Need a liquid logotype? Then try this Photoshop technique to create wet words. First you pick a script typeface design. Then you add some drips and drops around it. Use the Plaster filter to create a soft rounded effect on the type. Try some of the variations for different wet effects. Finally, you add the color and ...

...¸voilà !

Luanne Seymour Cohen, Creative Director at Adobe Systems, gets wet and wild with the Plaster filter in Adobe® Photoshop® 4.0.
**ADVANCED**

WET PAINT TYPE

1. Create a new file. Select the Channels palette and create a new channel named *mask*. We are going to create black and white artwork in the channels, instead of layers, to give ourselves more flexibility with coloring and highlighting the final art.
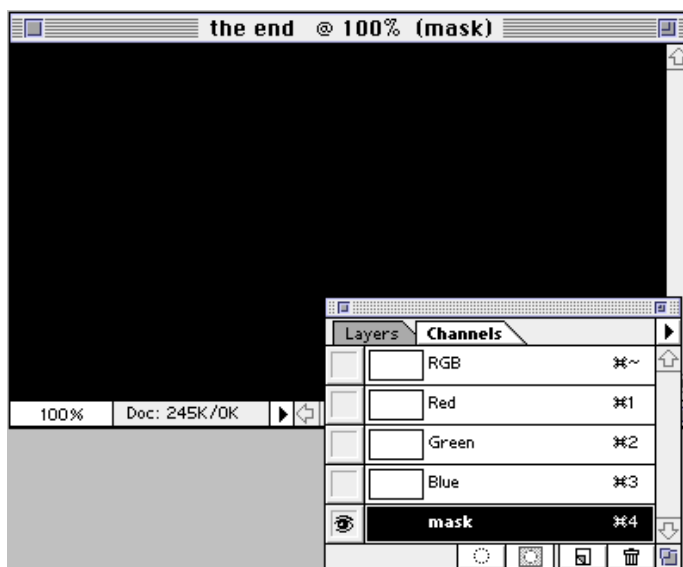
Shortcuts
Throughout this document, "Command/ Ctrl" means Command on the Macintosh and Ctrl on Windows, "Option/Alt" means Option on the Macintosh and Alt on Windows.

2. Be sure that your foreground color is set to white and the *mask* channel is selected. Use the type tool to create your type. Position the type before you deselect it. Type created in channels is only a selection, not a separate layer that can be edited and moved later.
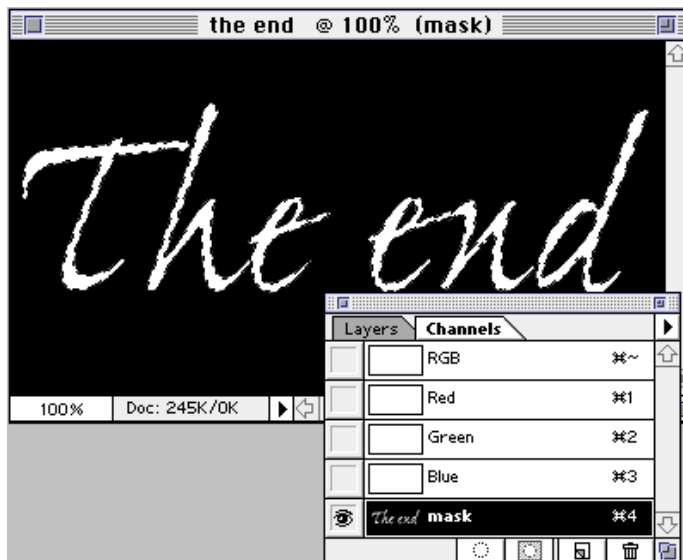

Liquid typefaces
The best typefaces to use for this technique are script or calli-graphic. If you want a slightly eroded look, choose a face with more pronounced thicks and thins. The typeface used in this illustration is Ex Ponto.

3. Use a paintbrush to add a few white drips and drops around the type. They won't look much like drips at this point, but they will turn into small "blobs of paint" later. We've now created the mask that we will use to bring crisp, sharp edges back to our type after we use the plaster filter.
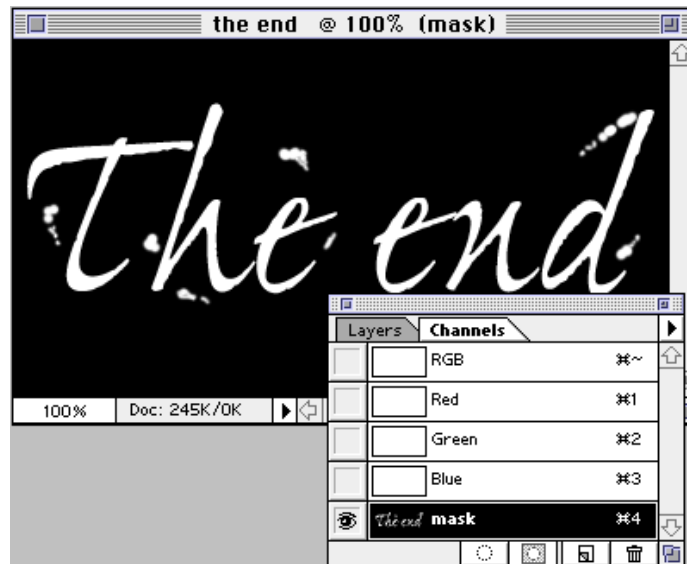
4. Create a duplicate of the *mask* channel. You can do this quickly by holding the Option/Alt key while dragging the *mask* channel icon down to the New Channel icon. Doing so brings up the dialog box to duplicate the channel. Name the duplicate *plaster type.*
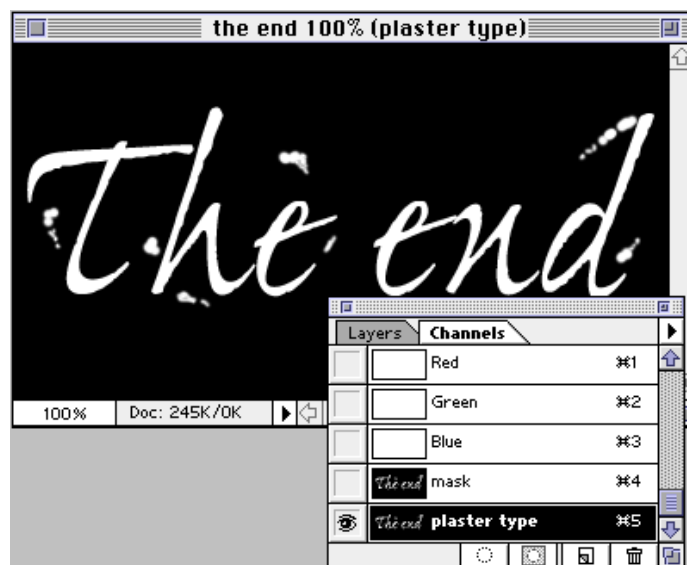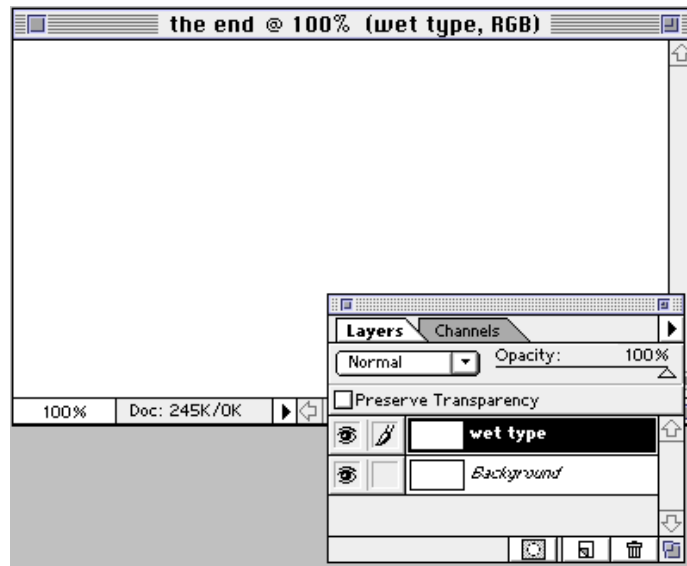
5. Select Filter > Sketch > Plaster. Choose the lighting position you want. Remember that since this is a channel, the image is in negative form. In this example, I want the final artwork to have highlights on the top. The Plaster filter puts the foreground color in the shadow areas and the background color in the highlight areas. Play around with the values on the sliders. Click OK when you are satisfied with the result.
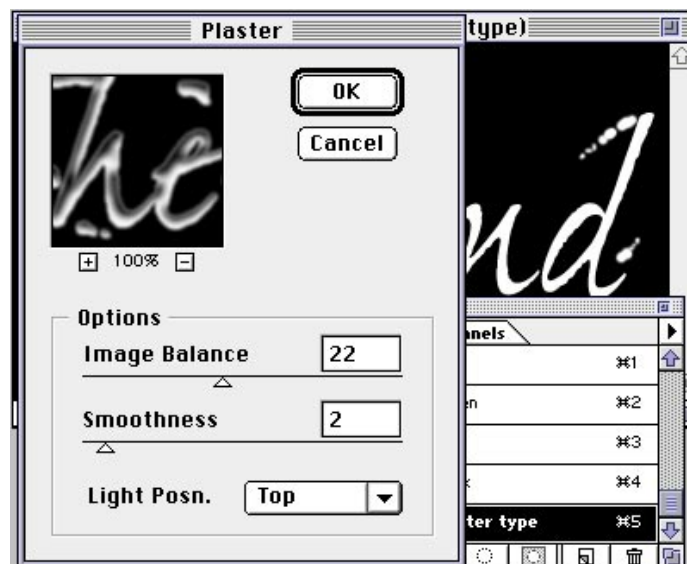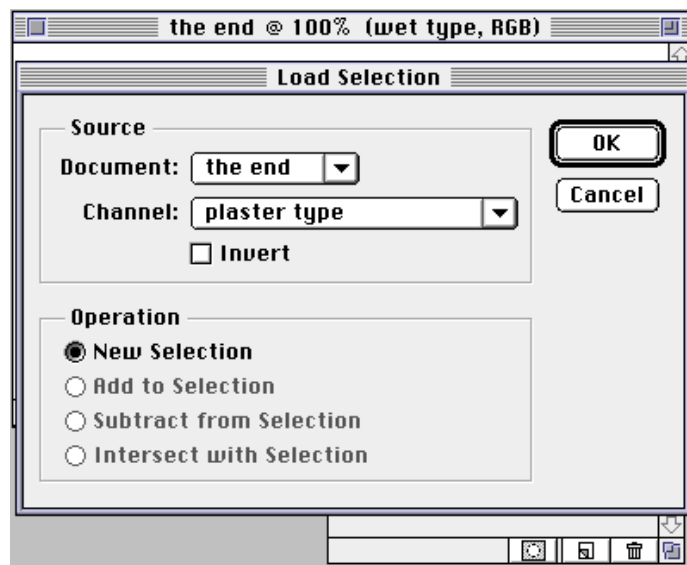
The Plaster filter
The Plaster filter uses the foreground color for the shadows and the background color for the highlights. It doesn't matter what color the image is to start with, the results will be created with the foreground and background colors. We won't get good results on layers with transparency, so we are doing this first part in a channel in order to create the type on a layer later.

6. Return to the Layers palette and click on the background layer to view it. Option/Alt-click on the new layer icon to create a new layer. Name it *wet type.*
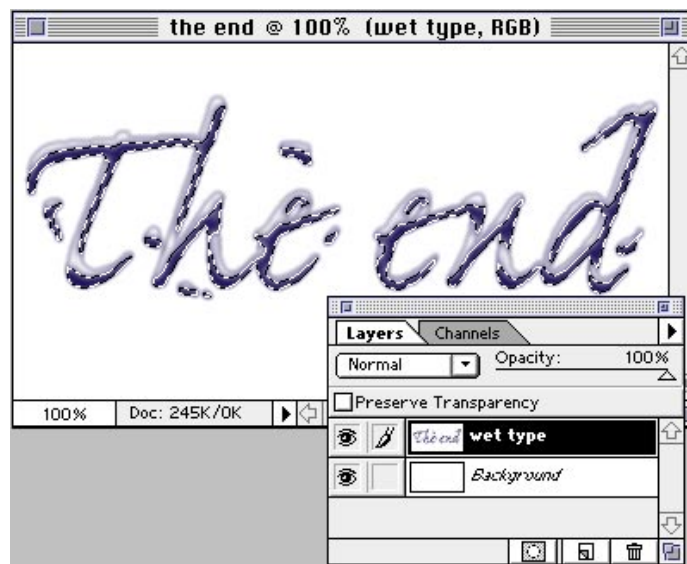
the end @ 100% (wet type, RGB)

Layers | Channels

Normal | Opacity: 100%

Preserve Transparency

wet type

Background

100% | Doc: 245K/0K

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7. With the *wet type* layer selected, load the *plaster type* channel as a selection. You can do this from the Channels palette or from the Select menu. Choose Select > Load Selection. Select *plaster type* as the Channel. Click OK.

the end @ 100% (wet type, RGB)

Load Selection

Source

Document: the end

Channel: plaster type

☐ Invert

Operation

◉ New Selection
○ Add to Selection
○ Subtract from Selection
○ Intersect with Selection

OK

Cancel

Selection shortcuts
If you want a quick way to load channels without using menus, try this. Separate the Layers palette from the Channels palette. When you are on a certain layer and you need to load a selection, hold the Command/Alt key and click on the channel name in the channel palette. The cursor will change to the selection cursor to remind you that it will now load the selection.

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8. Choose a foreground color for the type and fill the selection (Option/Alt+Delete/Backspace). I recommend darker colors for this step.

the end @ 100% (wet type, RGB)

Layers | Channels

Normal | Opacity: 100%

☐ Preserve Transparency

The end wet type

Background

100% | Doc: 245K/0K

Fill shortcuts
To fill with 100% of the foreground color, press Option/Alt+Delete/Backspace. To fill with 100% of the background color, press Ctrl+Option/Alt+Delete/Backspace.

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9. The Plaster filter softens and spreads the letter forms. This is fine for a plaster effect but for liquid, we need a crisper, cleaner edge. Use the magic wand (set to anti-aliased, 32 tolerance) to select the transparent background of the *wet type* layer. Choose Select > Similar to add any protected areas that you might have missed.
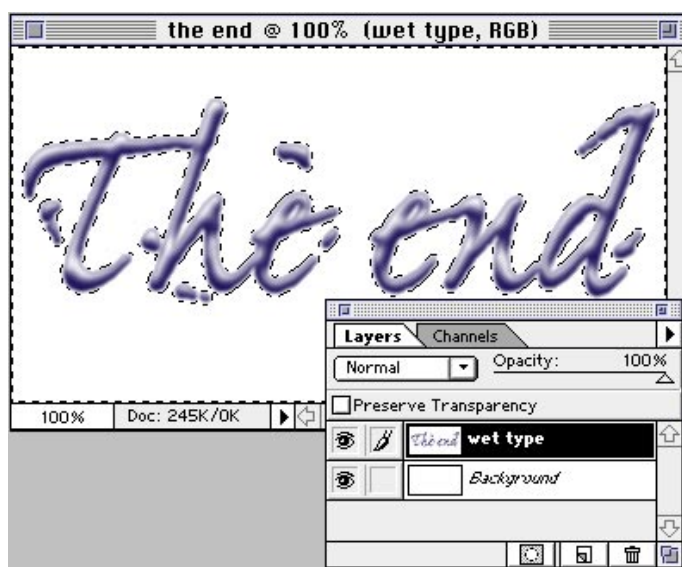
Select similar
Once you've created a selection, you can add to it automatically using the Select Similar command. Photoshop analyzes the colors of the pixels currently selected and proceeds to select all the other pixels in the image of those same values. In this example, we want all the white areas selected. Because the selection is anti-aliased, it also picked up the off-white areas along the edges of the letters.

10. To encompass a little more of the type's new bulgy shape, expand the selection. Choose Select > Modify > Expand. Expand the selection by 1 pixel. If your image is very high resolution, you might want to try 2. You'll have to experiment with this value on your own.
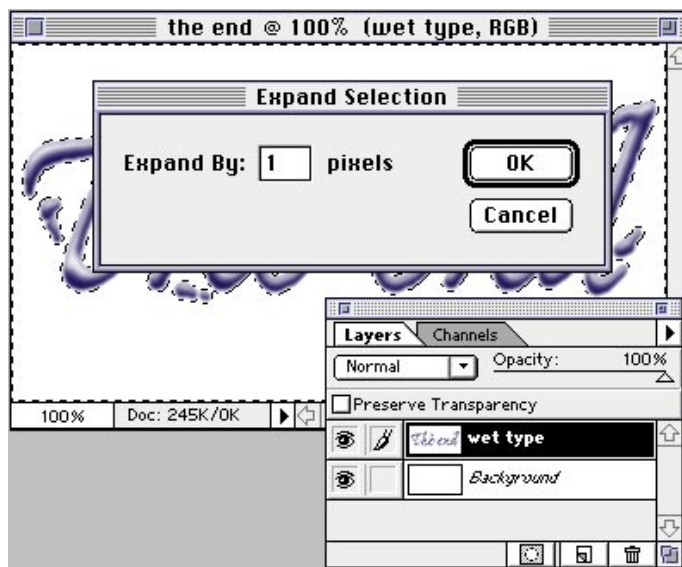
11. Invert the selection by choosing Select > Inverse (Command/Ctrl+Shift+I).
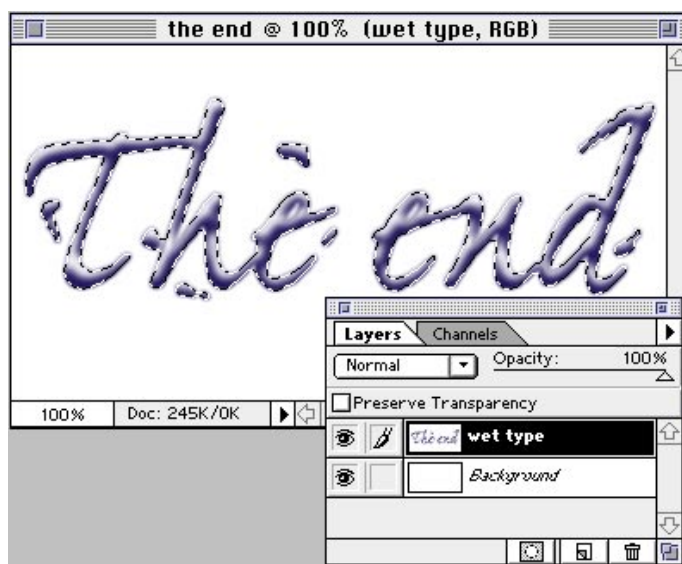
12. Next we will make a layer mask with only the selected areas showing through the mask. Click on the layer mask icon in the Layers palette, or choose Select > Save Selection and select *wet type Mask* as the channel. This automatically creates a layer mask with the selection. Basically, we are hiding the fuzzy edges with this layer mask.
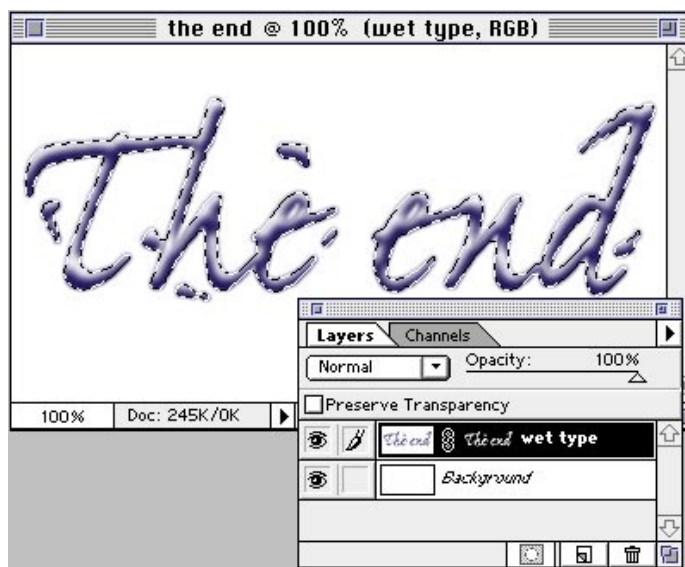
13. Deselect and evaluate the result. You may like it as is or you might want to increase the contrast and sharpen up the smooth gradations. If so, use the Unsharp Mask filter. See Variation 1 for this effect.

Variation 1: You can increase the contrast and make it look "glossier" by using the Unsharp Mask filter. In this example I used the following values:
Amount: 440%
Radius: 0.6 pixels
Threshold: 8 levels

Unsharp mask
Unsharp mask is a traditional film compositing technique used to sharpen edges in an image. The Radius value determines the number of pixels surrounding the edges' pixels that will be sharpened. Increasing the Threshold value allows you to protect some areas of your image from the noise introduced by sharpening. Usually the threshold is increased for skin tones.
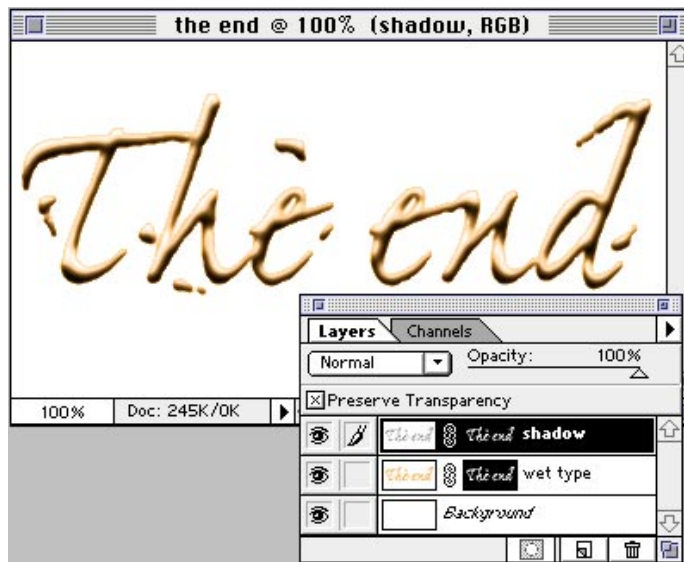
Wet Paint Type

Variation 2: For a puddling paint effect, try the following settings in step 5. The top image was created with Image Balance set at 8 and Smoothness at 12. If you want your letters to look sparsely painted as shown in the lower image, try using 40 for Image Balance and 4 for Smoothness.

Variation 3: To add a shadow of a different color, you'll need to make a copy of the *plaster type* channel. Name the new channel *shadow*. Open the Levels dialog (Command/Ctrl+L) and move the black input slider to the right. The light pixels remaining in the preview are the areas where the shadow will appear in your image. Experiment with the values depending on how heavy or light you want the shadow. In this example, we used Input Levels of 187, 1.00, 255.
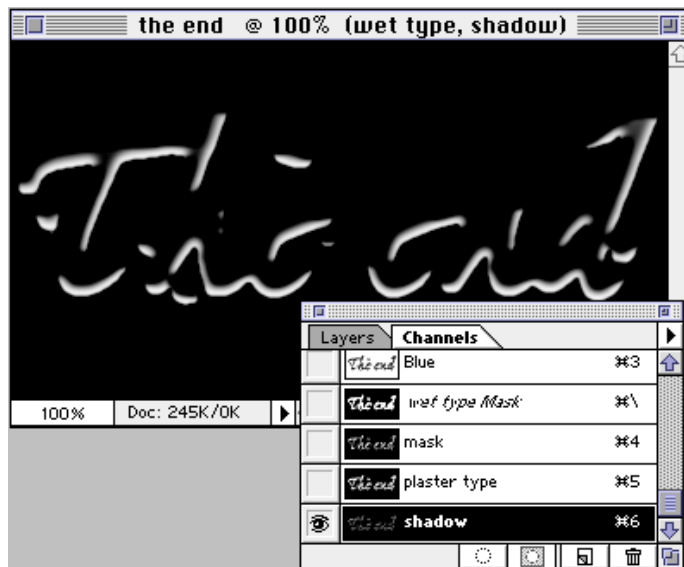
Variation 3 cont'd.: Repeat steps 6 through 13, but name the new layer *shadow*. If you want to experiment with colors, turn on the Preserve Transparency option so you can simply fill the layer with a new color.