## THE MOMENT IT CLICKS Photography secrets from one of the world's top shooters

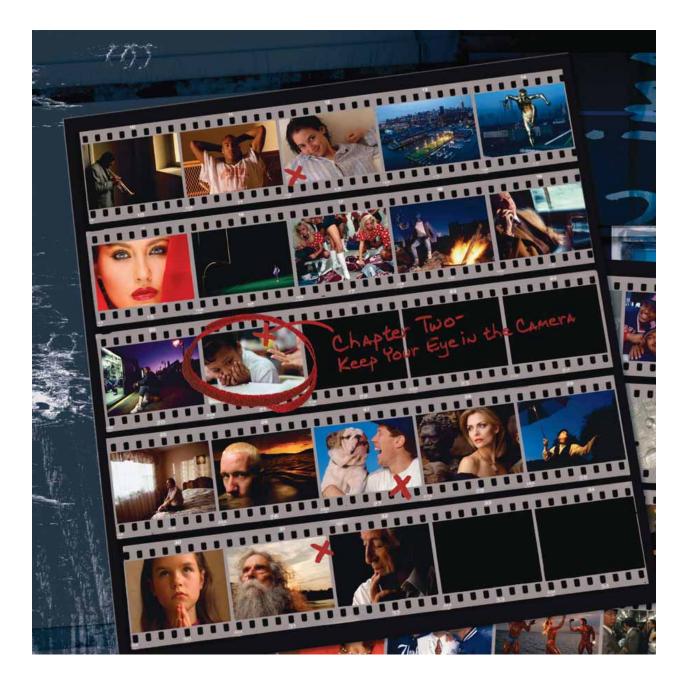


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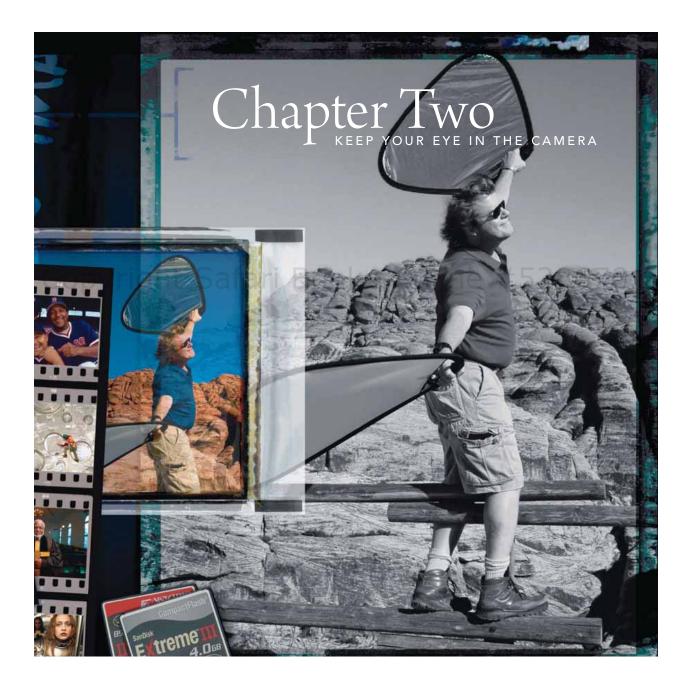
Chapter Two. Keep Your Eye in the Camera The Moment It Clicks: Photography Secrets from One of the World's Top Shooters By Joe McNally - Legendary Magazine Photographer ISBN: 9780321552907 Publisher: New Riders

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46 The Moment It Clicks Wynton Marsalis

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Respect, and the lack thereof, is always a hot topic on the photog threads. Apparently, we think of ourselves as a bunch of Rodney Dangerfields with motor drives.

Well, who's to blame for that one? Can you really expect red carpet treatment showing up in cutoffs, four-day stubble, and a t-shirt that poses the question, "Did You Get Yours Today?"

I got sent to New Orleans to shoot a pre-Super Bowl story for Sports Illustrated. Great job, and it just happened to coincide with the death of the former Mayor, Dutch Morial. There's nothing like dyin' in New Orleans. They have a party for you.

So I hit the street to shoot the jazz procession heading for St. Louis Cathedral. I was in dress pants, suit jacket, white shirt, and a killer tie. I was lookin' good, if I do say so myself. (Despite the festive nature of the funeral, it was still a funeral.)

I made my way to the balcony in the church, to make general views. There was a dignified gentleman next to me holding a trumpet. He turned and looked at me. "Man, that's a bad tie," he said. "I'd like to take your picture," I replied.

And the great jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis came over to the window for a quick portrait.

A professor I had in college used to tell me that if someone won't listen to what you have to say because you're not wearing a tie, then put on a tie, 'cause what you have to say is more important than not wearing a tie. He was right.

"A professor I had in college used to tell me that if someone won't listen to what you have to say because you're not wearing a tie, then put on a tie, 'cause what you have to say is more important than not wearing a tie."



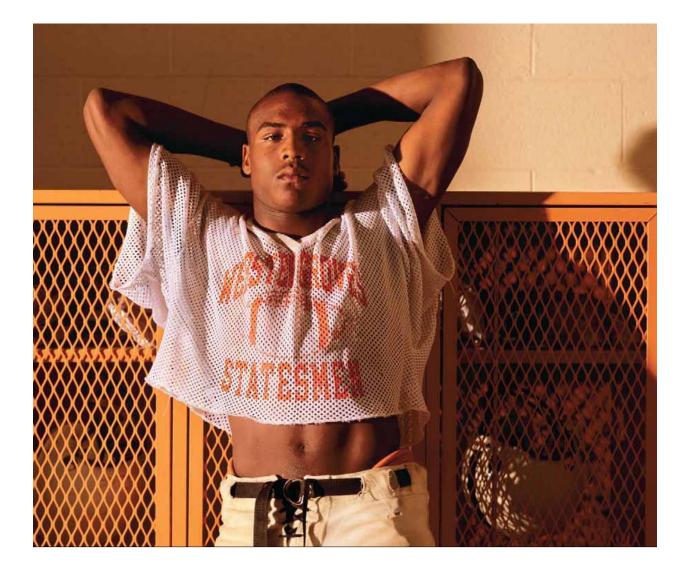
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THE LIGHT IN THE DOORWAY	
"Your light co	uld become unpredictable.
where your l	uld become unpredictable. d thing. Predictable is not ighting wants to be."
	We go through doorways all the time. So does light. So put a light out there, in the hallway. Fly it through the door. See what happens. You just might be done.
	The doorway actually frames the light, and gives it shape and edge. Might even give it some color, depending on the paint job in the hallway. If there is variation to the paint, or a shine to it, or the door itself is reflective, or has a pane of glass, your light, when bouncing around through all this stuff, could becomeunpredictable. That's a good thing. Predictable is not where your lighting wants to be.
	And, if you by chance have a 3x6' Lastolite panel, <sup>1</sup> one of those puppies just about fills a doorway. Instant softbox!
	No Lastolite panel? A bed sheet and some gaffer tape will do.
	This shot has no diffusion. I put a battery-operated strobe head outside the locker room, which had kind of a wide door opening that led out to the practice field. The light is hitting a couple of things, like a bank of lockers, which is causing the shadow behind the player's head—a happy accident (I love those!)—that produces the sharp line between that shadow and the highlight on the wall. (This is the opposite of the highlight/shadow play on Bobby's face, which is another happy accident I thought about later, but if I told you I was going for that or was even aware of it on location, I would be lying.) The rest of the light flies around the yellow walls of the locker room and, guess what? It gets warm! Light picks up the color of what it hits.
	Unpredictability. Accidents. Not good when you're engaging in, say, brain surgery, but when lightingwonderful!
<sup>1</sup> Lastolite Panel: A kit that has both	n diffusion and reflective material that fits onto a rigid, collapsible frame. Comes in 3x3', 3x6', and 6x6'

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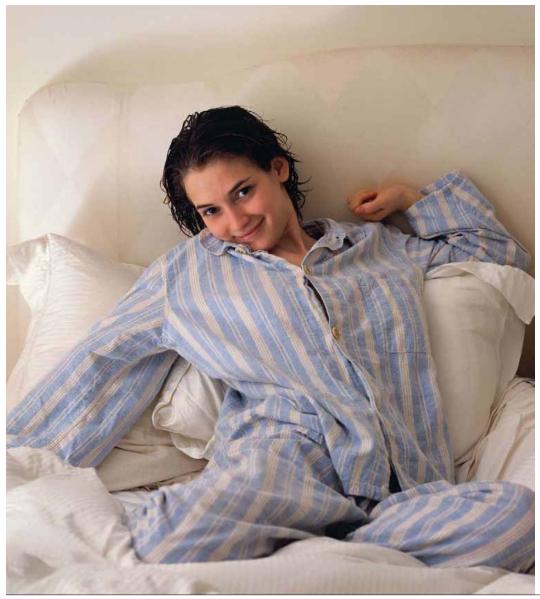
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	OMETHING DIFFERENT
TRY SU	
	"Try it, you might like it. You wever know."
	Winona Ryder had a loft bed and high ceilings in her NYC apartment. The actual bedroom area was super-tight, up a small staircase, big enough for the bed, her, and me. The ceiling was out of bounds for a bounce—too high.
	So, where ya gonna put the light? There was a room directly beneath the loft, and a small channel, sort of in the shape of a strip light, <sup>1</sup> where light from that room could filter upwards to the bed chamber.
	How to Get This Type of Shot: So I put a light downstairs and fired it into the wall by this little opening. Never tried a bounce light from the floor below my subject, but you never know. Turns out light skittered up through the opening, hit the wall by the bed, and presto, we were lit.
	It wasn't a tour de force of lighting, but it was good enough. When you've got Winona Ryder in her pajamas, in her bed, how much further do you need to go?
	When I'm figuring out where to put the light in a situation like this, in my head I'm channeling my grandmother trying to get me to eat Brussels sprouts or something. You know, "Try it, you might like it. You never know."
1.61	p Light: A strip light is simply a long, skinny softbox. It's great for adding an edge light around the body of an athlete.

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Winona Ryder

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No matter how many megapixels you've got inside that fancy machine you hold in your hands (and the megapixel wars are overrated), they aren't worth beans if you don't hold your camera steady. This needs to be worked at and practiced.

I'm right-handed, but left-eyed. Go figure. After years of straining to focus through lenses, my left eye is so much stronger than the right, I'm amazed I just don't walk around in a circle all day long. But, being left-eyed is an advantage when holding your camera at slow shutter speeds. Years ago, Keith Torrie, a terrific *Daily News* shooter with a similar eye/hand change-up, pulled me aside and showed me how he held a motor-driven camera. Keith was known around the shop as one of the few guys who always made a good neg. That meant he knew what he was doing.

He showed me how he threw his left shoulder forward and stuffed the base of the motor drive where his chest and shoulder met. There are no lungs up there, no heartbeat, just muscle and bone. Work it properly and you might as well have a third leg.

Nowadays, too, you don't have to worry about changing f-stops and focusing constantly with your left hand. So take that flipper and slap it over the outside of your main support—your right hand. Elbows into your gut, exhale, and you can shoot hand-held at speeds you never thought were possible.

How to Get This Type of Shot: This is just a straight available light photo taken from a helicopter, but the key to getting a shot like this is to be able to hold the camera steady while using slow shutter speeds like 1/30 to 1/10 of a second. This was taken with a 17–55mm Nikon lens, at 1/20 of a second, at f/2.8.

"No matter how many megapixels you've got inside that fancy machine you hold in your hands, they aren't worth beans if you don't hold your camera steady."



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	GET A PERMIT
	"This is business as usual on
	the Lower East Side of New York."
	Poppo and the GoGo Boys were a big deal in the performance art scene down in
	the alphabet streets of Manhattan. He had amazing control, turning his Day-Glo body
	into all sorts of twisted sculpture.
	Problem was, a neighbor called it into the local precinct as a jumper in progress, and two very adrenalized NYC cops burst onto the roof. They were wired and they were
	pissed, having just sprinted up a six-story walkup.
	They ordered me off my ladder and started barking questions. How do you explain this
	away and not sound like you need a shrink or some jail time? I'm trying to calm the situation down, all the while eyeballing the rising sun and watching my picture disappear.
	They were having none of it until I produced my permit. Like most cities, there's a permit
	office in NYC for TV and still shoots. I was covered. So, though I was still nuts as far as they
	were concerned, I was legally nuts. They left, and I got my shot.
	How to Get This Type of Shot: Shot with one strobe. (If I hadn't used a strobe and had tried to use just the available light at sunrise, I'd have had to expose for the subject, so
	the background would have been totally washed out.) The key to doing this is to match
	the color of the light and the angle of the strobe to the rising sun (I added a gel to the strobe—a half-cut of CTO'). Basically, you take the light stand and put it up high, right
	in the path of the rising sun, so the strobe hits the subject at the same angle the sun
	would hit the subject. That way, you can mimic the feel of sunlight but it gives you
	control over the exposure of the scene. There's no umbrella, no softbox—just the raw light, just the way the sun would be.
	<sup>1</sup> CTO: Color Temperature Orange. It's an amber gel, available in various intensities, that pushes daylight towards the warm (tungsten)
	end of the color scale. A half-cut means you get half the warmth of the full gel.
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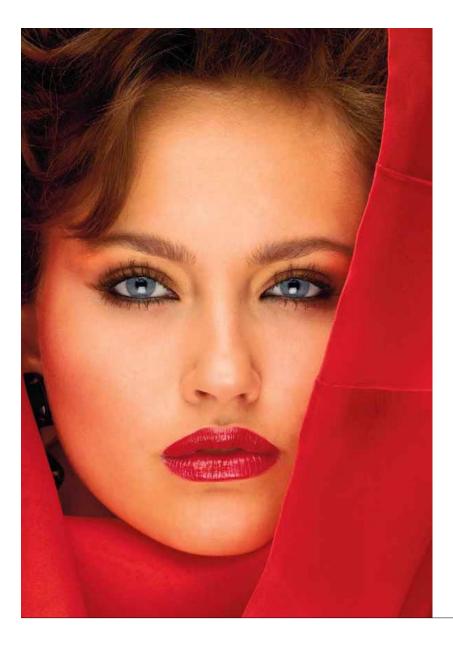
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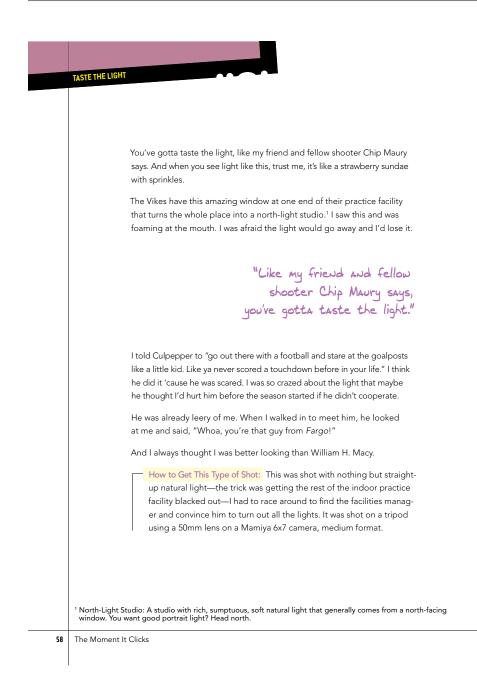
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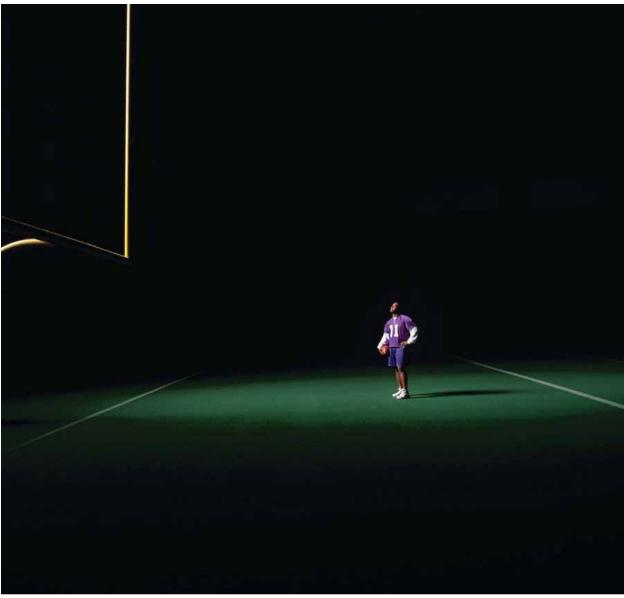


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Daunte Culpepper

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REMEMBER, YOU'RE NOT SPIDER-MAN

## "Sometimes, when you've got a camera in your hands, you can convince yourself you're Spider-Man."

Sometimes, when you've got a camera in your hands, you can convince yourself you're Spider-Man. I mean, Peter Parker's a newspaper shooter, right? Quick change of uniform and he's out there slinging webs and diving off buildings.

Or climbing rocks.

I was shooting a University of Alabama home football game at Bryant-Denny Stadium, which is like going to church with your cameras. I mean, these folks take football seriously.

The band and the cheerleaders were all lined up on the library steps doing a lively number, and I thought it would be cool to shoot them with a long lens from a higher vantage point. There's a ceremonial rock out in front of the library, some sacred stone that actually looks sort of like they swiped it from Stonehenge. It's about, oh, eight or nine feet high.

Perfect, I thought. I'll climb the rock and get my long lens view! An elderly couple was standing nearby, and I asked them to hold my cameras for me, and my shooting vest. They were sort of puzzled as to why a complete stranger would hand them three very expensive, motor-driven cameras and an article of clothing, but they were willing to go along. They looked trustworthy and not capable of running very fast.

I took a few steps back and started sprinting, Wham! I went from Spider-Man to Wile E. Coyote in a heartbeat. I mean, I just pancaked myself into the side of this rock. And not content with making a fool of myself just once, I tried it a second time.

Same result. Even worse, 'cause the very public humiliation of the first go caused me to run at it harder. I sort of slid down the face of the rock, just like in the cartoons

I looked over at the couple, who were staring at me with their heads tilted, like a pair of puzzled cats. I got to my feet, retrieved my gear, thanked them, and staggered off. Simple fill flash in the locker room was looking awfully good.

I'm sure those folks told everybody they saw that day about how "that photographer fella" did the damnedest thing...just ran into the rock-twice!

> How to Get This Type of Shot: In a shot like this, forget about

front-to-back true color. I mean, you can get close, but precise color control? Fugheddaboudit. You walk into a locker room like this, and you don't know if the fluorescence is warm white or cool white, or when they changed the bulbs last, or if they're GE or Sylvania. Then there's that tiny window off to the left, and then how about the tungsten bulbs in the makeup mirrors? Plus, you've got blond hair (lots of it), bunches of different skin tones, red shirts, and white boots.

Do you have time in a fluid situation like this to sort it out and walk around with a color meter and do some testing? That would be a no. You have to think and move fast. The action is frenetic, the pace is fast, plus every minute you're in there means your lenses are getting a thicker coat of hair spray.

Whaddaya do? Go for skin tone and let everything else go to hell in a handbasket. It's really all you can do. When I shot this, I went with the tried and true film solution of a full green conversion on the strobe, and 30 points of magenta on the lens. Now, I would highly recommend doing a preset white balance. To do this, find a white wall or carry a collapsible gray card (18% gray on one side, white on the other, collapses to a small circle and fits easily into your camera bag). Fill the frame with the white wall or the card. Shoot with either available light or flash. The camera will register the preset, and give you a good white balance for that particular mess of a room you are in.

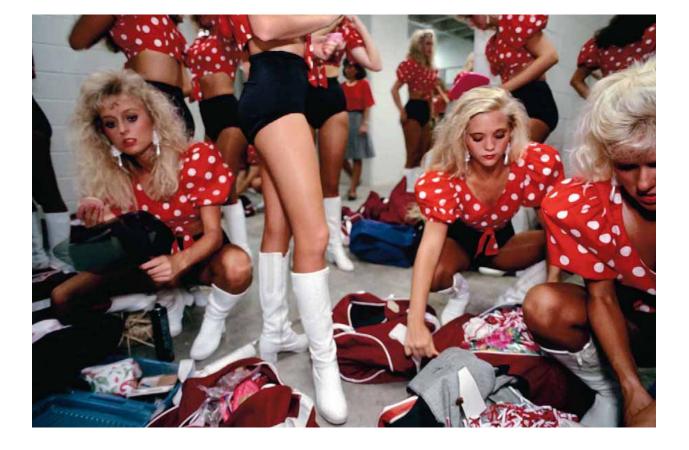
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Surprise me.	"This was guerrilla filmmaking.	
That's the best advice I ever got from a picture editor.	"This was guerrilla filmmaking. We got the lights ready, set the fire, and shot like mad."	
David Wojnarowicz, now deceased, a pai of tribal art at the time, so I made an urban of Sanitation trash can. (Had to swipe it o	ng. Yeah, that's the word. The subject here was nter, filmmaker, and activist. He was making kind version of the village campfire out of a Department ff the streets of the city and throw it in the back up, looked around, and threw it in. The van smelled	1
	ermit, but no police protection in what was then ave FDNY approval to set a fire. We got the lights	
two battery-operated strobes into the base scene. I also put a couple of ungelled strok	I he woulda been all sorts of unsharp. So we nestled of the fire, aimed up at him and lighting the whole bes behind the rocks on either side of him. They do und, and give me an extra measure of sharpness.	and the second se
near the blaze. Bye, bye light! Wasn't aw	quick, and burned through one of the strobe cables are of it at the time, of course. But without those strobe punch, and thus very little sharpness in our	and the second
control over: the deepening sky, and the ve and it pays to keep the subject just on the	like this, you have two things you have little to no ry erratic fire. The strobes give you a bit of leverage, e edge of the firelight, in semi-darkness, where your e your shutter speed takes care of how much or how e.	
face was entirely his idea. I was fine with the	ited a fake Uzi machine gun, and his blue painted at, the odder the better in my book. We were chatting as going to shoot next. (All the artists down there g a story.)	E
whose art tended to relate to that specific	an artist who had undergone sex change surgery and experience. He nodded knowingly, holding the phony ve a good time photographing her. She's really weird!"	
In New York, weird is relative.		

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David Wojnarowicz

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PUT THE LI	GHT IN AN UNUSUAL PLACE	
		and the second se
		and the second second
	"Using the flash freezes him, but allows me to use a slower	
	shutter speed, which blurs the world outside the car.	
	This sends a message: fast-moving, powerful man on the go."	
	I spent a week with corporate big shot Larry Tisch as he was preparing to	and the second second
	buy CBS. I needed a lead, something jazzy to kick off the story.	AND THE PARTY OF
	I put the flash in an unusual place—outside the limo, aimed at the backseat	
	side window (it was attached using a Bogen Magic Arm, which let me clamp	
	the flash to the limo, right by the driver's rear view mirror).	111111
	This wasn't frivolous. I had good editorial reasons. First, it gave me the main	
	light off-camera (and as I mentioned before, direct flash is a disaster) and it	
	also gave me control over the look of the picture colorwise, because the	
	flash was gelled to make it slightly warm.	
	Using the flash freezes him, but allows me to use a slower shutter speed,	
	which blurs the world outside the car. This sends a message: fast-moving,	
	powerful man on the go. Also, he was in the backseat of the limo. Another	
	bunch of messages: power, money, and very importantly, the photographer	
	is right there with him, behind the scenes, inside the fence. It says to the	
	reader: Stay with the story, you haven't seen this before.	
	Sheesh, you mean I can do all that with one lousy flash?	
	You can, until the driver forgets the light is boomed two feet outside his	
	window and squeezes left onto 5th Avenue, splattering it against the	
	rear view mirror of a double-parked van.	
	I only had one flash with me, so I turned to Tisch and said, "You know,	
	I think we got it!"	

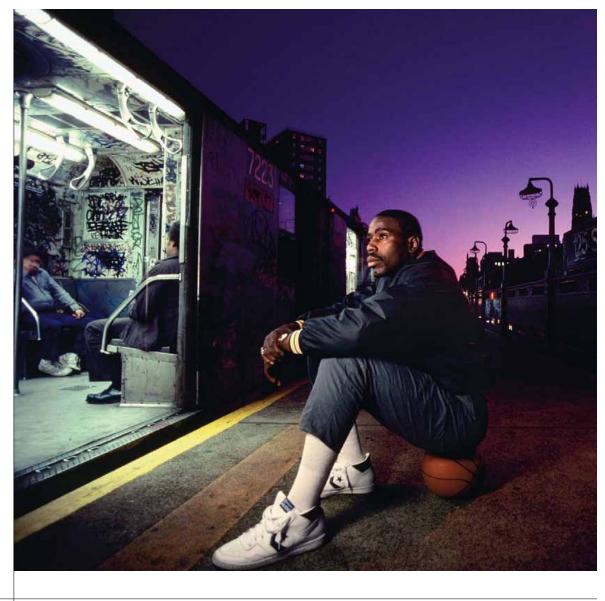
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Larry Tisch

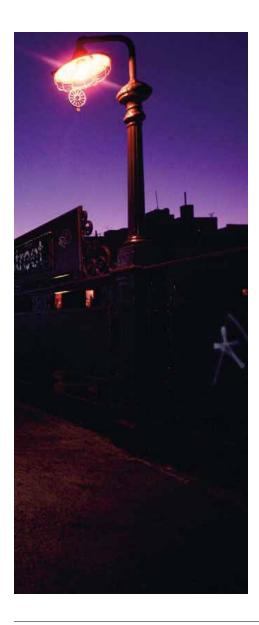
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30 magenta plus full green equals good sunset.

Uh, wanna run that by me again? In English?

One of the tough things about digital is the Fluorescent white balance setting. I use it, monkey with it, push it up and down a bit, and can still get results that look like I'm shooting through an aquarium that hasn't been cleaned in a while.

So I often do things the old-fashioned way. I set the white balance to daylight, pop a 30 magenta filter on the lens and a full cut of green conversion filter on the flash, and boom, we're cleaned up with good skin tones to boot. (The green flash filters are fluorescent conversion filters that come in different strengths.)

You've got your skin tones nice and normal, your disgusting green fluorescent foreground wrestled to the ground, and...Ta Dal...your not-so-great sunset has just exploded into an extravaganza of pinks and violets and reds, the likes of which will make your readers swoon and start thinking Tahiti, even when they're looking at Piscataway.

How to Get This Type of Shot: The only consistent thing about the NYC subway system is the fact that when the cars pull into the station, they always stop at the same spot. That simple regularity made this shot possible in real time, without setups, models, and a staged train. I scouted a good area, sat Bruce on the basketball, and set up a 1x2' softbox on a floor stand on camera left to mimic the door light of the train. Gelled it full green and put 30 points of magenta over the lens. The sky was crashing into twilight and I'm nervously looking over my shoulder, waitin' on a train.

One came in, blessedly. The doors opened, I shot three frames of Kodachrome, and the doors closed. By the time the next train rolled in, the sky was gone, and so was my shot.

P.S. Just try this nowadays with a tripod, camera, and flash on the subway. Hello, officer!

"City lights go green. 30 points of magenta cleans that up. and your sunset doesn't hate it either."

Bruce Dalrymple



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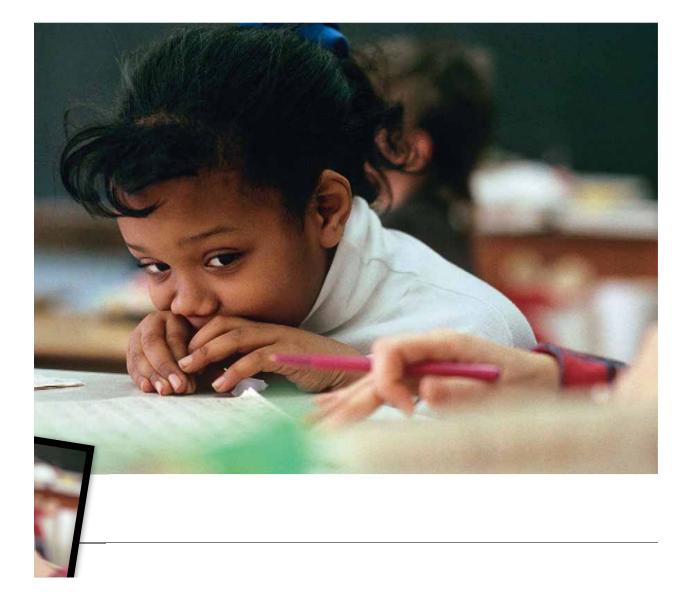
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WHERE BOLD	THE LIGHT COME FROM?
	"When I look at a window, I will
	often say, you know, 'nice view.' But in my head I'm saying, 'light source.''
	But in my head im saying, light source."
	Window washer Jan Demczur saved five people trapped with him in an elevator on 9/11 by using his squeegee blade to scrape through 6" of sheetrock. That squeegee now resides in the Smithsonian.
	his squeegee blade to scrape through of or sheetrock. That squeegee now resides in the smithsonian.
	I photographed Jan on the world's only giant Polaroid camera <sup>1</sup> immediately after the World Trade
	Center attack. We got to know each other a bit. He's a likable, simple guy. Like many, his life went on hold after 9/11.
	About a year later, I caught up to him at his home in New Jersey. At that time, he didn't go out much.
	There was a sense of isolation—9/11 lingered.
	When I look at a window, I will often say, you know, "nice view." But in my head I'm saying, "light source."
	Where does most light come from anyway? The windows! Ever wonder why the cameras are moving and
	the actors are dialoguing and you're seeing all over a room in a Hollywood movie but you never see the
	stands and the lights? They're all outside, sometimes down the block.
	Jan's window was huge and on the first floor. Light source! I put a strobe on the front lawn, triggered with
	a pocket wizard. <sup>2</sup> The lacy curtains were perfect as an imperfect, irregular softbox. One pop and the room
	filled with light. He sat on the bed, alone with his thoughts.
	How to Get This Type of Shot: When you do this, use one strobe head. If you put up two lights,
	you might have double shadows, which is something the sun does not do, it being a singular light
	source. If you have to use two heads and two packs for power reasons, make sure the second head
	is clamped to the same stand as the first and line it up exactly.
<sup>1</sup> Giant Polar 80" tall. Th	oid Camera: Referred to as "Moby C," it is the world's largest Polaroid camera, capable of making life-size images 40" wide by e interior chamber of the camera is the size of a one-car garage, and it was devised by Dr. Land and the engineers at Polaroid.
	ard: A highly sophisticated radio-triggering device used for firing strobes and remote cameras. Think of it as a really fancy r opener. (Just kidding. These are seriously effective field units.)

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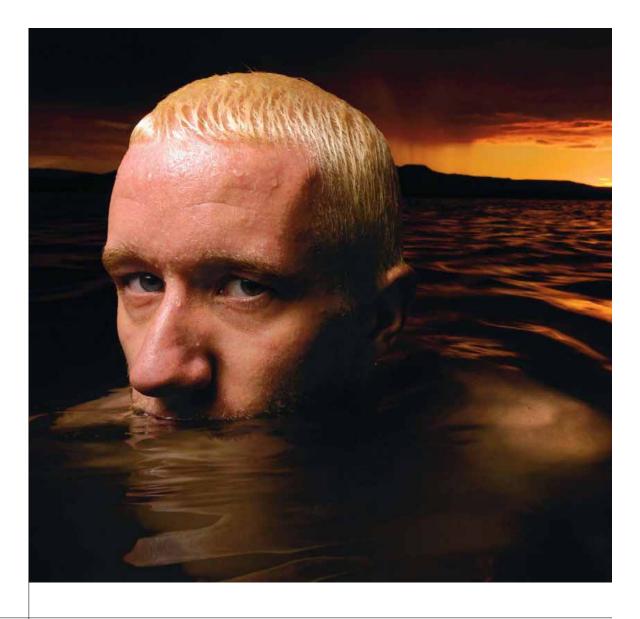
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Jan Demczur

Chapter Two. Keep Your Eye in the Camera The Moment It Clicks: Photography Secrets from One of the World's Top Shooters By Joe McNally - Legendary Magazine Photographer ISBN: 9780321552907 Publisher: New Riders

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## "You can extend your sunset working life dramatically by putting your subject next to a body of water."

Make your day longer. Now that doesn't sound desirable. But it is if you're a photographer desperate for as much golden hour as you can get. One way to do that is to use water.

Ever notice how the streets in the movies are always wet? Did it always just rain?

Nope. But the water truck just went through. Streets glisten when they're wet. They look cooler. You pick up f-stoppage.

When doing flash at the edge of sunset, you're desperate to get that beautiful sky and face of your subject. Not too tough, actually. Hit him with some light, crank your strobe up at +2, underexpose the sky. No biggie.

But then, where is your subject standing? In a black hole, most likely. The green grass looks like the dark side of the moon and your environment is, well, gone. (Holy mudhead, Mackerel, more Science High! It's...gone!)

Okay, okay, most people reading this book won't remember Firesign Theatre. And of course, if you were a Firesign fan, you're lucky to remember anything. 'Nuff said.

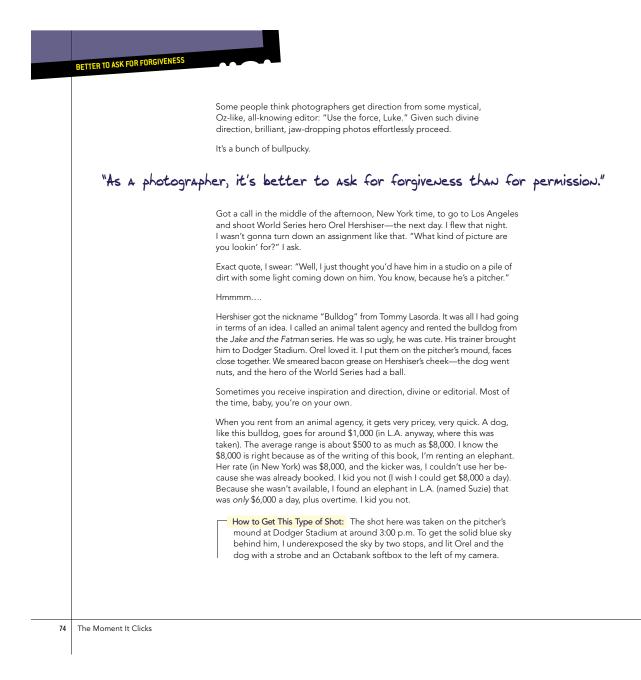
But I digress.

You can extend your sunset working life dramatically by putting your subject next to a body of water. The water remains almost the value of the sky exposure and stays right with you till the sky is almost gone.

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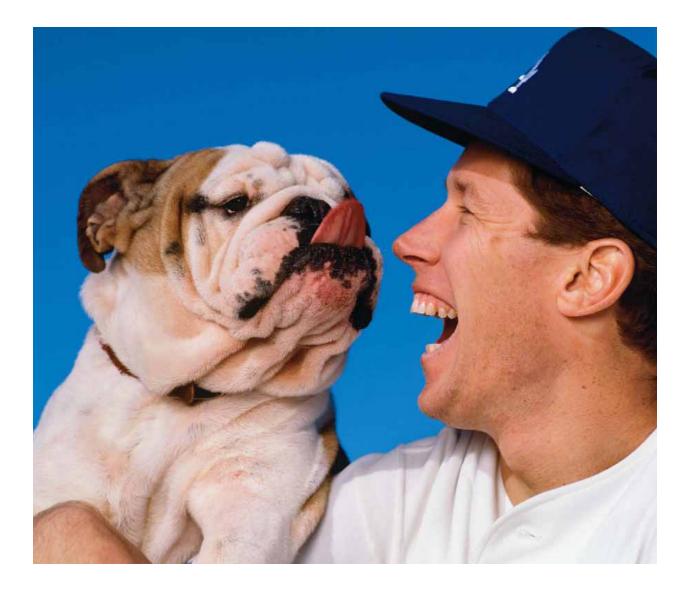
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Orel Hershiser

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Michelle Pfeiffer

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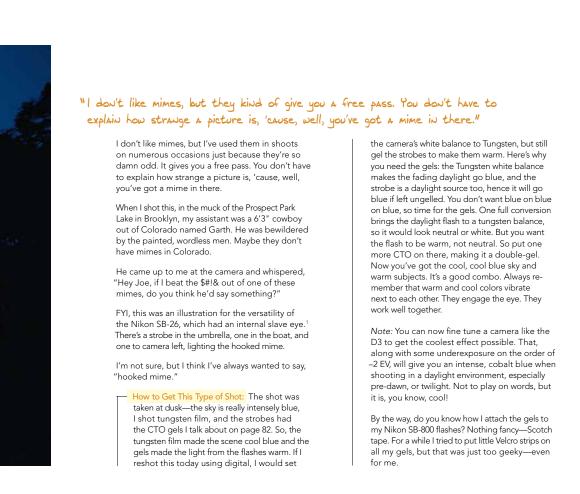
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<sup>1</sup> Internal Slave Eye: A photo eye or trigger built in to a flash unit, sensitive to sudden increases in light, which will trigger the flash.



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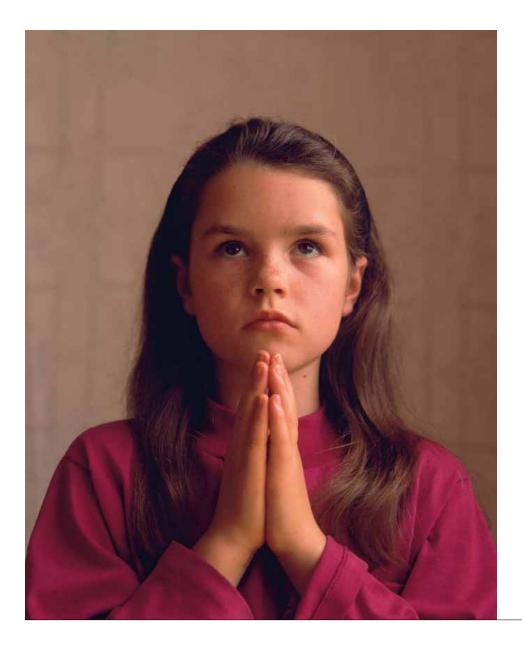
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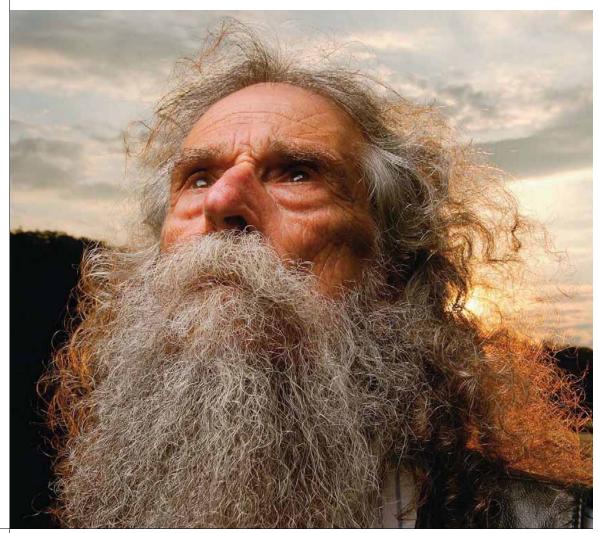
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When it comes to skin tones, warm is generally better than cool. This is a personal preference, you understand, and it stems from the fact that I feel people look better with a little warm glow, as if they're sitting at a nice, candlelit table at the Four Seasons, rather than looking like an extra on The Sopranos who's been hanging on a meat hook for a few days.

Of course, it depends on the mission. You can go either way-the important thing is to remember to choose. Don't let the gear choose for you. WARNING! WARNING! Technical talk starts here!

How to Get This Type of Shot: Flash units come from the factory neutrally balanced for daylight. The output is plotted as a bell curve. At the lower end of the curve, it is burning at a warm temperature. At the top of the curve, it is fairly cool in terms of degrees Kelvin. Depending on certain factors, like strobe duration and shutter speed, your exposure will carve out a piece of this bell curve, and more than likely, the cool chunk of it. Hence, your neutral strobe might look a little blue.

There are any number of ways to fix this. Try a Cloudy white balance, which is a slightly warm version of daylight. Or put a CTO on your strobe. A CT who? CTO: Color Temperature Orange. It's an amber gel (available in various intensities) and it pushes daylight towards the tungsten (or warmish) end of the color scale. You can push it a little, which is natural and pleasing, or you can push it a lot and make somebody look like the Great Pumpkin. Be careful.

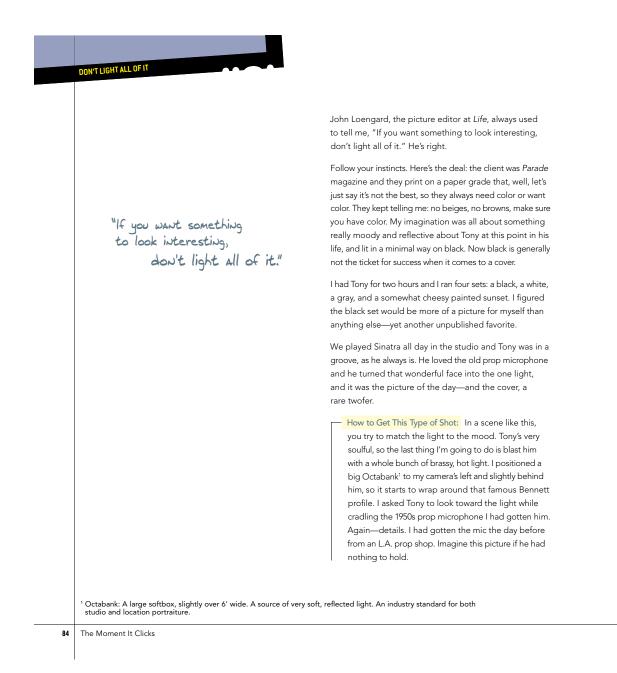
I love talking this tech stuff. Strobe durations and bell curves! Whew! Gets me hotter 'n Georgia asphalt.

> "When it comes to skin tones, warm is generally better than cool. Of course, it depends on the mission. You can go either way - the important thing is to remember to choose. Don't let the gear choose for you."

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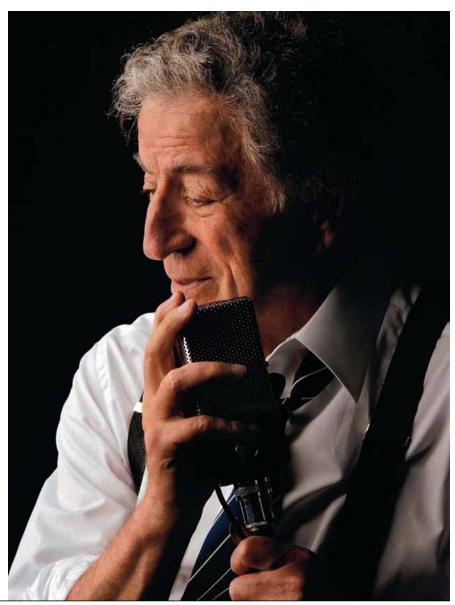
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Tony Bennett

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