

Irvin Simon's background technology featured in . . . .

# The New York Times

## No Boo-boos? Only in School Pictures

Oliver Tracy showed up for his first-grade portrait with a crisp white shirt tucked into navy slacks, a striped tie slightly too long for his tiny frame, and not a lock of his sun-streaked blond hair out of place.

But just above Oliver's right cheek was a scab; he had tumbled while playing tag. His father, Jahn Tracy, had e-mailed the school, the Bay Ridge Preparatory School in Brooklyn, to see if Oliver could take the photo on another day, after the cut healed.



When his school picture was taken, Oliver Tracy, a Brooklyn first grader, had a scab near his eye, from a tumble while he was playing tag. In his school photo, retouching made Oliver's scab disappear.

Mr. Tracy need not have worried. When the big envelope of photos arrived, Oliver's blemish was nowhere in sight.

The practice of altering photos, long a standard in the world of glossy magazines and fashion shoots, has trickled down to the wholesome domain of the school portrait. Parents who once had only to choose how many wallet-size and 5-by-7 copies they wanted are now being offered options like erasing scars, moles, acne and braces, whitening teeth or turning a bad hair day into a good one.



Brigitte Heidel of **Irvin Simon Photographers** taking Oliver Tracy's picture at Bay Ridge Preparatory School in Brooklyn, with **Steve Miller**, co-president of the firm.

School photography companies around the country have begun to offer the service on a widespread basis over the past half-dozen years, in response to parents' requests and to developments in technology that made fixing the haircut a 5-year-old gave herself, or popping a tooth into a jack-o'-lantern smile, easy and inexpensive. And every year, the companies say, the number of requests grows.

At the time of its founding in 1946, **Irvin Simon Photographers**, which took Oliver's photograph, employed artisans who could paint out pimples on negatives with special inks, or even out skin tone with a faint film of paint sprayed onto prints themselves. In those days, the services were available by special request, and the process was painstaking and expensive, said **Steve Miller**, co-president.

Six years ago, **Irvin Simon Photographers** upgraded to digital technology. Now, for about \$7, it routinely cleans up pimples, rubs out grass stains or neatens hair, among other touch-ups. Mr. Miller said that Irvin Simon would [retouch] whatever parents wanted, but he added, "We like to think that all the kids are cute already."



**Irvin Simon Photographers** took the pictures for the lower school at Bay Ridge Prep. More and more parents now choose to have their children's photos retouched.

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