

# FILM IS NOT DEAD

*A DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHER'S GUIDE TO SHOOTING FILM*

*PHOTOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN CANLAS*





# THE PREFACE

**FILM IS NOT DEAD.  
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE.**

Whether you're shooting for the first time or returning to film after a hiatus, welcome.

With this book, you have all the information necessary to leap from digital shooting to film shooting on the day your KEH.com purchases arrive in the mail. (Or the day you get your film gear out of the closet and start shooting film again.)



*Holga, E100VS cross-processed, "Cloudy" setting. Kauai, HI.*



Crown Graphic, 154mm lens, Polaroid Type 55, f/4.7. Lehi, UT. Shot by Mitch Issel.

*HI, I'M JONATHAN CANLAS.  
AND YOU NEED TO TRUST ME.*

You don't have to send me your social security card, or anything...but trust the way this book is arranged. I've held tons of Film is Not Dead workshops and answered thousands of questions from peeps around the world about film. This book condenses aaaaaaaall those questions into an easy-to-read guide.

It's designed for you to read all the way through to build the beginnings of a film foundation. Let me repeat: it's designed for you to read *ALL THE WAY THROUGH* before freaking out about the 6,873 questions this book has created.

You're going to have questions. It's great to have questions! I'm gonna need you to write those questions down. I've given you a place to record all those queries on page 94. Many times, your questions will be answered later in the book. If they're not answered – don't waste having gone through the trouble of writing 'em down! Google 'em.

Google provides a lot more current data about the cost of X camera body or X lens or X accessory than this book can. Google can find stuff that's available for sale. Google knows the sunny 16 rule just as well as I do. *Google is king when it comes to finding what you need.*

If your question isn't answered in this book AND you've got Google stumped, you can ask me. I have no secrets, and I don't believe in industry secrets. Sometimes there's a question that requires an honest-to-goodness film-shooting veteran's opinion or knowledge – I'm happy to answer those questions!

Just know that many times, my answer will be pretty boring. My answer will be 'try it and see' or 'practice, practice, practice' or something along the lines of a long rambling answer ending in 'hard work, sacrifice, and discipline.' Imagine a 300-pound dude giving you those same three answers over and over, and you'll be finding your own answers to questions in no time. (I get pretty repetitive, after all.)



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**HERE'S HOW IT'S GONNA GO DOWN.** We're going to talk about why I shoot film. The reasons I shoot are probably the reasons you're interested in shooting, so we can compare notes in a few pages. From there, we'll cover the rules of shooting film. These used to be child's play, taught in any Photography 101 course, but they're being lost. It's up to us to keep 'em alive and kicking.

Do not skip the rules. They are both important and useful.

After we've run through the rules, we'll get to the gear: cameras and film. I'll let you know what I recommend, which film stocks I shoot, and which film stocks are still in production. Things get a bit more technical after we talk film, as we'll talk LIGHT METER. Oy.

Do not let your eyes glaze over. Do not get scared. It is only a tiny little instrument that helps you expose your film. If you can add tunes to your iPod, you can most certainly work a light meter.

The final chapter of the book covers editing and storing your film – this chapter is short because film is light on the post-production work and is simple to archive.

We'll wrap up with a look at my favorite vendors for film, cameras, developing, scanning, and other goodies. And THEN you'll be left with no choice but to get out there and start shooting FILM!



Contax 645, 80mm lens, Kodak Portra 400, 1/2. Carlsbad, CA.



# THE **REASONS**

*SURE, I'M COMMITTED TO FILM -- BUT WHY? WHAT MAKES IT WORTH THE  
EFFORT OF CREATING AND MAINTAINING MY OWN LAB? THE ANSWERS AWAIT.*



# WHY I SHOOT FILM

**ONE: THE LOOK OF IT.** Film has a very distinct look and feel – an incredible color palette and tangible softness. For me, film is where it's at, visually. You may have tried to make your digital images look like film and failed – or just realized that the easiest way to get the look of film is to shoot film.



*Contax 645, Fujii PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2, Laguna Beach, CA.*







*Fuji GF670, Kodak BW400CN, 1/3.5, Lehi, UT.*



## THERE'S NO CHIMPING IN FILM! YOU HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO NAIL THE EXPOSURE...



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 35mm lens, f/8. San Francisco, CA.

**TWO: THE EASE OF IT.** I have a full-time photography business that requires *loads* of travel. I also have a wife and five kids who would like to see more than my face every once in a while. Film allows me to shoot, develop, scan, tweak and upload images to clients in a fraction of the time it takes to process the same number of images digitally. The majority of my finished images are straight from the camera, with only minor adjustments to make them sing.

### **THREE: IT FORCES YOU TO BE A BETTER PHOTOGRAPHER.**

There's no chimping in film! You have to know how to nail the exposure, how the light is interacting with your subject, and how your camera will react to both *before* you press the shutter.

Because each frame costs money, you'll be more diligent about clearing the frame of unwanted distractions. Film will also help you cut down on spraying and praying – where you were once shooting 10-15 images, you'll find yourself taking just 1 or 2 frames.

Pressing the shutter less often also saves time when culling images later. Less frames, less decisions...more time with family!

Finally, when you shoot enough with one film at one ISO, you learn the exposures necessary to handle different lighting situations. Film makes your exposures into clockwork, if you shoot it enough – so you can concentrate on your subject. *Not* your camera settings.



#### FOUR: DETAIL RETENTION IN HIGHLIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

*I dare you* to shoot the same ultra-high-contrast scene at identical exposures using film and digital cameras. The results will show an incredible retention of detail in both highlights and shadows of your film image. A HUGE dynamic range of tones with even gradation from darks to lights.

In digital? Not so much. I'm not hatin,' either – just try it and see.

**FIVE: THE DEPTH OF FIELD IS UNREAL.** Unreal, like bokeh so buttery you'd swear it belongs on your toast.

**SIX: YOU LEARN TO SEE THE WORLD FULL-FRAME.** Many digital cameras have a crop factor of at least 1.5, which means digital photographers see the world in a semi-telephoto state all the time. *What you say!?* A 50mm lens on a film camera does not have the same angle of coverage on a dSLR with a 1.5 crop factor, as it is now a 75mm lens. (Full frame digital cameras are available, but if you don't have one, you're seeing the world through your lens differently.)

**SEVEN: IT CAN MIX AND MATCH LIGHT WITH NO PROBLEM.** Let's say we're in a room together. You're being lit by window light from the side and tungsten light from overhead. A digital capture will render all sorts of issues with mixed, uneven light. With film, there's no problem. You'll end up with even gradations from tungsten to ambient light. (And no white balance nightmares!)



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 35mm lens, f/3.5, San Francisco, CA.

**EIGHT: THE DROPPING PRICE OF FILM GEAR.** As the brightest and shiniest dSLRs hit the market, film cameras can be picked up for pennies on the dollar of their original value. What used to cost as much as the latest high-end Nikon or Canon release is now only a fraction of the price – and prices are continually dropping. (Unless I blog about a new camera system and then they double in price overnight...)

I can replace everything in my main camera bag – *two Contax cameras and their lenses, film inserts, Polaroid 600SE, light meter, modified Holga, Nikon flash, video light, batteries, and tripod* – for less than \$4500. EVERYTHING. For less than the cost of a Nikon D3 body.

**NINE: LEAF SHUTTER, BABY.** There isn't a dSLR on the market with leaf shutter capabilities. But what's a leaf shutter? Instead of the camera's shutter being a focal plane shutter – inside the camera, behind the lens – the shutter is **INSIDE THE LENS**. Leaf shutters can sync with a flash at all shutter speeds. That means you're no longer stuck at 1/250th or less for your fastest sync speed!

Also with leaf shutter – particularly Twin Lens Reflex (TLR) cameras, there is no mirror in the body that has to go up and down. No mirror equals less camera shake, which equals hand-holding when shooting at much lower shutter speeds.

**TEN: FILM SETS YOU APART. FAR APART.** Quite frankly, those who shoot film know their crap. And when you know your crap, you can forget the technical aspects to shoot the world the way you see it. Your vision comes out to play when you leave all the latest actions, presets, and doodads behind to focus intently on the subject matter before you.



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. Artesia, MS.





*Fuji GF670, Ilford XP5, pushed to 6400. Salt Lake City, UT.*





# THE **RULES**

*SOME RULES WERE MADE TO BE BROKEN. BUT YOU CAN'T  
BREAK THEM IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE. FOLLOW  
THESE RULES, AND YOUR IMAGES WILL AMAZE EVEN YOU.*







# SUNNY16

## ON A SUNNY DAY, SET YOUR CAMERA APERTURE TO F/16 AND YOUR SHUTTER SPEED TO THE RECIPROCAL OF THE ISO FILM SPEED

So, let's say you have 400-speed film in your camera. There's a person in the sun over there and you want to shoot them – but you have no light meter! Applying Sunny 16 all quick-like, you know to set your aperture to  $f/16$  and your shutter speed to the reciprocal of your ISO:  $1/400$ th of a second. (Reciprocal is just a number with 1/ over it – so the reciprocal of ISO 100 would be....you got it,  $1/100$ . And the reciprocal of ISO 200?  $1/200$ th of a second.)

**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SUNNY AREA AND A BACKLIT AREA IS GENERALLY 3 STOPS.** For example: I'm shooting in direct sun. I know my exposure when shooting Kodak Portra 400 is  $f/5.6$  @  $1/4000$ th of a second. The exposure of the same subject standing in the shade would be  $f/2$  @  $1/4000$ th of a second. That's a 3-stop difference.



*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens,  $f/2$ , Aspen CO.*





*Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, pushed to 3200, 80mm lens, f/2. Miami, FL.*



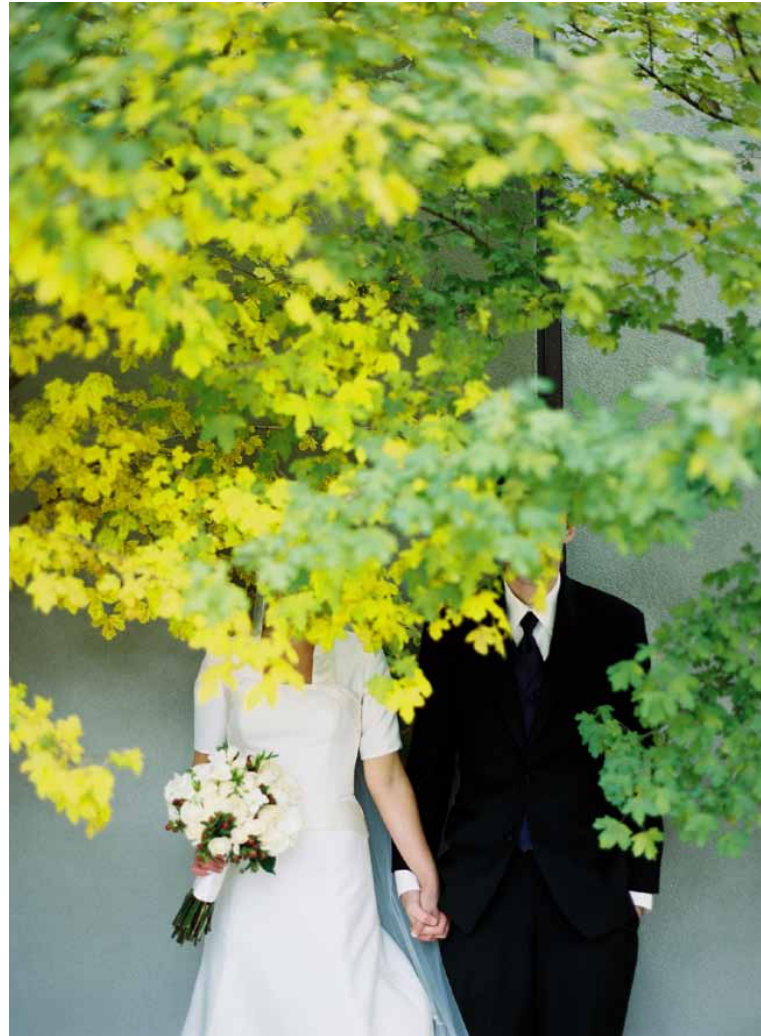
*FUJI FILM AND KODAK FILM ARE TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT BEASTS: FUJI FILM IS GREAT WITH GREENS AND BLUES. KODAK IS GREAT WITH YELLOWS AND REDS.*

**YOU CAN HANDHOLD SLR CAMERA SHOTS FOR AS LONG AS THE FOCAL LENGTH OF THE LENS ON YOUR CAMERA.** So, I can handhold a 35mm lens for 1/30th of a second. A 50mm lens for 1/50th of a second. I handhold in low light and without a tripod all the time. *All the time.*

With a leaf shutter, you can push this rule even farther. For example, I handhold my Polaroid600SE down to 1/15 of a second – and the lens is a 127mm lens. On the Fuji GF-670, which has an 80mm lens, I can handhold down to 1/8 of a second.

**FUJI FILM AND KODAK FILM ARE TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT BEASTS: FUJI FILM IS GREAT WITH GREENS AND BLUES. KODAK IS GREAT WITH YELLOWS AND REDS.**

**FUJI FILMS AND KODAK FILMS SHOULD BE EXPOSED DIFFERENTLY.** Fuji color film typically needs to be overexposed from one to two stops to create the ideal exposure. MOST of the new Kodak color negative films – especially Portra 800, Portra 400, and Ektar 100 – only need to be overexposed by half a stop. (AND I've been told by Kodak that the new Portra 400 can be *underexposed* by up to 2 stops without introducing muddy or shifting color into the frame. That's unheard of – and friggin rad.)



*Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, 1/2. Salt Lake City, UT.*



*FUJI COLOR FILM TYPICALLY NEEDS TO  
BE OVEREXPOSED FROM ONE TO TWO STOPS  
TO CREATE THE IDEAL EXPOSURE.*

*Contax 645, Fujifilm PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. Los Angeles, CA.*



# KNOWYOURCAMERA



Contax 645, Fujii PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. Montauk, NY.

*KNOW WHICH LENS AND WHICH F-STOP YOU NEED, THEN METER ACCORDINGLY. KNOW YOUR GEAR, KNOW WHAT YOUR IMAGE WILL LOOK LIKE AT ANY GIVEN F-STOP, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.*

I constantly camp out at  $f/2$  on my Contax with my 80mm lens. That doesn't mean you'll get the same look from your Nikon F100 50mm  $f1.4$  lens shot @  $f2$  – different camera, different lens, different look.

Likewise, when I shoot family formals @  $f/8$  on my 80mm Contax lens, the images would look completely different if I shot a different lens/camera combo. Get to know your lenses and their depth of field. Know what f-stops you need to use for EVERY situation. There are markings on all lenses that will tell you what will be in focus when shot at each f-stop.

Shoot around, practice, find what you like. This helps *tons* when the pressure is on while shooting an event. Know which lens and which f-stop you need, then meter accordingly. Know your gear, know what your image will look like at any given f-stop, no questions asked.





Contax 645, Kodak BW400CN, 80mm lens, f/2. Baltimore, MD.

**DON'T TRUST YOUR CAMERA.** Use an external light meter to determine exposures. External light meters allow you to spot meter, which is a lot more precise than overall reflective metering. If you're going to take the time and effort to shoot film, meter correctly.

**KEEP IT SIMPLE.** You don't need to have every lens available for your camera. Get the job done with the least amount of equipment possible – figure out what works for you and run with it.

**BLAZE YOUR OWN PATH.** Find out what works for you and run with it! Don't buy a 70-200mm lens just because you think that is what you need to be a "professional" photographer – buy what works for YOU.

When I bought my 35mm cameras, I bought the F5. That camera was almost \$1000 more than the F100 at the time, and the only difference was that the F5 had the tall battery



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. Baltimore, MD.

grip which made the camera look like a 'pro' body. At the end of the day, all that 'pro' look did was make my back hurt.

**STICK TO A SINGLE ISO WHEN SHOOTING AN EVENT.** Let's say you're shooting an event and you've brought Fuji 400H and Fuji 160S. If you were smart, you pre-loaded all your inserts.... but were you smart enough to use a Sharpie to mark which rolls are 160S and which rolls are 400H? A HUGE design flaw in Fuji color negative film: once the paper seal is broken and the film is loaded, it looks the same *no matter the film stock*. The last thing you need is to grab 160S and shoot it as if you were shooting 400H because, well, you thought you were shooting 400H.

That's why you stick to one ISO at a time. When I change film stock, *everything* I shoot changes. If, for example, it's getting too dark for Portra 400, I switch to Portra 800 across the board. One ISO (and in this case, one stock) means making less easily preventable mistakes.



Contax 645, Kodak BW400CN, 80mm lens, f/2. Baltimore, MD.



*Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, pushed to 3200, 80mm lens, f/2. Miami, FL.*







## *PERSONAL WORK IS CRUCIAL TO DEFINING AND REFINING YOUR VISION.*

**BE A GEAR HOARDER.** Have backup gear for your backup gear! Many film cameras are not in production anymore, so if anything goes wrong with your gear it will most likely be harder/more expensive to fix than to simply replace. I have 3 Contax 645's – not because I shoot them all, but because I am backed the buck up.

**BE A FILM HOARDER, TOO.** Always always ALWAYS bring more film than you anticipate shooting – at least 1.5 times the amount of film you need. You never know when you're going to need those extra rolls because DJ Lance Rock/your kid's hero/your celebrity crush shows up to a wedding and agrees to let you shoot 'em for 15 minutes...

**SHOOT PERSONAL WORK, AND SHOOT IT OFTEN.** I don't EVER use a paid gig to practice my craft. Practicing, experimenting, testing, and trying out gear/film/gadgets is done on my own dime and my own time. Not only will you learn your craft so it becomes second nature, you'll find something that is more important to you as a photographer than anything else. *Your vision.*

Shooting personal work is personal. Shoot whatever strikes your fancy, and shoot it on a regular basis. Nascar, daffodils, leaves, dogs, Chinatown...

*Shoot what you love. After a while, you'll notice a certain voice/look/style/ethos in your photos. That's your vision, and it only becomes clearer with more shooting.*

Finding your vision is work – and hard work at that. I firmly believe, though, that nothing good in life comes without a bit of hard work, sacrifice, and discipline. Refining your vision requires those elements, but it pays major dividends.

Your work gets better. Your clients benefit. They tell their friends, which leads to more work, which leads to your work getting even better, which leads to...you get the idea.

Personal work is crucial to defining and refining your vision.

Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. Ko Ollina, HI.





# THE **CAMERAS**

*THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF FILM CAMERAS ON THE MARKET (AND IN YOUR GRANDPARENTS' ATTIC), BUT WHICH ONE IS RIGHT FOR YOU? I NARROW THE CHOICES SIGNIFICANTLY TO MAKE GETTING STARTED EASIER.*







# MEDIUMFORMAT

## CONTAX 645. THE CADILLAC OF MEDIUM FORMAT.

This is my workhorse and my baby: the Contax 645.

Let's start with my basic outfit, which I recommend to anyone who's serious about shooting medium format film: the Contax 645 with 80mm f/2 lens, back with 120/220 insert, battery grip, and metered prism. (The prism is the part that you look through. It's mounted on top of the camera and has a light meter in it, as well as showing you your shutter speeds and f-stops when you push the shutter button halfway down.) That's all you need to get started.



Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, f/2. Miami, FL.



I shoot with the Contax for a number of reasons. First, *I HEART* medium format film. Bigger negatives yield higher quality images. Add to that the creamy soft bokeh at  $f/2.0$  with the 80mm Contax lens (Zeiss glass!) and I'm in heaven.

The 645 format appeals to me because it's the smallest medium format size. The Contax is lightweight like a 35mm camera; other medium format cameras are *not* as lightweight or as easy to use. 645 format is best for popular portrait sizes and enlargements, as it has minimum cropping to reach 5x7, 8x10, 11x14 sizes. Square format doesn't work for large group portraits, but the 645 format works perfectly for weddings and events.

I also like to keep things simple, and have found that I love shooting entire weddings with the 80mm  $f/2$  lens. One camera, one lens. Works like a charm.

When shooting an event, I keep two Contax cameras loaded and ready at all times. One Contax is loaded with color film, the other with black & white film.

*How do I tell them apart, you ask?* The color body has a *neck* strap, the b&w body has a *wrist* strap. Always, always, always. Weddings and shoots are too fast-paced and important to waste any time wondering which body holds which film, and straps are the easiest way I've found to keep it consistent.

Oh, and the battery grip allows me to ditch 2CR5 batteries and shoot with plain ol' AA batteries. Rechargeable, longer-lasting, not-\$20-a-pop AA batteries.

My bag also holds 12 inserts pre-loaded with 220/120 film. If you can find Contax inserts, buy 'em up. I never take the back off my camera. I just open the back and swap out inserts. The back isn't easy to get off, but insert-swapping is easy.

The only other Contax lens I use is the 35mm  $f/3.5$ . This rocks the super-wide shots and is perfect for creating long exposures at night. Think tent wedding with an evening glow of soft light, shot from about 30 feet outside the tent. That's where this lens shines.

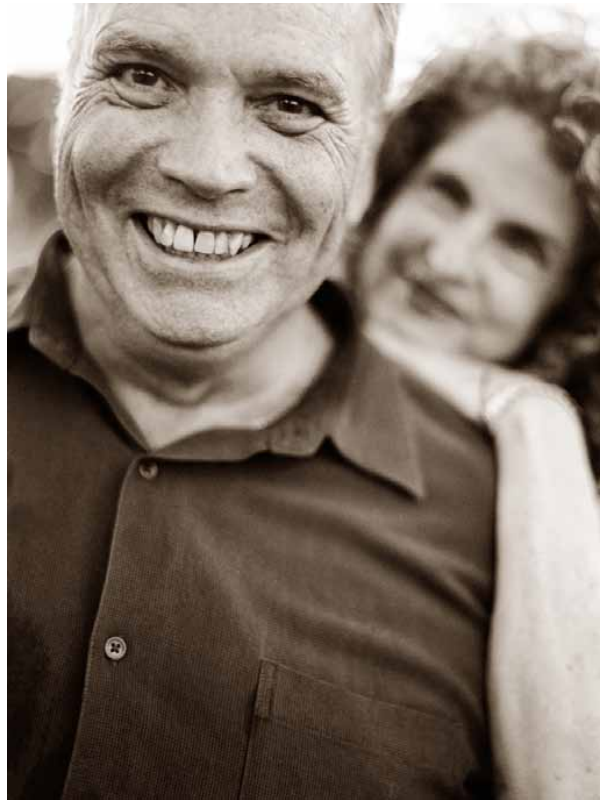
Oh, and I don't shoot the Contax with flash. I either supplement with continuous video light (the ProMaster LED42 daylight-balanced LED light), or shoot at  $f/2$  with Delta 3200, pushing to 6400 when necessary.

*Contax 645, Kodak BW400CN, 80mm lens,  $f/2$ . Kahuku, HI.*





*Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400 (color images)/Kodak BW400CN (B/W image), 80mm lens, f/2. Kahuku, HI.*





*Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, f/2. Los Angeles, CA.*

## COMMON CONTAX 645 QUESTIONS

### HOW MANY EXPOSURES WILL I GET PER ROLL OF FILM?

If you're shooting 120, you'll be shooting 16 exposures. If you're shooting 220, you'll be shooting 32 exposures.

### CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT INSERTS? 120/220 inserts

can take both 120 and 220 film. If you get the 220 vacuum back, you're out of luck if you want to shoot 120.

I have both vacuum inserts and standard inserts. I've used 'em both, and have never seen a difference in the final image. No need to be picky about which kind you use.

### WHAT'S THE LOWEST SHUTTER SPEED YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH HAND-HOLDING THE CONTAX? I handhold the

Contax down to 1/30th of a second – think deep breath, long pause, and subject matter that's agreed to remain still.





Contax 645, Kodak BW400CN, 80mm lens, f/2. Mill Valley, CA.

**HOW DO I SET UP MY VIEWFINDER'S DIOPTER FOR MANUAL FOCUSING?** There is only one way to set up an adjustable diopter to work for you. Put your lens cap on your lens so all you see is...nothing. Half-push your shutter in until the lights come on. Then adjust your diopter – when the letters/numbers at the edges of the screen are TACK sharp, your diopter is set to match YOUR vision.

I don't use the sharpness confirmation (magic green circle) on the Contax, as it's only configured to let you know when the middle of the frame is in focus. Since I rarely-if-ever want my focal point to be smack-dab in the middle of the frame, I just focus manually.

**HOW DO I MAKE MY CONTAX SCREEN BRIGHTER?** The regular ground glass screen the Contax comes with is DARK. This is crazy, since any camera rocking a 2.0 lens should be super-bright. Put any other lens like the 45 2.8 or the 35 3.5 and we are talking EVEN DARKER.

Bill Maxwell over at Maxwell Precision and Optics will take your existing screens and make them four to five times brighter than they are originally. I prefer just a clear matte screen. The diagonal split prism is great if you want to focus in the dead center of your photo regularly. You can also choose a screen with a grid which will help with horizons and rule of thirds. To me, the whole point of the bright screen is to be able to see the image, not hinder it in anyway – but, to each his own.

These ground glass screen modifications (you send yours, he fixes it and sends it back) run around \$300. That's worth every penny when it gets to low light situations and you are no longer squinting, or stuck deleting images because you missed the focus when it mattered most. Call Bill Maxwell at 770-939-6644, or e-mail him at maxwell-precisionoptics@yahoo.com.

**HOW CAN I MAKE FOCUSING ON THE CONTAX EASIER?** Get a super-bright screen, and one that has markings you like on it. I prefer just plain bright matte screens, while some people like the diagonal split prism, etc...

**HOW CAN I MAKE FOCUSING ON THE CONTAX EVEN EASIER?** Practice. And practice some more. Shoot personal work until you can nail your focus every time before incorporating the camera into your paid professional work. I have horrible vision and I'm color-blind, but I've found a way to produce tack-sharp images for clients every time. You can, too – with practice. (Read: practice, practice, practice.)

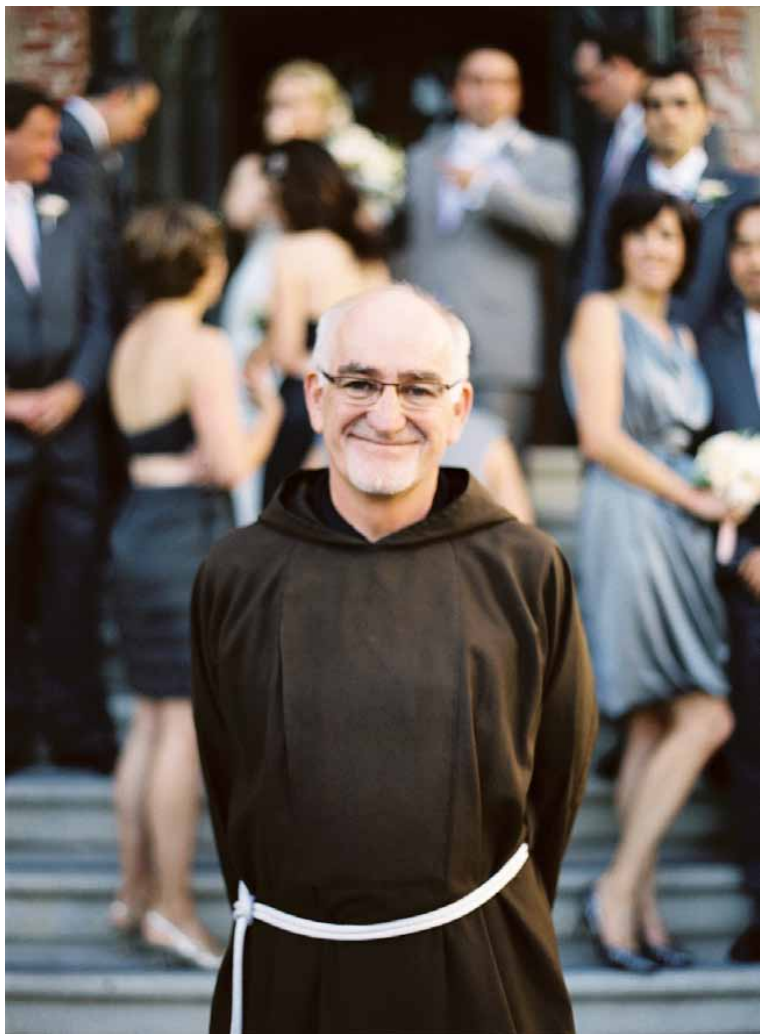
**HOW DO I METER WITH THE CONTAX 645?** I recommend ignoring the camera's built-in meter and going with a handheld light-meter like the Sekonic L-508 or L-358 to get precise exposures. There's a whole chapter about this later in the book, so stay with me and we'll get to it.

**HOW CAN I METER WITH THE CONTAX 645 IF I'M TOTALLY FRIGGIN' SCARED OF METERING?** You can (and I don't recommend it, but you can...) put your camera on AV mode and set it to expose +.5 for Kodak film or +1.5 for Fuji film. Honestly, though, if you're going to shoot film and slow down with the Contax, why not invest in an external light meter to NAIL your exposures?



*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, 1/2. American Fork, UT.*





#### WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE ACCESSORY FOR THE CONTAX?

Without a doubt, Hoya plus filters. These are macro filters that come in a set of 3: +1/+2/+4. They're basically a magnifying glass that mounts to the front of your lens without causing any degradation or loss of exposure in the images. They're a great alternative to extension tubes, as they are cheaper and you don't have to remove your lens every time to attach them.

In my case, the Hoya plus filters are 72mm and screw right onto the 80mm f/2 lens for the Contax, which I use for 95% of any given wedding day.

*Plus filters are perfect for up close portraits, macro ring shots -- or anything macro for that matter. The set costs \$65 -- way more economical and LIGHTER than a five-pound macro lens that costs more than \$1,000.*

**WHAT ABOUT OTHER FILTERS?** There are loads of filters on the market, so you can decide which filters are best for your shooting style and your common shooting situations. That said, I don't use filters -- I correct for tungsten/florescent lighting during scanning.

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN/IF I SHOOT A ROLL OF 120 WITH MY BACK SET TO 220?** That shouldn't happen, as your camera just plain should not work if you've made that mistake. Always check your inserts when using multi format backs (120/220) to be sure they are set accordingly.

This is why I don't shoot a mixture of 120/220 throughout the day. Either I am one or the other, or you'll end up making a mistake and wasting precious film. Wasting film is LAME. And somewhere, a unicorn dies for your mistake.

**HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR CONTAX EXPOSURES ARE -- LIKE FOR THE SAMPLES INCLUDED IN THIS BOOK?** If I don't know an exposure and need to check, the Contax records my exposure on the outer rim of the negative.

I rarely have to check, though, as I tend to camp out at f/2. I adore the look of f/2 on the Contax and only deviate from it during family formals. The f/stop determines how an image looks, so it's my primary concern when determining the exposure of any given frame. (Bokeh, bokeh, bokeh!)

**MY CONTAX WON'T WORK. HELP!** If you're without the help of a film buddy or mentor, these common errors could lead to some serious frustration.

*Is the dark slide still in your back?* If yes, your camera can't take photos.

*Do you have batteries in it?* If no, your camera can't take photos.

*When you push the shutter down, do you see any numbers/info in the view finder?* If you do not and there is a delay in the shutter -- like, you push it and it goes off half a second later -- remove the viewfinder and clean the contact areas with a dust cloth or your finger. Reattach the viewfinder, slightly push down the shutter, and you should see the numbers in the viewfinder.

*Did you load the correct film into the film insert?* If you're shooting 120, you must switch the insert to 120 by rotating the pressure plate. It won't shoot if you have 120 in a 220 back, or 220 in a 120 back.

*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. San Francisco, CA.*



## ALTERNATIVES TO THE CONTAX 645

*I DON'T RECOMMEND SKIMPING ON GEAR IF YOU'RE SHOOTING FILM FOR THE LONG HAUL. THAT SAID, THESE CAMERA MODELS EACH HAVE DISTINCT STRENGTHS.*



The Contax is the Cadillac of medium-format cameras. It's top-notch gear, and I don't recommend skimping on gear if you're shooting film for the long haul. That said, these camera models each have distinct strengths.

**MAMIYA 645.** The Mamiya 645 is the poor man's Contax. The Mamiya 645 is a great medium format camera, and I've seen some pretty rad images produced with it. But, I shoot for the Zeiss glass creamy-buttery-smooth goodness on the Contax 80mm lens. I'm hooked on sharpity-sharp images cranked out with Zeiss glass, so I can't shoot Mamiya.

If you've never been friendly with the Zeiss, you just might adore the Mamiya 645 outfit. There's an 80mm 1.9 lens that rivals the Contax 80mm 2.0 lens if you're looking to up your game on a budget – and backs for this bad boy are under \$40, which makes it a much-cheaper alternative to Contax at the time of writing.

**BRONICA ETRS 645.** The Bronica ETRS 645 – which I shot for nine years – is super, super cheap. The glass just isn't the same as that Contax-y goodness, and I had to use a fill flash all the time with this camera. The Bronica is great if you want to get your feet wet and just aren't ready to commit to the Contax.

Contax 645, Kodak BW400CN (left)/Fuji PRO 400H (right), 80mm lens, f/2. Temecula, CA.



## 66 FORMAT

**HASSELBLAD.** Hasselblads are known for their square format. I've found squares to be awful for family formals, and hate shooting with the intention to crop huge chunks of the image away in post-production. 6X4.5 backs are available for Hassy's, but then you have to tilt the camera (super-awkward!) to shoot a vertical image. Doesn't work for me, might be perfect for you.

If you're not worried about shooting weddings and/or family formals, Hasselblads are great cameras. They use Zeiss glass – and you know how I love the Zeiss! Hasselblads are also fantastic for fine art shooting, travel subjects, and/or for individual portraits. The square crop adds interest and is instantly recognizable.

**YASHICA-MAT 124-G.** The Yashica Mat 124-G is an inexpensive way to get started in the land of medium format, though it isn't as wow-inducing as the other alternatives mentioned. Going for under \$300 on eBay at the time of writing, it typically comes in mint condition with a broken light meter. (Since you'll be shooting with a handheld light meter, you don't care! What a bargain!)

Like the Hasselblad, the Yashica operates with a square format. This camera can't focus any closer than around 3 feet, so I strongly suggest picking up a pair of + filters to correct parallax error. You'll get 2 + filters, one for the viewing lens and one for the taking lens, so what you see is what you get. At about \$100, they're totally worth the ability to be able to photograph close-up. (Search "Bay 30 close up filter" on eBay for a quick peek at what's available.)

Since the Yashica Mat 124-G is a twin lens reflex, you're looking DOWN into the camera to take photos. The average person will think you're just fiddling with your camera, but you're actually shooting the whole time. **STEALTH.** (Unless you're shooting grandparents. Then, no stealth.)



Yashica Mat 124-G, Fujifilm PRO 400H, 1/8. Huntington Beach, CA.

Like any Twin Lens Reflex camera, the Yashica rocks a fixed lens. The 124-G has a leaf shutter, so you can handhold down to 1/8 of a second if you are steady or 1/15 if you've had too much caffeine. The Yashica shoots both 120 and 220 film formats, but you can't switch from black & white to color film once a roll is loaded.

**WAIT WAIT WAIT...WHAT'S PARALLAX ERROR?** Parallax error means that, when looking through the viewfinder of a twin lens reflex camera, what you see is NOT what you get. Parallax error happens because the viewing lens is directly above the taking lens. If you get close to a subject, this means that what appears to be at the top of your frame is NOT the top of your frame, as the top lens is above the taking lens.

So, I'm within a few feet of Bernina the bride, and I'm trying to cut the frame off at her forehead, as I so often do. With a twin lens reflex camera, due to parallax error, I'll end up cutting the portrait off at the eyeballs – since the top of my frame in the viewfinder isn't actually the top of my frame. (Not going to be selling any prints of that portrait...)

Remember, the viewing lens is up top and the taking lens is down low, so the closer you get in on a subject, the more it crops from the TOP and is looser on the bottom than what you are seeing through the taking lens UNLESS you have something to correct for parallax error. Like close-up filters! They account for and correct this problem with twin reflex cameras like the Yashica Mat 124-G.

More sophisticated cameras have parallax error compensation. Like my Girlfriend – she has parallax error compensation out the wazoo. Read on to find out all about her.

*HASSELBLADS  
ARE FANTASTIC  
FOR FINE ART  
SHOOTING, TRAVEL  
SUBJECTS, AND/OR  
FOR INDIVIDUAL  
PORTRAITS.*

*Hasselblad 500C, Kodak BW400CN,  
80mm lens, 1/5.6. Saratoga Springs, UT.*

FILM IS NOT DEAD





## FUJI GF-670. THE GIRLFRIEND.

*THE GF HAS PARALLAX ERROR COMPENSATION, SO WHEN I LOOK THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER – WHAT I SEE IS WHAT I GET.*

Since the Contax isn't great for shooting in a photojournalistic manner (Contax = s-l-o-w, precise focusing), I had to introduce the Fuji GF-670 into my life. The GF (get it, girlfriend?) is a phenomenal rangefinder camera with fast manual focusing.

**HOW DO I LOVE MY GF? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS.** It's a rangefinder, which puts me into candid-hunting mode. Maybe it's because all the world's greatest photojournalists shot with rangefinders. Maybe it's my imagination. Whatever. I find candid moments with this camera.

It shoots square (6x6 cm format – my preference) or rectangular (6x7 cm format) photos. Your choice.



Fuji GF670, Kodak Portra 800, f/3.5. Provo, UT.

It's super-sharp at all f/stops. It doesn't have a sweet spot, it IS a sweet spot.

It's perfect for larger groups of family formals. The Contax isn't so great at f/4-f/16 – in my opinion, that Zeiss glass is meant to be shot at f/2. But with the Girlfriend, it seems impossible to get any image out of focus.

It's super-lightweight and therefore, super-stealthy. Though it has fantastic optics and isn't a cheap camera, the GF doesn't look any more intimidating than your Grandpa's point and shoot.

The GF has parallax error compensation, so when I look through the viewfinder – what I see is what I get. Even



when I move closer to the subject, change my focal point, etc...it keeps up with me. There are guides that move in and out, telling me what is inside and outside of the frame.

It's compact. Like, fits in my coat pocket compact. This makes it ideal for shooting editorial portraiture, travel, and candids.

The viewfinder is super-bright.

The internal light meter is SPOT. ON. Like, I think it'd be okay to just shoot this in A mode. (Which is my biggest no-no.)

It's super-quiet. My first five shots on the thing were ruined because I didn't know I had taken a picture. THAT quiet.

You can hand-hold down to 1/8 of a second – my favorite feature of a leaf shutter!

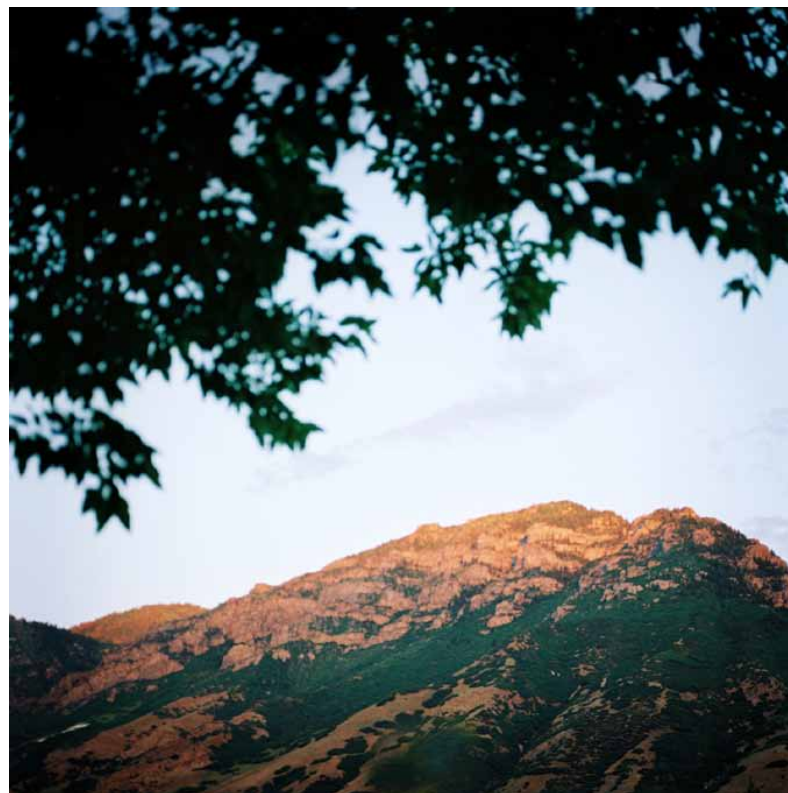
Oh, and like all girlfriends, I look cooler when I'm with it. Freaking bellows and a lens that folds in and out? Sexy.

**WHY WOULD I CHEAT ON MY GF WITH MY CONTAX?** The GF can't compete with the Contax Zeiss glass at f/2. (Heck, it's not even made for f/2 – more like f/8 or f/11 for INSANE results.) The Girlfriend can't produce the creamy buttery goodness and soft tones of the Contax, complete with bokeh that's to die for. I would never shoot details at a wedding with this camera!

It rings in at just under \$2,000. Not cheap, and not likely to go down in price anytime soon.



*Fuji GF670, Kodak Portra 800, f/3.5. Provo, UT.*



#### **WAIT WAIT WAIT...WHAT'S 6X7 FORMAT? HUH!?**

645, 66, and 67 are the shorthand way of referring to the sizes of medium format negatives. The Contax 645 is so named because it produces negatives that measure 6 centimeters by 4.5 centimeters. You'll note that 645 is best for any work that's going to be cropped to 5x7" or 8x10" prints, as it closely matches those print ratios.

The square format, 66 – common to Hasselblads, and my primo choice for shooting with the Girlfriend – produces negatives measuring 6 centimeters by 6 centimeters. Just to mix it up, the 67 format – which creates 6 centimeter by 7 centimeter negatives – is an option with the Girlfriend.

**6 X 4.5 FORMAT**



**6 X 6 FORMAT**



**6 X 7 FORMAT**







*Fuji GF670, Kodak Portra 800, 1/8. Lehi, UT.*







# 35MM

**I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO CALL 35MM THE RED-HEADED STEPCHILD OF FILM AND OTHER NASTY NAMES. I JUST PLAIN DON'T LIKE THE 4X6 FORMAT OF 35MM FILM, AND THINK IT'S GRAINY IN COMPARISON TO MY MEDIUM FORMAT NEGATIVES. I DON'T SHOOT IT OFTEN -- BUT EVERY FILM HAS ITS PLACE AND PURPOSE.**



Nikon F5, Fuji PRO 400H, 50mm lens, f/1.4. San Diego, CA.

35mm film is much easier to get developed & scanned than medium format film. The prices of 35mm SLR bodies are still falling, so you can score an outfit that would have cost as much as a new car a few years ago for well under \$1,000. (Seriously. Less than \$1,000 for an *incredible* body and a new lens or two.)

**THE BASIC RULE OF 35MM: LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH.** If you have an 'old' 35mm camera body sitting around at home, it'll do the trick. Pop your best glass onto it and *get shooting*. You can rough it with the in-camera meter at first. Of course, I encourage busting out your light meter to get absolutely fantastic results from the get-go.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO OVERCOME WHEN SHOOTING 35MM FILM IS YOUR MINDSET.** Ignore the voices that say film is scary or hard or difficult or outdated or that you can't do it. If you bought this book, I KNOW you want to shoot film. So grab what you've got, or round up a 35mm body on KEH.com – my friend scored a perfectly acceptable 35mm Nikon body for \$37 last week – and get shooting.

**MY GO-TO RECOMMENDATION FOR A 35MM BODY IS THE NIKON F100.** It's fast and user-friendly. Aside from being extremely durable, both have fast primes and there's Zeiss glass available.

**THE F100 RETAILS FOR UNDER \$200 AT THE TIME OF WRITING. IT'S BUILT LIKE A TANK.**

*Why not recommend the F5?* The F5 has a built-in battery grip, making it much heavier than the F100. At the end of an event, I don't care about having a battery grip on my camera so much as I care about how my neck, back, and feet feel. Lighter equipment = happier neck, back, and feet.

Standard Nikon lenses will mount onto the F100 body, so there's no loss of lens investment by purchasing a film body.

I recommend a few prime lenses for getting going in the film world, too. The Nikon 50mm f/1.4 is ideal for portraits and details. The Nikon 85mm f/1.8 is just plain perfect candid expressions and portraits shot up to f/2.8. Finally, the Sigma 20mm f/1.8 captures wide establishing shots that capture a sense of place and story.



*GIVE AUTOFOCUS A WHIRL IF YOU MUST, BUT LEARNING TO FOCUS EVERYTHING IN MANUAL WILL MAKE YOU AN EVEN BETTER PHOTOGRAPHER.*



*Nikon F5, Fuji PRO 400H, 20mm Sigma lens, f/6.3. Sundance, UT.*

**THE TRANSITION FROM DIGITAL TO 35MM FILM SHOOTING WILL PROBABLY FEEL THE MOST NATURAL – SAME LENSES, SAME ASPECT RATIO, JUST NO MORE CHIMPING AFTER THE IMAGE IS SHOT!**

Those who can tolerate manual winding and advancing may also enjoy the Nikon FE line of cameras. I absolutely HATE having to advance or wind manually; FE cameras are also loud. Loud, like expect to get withering looks from the Mother of the Bride if you're shooting with one during a ceremony.

Oh, and this camera is completely responsible for me shooting everything in manual focus. (Read: autofocus is horrendous.) Give autofocus a whirl if you must, but learning to focus everything in manual will make you an even better photographer.

**I'M NOT A CANON SHOOTER. IF YOU ARE, AND YOU'D LIKE TO KEEP YOUR GLASS, I RECOMMEND THE EOS3.** This camera retails for about \$100. Those with a bigger budget can pick up the Canon 1V, which retails for up to \$600. (Ironically, the EOS3 is a better camera – but that is an industry secret.)

## CONTAX G2. THE AUTOMATIQUE.



Contax G2, Generic color neg B/W film from China, 21mm lens, f/2.8. Lale, HI.

The G2 is a 35mm rangefinder that I've come to love. First, it corrects parallax error in the viewfinder. When you change lenses, the viewfinder adjusts accordingly! I use the G2 for shooting birth stories and personal work – it's a storyteller. With the TLA200 flash attached, it's ideal for shooting dancing shots at receptions!

**THE G2 IS THE ONLY CAMERA I SHOOT ON (GASP!) AUTO.** I set it to the f/stop I want, put it on Aperture Priority, point, and shoot. The lenses for this Contax are out of this world: all Zeiss (yes, ALL ZEISS) and super super sharp. Contrast is PERFECT. The rear element is so close to the film plane that it makes it almost impossible to get out of focus images.

I rely on Autofocus with this camera because when you change the focus manually, what you see through the viewfinder does not change. The little marker telling you how many meters you are away changes, but everything stays sharp.

**I HAVE THE 21MM, 28MM, 45MM AND 90MM LENSES. WHICH IS MY FAVORITE? ALL OF THEM.**

They are ALL rectilinear lenses. What does that mean? When I shoot with 28mm or 21mm lenses, there is NO distortion whatsoever. It is absolutely unreal. If I had to vote one lens out of my gear bag, it would be the 90mm. This is a rangefinder camera (read PHOTOJOURNALISM), so for me, that means wide with the occasional use of the 45mm for portraits.

I also have the TLA200 flash, which I scored on KEH.com for \$39. It's the size of a small child's palm and fits right on the hot shoe. Just put it on A and set the dial to the angle of coverage. (The look of this camera with a flash is very Terry Richardson. Of course, you get to choose if you're going to cover the same subject matter – but I hope you don't.)

**TRUST THE CAMERA AND IT TAKES PERFECTLY EXPOSED IMAGES EVERY TIME.** You can usually find the G2 system in a complete outfit which includes the body, 28/45/90mm lenses and the occasional TLA200 flash. The outfit retails for less than \$1500 at time of writing (way cheaper than buying individually). You can get the body for less than \$700 and the lenses for around \$300 each. The 21mm, which has a dedicated viewfinder, goes for less than \$800.



Contax G3, Generic color neg B/W film from China, 21mm lens, 1/2.8. San Francisco, CA.



# INSTANT

## POLAROID 600SE. WHEN ONLY THE BEAST WILL DO.

First, pack film – i.e. medium format film which comes in boxes of 10 sheets per pack – is dead in Polaroid form. So the setup we're about to go through involves a Polaroid camera using Fuji pack film.

The Polaroid camera is alive and kicking in this, my favorite instant film camera. Like all Polaroid cameras, the 600SE produces instant results. Think portraits of your kids and loved ones. Think birthday parties at Chuck E. Cheese. Think wedding receptions. Think any freaking subject you want to capture instantly.

The 600SE is a rangefinder camera. That means focusing entails you lining up two images until they overlap exactly. Focusing takes practice, but is well worth the results. Oh, and the standard outfit comes with a Mamiya 127mm *f*/4.7 lens. I love this lens, and wouldn't recommend getting any others for this outfit.

I often use the Polaroid 600SE to photograph peeps during the lull in any given wedding reception. The majority of the time, the camera jump-starts things. People FLIP over having a print right there in their hands. I never keep the prints – I give 'em to the bride/groom/whomever I just shot.



*Polaroid 600SE, Fuji FP-3000B, 127mm lens, *f*/4.7. Arcadia, CA.*



Polaroid 600SE, Fuji FP-3000B, 127mm lens, f/4.7. South Jordan, UT.



The Beast requires carrying a portable hair dryer with you to dry the negs. When you pull the images, the negs are wet and cannot be stacked, touched, overlapped, etc...or the emulsion is ruined. Bad emulsion = bad neg = no blogging goodness for you. Thus, the need for a blow dryer. (We'll talk more about handling the film later.)

Since mentioning this camera here and there, its price has shot through the roof. These cameras are great alternatives to the Polaroid 600SE:

**THE MAMIYA PRESS. THE POLAROID 195. THE POLAROID 110A CONVERTED TO TAKE PACK FILM. THE POLAROID 185S. THE FUJI FP-1.** *I would KILL for a Fuji FP-1.* So if anyone has one and needs someone to die, you know who to call.

If you want to shoot instant film right this second, get yourself a Fuji Instax camera. It comes in Mini or Wide options. The Mini takes photos the size of a credit card, while the Wide takes photos that measure a little over 3.5x5 inches. The film is 800 ISO and the color/saturation is to die for. It's readily available online, and is cheap when purchased in bulk on eBay.

*Polaroid 600SE, Fuji FP-3000B, 127mm lens, 1/4.7. Artesia, MS.*





# TOY

## HOLGA

The Holga is a plastic toy camera from China. Each one comes complete with a 60mm lens and some major personality. (Think light leaks and unpredictable results.) Since this guy is plastic and cheap, it's not even a bit intimidating. Just get out there and have fun with your Holga.

My Holga has been modified by Randy Smith over at [holgamods.com](http://holgamods.com). Even modified Holgas retail for \$50 or less. Mine has been changed to have two working f-stops (f/8 and f/11) and to focus at a minimum of 2 feet instead of the standard 3 feet.

*What's that, your Holga already has two f/stops?* Wrong, my friend...if you click between 'sunny' and 'cloudy,' nothing changes. It's the same f/stop. Randy will take care of your single-apertured Holga.

*What on earth do you use your Holga for?* I like to mix up wedding reception shots with a super-simple, super-fun setup for capturing dancing candids. I pair a Holga camera with a Nikon SB-80DX flash and fire away. My Holga is loaded with Kodak BW400CN – when my stash of that film runs out, I'll be shooting Ilford XP2.

*Can you tell me more about that setup, please?* Indoors with flash, I set the Holga to cloudy (or f/8). I place the Nikon SB80DX flash on the hot shoe. Since I'm generally shooting BW400CN, my ISO is 400. I turn the flash on. I put it into Manual mode. I then manually set the ISO to 400.

*Holga 120S, Kodak E100VS, cross-processed, "cloudy" setting, Salt Lake City, UT.*





*Holga 120S, Kodak E100VS, cross-processed, "cloudy" setting. Salt Lake City, UT.*





*I DON'T EVEN LOOK THROUGH THE VIEWFINDER – JUST POINT, MAKE A CRAZY FACE AT THE SUBJECT, AND SHOOT AWAY.*

Next, I set the angle of coverage to 35mm. Then I set the flash to subject distance to 6.2 feet, which is about how far I'll be from the subject when shooting dancing candids.

From here, I go up 1 full stop in power (3 clicks on a flash set to 1/3 stop increments) since I want to err on the side of overexposing.

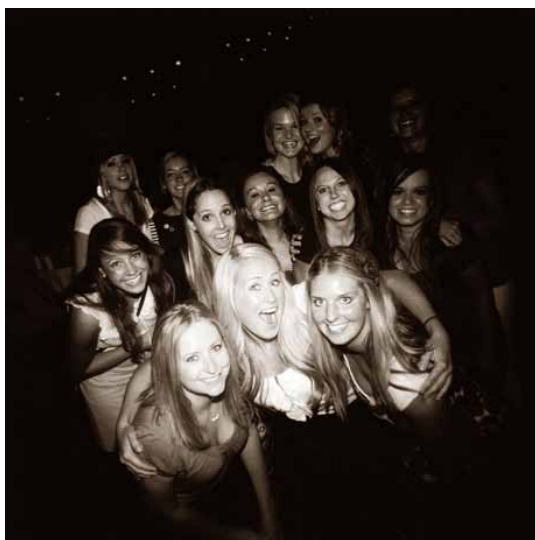
*You did what to your flash, and then...huh?* I manually set my ISO, my flash to subject distance, and my flash output. For help with the SB80DX or any flash, read your manual. Google any questions you may have. Then read your manual again. ANY flash can produce great results with this setup.

As long as my subject is anywhere from 4-7 feet away from me, they will not only be in focus, but will be exposed well enough that the image can be scanned and left untouched in Photoshop or Lightroom.

*The best part?* I don't even look through the viewfinder – just point, make a crazy face at the subject, and shoot away. Makes even the dullest events look AWESOME.

*What about shooting Holga during the day?* I set my aperture to sunny (f/11), choose my subject distance, keep the sun at my back, and fire away. During the day, the Holga is loaded with Kodak E100VS slide film. I cross-process the film to create bright bright BRIGHT color and crazy-heavy vignettes. I shoot this film in harsh light, which is the opposite of the way I shoot typical color negative film. You'll want to avoid shooting this setup in the shade or you'll have horrible green color in each and every image.

Oh, and you need to meet my friend AXIS lighting. This means the sun is directly to my back, shining harshly on the subject in front of me. I only shoot the Holga (loaded with E100VS film) in an AXIS lighting situation.



Holga 120S, Kodak BW400CN, "cloudy" setting. Lehi, UT.



*I CROSS-PROCESS  
THE FILM TO  
CREATE BRIGHT  
BRIGHT BRIGHT  
COLOR AND  
CRAZY-HEAVY  
VIGNETTES.*

*Holga 120S, Kodak E100VS, cross-processed,  
"sunny" setting. Provo, UT.*





# THE **FILM**

*THIS CHAPTER COULD BE A HUNDRED PAGES LONG -- AND EVEN THEN,  
IT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONTAIN MY LOVE FOR FILM. SEE THE FILM  
STOCKS THAT TRIP MY TRIGGER. FIND THE ONES THAT TRIP YOURS.*









# FUJIOR**KODAK**



*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2, Aspen, CO.*



As much as I love Kodak's new Portra line of films, I don't care about name. I care about final product for my client and for myself. I am completely dedicated to film, and will shoot whichever film works best for me in a given shooting situation.

If Hershey comes out with a film in formats that I need and with the specifications I require, then you can call me Chocolate Canlas.

# BASICS



Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, f/2. Mill Creek, UT.



Don't be intimidated by the long names of some films – they're easy to break down once you know what each part means.

Let's say I'm shooting a common film: Kodak Portra 400 220.

Kodak is the name of the film maker. *You'll most likely encounter Kodak or Fuji as your film maker.*

Portra is the film stock. *Different stocks have characteristics that are quite noticeable.*

400 is the ISO of the film, where ISO equals light sensitivity. *(You know this from your digital gear!) Film stock comes in ISO 100, 160, 200, 400, 800, 1600, and 3200, increasing in noticeable grain as the ISO gets closer to 3200.*

220 is the size of the film – in this example, 30+ exposures of medium format film. *120 indicates 15+ exposures of medium format film. 35mm indicates that it's intended for use in a 35mm camera. Pro rolls of 35mm film typically contain 36 exposures.*



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, 1/2. Provo, UT.





# MY RECOMMENDATIONS



Contax 645. Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, f/2. Tacoma, WA.

*THE MAJORITY OF WHAT I SHOOT DURING EVENTS LIKE A WEDDING DAY IS KODAK PORTRA 400. HANDS DOWN, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.*

Before we talk in general terms about film stock, let's cover what I shoot during any given assignment. This will serve as a real-life example of film in action. The rundown of what's what in generic terms will follow this, so you can decide what's best for you.

First things first: my ISO of choice is 400. It's a fast film with no grain that shows up in scans. My film stock of choice depends on who, what, and where I'm shooting.

The majority of what I shoot during events like a wedding day is Kodak Portra 400. Hands down, no questions asked.

As it gets later in a wedding day, I'll break out the Kodak Portra 800 – note the Portra theme, here.

For the holga, I bring 10 rolls of Kodak E100VS slide film. I cross-process this for all shots taken during the day in the harshest of light (read: rad vignettes and crazy color). Using this at night with a flash results in whack colors that are super-unpredictable.

When using the Holga with flash, I shoot 5-ish rolls of Ilford XP2 – a color negative (C-41) black and white film. If I feel like mixing it up, I throw some Kodak Portra 800 film into the Holga and fire away.

As light completely disappears in the evening, I shoot 10-ish rolls of Ilford Delta 3200. This is a high speed black and white film in 120 format (16 exposures, remember?).



Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, f/2. Mill Creek, UT.



## DON'T FORGET THAT THE ONLY WAY TO GET THE ANSWERS YOU REALLY WANT REGARDING WHICH FILM TYPE IS BEST IS FOR YOU IS TO...

**GET OUT AND SHOOT IT FOR YOURSELF.** Let this be a starting point, and only a starting point for your exploration of the world of film!

**COLOR.** (Developed in C-41 process. Has latitude, making it very forgiving for choosing exposure. Amazing high-light retention, shadow detail, and tonal range.)

**KODAK PORTRA 400:** This film is brand new to the market – only just introduced at time of writing. It is the answer to serious film shooters as it is the *only* color film available in 220. Kodak Portra 400 is RAD because it uses the vision 3 technology found in motion pictures. This means Portra 400 can be PUSHED and PUSHED WELL! I've shot it pushed to 3200, which is unheard of for color negative film – and it is *gorgeous*. No grain increase, color shifts, or lack of contrast and saturation. Add the fact that you can now shoot at night with this film by pushing it like crazy? AWESOME.

Great skin tones, great contrast and saturation, this is the future of color film in 120, 220, and 35mm formats. (We can all shoot Portra, shazaam!)

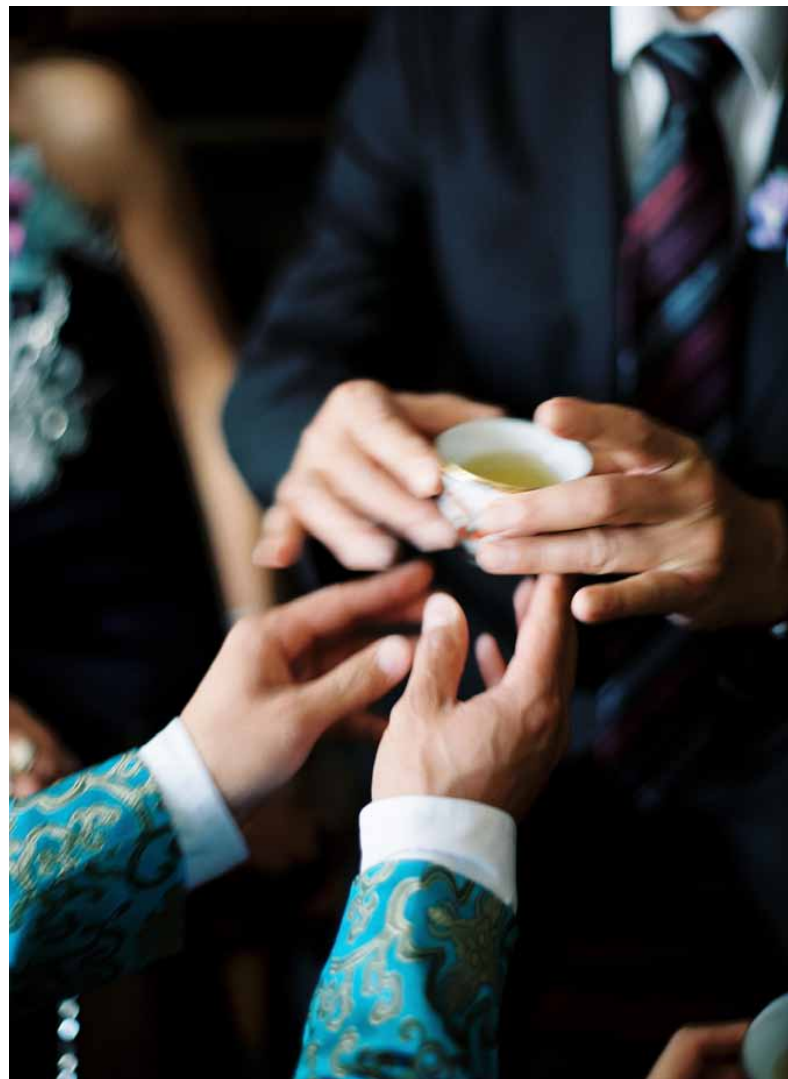


Contax 645, Fujii PRO 400H, 35mm lens, 1/8. Salt Lake City, UT.





*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, 1/2. Groton, CT.*



## THE MORE OVEREXPOSED THE FILM, THE MORE SATURATION AND CONTRAST YOU'RE INTRODUCING INTO THE IMAGE.

Gotta tell ya, though: when I first shot this film I did not think much of it. My test images were super yellow. Turns out, they were super yellow *because I shot it the way I shoot Fuji 400H, overexposing and metering for the shadows.*

This new Portra 400 is more or less motion picture film. If anyone has worked on a movie set, you know when they meter they have the bulb out and meter straight up, then expose exactly what the meter says. I have found this is the way to meter for Portra 400. No overexposing unless you like yellow photos.

**KODAK PORTRA 800:** When Fuji discontinued 800Z film, the film world had a moment of mourning. Luckily, there's Portra 800 to step up and handle those low-light situations. It lacks the magenta shift 800Z introduced whether you liked it or not, and Portra 800 can be pushed to 1600 without any issues. This film is great for skin tones but still nice and contrasty and saturated.

**I LOVE THIS FILM, IT'S AWESOME. LIKE BLOW YOUR MIND AWESOME.**

The only drawback? Kodak Portra 800 is only available in 120 and 35mm formats. I shoot this guy in 120 for about an hour at the end of the night to keep that 120 format from bothering me too much.

**KODAK EKTAR 100:** Great for travel work, personal work, and details. Super-saturated, super-super-super (note the use of 3 supers! I warned you!) contrasty, and a bit red. Red people aren't pretty people, so this film doesn't work for portraits.

Available in 120 and 35mm formats. The film grain is crazy-fine – like, it just might make you weep at its grainy perfection. Or blow up an image to the size of your studio wall to test its capabilities.

Want to get ballsy? These films are all available in 4x5 and 8x10 formats. *Booyah.*

**FUJI PRO 400H:** Available in 120 medium format and 35mm format, this was my film of choice for color negative film. I love the color palette and levels of saturation & contrast I can achieve when I overexpose this film. The skin tones on 400H freaking rock.

400H is what creates the signature pastel look in film images – when grouped with a Contax, the combination is CRAZY RAD.

That ISO of 400 is versatile in lots of lighting situations, like broad daylight, open shade, and handheld up to 1/30 sec in relatively low light. This film must be overexposed to create that pastel-y look. Depending on the lighting, I recommend overexposing this film by 1 to 3 stops. In broad daylight: +1. In open shade: +2. In really flat light: +3.

The more overexposed the film, the more saturation and contrast you're introducing into the image.

**FUJI 160C:** A super-magenta, super-contrasty film much like the discontinued 800Z, just 2.3 stops slower. A discontinued-at-the-end-of-2010 film that's readily available on eBay at time of writing.

**FUJI 160S:** Think 400H with 1.3 stops less light sensitivity. Another discontinued-at-the-end-of-2010 film that's readily available on eBay at time of writing.

If you're going to be shooting weddings in the summer, outdoors, you can shoot 160S in 220 format and you'll never miss your 400H. In the winter or inside? You'll miss your 400H.



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, 1/2. Lehi, UT.



# SLIDE

## (DEVELOPED IN E-6 PROCESS. VERY LITTLE EXPOSURE LATITUDE.)

**KODAK E100VS:** I always cross-process this film after shooting it in my Holga – yes, that’s a very specific use of this film – and when you cross-process, you must over-expose. By setting the Holga to ‘Sunny’ and exposing at the standard Holga shutter speed (1/100), I overexpose the film by 1 & 1/3 stops. The cross-processed results of Kodak E100VS in a Holga always have midnight blue skies and through-the-roof saturation. I prefer this film over other slide films because it renders the perfect color results I want straight out of camera without any fiddling in Photoshop on the back end.

Oh, and I only recommend shooting this film in broad daylight (not open shade!), as the results go *really* green in the shade.

*What the heck is cross processing?* Instead of developing slide film in E-6, which is what it’s designed for, it’s processed in color negative (C-41) chemicals.

If you develop E-6 normally, you’ll get a positive – or a slide. Remember those things you used to have to sit through as your dad hit the next button on the slide carousel while you looked at photos of him at Yellowstone in his heyday? Yah, those kind of slides.

If you develop color neg film (C-41) you get a negative, the opposite of a positive. So cross-processing means, to take C-41 film and develop it in E-6 chemistry (not so popular) or to take E-6 film and develop it in C-41 chemistry (what I do with my holgas to get CRAZZZZZZZZZZY color).

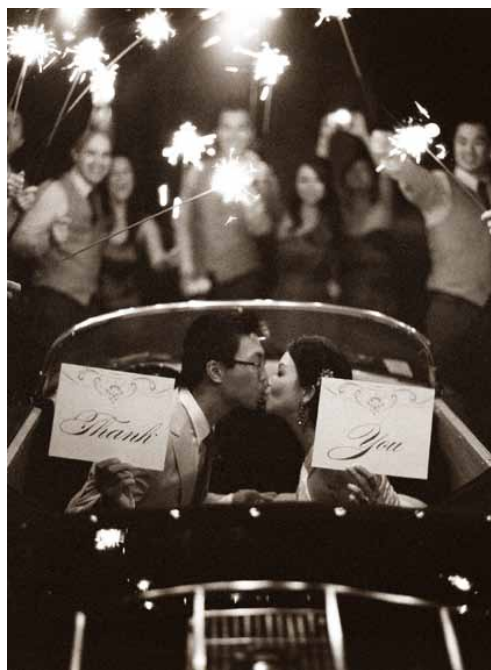
*Holga 120S, Kodak E100VS, cross-processed, “sunny” setting. Compton, CA.*





# TRUEBLACK&WHITE

(HAS ITS OWN DEVELOPER. MORE FORGIVING THAN SLIDE FILM, LESS FORGIVING THAN COLOR FILM.)



Contax 645, Ilford 3200, pushed to 6400, 80mm lens, f/2. Groton, CT.



**ILFORD DELTA 3200:** The only 3200 ISO black and white film available in 120! It is fantastic pushed to 6400 as well. Grainy, romantic, *awesome*: the triple threat.

Also available in 35mm format.

**KODAK TMZ 3200:** If you want grain just plain oozing out of your image, shoot this stock. Available in 35mm.

**C-41 BLACK & WHITE. (WAY FORGIVING = LOTS OF LATITUDE. SHOOT WHICHEVER ONE YOU CAN FIND, AND YOU'LL BE A HAPPY CAMPER.)**

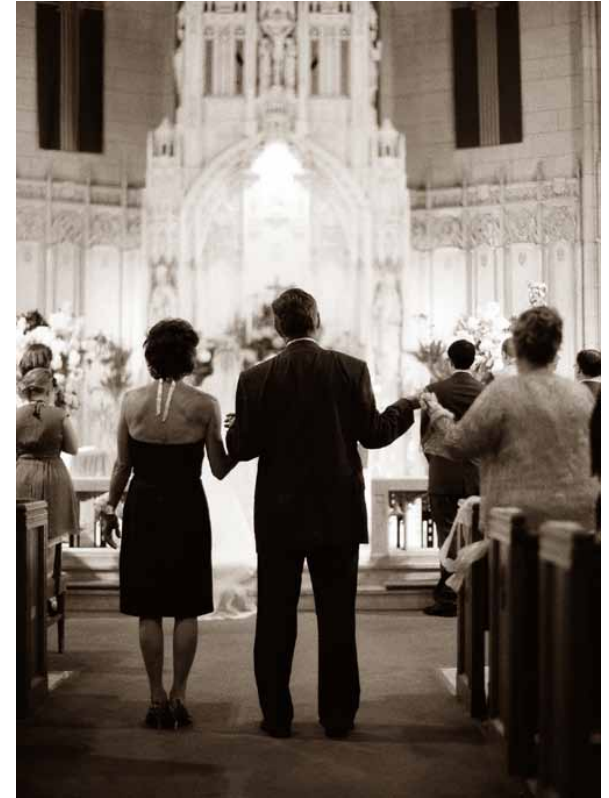
**KODAK BW400CN:** This is a C-41 (or color negative) black and white film. What the WHAT!? It isn't a true black and white film, so it has more latitude when shooting. You can heavily overexpose without creating any weird color shifts. It has great contrast when you overexpose by a stop or two, and is my black and white film of choice for regular shooting.

Available in 35mm format.

**ILFORD XP-2:** Another C-41 black and white film that's available in 120 and 35mm formats. Comes with the same latitude as KodakBW400CN, which means it's rad.



*Contax 645, Ilford Delta 3200, pushed to 6400, 80mm lens, f/2. San Francisco, CA.*



# BUYING&STORINGFILM



Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, f/2, under-exposed 2 stops. Las Vegas, NV.

## FILM CAN BE PURCHASED BY THE ROLL, BY THE PRO PACK (TYPICALLY 5 ROLLS), OR IN BULK.

### GET YOUR FEET WET WITH FILM FROM REPUTABLE VENDORS.

While you're still trying out stocks to find out which films you love best, I recommend buying a roll or two of film from dealers like Adorama Camera or B&H Photo. These dealers are top notch, and you can rest assured that you'll be dealing with fresh film.

**BUY FILM IN BULK TO SAVE CASH.** I buy my film on eBay in large quantities, spending at least \$500 at a time. These two eBay sellers are awesome: *amaan13* and *ultrafineonline*.

I'm a level-three film hoarder, so please ignore that suitcase stuffed with film over there. And that refrigerator out in the garage that's full of film. Oh, and that rolling bag, there. And that filing cabinet drawer.

**DON'T HESITATE TO BUY EXPIRED FILM.** As film gets older, two things can happen. One: it becomes more prone to color shift. Two: it can lose light sensitivity. That makes color negative film a *lot* more sensitive to expiration dates. I regularly shoot color negative film like 400H that expired in 2007. With a C-41 film like BW400CN that doesn't have any color – thus making color shifts irrelevant – I buy as far back as 2001. Since I overexpose the hell out of that film anyway, the loss of light sensitivity doesn't make a bit of difference.

### SHOOT EXPIRED FILM JUST AS YOU WOULD NORMAL FILM.

Assume that your expired film is fresh as a daisy and shoot away. I shoot film that expired in September 2007 all the time without any issues.

**STORE YOUR FILM IN A COOL, DRY PLACE.** Film is stored in the refrigerator if I can swing it – and a suitcase if the refrigerator is full. I live in Utah, which is the opposite of humid. If you live on a tropical island or an extremely humid place, I don't recommend fridge storage. Upon removal from the fridge in a tropical climate, the film will start to sweat. Water + unexposed film = no bueno.

You can freeze film if you don't plan on shooting it for at least six months. Frozen film should be removed from the freezer and allowed to acclimate to room temperature for a minimum of 24 hours before being popped into your camera.

If you're actively shooting, the fridge will do just fine.



# FAQ

## WHY ARE YOU SO SURE FILM ISN'T DEAD? AND WON'T BE DEAD REALLY SOON?



Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, f/2. Venice Beach, CA.



If film dies, I'll pick you up on my unicorn and we'll go check out double rainbows in the land of Goody Goody Gumdrops. (Read: NOT likely.)

Kodak just dropped a ton of cash into research and development for the new Kodak Portra 400. Plus, the motion picture industry keeps film production alive by buying a million dollars worth of film PER MOVIE. So long as Hollywood is cranking out motion pictures, Kodak will keep making film.

**WHAT'S THE BEST 'ALL AROUND FILM' TO PURCHASE? ONE THAT WILL WORK WITH BOTH TONS OF LIGHT AND LOW LIGHT?** This depends entirely on the look you're going for! If you want creamy pastel tones, shoot Fuji 400H and overexpose. If you're looking for true-to-life color and the ability to push your film a stop or two or three, shoot Kodak Portra 400. These two films are apples and oranges, in terms of look, but they provide that versatile 400 ISO to handle a range of shooting situations.

**DO YOU REALLY NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SKIN TONES' COLOR WITH FILM? REALLY!?** Yes and no. You are ALWAYS at the mercy of the person scanning your film. Whether that's a lab technician or your friend Sally or even you – bad scanning makes for tons of post-production work.

If you've exposed correctly and your lab has scanned the film with skin tones in mind (which Richard Photo Lab does automatically), you're good to go. I'll shoot in a myriad of lighting situations, then do quick adjustment to levels, curves, and/or color balance if needed. Those who are less picky than me about color may not feel the need to do a darn thing after getting scans back from the lab.



**WHY SHOOT BLACK AND WHITE FILM? WHY NOT JUST SHOOT IN COLOR AND CONVERT IN PHOTOSHOP?** That one extra step in post-production kills me! My whole goal is to sit behind a computer *for as little time as humanly possible*, so 'just' converting 100 images to black & white, then tweaking them and exporting them over the course of shooting a year's worth of weddings means a lot more time behind El Mac-o.

Aside from that, it's a lot easier to create the look of Ilford 3200 by...shooting Ilford 3200.

**HOW MANY ROLLS OF FILM DO YOU SHOOT AT A WEDDING?** Forty-ish. I bring at least 60 rolls to any given wedding. Uncle Bob might be a nice dude, but he's not going to be equipped with a few extra rolls of Kodak Portra 400 220 that I can borrow. It's on me to be prepared. I also shoot tons of personal work outside of the wedding or event, so those 'leftover' rolls are often used up before I head home.

**HOW DO YOU GET ALL OF YOUR FILM THROUGH AIRPORT SECURITY?** First and foremost, I keep it out of my checked luggage. Always, forever, no exceptions. Film in checked luggage will be ruined film by the time it reaches your destination.

Any film rated above ISO 800 (like the Ilford Delta 3200) and all instant films (Fuji FP3000B) have to be hand-checked at security. I keep them in a separate bag that the nice security people inspect box by box and roll by roll. Again, films of ISO 1600 or 3200 and instant films simply can't go through the x-rays at security.

**WHERE DO YOU STORE FILM THAT'S ALREADY BEEN SHOT?** You can store it briefly in the fridge, but I recommend getting exposed film developed STAT.

*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, 1/2. Carlsbad, CA.*

# INSTANT



Polaroid 600SE, Fuji FP-3000B, 127mm lens, f/4.7, Pasadena, CA.

We're only going to talk about one instant film, and that's Fuji FP-3000B. It has an ISO of 3200, which makes it perfect for shooting just about anywhere with your Polaroid 600SE camera.

Shoot an image, then let it develop for at least 30 seconds. Pull too soon and the image will solarize – your negative will be useless. When it doubt, let it develop longer!

First, pull your image. Separate the positive (pretty picture) from the negative (goopy mess).

Give the positive to your portrait subject. Dry the negative (the goopy side) – you can hit it with a portable blow dryer or allow it to air dry. Keep the negative from touching anything else until it's dried!

Grab some glass cleaner for your scanner and a can of air for your neg to make 'em both as dust-free as possible before scanning.

Scan the neg on a flatbed scanner at the highest DPI possible. *(You know that crappy 3-in-1 scanner/printer/fax machine you have? That'll do. I have an Epson 4990 Flatbed Scanner.)*

## TO BRING YOUR FP-3000B NEGATIVE TO LIFE IN PHOTOSHOP:

Open the document in Photoshop. (File>>Open)

Invert it. (Image>>Adjustments>>Invert)

Flip the canvas horizontally. (Image>>Image Rotation>>Flip Canvas Horizontally)

Adjust levels, brightness, and curves to taste. (Image>>Adjustments>>Levels)

*If you've scanned at the highest DPI possible, you can prep for prints as usual. I scan all my FP-3000B negs at 800 DPI and print 16x20's from them amazingly. Like melt your face awesome.*

## TO ADD RAD TONING TO YOUR FP-3000B NEGATIVE IN PHOTOSHOP:

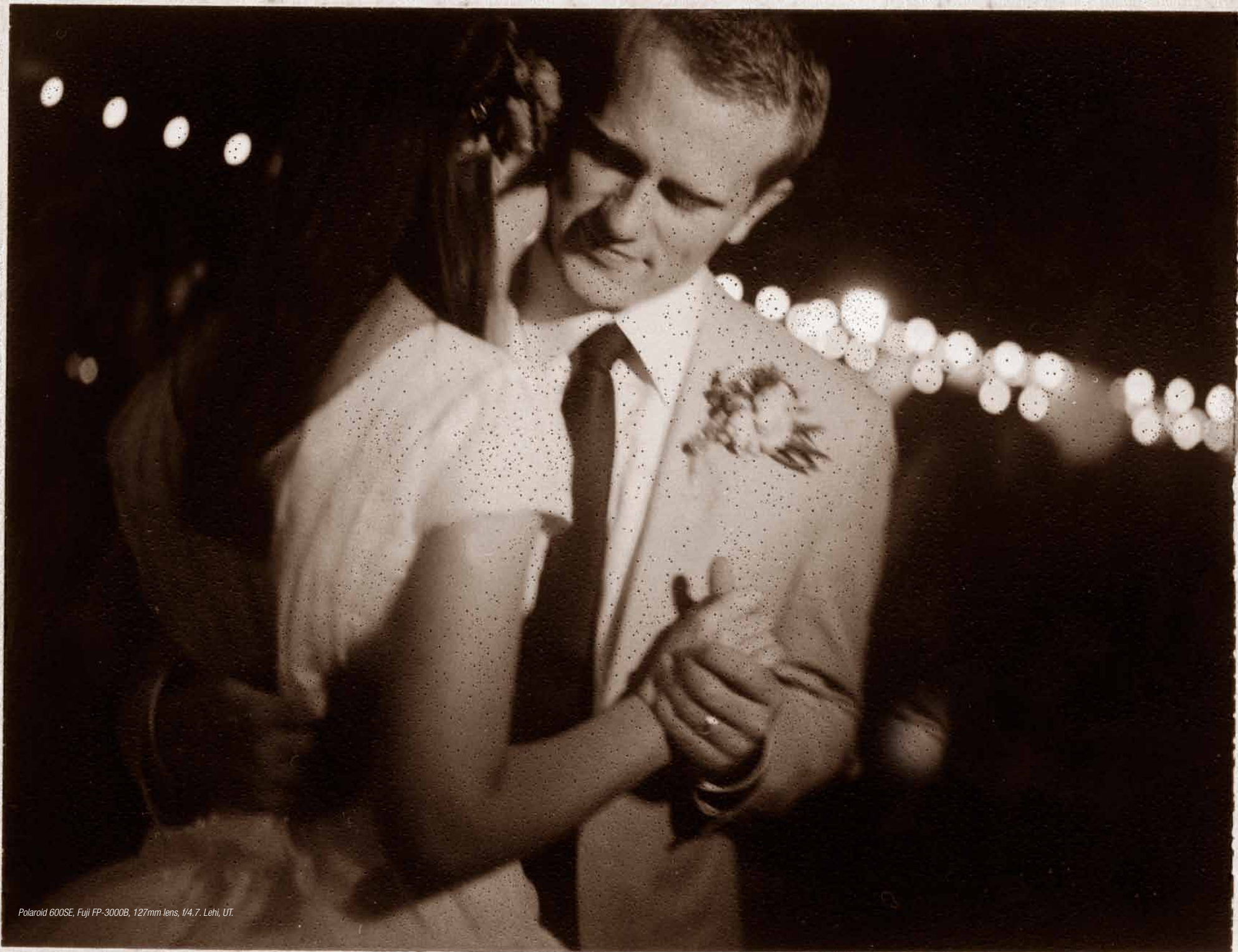
Convert to Grayscale. (Image>>Mode>>Grayscale)

Convert to RGB. (Image>>Mode>>RGB Color)

Open Color Balance and add/subtract the numbers to taste. (Image>>Adjustments>>Color Balance)

*This creates subtle toning – find your own signature formula and get down with your bad self.*





Polaroid 600SE, Fuji FP-3000B, 127mm lens, f/4.7, Lehi, UT.



# THE **EXPOSING**

*LEAVE THE SAFETY NET OF INSTANT DIGITAL FEEDBACK BEHIND.  
I GUARANTEE YOU'LL LIKE WHAT YOU DISCOVER.*







# EXPOSING COLOR & C-41 FILM



Contax 645, Fujii PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. San Francisco, CA.

This is where you freak out. You have a camera, a lens, and film. You're, like, *a film shooter*. Only you're scared to lose the safety net of instant digital feedback.

Breathe. You can do this. If you can shoot a camera in manual, you can shoot film like a champ. Let's start with shooting color film like Kodak Portra 400.

**WHEN SHOOTING COLOR NEGATIVE OR C-41 FILM, ERR ON THE SIDE OF OVEREXPOSING THE FILM.** When you overexpose your film, you are exposing for the shadows, which guarantees detail in the darkest parts of your image. Overexposing doesn't kill your highlights though. It is almost impossible to have blown highlights with film.

This freaks digital shooters out, as you've been taught to *err* on the side of **underexposing** your digital images. Underexposed film images look like crap. Underexposing can introduce noticeable grain, strange color shifts, and muddy blacks into your images.

That said, Kodak Portra film can be underexposed up to 2 stops. (It's the **ONLY** color negative film that can be underexposed and deliver results you won't be embarrassed to show your client.)

**HOW MUCH YOU OVEREXPOSE YOUR FILM IS A MATTER OF TASTE.** All Kodak films can be overexposed by half a stop without introducing more yellow into the image. To do this, I meter with the bulb out and held perpendicular to the ground. We'll talk more about that later. If your style involves crazy-heavy contrast and you're willing to color-correct for the yellow you're introducing, overexpose your Portra by a stop or two.

Overexposing Fuji films introduces contrast and saturation to an image. With Fuji film, overexpose by 2 to 3 stops in totally flat light. If your subject is back-lit, overexpose by 1.5 to two stops. And if you're shooting in direct sunlight – so the sun is already providing heavy contrast – overexpose by just one stop.

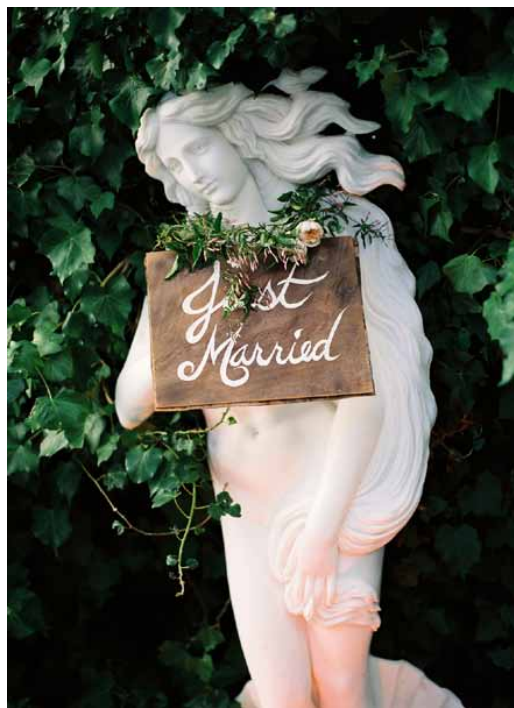
**OVEREXPOSING SAVES ON RETOUCHING TIME, TOO.** You'll hide blemishes or large pores on your portrait subject by overexposing an additional stop. Creamy, creamy skin and minimal retouching is the result.

This is basically doing post-processing at the time of exposure – sneaky, eh? Just saved you a few hours in Photoshop, per shoot, over the course of your multi-decade career. *You're welcome.* Make checks of gratitude payable to Jonathan Canlas Photography.

# YOUR BUDDY, THE LIGHT METER



Contax 645, Fujifilm PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. San Francisco, CA.



My light meter is around my neck 100% of the time that I'm shooting. Literally, 100%. It's a Sekonic L-508. It's less than \$300 when you buy it used on eBay. (Notice the trend of buying gear on eBay? I rarely buy gear new.)

The Sekonic L-508 is affordable compared to the newer models, it has spot-metering capabilities, and the ambient bulb is retractable. (This matters. You'll find out why in a bit.) If you can't swing the \$300, you can purchase the Sekonic L-358. The L-358 doesn't have a spot meter, which you'll need for shooting black and white film. Worth saving up that extra \$75, for sure.

**I GOT COMFORTABLE WITH MY LIGHT METER THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY: BY READING THE MANUAL.** You need to read the manual, too, so you know what the meter is capable of and how best to use it. After you've read the manual and are familiar with its basic functions, you're ready to begin metering with film. (I never, EVER recommend trying out a new tool or gadget on a client's dime – you need to get comfortable with metering before introducing it into your paid work.)

So, you have your meter. It's around your neck and you're ready to shoot color negative film.

You turn it on. What now?



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, 1/2. San Francisco, CA.







Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. San Francisco, CA.

**OUR GOAL IS TO OVEREXPOSE OUR IMAGES. HOW MUCH WE OVEREXPOSE THEM DEPENDS ON WHICH FILM STOCK WE'RE SHOOTING.**

#### **HOW TO METER FOR KODAK COLOR NEGATIVE FILMS + FUJI 160C:**

1. Set the ISO to the same ISO as your film. If we're shooting Portra 400, that's 400. The ISO is in the name of the film.
2. Set the meter to take an Ambient reading.
3. Make sure the meter's bulb is out.
4. Hold the meter parallel to the subject and perpendicular to the ground. Remember, 90 degrees is perpendicular to the ground.
5. Take a reading.
6. Set your camera to shoot what the meter reading just told you to shoot.

#### **HOW TO METER FOR FUJI 400H + 160S:**

1. Set the ISO to the same ISO as your film. If we're shooting 400H, that's 400. The ISO is in the name of the film.
2. Set the meter to take an Ambient – NOT SPOT – reading.
3. Retract the meter's bulb. When it is out, it's metering 180 degrees. We don't want to meter 180 degrees, we want to meter for the shadows. With the bulb retracted, we're all set to overexpose our image by ½ to 2/3 of a stop.
4. Hold the meter AWAY from the subject and 45 degrees to the ground. Remember your basic geometry – 90 degrees is perpendicular to the ground, 0 degrees is parallel to the ground. You want 45 degrees.
5. Take a reading. That 45 degree-reading you're taking will overexpose by another 2/3 of a stop. (So, 2/3 by retracting the bulb and 2/3 by holding at 45 degree angle – we're talking overexposing by 1.3 stops. It's a perfect reading!)
6. Set your camera to shoot the f/stop that the meter reading just told you to shoot. (More on that below.)

Boom! Perfectly exposed film! Where's that easy button?

#### **DUDE, IT JUST GAVE ME A NUMBER LIKE 2.8.5! WHAT!?**

The Sekonic L-508 meter gives you readings in 1/10th increments of each f/stop. So, if you're supposed to be shooting at f/2.8, you can get readings of f/2.8.1 all the way up to f/2.8.9. You can ignore that last number entirely – so if the meter says f/2.8.1, just shoot at f/2.8. If it says f/2.8.6? Shoot at f/2.8. You're rounding down to err on the side of overexposing.

# METERING TRUE BLACK & WHITE FILM



Contax 645, Ilford Delta 3200, pushed to 6400, 80mm lens, f/2. San Francisco, CA.



You need to be *much* more exact when exposing true black and white film, as it is not as forgiving as color neg film. We're going to use the Zone System to expose our film. The Zone System teaches us to meter for shadows and develop for highlights.

Skintones are the basis of our portraits with color film, and the same goes here. Middle gray is zone 5. We want our skin tones to be lighter than middle gray, so we're doing our best to place skin tones in zone VI.

You're going to meter for the face (the cheek, actually) of your portrait subject to properly expose your image.

## OUR GOAL IS TO EXPOSE FOR OUR SUBJECT'S SKINTONE.

**Why did I spot meter for the cheek?** I take a reading for the face as I don't really care where everything else falls in the exposure. If a face is properly exposed, all is well in my world.

Again, Caucasians are Zone 6-6.5 (overexposing on your meter either 1-1.5 stops) depending on the creaminess of the white person. If a vampire attended a wedding, they would be Zone 7. Those dudes are so creamy they're translucent.

To use your sekonic l-508 with true black and white film, you'll need to bust out your spot meter. Stick with me, here...

1. Set the ISO on the meter to be the same ISO as your film.
2. Set the reading to Spot Meter – NOT AMBIENT.
3. Point the spot meter at the cheek of your subject.
4. If your subject is Caucasian, overexpose by 1 – 1.5 stops. (If the spot meter reading says 4.0.5, shoot at f/2.8 – that's 1.5 stops overexposure.) Most Caucasians' skin tones fall into Zone 6. (See Zone Meter Grid.) Darker-skinned people like myself are around middle gray, or Zone 5 in the Zone Metering system.

*MOST CAUCASIANS' SKIN TONES FALL INTO ZONE 6. DARKER-SKINNED PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF ARE AROUND MIDDLE GRAY, OR ZONE 5 IN THE ZONE METERING SYSTEM.*



*Contax 645, Ilford Delta 3200, pushed to 6400, 80mm lens, 1/2. Artesia, MS.*





# FAQ

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO RATE MY FILM?** When you tell the meter which ISO you're shooting, you're rating your film. So, when you load a roll of Portra 400 and set your light meter's ISO to 400 – you've rated your film.

**HOW DO I PUSH FILM? WHAT DOES THAT EVEN MEAN?** Pushing film is just another term for underexposing film ON PURPOSE.

Let's say I'm shooting Portra 400, which has an ISO of 400. If I rate my film at 800 (by entering 800 on my meter instead of 400), I'm exposing the film as if it has an ISO of 800. I just let the lab know to push the film one stop at time of developing in order to achieve the desired results – it will look like I shot 800 film, even though I ran out of it yesterday, etc... Kodak Portra 400 is FANTASTIC for pushing.

If you're pushing film, be sure to push THE ENTIRE ROLL. Pushing requires extra time in the developing soup, and the whole roll goes in the soup.

**WHY DO YOU OVEREXPOSE THE WAY YOU DO?** There are several ways to effectively overexpose film, but I have found this to be the most reliable way. I do NOT use the meter in my camera as it is taking an over all reading of the scene and usually with a white dress and black tux, the meter goes a bit loco.

You could shoot in aperture priority and just put the camera to be set at +.5 when shooting Portra or +2 when shoot-

ing 400H -- but then you are at the mercy of your in-camera meter. Frankly, I don't trust in-camera meters any more than I trust recently-released ex-cons who offer to babysit my kids for free.

It's important to be in control of your camera – not the other way around – and with the Sekonic L-508 I know my reading is going to be spot on. It is fast and easy to do, and does not require you to walk up to your subject every time to take a reading.

**WHAT ARE SOME EXPOSURE ERRORS TO BE AWARE OF?** *Make sure your film's ISO + your meter's rating match.* If you don't set your light meter to match your ISO (this is called rating your film), you could be in serious trouble. If, for example, you're shooting Kodak Ektar 100 and you have the meter rated at 160, you'll be fine. But if you're shooting Ilford 3200 and have the meter rated at 100, you are just plain hosed. Check and double-check your ISO rating when metering.

*Make sure you have your meter on Reflective mode if shooting color neg film and on Spot mode when shooting true black and white film.*

*Dial it in.* The most common error of all? Taking a reading and forgetting to set your camera to what the meter says. (Not that it happens to me every so often...never...)

Contax 645, Ilford Delta 3200, pushed to 6400, 80mm lens, f/2. Montauk, NY.







*FRANKLY, I DON'T TRUST IN-CAMERA  
METERS ANY MORE THAN I TRUST  
RECENTLY-RELEASED EX-CONS WHO OFFER  
TO BABYSIT MY KIDS FOR FREE.*

*Contax 645, Ilford Delta 3200, pushed to 6400, f/2. Salt Lake City, UT.*



# THE **BACKEND**

*THERE ARE PLENTY OF OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR  
WORK. I'VE NARROWED THEM TO JUST FOUR: RICHARD PHOTO  
LAB, YOUR LOCAL LAB, ON THE CHEAP, AND ON YOUR OWN.*





# FORREAL

I recommend using Richard Photo Lab to develop and scan your film. End of story, no questions asked, forever and ever amen. They are not the cheapest lab on the block. They are the BEST lab on the block.

Richard Photo Lab is amazing at treating everyone who works with them the same way. Whether you're Jonathan Canlas or Jonathan Fanless, you'll have the same customer experience with RPL. Yes, RPL is expensive, but you get what you pay for: little to NO time behind the computer fidgeting to make your images look good.

Get the RPL medium scans at time of developing to print up to 11x14, and large scans if you regularly sell enlargements to clients. (This is much cheaper than sending a single neg back to RPL, paying for drum scanning, and then paying to have the neg returned to you via FedEx. Just err on the side of large scans if you regularly sell big prints.)

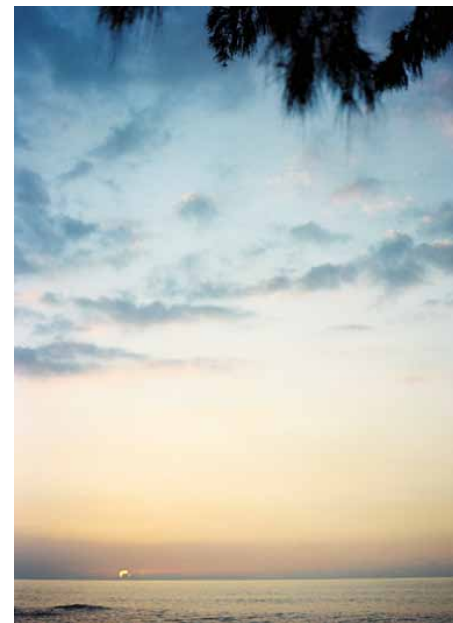
When you get scans back from them via FTP, be sure to let them know if the color is not what you expected (too warm, too cool, etc...) and begin a dialogue with them. Talk to Bill. He'll set you up with a profile that allows any technician who scans your work to know and dial in your scanning preferences. I tell them to process for skin tones and let the rest of the color fall where it will.

*Richardphotolab.com*





## YOURLOCALLAB



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. Oahu, HI.

If you're not yet ready for RPL, take a drive to your local camera lab and see what they're capable of. Start a conversation about scan sizes and film types – they'll be happy to chat with you.

*Does the lab develop color + C-41 film? How about medium format? What about true black and white? What sizes of scans do they offer, and for how much? Do they push and pull film? At what charge? What's their turnaround time? How much are proof prints?* Be prepared to ask questions and record the answers, then give the lab a try if you like what you see.

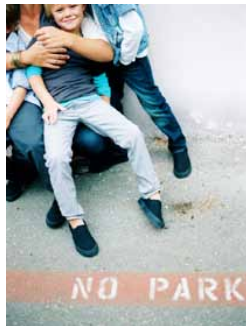


*Contax 645, Kodak BW400CN, 80mm lens, 1/2. Baltimore, MD.*





# ON THE CHEAP



If you've just shot a few rolls of film and you need to know if you nailed your exposures or failed miserably, you don't want to find out to the tune of \$30 a roll. For 35mm shooters, you have a secret ally in the land of film.

*Walgreen's.*

Yes, Walgreen's. Develop and scan your 35mm rolls to CD for less than \$7 in the continental U.S. These images can't be printed larger than 8x10 – but Walgreen's photo labs are great for getting the hang of film.

***THESE IMAGES CAN'T BE PRINTED  
LARGER THAN 8X10 – BUT WALGREEN'S  
PHOTO LABS ARE GREAT FOR  
GETTING THE HANG OF FILM.***

Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, 1/2. Balboa Park, CA.



*Fuji GF670, Kodak Portra 400, f/8 (left), f/3.5 (right). Pearl Harbor, HI.*



# ON YOUR OWN

I am completely dedicated to film and only shoot film, so it made sense to buy a Fuji Frontier SP-2500 as a scanner and a Noritsu QSF-V30 for my developer. I'll tell you right now, if you're reading this and getting the bright idea of going out on eBay and buying the machines...DON'T.

My setup is not normal in any sense of the word. I have interns/assistants who help with developing, and a part-time employee who does all of my scanning. You CAN NOT do what I do. I repeat, cannot. I have a tech guy who runs control strips making sure the chemistry is on. He will spike the chemistry as needed, and I have no idea what he does. I just pay him \$100 per hour to work his magic.

I've watched friends buy Frontier scanners and then sell them a few weeks or months later. PLEASE...send your stuff to Richard Photo Lab in L.A. Go to sleep at night and rest easy, knowing your film is in the best hands it can be in. Enjoy your results and thank me later.

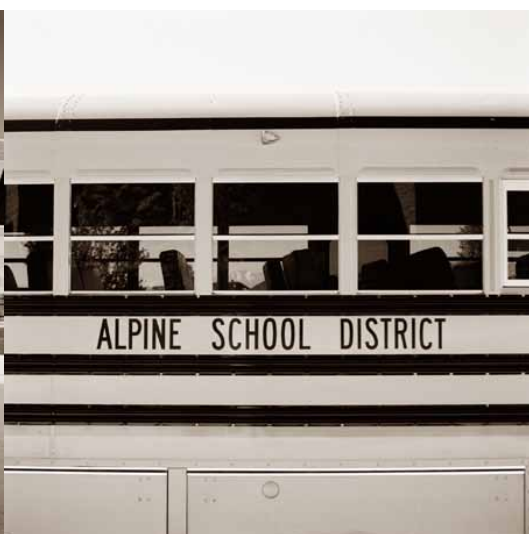
I don't have a dedicated film scanner for home/casual use, so I can't recommend one. Again, RPL is the answer I come back to – and if not RPL, your local camera store or lab will be happy for the business.

I can't pretend that I send every single roll to RPL – they only take care of me during my heaviest months of shooting. But I don't want to let anyone believe that buying and maintaining your own equipment – in effect, becoming your own lab – is a feasible solution.

*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. Oceanside, CA.*







*Fuji GF670, Kodak BW400CN, 1/8. American Fork, UT.*



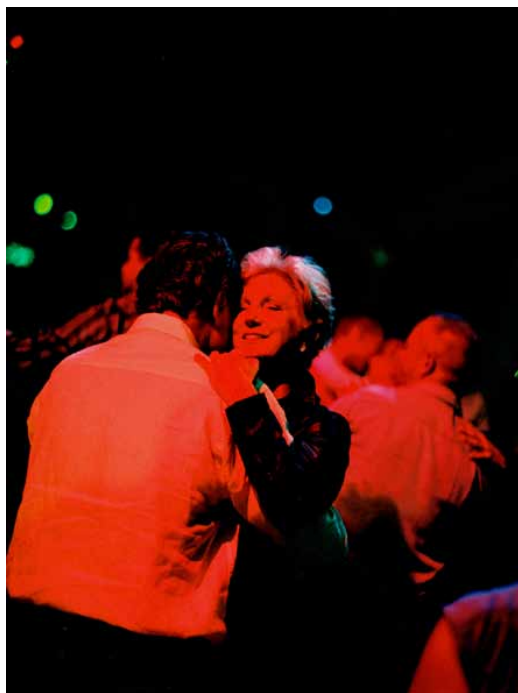
# EDITING

**MY WORKFLOW IS SO STINKING SIMPLE!  
HERE GOES...**



*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 35mm lens, 1/8, Artesia, MS.*

1. Shoot.
2. Develop + scan. (For you, this will be Richard Photo Lab's job.)
3. Do quick edit of keepers, deleting blinks and unwanted images.
4. Organize into sub-folders (Details, Getting Ready, Family Formals, etc...)
5. Edit any dust out of scans. (Because you use Richard Photo Lab, you'll get to skip this)
6. Correct scans for levels, curves, and color balance.
7. Batch process jpegs to smaller upload size in preparation for Instaproofs in separate folder.
8. Upload to client proofing site – [instaproofs.com](http://instaproofs.com).
9. Archive to DVD and hard drive. Add sleeved negs and DVD to event folder in filing system. (We'll get to that in a few.)



*Left: Contax 645, Fujii PRO 400H, pushed to 3200, 80mm lens, f/2. Park City, UT. Right: Contax 645, Ilford 3200, pushed to 6400, 80mm lens, f/2. Park City, UT.*

**WHAT DO YOU USE TO EDIT YOUR PHOTOS?** I use Photoshop to tweak levels (making blacks darker and lifting midtones if necessary), to tweak curves (adding a bit of contrast when necessary) – and finally, to color balance. Color balance is always last, and the whole process is lightning-fast.

Color balance is always last because messing with tweaks in levels and curves often alters your color. This comes with practice, but anyone can color balance. I'M COLORBLIND.

Levels, curves, color balance. 5 seconds per image.

**HOW DO YOU GET THOSE FAB TONES IN YOUR IMAGES?** Proper exposure + Contax + Zeiss glass + film. Good soup (i.e. spot-on chemistry at time of processing.) Good scanning. The tones are taken care of before I ever get my hands on the image.

**WHY NOT LIGHTROOM?** I found a system that worked for me and stuck with it. If you love Lightroom, use it. No matter which program you're using to edit, I'll bet you spend 75% less time behind the computer editing when you start shooting film. And that's the goal, here.

**WHAT ABOUT SHARPENING FOR WEB?** I don't sharpen for web because I find that my images don't need it. This may be hard for you die-hard digital peeps to get used to, so sharpen for web to your liking.





**OH, AND I TONE MY BLACK AND WHITE IMAGES  
IN PHOTOSHOP, TOO. HERE'S HOW:**

Convert to Grayscale. (Image>>Mode>>Grayscale)

Convert to RGB. (Image>>Mode>>RGB Color)

Open Color Balance and add/subtract the numbers to taste.

(Image>>Adjustments>>Color Balance)

*This creates subtle toning – find your own signature  
formula and get down with your bad self.*

*Contax 645, Fuji PRO 800Z, 80mm lens, 1/2. Orem, UT.*

# STORAGE



Contax 645, Fuji PRO 400H, 80mm lens, f/2. Artesia, MS.

## ONCE YOUR FILM HAS BEEN SCANNED AND THE NEGATIVES HAVE BEEN DIGITIZED, YOU'LL NEED TO CREATE A STORAGE SYSTEM FOR YOUR NEGATIVES.

Your lab will cut and sleeve the negatives for you.

Grab a file folder and label it with an event's details and date, then place it in a filing cabinet. Store your event folders chronologically, and voila! Film storage system! (Yes, the better part of my office is full of filing cabinets.)

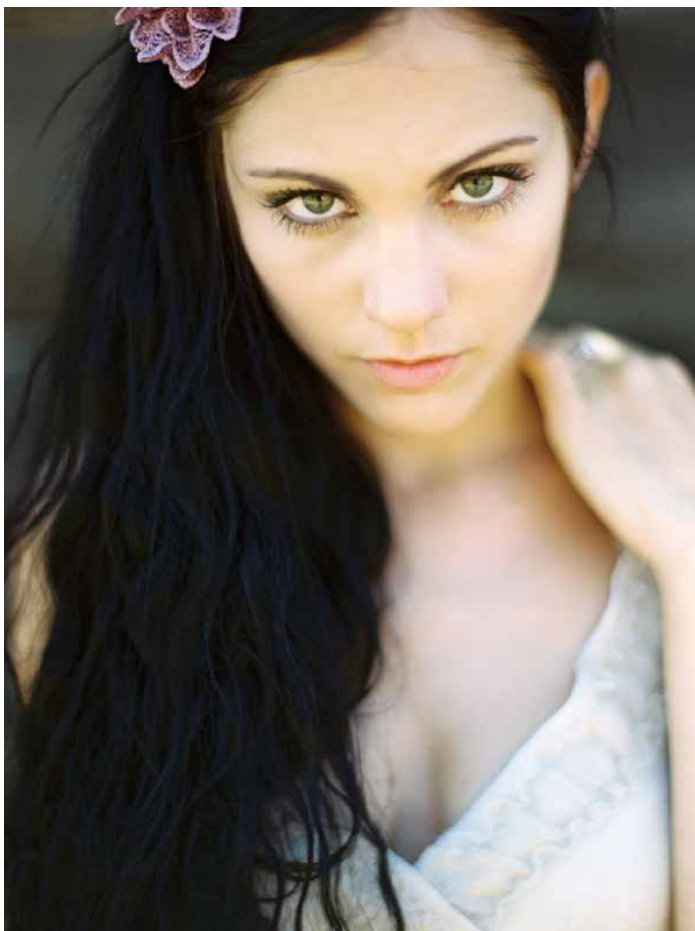
I only keep event negs for 1 year, then mail them to the client on their first wedding anniversary. (What the hell do I want their negs for, anyway? I have the DVD of each event. I don't need them sitting around my office.)

You'll need anywhere from 1 to 3 filing cabinets stacked two tall, depending on how much you shoot. That houses one year's worth of my negs, and I shoot a TON.









Contax 645, Kodak Portra 400, 80mm lens, f/2. Carlsbad, CA.

## PARTINGSHOTS

**FILM IS NOT DEAD, AND THIS BOOK IS PROOF OF IT. MAY YOUR JOURNEY INTO SHOOTING FILM BE EVERY BIT AS REWARDING AS MINE HAS BEEN, AND CONTINUES TO BE.**

**FILM IS NOT DEAD ON FACEBOOK:** You can now go to [FACEBOOK.COM/FILMISNOTDEAD](https://www.facebook.com/filmisnotdead) for the magic!!!!!!!!!!!!!! High fives! :)

**FILM IS NOT DEAD BLOG:** [filmisnotdead.blogspot.com/](http://filmisnotdead.blogspot.com/)

**TWITTER:** [twitter.com/jonathancanlas](https://twitter.com/jonathancanlas)

**EMAIL:** [jonathan@jonathancanlasphotography.com](mailto:jonathan@jonathancanlasphotography.com)

There are lots of ways to keep up with the Film is Not Dead movement, which is much bigger than just me and a few cameras. It's all about film – and the community we're building around it!

-Jonathan

# GOOGLETHIS, STAT!

## QUESTIONS ABOUT CAMERAS:

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## QUESTIONS ABOUT EXPOSURE:

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## QUESTIONS ABOUT FILM:

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## GENERAL QUESTIONS:

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# THE RESOURCES

## **GET LEARNED AT THE FILM IS NOT DEAD WORKSHOP.**

*jonathancanlasphotography.com/workshop*

## **SEE FILM SIZES + FORMATS COMPARED IN A HANDY-DANDY DIAGRAM.**

*design215.com/toolbox/film\_chart.php*

## **BUY CAMERA GEAR.**

*KEH: [keh.com](http://keh.com)*

*Adorama: [adorama.com](http://adorama.com)*

*Calumet: [calumet.com](http://calumet.com)*

*B&H: [bhphotovideo.com](http://bhphotovideo.com)*

## **BUY FILM.**

*Adorama: [adorama.com](http://adorama.com)*

*B&H: [bhphotovideo.com](http://bhphotovideo.com)*

*Unique Photo: [uniquephoto.com](http://uniquephoto.com)*

*Freestyle Photographic: [freestylephoto.biz](http://freestylephoto.biz)*

*Ebay: [ebay.com](http://ebay.com). Look for sellers 'amaan13' and 'ultrafineonline'.*

## **GET FILM PROCESSED WITHOUT HASSLE + GORGEOUSLY. IN GOOD SOUP.**

*Richard Photo Lab: [www.richardphotolab.com](http://www.richardphotolab.com)*

## **GET YOUR CONTAX SCREEN TO BE BRIGHTER + MORE USEFUL.**

*Maxwell Precision Optics. Bill Maxwell. (770) 939-6644*

## **GET YOUR CONTAX FIXED.**

*Kevin's Camera Service in Provo, UT can help you out.*

*211 West 500 North Street, Provo, UT 84601-2829 (801) 373-5873*



