



Extreme Editing Workflow

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In a recent lesson, we talked about how to create dramatic black and white images of architecture. In this lesson, we're going to take that same image we worked on previously and look at different ways that we could achieve the same end result, using more versatile ways of working. Note that many of the techniques will still be useful even if you don't plan on working in black and white or with architectural images.



This is the dramatic black & white effect we're going to recreate in this lesson using many advanced techniques.

In the previous lesson, we created two layers that contained two versions of the image. The bottom layer contained a dark version of the image and the top layer contained a bright version of the image. We added a layer mask to the top layer, allowing the brightness to show up only in certain areas. What makes this technique less than ideal is that all of the various areas are being brightened by a single layer mask. This makes it difficult to go back and fix or adjust individual areas.

In this lesson, we will create the same effect but create a more complex document in doing so. This will allow us to have more control as well as the ability to change individual areas later.

There are a few different concepts that you will need to understand before we can truly start to work on the image so we will look at those first.

Create Two Versions of the Image

When we create this black and white effect, we will start with the same two layers that we did in the previous lesson. These layers contain two versions of the same image. One version will be dark and dull-looking. The other version will be so bright that it's close to losing detail. After we create these two versions, we'll use several techniques to incorporate the two together. We talked about how to create these two layers in the previous video lesson, so Ben does not cover that process in this video. I am including the steps below so that you have a good starting point in this handbook.

Create the dark, dull version We'll create the dark and dull version of the image first. We'll open the image as a smart object in Photoshop. If you are using Lightroom, you will select the image, click on the Photo menu and choose Edit in > Open as Smart Object in Photoshop. If you are using Adobe Camera Raw, you will hold down the Shift key so that the "Open Image" button (in the lower right) turns into the "Open Object" button and then click that button.

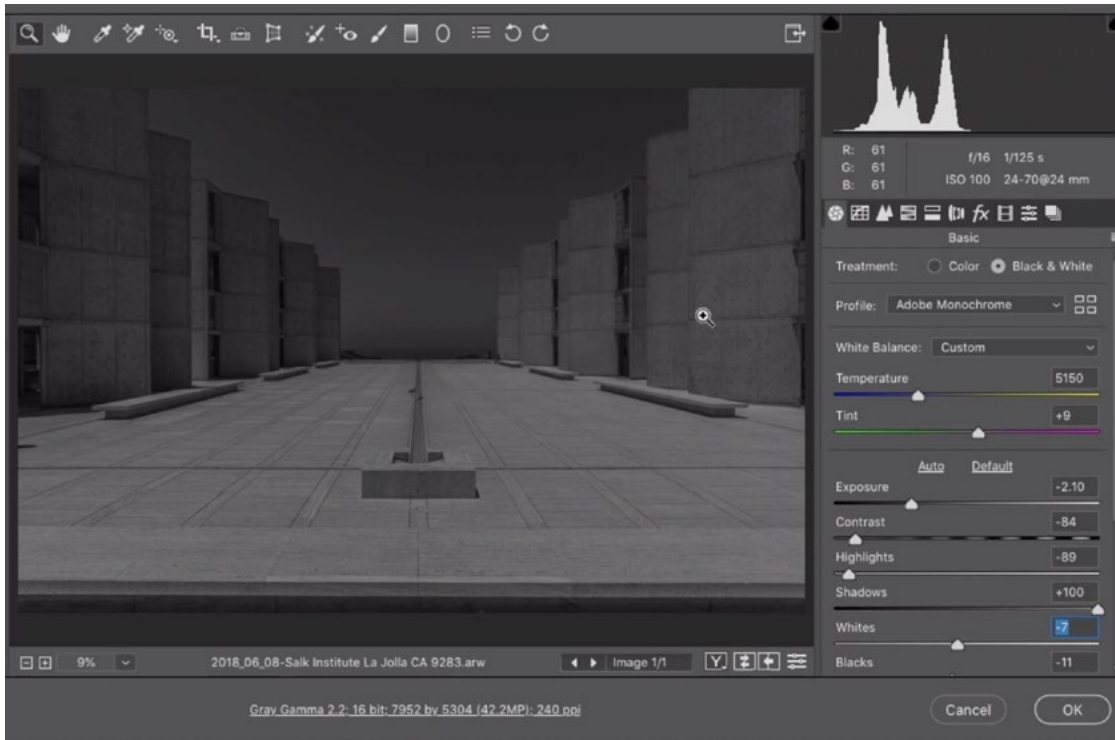


You can tell a layer is a smart object because it will have the icon in the bottom right corner of the thumbnail.

In Photoshop, we'll double-click on the thumbnail for the image layer. This will open the smart object to show its contents in a separate window. Because the contents of this smart object is a raw file, it's going to open the image in Camera Raw.

The first thing we'll do here is convert the image to black and white by turning on the Black & White check box that appears at the top of the Basic Panel, on the right side of the interface. Next, we'll use the Basic Panel sliders to darken the image. We don't want it to look so dark that we can't see any detail, but it should look dark and dull. In the video example, the Exposure slider was set to around -2 and the Highlights slider was moved almost all the way to the left. This caused some areas to become so dark that they lost detail, so we moved the Shadows slider up until some of that detail returned. We also want the image to look dull, so we moved the Contrast slider far to the left as well.

We'll click OK to exit Camera Raw and return to Photoshop's main interface. The image will be updated here and this will be the base image that we're going to build on.



The smart object was opened in Camera Raw and we are using the Basic Panel sliders to create the dark version of the image.

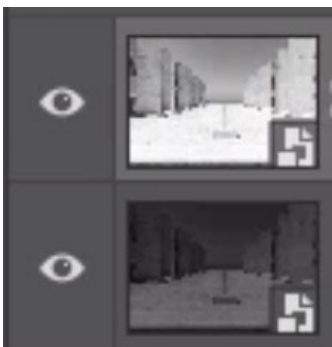
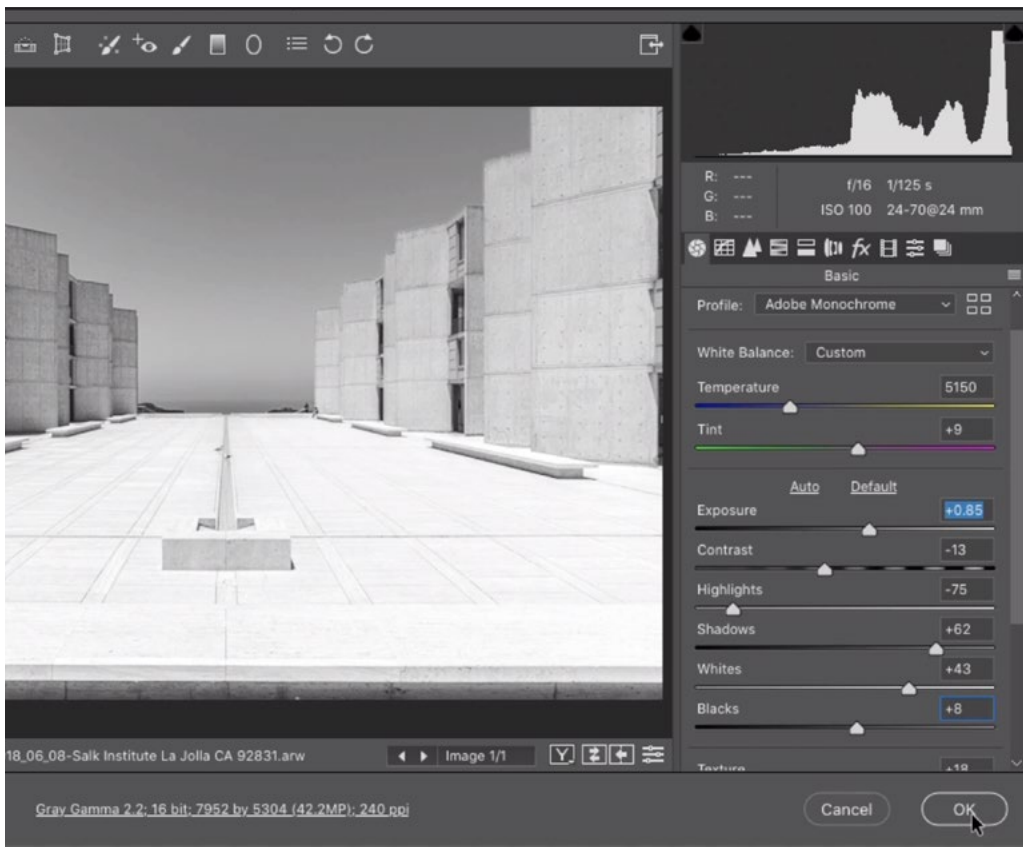
Create the bright version Now we're going to create a second version of the image. This version will be extremely bright. We will duplicate the original smart object, but we need to do so in a special way. If we were to simply duplicate the layer by using the standard method (Command+J, Ctrl+J on Win), we would be creating a second instance of the SAME smart object. If we were to make a change to one instance of the smart object, all other instances of that same smart object would be changed as well. We DON'T want that.

We need to create a duplicate of the smart object that is independent of the original. We can do this by clicking on the Layer menu and choosing Smart Objects > New Smart Object Via Copy. We now have two smart object layers in the Layers Panel. We'll rename the bottom layer to "Dark" and the top layer to "Bright."

We need to adjust the “Bright” layer to make it really bright and really pop. We’ll double-click on the image thumbnail in the Layers Panel. This will open the contents of the Smart Object and, since it’s a raw file, it will again open the image into Camera Raw. Here, we’ll use the sliders in the Basic Panel on the right side of the screen.

We’ll move the Exposure, Shadows and Whites sliders to the right, brightening the image. The image should be extremely bright, but not so bright that it’s losing detail. If it starts to lose detail, we can always move the Highlights slider down a bit to compensate. We’ll also move the Texture and Clarity sliders to the right a bit, making the details pop out more. After making these adjustments, we’ll click on the OK button to exit Camera Raw and return to Photoshop’s main interface.

The dark layer is on the bottom and the bright layer is on the top.



LEFT: The second smart object was opened in Camera Raw. In this version, we are brightening the image and making the details pop.

ABOVE: We have two versions of the image: a dark version and a bright version.

Layer masks & vector masks (Timestamp 6:15)

One of the things you'll need to understand is the difference between layer masks and vector masks. If you click the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel, a layer mask will be added to the active layer. If you click that Layer Mask icon a second time, it will look as if a second layer mask is added. That's not the case. That second mask is actually a vector mask. A vector mask will limit where an area appears by using a path. A path can be created by using the Pen Tool or the Shape Tool. For this technique, we will use both a vector mask and a layer mask in order to be more versatile.



This layer has both a layer mask and a vector mask. You can tell that both masks are active because they are surrounded by white brackets.

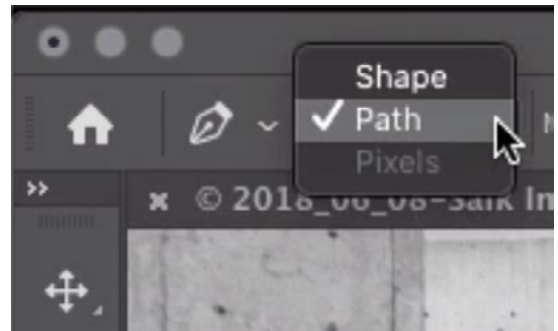
After clicking the Layer Mask icon twice to add the two masks, both of these masks will be active by default. You can tell that a mask (or a layer) is active because it will have little white brackets around its thumbnail. At this point, if you were to use any type of brush tool, it would affect the layer mask (not the vector mask). That's because a brush will add or remove pixels and a layer mask is considered to be a pixel-based mask. If you instead used the type of tool that would create a path (Ex: the Pen Tool), then you would be affecting the vector mask and not the layer mask. To clarify, you can have both masks active at the same time and the type of tool you use will determine which mask is affected.

In order to create the dramatic black and white effect, we are going to follow a different process from the one we used in the other lesson, but we will still start with the same initial two layers: The bright layer and the dark layer. Before we truly start to work on the image, let's look at how we're going to use layer masks and vector masks with these two layers.

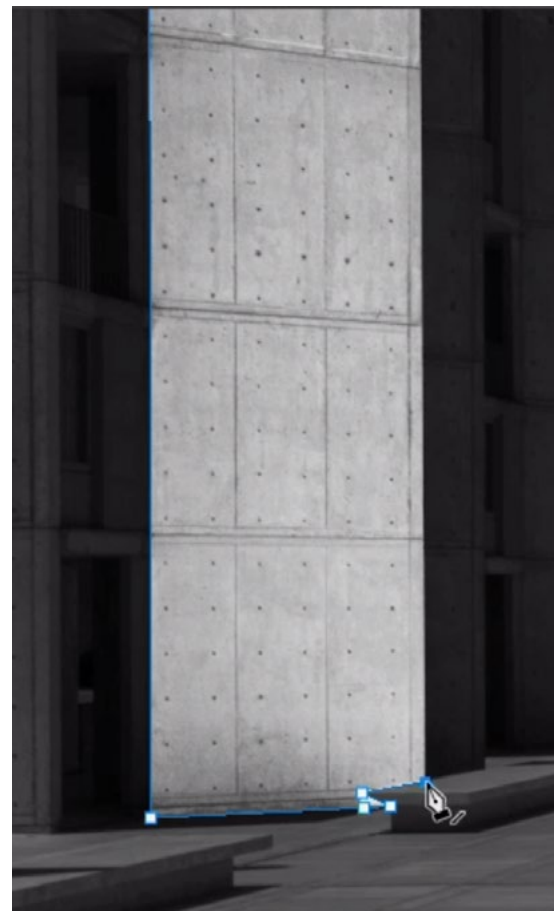
With the bright layer active, we'll click the Layer Mask icon once to add a layer mask and then we'll click it a second time to add a vector mask.

Working on the vector mask When we start to create the effect, we're going to focus on one part of the building at a time, and we'll start with one of the large panels on the left side. We'll activate the Pen Tool and we'll make sure that the menu in the Options Bar is set to create a Path. We'll also make sure that the vector mask thumbnail has white brackets around it, indicating that it is active. We'll use the Pen Tool to isolate the panel. We'll start by clicking on one of the corners to add a point. After we place the second point, the entire bright layer will become hidden. That's because a vector mask will only reveal the layer you're currently working on inside the shape of the path that you've drawn. After we start to add more points, the bright layer will start to appear inside the shape that we're drawing. As we're finishing making the shape, we'll make sure that we click where we started in order to close the path.

Working on the layer mask Now we have a vector mask limiting where the bright layer is visible in the image. We're going to add to this by applying the Gradient Tool. The Gradient Tool creates pixels (not paths) so it's going to affect the layer mask and not the vector mask. We'll make sure that the layer mask has little white brackets around it, indicating that it is active. Then we'll activate the Gradient Tool, we'll make sure that it is set to the "foreground to background" gradient and we'll ensure that the foreground color is white and the background color is black.

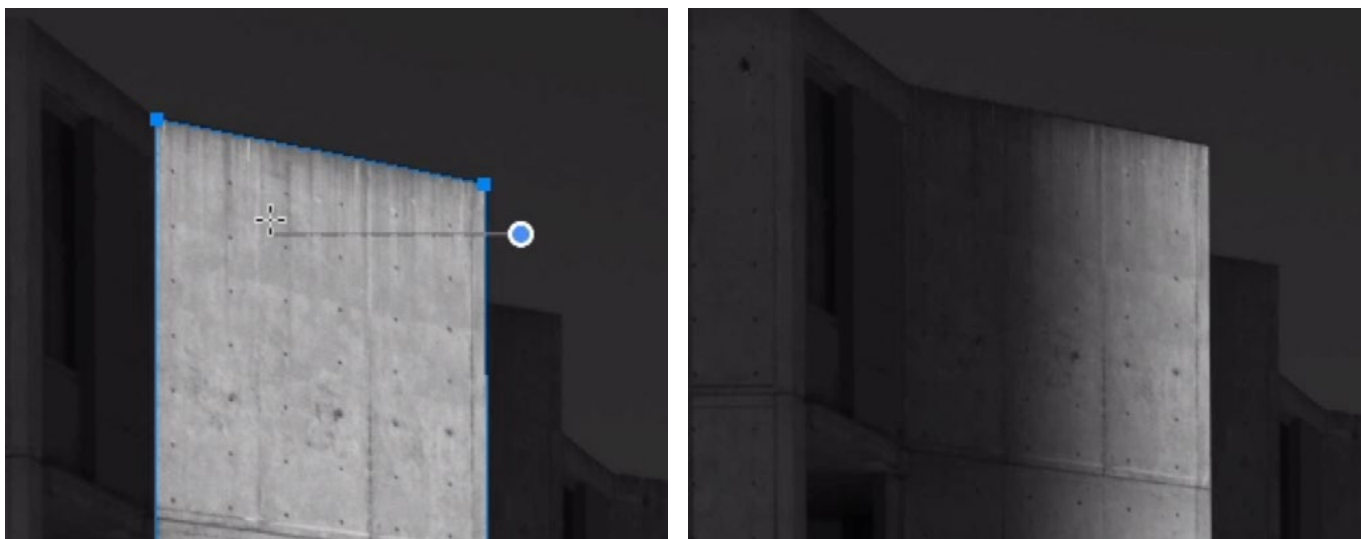


When using the Pen Tool on a vector mask, we need to make sure that the menu in the Options Bar is set to create a Path.



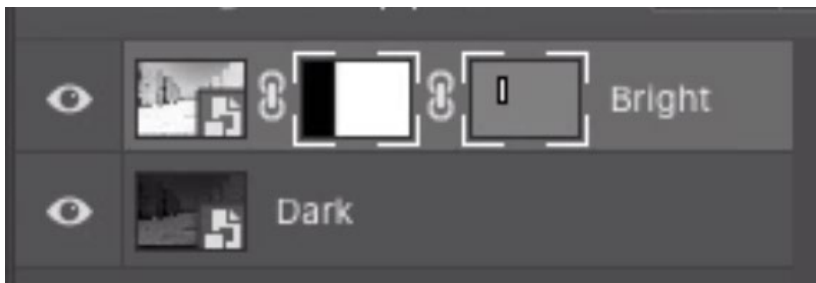
The Pen Tool is being used to create a path around one of the panels on the building.

We'll use the Gradient Tool to click on the right side of the building panel and drag to the left, about half-way into the panel. When we release the mouse button, the white-to-black gradient will be applied. Because this gradient is being applied to the layer mask, the white parts are where the layer is being revealed and the black parts are where the layer is being hidden. The black part of the gradient on the left side of the panel will hide the bright layer.



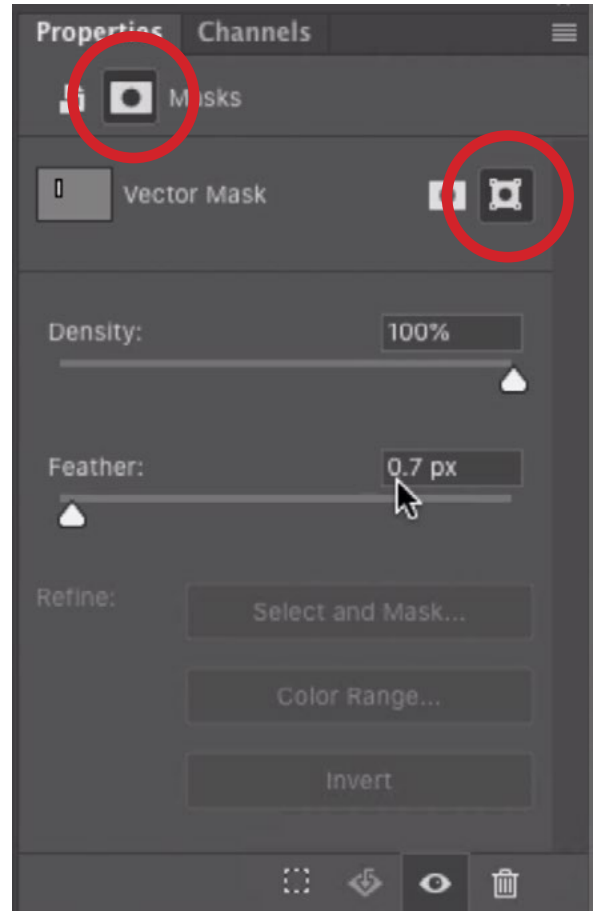
LEFT: The Gradient Tool is being used to drag right to left over the targeted building panel.
RIGHT: When the mouse button is release, the gradient is applied to the layer mask.

We now have two masks limiting where the bright layer can be visible. The vector mask is hiding the entire layer except for the targeted panel on the building and the layer mask is creating the fade-out effect in that panel. This gives us added versatility that we didn't have when creating this effect in the other lesson.



Both the layer mask and the vector mask are limiting where the Bright layer is visible. The vector mask is isolating the panel and the layer mask is creating the gradient on the panel.

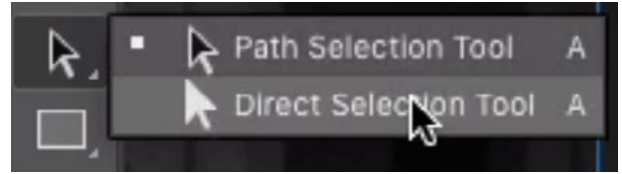
Feather the vector mask The last time we created this black and white effect, we isolated areas by using the Polygonal Lasso Tool and then we used the Feather command to soften the selection edges. With the technique in THIS lesson, we used the Pen Tool on a vector mask instead of the Lasso Tool, but we can still soften the edges. We'll make sure the Properties Panel is visible on the screen. If it's not already open, you can access it by clicking on the Window menu and choosing Properties. Two icons will appear at the top of the Properties Panel. If the icon on the left is active, it will work on the contents of the layer itself (the actual pixels). If the icon on the right is selected, it will instead work on the masks that are attached to the layer. If this mask icon is turned on and you have two types of masks attached to the layer, two additional icons will appear, allowing you to determine whether you will be working with the layer mask or the vector mask. If the left icon is selected, the panel will present settings for the layer mask. If the right icon is selected, the panel will present settings for the vector mask.



In the Properties Panel, we selected the icons (circled) to work on the vector mask. Here, we are increasing the Feather slider very slightly in order to soften the edge of the mask.

We'll make sure the vector mask icon is selected. Below that, there is a Feather slider and moving this slider up is the equivalent to feathering an active selection. What's great about this setting is that we can go back and change it at any time, adjusting the feather setting on the mask. This is not something that we could do with the technique from the previous lesson.

Making changes to the vector mask If you find any problems with the vector mask, it is easy to go back and fix them at any time. In the video example, the mask stopped short of the top of the building panel, so we need to extend it upward just a bit. The path used to create the vector mask is not currently visible in the image window and that's because we're not currently using a tool that can edit the vector mask. If we were in the Shape Tool, the Pen Tool, the Path Selection Tool, or the Direct Selection Tool, the path would appear. The Path Selection Tool allows us to work on the path shape as a whole and the Direct Selection Tool will allow us to work on individual points on the path.



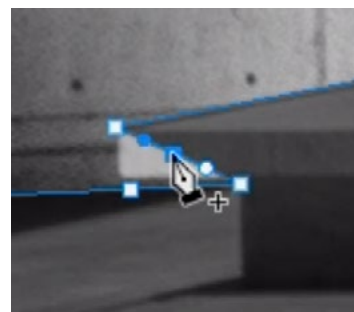
The Direct Selection Tool is grouped with the Path Selection Tool.

We'll activate the Direct Selection Tool, which looks like a white arrow and is grouped with the Path Selection Tool in the Toolbar. With this tool, we can click on a point and drag it around to reposition it. Alternatively, we could click on a point to make it active and then use the arrow keys on the keyboard to move the point around with more precision. We'll click on one of the points at the top of the building panel and then use the arrow keys to make sure the path perfectly aligns with the panel. Then we'll do the same thing for the other top point. If the path lines make it hard to tell when things are aligned, you can use temporarily hide them by using the keyboard shortcut Command+H (Ctrl+H on Win).



The Direct Selection Tool is being used to fine-tune the position of a point on the path.

When modifying a path, you may need to add a point and you can do that with the Pen Tool. With the Pen Tool active, hover the cursor over the curve line and you will see a little plus icon (+) appear. This means that by clicking on the path line, you will be adding a point.

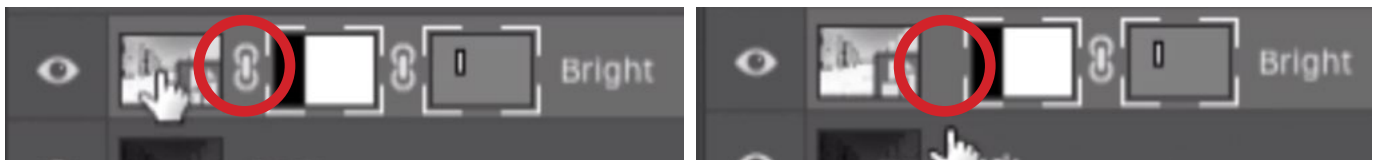


The Pen Tool is being used to add a point to the path.

If the point has little handles coming out of it and you do not need a curved line, you can hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) and then click on the point to retract the handles. With the Pen Tool, you can also remove a curve point simply by clicking on it.

Make Changes to the Layer Mask Let's say that we want to reposition the gradient that's contained in the layer mask so that it extends farther across the panel. We could use the Gradient Tool to create a new gradient, or we could instead reposition the gradient using the Move Tool. We'll activate the Move Tool so that we can reposition the gradient, but we need to be careful when doing this. By default, using the Move Tool will reposition the entire layer, along with the layer mask. That's because the layer mask is linked to the layer, and you can see the little link icon between the layer thumbnail and the mask thumbnail in the Layers Panel.

We want to move the layer mask but keep the actual layer in place, so we'll click the little link icon in order to make it disappear. Now we can activate the layer mask and use the Move Tool to reposition it. Because the mask is unlinked, the image layer will stay in place. It's only the mask that will move.



LEFT: The layer mask is linked to the layer. If we move the mask, the image layer will move along with it. RIGHT: We clicked the link icon to unlink the mask from the layer. Now we can move the mask and the image layer will stay in place.

If the bright areas that we're introducing to the image are too bright, we can lower the opacity of the entire layer by using the Opacity setting at the top of the Layers Panel.

We now know how to use a vector mask and a layer mask to reveal the bright layer on one of the building panels. To truly finish this image, we'll need to lighten additional areas in the rest of the image, but we can not use those same masks to do so. We will need to look at additional concepts before we can complete the effect on this image.

Using an “Empty” Adjustment Layer with Knockout Shallow (22:04)

Before we truly start working on the image, you must be introduced to two more concepts. One of these is an “empty” adjustment layer and the other is the Knockout setting in the Layer Style dialog. To understand these concepts, we’ll again start with our initial two layers: the layer containing the dark version of the image (on the bottom) and the layer containing the bright version of the image (on the top).

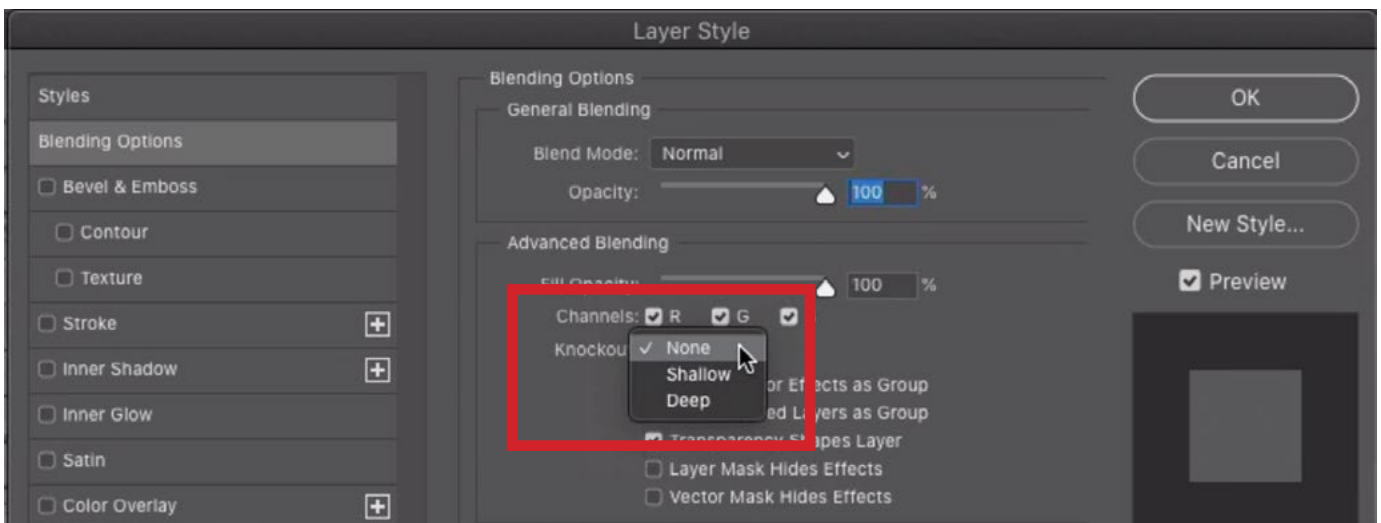
One of the things we’re going to use is an empty adjustment layer. An empty adjustment layer is one that doesn’t actually change the look of the picture. For example, we could create a Levels adjustment layer but never change the settings relating to that adjustment layer. The same could be done with a Curves adjustment layer, Hue/Saturation, Color Balance, etc. With all of these adjustments, we could leave them at their default settings and the image will not be changed at all. We could not create an empty adjustment layer using the Invert adjustment layer or the Black & White adjustment layer. These types of adjustments will change the image as soon as we create them.

We’ll create a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer and we’ll leave the settings alone so that it doesn’t change the look of the image at all. (We just randomly chose the Brightness/Contrast adjustment, but we could have chosen any of those adjustments that make no initial changes to the image.)

Even though the adjustment is not doing anything, Photoshop thinks that the adjustment layer contains what the picture would visually look like as a result of that adjustment. Because the adjustment is not changing anything, Photoshop thinks that the contents of the layer is like a copy of whatever the picture looks like. If there is a layer mask attached to the adjustment layer, it will think that the copy only takes up the amount of space that is revealed by the mask.

To give you an idea of how Photoshop thinks about this layer, we could change the blending mode of this empty adjustment layer and it will change the look of the picture, acting as if the adjustment layer is a duplicate of the underlying image.

We're going to use this adjustment layer to poke a hole through the layer that's underneath it (the bright version of the image) to reveal the bottom layer (the dark version of the image). In order to do that, we're going to need to get a little fancy. We need to select the empty adjustment layer and the layer we want to poke a hole in, and then place these two layers into a group by clicking on the folder icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel. We'll expand the group/folder and select the adjustment layer. Then we'll click on the FX icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel and choose "Blending Options" from the pop-up menu. The Layer Style dialog will appear and the Blending Options settings will be visible. We need to focus on the Knockout menu, located near the center of this dialog. This menu includes the options of None (the default setting), Shallow and Deep. If we were to set this menu to Deep, it would knock through every single layer (that's below the active layer) until it hits a layer called "Background." In our current document, there is no Background layer, so this setting would knock through everything, creating a hole in the image. If we set the Knockout menu to Shallow, it will knock through all of the layers (beneath the active layer) that are contained in the same group. In our case, the bright version of the image is the only other layer in the same group, so it will poke a hole through this layer to reveal the dark version of the image underneath. We'll set the menu to Shallow and then click the OK button to exit the Layer Style dialog.



The Knockout setting can be found within the Blending Options category of the Layer Style dialog.

Combining Concepts to Create the Black & White Effect (29:18)

Up until this point, we learned about the following concepts:

- Layer masks vs. vector masks
- Adjusting a vector mask
- Adjusting a layer mask
- How to use an empty adjustment layer
- The Knockout setting

We're going to use all of these concepts together in order to create the dramatic black and white effect.

SET UP THE LAYERS

We'll start by setting up the layers, but the stacking order is going to be a little different. When we demonstrated the vector mask concept earlier, we were not using the Knockout feature. Therefore, the bright version of the image was on the top, the dark version was on the bottom and we used a vector mask to reveal small areas of the bright layer. Now, as we start to combine features, we're going to start with the dark version of the image on the top and the bright version on the bottom. When we use the Knockout setting, it's only capable of poking a hole through that underlying layer contained within the same folder. The dark version is going to serve as the base of the image, meaning most of the image will be dark. When we poke a hole through it, the light version will be revealed in the areas where we specify. This will allow us to selectively add the highlights to the image.

Now we should have the bright version of the image on bottom and the dark version of the image on the top. We need to place the layer containing the dark version in a folder, or group, as this will allow us to use the "Knockout Shallow" setting later. With the dark layer active, we'll click the folder icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel and the layer will be placed inside a folder. (Note that the words "folder" and "group" can be used interchangeably.)

Next, we need to create that empty adjustment layer so that we can use it to poke a hole through the bright layer. We'll click the Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel and choose "Brightness/Contrast" from the pop-up menu. Remember, you can use any type of adjustment layer that does NOT make automatic changes to the image when it is created. We'll make sure that this adjustment layer is positioned right above the dark layer, inside the group.

ISOLATE AN AREA WITH THE PEN TOOL, APPLIED ON THE VECTOR MASK

We're going to use a vector mask to isolate one of the panels on the building. The adjustment layer already contains a layer mask. By clicking on the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel, we will be adding a vector mask. Both of the masks should be active by default.

We're now going to use the Pen Tool to isolate one of the panels on the left side of the building. Because the Pen Tool is a tool that creates paths, it will be applied to the vector mask and not the layer mask. We'll activate the Pen Tool and click on one of the corners on the panel we want to isolate. Then we'll click on the other corners, making straight path lines between them. We'll click on the point where we began to close the path.

SET ADJUSTMENT LAYER TO KNOCKOUT SHALLOW

Nothing happened to the image when we created the path and that's because we have not yet changed the Knockout setting of the adjustment layer. With the adjustment layer active, we'll click on the FX icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel and choose Blending Options from the pop-up menu. The Layer Style dialog will appear and we'll set the Knockout menu to Shallow. Remember, using the Shallow setting will cause the layer to poke a hole through all underlying layers that are contained within the same folder. We'll click OK to exit the Layer Style dialog. The panel that we isolated will now be bright because the mask is poking a hole through the dark layer to reveal the bright layer below it.

ADD THE GRADIENT TO THE LAYER MASK

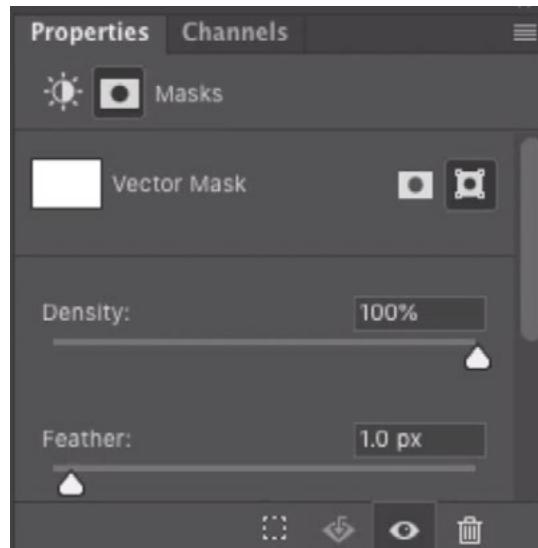
We can now add the gradient to the targeted panel. We'll activate the Gradient Tool, which will automatically apply to the layer mask (not the vector mask) because it is the type of tool that affects pixels. We'll make sure that the gradient menu in the Options Bar is set to "Foreground to Background." We'll use the tool to click to the right of the panel and drag left, to about the middle of the panel, before releasing the mouse button. The gradient will be applied to the panel. We're only seeing the gradient in the area where the panel is because it's being isolated by the path that has been applied to the vector mask.



A gradient was applied to the layer mask. The areas isolated with the layer mask and the vector mask are poking a hole through the dark layer to reveal the bright area underneath.

FEATHER THE PATH EDGE

In order to make the transition between bright and dark layers look realistic, we can feather the vector mask very slightly. We'll open the Properties Panel and make sure that the vector mask icon is selected at the top of the panel. This will cause the Feather slider to appear. We'll set this to one pixel, softening the edge just enough to look realistic.



The Feather setting in the Properties Panel is being used to slightly soften the path edge.

REPEAT THE PROCESS

We have added a highlight to one of the building panels. Now we need to repeat the process for the other panels as well as any other areas that we want to highlight. We will create a new empty adjustment layer for every area we want to isolate and highlight. Here is the general process:

1. Create an adjustment layer by clicking the Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel and choosing an adjustment that won't initially change the image. (Brightness/Contrast, Curves, Levels, etc.)
2. Click the Layer Mask icon to add a vector mask to the adjustment layer.
3. Click the FX icon to open the Layer Style dialog and set the Knockout menu to Shallow.
4. Use the Pen Tool to isolate the area where you want to add the highlight.
5. Use the Gradient Tool to add the gradient within the area you isolated with the path.

6. Feather the path edge by one pixel. This can be done by opening the Properties Panel and making sure the mask icon at the top is set to Vector Mask (not Layer Mask). Move the Feather slider to 1 px.

Save Time by Creating a Template Layer (33:31)

As you can probably see, the process of creating these layers and applying all of the necessary settings can be very time consuming (especially if there are a lot of areas you need to isolate, like we have in the example image). We can save time by setting up one layer in the way we need and then duplicating that layer for every area we want to highlight. Here are the steps:

1. Create an empty adjustment layer (We use Brightness/Contrast in this lesson.)
2. Click the Layer Mask icon in order to add a vector mask. (The adjustment layer will already have a layer mask.)
3. Fill the layer mask with black by clicking on the Edit menu, choosing Fill and then setting the Content menu to Black. Note that we are filling the mask with black because we want to selectively choose which areas should be visible. It will be easier to do this if we start with a black mask that hides everything.
4. Set the Knockout setting to Shallow by clicking on the FX icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel, choosing Blending Options and then setting the Knockout menu to Shallow.
5. Open the Properties Panel, choose the Vector Mask setting and adjust the Feather slider to one pixel.



The Edit > Fill command is being used to fill the layer mask with black.

Now we have an adjustment layer with all of the settings ready to go. We can now duplicate this layer and use the duplicate to isolate and highlight an area. We can continue to create duplicates of this template layer for each area we want to work on. Note that you can duplicate an active layer either by dragging it to the New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel or by using the keyboard shortcut Command+J (Ctrl+J on Win).

How to Prevent Photoshop from Bombing on You (35:21)

There is currently (as of June of 2020) a bug within Photoshop that will cause it to bomb (suddenly quit) if you follow a few specific steps in succession. If you duplicate a layer, then use the Pen Tool on a vector mask, the dot will not be placed on the vector mask and the vector mask will suddenly no longer be active. If you click on the vector mask and the vector mask will suddenly no longer be active. If you click on the vector mask to make it active, Photoshop will quit. This is an obscure bug that we'll have to get around. Hopefully Adobe will fix it sometime soon.

Here's how to avoid having this happen. After duplicating adjustment layer #1 to create adjustment layer #2, click back on the original adjustment layer #1 and work on it instead. Then, when you need to create another adjustment, click on adjustment layer #2 to make it active. Duplicate this layer to create adjustment layer #3, then work on adjustment layer #2. Continue this process.

NOTE: After duplicating a layer and then returning to the original to work on, make sure that both the layer mask and the vector mask are active. Sometimes they will not be active after switching layers like this and that will cause problems when you try to work on them.

Adjusting the Gradients and Brightness (41:10)

After we have worked our way through the image, we will have one layer for each panel and for every additional area that we highlighted. If we want to change the position of the gradient on any particular area, we can click on the layer to make it active (and make sure both masks are active). Then we can use the Move Tool to fine-tune the position of the gradient.

If any of the areas is too bright, we can correct that as well. We would click on the layer that contains the too-bright area to make it active. Then we could simply use the Opacity setting at the top of the Layers Panel to lower the opacity, therefore darkening the layer a bit.



In the finished image, many empty adjustment layers were used to add highlights to the individual areas in the image.



Multiple layers are used to create the effect in the sky. You can see the “before” version on the left and the “after” version on the right.

Use Multiple Layers to Create Sky Gradient (42:26)

Things get a little more complicated in the sky area. In the final effect, the area directly above the building was brightened slightly. This area is actually water in the distance, so I didn’t want to brighten it too much, making it look like sky. The area directly above the water was brightened a lot and then the brightening effect fades out as you move up the sky. Several layers were used to accomplish this effect.

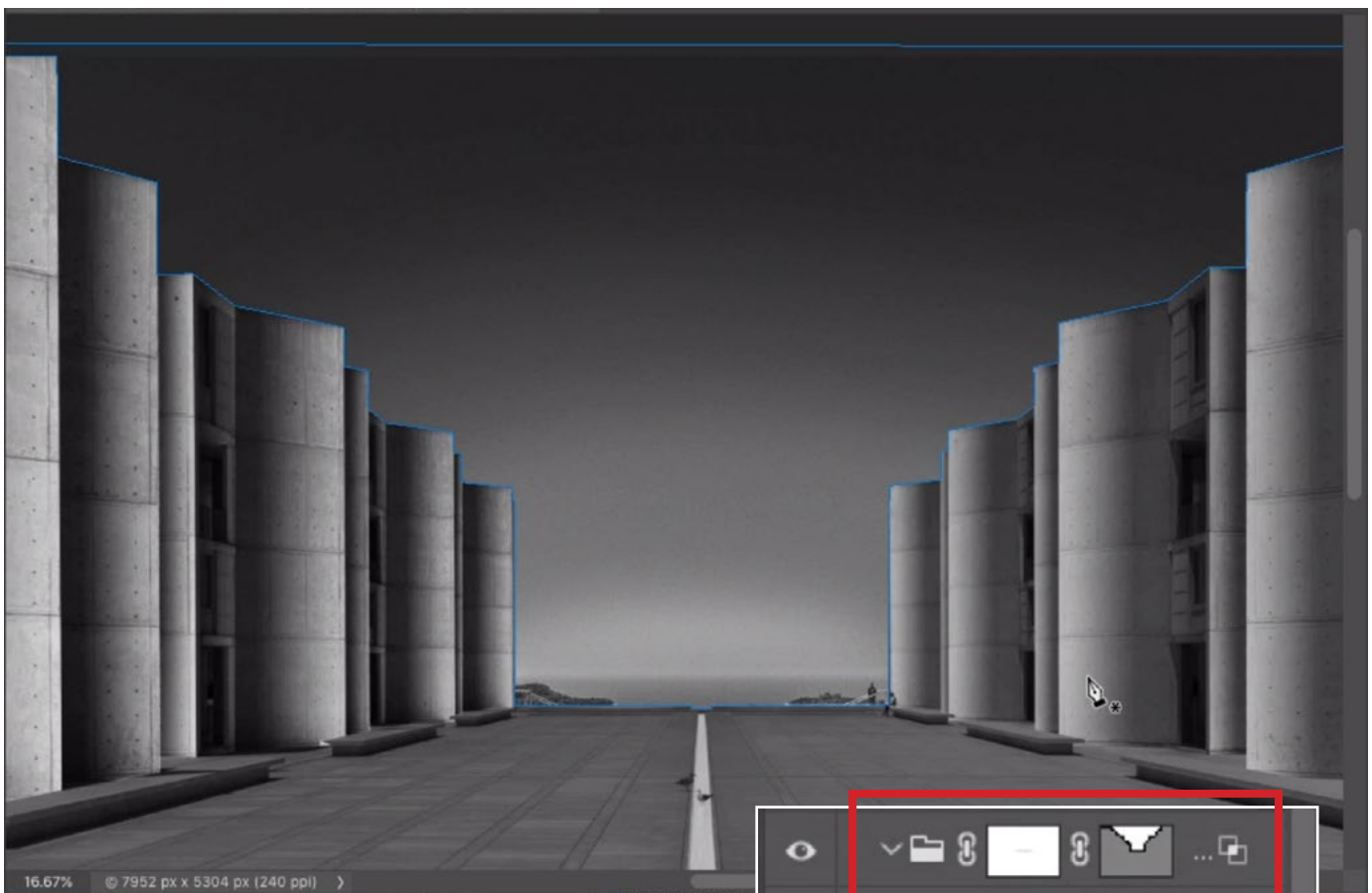
A different empty adjustment layer was used for each part of the sky. I did not add vector masks to these individual layers, but each of their layer masks was filled with black, hiding the bright layer completely. Then, I used soft brushes to paint on the masks to lighten different parts of the sky. I then adjusted the opacity of the adjustment layers to fine-tune the brightness of each area.



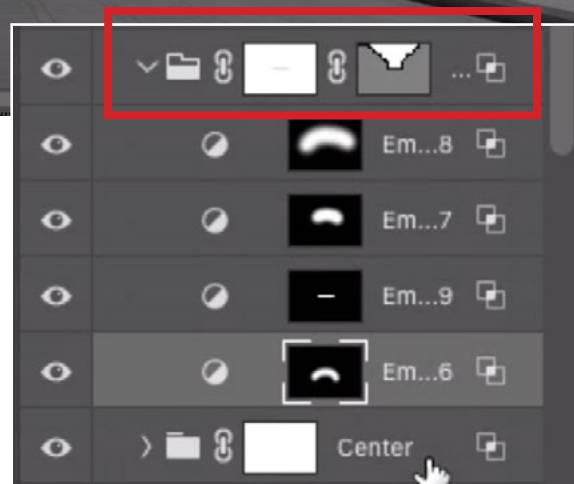
A different empty adjustment layer was used to lighten each area of the sky. The opacity settings for these adjustment layers were then changed so that each area could be a different brightness.

I DID need a vector mask to limit these adjustments to the sky area, preventing overspill onto the building. I selected all of the adjustment layers affecting the sky and placed them inside a group by clicking the folder icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel.

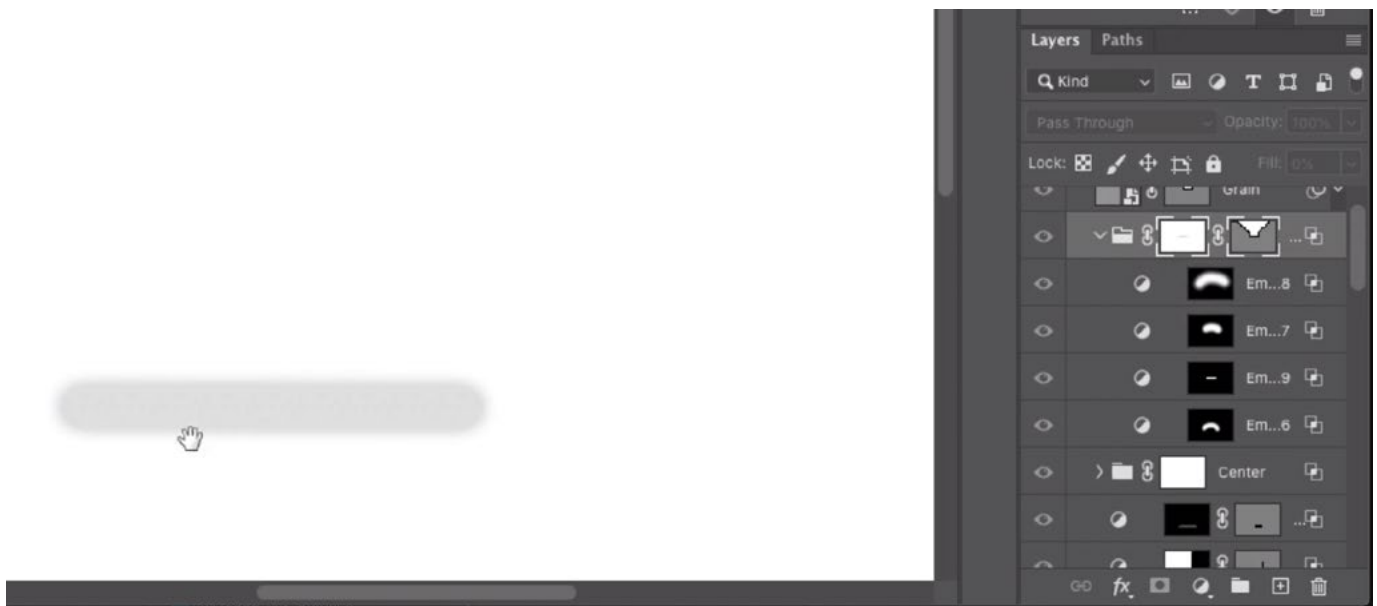
Then, I added a vector mask to the group itself and used the Pen Tool to create a path around the sky. This limits the effect created by all of the adjustment layers inside the group.



The adjustment layers affecting the sky were placed into a group and a vector mask was applied to that entire folder. The Pen Tool was used to create a path around the sky, as you can see above.



I also wanted to prevent the sky adjustments from affecting the water area. To do this, I used a layer mask attached to the group itself. I used the Brush Tool to paint on the mask with black in order to prevent the other layers from affecting the water area. The effect was too extreme so I used a Levels adjustment on the layer mask to lighten that black paint stroke until the water area looked natural.



Above, we are viewing the layer mask in the image window. This mask is attached to the group of layers affecting the sky. The gray area is where we painted in order to lessen the brightening effect on the area where the water is.

There is another challenge in creating the adjustments for the sky. If I use the Knockout Shallow setting on the adjustment layers, it will cause these sky adjustment layers to knock through all the layers contained within the same group. The problem is that I need them to knock all the way through the layer containing the dark version of the image, which is near the bottom of the layer stack. I can do that by additionally changing the Knockout setting for the folder itself. After setting the folder itself (as well as all the adjustment layers inside) to Knockout Shallow, it was able to knock through two levels of folders and reveal the bright layer at the bottom of the layer stack. The same technique was used to lighten the center, vertical element in the image.

Convert to Grayscale & Use Lightroom to Tint Layer (53:35)

The original image was a color photograph, which used the RGB mode. Even after I used Camera Raw to make the image black and white, the image remained in RGB mode. RGB files are made up of three channels: red, green and blue. An image in Grayscale mode is just made up of one channel: Gray. This means that an RGB image is three times the size as a grayscale image.

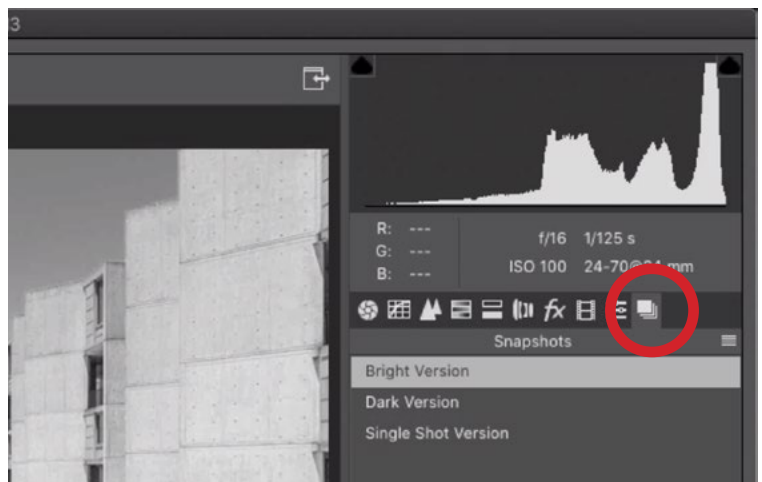
I like the idea of using the Grayscale mode because of the lower file size. But it can also be nice to have the option of toning the image later. You would think that we'd need the image to be in RGB in order to do this, BUT that's not truly the case. We can get a little sneaky.

Before working on the image to create the black and white effect, we'll follow these steps:

To convert the image, we'll click on the Image menu and choose Mode > Grayscale. A dialog will appear, asking if we'd like to rasterize the smart object. We'll click the "Don't Rasterize" button.

Next, we'll click on the Layer menu and choose Smart Objects > New Smart Object via Copy. This command will create a duplicate of the smart object that is completely independent of the original smart object. This means we can make changes to the duplicate and the original will remain unchanged.

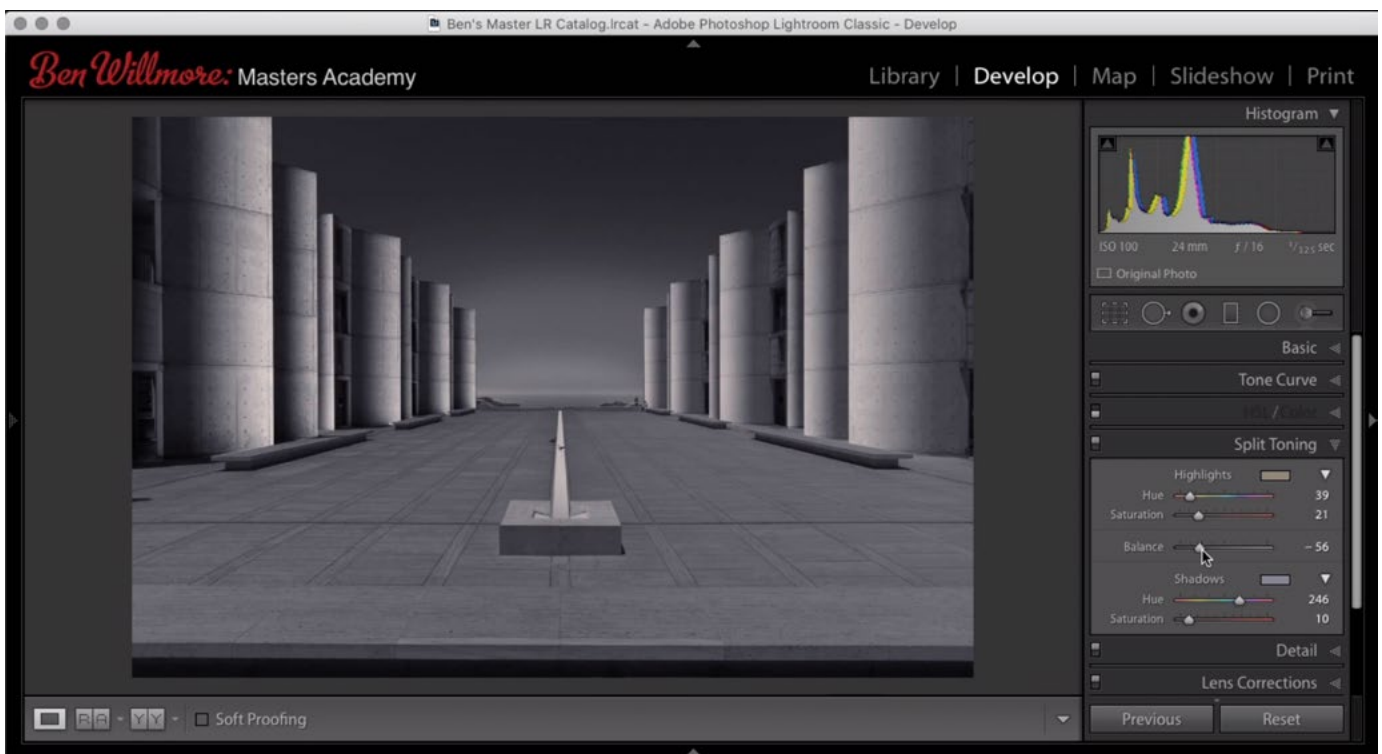
We'll double-click on the thumbnail for the duplicate to open it in Camera Raw. Here, we want to make the image bright. I saved the settings to create the bright version as a Snapshot that is included in the file you received with the lesson. Click on the Snapshots tab and choose the "Bright Version." Click OK to exit Camera Raw and return to Photoshop's main interface.



In Camera Raw, we are using the Snapshots Panel (circled) to choose the "Bright Version" snapshot. This is part of the file included with the lesson.

We will now have two versions of the image: the dark version and the light version. This is where we would start the technique, following the steps in this lesson.

Now let's say that we want to give the image a slight blue tint. You would think that would be impossible because the image is in Grayscale mode. We can use Lightroom to get around this. We'll save the image and then open it in Lightroom. In Lightroom, we can use the Split Toning settings to add a tint and it will allow us to apply this coloring to an image that is in Grayscale mode. When we export the file, it will export in RGB mode even though it is coming from a layered Photoshop file that is in grayscale mode.



After applying the dramatic black and white technique on the grayscale image in Photoshop, we opened it in Lightroom and are using the Split Toning settings to apply a tint to the image.