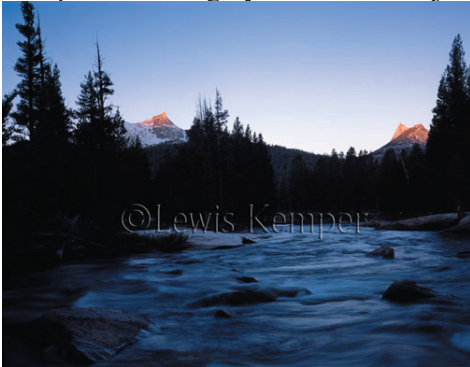


## Lighten A Dark Area

I shot this image in Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite National Park with my 4 x 5 view camera. I used a two stop graduated neutral density filter on the image to hold the exposure on the sky area. But unfortunately there was such a big difference in the brightness range of the highlights and shadows the trees blocked up.

1. Open the image you want to adjust.



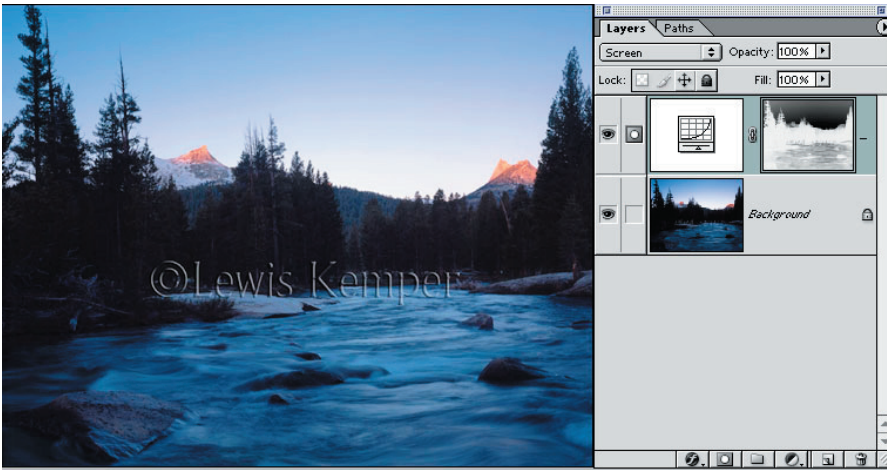
2. Next hold the CMD/CNTRL + OPT/ALT + the Tilde (~) (left of number 1).

3. Invert the selection – we do this because we want to effect the dark areas not the light areas! You can invert the selection through the menu as shown or the keyboard shortcut SHIFT + CMD/CNTRL + I.

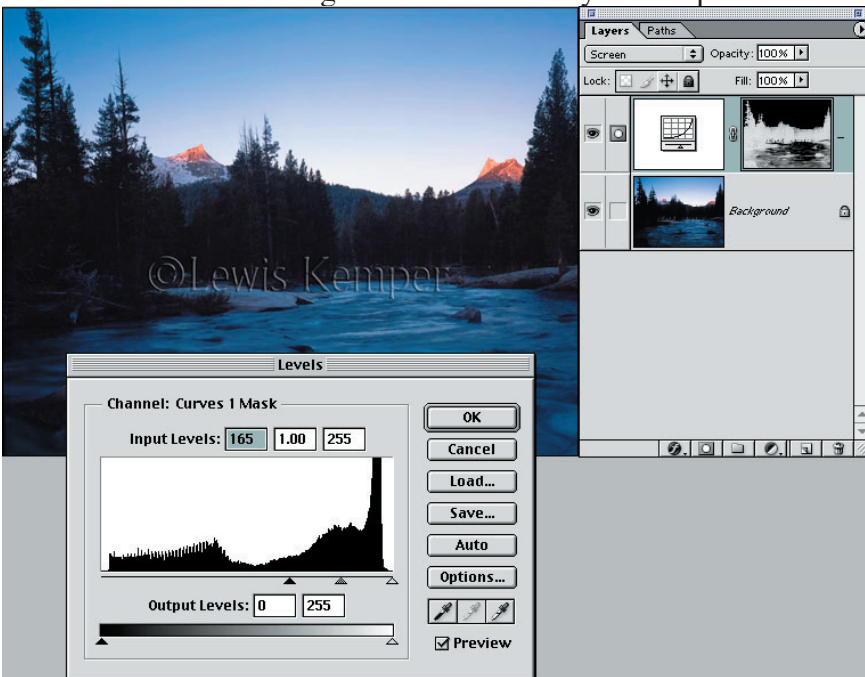


4. Create an empty Adjustment Layer.

5. Set the Blend Mode of the adjustment layer to **Screen**. Notice the adjustment layer has a mask automatically loaded based on the selection. Since the mask is not pure black and white there will be changes to areas of gray.



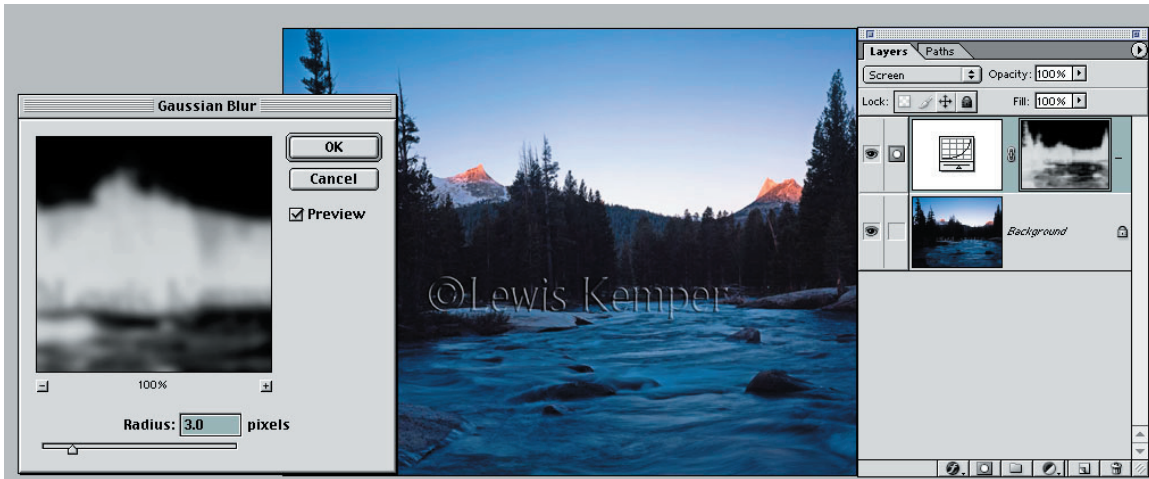
6. Optional step – Since the negative will become our mask and with all masks the simple rule is “White Shows, Black Hides” we can make the sky of our mask a solid black to keep the sky of the original image unchanged. To do this go to Image>Adjustments>Levels and move the left triangle to the right while the adjustment layer is the active layer. Watch the image on the mask and stop when the sky is a solid black on the mask. This will lighten the shadows by one stop.



Lightening shadows by one stop.

If you want to fine tune the image you can select a soft brush and paint with white on the adjustment layer to lighten any areas or paint with black to darken any areas. You can just paint with Black and White on the mask instead of doing step 5 but you will get a better mask by doing that step.

7. To make the image sharper run a 3 pixel Gaussian Blur on the mask.



If you are darkening a light area you do the same thing except don't invert the selection and set the Blend mode to Multiply.