

Editing Images – Using A Mask

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This is simply an overview of how to use different types of masking techniques to edit images in Photoshop.

Firstly though, what is a mask ? Simply, it is just a means to isolate, or to select subjects or backgrounds, or select certain parts of a scene for editing purposes.

Below, are some screen-shots showing how to do this. They start with very simple techniques and progress to those which take a little more time and effort.

Note : This guide is not meant to be exhaustive and presumes you have a knowledge of most of the tools mentioned. Indeed, I am only showing quite simple examples.

Image 1 - This first image simply shows the original image whereby I wish to isolate parts of the image to enhance the rest.



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Image 2 – In this example, I am using the most basic tool – Magic Wand – to isolate the sky area.

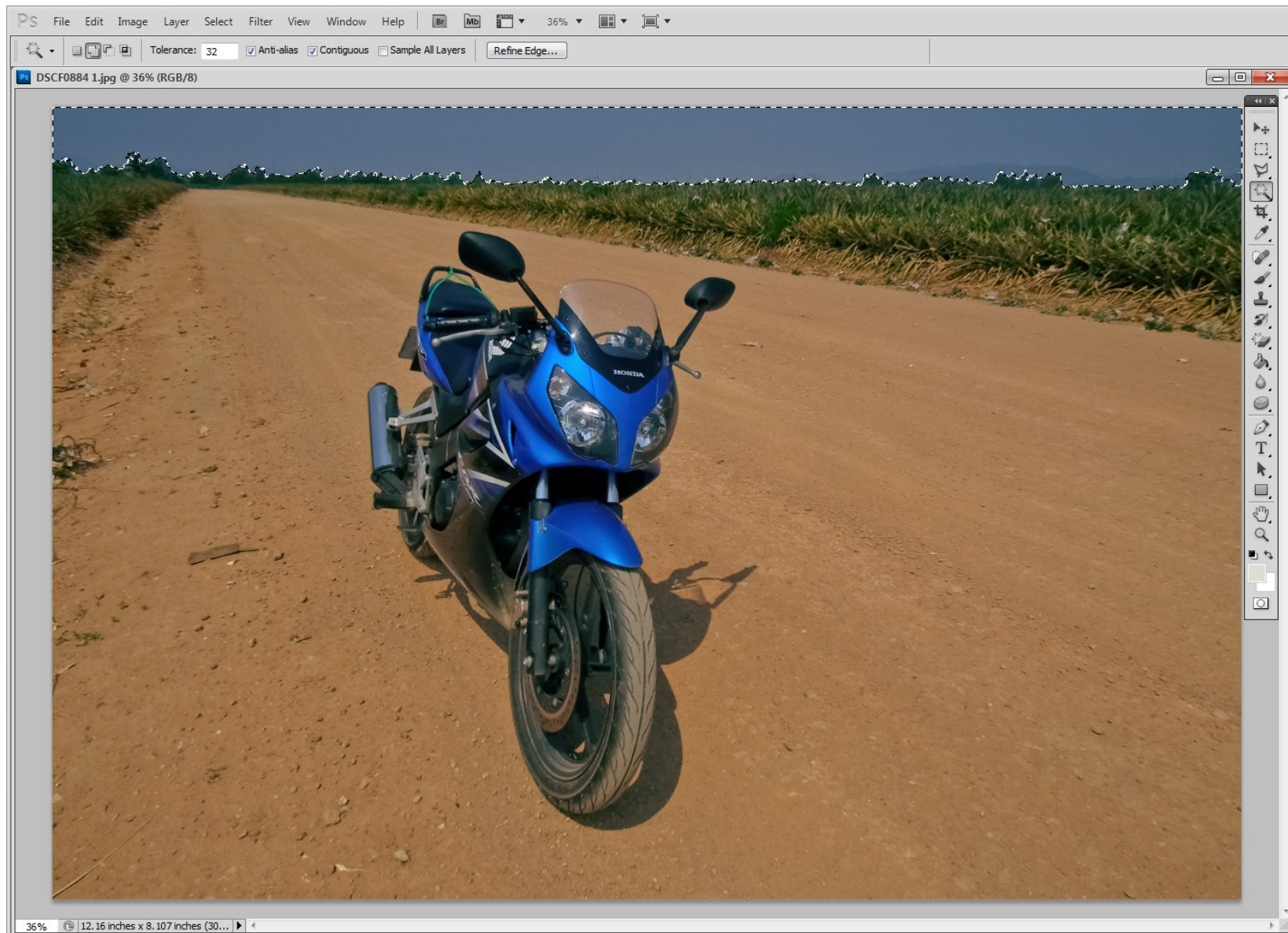


Image 3 – The first reason for selecting the sky area, is it is 'noisy'. Once selected, I am simply going to apply Despeckle (twice) to take some of the noise out.

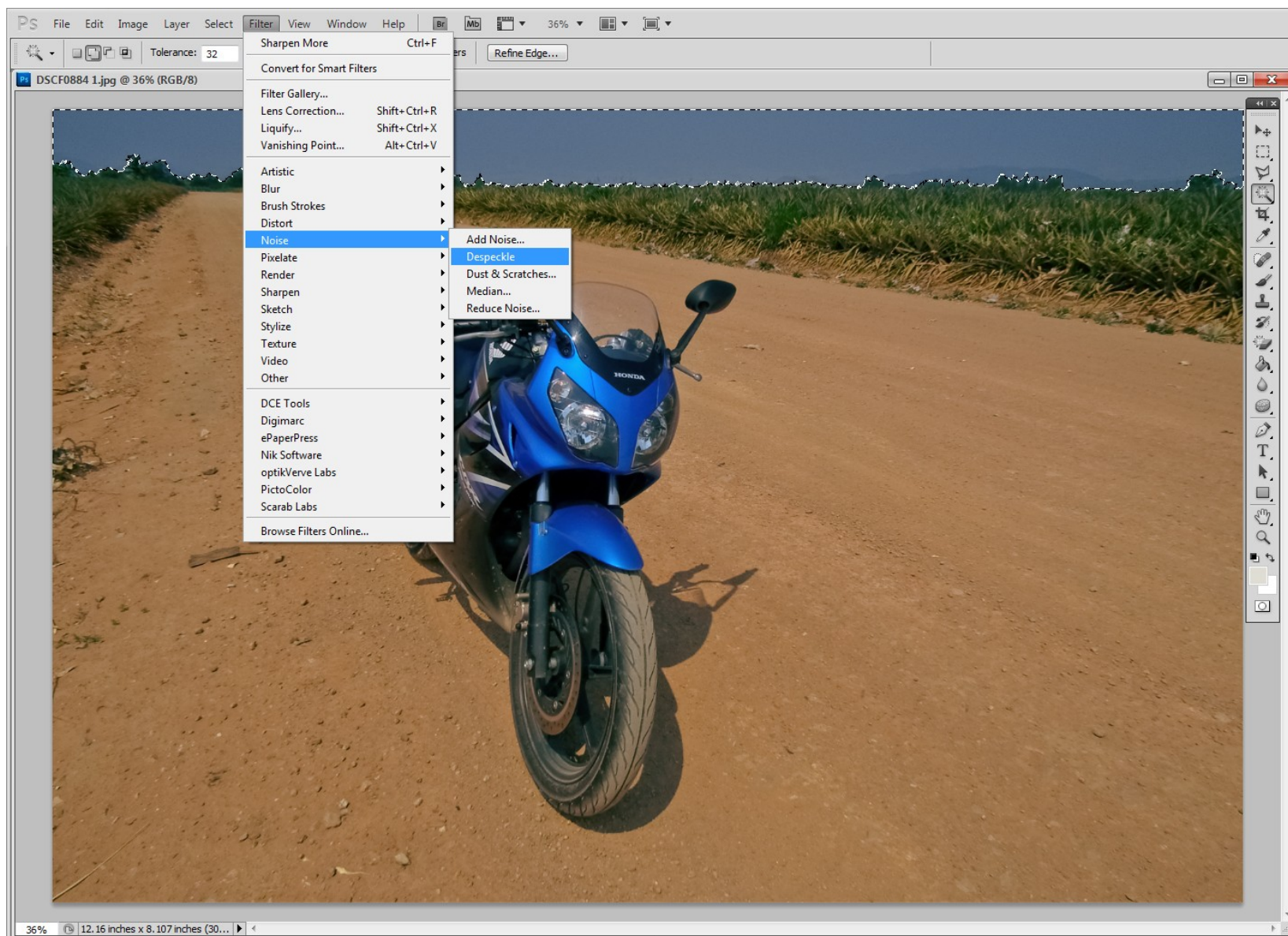


Image 4 – My next step is to invert my selection so I can work on areas other than the sky.

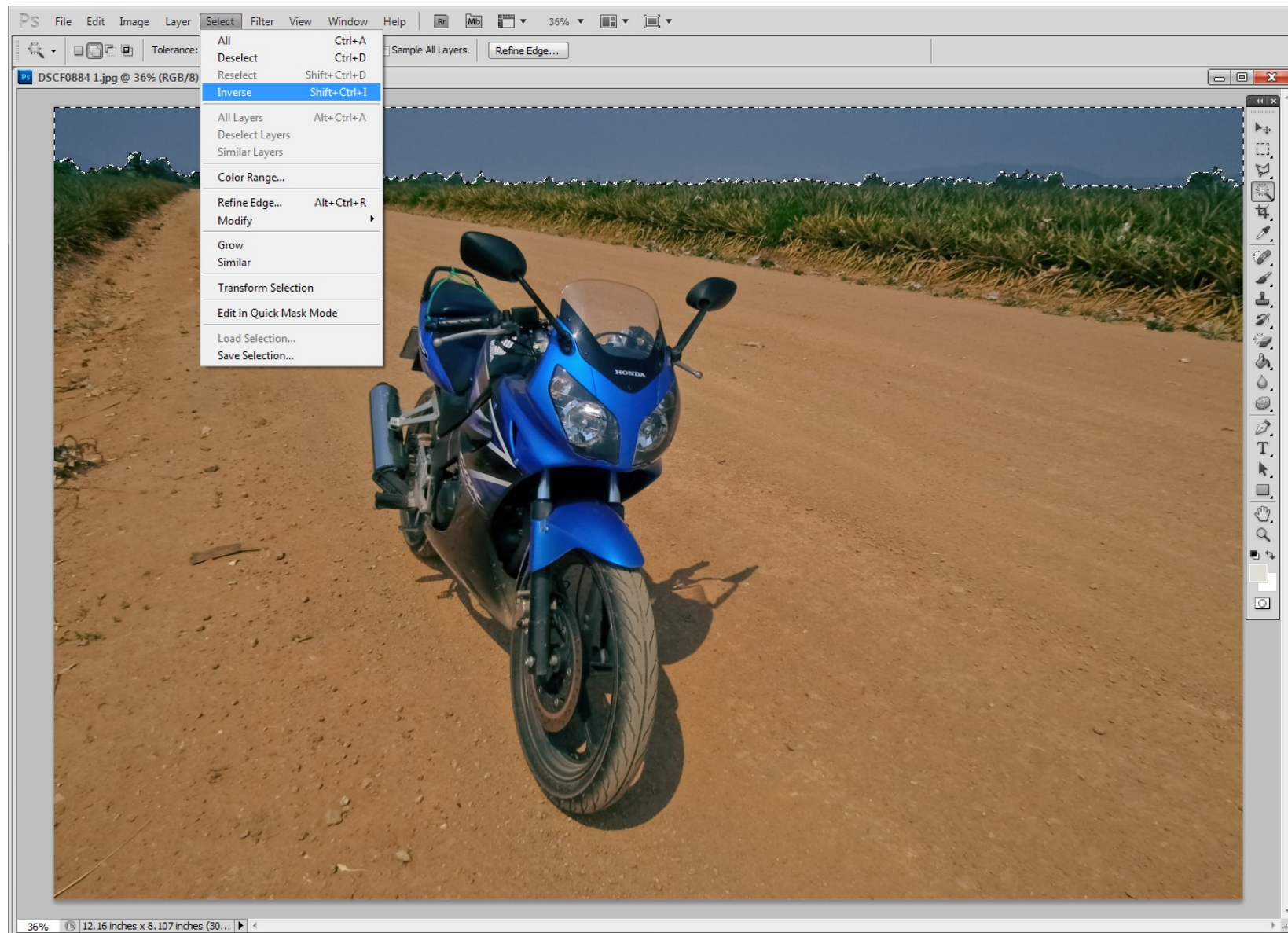


Image 5 – With my selection inverted, I have made some simple adjustments to the levels and contrast, and also sharpening, without affecting the sky area.

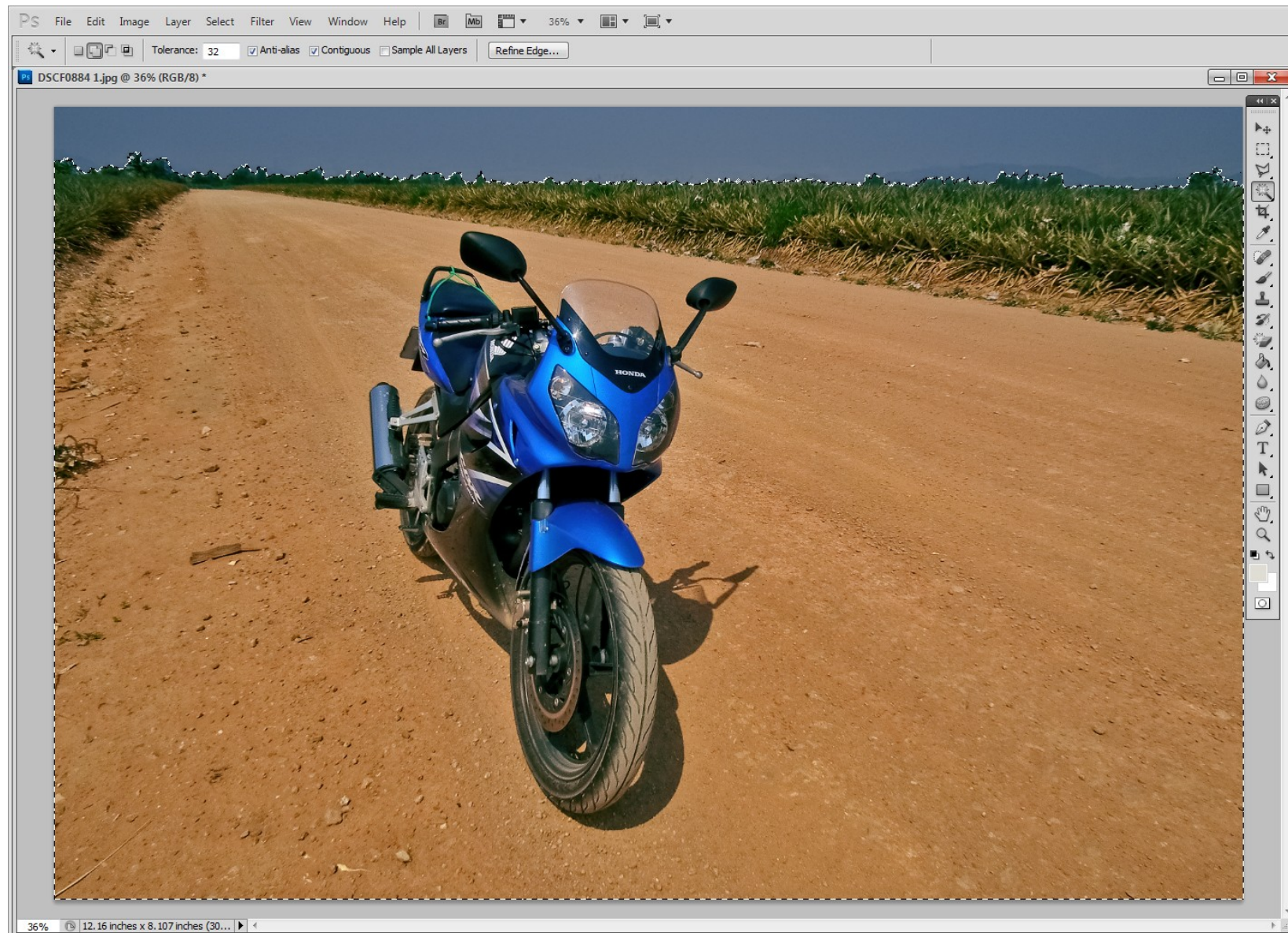


Image 6 – Here are the two images shown side by side. The original at left, and the edited image at right. Not a huge amount of editing.

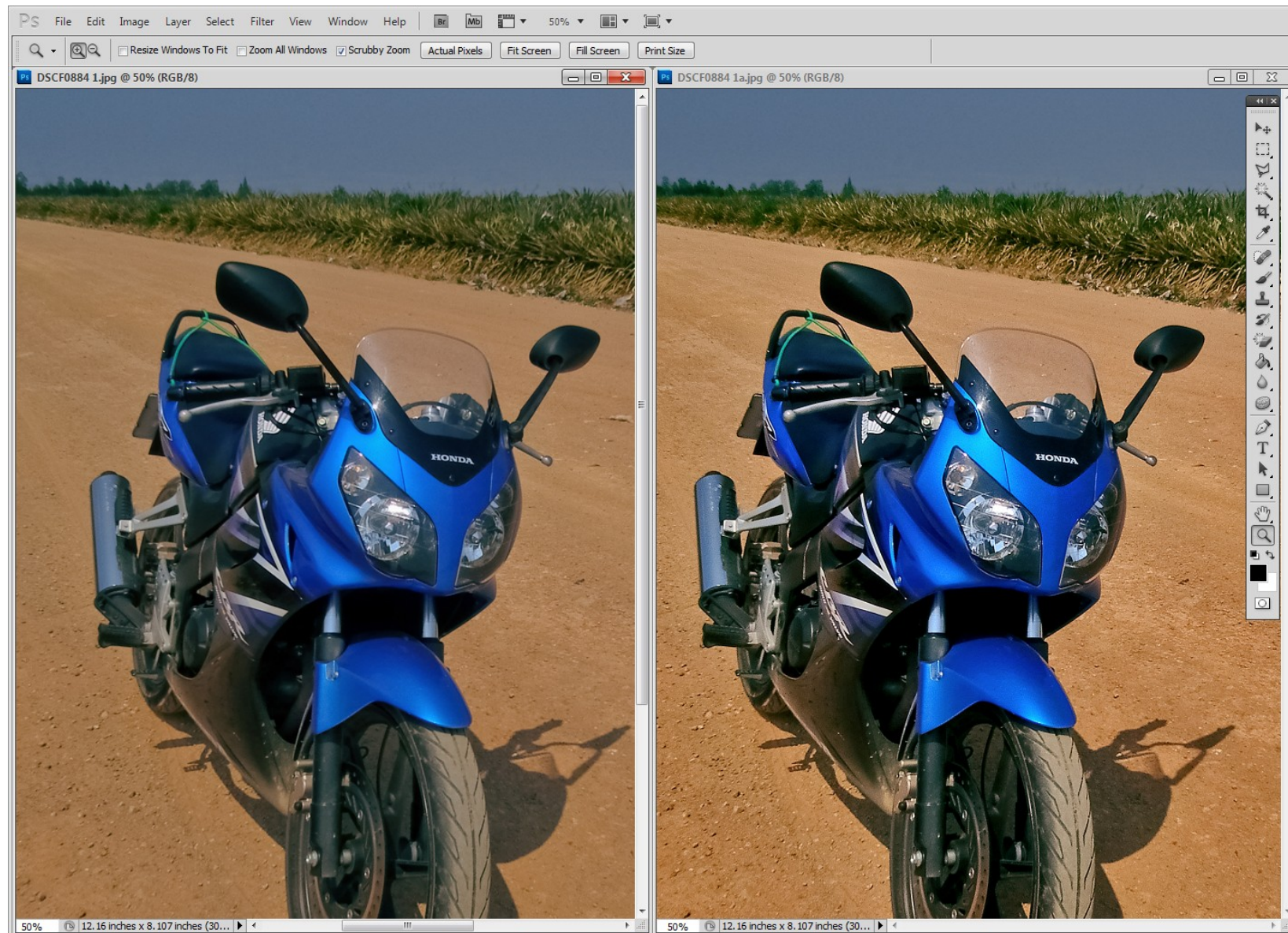


Image 7 – My original image.



Image 8 – My image after editing.



Image 9 – My next example shows a simple technique for masking part of a scene to adjust it. Here is my original.

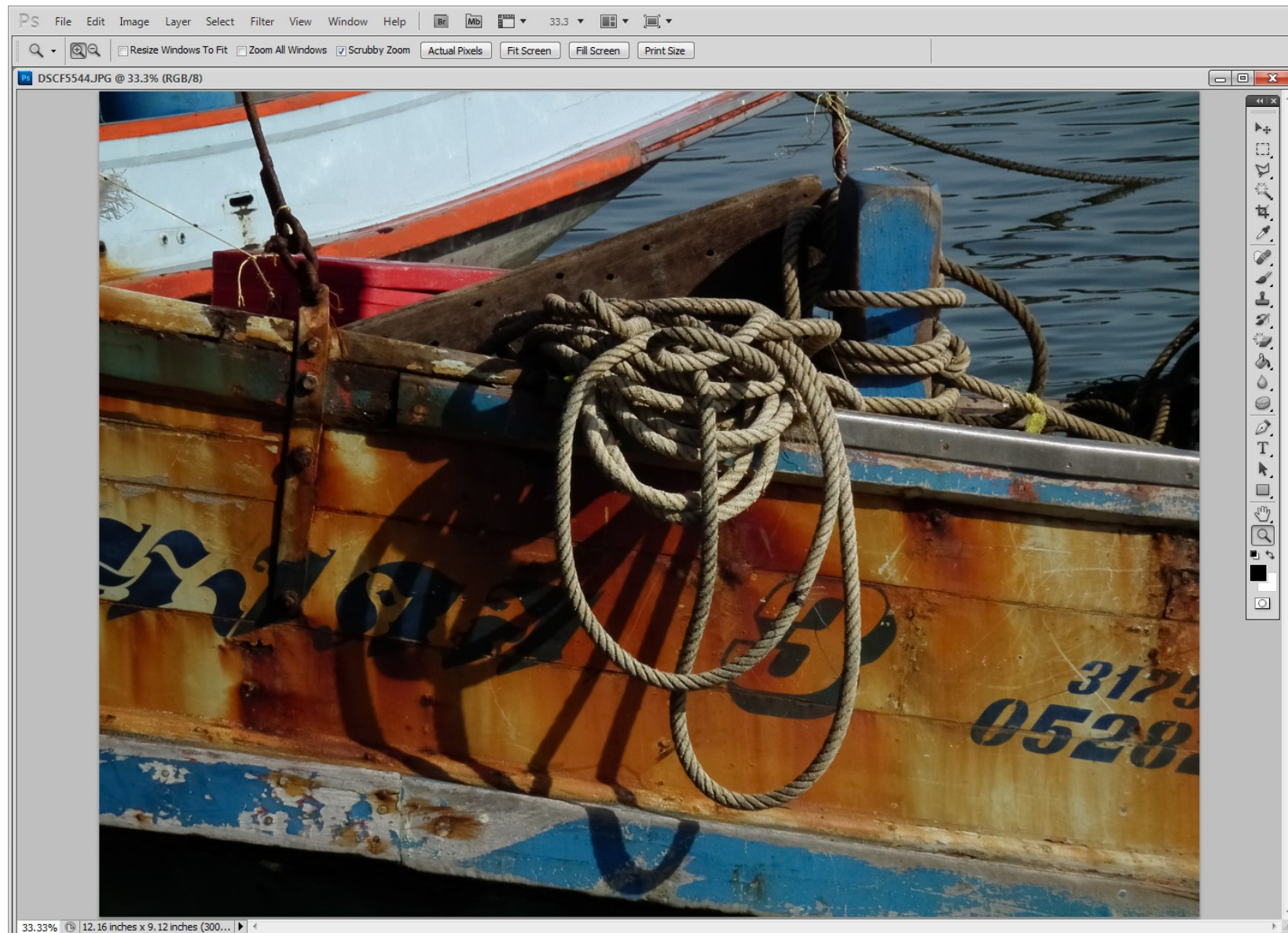


Image 10 – Using the Polygonal Lasso Tool, I have marked around the area I wish to preserve. Note that I have used 25 px to 'Feather' my selection edges.

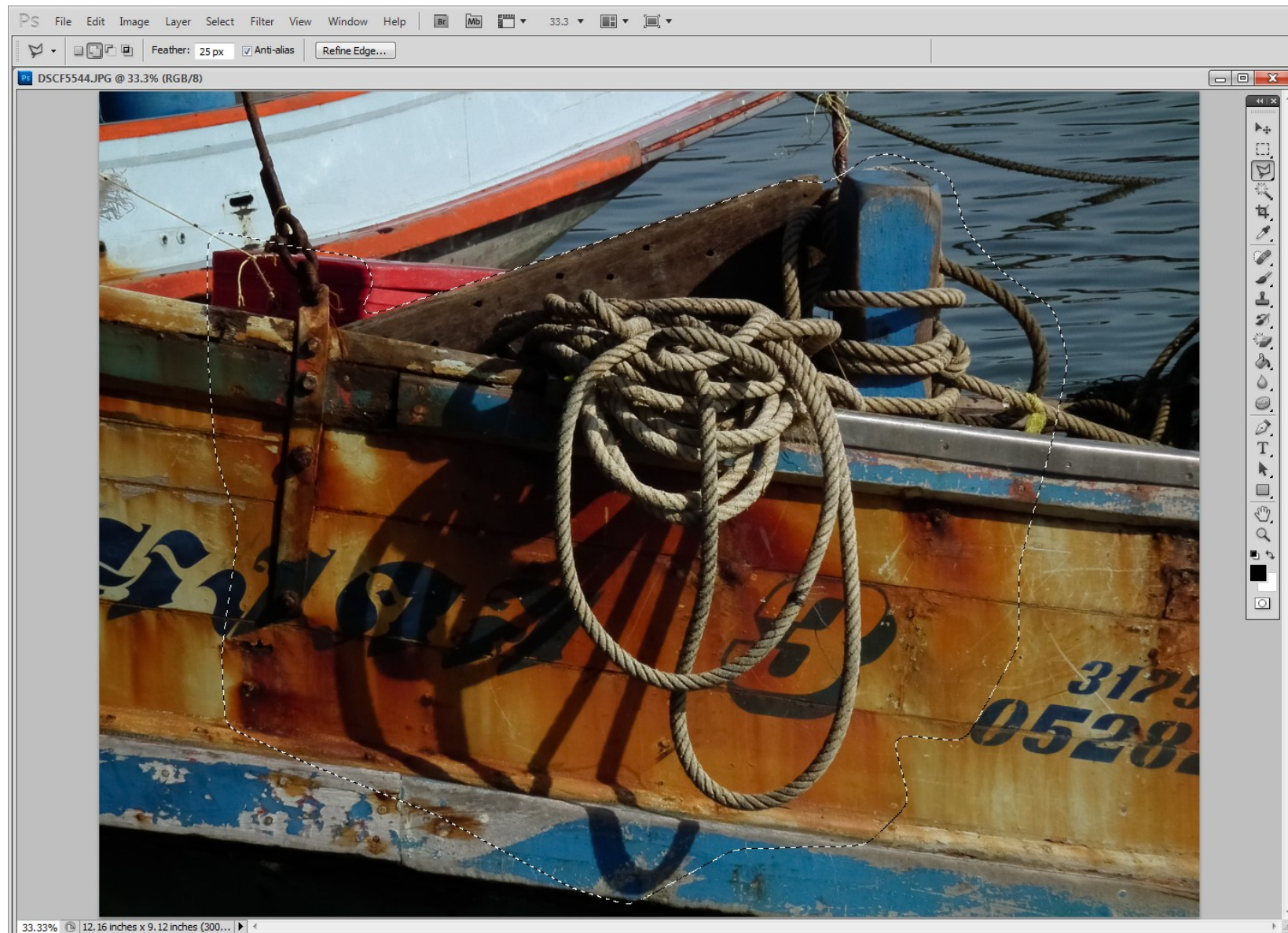


Image 11 – Next, I have inverted the selection.

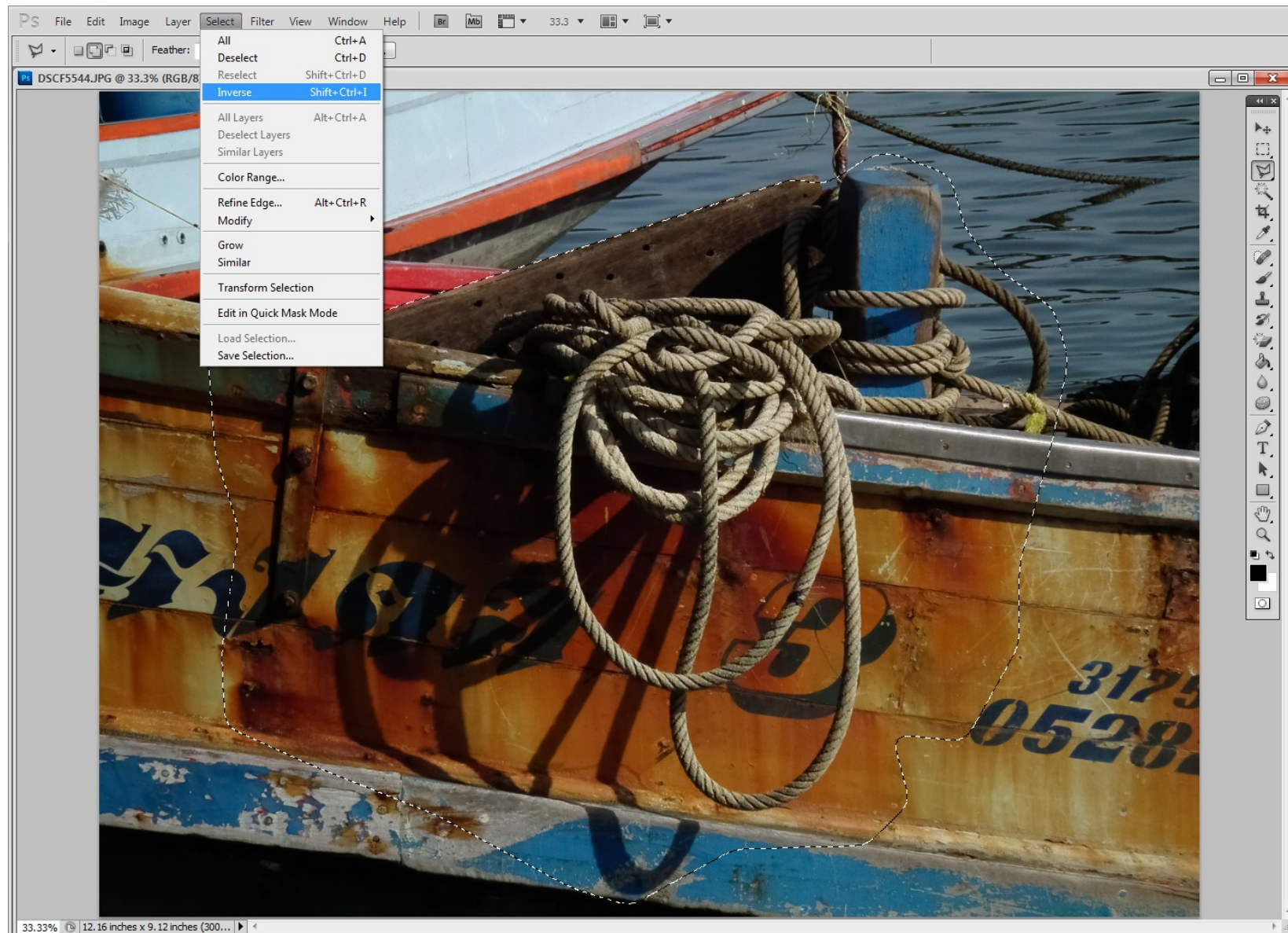


Image 12 – Once inverted, I have now selected Levels and made adjustments. The 'featherd' edge means that the adjustments will blend smoothly.

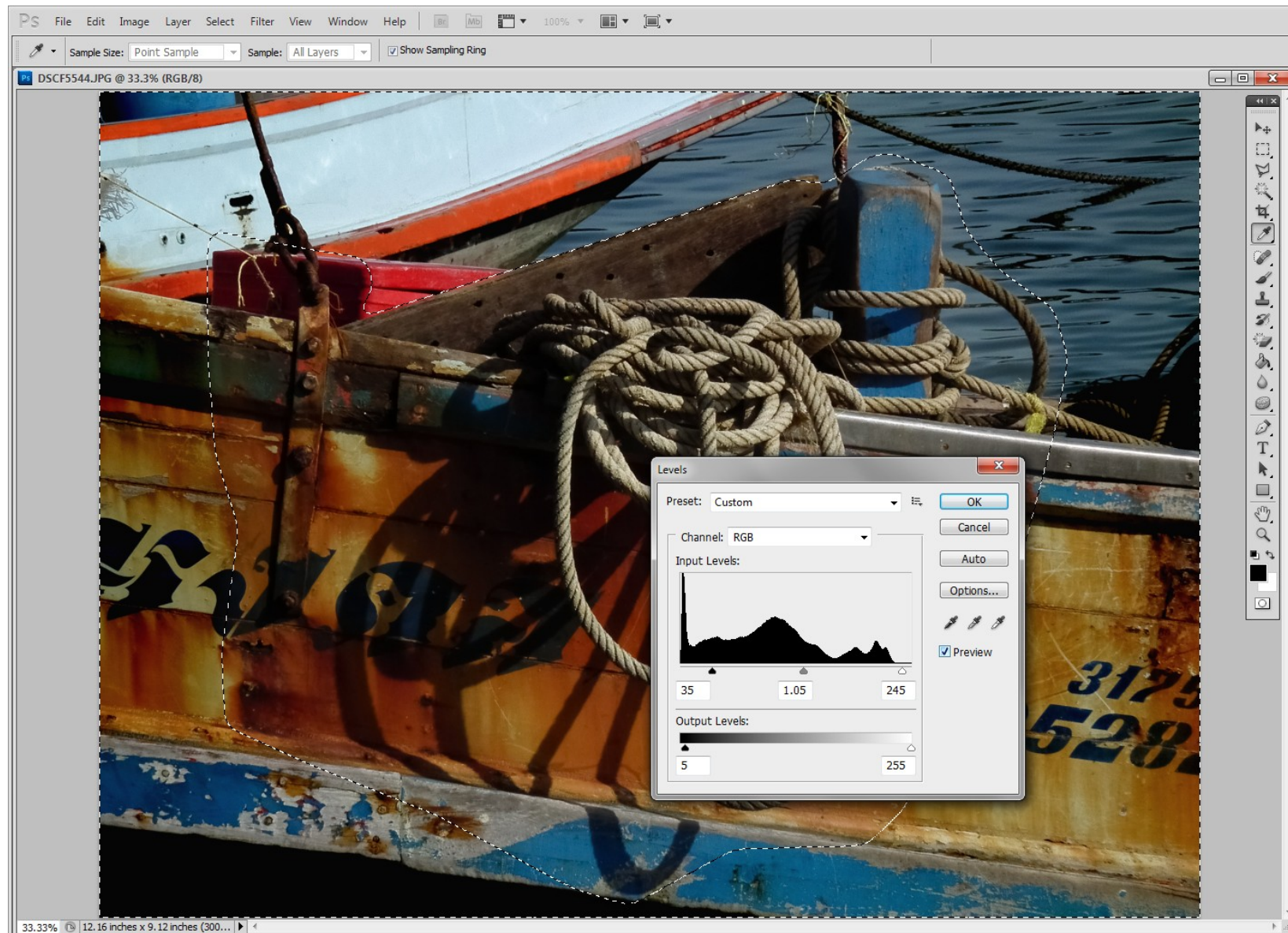


Image 13 – The original image.



Image 14 – The adjusted image. Again, just simple adjustments to darken and add contrast to the outer areas, whilst preserving the rope detail and highlights.



Image 15 – A similar example as the one above, but this time enhancing the centre of the image. Here is the original with my (rough) masked area shown.

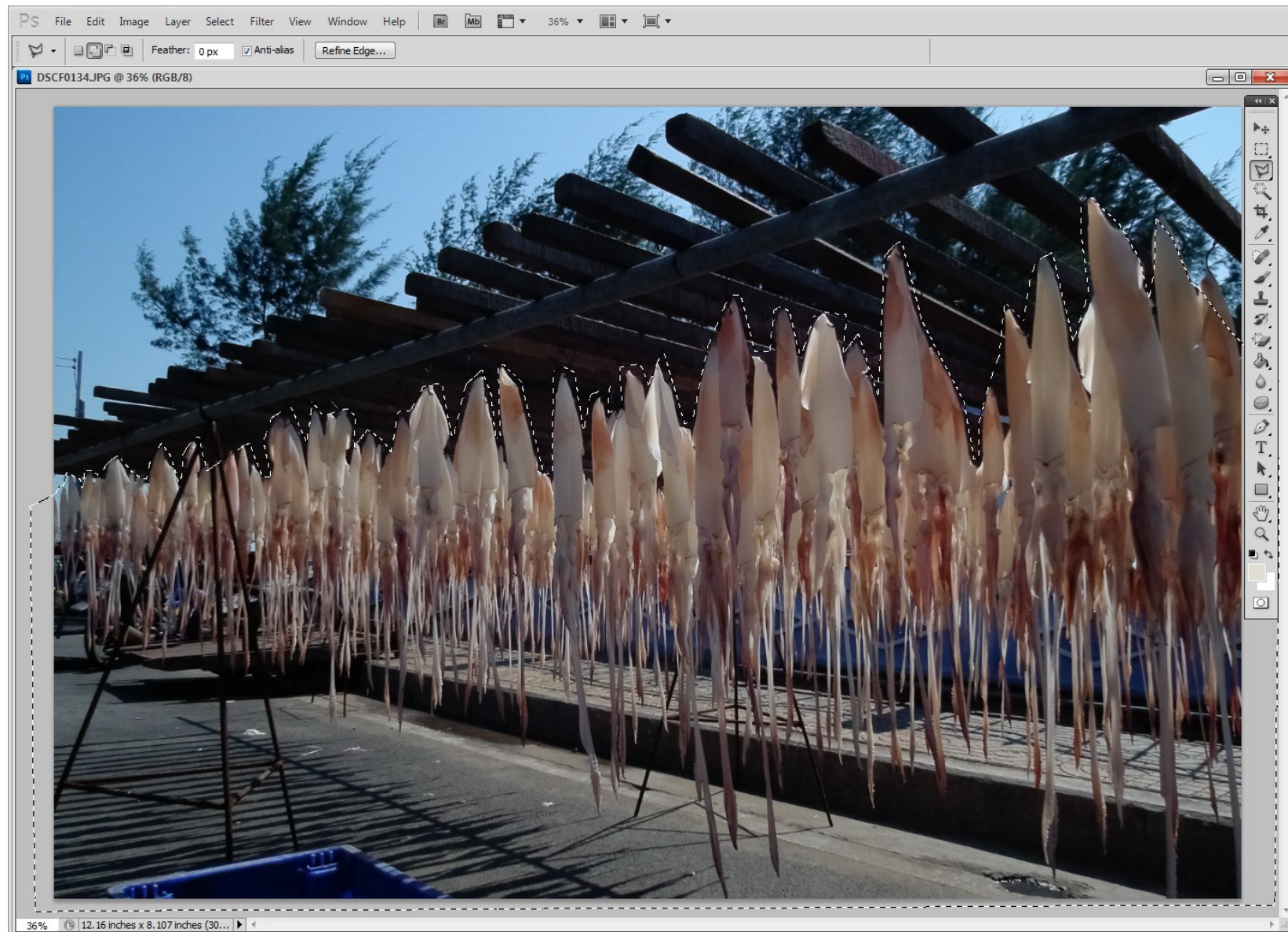


Image 16 – Again, using a feather of 25 px, I have simply used levels and sharpened the selected area. The feathering ensure the adjustment blends well.

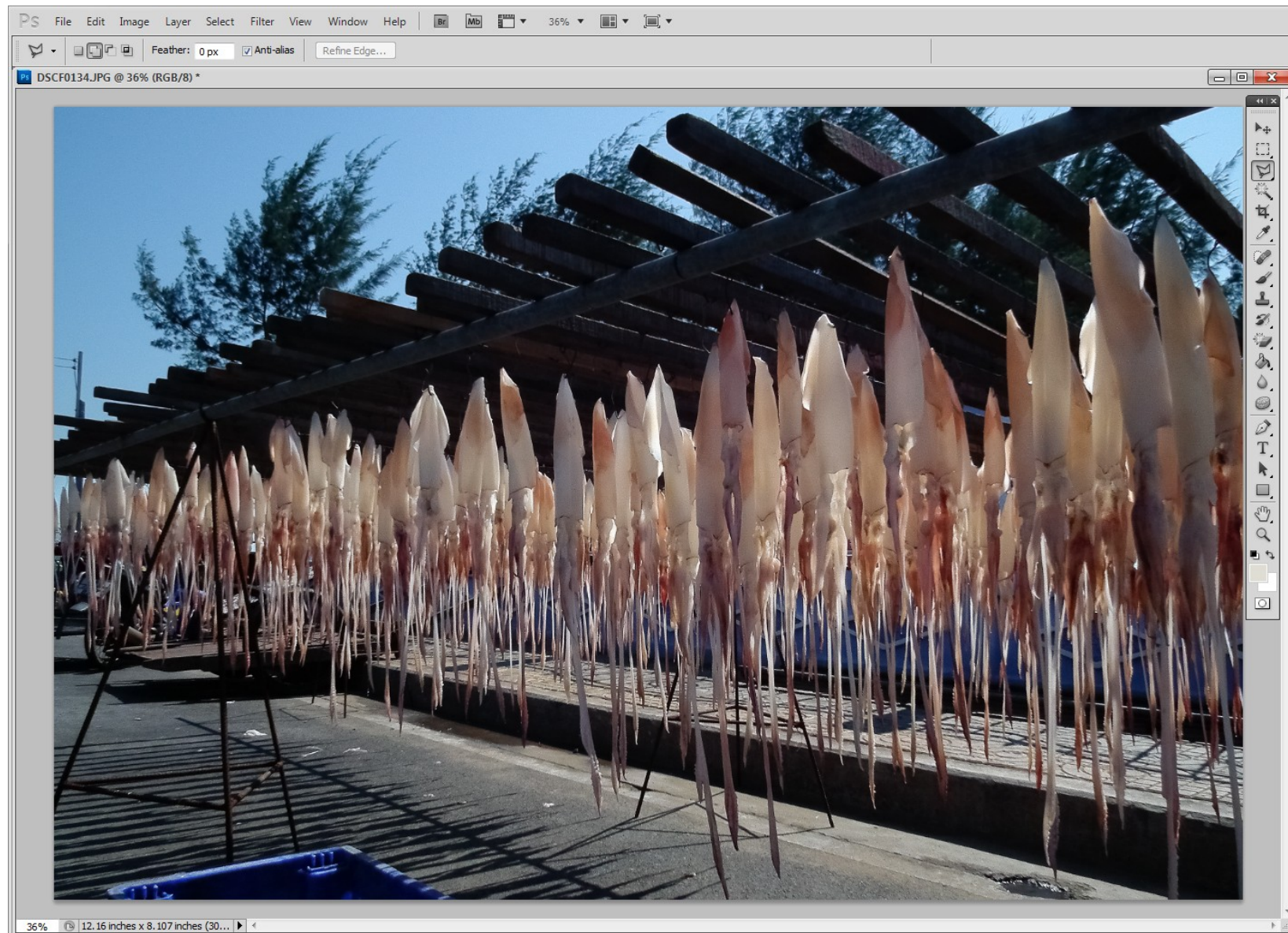


Image 17 – A comparison between the original at left, and the adjusted image at right.

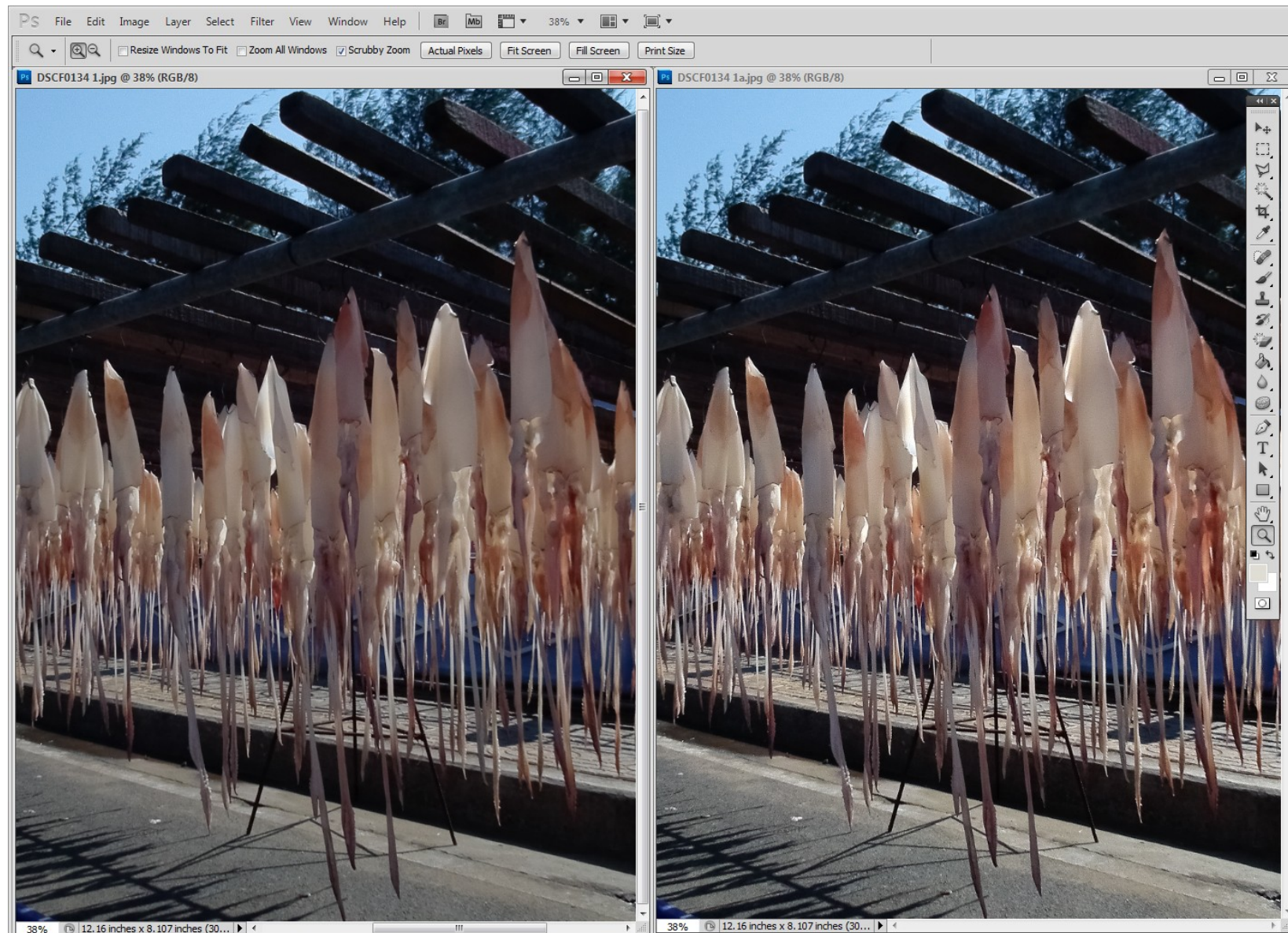


Image 18 – The original image.



Image 19 – The adjusted image.



End of section one.

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