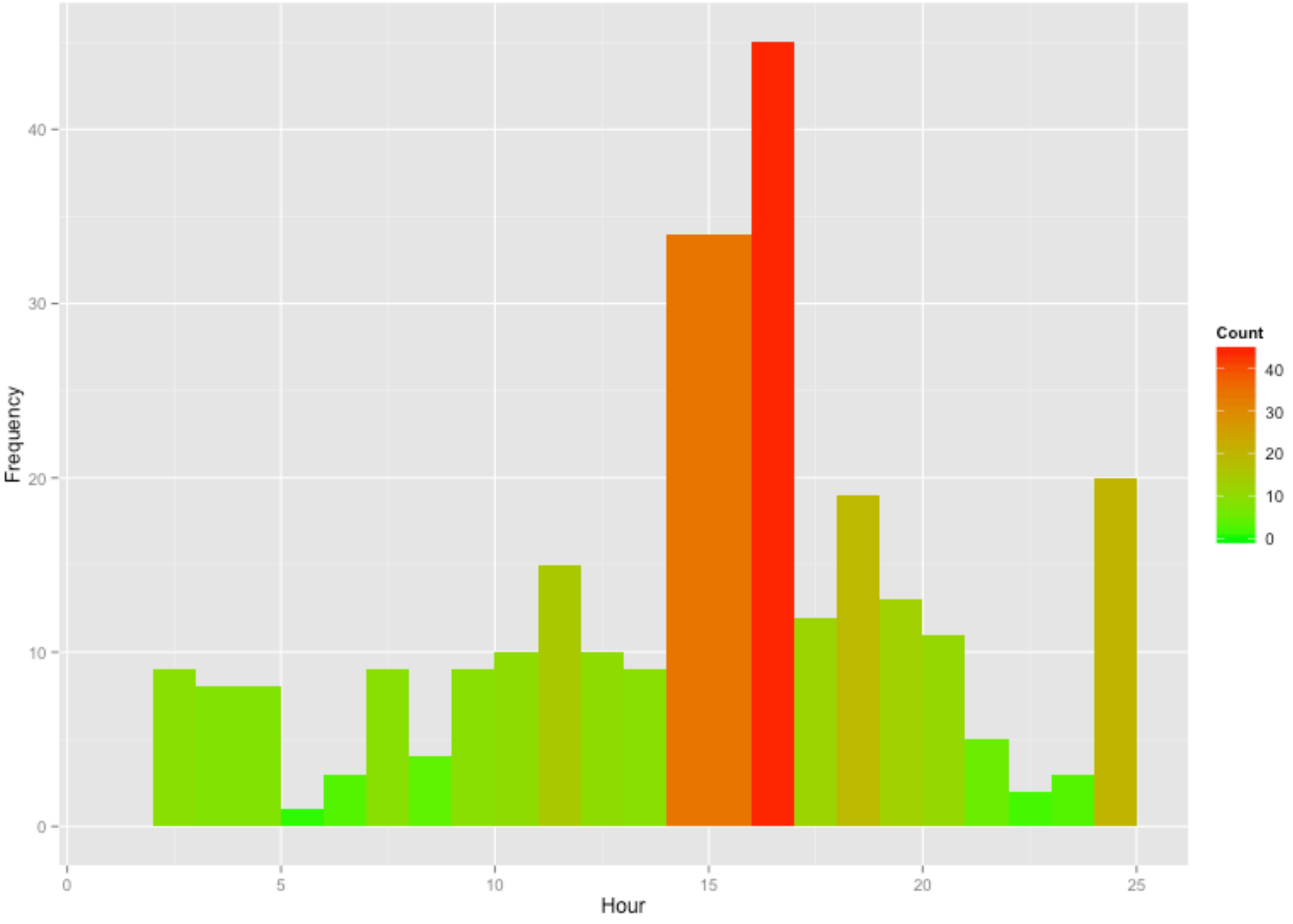
- Select 293 best portrait photos from 50,000 photos in the past 5 years
- Use R to visualize the exif data
- Answer the following questions:
  - What's the most frequently used focal length?
  - What's the most frequently used aperture (f stop)?
  - What's the most frequently used lens?
  - What's the most frequently time?


Frequency
100
50
0
0
100
200
300
Actual focal length
Count
100
50
0


Frequency
75
50
25
0
0
5
10
15
20
Aperture (f stop)
Count
75
50
25
0

Zoom-Telephoto
Prime-Wide-angle
Zoom-Normal
Prime-Normal
Zoom-Wide-angle
125
100
75
50
25
0
Frequency
Count
125
100
75
50
25
Lens type


60
40
20
0
Frequency
01
02
03
04
05
06
07
08
09
10
11
12
Month
Count
50
40
30
20
10


Count
40
30
20
10
0
Frequency
40
30
20
10
0
0
5
10
15
20
25
Hour

“It’s one thing to make a picture of what a person looks like, it’s another thing to make a portrait of who they are.”

–Paul Caponigro (a leading American landscape photographer)