

# FLASHING

This is a printing technique used to help bring the contrast of a print down. Once in awhile, the highlights in a particular negative will be extremely dense, and you will want to just bring those down without changing the contrast of the mid-tones and shadows. If you changed filters, everything would be lowered, but if you on purpose fog your paper ever so slightly it will help add gray tones or even more detail to a very bright area that may be difficult to burn in.

You will need two enlargers, one with the negative in and focused, and the other with just an empty negative carrier.

- Step 1** -- Print the image to the best of your ability doing nothing different. Don't worry about your highlights being blown out; make sure the mid-tones and shadows look good but slightly contrasty. Write down what you have to do.
- Step 2** -- Put the other enlarger head all the way up as high as it does, and shut the lens down to the smallest (biggest numbered) aperture. Focus the enlarger so that the edges of the square are sharp. Cut a sheet of paper into four vertical slices, put three back in the bag and tape one to the baseboard. Using a piece of cardboard, make a 10 step zebra test strip at intervals of 2 seconds. Mark where the cardboard was with a pen or pencil for every stripe.
- Step 3** -- Process the strip normally. If you get nothing, increase the intervals to 5 seconds, if it changes from white to black, cut the interval back to 1 second. What you are looking for is the first strip that has distinction between paper white and light gray tonality. You need to know what time this strip is, so it is important to make the mark on the paper in step 2.
- Step 4** -- Expose your photograph normally as in step 1, then take the paper out of the easel and expose to the unfiltered light from the empty enlarger for the amount of time you figure out in step 3. Process normally. If the highlights are still too bright, add more time to the exposure you make under the empty enlarger. If the highlights have gotten too dark, reduce the amount of time under the empty enlarger. If the whole print has gotten too dark, reduce time in the enlarger with the print in it. If the whole print has gotten to flat, try increasing the filter you use in the enlarger with the negative in it.

This is NOT an easy technique, but it can REALL HELP in saving some contrasty negatives! Be patient, and make small prints at first until you get the hang of it. Some professional prints flash every single print they make once they see how well it works!