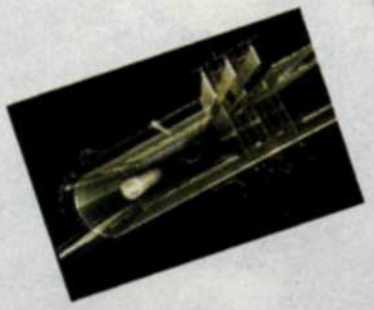
The NIKON Challenge III



Special Advertising Section

The NIKON Challenge III

TELEPHOTO FOCUSING AT NIGHT WITH THE NIKON SB-24 AF SPEEDLIGHT

Shooting photographs of animals at night can be quite difficult, because it's hard to see and focus on them. The special features of the Nikon F4S camera and SB-24 AF Speedlight can help you do it easily, though.

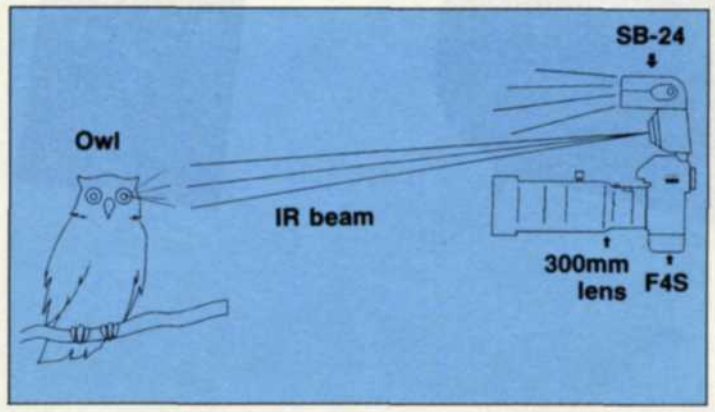
A visit to the Portland Zoo resulted in a meeting with an owl named Hooter. We attached a 300mm AF Nikkor lens to the F4S, and shot with the SB-24 Speedlight, both mounting it in the camera's hot-shoe, and moving it off-camera using the SC-17 off-camera TTL cord. All lights were turned off in order to simulate night conditions. The F4S was set to autofocus, while the SB-24 was set to TTL flash.

When the shutter button was depressed halfway, the red focus-assist beam fired and illuminated the owl. This focus beam served three purposes: First, it allowed us to center the owl in the frame, as we could not see the bird in total darkness. Second, it allowed the camera to autofocus the lens properly on the subject. Finally, the beam indicated when the retina was flashing back "red-eye" at the camera. As soon as we saw this "red-eye," we pressed the shutter button fully down to record the image: a night picture of the owl with its eyes glowing.

If you've ever caught a cat's eyes in your car headlights at night, you've seen them glow. Most animals' eyes glow like that when suddenly struck by bright light at night. You can record this effect in your night photos by using a relatively long-focal-length lens and on-camera flash—in effect, intentionally inducing "red-eye." If you don't want this effect, you can move the flash unit off-camera. Examples of both techniques are shown here, with the owl as subject. When you use Nikon's off-camera TTL cord SC-17 to connect the SB-24 flash unit to the camera, you'll get fully automatic TTL flash operation, just as you do when the flash unit is mounted in the camera's hot-shoe. □

Off-camera flash

On-camera flash



CAMERA: Nikon F4S
LENS: 300mm AF Nikkor
FLASH: SB-24 AF Speedlight
MODE: Program AE
METER: Matrix
MOTOR DRIVE: Single frame
EXPOSURE: 1/250 at f/11
FILM: Kodak Ektapress Gold 400

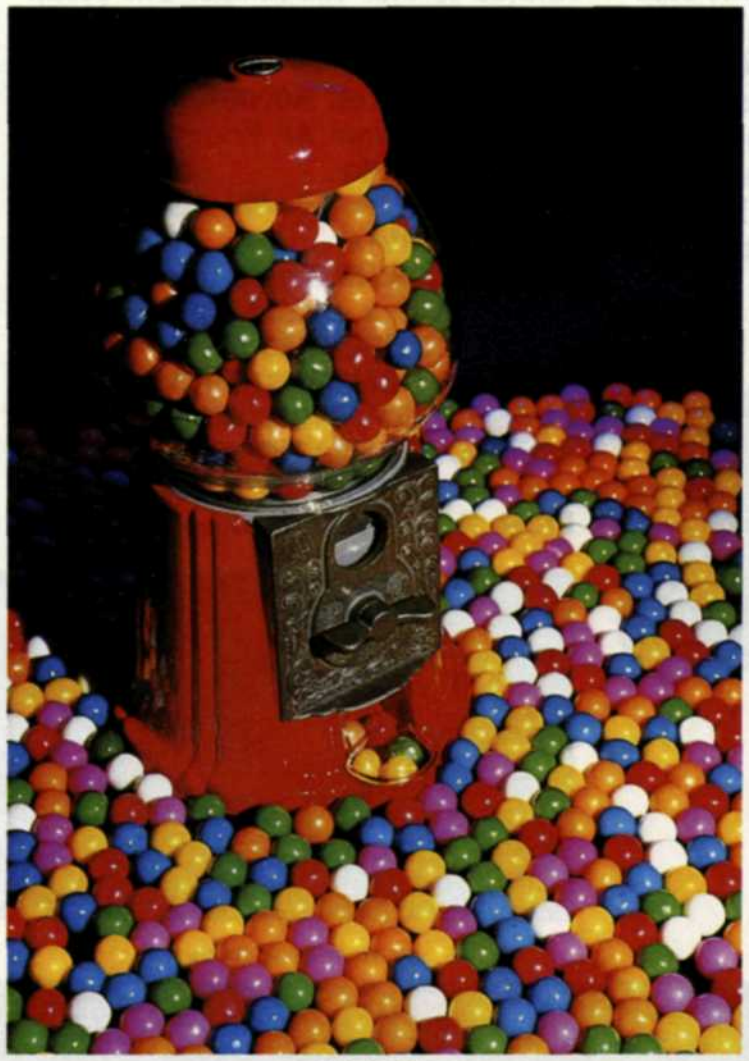
The NIKON Challenge III

CREATING VARIOUS LIGHTING EFFECTS WITH A SINGLE SB-24 AF SPEEDLIGHT

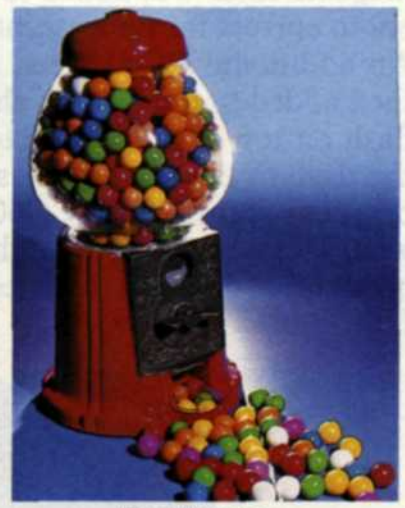
Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you need to take some studio shots of a subject, but lack a studio full of lighting gear? What do you do? Take advantage of the versatile functions of the Nikon N8008 camera and SB-24 AF Speedlight, and you will find yourself with a whole carload of lighting equipment: Through the technique described here, the SB-24 can be used as a complete studio lighting system.

To make these shots, we mounted the camera on a sturdy tripod, and attached the SB-24 AF Speedlight to the camera via the SC-17 TTL cord. We then set the N8008's multiple-exposure mode to the number of flashes desired for the shot. We set the camera to manual exposure, with the shutter speed at ½50 to eliminate the effect of any ambient room light, and focused on the subject. Then, one of us placed the SB-24 flash in each position desired, as the other tripped the camera shutter. The diagram shows one lighting possibility using this technique.

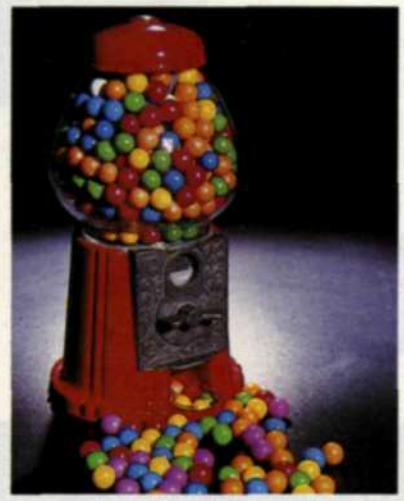
CAMERA: Nikon N8008
LENS: 60mm AF Micro-Nikkor
FLASH: SB-24 AF Speedlight and SD-8 Battery Pack
MODE: Manual
METER: Matrix
MOTOR DRIVE: Single frame
EXPOSURE: ½50 at f/16
MAGNIFICATION: 1:10 to infinity
FILM: Kodak Ektapress Gold 100
MULTI-EXPOSURE FUNCTION: Set to 3 exposures



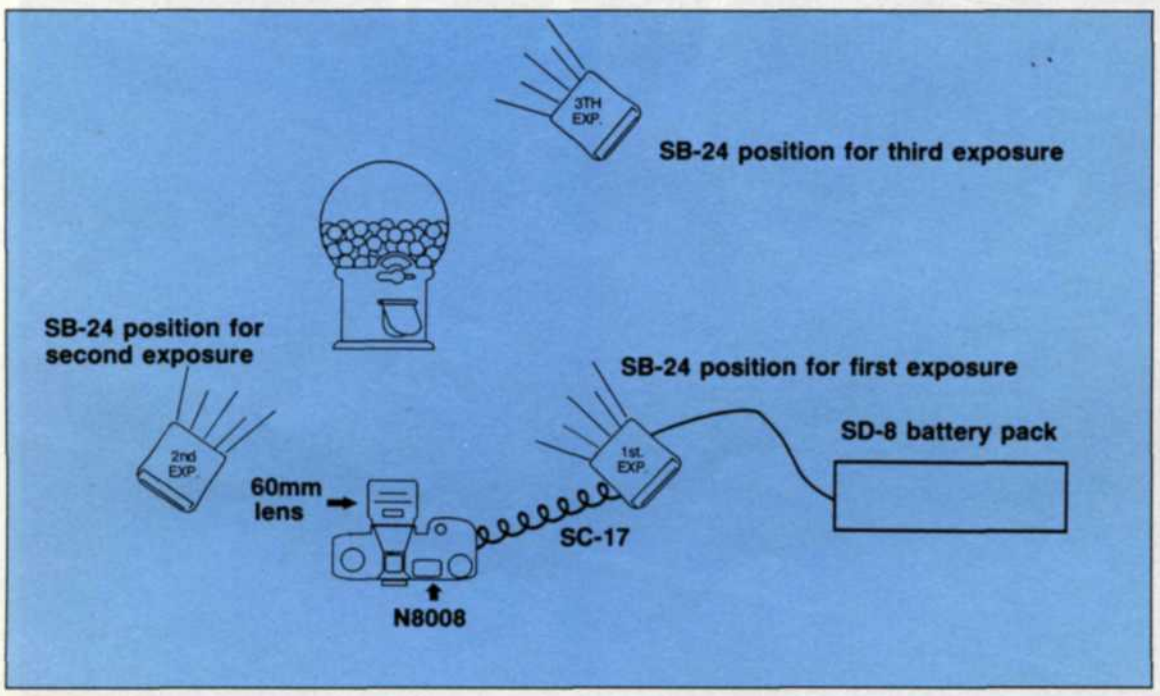
Sidelighting



Backlighting



Spotlit background



Colored gel filters were placed over the flash at some of the positions for that extra creative effect. Direct backlighting can be accomplished by covering your hand with a black cloth and holding the flash unit directly behind the subject.

For softer lighting, the SB-24 can be set to 1/16 power for eight stroboscopic exposures. Reset the camera's shutter speed to one second so that the flash unit has time to fire all eight flashes. Each time you trip the camera shutter, you should pan the flash in an inverted U-shaped arc. Each arc should take about one second to complete. □

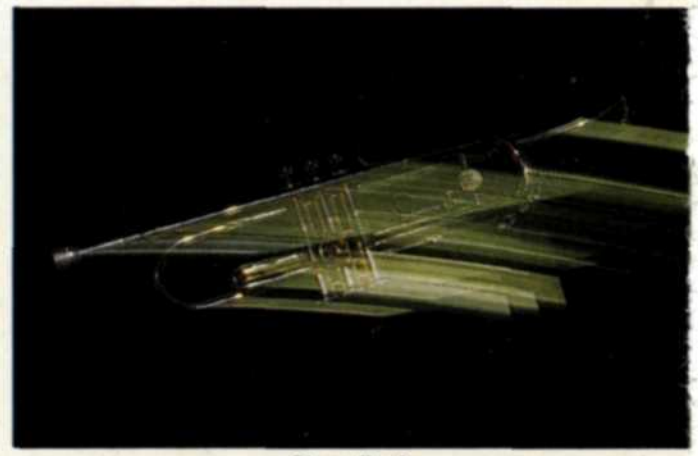
The NIKON Challenge III

SLOW-SPEED SYNC AND REAR-CURTAIN SYNC WITH THE NEW NIKON N6006

Complex studio lighting setups involving two types of lighting sources can be photographed using the advanced functions of the N6006 camera. A brass trumpet was set on a black velvet background, in a room with overhead fluorescent lighting. The N6006 camera and 28–85mm AF Zoom-Nikkor lens were mounted on a tripod with a smooth-operating pan-and-tilt head. A CC30 magenta filter was added to the camera to correct for fluorescent lighting. An additional CC30 green filter was then added to the front of the built-in flash on top of the N6006 to balance the flash to the same color as the fluorescent lights. The CC30M filter would then correct both light sources back to a daylight balance for the film in use.

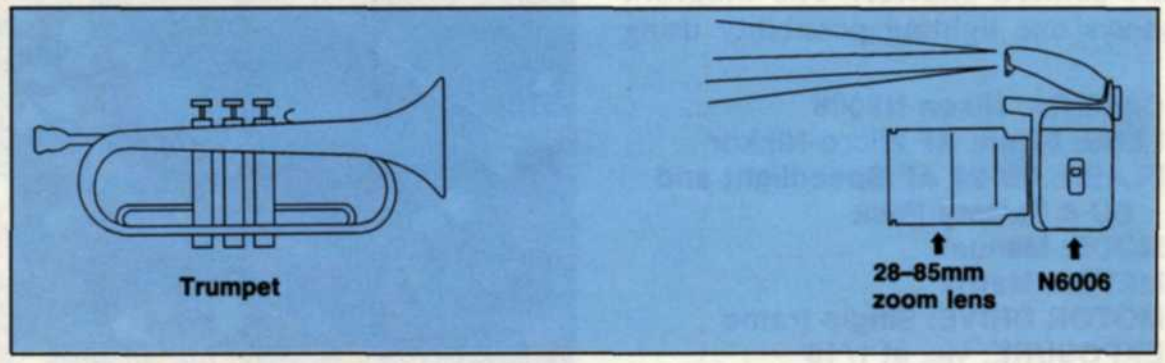
The camera was set to slow-flash-sync mode, so that the flash would fire at the beginning of the exposure, and the available-light exposure would follow. The flash-compensation dial was set to +1 stop, and the camera compensation to –1 stop. This would create about a 1:2 ratio between the flash and existing-light exposures. As soon as the shutter button was pressed, the pan head was rotated to blur the image. The result is a sharp image at the beginning of the exposure, and a blur at the end: the blur precedes the subject.

CAMERA: Nikon N6006
LENS: 28–85mm AF Zoom-Nikkor
FLASH: Built-in
MODE: Shutter-priority AE
METER: Matrix
MOTOR DRIVE: Single frame
EXPOSURE: 2 sec. at f/8
FLASH COMPENSATION: +1 stop
CAMERA COMPENSATION: –1 stop
FLASH FILTRATION: CC30 green
CAMERA FILTRATION: CC30 magenta
FILM: Kodak Ektachrome 100

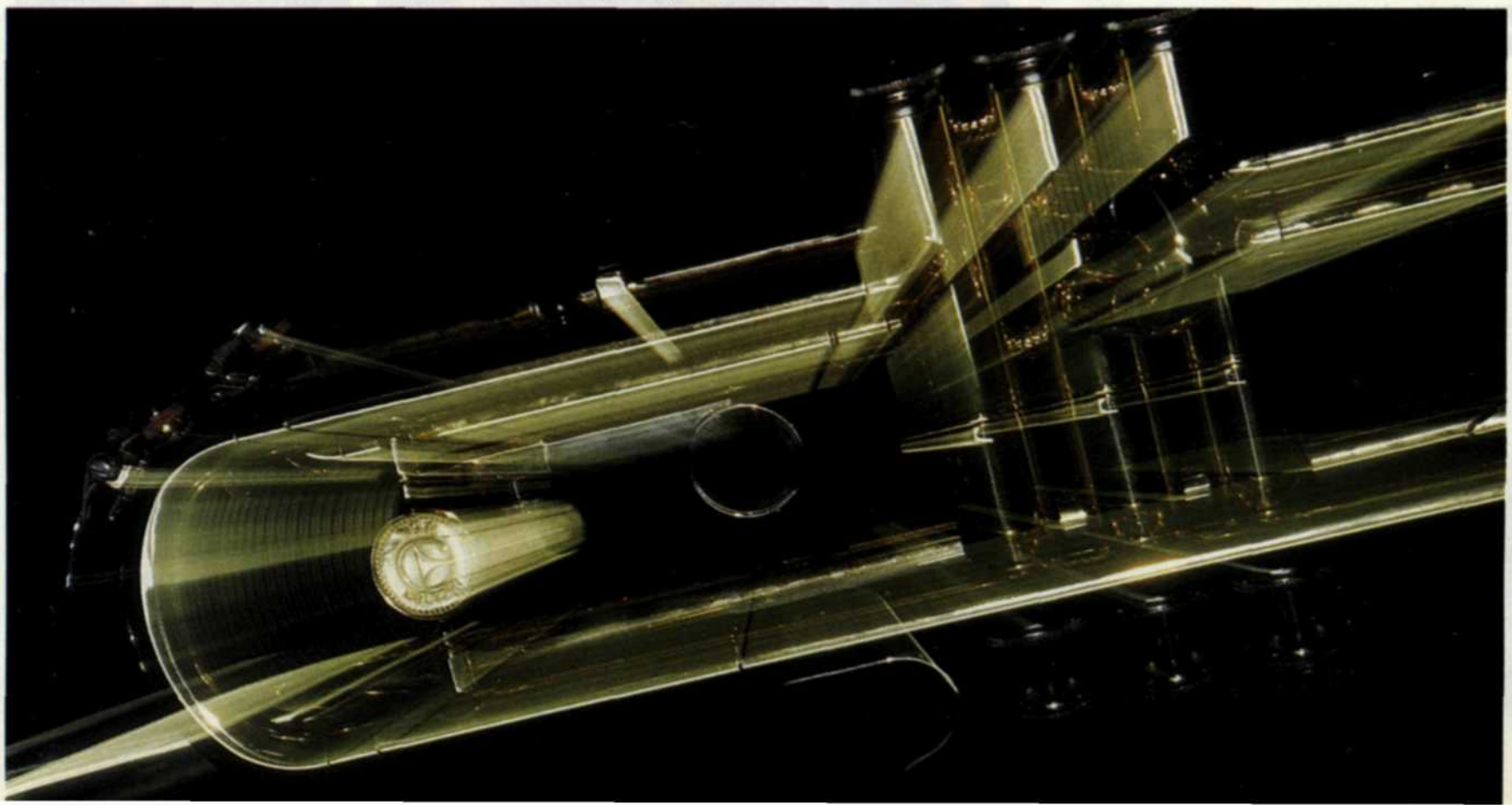


Slow flash

For the second series, we set the camera to the rear-sync mode, and the sequence was reversed. When the shutter was opened, we panned the tripod head to record the existing-light blur, with the flash firing at the end of the exposure to produce a sharp image. In the photograph, the blur follows the subject's motion, a more natural effect. □



▼ Rear-sync flash



The NIKON Challenge III

WIDE-ANGLE TWILIGHT SCENICS WITH BALANCED FILL-FLASH

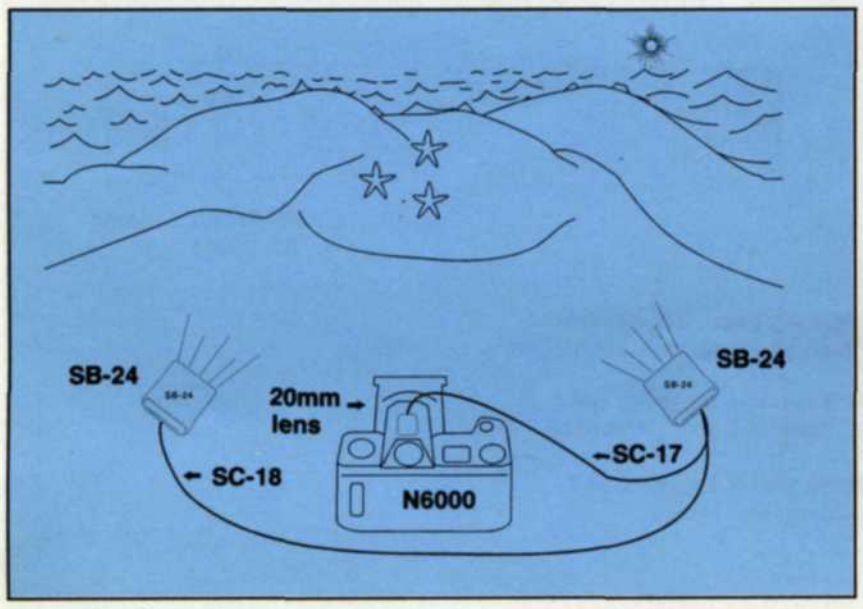
When you're taking wide-angle photos in contrasty lighting conditions, most color films will not be able to handle the scene's brightness range. By using one or two SB-24 AF Speedlights off-camera, you can use fill-flash to effectively combat contrasty shadows.

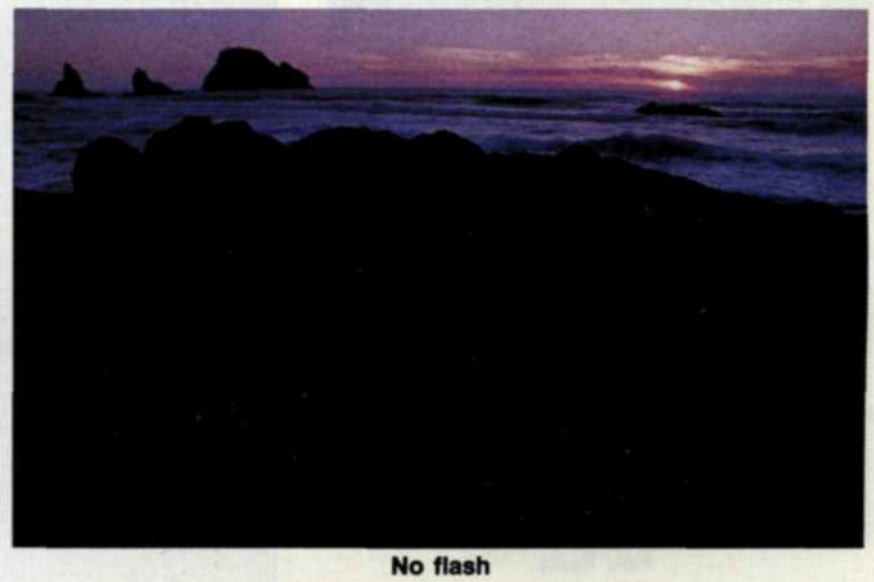
For this shot, an N6000 camera was set up on a tripod, and manually focused on some nearby starfish. One SB-24 AF Speedlight was connected to the camera via the SC-17 TTL cord, and a second SB-24 was attached to the first via an SC-18 flash cord. Each SB-24 flash unit was pointed toward foreground areas needing extra light. The N6000's shutter was activated by using the camera's built-in self-timer.

CAMERA: Nikon N6000
LENS: 20mm AF Nikkor
FLASH: Two SB-24 AF Speedlights
MODE: Program AE
METER: Matrix
MOTOR DRIVE: Single frame
EXPOSURE: 1/30 at f/8
FILM: Fujicolor Reala

Fill flash

If you are alone, you can hold one SB-24 in your left hand and the other in your right. It is also possible to mount one SB-24 in the camera's hot-shoe and turn the flash head toward one part of the scene, while holding the second SB-24 in one hand and pointing it at another part of the scene. If the area to be illuminated is small, one SB-24 may be all that is necessary to fill the shadows. and illuminate the foreground. □





No flash

The NIKON Challenge III

ADVANCED FLASH-FILL PORTRAITS USING THE NEW NIKON N6006

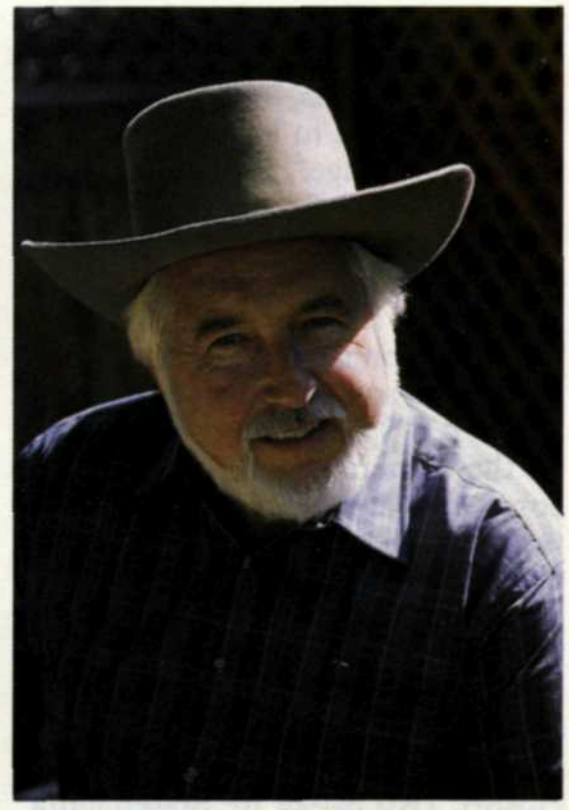
With the new N6006 camera, beautifully balanced fill-flash pictures are easy. When you need fill-flash, simply raise the flash head, wait a short time for the flash to charge, and shoot. The camera does the rest.

In this setup, we positioned the subject with his back to the sun, so that fill-flash was necessary. Using the +/– compensation for the flash, and the +/– compensation for the camera, we were able to achieve virtually any flash-to-daylight lighting ratio desired.

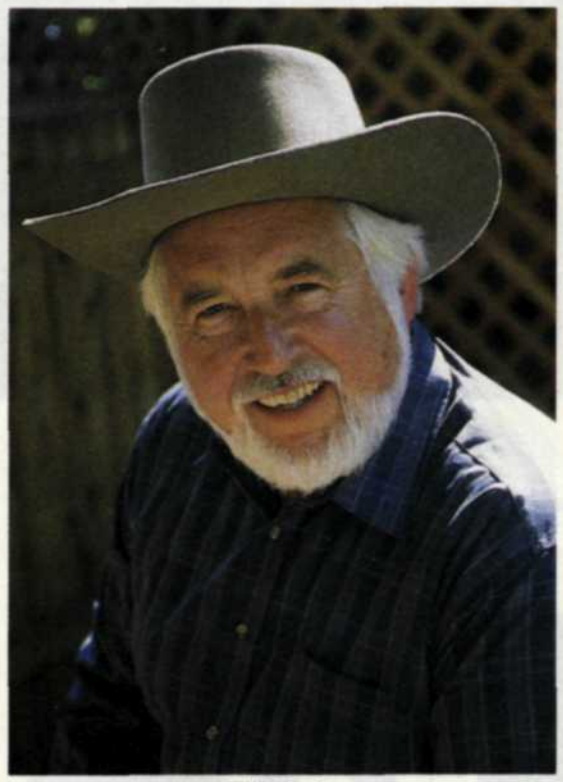
The first group of photos was taken with no flash, and the N6006 camera set to a five-exposure autobracketing sequence in ⅓-stop intervals. The second set of photos was taken using the built-in flash. Full fill-flash was accomplished by leaving all settings on normal. The fill ratio was increased by changing the flash compensation to –0.3 stop, –0.7 stop, –1 stop, and –1.3 stops. We also decreased the overall exposure by changing the camera's exposure compensation setting to –0.3 stop and –0.7 stop.

We also found that you could bracket the overall fill-flash series by holding the shutter button down until the camera had taken all the variations required. The N6006 automatically waits for the flash to recycle before taking each shot in the bracketed series. □

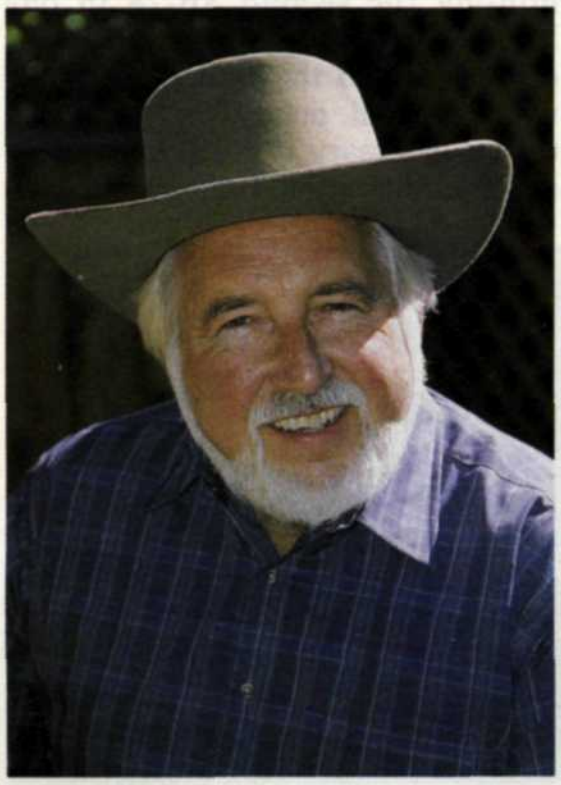
CAMERA: Nikon N6006
LENS: 28–85mm AF Zoom Nikkor
FLASH: Built-in
MODE: Program AE
METER: Matrix
MOTOR DRIVE: Single frame
EXPOSURE: 1/125 at f/11
EXPOSURE COMPENSATION: –0.3 to –0.7 stops
FLASH COMPENSATION: –0.3 to –1.3 stops fill-flash
FILM: Kodak Ektachrome 100



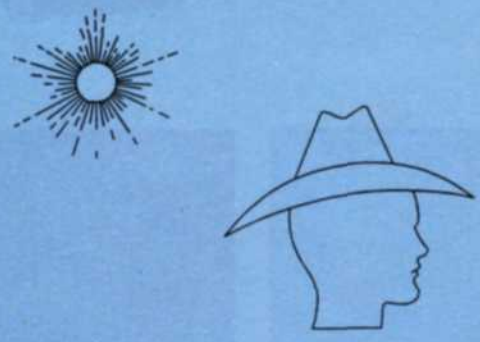
No flash

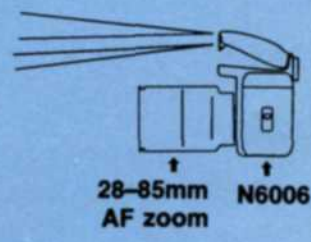


Fill flash



Key flash





Example: For 1:2 lighting ratio, set camera at 0 compensation, flash at –1 compensation

Example: For underexposed 1:1 ratio, set camera at –1 stop, flash at 0 compensation

Example: For underexposed 1:2 ratio, set camera at –1 stop, flash at –1 stop

The NIKON Challenge III

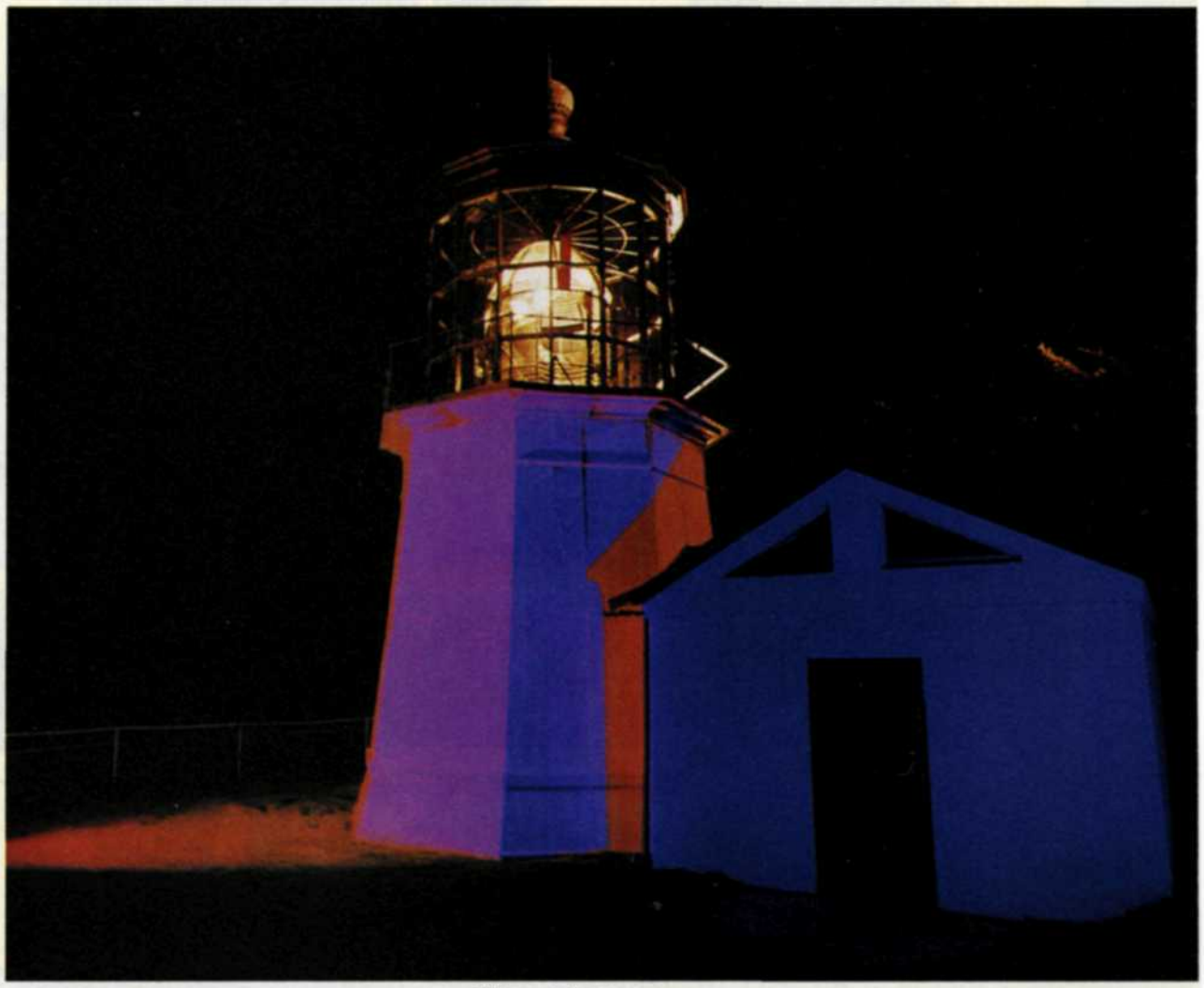
LIGHT PAINTING USING A SPOTLIGHT AND AN SB-24 AF SPEEDLIGHT

Lighting large nonilluminated subjects at night can be very frustrating unless you utilize a technique called "painting with light" that has been used by professional photographers for decades. In order for us to photograph such a subject, we took advantage of the features of the Nikon N8008 camera and SB-24 AF Speedlight with its SD-8 battery pack. We first secured the camera to a sturdy tripod, then attached a 20mm AF wide-angle lens and manually focused on the subject. Additional props necessary for this shot included a No. 25 red gel filter, a No. 47 blue gel filter, and a high-intensity spot flashlight. The camera exposure controls were set to 30 seconds at f/2.8, and the multiple-exposure function was set to make three exposures.

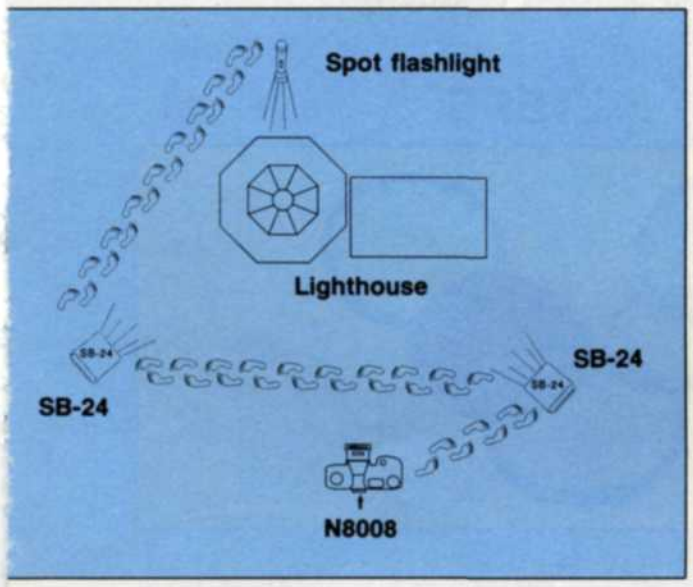
We walked to the first position on the right side of the lighthouse, and attached the blue filter over the flash unit. The flash unit's stroboscopic function was set for eight flashes, at 1/16 power. After one of us opened the camera's shutter, the other proceeded to "paint" the right side of the lighthouse with the flash unit. Ten sets of stroboscopic exposures with the blue filter were made during the first 30-second exposure, for a total of 80 exposures. Next, we moved to the position on the left side of the lighthouse, where we repeated the procedure, but with the red filter over the flash, for an additional 80 exposures. Finally, we moved to the third position, where we concentrated a very high-intensity-beam flashlight on the backside of the huge convex lens in the top of the lighthouse for the final 30-second exposure.

We've also included a "painting" with straight, unfiltered flash. □

Unfiltered flash



Filtered flash



CAMERA: Nikon N8008
LENS: 20mm AF Nikkor
FLASH: SB-24 AF Speedlight and SD-8 BatteryPack
MODE: Manual
METER: Matrix
MOTOR DRIVE: Single frame
EXPOSURE: 30 seconds at f/2.8
FILM: Fujicolor Reala
FILTERS: No. 25 red (left flash); No. 47 blue (right flash)
MULTIPLE-EXPOSURE FUNCTION: Set to 3 exposures (2 with SB-24, 1 with high-intensity flashlight