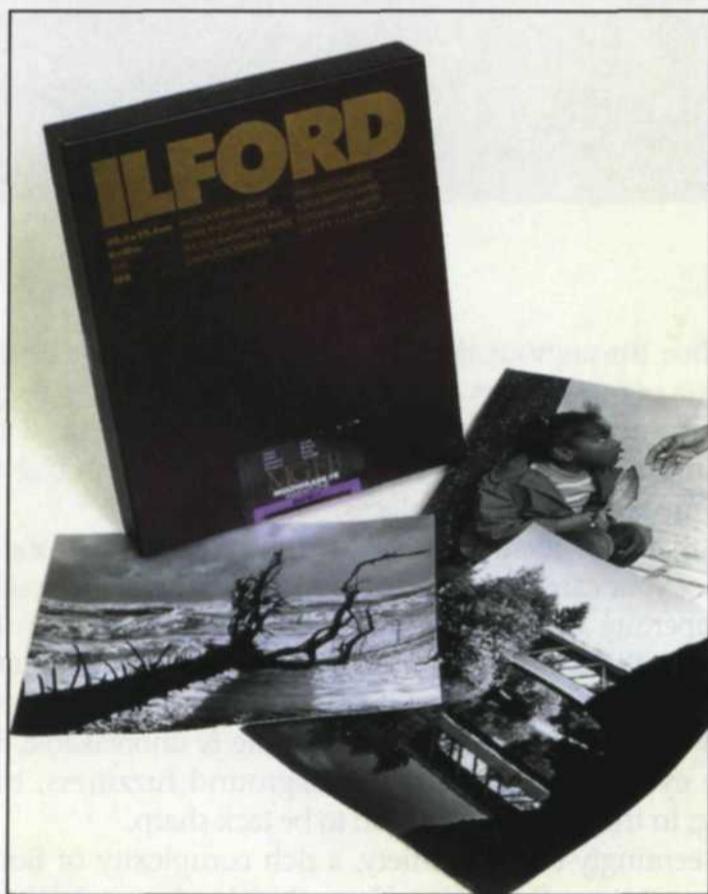


First Exposure I

Scott Adams



**Ilford Multigrade FB
Warm Tone Paper**

I think we can all agree that photography is going through some growing pains. Rapid advances in digital technology have divided the world of photography into very distinct groups. In a way this is good, because it leaves the world of traditional photography to those who really love it.

I started my career in black-and-white

photography many years ago at Brooks Institute of Photography in Santa Barbara, California. I was exposed to a variety of black-and-white paper products, including Ilford's line of printing papers. Over the years I drifted away from black and white, because most of the jobs I did demanded color. Those times that I did work in black and white, I used the rapid

black-and-white process. I love technology and the excitement it brings, but deep down, I missed black and white.

Recently I made a trip back to Brooks Institute and talked at length with Mr. Brooks about the future of photography. We talked about our roots in photography, and how we all seem to make a full circle back to the start at some point in



our lives. Mr. Brooks had arrived back at his start and was now concentrating most of his photographic efforts in black-and-white underwater photography. But what about me?

When I returned to my lab, *Rangefinder's* editor, Bill Hurter, also a Brooks Institute graduate, had some new assignments waiting for me. Perfect timing for an article on Ilford's Multigrade FB Warm tone paper. I looked through the black-and-white negatives I had shot over the years and selected a dozen to test on the new Ilford paper.

The Ilford Multigrade FB Warm tone paper is described as a premium quality, variable contrast black-and-white paper that has a warm black image tone on a warm white fiber base. It easily accepts a variety of toning solutions and has a double-weight fiber base.

This paper offers seven full grades of contrast control, in half-grade steps, using Ilford's Multigrade filters. These 12 filters are numbered 00-5 in $\frac{1}{2}$ steps. Exposure compensation for the Ilford filters is broken down into two groups — 00-3 $\frac{1}{2}$ are all the same, while filters 4-5 are double the exposure. For example, if your exposure is 8 seconds at f/11 with a #2 filter, it would be 16 seconds at f/11 or f/8 for 8 seconds with a #4 filter.

Ilford realizes that many of their black-and-white paper users often do their work on a color enlarger. So they have devised charts that come with paper to make it easier. This cross-reference chart is for Dunco, Durst, Kaiser, Kienzle, Leitz, Lupo, Beseler, Chromega, De Vere, Fujimoto, IFF, Jobo, LPL, Omega, Paterson, Simmard, and Vivitar enlargers. The chart gives you the magenta, and yellow values that correspond to 12 Ilford multi-contrast filters, so printing is easy.

The Ilford FB Multigrade Warm tone paper can be used with most common darkroom safelights that are used for black-and-white printing. My lab is equipped with a Kodak OC safelight filter, which didn't fog the paper and my darkroom was pretty bright during the printing process.

Ilford recommends their Multigrade developer for best printing results. Other manufacturers developers will work, but I found the best results with Ilford's developer. It is mixed 1:9 at 68°F for normal use. Prints are usually in the developer for about two minutes. If you want better control of the processing and you are not in a hurry, you can mix the developer at a 1:14 ratio. This will save you money and allows you to pull maximum tones in your print. Processing times can reach

up to six minutes before there is a noticeable change in contrast or fog. Ilford's Bromophen and Universal developers also work with this paper.

During the printing session I found that either a water bath or stop bath was necessary to avoid the possibility of staining. If you don't use such an intermediate step, the staining may not show up until you want to tone the prints. Better to be safe than sorry.

Two fixing baths are recommended for this paper. Spend half the fixing time in the first fixer and then half in the second tray. When the first fix is exhausted, move the second in place of the first, and pour a new second fix.

Since this paper is double-weight fiber base it requires a long wash time. Ilford recommends at least 30 minutes to achieve maximum warmth results. Using this method of fixing and washing you can expect archival storage up to 10 years. If you use Ilford's Universal Wash Aid, you can expect archival storage of up to 100 years.

Toning can create subtle tonal changes or dramatic effects. Ilford's Multigrade FB Warm tone paper is receptive to a wide range of toners. Ilford recommends the use of polysulfide toners such as Kodak Brown Toner, Afga Viradon, or

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selenium toners.

In choosing test negatives, I tried a variety of contrast levels in order to really test this Ilford paper. I found the tonal range of each negative to be accurately printed on the paper. Some took normal processing times and other required extended times to achieve the right look. Burning and dodging worked very well, and I found the printing values supplied by Ilford to be very accurate. The double-weight thickness of the paper made it easy to work with in processing. I had not really thought that much about the difference between normal and warm tone papers, but after working with this warm tone paper, I definitely know why it is part of Ilford's product line.

Recommendations

After putting this paper through the paces, I have a few recommendations:

1) Be sure to use a timer. I know it's great to pull the prints when they look great, but print consistency results from use of a timer. Timers also help control staining by ensuring proper times in the stop bath and fixer.

2) Be sure to use test strips. Step off each at 2- or 3-second intervals and run the strip completely through the fixing process. Looking at a test strip under safe-light doesn't always give you the correct results. By fixing the print you can view it under normal lighting conditions.

3) Don't cut corners on chemicals. If you run the fix beyond its capabilities, you may get staining after the prints are dry, and you will have to start all over.

4) Don't be afraid to burn, dodge and extend processing times to get the right look. Perfect negatives are very rare, so you're going to have to work a little to get that perfect print.

5) Most of all, have fun while you print. That's what it is all about.

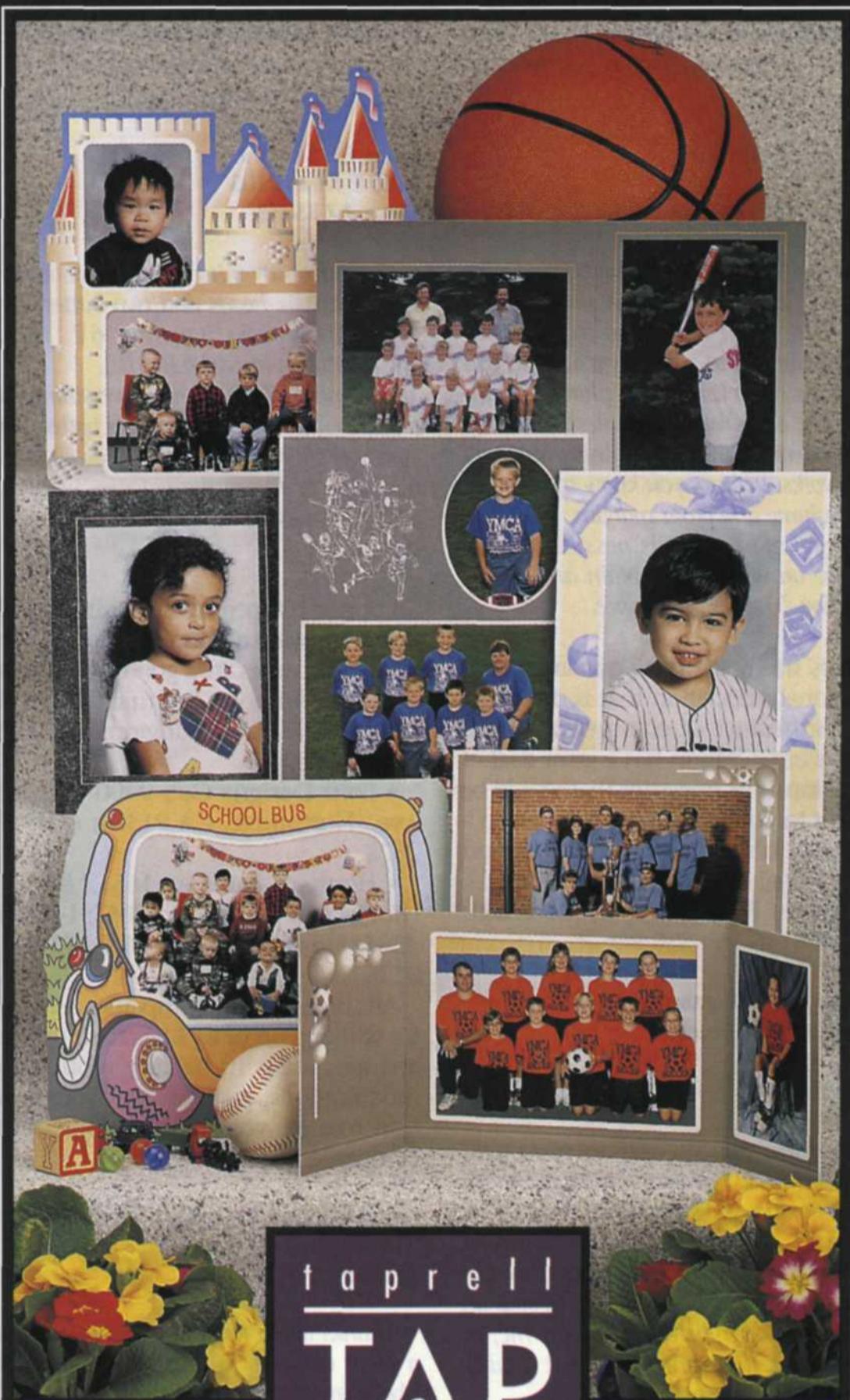
Testing Ilford's Multigrade FB Warm tone paper has given me the chance to once again work in the field of black-and-white photography. I didn't realize just how much I missed it. Thanks Ilford!



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