

THE IMPACT OF MONOCHROME

John Lehman



SOME THOUGHT ABOUT MONOCHROME PHOTOGRAPHY

Note: except where noted in these quotes , image are those of commentors



“Black and white has an unsurpassed ability to convey character.”

- David Praker



“Color is descriptive. Black and white is interpretive.”

– Elliott Erwitt

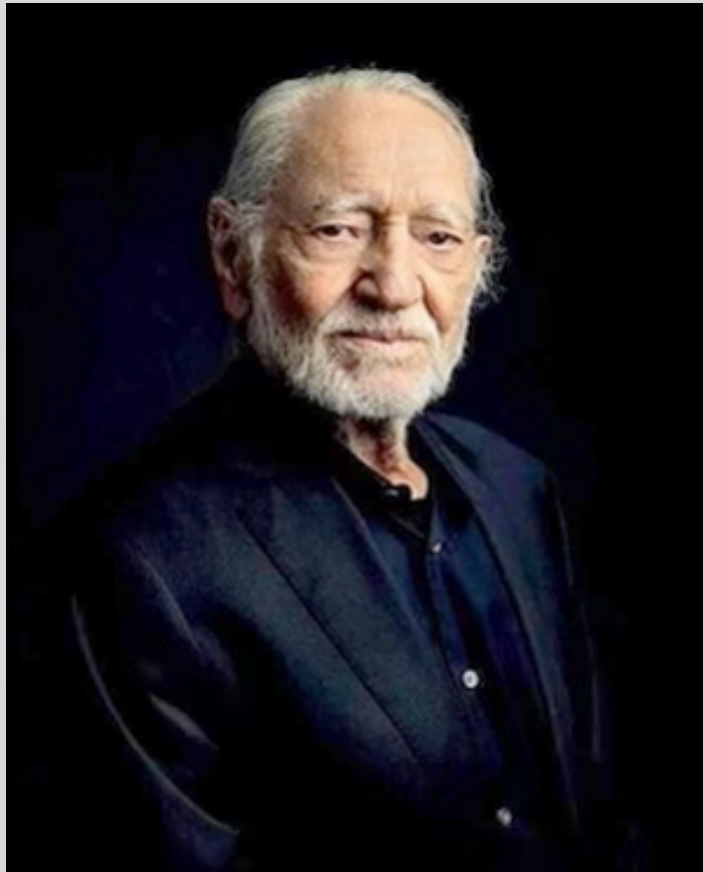


“When you photograph people in color, you photograph their clothes. But when you photograph people in black and white, you photograph their souls!”

- Ted Grant

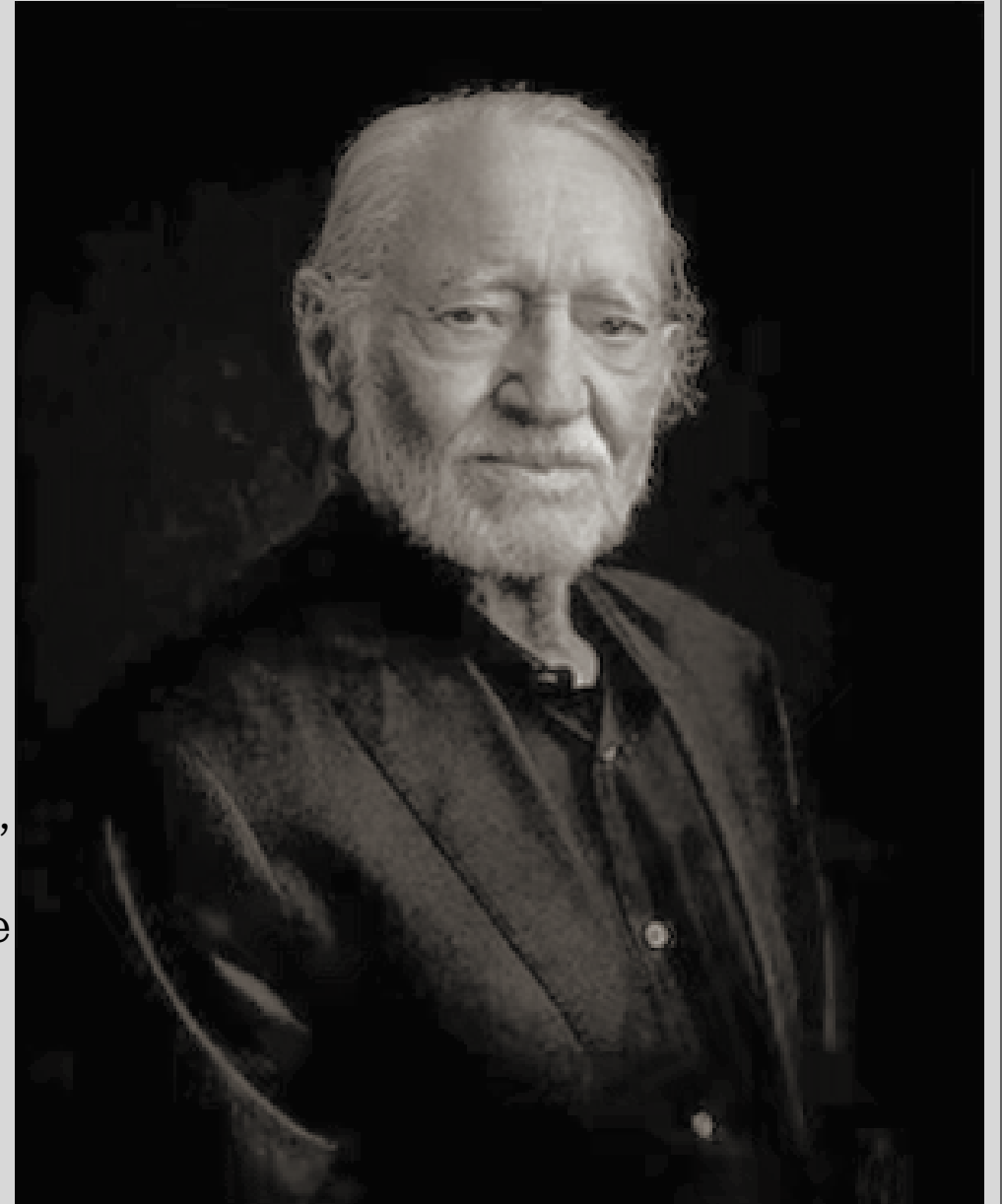
**“Black and white photography
erases time from the equation.”**

— Jason Peterson



The left image was recently posted on Facebook, I don't know the photographer. (it wasn't credited)

I saw it and immediately thought, he needs to be seen in B&W. I created the B&W, to me this is much more like Willie.



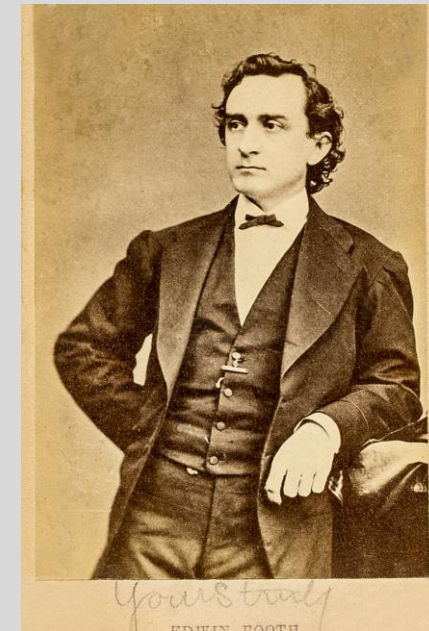


--Photo by John Lehman

- "It is always worth reflecting on why you are doing B&W. After all, making pictures black and white is a deliberate choice and there's usually a bit more to it than a whim." – John Beardsworth

A very brief introduction to me

- I've been a photographer for over 60 years. My first camera was a Kodak Brownie. Now, I shoot with a Fuji XT3 with a variety of lenses. I use LR/PS and a wide variety of plug-ins.
- I have always loved photographing people—portraits, events, candid, etc. My wife and I are volunteer photographers for several organizations, including the Dallas Heritage Village.
- I have always been drawn to black & white. I am not really sure why. I think some of the comments above reflect my thinking process.
 - Over the years that has also prompted me to collect vintage images (1860's-1930's)
- I've been published in newspapers many times, and also was published in Popular Photography and in a recent show in Grand Central Station in New York City.
- My wife and I have been members of the Plano Photography Club for well over 25 years and are past presidents.



Edwin Booth
Famous Actor
1860's
Souvenir Photo

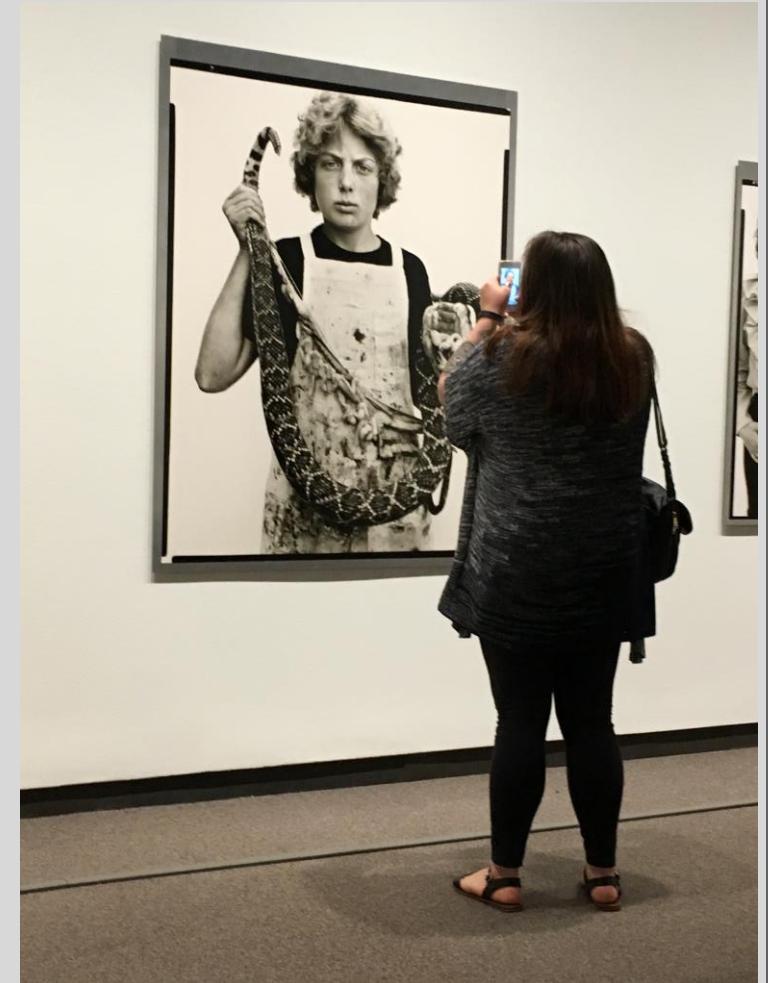
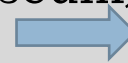
Brother of
John Wilkes
Booth

A few definitions:

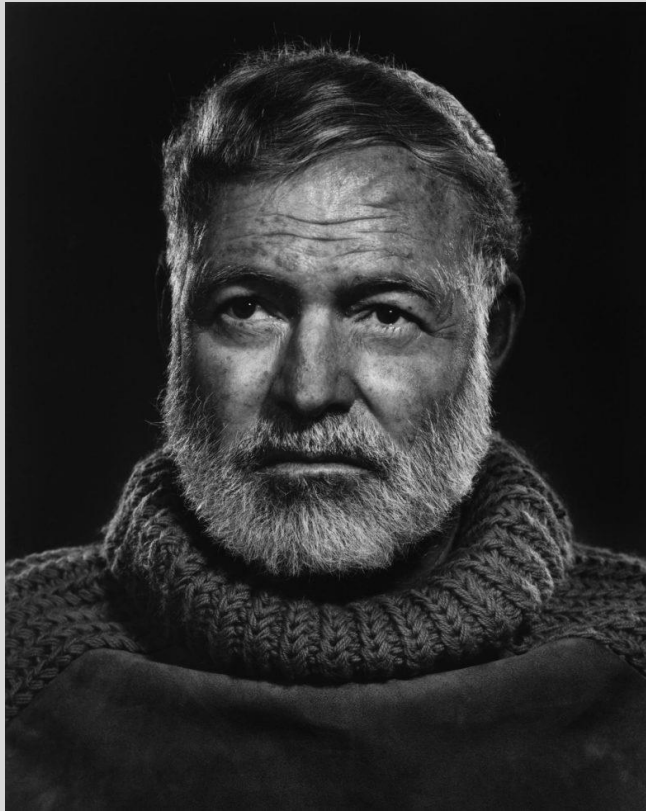
- A ***B&W image*** is one that is made up entirely of black, white and shades of gray
- A ***Monochrome*** image is made up of a single color with varied shades of the color {i.e. Sepia tone).
- A ***split tone image*** is often one where the image is made up of one color in the highlights and another in the shadows that are blended in the image. These are also generally devoid of original color other than the tones being used.
- For our purposes in this talk, I'm going to discuss these within the frame of all of these, since they all have had the original colors removed or were originally taken in B&W and the image was then converted.

Getting a feel for Black & White/Monochrome

- Black & White photographic images have been around since 1850's Done well, it is a dramatic and powerful medium.
- Famous B&W movies;
 - Casablanca- great studies of impacting mood with light and shadow.
 - Citizen Kane-Dramatic and powerful
 - Young Frankenstein
- Photographers who mainly, or exclusively shot in B&W
 - Ansel Adams and Edward Weston (of course)
 - George Hurrell-1940's celebrity photographer
 - Portraitists-Karsh and Arnold Newman
 - Elliott Erwitt—editorial photography
 - Robert Frank--predominately street photography
 - Richard Avedon-portraits (many at the Amon Carter museum)



Some of the famous b&w photographers



Karsh

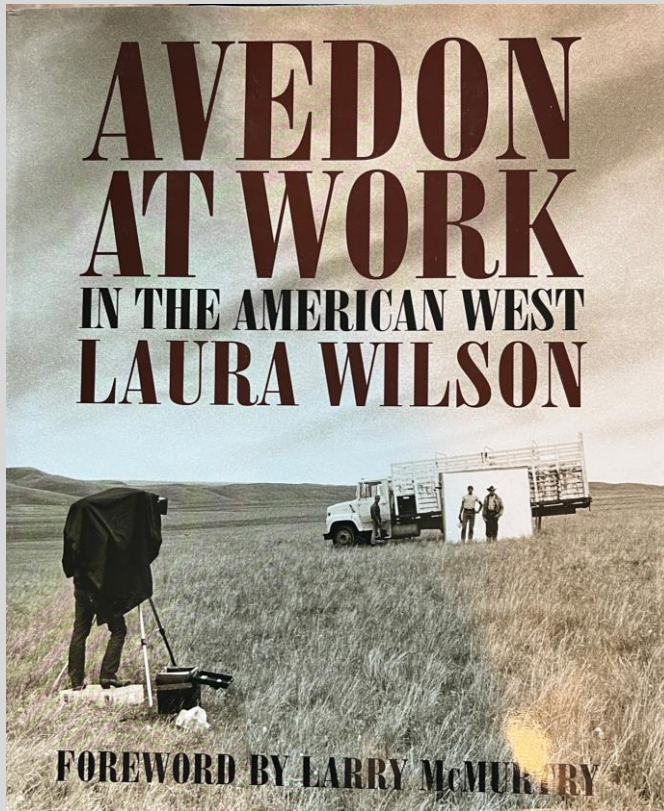


George Hurrell

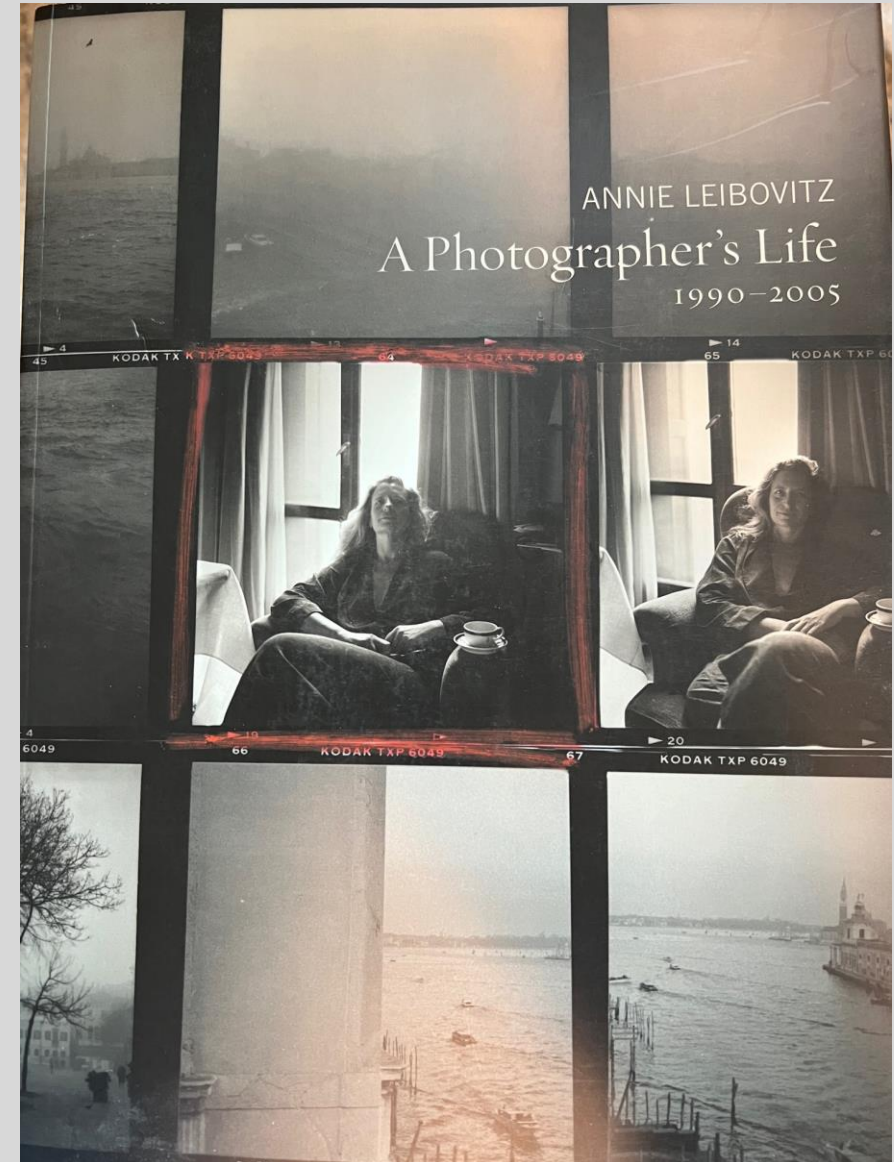


Robert Frank

Inspiration Reading:



This project was
Funded by the
Amon Carter
Museum.





THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Helping to create good images:

Tips to consider creating or converting an image to monochrome:

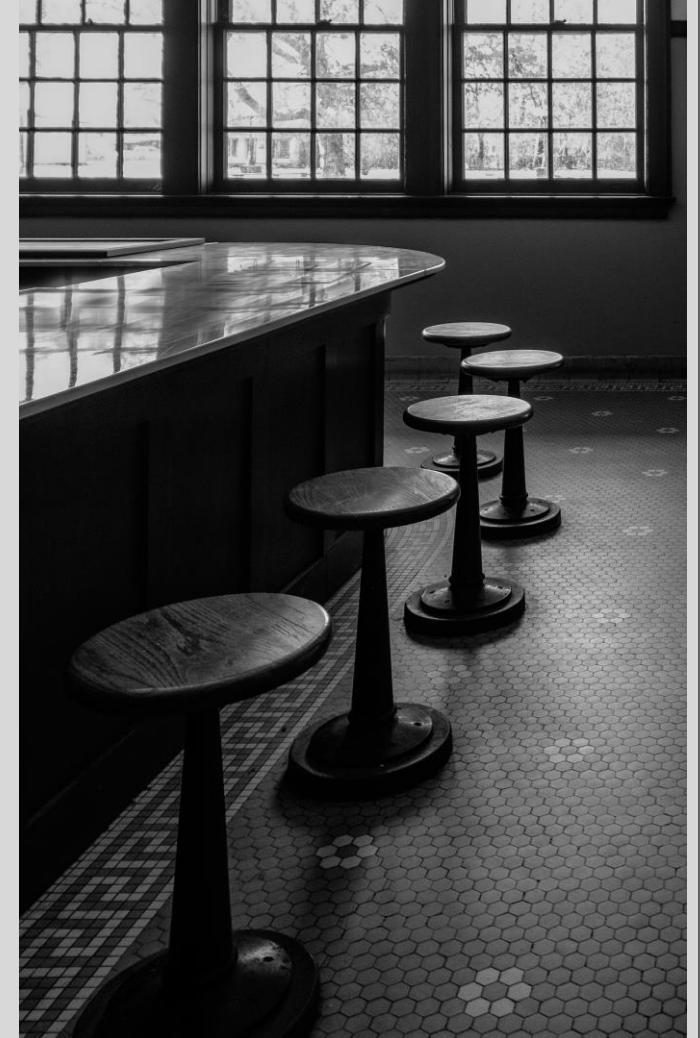
- When I select an image to edit, because I love monochrome, I ask myself:
 - Do the original colors **add anything** to the **impact** of the image?
 - Does the *color* **distract** what the image is trying to say?
 - Does removing the color improve or hamper the feel of the image?
- Are there interesting light patterns and/or contrasts that add to the image?
 - Light and contrast are great ways to highlight these in B&W.
- Are there interesting *textures* that could be enhanced by B&W to improve the impact of the image?
- What is the mood/feeling that you want to create?
 - Does color enhance or distract that from the mood/feeling?



Good camera settings for a monochrome image

- 1. Use a **low ISO** if possible, to keep down grain. Preferably use the native ISO of your camera. If you want grain, you can add it in post.
- 2. It is often helpful to somewhat underexpose the image to maintain detail in your darker tones. It is easier to recover darker tones than bright ones.
- 3. Using a **small aperture** helps to keep detail and better depth of field. The only caveat is using an aperture which serves your vision, i.e. a wide aperture (f 1.4, 2.8, etc.) is often preferred in portraits.
- 4. **Auto white balance** is a good option so that you are ready for lighting situations.
- 5. **Keep your eye on the histogram.** Attempt to not blow out highlights or to block up your shadows. Remember, monochrome images are created by the interplay of light and shadow and contrast, and you want to get the best image possible.

Are there interesting light patterns and/or contrasts that add to the image?
Light and contrast are great ways to highlight these in B&W.



Monochrome can help create mood/feelings



An example of how B&W can change the mood



Do colors enhance or detract?
Show more of the personality or not?

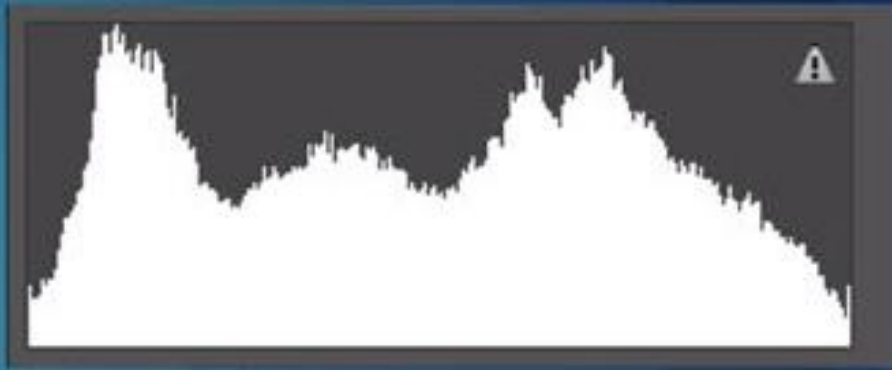


Creating a good monochrome image

- Look for patterns and textures:



Histograms for Black and White Image

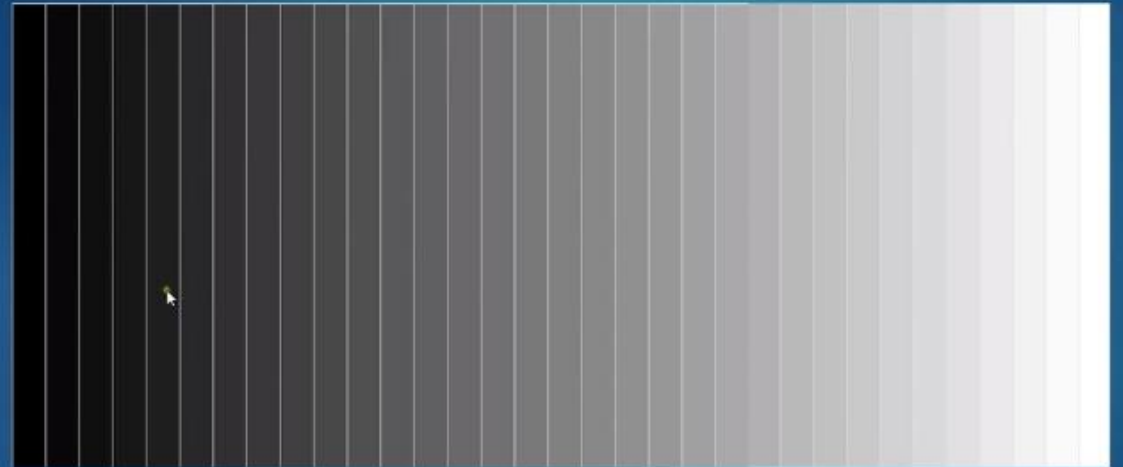


Histogram

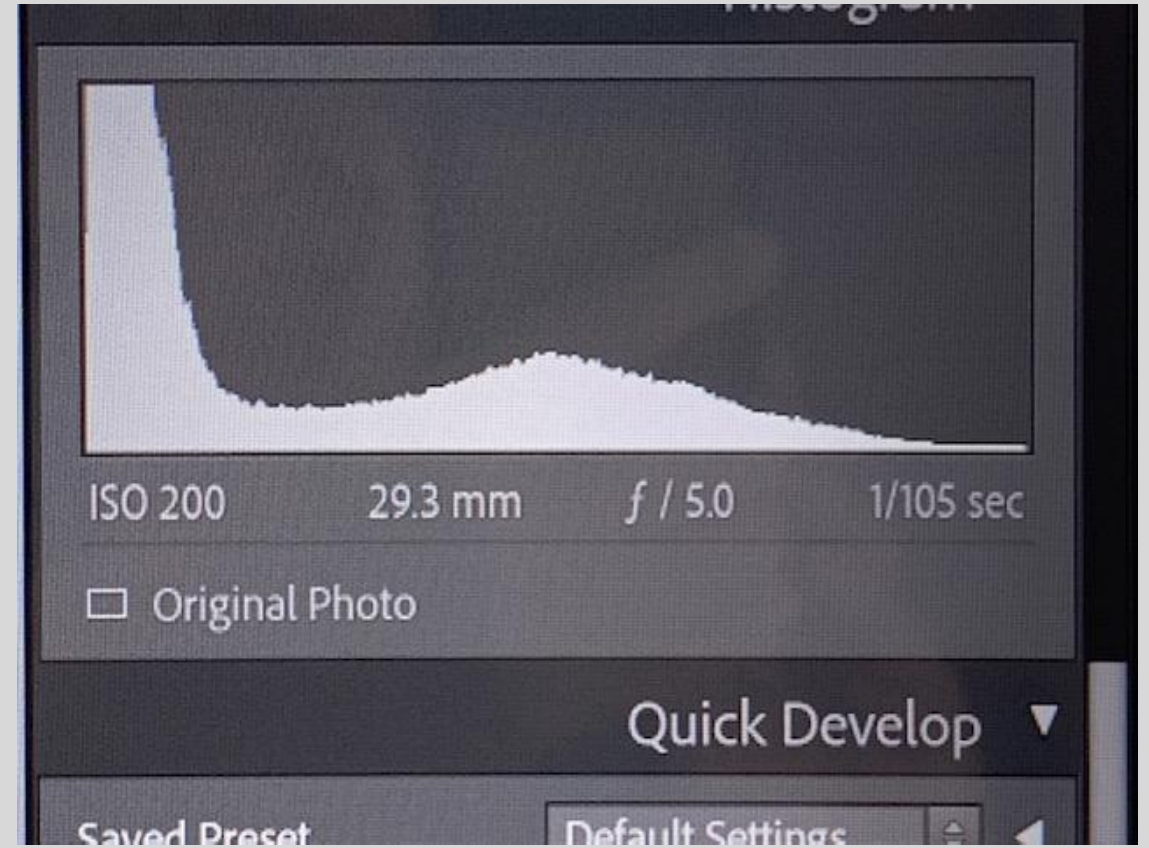


Greyscale

255 Shades of Grey

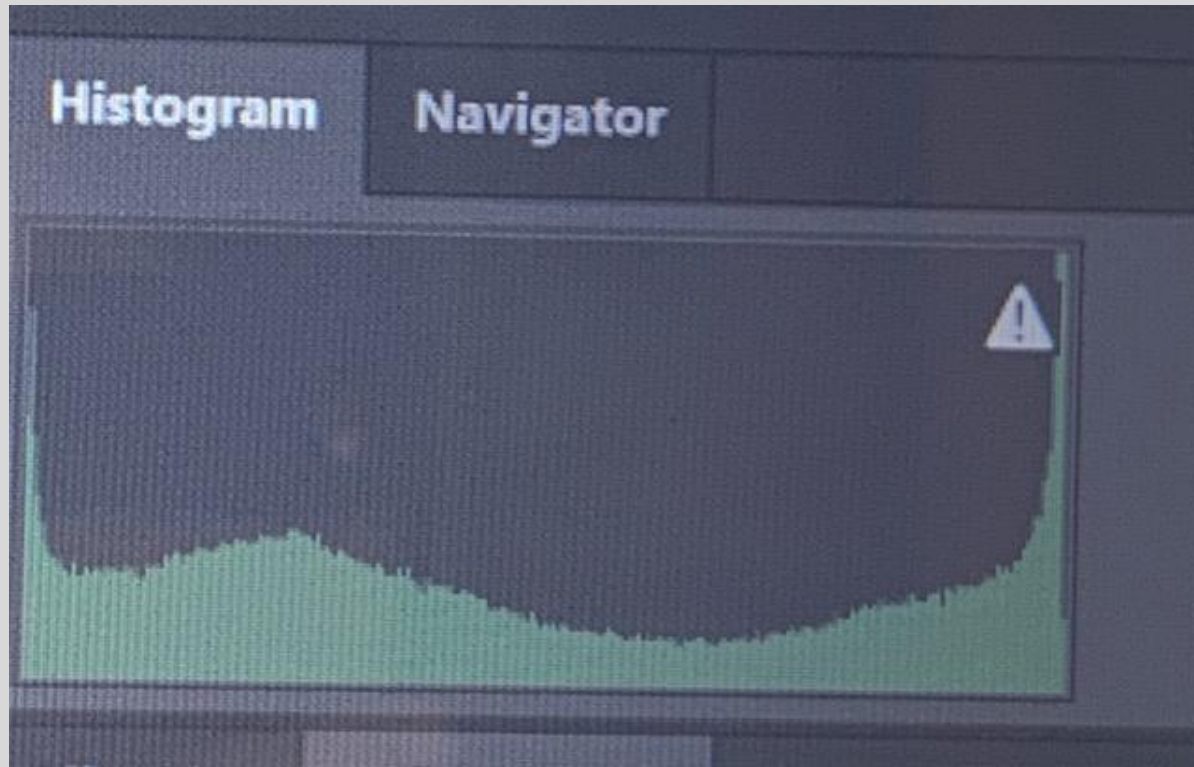


Example of an image with it's histogram

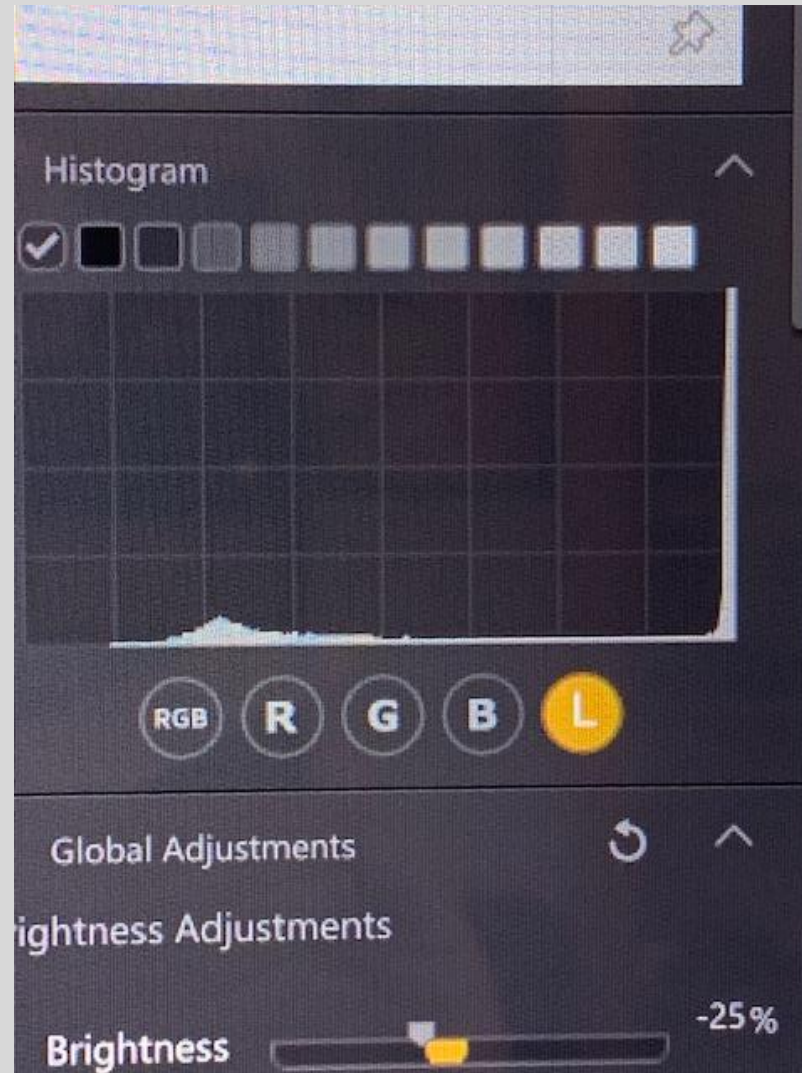


Clean whites and blacks

Having clean black and/or whites helps make the image. Check your histogram, pull in the black and white points as well. *Decision point: show detail in the two ends of the histogram or not..*



High Key Image and histogram



Great Monochrome projects:

- 1. Go out with your camera thinking of these issues—*mood, textures, patterns, and strong contrasts*. Take shots with the intention of creating (or editing) them in monochrome.
 - Architecture, urban street scenes, portraits, and landscapes are great options
- 2. If your camera has the capability, switch to B&W mode JPEGs and then shoot RAW + JPEG and see what you get as you take the images. Then review them on your screen or in editing.
- 3. A great option is to go out to shoot in some area which has abandoned buildings, vintage events, historic sites like the Dallas Heritage Village or the Stockyards, where the buildings and docents will lend the idea of a B&W or monochrome image (such as sepia tone)



This image is done to
recreate an 1870's
image
It's done in On1
Effects

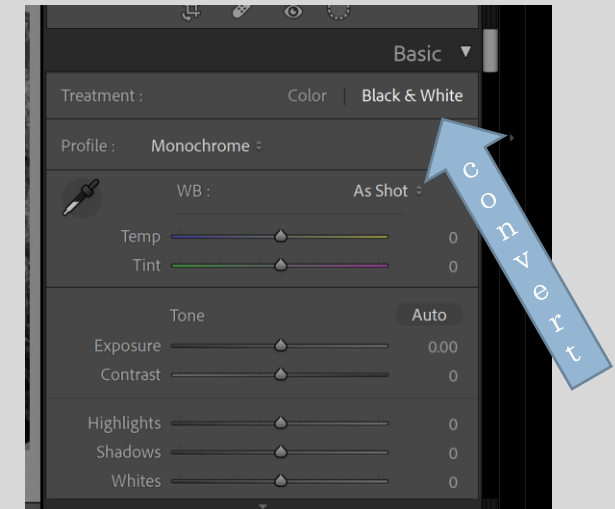


EDITING TO CREATE MONOCHROME

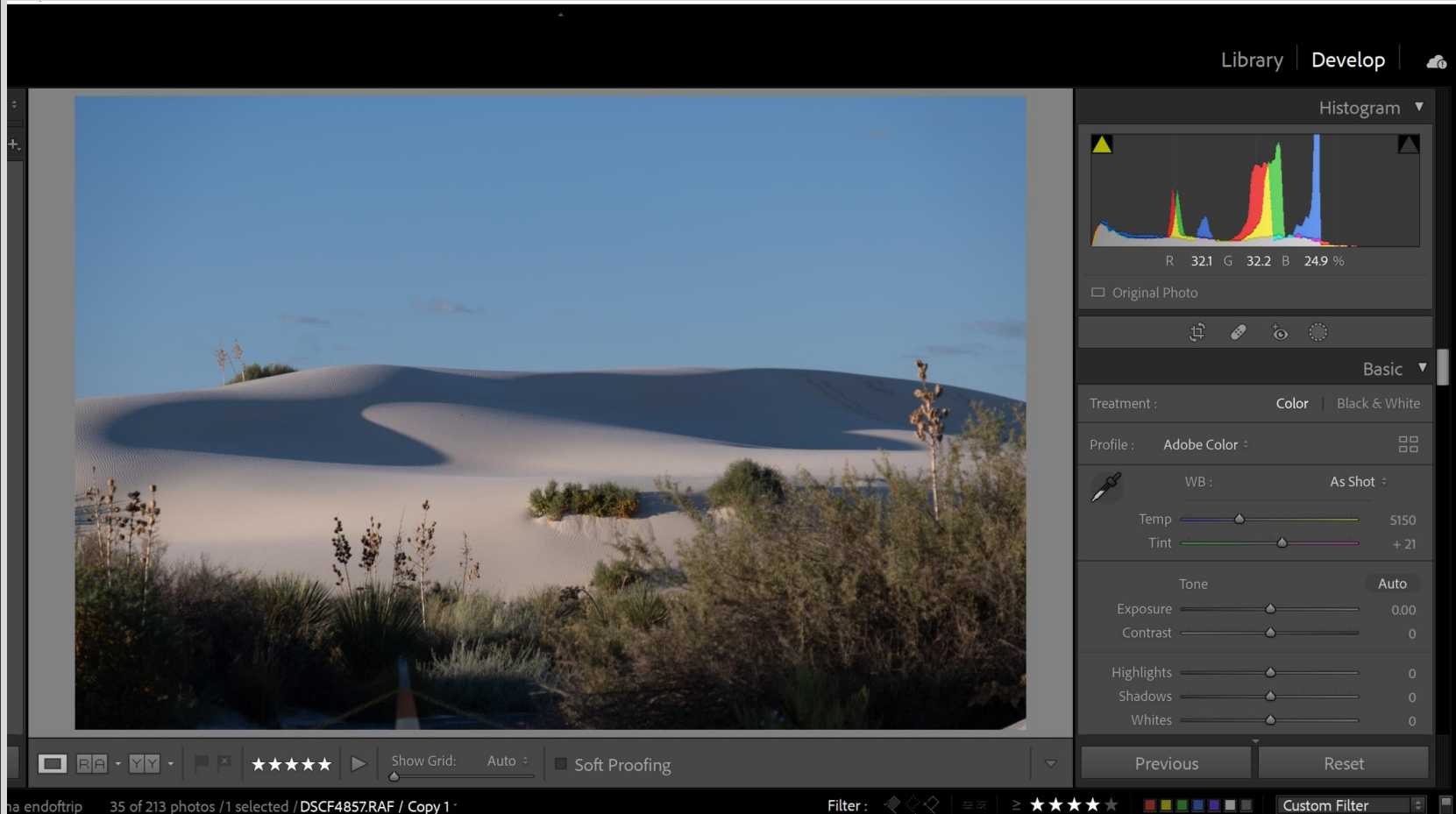
Adobe and Silver Efex Pro 3

Creating Black & White/Monochrome Images

- **Adobe**
 - Lightroom/Adobe Camera Raw can convert images in simple and/or sophisticated ways as seen in a simple click in LR here
 - Photoshop and Capture One can also create monochromes.
- **Nik Silver Efex Pro 3** is considered a gold standard by most.
 - Can be utilized within LR/PS as a plug-in (most often used)
 - Can be used as a stand-alone
 - Nik Collection 4 is a suite of 8 software programs with multiple uses. (Nik Collection 4-\$149- including Silver Efex and Color Efex-(free trials are available)
Review of Silver Efex 3:
www.dpreview.com/reviews/software-review-nik-silver-efex-pro-3-review
- **Several other editing programs and plug-ins** (Exposure X7, On1, etc.) include black&white presets, but most are not as sophisticated.
- *There are a multitude of YouTube videos on all of these options, so I am not going to go into them at length in the limited time available. I'll introduce you to Silver Efex.*



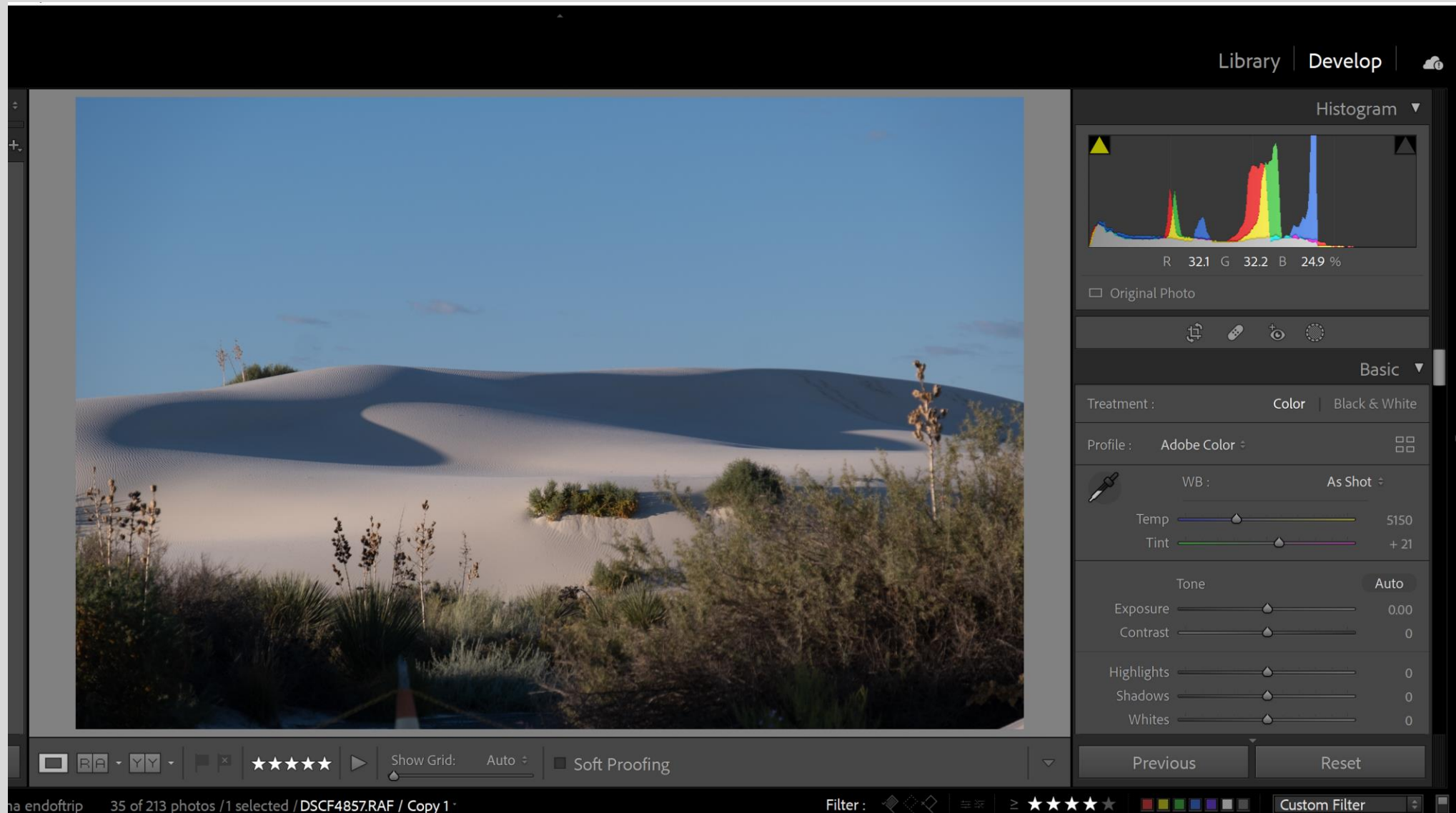
What makes a good image to convert?



1. Good contrast.
2. Nice textures.
3. Good tones.
4. Foreground, middle ground and background is sharp.
5. Shadows are not blocked up.
6. Highlights are not blown out.

All of these characteristics are ripe for a monochrome conversion.

Original Raw image—Let's convert



Basic LR modifications before conversion

Changes to original LR raw image reflected in next images:

1. Linear gradient on foreground
2. Crop of bottom of image
3. Different sky with PS sky replace to be seen in next slide
4. My preset for some changes in highlights, shadows and clarity. As shown

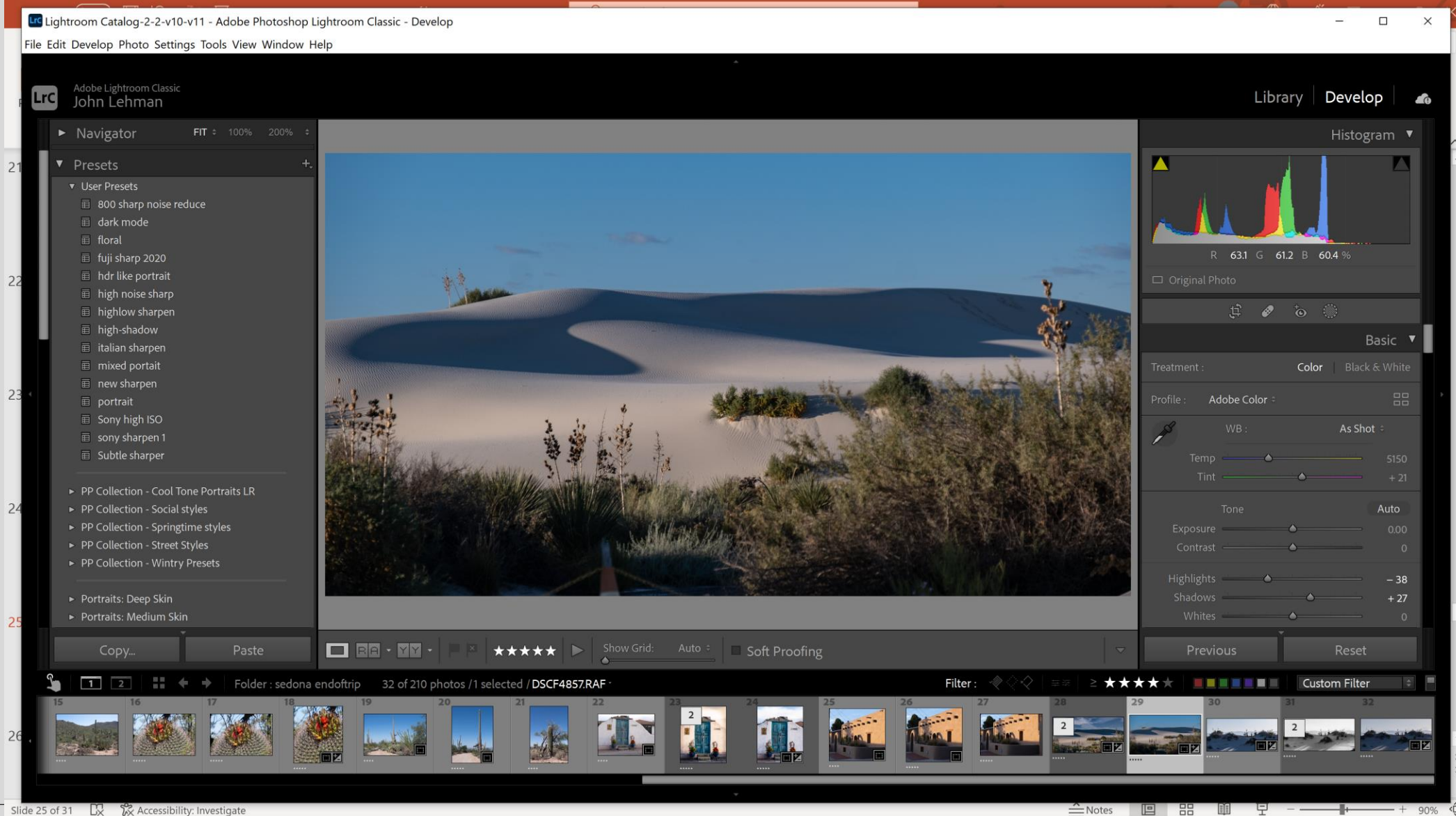
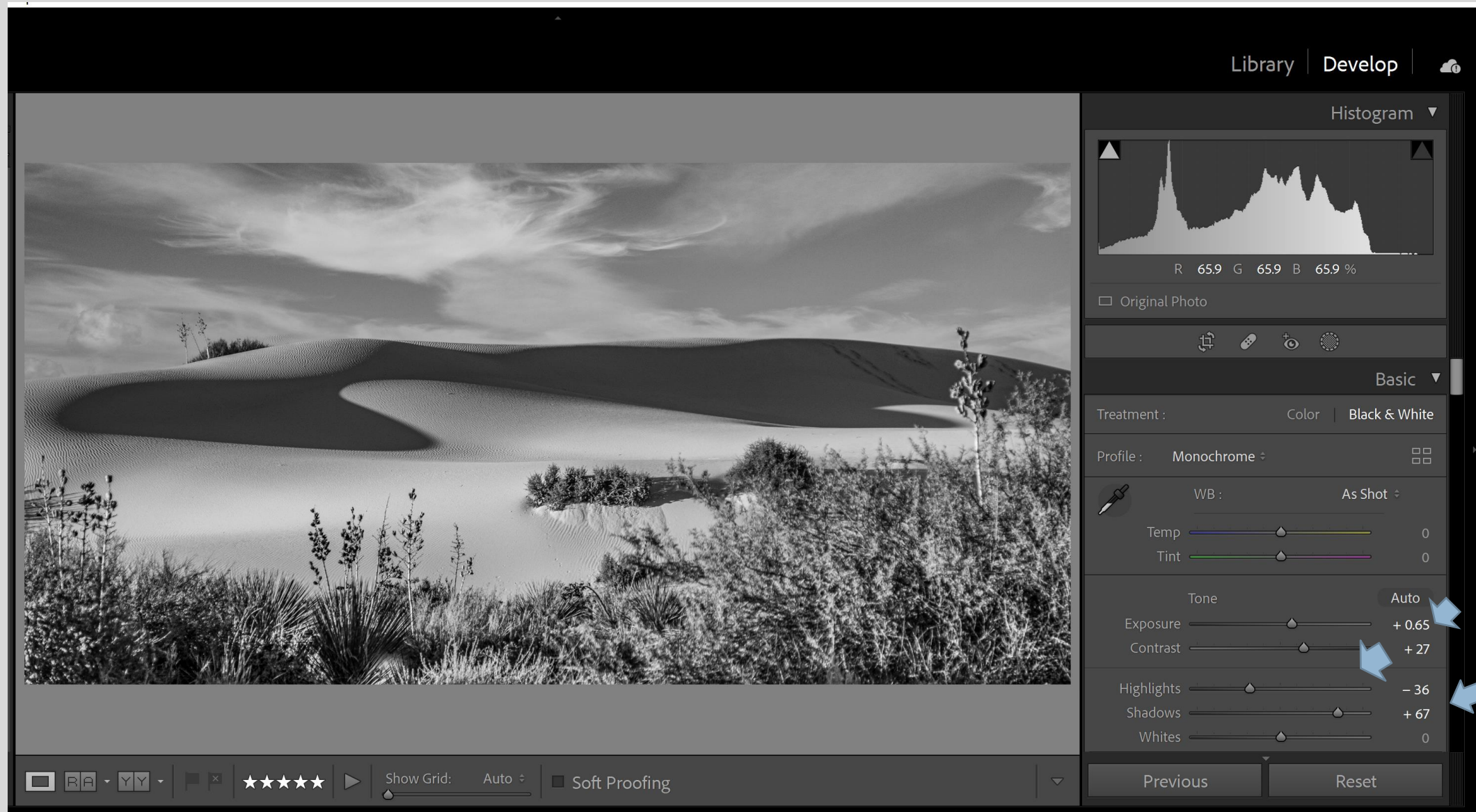


Image if done by LR basic B&W conversion



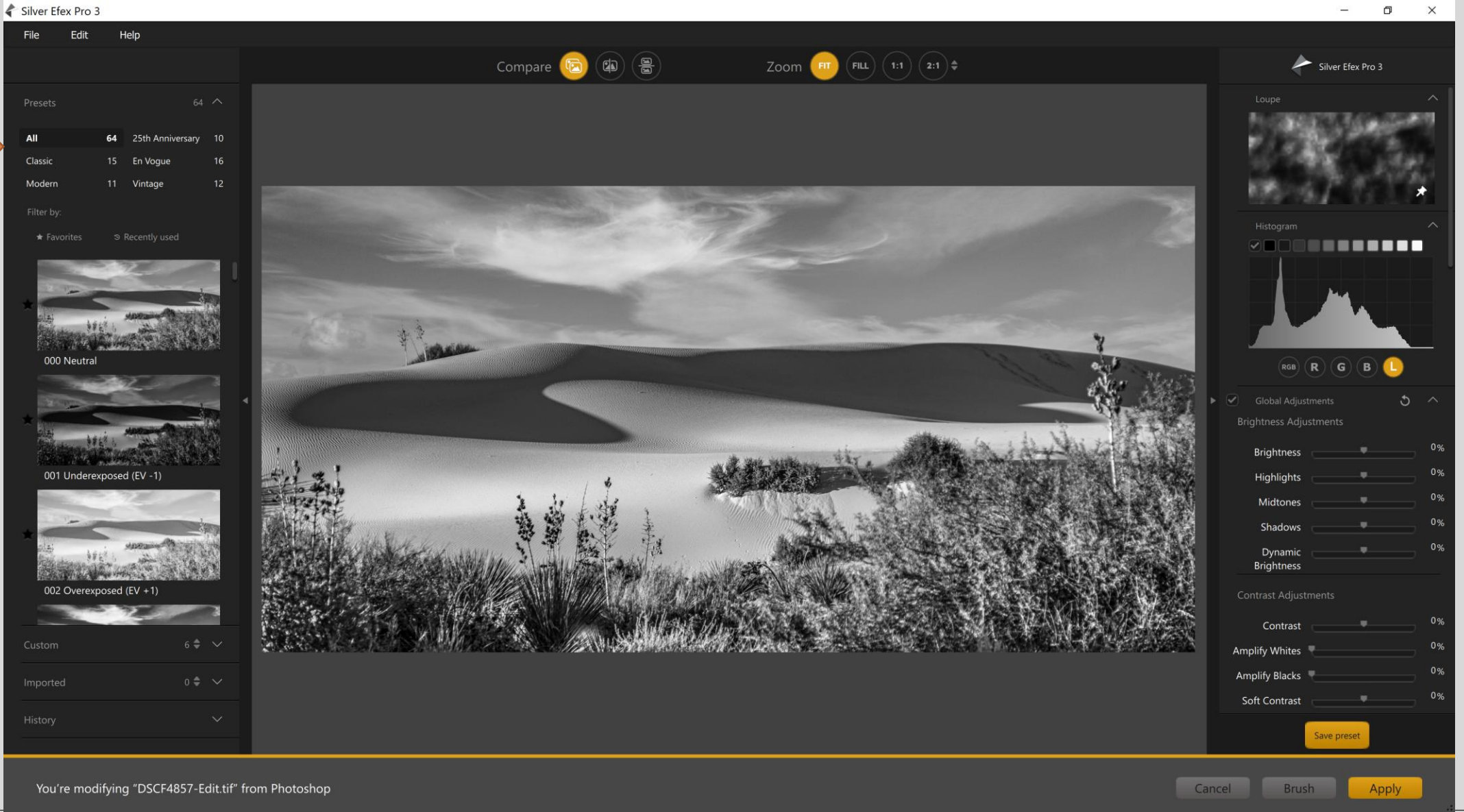
Arrows show basic changes.

Not shown some increase in clarity and sharpness

B&W work flow into Silver Efex as the Raw Image from LR

64
Presets

Neutral



Start with a preset, I like Fine Art or More Silver

This one has fine grain and good balance of tones which I prefer

The screenshot shows the Silver Efex Pro 3 interface. On the left, a 'Presets' panel lists various presets, with '019 Fine Art Process' selected and highlighted by an orange arrow. The central area displays a black and white landscape photograph of sand dunes. On the right, a 'Global Adjustments' panel is visible, featuring sliders for 'Brightness Adjustments' (Brightness, Highlights, Midtones, Shadows, Dynamic Brightness) and 'Contrast Adjustments' (Contrast, Amplify Whites, Amplify Blacks, Soft Contrast). A blue arrow points to these sliders with the text 'Basic Sliders with many other options'. At the bottom, a status bar indicates 'You're modifying "DSCF4857-Edit.tif" from Photoshop' and includes 'Cancel', 'Brush', and 'Apply' buttons.

File Edit Help

Compare Zoom FIT FILL 1:1 2:1

Presets 64

All 64 25th Anniversary 10

Classic 15 En Vogue 16

Modern 11 Vintage 12

Filter by:

★ Favorites Recently used

★ 017 Full Spectrum

★ 018 Full Spectrum Inverse

★ **019 Fine Art Process**

Custom 6

Imported 0

History

Loupe

Histogram

Global Adjustments

Brightness Adjustments

Brightness 0%

Highlights -43%

Midtones 0%

Shadows 0%

Dynamic Brightness 0%

Contrast Adjustments

Contrast 19%

Amplify Whites 0%

Amplify Blacks 21%

Soft Contrast 11%

Save preset

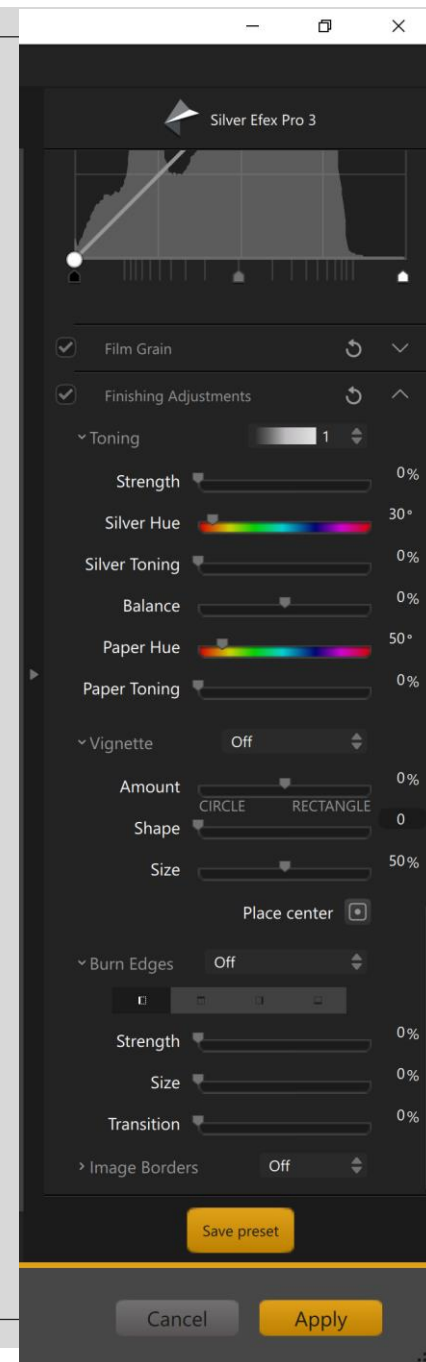
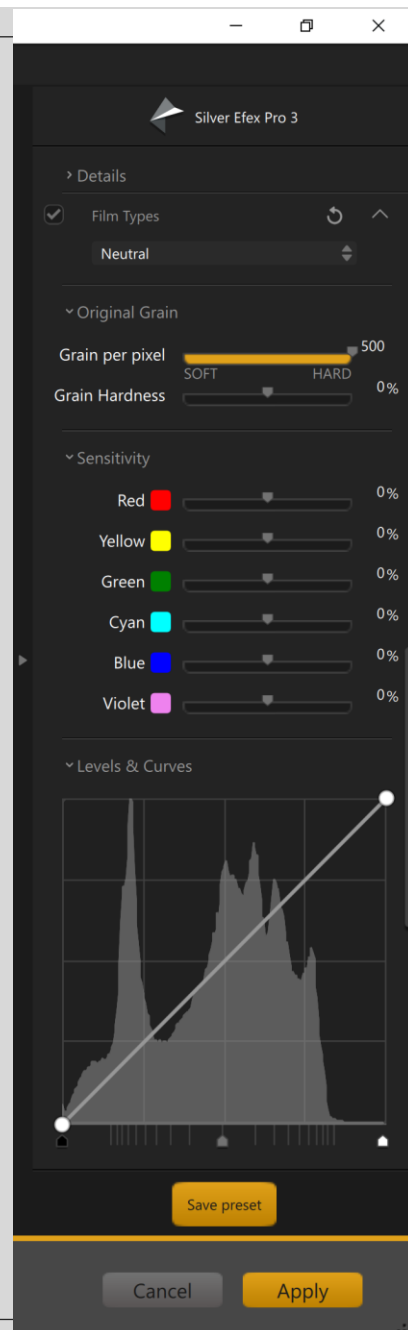
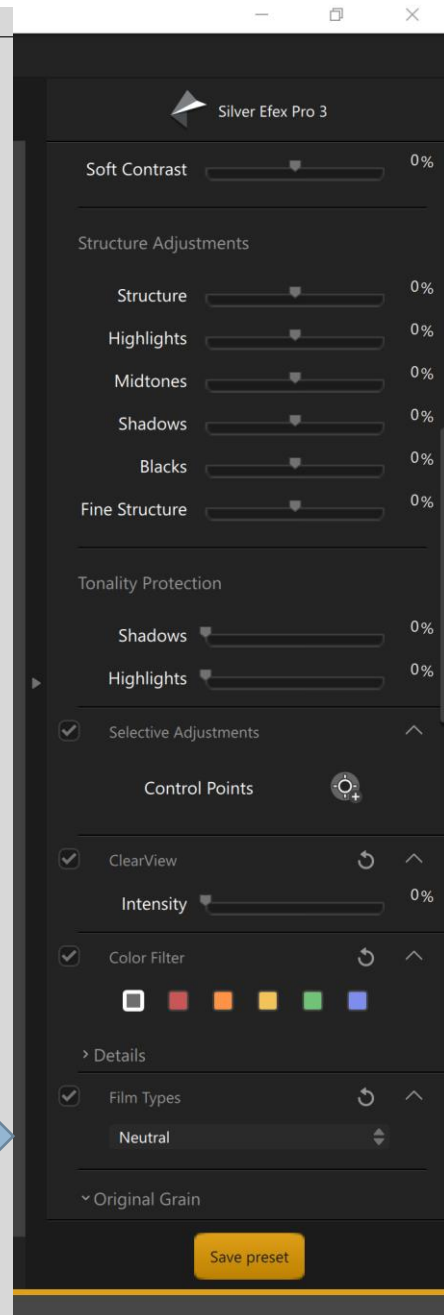
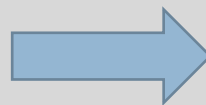
You're modifying "DSCF4857-Edit.tif" from Photoshop

Cancel Brush Apply

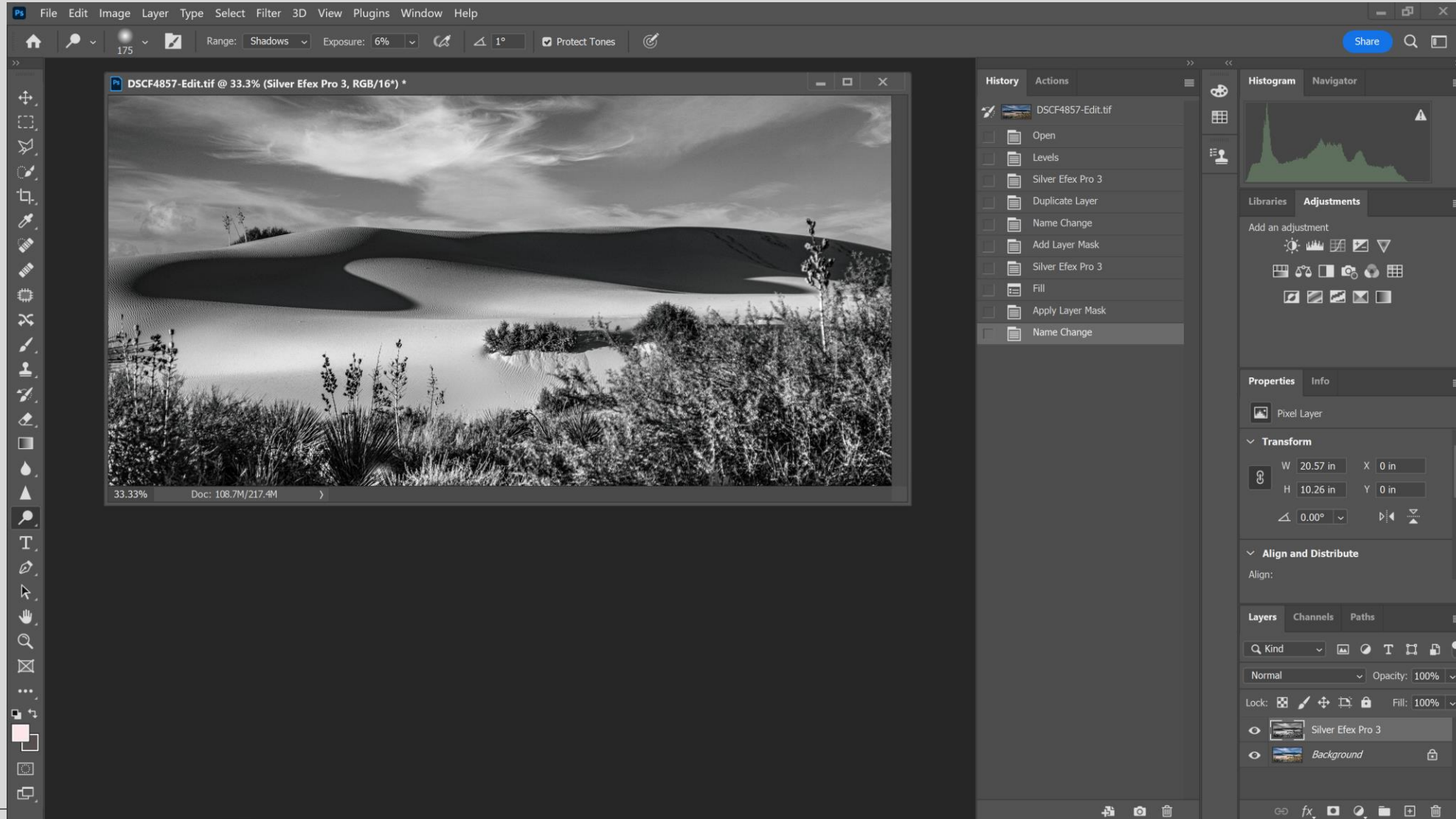
Many of the slider options to handle the image.

If you create a combination of the sliders that you like, you can save it as a custom preset.

Film
Simulations



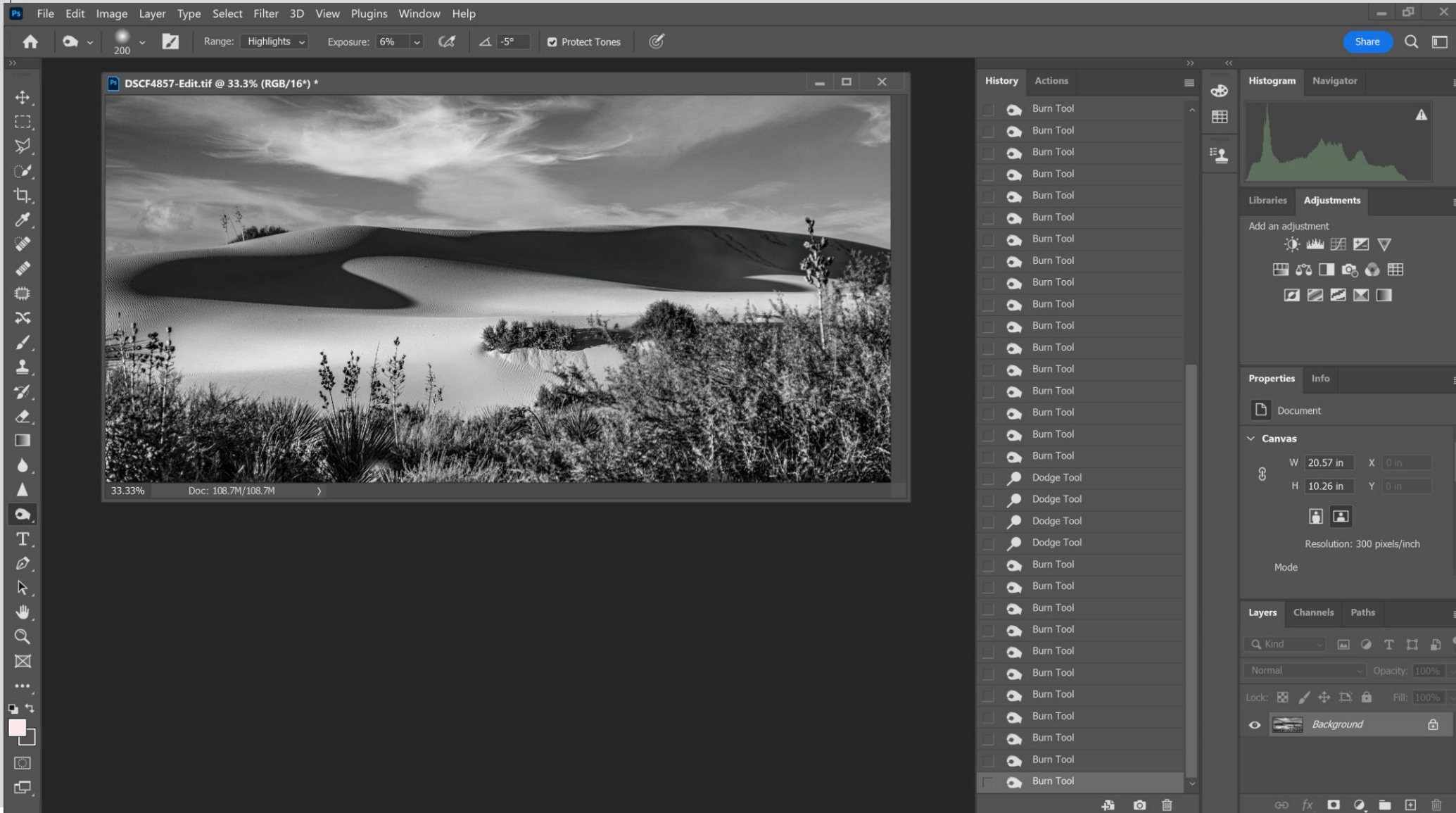
The image can be moved back to PS



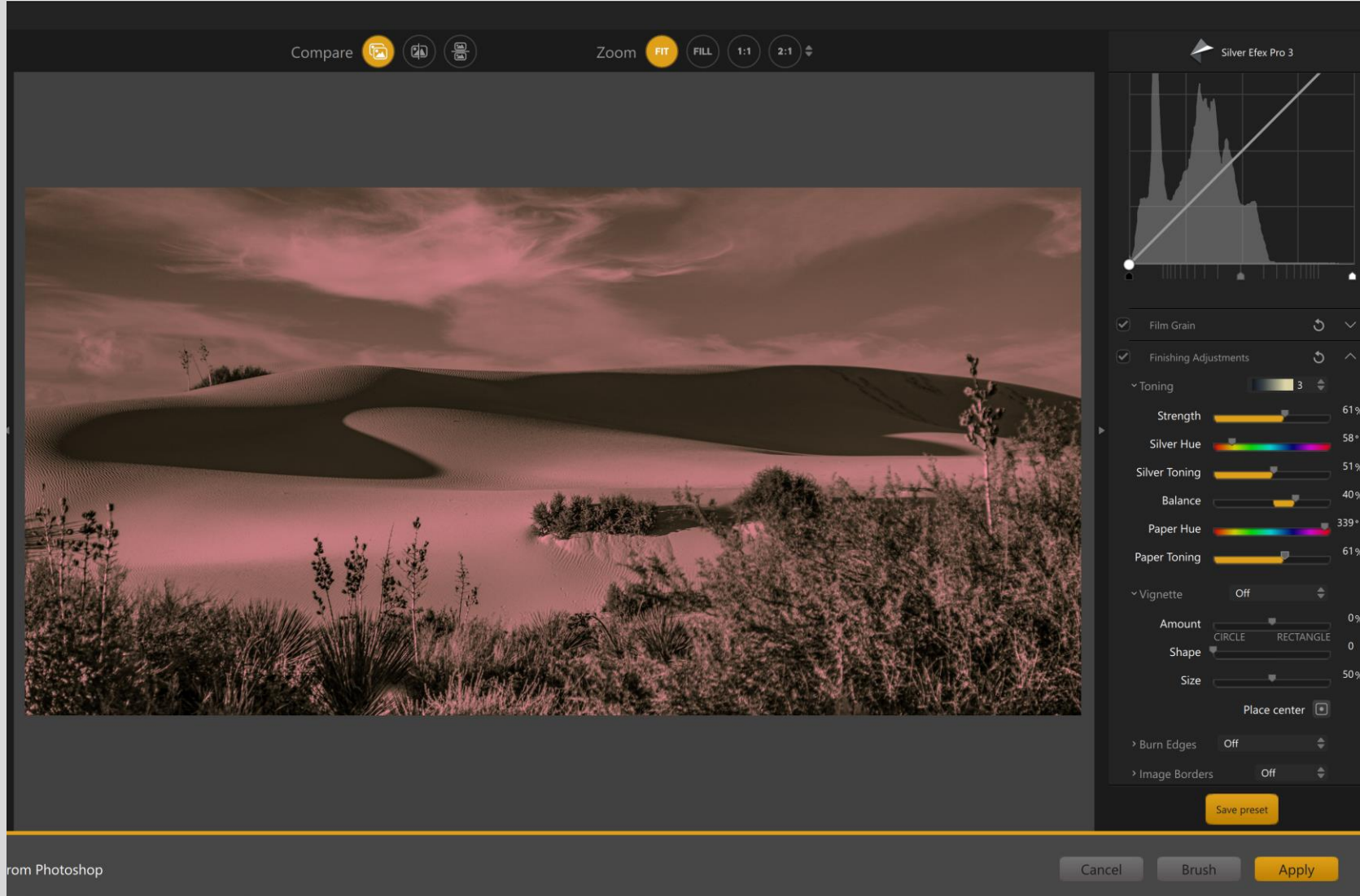
Silver Efex
creates its
own layer
automatically
then you can
further
manipulate it
in photoshop



Final image after further PS dodging and burning



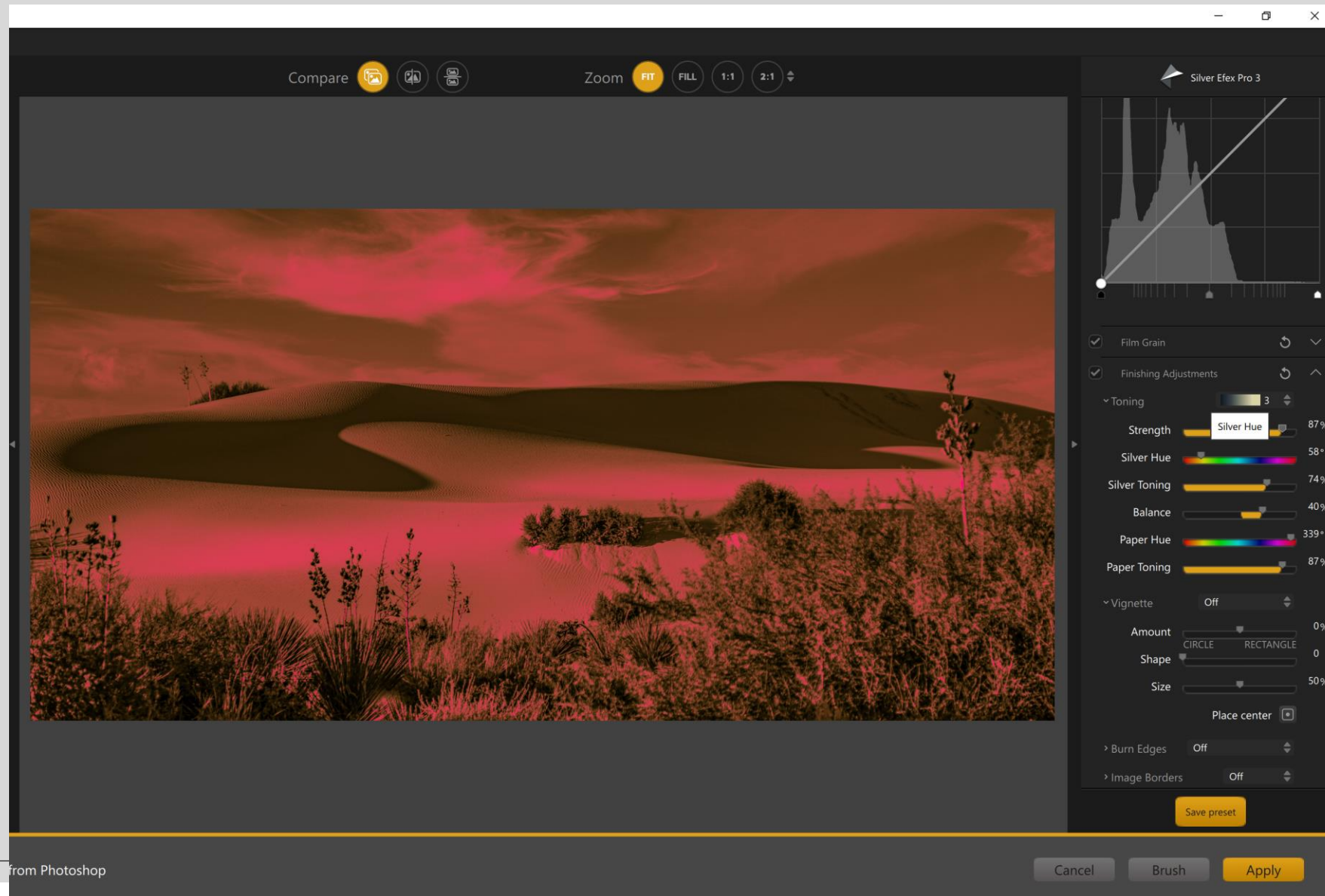
Split Toning to create a blend of shadows and highlights using different colors



Split tone is created by toning the silver and then also toning the paper. In reality you are toning the shadows differently than the highlights. In LR you will split tone as shadow and highlight.

In Silver Efex you see a whole set of sliders for split toning. Here I am toning the silver with yellow and the paper with a deep red. Each has its own strength.




Pushing the intensity to show the toning



Split tone with a balancing of the tones

Silver Efex Pro 3

File Edit Help

Compare   

Zoom **FIT** FILL 1:1 2:1

Presets 64 ^

	64	25th Anniversary	10
All	64	25th Anniversary	10
Classic	15	En Vogue	16
Modern	11	Vintage	12

Filter by:

★ Favorites ▾ Recently used

018 Full Spectrum Inverse

019 Fine Art Process

020 Fine Art (high key, framed)

Custom 6 ▾

Imported 0 ▾

History ▾

Silver Efex Pro 3

018 Full Spectrum Inverse

019 Fine Art Process

020 Fine Art (high key, framed)

Strength 55%

Silver Hue 49°

Silver Toning 55%

Balance -40%

Paper Hue 359°

Paper Toning 50%

Vignette Off

Amount 0%

Shape CIRCLE RECTANGLE 0

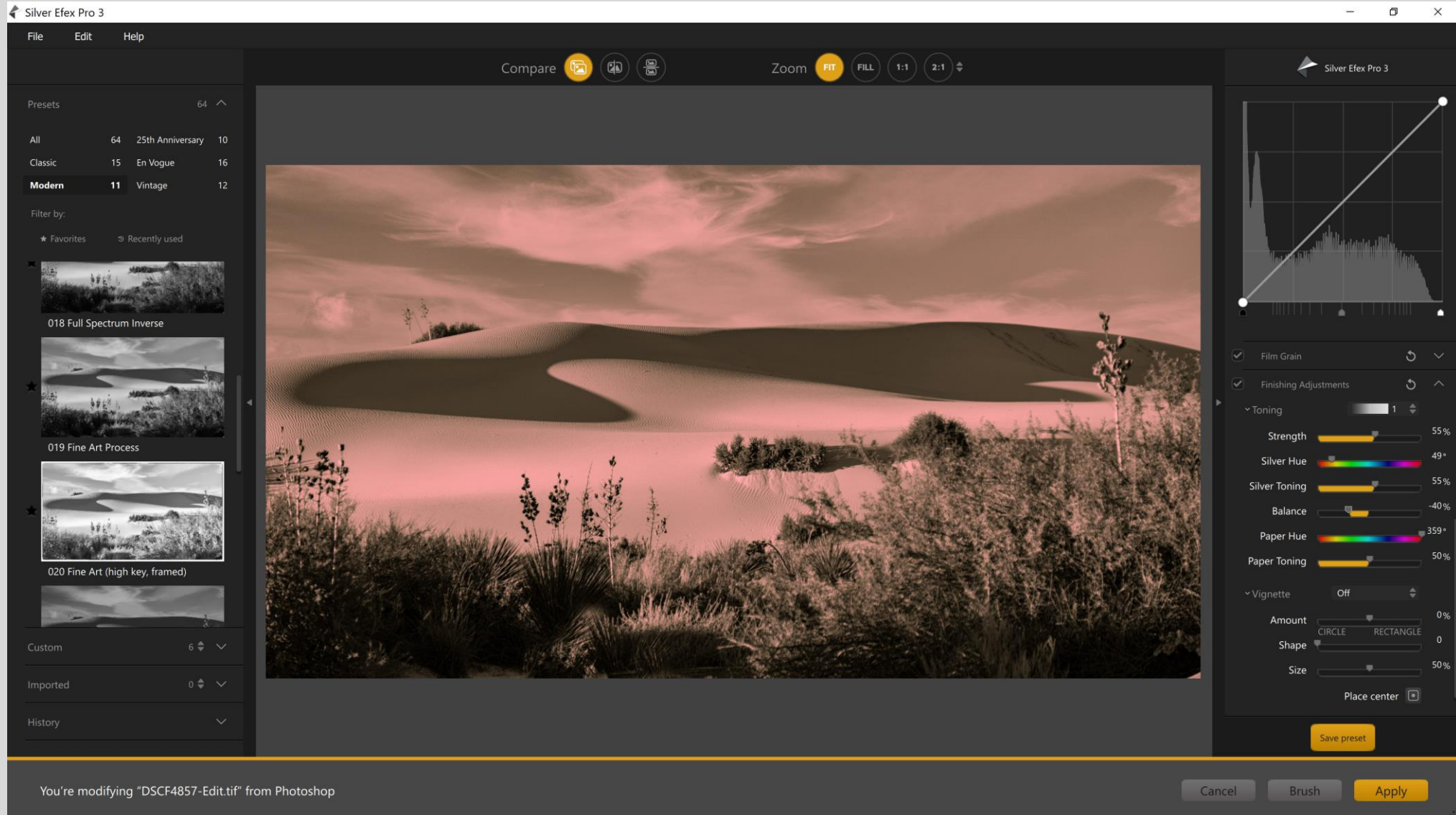
Size 50%

Place center

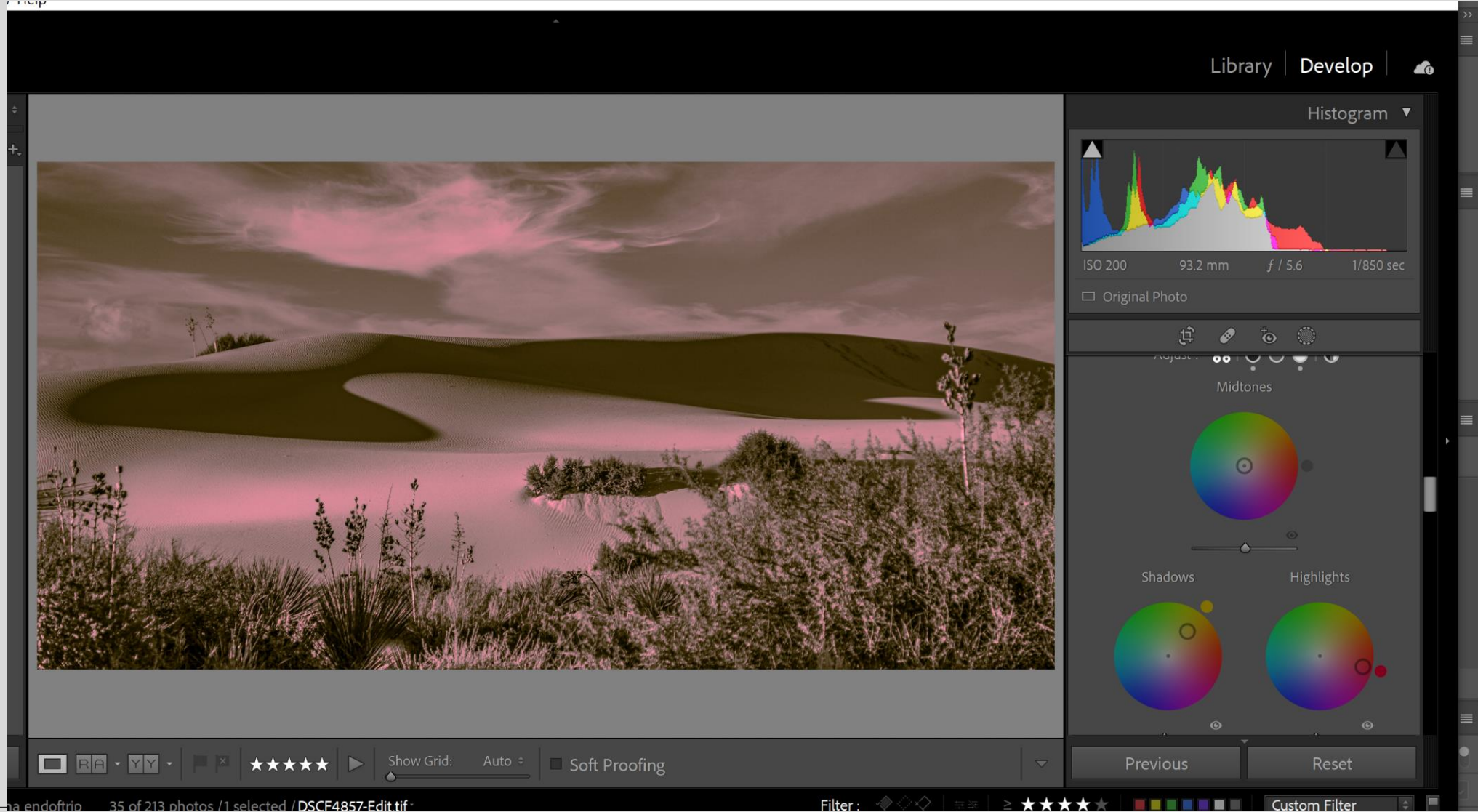
Save preset

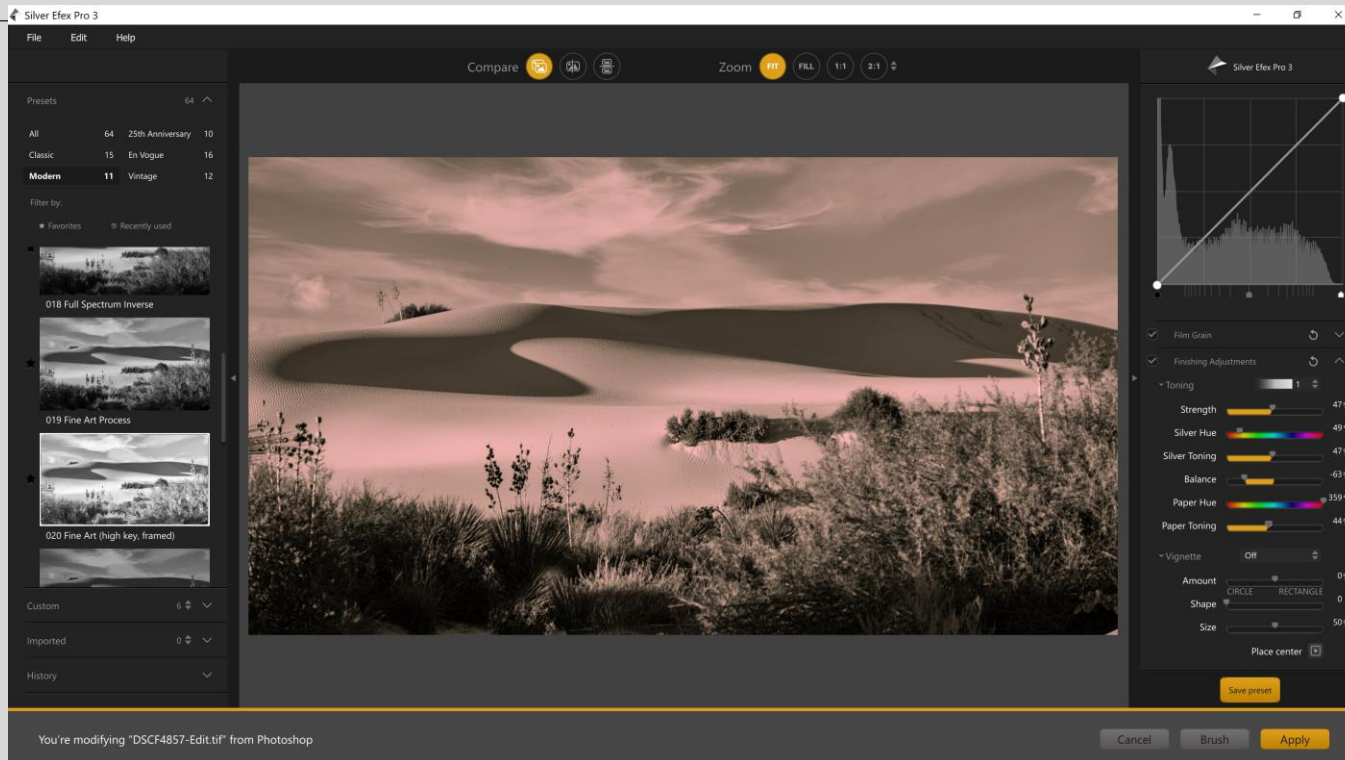
You're modifying "DSCF4857-Edit.tif" from Photoshop

Cancel Brush Apply

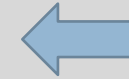


Split tone in LR same colors





Silver Efex



Comparison-same image
same color of toning (as close
as possible)

◦ Lightroom



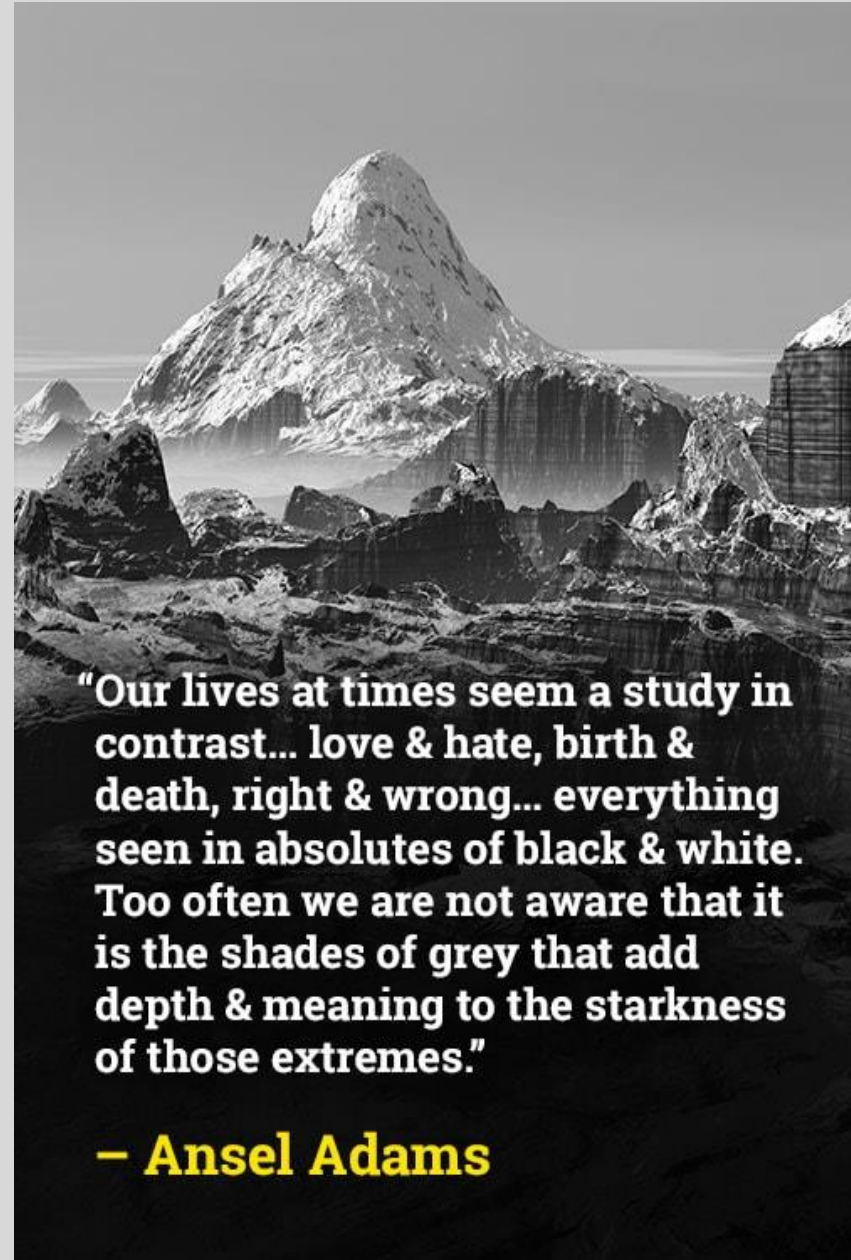
White Sands, New Mexico-B&W



Thanks for your time!

A final thought from the
best known of B&W
photographers:

Time
For
Questions?



"Our lives at times seem a study in contrast... love & hate, birth & death, right & wrong... everything seen in absolutes of black & white. Too often we are not aware that it is the shades of grey that add depth & meaning to the starkness of those extremes."

– Ansel Adams