



Venice Godfather, Jesse Martinez, frontside grind

“When I was just 15 years old, Warren Bolster (RIP), the editor of the original SKATEBOARDER MAGAZINE, met me for the first time at the grand opening of the Reseda Skatercross skatepark. After Warren’s initial shock that I was so young, he asked me if I’d like some film and put three gold and red boxes of Kodachrome 64 in my hands, 36 exposures each. Having had only two photos published at the time, I thought I had arrived. The Godfather of skateboard photography wanted to give me film; that sure as hell gave me a lot of confidence. I got a full-page color shot from that day published in the next issue’s Focus section.

Kodachrome was *the* film. If you were serious about being published, there was no other choice. Kodachrome is a slide (transparency) film, positive image. The most realistic, not over-saturated color, ‘warm’ like no other, with a grain that was the sharpest of its day in all its different speeds: 25, 64 and (eventually) 200. The lower the number, the finer the grain, which even the highest megapixel camera of today still cannot match. All my best and most classic color images were shot on Kodachrome. You can examine the film from more than 30 years ago, and it’s as crisp and color-accurate as the day I got it back from the Kodak lab (the only place that could develop this incredibly toxic recipe) in one of those bright yellow boxes. Cardboard-mounted individual frames of film—slides—stacked in two rows side by side, dated and numbered. When I was able to stretch a roll to a 37th image, it was almost always something special.

December 30, 2010, was the last day this film was ever processed. It hadn’t been manufactured for several years, so on that last day of processing, most of it had probably been saved on ice.



Alex Olson, frontside ollie

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So, what did I do with my last rolls? Almost a month after I shot them, my last two rolls of Kodachrome film finally came back from the last lab on the planet that still processed the stuff. I was really hoping to shoot Jay Adams with the last roll, since he was the subject of my first published photo here in the pages of SKATEBOARDER, but parole difficulties had him back in Hawaii. I hit up another old friend and favorite subject, Tony Alva, who's always down to skate a secluded backyard pool, but he was nursing a serious foot injury, so he couldn't be on it either. So, I just headed down to the Venice skatepark and made some calls on the way. My first call was to one of my old best friends, Steve Olson, to see if he wanted to come down with his now famous son who's following in his footsteps. They were up for it. I ended up getting some cool stuff that day of the old man and even a good shot of the kid after harassing him about a sticker he had on the bottom of his board of a company that stole from me. I wouldn't even point the camera in his direction until he removed the sticker. The kid didn't take me seriously until an hour later, so in the end we were both lucky I still had the last few frames I could shoot of him, including my very last one you see printed here, shot number 37 on a stretched roll of 36. I also got some great shots of the locals, including the Godfather of the Venice skatepark, Jesse Martinez.

Anyway the era is gone, done, born in 1935, now finished. Only the old images remain, no more to be created with this incredible palate of color and grain. On this very film, cherished and inspiring moments will last longer than our own lives. Whether it's ever scanned or not, digitized or not, these images live.”

—GLEN E. FRIEDMAN