



# Recording and using Photoshop actions to streamline workflow in latent enhancement and crime scene photography

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## **Advantages;**

**Works with any version of Photoshop as long as the tools are present \***

**Easy tool access-no navigation through multiple menu screens**

**Keyboard shortcuts can be assigned to the action**

**Combine multiple tasks into one button click**

**Speed up repetitive processing**

**Works across networks/servers**

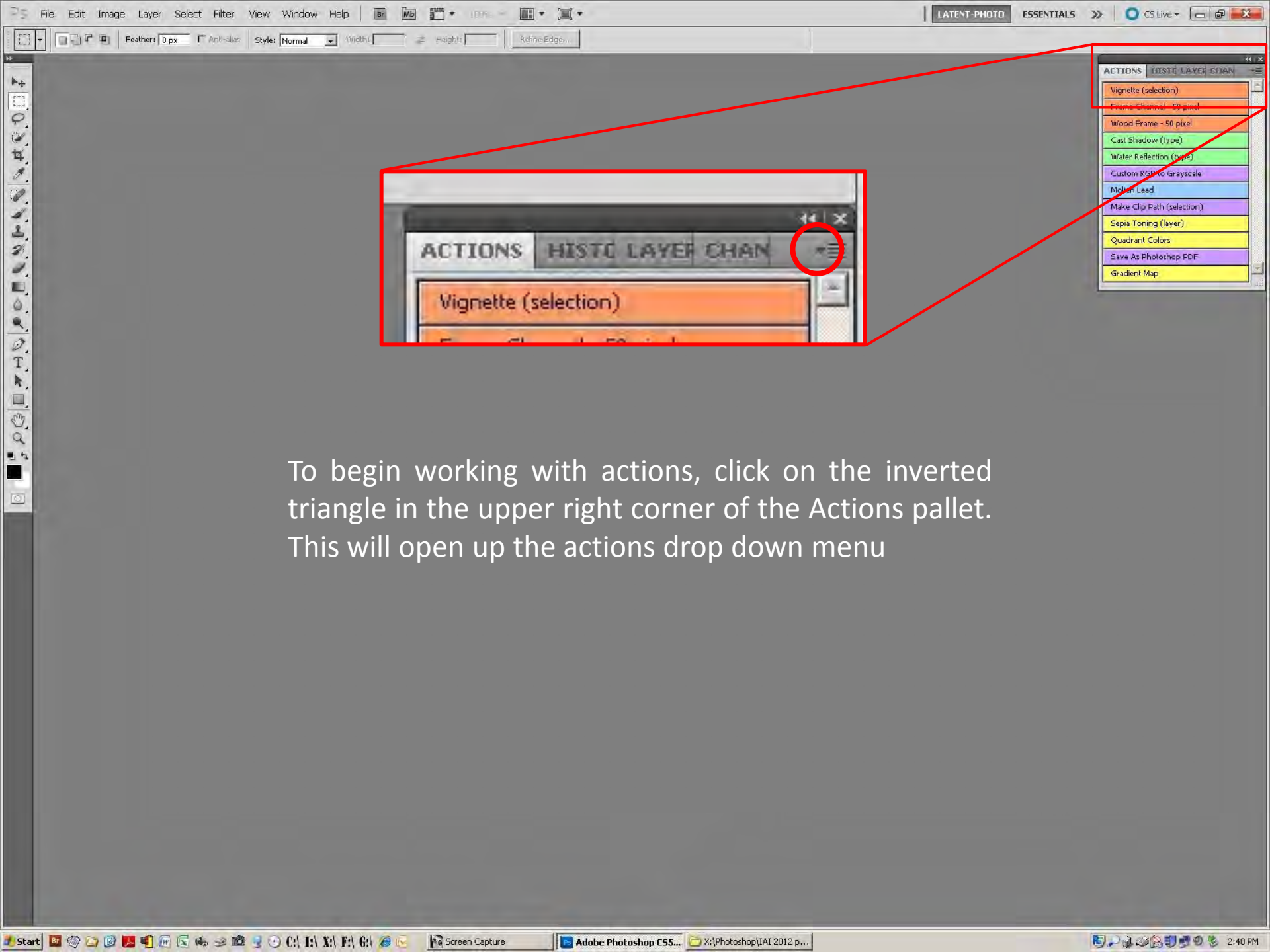
## **Disadvantages;**

**Limited history log information**

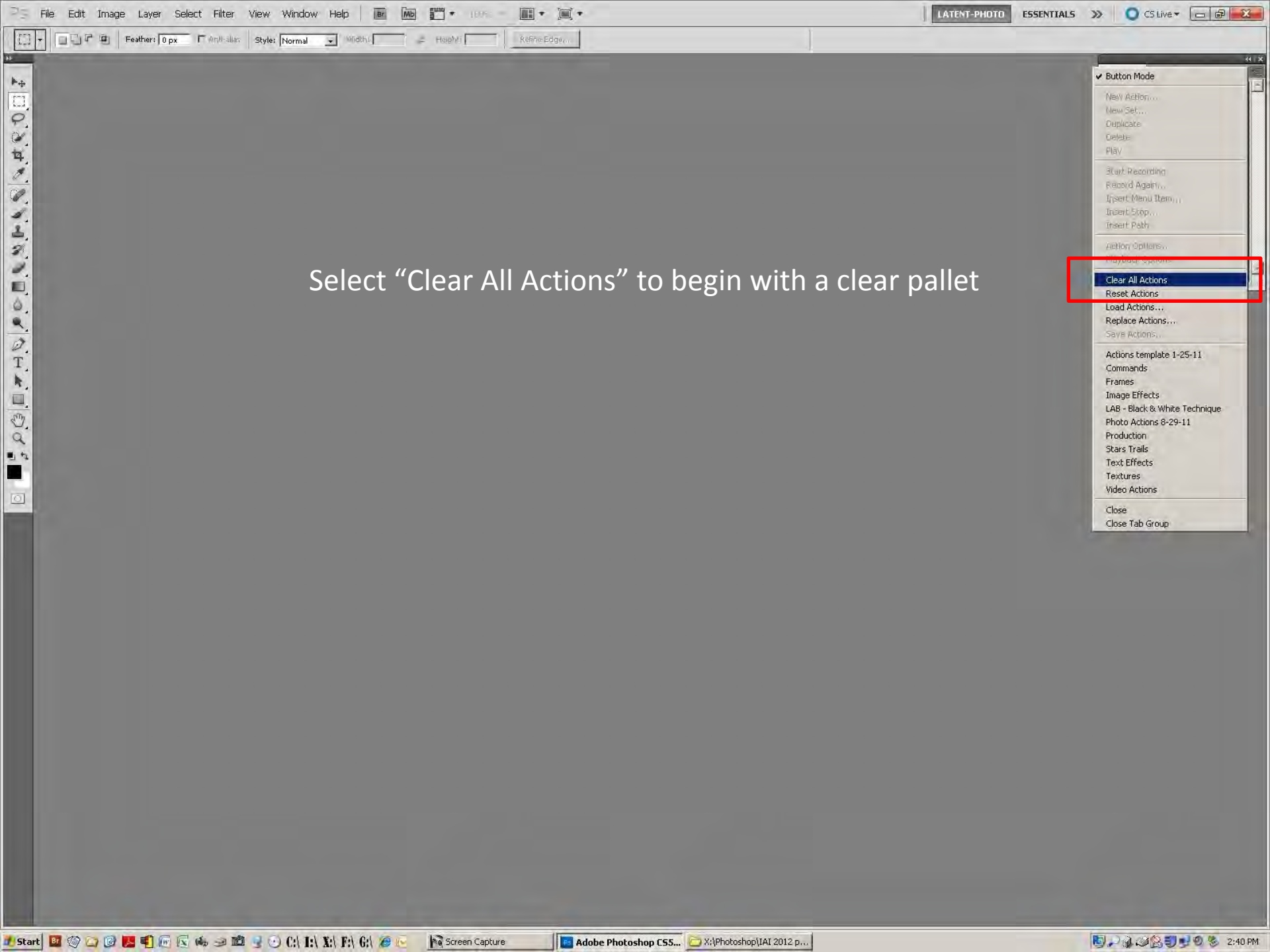
**Only works within Photoshop**

**\* Some exceptions with version CS5**

# Single step Actions

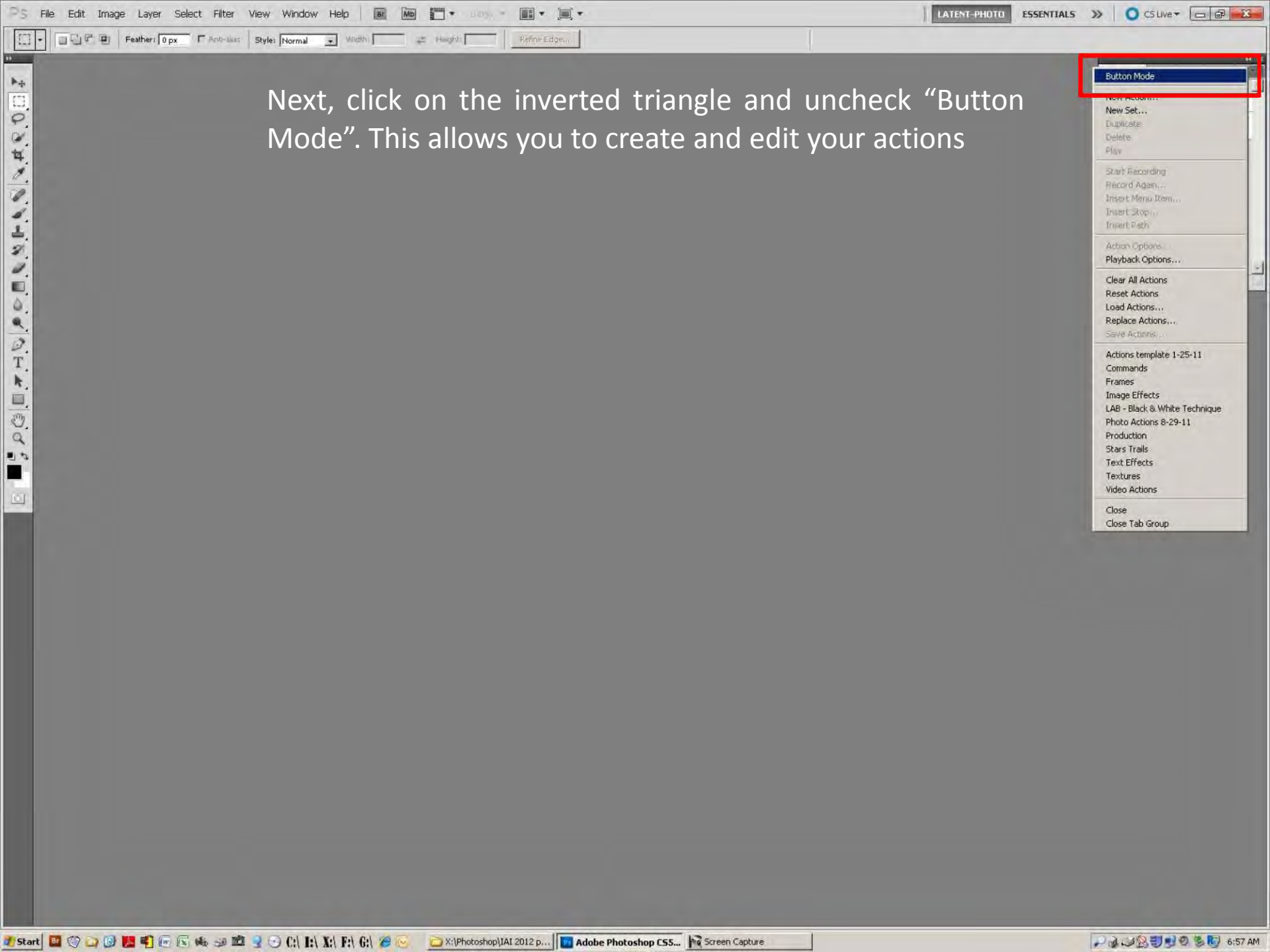


To begin working with actions, click on the inverted triangle in the upper right corner of the Actions pallet. This will open up the actions drop down menu



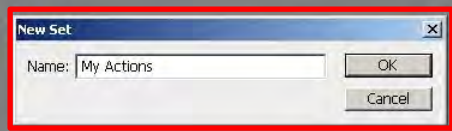
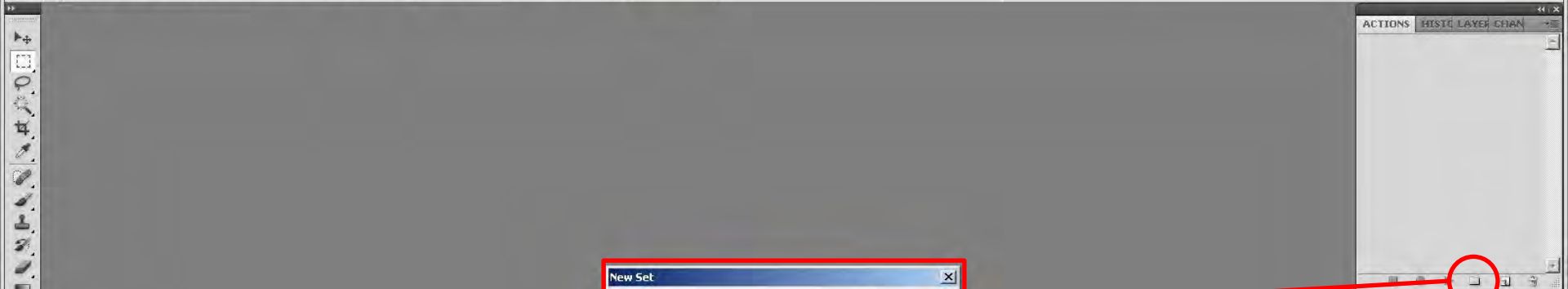
Select "Clear All Actions" to begin with a clear pallet

Clear All Actions



Next, click on the inverted triangle and uncheck "Button Mode". This allows you to create and edit your actions

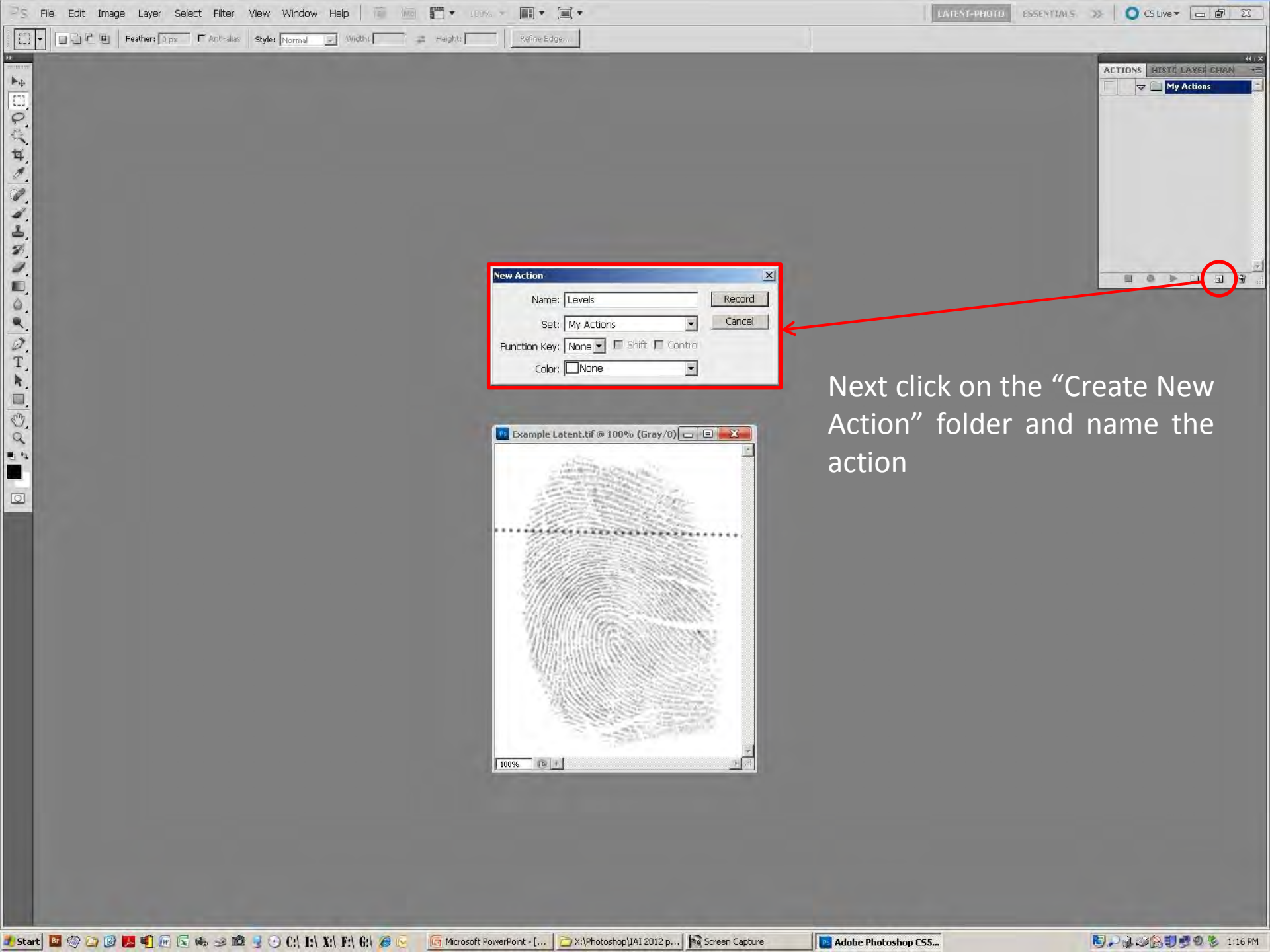
- Button Mode
- New Action...
- New Set...
- Duplicate
- Delete
- Play
- Start Recording
- Record Again...
- Insert Menu Item...
- Insert Stop...
- Insert Path
- Action Options...
- Playback Options...
- Clear All Actions
- Reset Actions
- Load Actions...
- Replace Actions...
- Save Actions...
- Actions template 1-25-11
- Commands
- Frames
- Image Effects
- LAB - Black & White Technique
- Photo Actions 8-29-11
- Production
- Stars Trails
- Text Effects
- Textures
- Video Actions
- Close
- Close Tab Group



First, open an image. Use a sample image to create your actions so you can discard it later. **Never** use original images for creating actions



Click on the “Create New Set” folder at the bottom of the Actions Pallet. A pop up window will open to allow naming of the new set. This will not be visible when the button mode is enabled



**New Action**

Name:

Set:

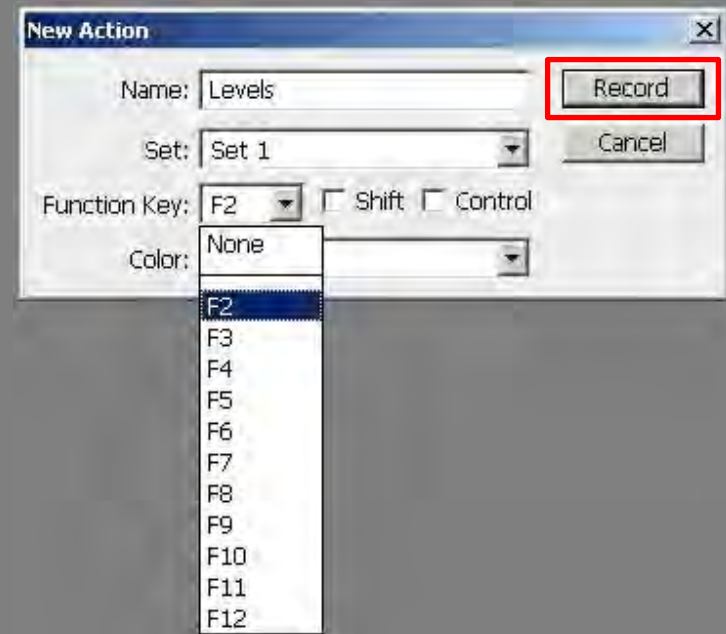
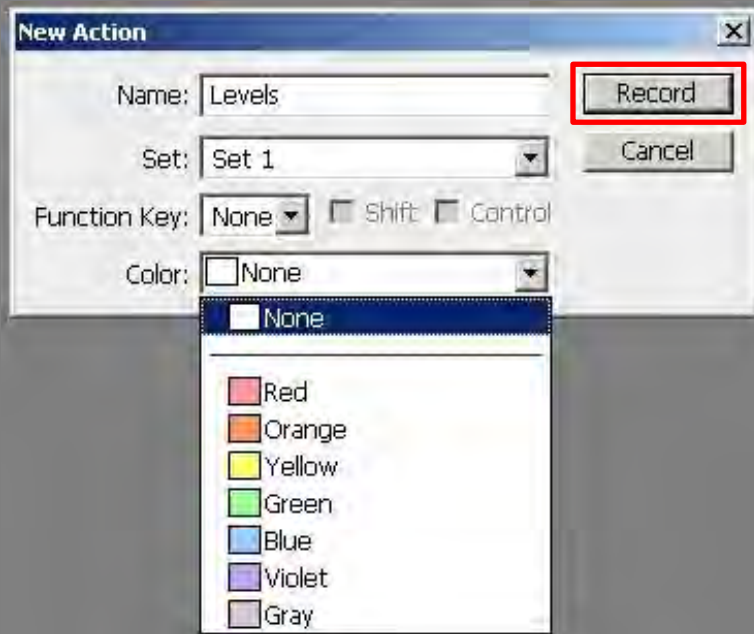
Function Key:   Shift  Control

Color:

Next click on the "Create New Action" folder and name the action



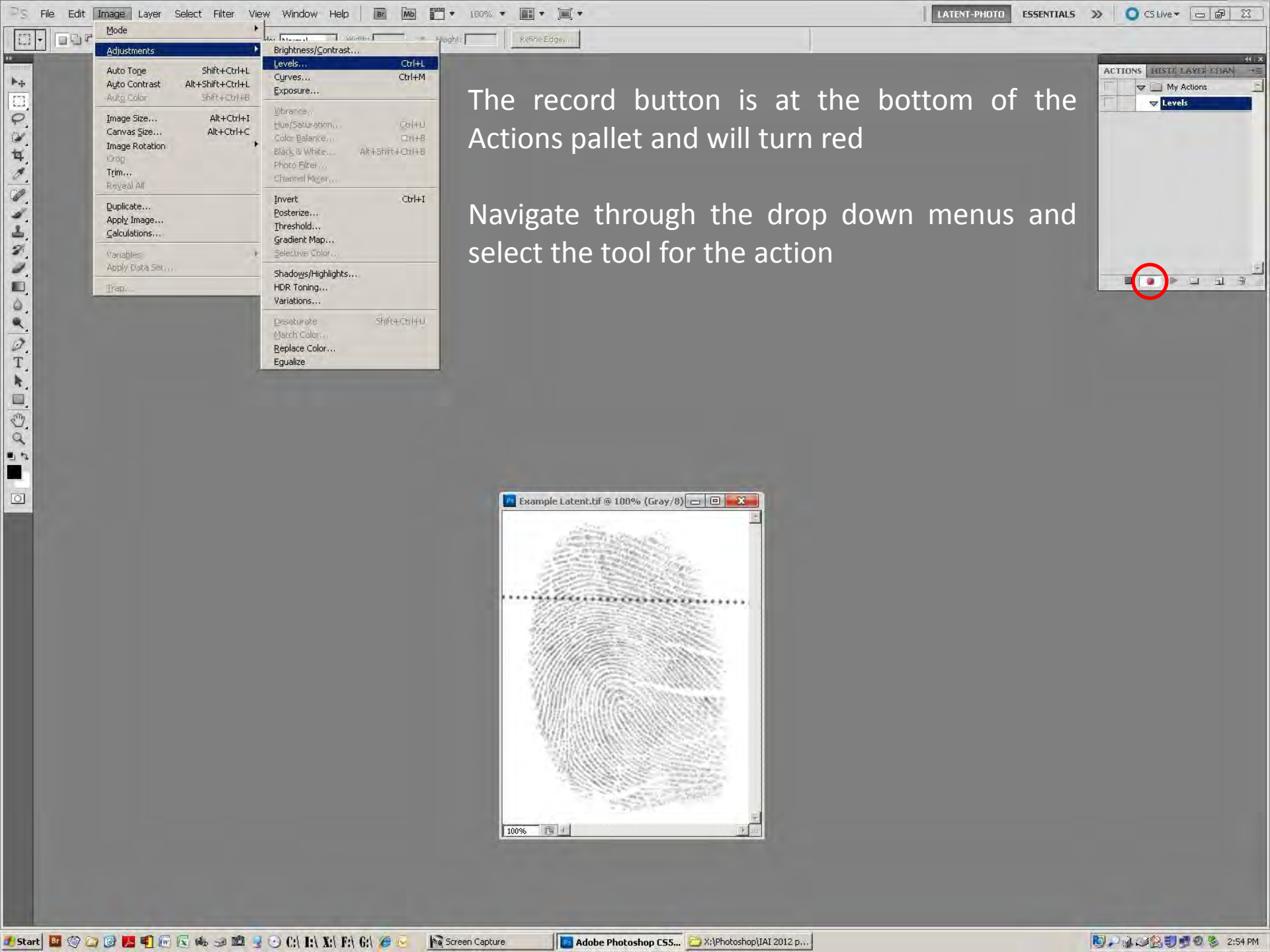




While the “Create New Action” dialogue box is open, you have the option of assigning a color and/or a function key combination to the button

A color or function key combination can still be assigned after the action has been created by double clicking the action

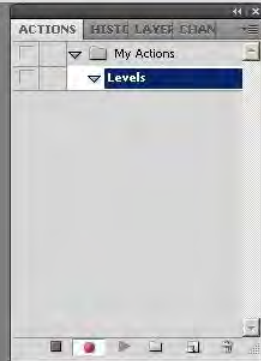
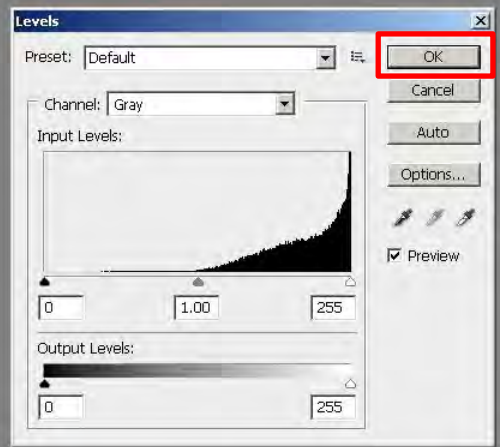
Click on the “Record” button to begin creating the action



The record button is at the bottom of the Actions pallet and will turn red

Navigate through the drop down menus and select the tool for the action

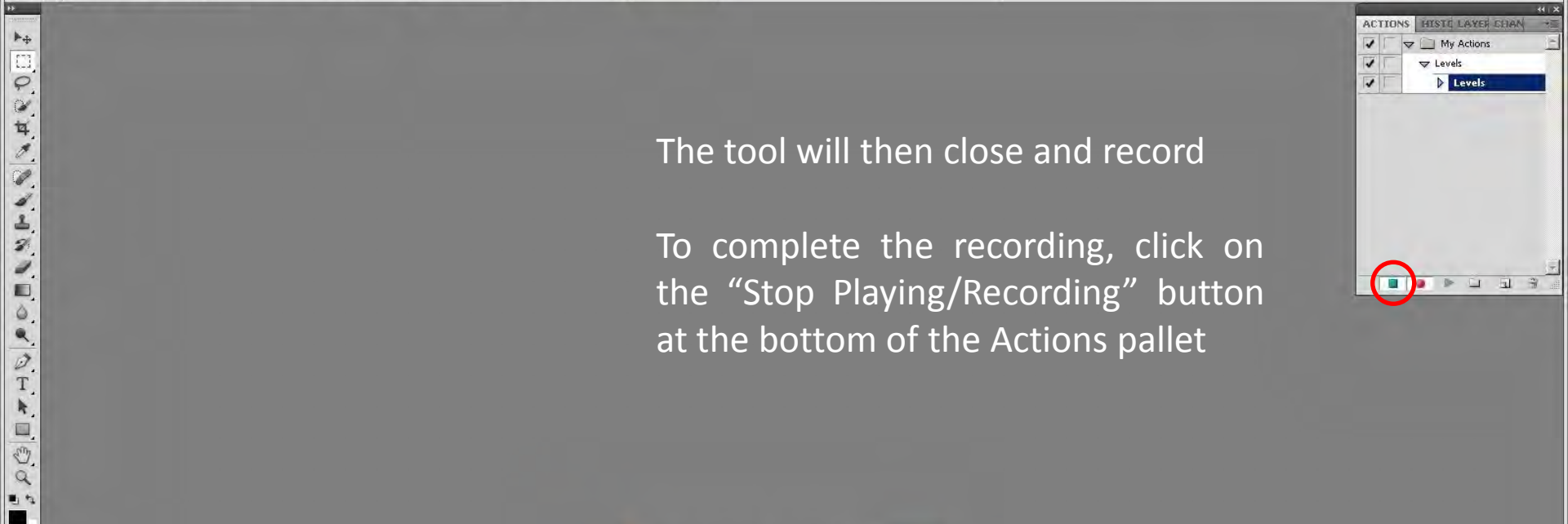




After the tool opens, click on "OK"

Some tools require a small adjustment before clicking "OK" to allow being recorded as an action. If so, that will become the default setting of that tool for its action





The tool will then close and record

To complete the recording, click on the “Stop Playing/Recording” button at the bottom of the Actions pallet

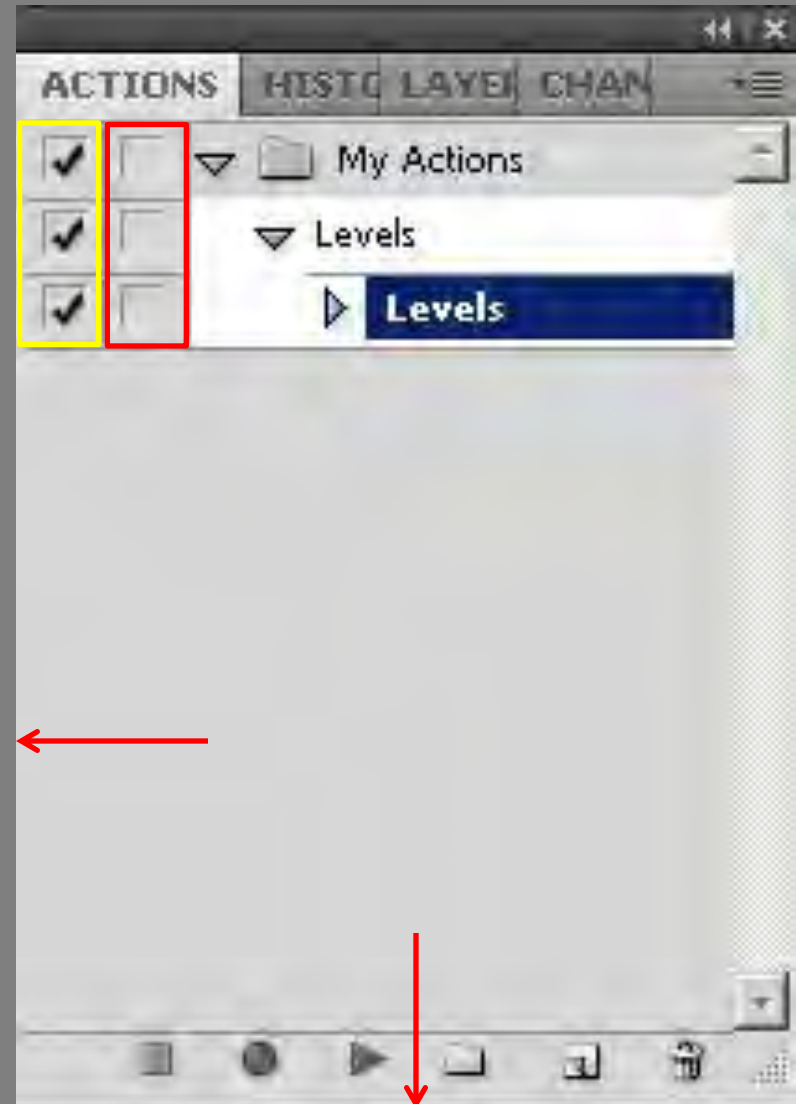


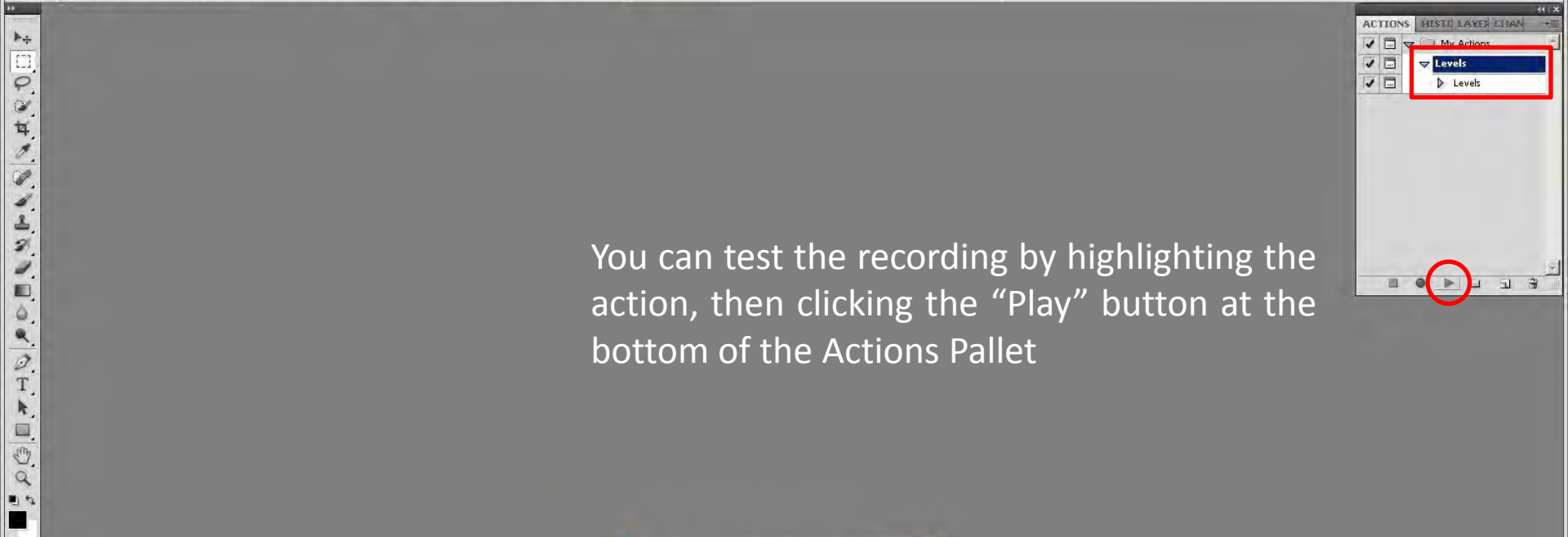
In the edit mode of the Actions pallet, there are two rows of check boxes along the left side. The following applies to all actions

The Boxes in the Yellow column are to be unchecked only if you need to disable the action, or skip a step or steps within a more complex action

The boxes in the red column are to be checked if the action needs to stop and display the dialog box to allow adjustments, as with Levels, Contrast/Brightness, etc. If you have set the tool to a preferred setting and do not need to make any further adjustments, leave the box unchecked

The Actions pallet window can also be expanded by dragging the left and lower edges outward to view the complete text of the action

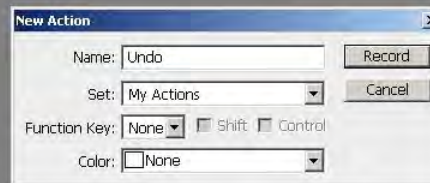




You can test the recording by highlighting the action, then clicking the “Play” button at the bottom of the Actions Pallet



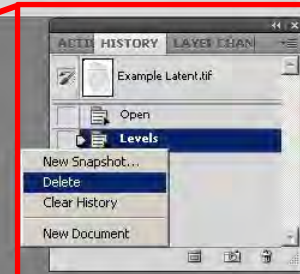
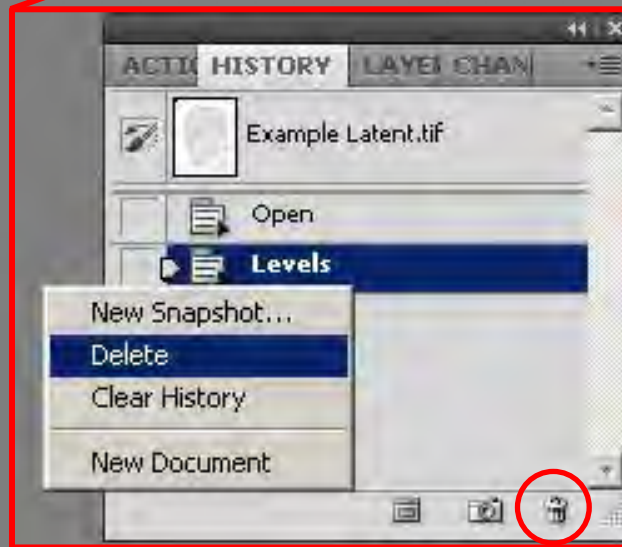
To create a generic “Undo” button for a simple action, open a sample image and run a single action such as “Levels”, make an adjustment, then click “OK”



Open the “Create New Action” dialog box, title it “Undo”, then click “Record”

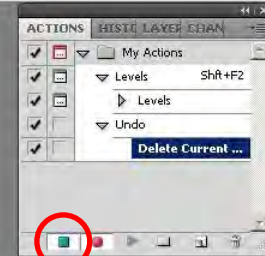


Open the "History" pallet, select the "Levels" history, then right click and delete the Levels history or click and drag it to the trashcan on the lower right side of the "History" pallet

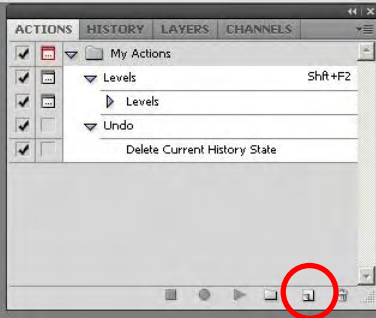
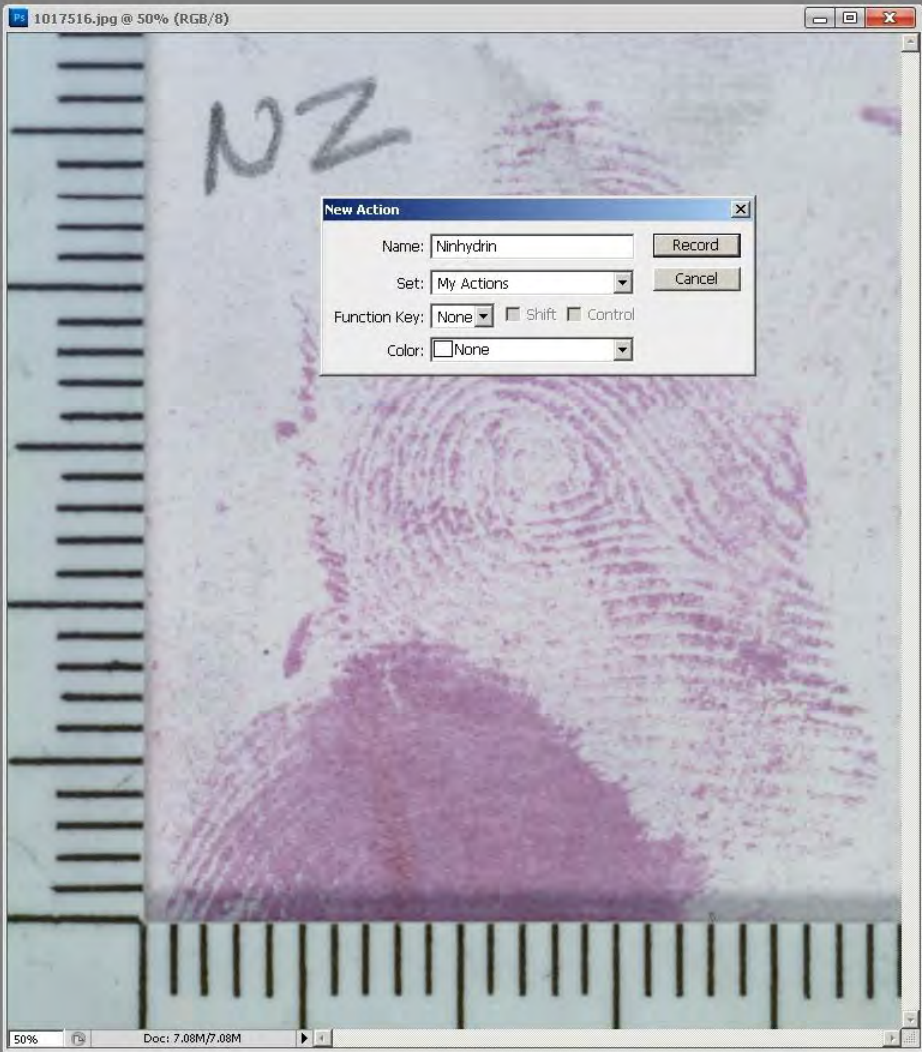




Return to the “Actions” pallet and click the “Stop Playing/Recording” button. This will now work to undo any single tool action



# Multiple step Actions

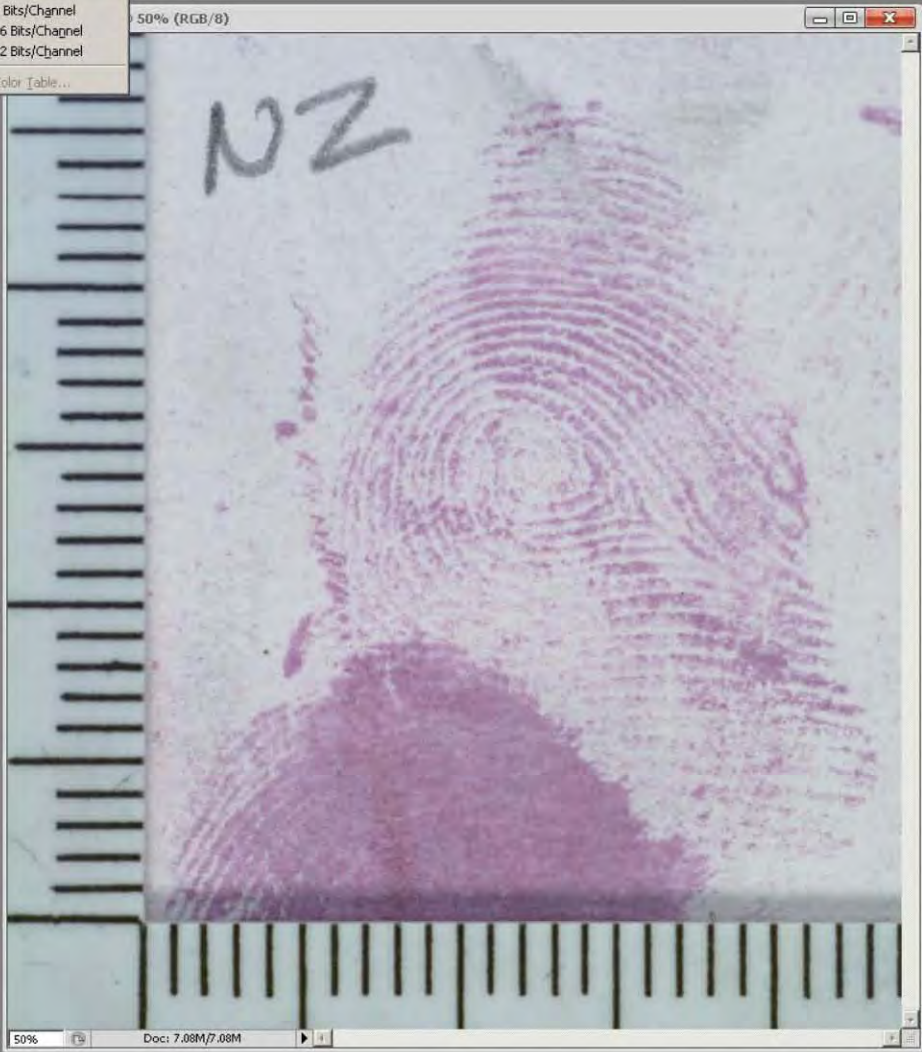


Multiple tools and adjustments may be included within a single action

To make a multiple step action, begin with the “Create New Action” dialog box, title the action, then click “Record”

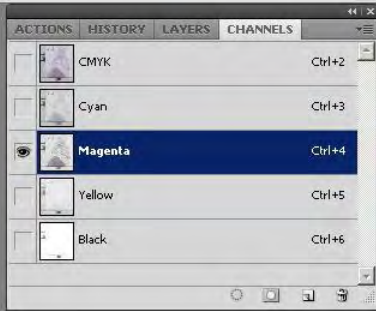
- Mode
  - Bitmap
  - Grayscale
  - Duotone
  - Indexed Color...
  - RGB Color
  - CMYK Color**
  - Lab Color
  - Multichannel
- 8 Bits/Channel
- 16 Bits/Channel
- 32 Bits/Channel
- Color Table...

Navigate to the "CMYK Color" menu



ACTIONS HISTORY LAYERS CHANNELS

- My Actions
  - Levels (Shift+F2)
  - Levels
  - Undo
  - Delete Current History State
  - Ninhydrin**



Open the "Channels" pallet and select "Magenta"

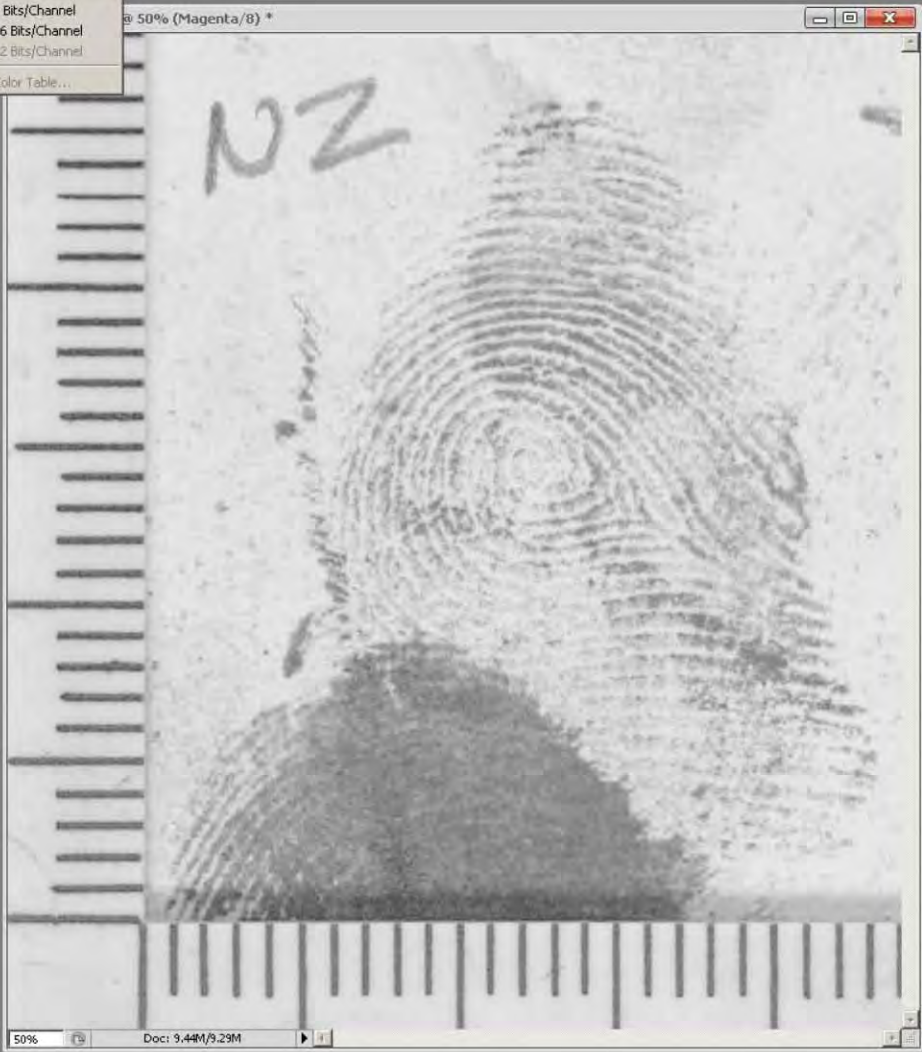
Mode

- Bitmap...
- Grayscale
- Duotone
- Indexed Color
- RGB Color
- CMYK Color
- Lab Color
- Multichannel
- 8 Bits/Channel
- 16 Bits/Channel
- 32 Bits/Channel
- Color Table...

Adjustments

- Auto Tone Shift+Ctrl+L
- Auto Contrast Alt+Shift+Ctrl+L
- Auto Color Shift+Ctrl+B
- Image Size... Alt+Ctrl+I
- Canvas Size... Alt+Ctrl+C
- Image Rotation
- Crop
- Trim...
- Reveal All
- Duplicate...
- Apply Image...
- Calculations...
- Variables
- Apply Data Set...
- Trap...

Navigate to the "Grayscale" menu



ACTIONS HISTORY LAYERS CHANNELS

<input type="checkbox"/>	CMYK	Ctrl+2
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyan	Ctrl+3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Magenta	Ctrl+4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yellow	Ctrl+5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black	Ctrl+6

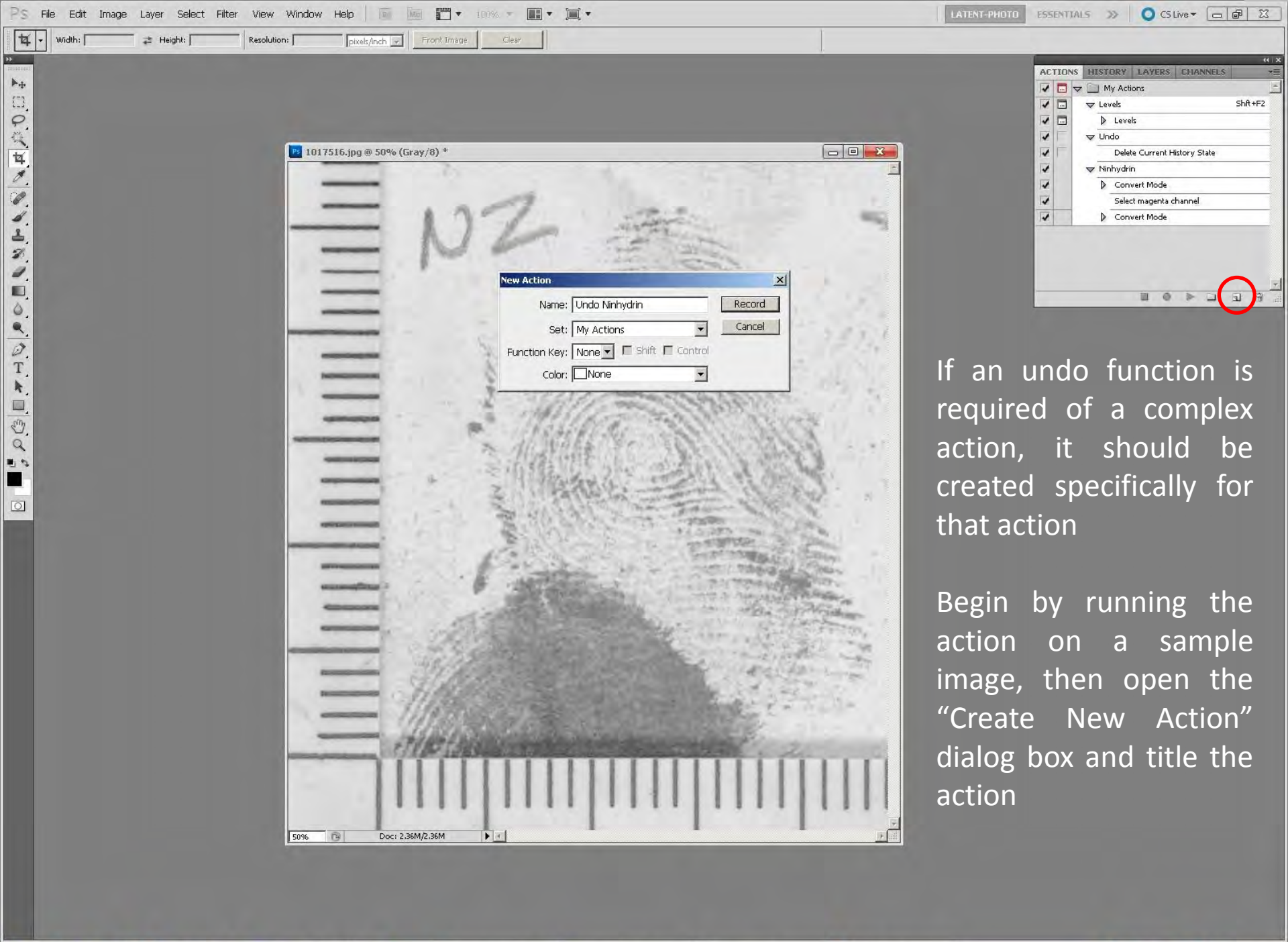


**ACTIONS** HISTORY LAYERS CHANNELS

- My Actions
  - Levels Shift+F2
    - Levels
  - Undo
    - Delete Current History State
  - Ninhydrin
    - Convert Mode
    - Select magenta channel
    - Convert Mode**

Stop Recording/Playing button (red circle)

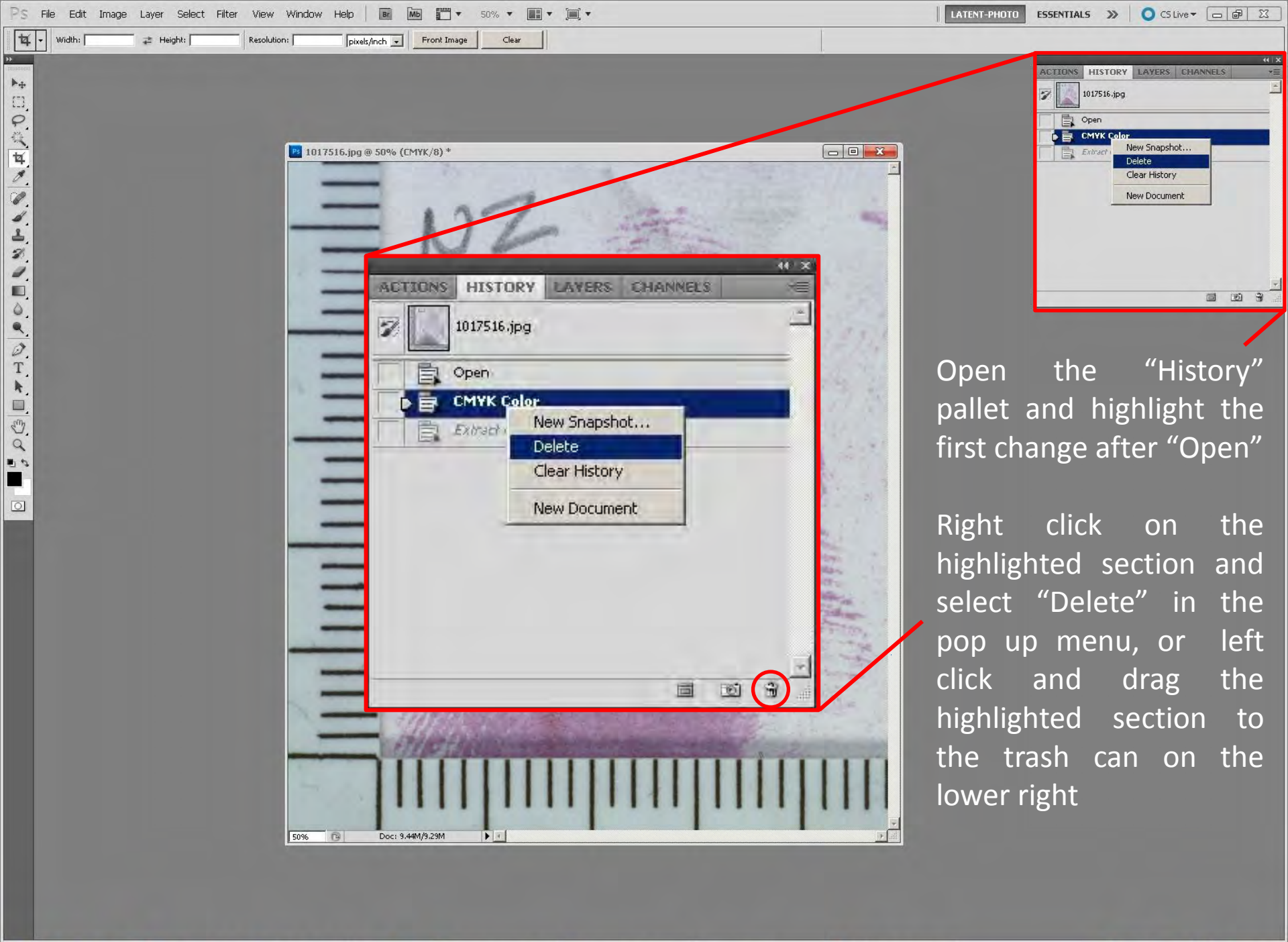
Return to the "Actions" pallet and click on the "Stop Recording/Playing" button to complete the action



If an undo function is required of a complex action, it should be created specifically for that action

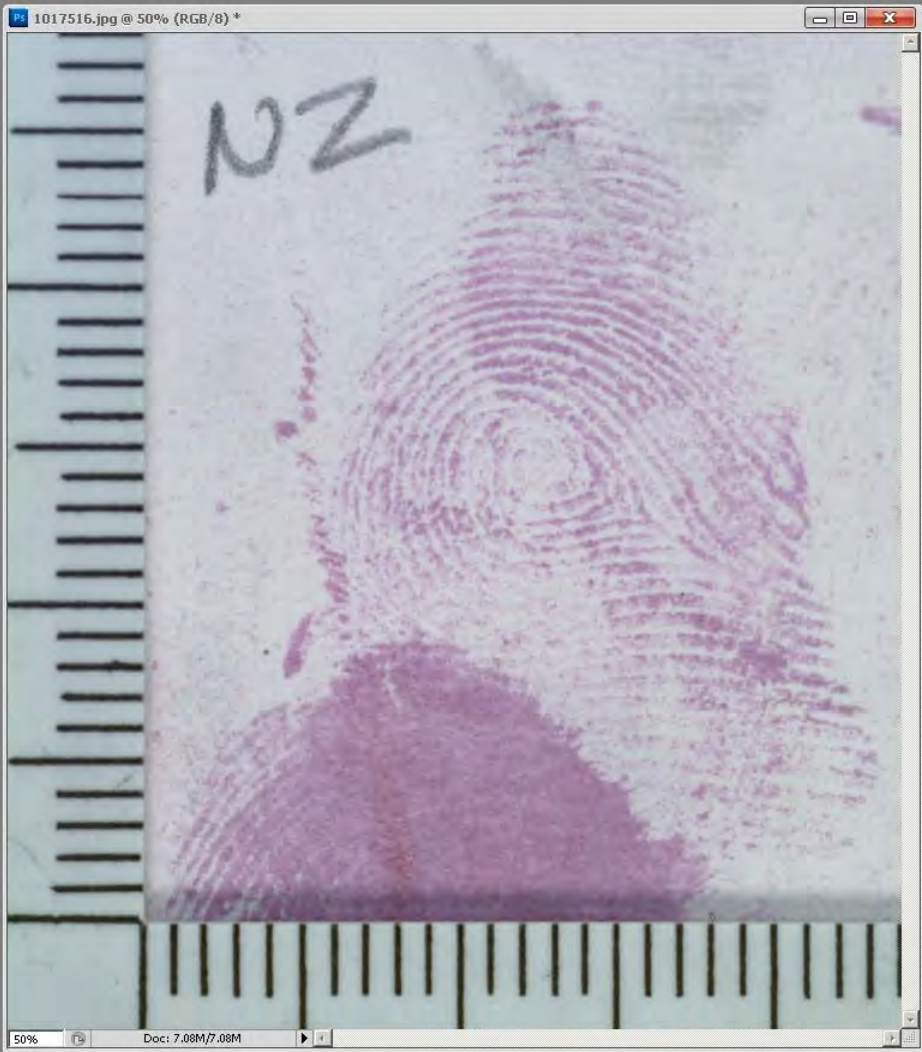
Begin by running the action on a sample image, then open the "Create New Action" dialog box and title the action





Open the "History" pallet and highlight the first change after "Open"

Right click on the highlighted section and select "Delete" in the pop up menu, or left click and drag the highlighted section to the trash can on the lower right



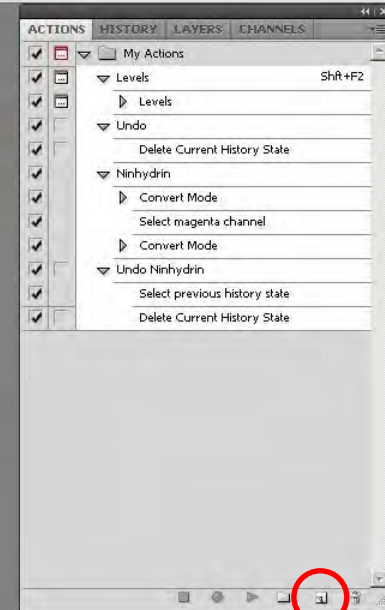
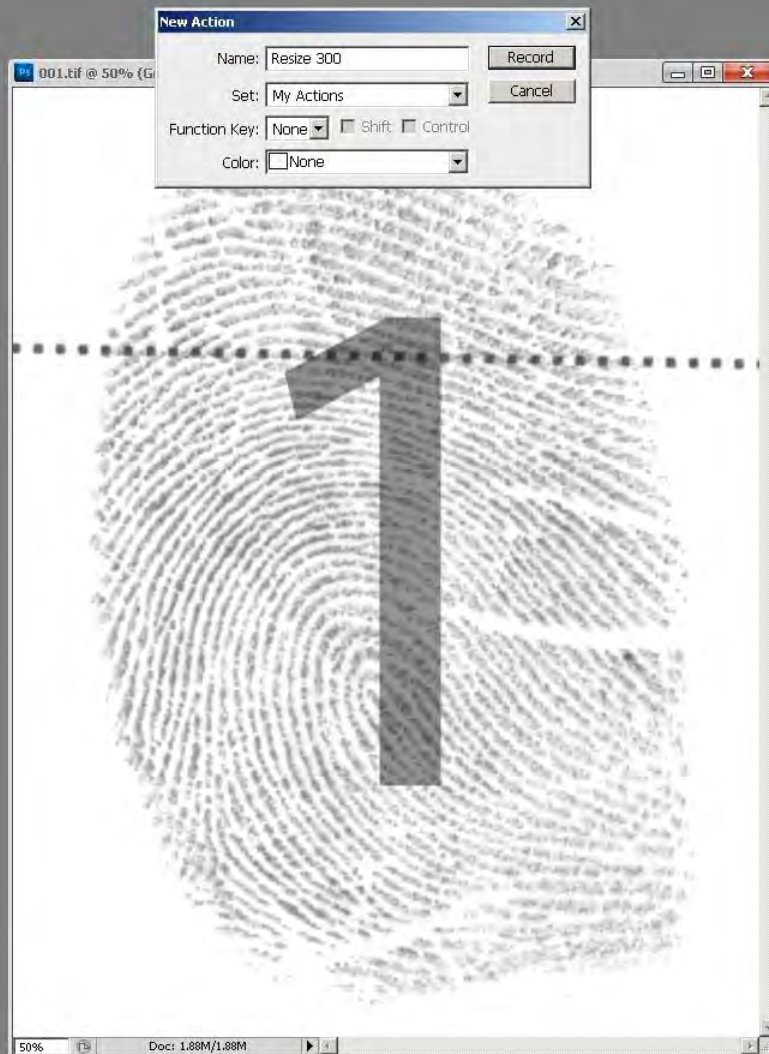
Return to the "Actions" pallet and click on the "Stop Recording/Playing" button to complete the action

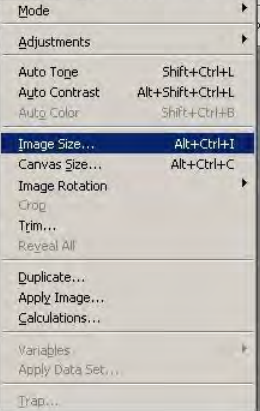
# Batch File Processing

The first step in batch file processing is to create a central action. The action can be simple or complex

This example will resize all images in a source folder, then save to a destination folder

Open a sample image then open the “Create New Action” dialog box. Name it “Resize 300”, then click “Record”





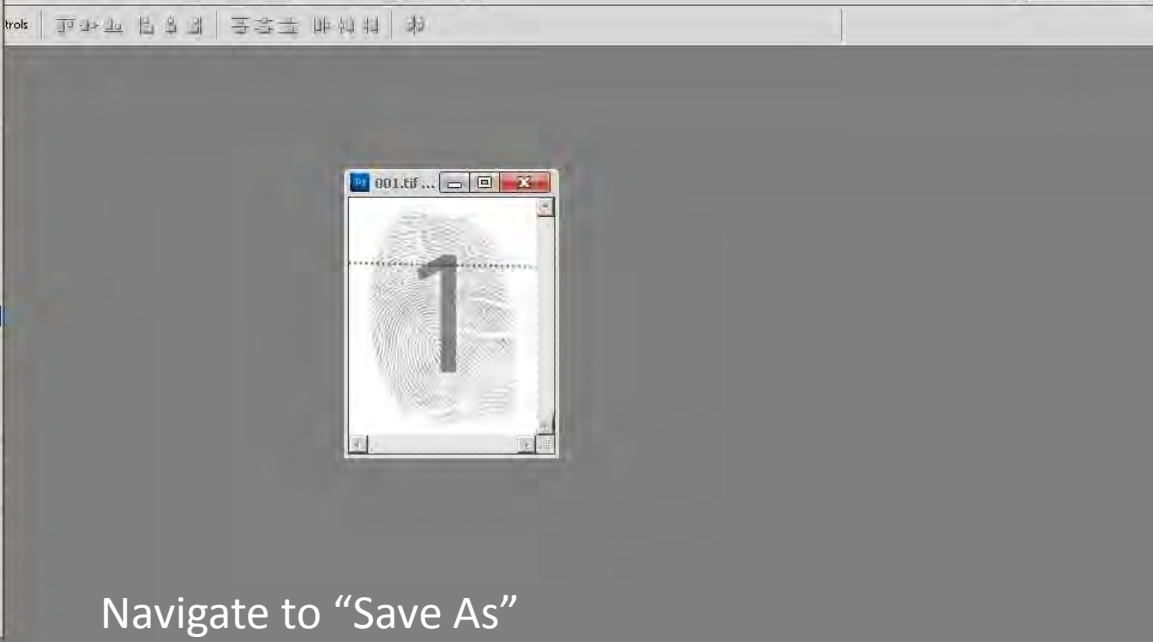
Navigate to "Image Size"



In the “Image Size” dialog box that opens, change the resolution to the required size and click “OK”



- New... Ctrl+N
- Open... Ctrl+O
- Browse in Bridge... Alt+Ctrl+O
- Browse in Mini Bridge...
- Open As... Alt+Shift+Ctrl+O
- Open As Smart Object...
- Open Recent
- Share My Screen...
- Create New Review...
- Device Central...
- Close Ctrl+W
- Close All Alt+Ctrl+W
- Close and Go To Bridge... Shift+Ctrl+W
- Save Ctrl+S
- Save As... Shift+Ctrl+S**
- Check In...
- Save for Web & Devices... Alt+Shift+Ctrl+S
- Revert F12
- Place...
- Import
- Export
- Automate
- Scripts
- File Info... Alt+Shift+Ctrl+I
- Print... Ctrl+P
- Print One Copy Alt+Shift+Ctrl+P
- Exit Ctrl+Q



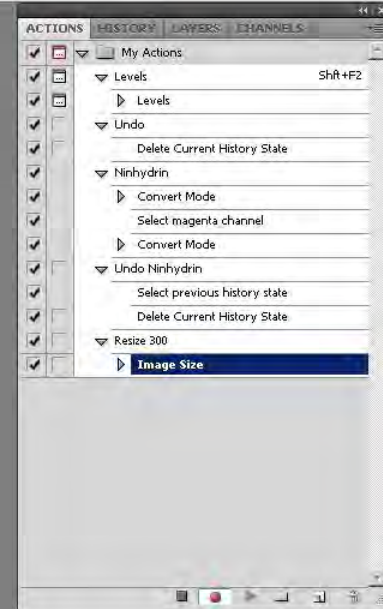
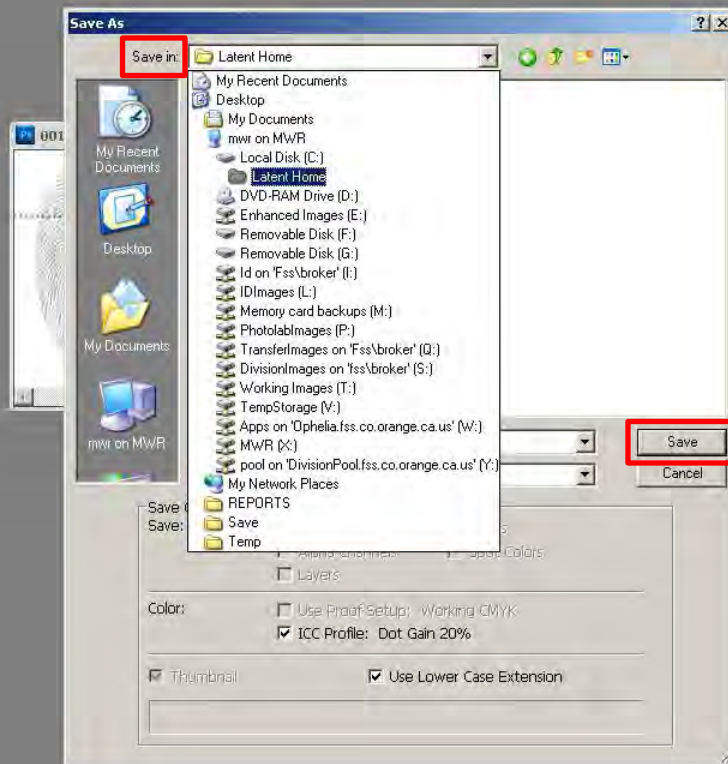
**ACTIONS** HISTORY LAYERS CHANNELS

- My Actions
  - Levels Shift+F2
  - Levels
  - Undo
    - Delete Current History State
  - Ninhydrin
    - Convert Mode
    - Select magenta channel
    - Convert Mode
  - Undo Ninhydrin
    - Select previous history state
    - Delete Current History State
  - Resize 300
  - Image Size**

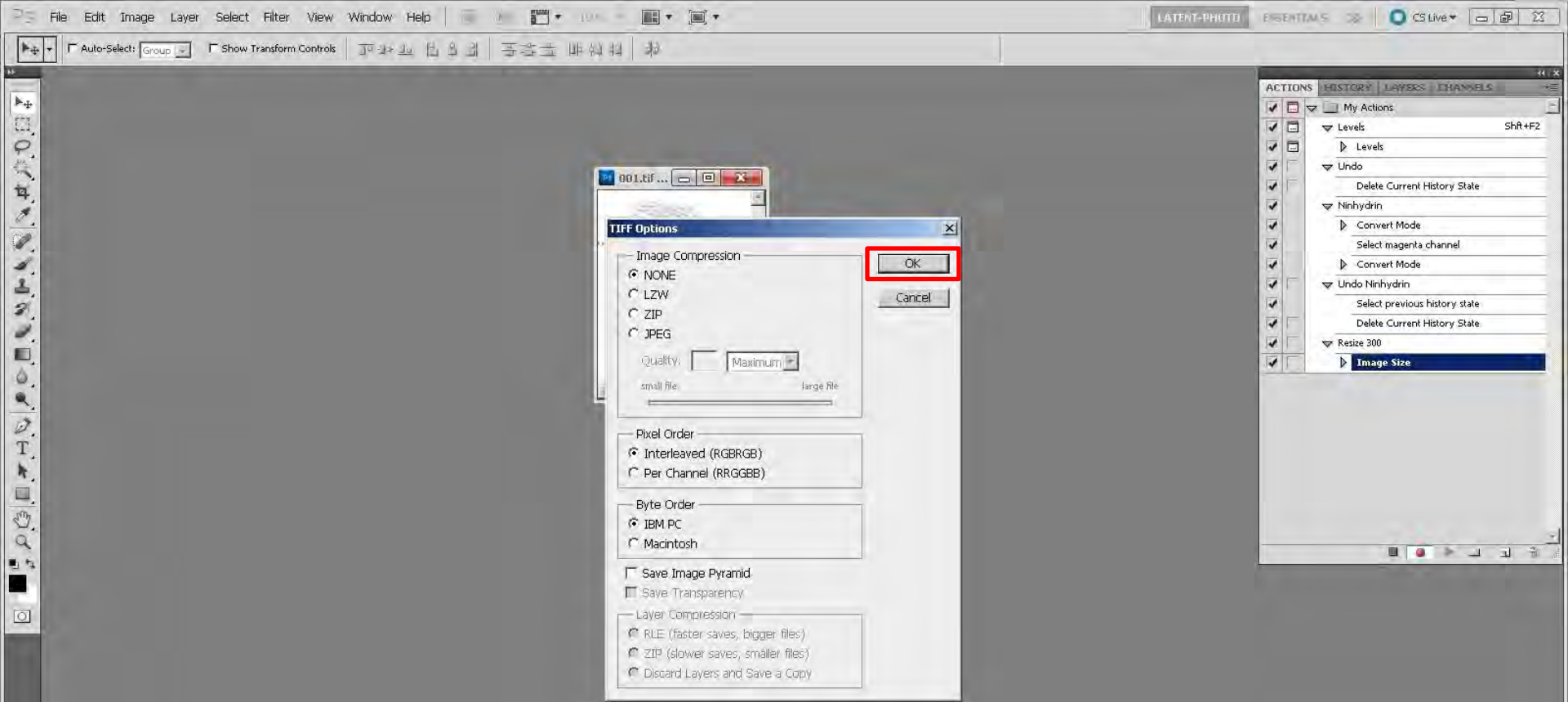
Navigate to "Save As"

In the “Save As” dialog box that opens, navigate to the target folder in the “Save In” drop down box and click “Save”

The folder can be located on any local or network drive that the host computer is connected to



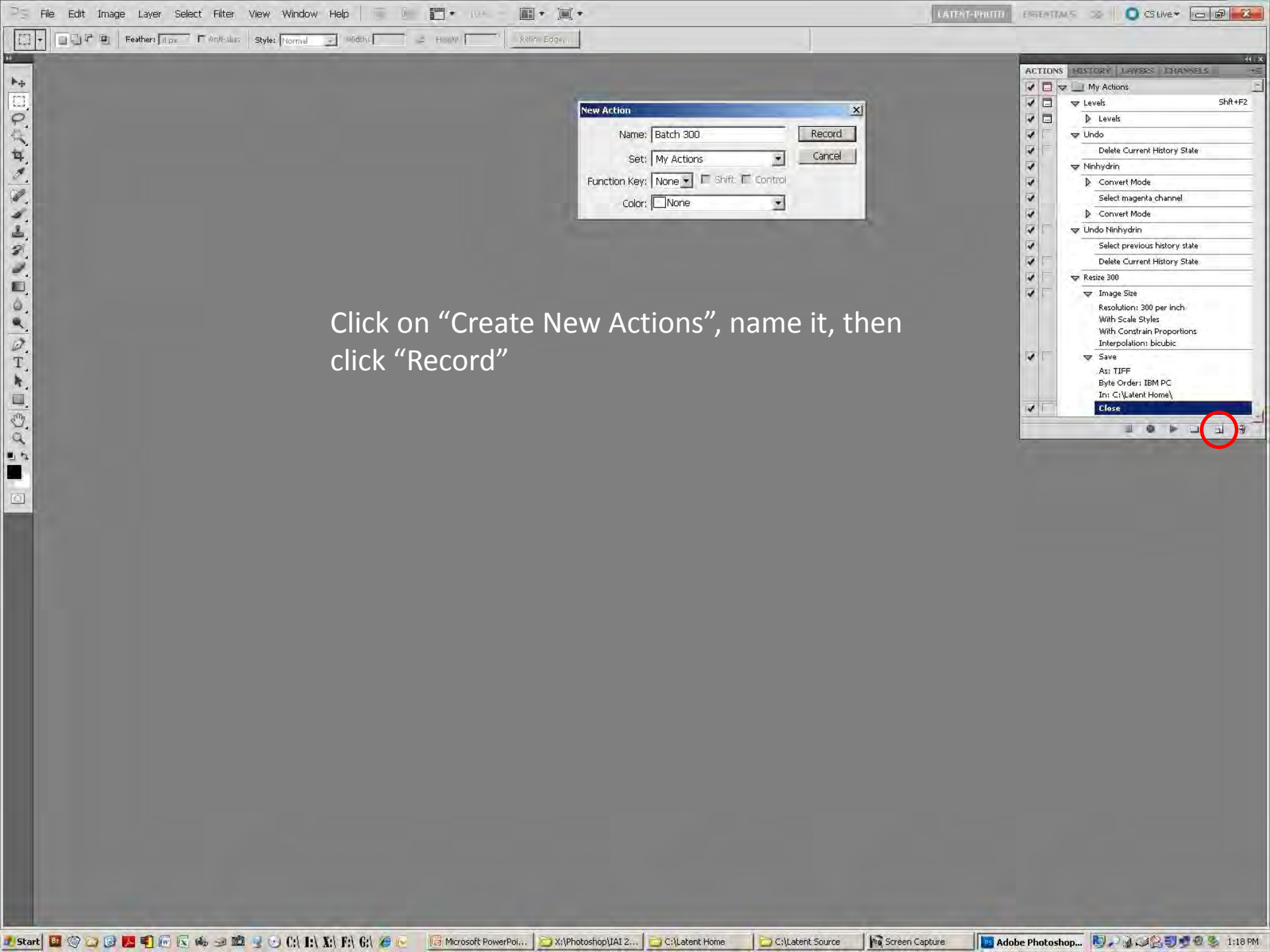




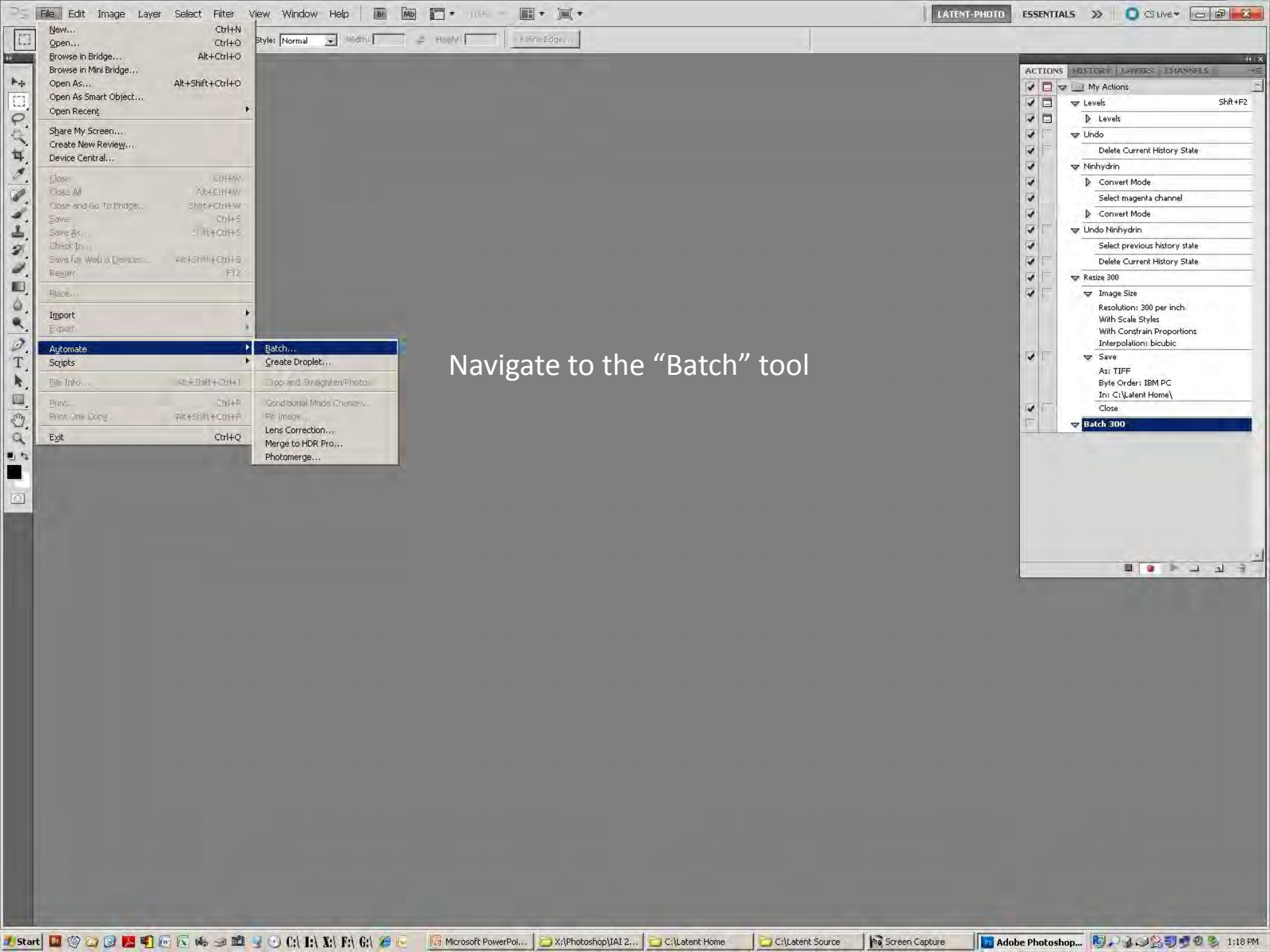
Depending on the file format that the image is being saved as, select the appropriate options and click “OK”



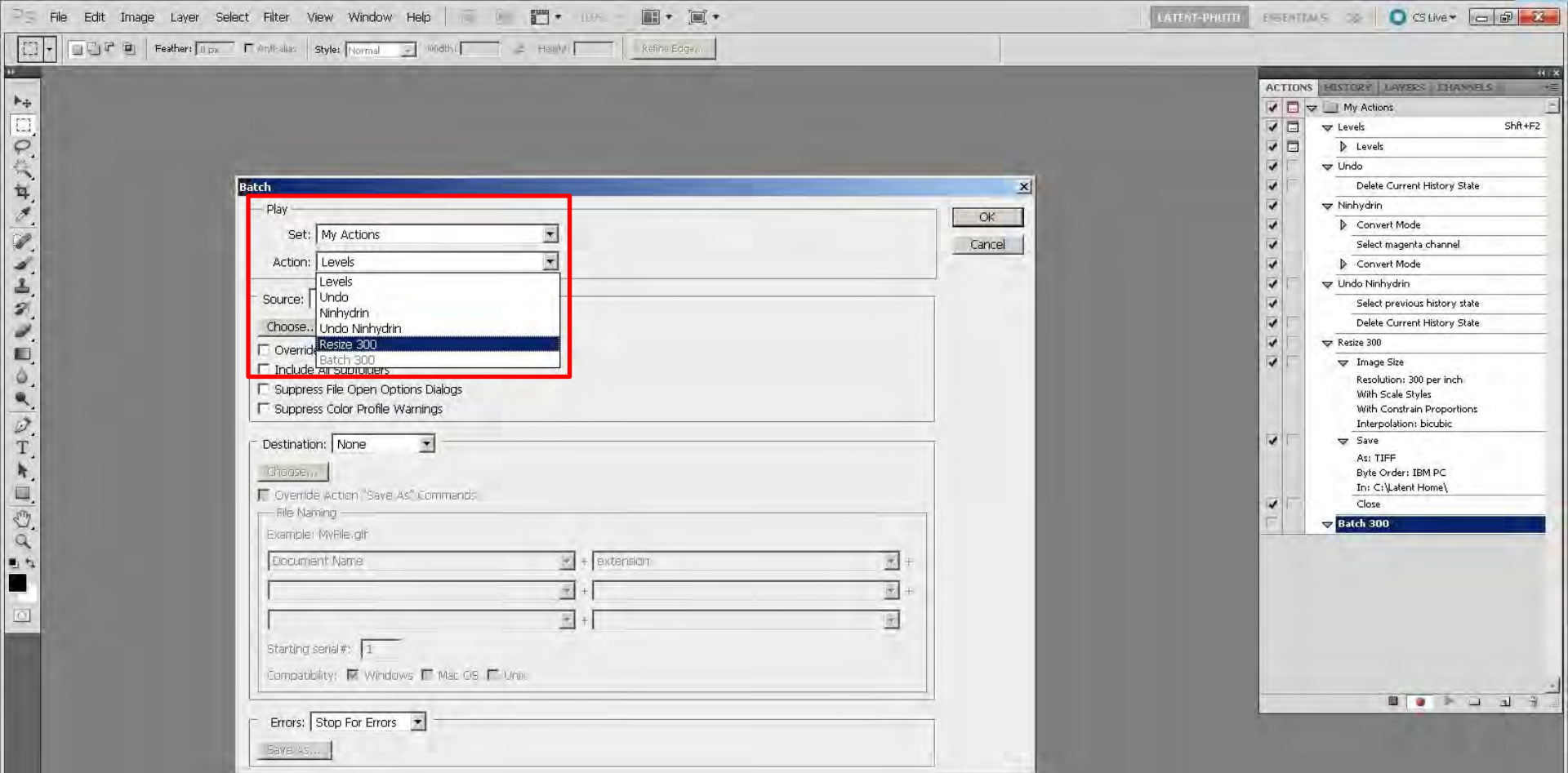
Return to the “Actions” pallet and click on the “Stop Recording/Playing” button to complete the action



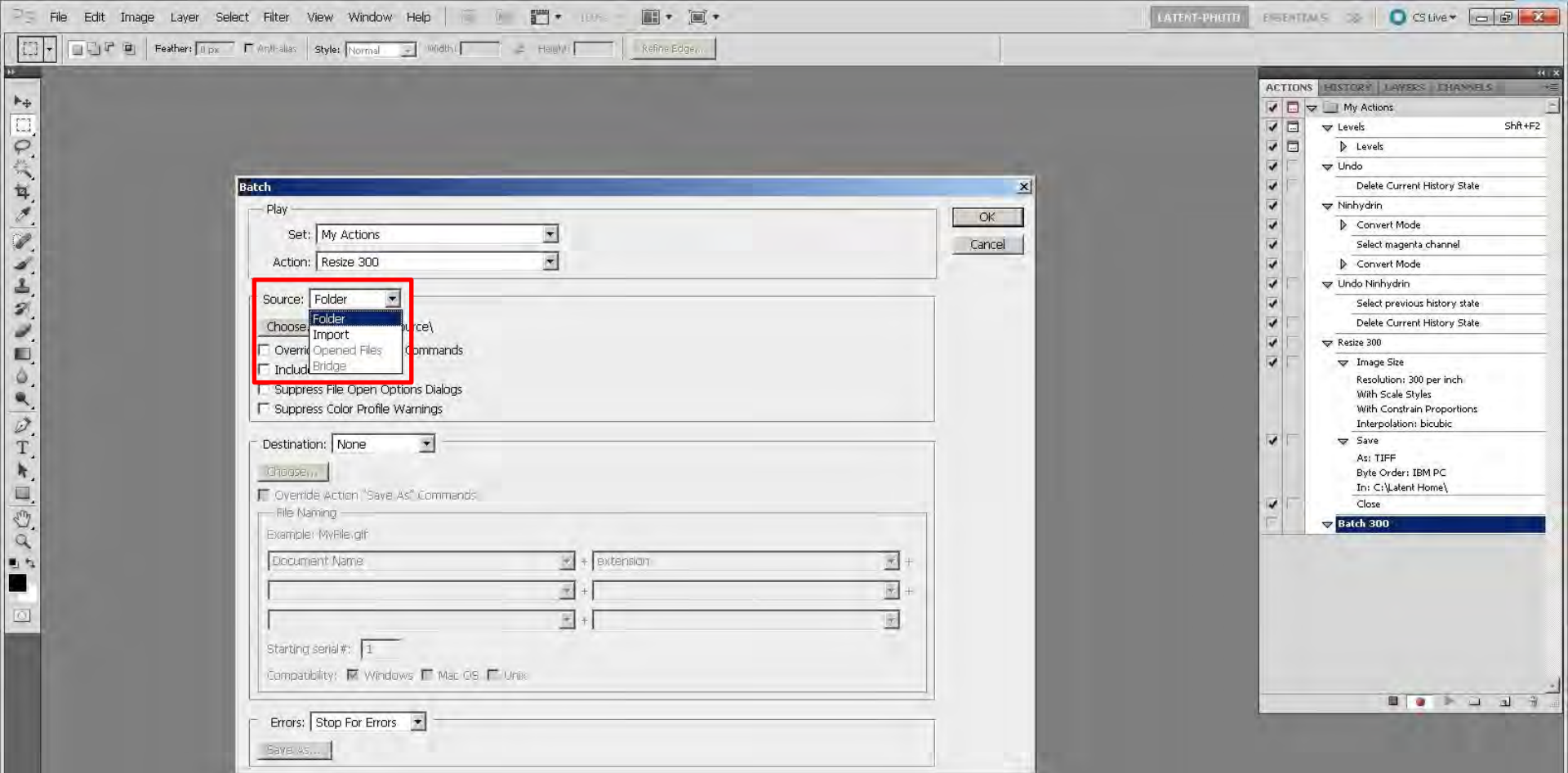
Click on “Create New Actions”, name it, then click “Record”



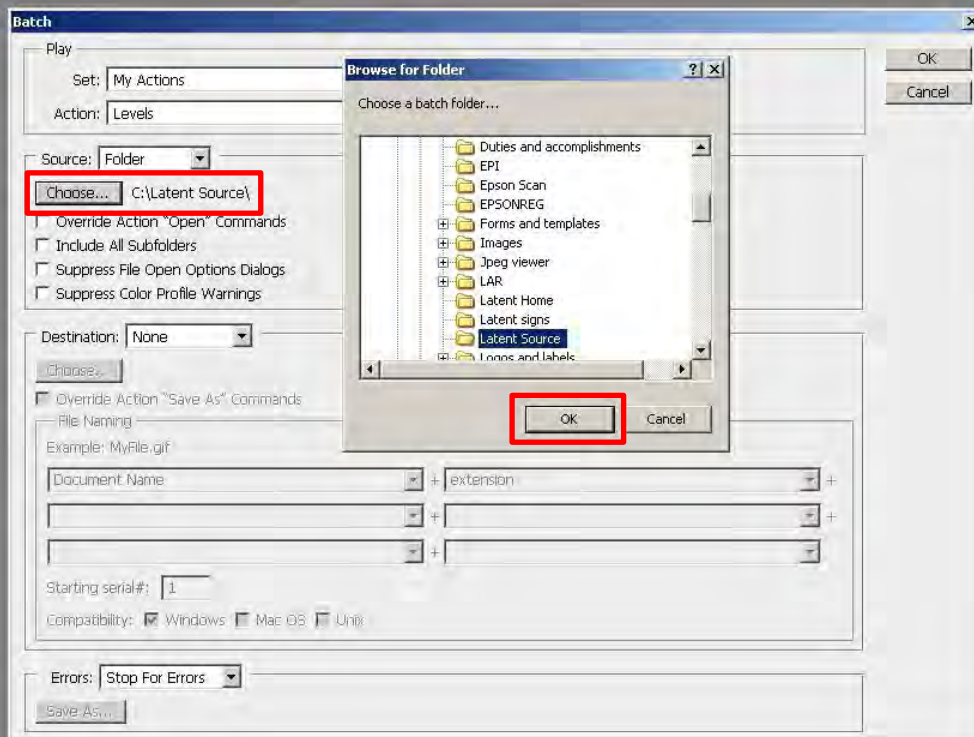
Navigate to the "Batch" tool



In the “Action” drop down box of the “Play” segment, select the core action that was just created

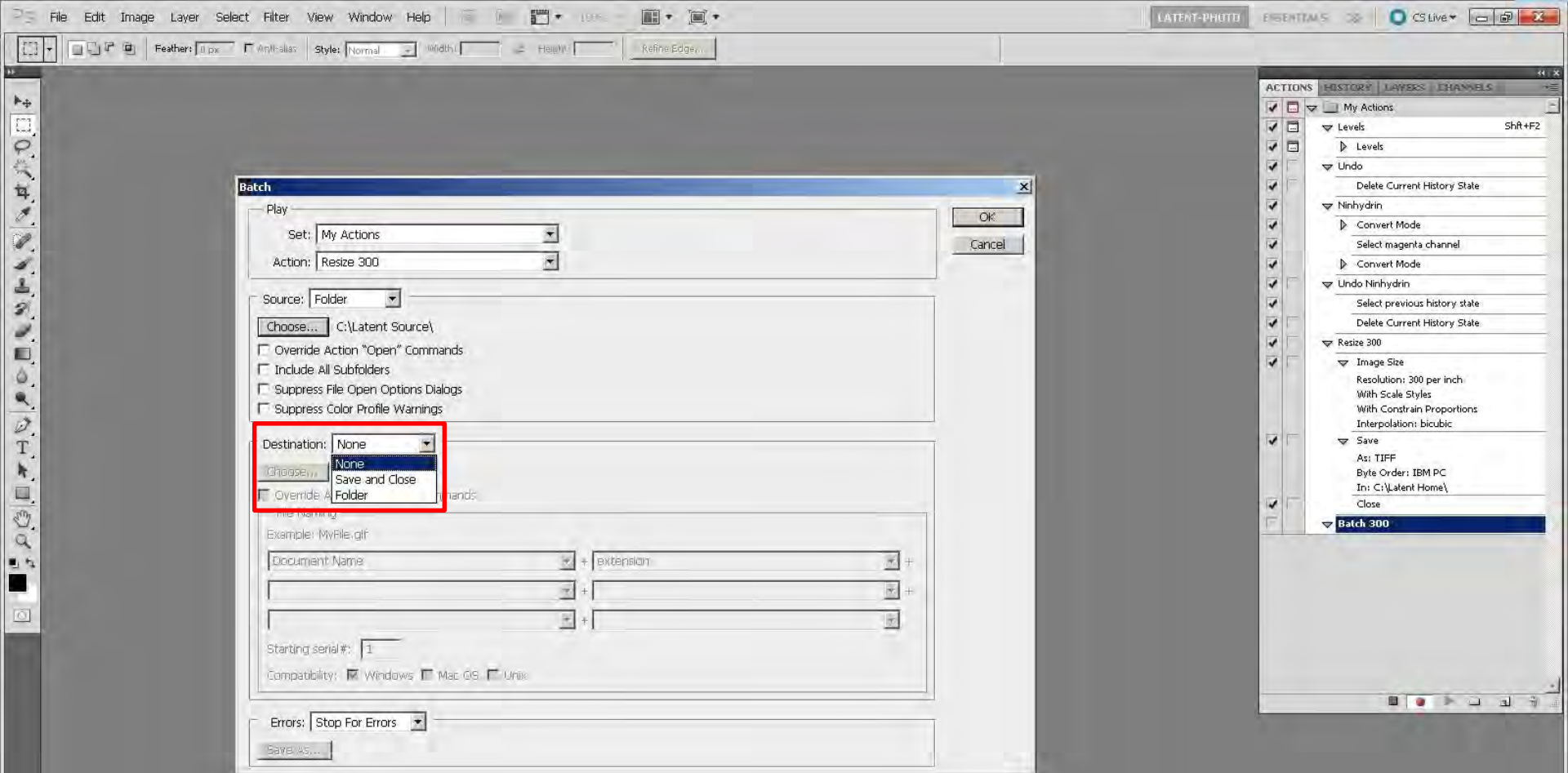


In the "Source" drop down box, select "Folder"



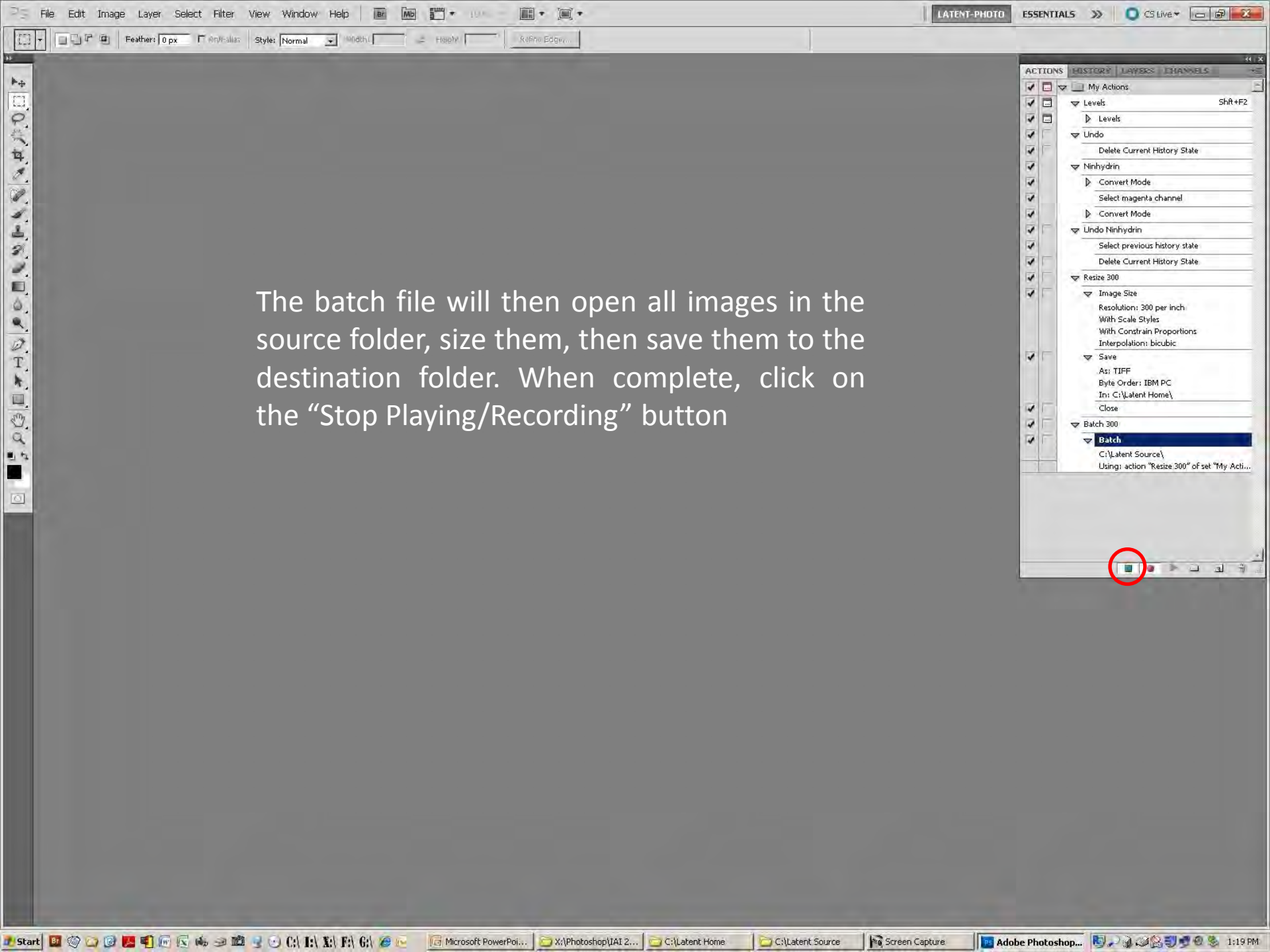
Click on the “Choose” button and navigate to the source folder in the “Browse For Folder” pop up window, then click “OK”

The folder can be located on any local or network drive that the host computer is connected to



In the "Destination" drop down box, select "None", then click "OK"





The batch file will then open all images in the source folder, size them, then save them to the destination folder. When complete, click on the "Stop Playing/Recording" button

**ACTIONS** HISTORY LAYERS CHANNELS

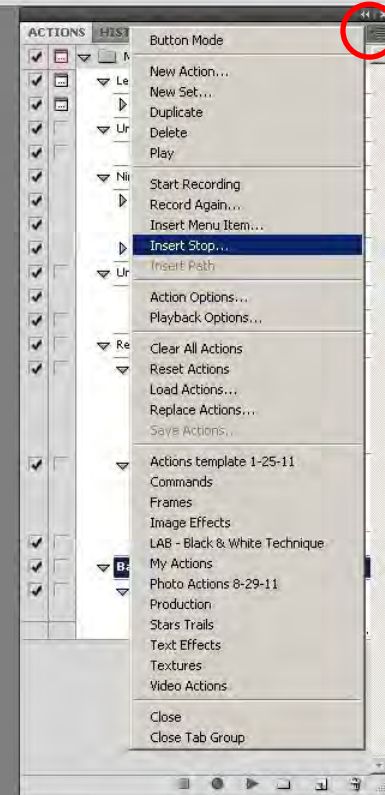
- My Actions
  - Levels SHIFT+F2
    - Levels
  - Undo
    - Delete Current History State
  - Ninhydrin
    - Convert Mode
    - Select magenta channel
    - Convert Mode
  - Undo Ninhydrin
    - Select previous history state
    - Delete Current History State
  - Resize 300
    - Image Size
      - Resolution: 300 per inch
      - With Scale Styles
      - With Constrain Proportions
      - Interpolation: bicubic
    - Save
      - .As: TIFF
      - Byte Order: IBM PC
      - In: C:\Latent Home\
      - Close
  - Batch 300
    - Batch**
      - C:\Latent Source\
      - Using: action "Resize 300" of set "My Acti...

□ ▶ ⏏ ↺

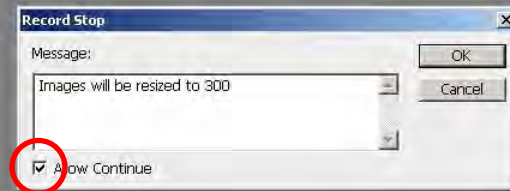
# Stop Functions

Stop functions are basically dialog boxes for the next step in an action. They can precede a tool with directions or alert a user to the functions of the next step

Highlight the action where you are inserting the stop, click on the inverted triangle at the top of the actions pallet, and navigate to "Insert Stop"



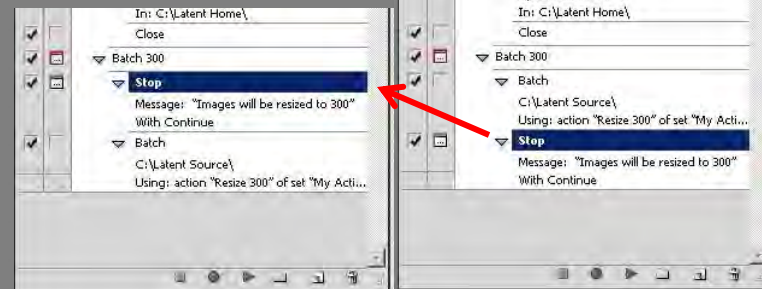
Type your text into the message box



Check the “Allow Continue” box then click “OK”. Checking the box allows the action to complete itself



Click and drag the stop to the beginning of the action or section within the action that the stop refers to



When you run an action with a stop, the message window will pop up with your text message



Click "Continue" and the action or step within the action will complete itself

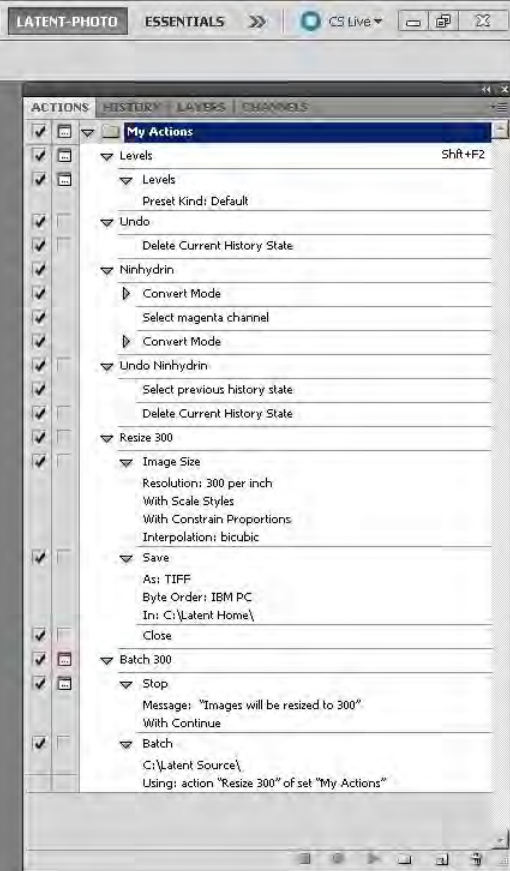
The stop will work with all single and multiple step actions



# Saving Actions

Actions can be saved as a reloadable set or as text

To save as a set, highlight the Action set as in "My Actions" at the top of the actions pallet





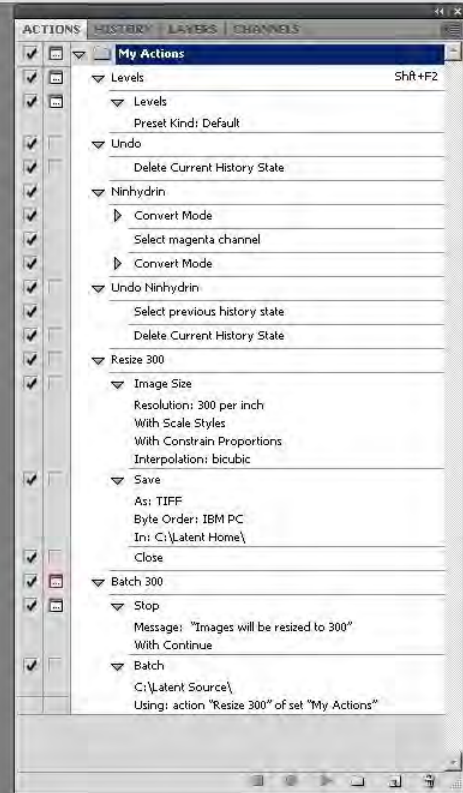
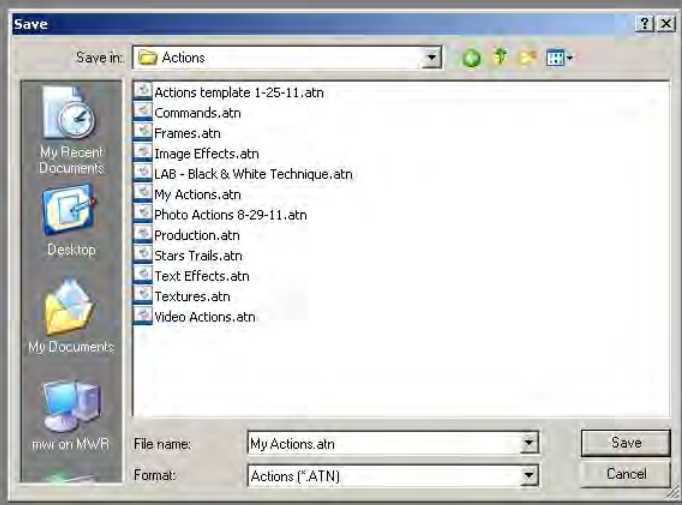


Click on the inverted triangle at the top of the actions pallet, then select "Save Actions"

ACTIONS HISTORY LAYERS

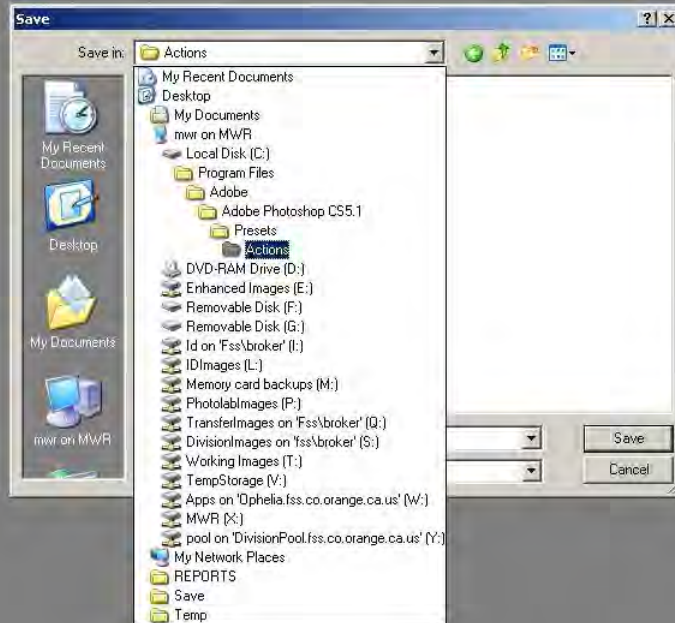
- My Actions
  - Levels
    - Levels
      - Preset Kind: Default
  - Undo
    - Delete Current Histo
  - Ninhydrin
    - Convert Mode
      - Select magenta char
    - Convert Mode
  - Undo Ninhydrin
    - Select previous histo
    - Delete Current Histo
  - Resize 300
    - Image Size
      - Resolution: 300 per
      - With Scale Styles
      - With Constrain Prop
      - Interpolation: bicub
    - Save
      - As: TIFF
      - Byte Order: IBM PC
      - In: C:\latent Home
      - Close
  - Batch 300
    - Stop
      - Message: "Images v
      - With Continue
    - Batch
      - C:\latent Source\
      - Using: action "Resiz

Button Mode  
 New Action...  
 New Set...  
 Duplicate  
 Delete  
 Play  
 Start Recording  
 Record Again...  
 Insert Menu Item...  
 Insert Loop...  
 Insert Path  
 Set Options...  
 Playback Options...  
 Clear All Actions  
 Reset Actions  
 Load Actions...  
 Replace Actions...  
 Save Actions...  
 Actions template 1-25-11  
 Commands  
 Frames  
 Image Effects  
 LAB - Black & White Technique  
 My Actions  
 Photo Actions 8-29-11  
 Production  
 Stars Trails  
 Text Effects  
 Textures  
 Video Actions  
 Close  
 Close Tab Group



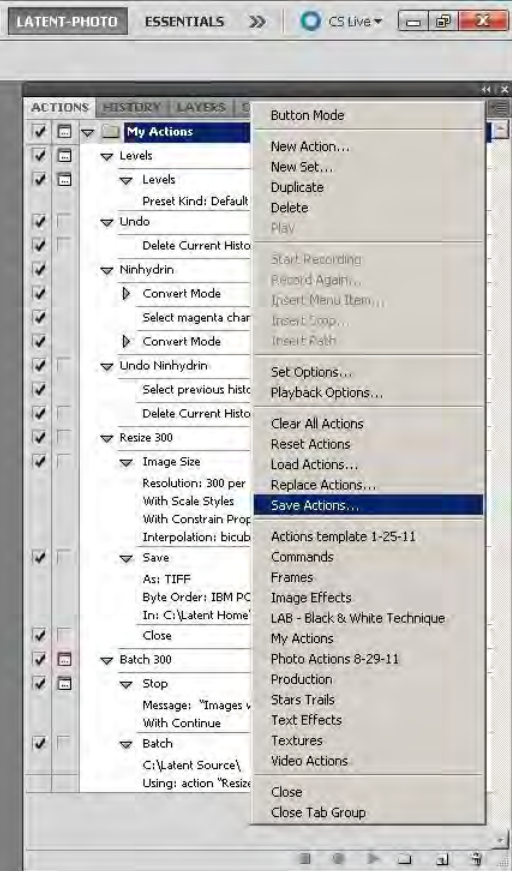
The "Save" dialog box will open allowing the actions to be saved to any location

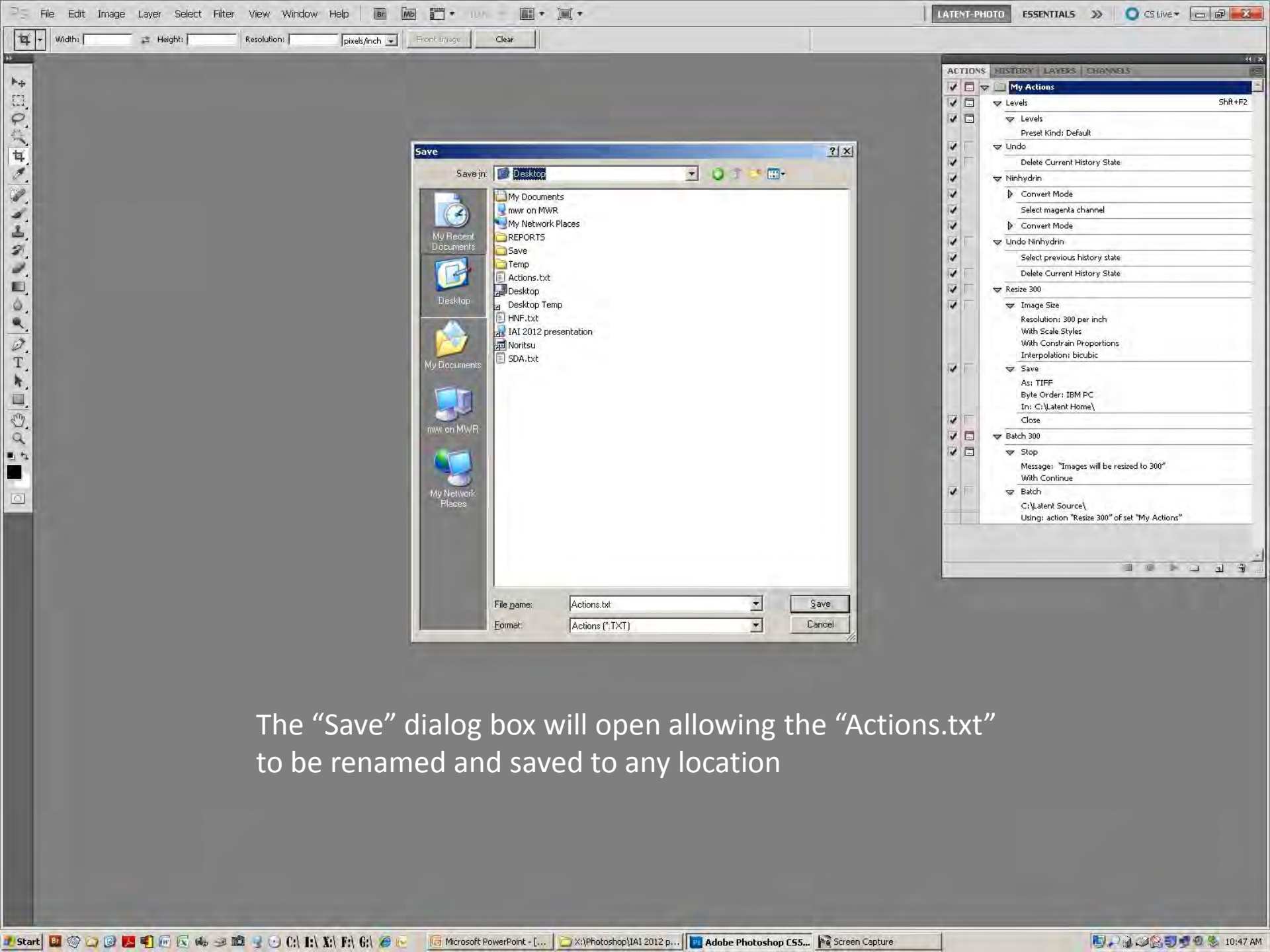
If you save the newly created actions to C:\Program Files\Adobe\Adobe Photoshop \_\_\_\Presets\Actions folder, they will be easily accessible to reload from the actions pallet drop down menu



Saving as text is an easy way to keep a record of what the actions do. This can be used to rebuild or modify actions, or to explain and reference the tools used. The history log information can also be cross referenced to the actions text

Highlight the Action set (My Actions). Hold down the Ctrl + Alt buttons, left click on the inverted triangle, then while holding down the left mouse button drag to "Save Actions", and release





The “Save” dialog box will open allowing the “Actions.txt” to be renamed and saved to any location



When you are finished creating and saving your actions, open the Actions pallet drop down menu (inverted triangle) and check "Button Mode"

**ACTIONS** HISTORY LAYE

- My Actions
  - Levels
    - Levels
    - Preset Kind:
  - Undo
    - Delete Curre
  - Ninhydrin
    - Convert Moc
    - Select mager
    - Convert Moc
  - Undo Ninhydrin
    - Select previo
    - Delete Curre
  - Resize 300
    - Image Size
      - Resolution: 3
      - With Scale SI
      - With Constrs
      - Interpolation
    - Save
      - As: TIFF
      - Byte Order:
      - In: C:\Latent
      - Close
  - Batch 300
    - Stop
      - Message: "Tr
      - With Continu
    - Batch
      - C:\Latent So
      - Using: actor

Button Mode

- New Action...
- New Set...
- Duplicate
- Delete
- Play
- Start Recording
- Record Again...
- Insert Menu Item...
- Insert Stop...
- Insert Path
- Action Options...
- Playback Options...
- Clear All Actions
- Reset Actions
- Load Actions...
- Replace Actions...
- Save Actions...
- Actions template 1-25-11
- Commands
- Frames
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- Photo Actions 8-29-11
- Production
- Stars Trails
- Text Effects
- Textures
- Video Actions
- Close
- Close Tab Group



ACTIONS HISTO LAYER CHAN

Levels	Shr+F2
Undo	
Ninhydrin	Ctrl+F2
Undo Ninhydrin	
Resize 300	
Batch 300	

The actions will convert to buttons and the toolbar will disappear from the bottom of the Actions pallet

ACTIONS HISTORY LAYERS CHANNELS

Levels	Shr+F2	Undo
Ninhydrin	Ctrl+F2	Undo Ninhydrin
Resize 300		Batch 300

The size of the Actions pallet can then be reduced by dragging the left and lower edges of the window to fit the buttons

# Things to Remember



Actions don't break....most issues occur with actions that include batch files that span networks or folders. If you have an action that suddenly stops working, check the network or the origin/destination folders for a disconnect, or a change in the path

Actions can access scanners under File>Import

When creating actions or saving as text, the action will reflect the current Units and Rulers settings in Photoshop preferences

In CS5, actions can record the print and printer driver data, allowing a one button print process

In CS4 and earlier, actions can only call up the default printer, but not the printer driver data (the data would have to be preset)

On a computer with access to more than one printer, turning the dialog box on to pause the action would allow the printer to be selected and the driver options set before continuing

The Internet is a good source for premade actions and tutorials

“Photoshop CS3 All in one Desk Reference For Dummies” Wiley Publishing

# CS5 and CS3 printer actions

## Set: Size and Print to DS80 for CS5

Action: Size and Print to DS80  
Flatten Image  
Image Size  
Resolution: 300 per inch  
With Scale Styles  
With Constrain Proportions  
Interpolation: bicubic  
Convert Mode  
To: grayscale mode  
Print Print Options of current document  
Printer Options  
With Color Management  
Intent: relative colorimetric  
false  
Printer Name: "\\IDPROCESSING\DS80"  
Print Output Options  
Without Caption  
Without Calibration Bars  
Without Registration Marks  
Without Corner Crop Marks  
Without Center Crop Marks  
Without Labels  
Without Negative  
Without Emulsion Down  
false  
Background Color: RGB color  
Red: 255  
Green: 255  
Blue: 255  
Border: 0 inches  
Bleed: 0 inches  
300 pixels  
With Include Vector Data  
Page Position: centered  
Left: 0.076 inches  
Top: 0.056 inches  
Print Scale: 100%  
<unknown>  
(data)...  
Print One Copy  
Close  
Saving: no

## Set: Size and Print to DS80 for CS3

Action: Size and Print to DS80  
Flatten Image  
Image Size  
Resolution: 300 per inch  
With Scale Styles  
With Constrain Proportions  
Interpolation: bicubic  
Convert Mode  
To: grayscale mode  
Set <unknown> of current document  
To: Print Options  
<unknown>  
300 pixels  
100%  
<unknown>  
"DS80\_0101"  
false  
(data)...  
Close  
Saving: no

# History log

Actions text, with default settings

```
Action: Rotate 90 CW
        Rotate first document
        Angle: 90°

Action: Crop
        Crop
        To: rectangle
        Top: 0.53 mm
        Left: 0.56 mm
        Bottom: 13.84 mm
        Right: 15.93 mm
        Angle: 0°
        Target Width: 0 pixels
        Target Height: 0 pixels
        Target Resolution: 0 per cm

Action: Laser
        Convert Mode
        To: grayscale mode
        Invert

Action: Shadow/Highlight
        Shadow/Highlight
        Shadow: Parameters
        Amount: 50%
        Tone Width: 50%
        Radius: 30
        Highlight: Parameters
        Amount: 0%
        Tone Width: 50%
        Radius: 30
        Black Clip: 0.01
        White Clip: 0.01
        Contrast: 0
        Brightness: 0

Action: Levels
        Levels
        Adjustment: levels adjustment list
        levels adjustment
        Channel: current channel
        Gamma: 0.99
```

History log set to “Detailed”, using Actions

```
Play action " Rotate 90 CW" of set "Temp actions"
Play action " Crop" of set "Temp actions"
Play action " Laser" of set "Temp actions"
Play action " Shadow/Highlight" of set "Temp actions"
Play action " Levels" of set "Temp actions"
```

Even with the history log set to “Detailed”, single and multiple step actions only show up as a single line with no indication of the tool settings

Using the printed Actions text will show the full content of the individual action

History log set to “Detailed”, using tools

```
Rotate Canvas
        Rotate first document
        Angle: 90°

Crop
        Crop
        To: rectangle
        Top: 40.92 mm
        Left: 82.55 mm
        Bottom: 420.17 mm
        Right: 413.82 mm
        Angle: 0°
        Target Width: 0 pixels
        Target Height: 0 pixels
        Target Resolution: 0 per cm

Grayscale
        Convert Mode
        To: grayscale mode

Invert
        Invert

Shadows/Highlights
        Shadow/Highlight
        Shadow: Parameters
        Amount: 35%
        Tone Width: 27%
        Radius: 41
        Highlight: Parameters
        Amount: 0%
        Tone Width: 50%
        Radius: 30
        Black Clip: 0.01
        White Clip: 0.01
        Contrast: 67
        Brightness: -18

Levels
        Levels
        Preset Kind: Custom
        Adjustment: levels adjustment list
        levels adjustment
        Channel: current channel
        Input: 36, 219
        Gamma: 1.19
```