

## **Photojournalism**

Photojournalism is a particular form of journalism the collecting, editing, and presenting of news material for publication or broadcast that creates images in order to tell a news story. It is now usually understood to refer only to still images, and in some cases to video used in broadcast journalism. Photojournalism can fall under all subjects' of photography but the image needs to be news wordy to end up being published.

### **There are two types of photojournalism.**

The first type is where an image is used to illustrate a story. Many feature journalists work closely with photographers and commission them to produce images that will be published with their articles. There is no limit to how many images used. This is usually the photo editor decision.

The second is where an image is used to tell a story without any words. One single image may be used or as many as ten images are often used in magazines. If you can write - do so; it will be an advantage when you submit some images.

### **Role of Photojournalism**

The best way to gain experience in photojournalism is to do it. Classroom study, photo books, even making pictures cannot completely prepare one for the feeling that comes when you accept a photographic assignment for money. There is a tremendous sense of responsibility when someone is willing to put cash on your ability to deliver a professional looking photograph. It can be almost devastating if the first assignment is one that cannot easily be re-shot or if something should go wrong. But the feeling of achievement is equally great when you are able to deliver a good print.

Many beginning photojournalists aspire to start at the top by submitting pictures to the national magazines. If you can sell your work to them, fine as starting at the top saves time. But in photography, as in any other business, most people find easier to start at the bottom and advance as they gain experience. The main danger in attempting to sell to the national magazines at the start is that you may become discouraged and quit without ever really discovering whether or not you are suited to a career in photojournalism.

Instead of trying to compete with the world's top photographers for space in the big magazines, you will profit more by turning your attention to your local newspaper. These local publications offer the serious beginner a chance to try his luck in photojournalism without leaving his home areas. The photographer on a local newspaper is required to shoot every sort of picture imaginable from news and sports to fashion and architecture.

There are many qualities that go into the making of a successful photographer. Most virtues such as determination, imagination and perseverance are the key to success. Anyone who seriously has these qualities and vision can be competent and excel in the field of photojournalism. The minute a photojournalist sees his subject, he knows from past experience what exposure, shutter speed, and type of lighting he should use.

One of the most important qualities of a photojournalist is his ability to react quickly when he comes along a scene that may be news wordy.

List items, which may be news worthy, are Impact pictures, Pictures of the Environment People, New buildings.

If you are serious about photojournalism build a collection of images from your area. Many of these pictures will not be immediate news worthy but may be news worthy down the road. Take pictures of all the factories and buildings in the area. Someday a factory may close and you may not be able to get to the scene. Also have plenty pictures of local businessmen and politicians.

Some photojournalists are lucky enough to get assignments from newspapers or magazines, most have to follow or find the news to make a living. For those showing still photographs accurate, correctly spelled caption information is still considered a must. This may go away as more projects are shown in a multimedia environment. However for the foreseeable future hiring editors want clear, clean, communicative captions that are spell checked and grammar checked.

The world of digital photography has made the work of the photojournalist a lot easier. Being able to view, scan and e-mail images to a publisher instantly is a massive advantage.

The work of a photojournalist can be extremely harsh - taken pictures in all kinds of extreme conditions and in very dangerous situations. Many photojournalists die each year in war zones and at different natural disasters around the world.

We live in a world, where today's news is forgotten tomorrow and the need to get the images quickly to the publisher is so important. If you have images that are news worthy don't delay sending them to a news agency or publisher. They won't stay in the news very long.

What qualities are most important for those who want to pursue such a career?

**[?] A desire to be "out in the world":** The storytelling photographers do take them into the community. That could be the local community where a photographer makes his or her home. It could also be the world community. The options are endless, depending on how far a field the photographer wants to work. But the key is that the storytelling photojournalists do, whatever tools they choose to use, are not at home in their studio or apartment. The work is out in the world with people. Unlike the world of fine art where the aim is for the photographer to tell their story to the world, in photojournalism the photographer/storyteller concentrates on the story of other people.

**[?] Technical proficiency:** Whether one is a documentary filmmaker, a multimedia storyteller or still photography photojournalist, the tools today consist of electronic cameras and computers. Film and videotape are gone. Pictures are captured on digital media. The darkroom is gone. Today computers serve as the digital darkroom and as video editing machines. Photographers need to be willing to learn the essentials, buy the key gear they need, and then keep up with the evolving technological changes. New software, improved cameras, hard drives and computers come flying at working pros with increasing speed requiring upgrades and significant additional investment at least every 18 months, probably every 12 months.

**[?] Understanding of and a commitment to ethical standards:** With the vast degree of image manipulation visible in advertising, television commercials and the special effects in movies, it is easy to assume "anything goes" no matter which part of the visual world one works in today. Such is not the case for the photojournalist.

Photographers who cover the world and its stories are much more in the mode of, "Record what you see, present what you saw." Yes, pictures and video are adjusted electronically to make this plain to the viewer. But the concept of not manipulating images to alter their meaning is still in play for the modern photojournalist.

**[?] Persistence:** This comes from a drive to get the story. Photojournalists, like writing journalists, are often told "no". The most successful journalists just don't accept the most recent 'no' as the final answer. The best journalists press on without being obnoxious about it and just continue to pursue the story with the next phone call, the next request for an interview.

This same persistence comes into play when it comes to breaking into the business and then once in, to advancing up the ladder. Moving from one publication to another, one company to another or climbing the ranks to the "better" publications or video outlets takes time, energy and often, repeated visits to show your work.

### **Importance of Photojournalism**

Photojournalism is an important aspect to the news media. For most people who read newspapers or watch the news, it is the photographs that summarize what has been written. This makes newspaper reading and news reporting much more effective as now one can relate the news to real life scenes and understand fully what it must be like to be in that actual place at that actual time. This applies especially for people who are not too fond of reading the newspaper or watching the news. For such people, it is the pictures that convey the news.

Photojournalism is a type of journalism that depends on images to tell a story. It is not classical photography as the pictures taken are mostly or entirely related to a news story or event. They are not usually for entertainment or appreciation but more for conveyance of a news event. These images have to be relevant to society, informative and should be able to convey what is happening in the world. The images should also possess an objective quality. It is very important that the photograph is relevant to the context of the story being reported.

Photojournalism has reached the same status as all other forms of journalism. A status as a medium which is part of the daily stream of information and to which readers have a critical attitude. Photojournalism has not become more or less credible, just as journalism has not become more or less credible. Photojournalists must take on the role of storytelling rather than seeing themselves as illustrators of articles.

Greater demands are made on photojournalists but also on other users of pictures such as journalists, editorial assistants, and editors. Photojournalists are trying to get attention in an increasingly visually oriented environment and therefore photojournalists must make use of visual storytelling techniques to become better storytellers. Every journalistic photograph should tell its own story. The portrait where the eyes catch the reader and tell stories about the person's life. The strange light over a natural landscape. Or the funny moment from everyday life which stimulates the reader's memory.

All photographic stories should be based on a photographic angle which creates identification for the reader. Makes the reader feel surprised, emotional, or just stimulated to think about something. That is the strength of the photograph! The

story is always the most important – the main contents. The storytelling tools frame the photograph in ways that underpin and strengthen the contents. A well composed photograph that makes good use of its mode of expression to fit the story is more effective and makes a greater impression on the reader. It communicates better.

Photographs do not provide readers with answers. A photograph will not tell you why a child is crying. Therefore it is doubly important that the written and the photographic story complement each other and use each others' strengths. The strength of photojournalism lies in the ability to communicate feelings and the immediate reaction from readers. Written journalism gives you the answers to who, what and why. The photojournalist must reflect on his and the journalist's story and the best way to express it visually. The means and the options must be considered and a common angle determined, so the final story provides the reader with information as well as experiences.