

REPORT ON THE WORLD'S FASTEST FILM



ASA 1600



ASA 3200



ASA 4800



ASA 6400



ASA 12,800

*Kodak's Royal-X Pan
is rated at ASA 1600,
produces usable results at ASA 8000*

For nearly a year, ever since shortly before the 1956 political conventions, along with the nation's leading news photographers and photo editors we have been testing an exciting new Kodak sheet film mysteriously labeled "SO 1177," under a pledge not to reveal its existence in print until after its scheduled debut at the Washington IPEX trade show in March.

Now the wraps are off, and SO 1177 has been revealed as Kodak Royal-X Pan sheet film. An ASA speed index of 650 has been announced, as was foreshadowed by the statement in the preliminary data sheet that Royal-X Pan is "two-to-four times faster than Kodak Royal Pan, depending upon the time of development."

Royal-X Pan is, without a doubt, the world's fastest film. It is capable of producing full-bodied 4x5 negatives under the dimmest imaginable existing-light conditions with effective film-speed ratings as high as 4,000 (for ASA calibrated meters). With more moderate development it produces excellent gradation and contrast, and a surprising abundance of shadow detail, when exposed at 2,000. With forcing, Royal-X Pan has also produced highly creditable results with effective speed indexes in the improbable neighborhood of 8,000 to 12,000!

The two most important limiting factors in achieving high effective emulsion speeds are excessive grain and contrast. Royal-X Pan is not a fine-grain film. Neither is it outstanding in its resistance to excessive contrast. It is, however, a large-

Times Square night scene, left, was photographed by Bob Schwalberg with a 190-mm lens on his Super-D Graflex, rating Royal-X Pan at the equivalent of ASA 4000. Exposure: 1/100 second at f/5.6. Test shots below demonstrate film's performance and wide latitude over a range of exposures. All were developed for 12 minutes in DK60 A at 68 F.

format sheet film. And while 35-mm and 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 negatives are commonly enlarged from approximately 5 to 20 diameters (linear) a 4x5 sheet-film negative is seldom blown up more than 2 to 5 times. In vulgar parlance this means that we can get away with murder. And this is just about what we've been doing.

All of the better-known press-type developers were tested with Royal-X Pan, along with a number of special brews, but the outstanding successes were rolled up by that old favorite, DK-60a, which appears to understand this film's requirements best. Developing times running from about 8 to 18 minutes at 70 F with 10 to 15 seconds of agitation per minute pulled in exposures from 2,000 to 8,000. With the increase in developing time comes a gradual blanketing of fog, but even at 18 minutes we do not consider this at all harmful, and in so far as the fog tends to lower over-all contrast by contributing significantly more to the shadow areas than to the highlights, it may even be said to be helpful. Exposure and development data are rather harder to come by with a tolerant 4x5 negative than is the case with 35-mm negatives, but the following table will probably prove helpful for your first steps with Royal-X Pan:

Speed Index (ASA calibration)	Approximate times in DK-60a with intermittent agitation at 70 F
1600 — 2400	8 to 12 min
3200 — 4800	12 to 15 min
6400 — 8000	15 to 18 min

Ratings lower than 1600 are not listed for two reasons—they don't appear to offer any material improvement in quality, (Continued on page 125)

THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS MADE AT ASA 4,000!



Report on Royal-X Pan

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and are generally inferior to the results obtained when such films as Royal Pan and Ilford HPS sheet film are used at indexes from 500 to 1000.

Two precautions: Royal-X Pan should be restricted to fairly fresh developer solutions as partially exhausted soups produce dichroic fog. This can usually be wiped off while the film is in the hypo, but may not be noticed in time. The second is the need for about twice the normal fixing time usually given for high-speed films which is a result of the film's very thick, silver-laden emulsion. An acetic-acid stop bath is recommended, and this is one case in which this writer will go along with this advice.

Green safelight inspection is safe after the film has been in DK-60a for about 7 minutes, except in the case of extreme underexposures, in which event it's wise to wait till about 10 minutes have elapsed. The film has a peculiar milky look under the #3 Wratten safelight, which takes getting used to.

That's about all we've got to say. Now go find yourself some real dark subject matter, and no fair using more than $f/5.6$!

—Bob Schwalberg