

Tutorial One: The Three Types of Photojournalism

By

David Lewis-Hodgson

www.photojournalism.uk

In this tutorial, I explain the three forms photojournalism can take and how each differs from press photography. A video of this tutorial can be found on this website.

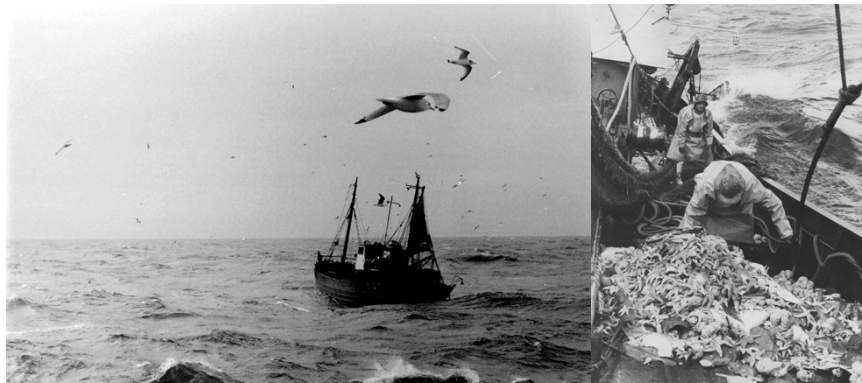
Photo Essays

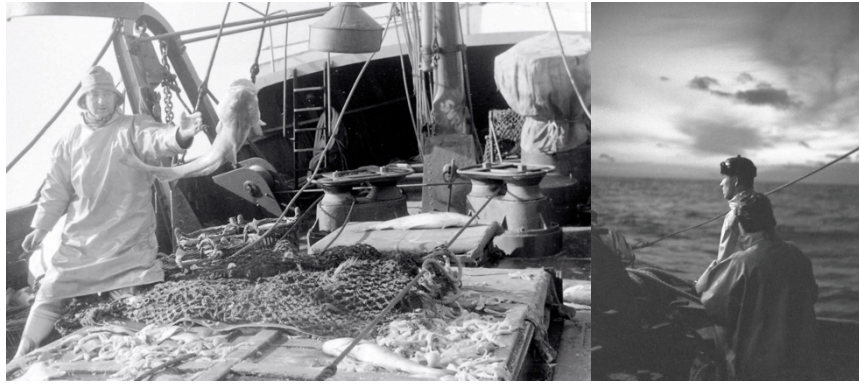
Although telling a story with a minimum of words was once popular, few photo essays are now published by traditional print media. However, photo essays, which emphasise pictures rather than words, are coming back on Social Media.

When creating a photo essay, you should focus on linked and individually powerful images, like the ones below, all shot on a modestly priced but highly reliable Miranda 35mm camera.

This widely published photo essay, shot in the early '60s aboard the North Sea trawler *Ocean Surf*, follows every stage of a three-week voyage: from the crew's arrival and taking on the tons of ice needed to keep the catch fresh to leaving the harbour, casting their nets, and gutting the catch to the celebratory drink when safely back in port. Some of these images are shown here.







When I first shot the essay and tried to find publishers, only a few magazines were interested. After I changed it into an illustrated article (see below), it appeared in several more.

Recently, these photographs have been featured more widely as photo essays of historical interest, gaining thousands of hits and 'likes' on my YouTube channel, so

never dismiss an eye-catching photo essay as having little or no commercial interest or value.

Illustrated Articles

As the name suggests, this combines text and images, sometimes in equal measure and sometimes with many more words than pictures.

When I started shooting these, I worked with a journalist. After a while, I realised I could write copy as well as most of them, enabling me to keep the entire fee for myself.

Today, when digital images cost next to nothing and require little or no expensive processing, there are few financial reasons for keeping an eye on what movie makers term your 'shooting ratio'. In other words, how much stock is used for each shot?

Every photograph you take must be carefully considered. Treat your camera like a sniper's rifle rather than a blunderbuss!

One illustrated article I shot and wrote was on a rather sad subject: the burial of Lady, an elderly couple's much-loved family cat. Having secured their agreement to cover her internment in an animal cemetery (I'll be covering setting-up stories in Tutorial Four), I visited her home to capture an image of their pet.

I photographed her headstone being carved and the coffin being built. Only too willing to obtain pictures of his 'service', they posed for me beside the grave as I pictured them in colour and black and white.

To capture different angles on the occasion, I used a stepladder and placed a remotely controlled camera in the empty grave itself. The illustrated article, which included 800 words of text, was published by over a dozen magazines and newspapers in ten countries.



Here's another example of an illustrated article on a Metropolitan Police gun school, covered with half a dozen photographs and 600 words.



Picture Sequences

The final type of picture story is a sequence of related pictures with a minimum number of words, like the photo essay. However, while the photo essay, especially in European magazines, often adopts a more poetic form of storytelling, the photo sequence is direct and in your face.

Here are two examples of picture sequences which secured a hundred publications between them. The first depicts two youngsters kissing and was taken at the end of an assignment about a stage school for children. It happened like this.

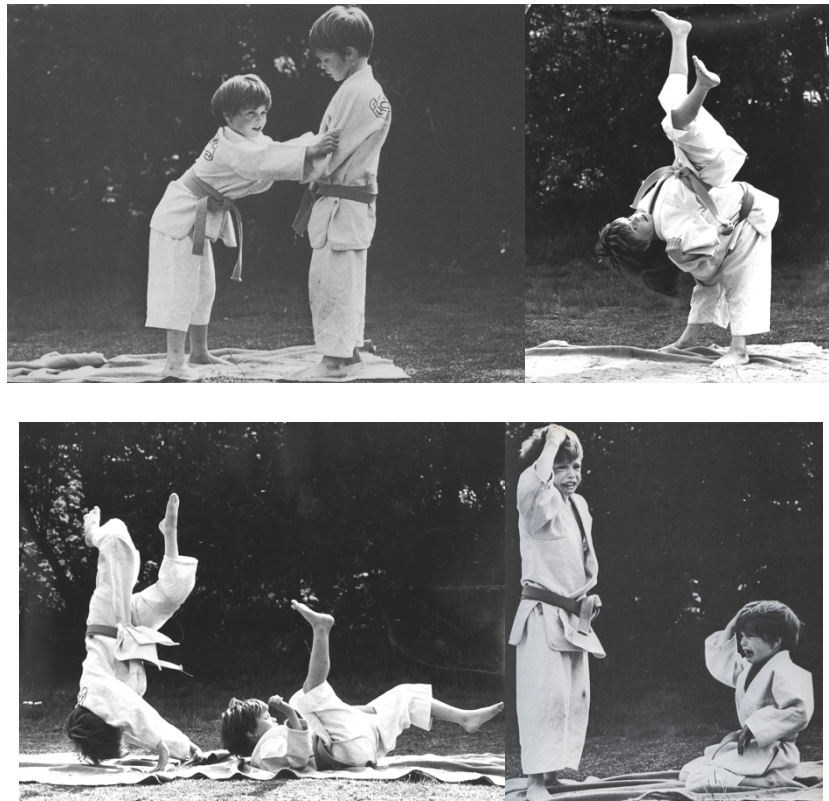
I had gone there for a different story and was walking back across the playground, where a dozen or more youngsters were enjoying their midmorning break. While loading my cameras into my car, I noticed a small girl eyeing up a shy-looking boy. Sensing this might provide charming and marketable photos, I rapidly attached a 135mm lens to my Nikon and started shooting pictures as the girl stepped boldly up to the boy and planted a sloppy kiss on his cheek.

Looking first coy, then surprised and finally disgusted, the eight-year-old quickly wiped his cheek clean while the girl looked delighted by the success of her bold move.



This charming sequence of photographs proved highly saleable, given I had shot it just in time for publication on Valentine's Day!

Another set of appealing images was shot by chance when covering two ten-year-olds practising judo. As with the kissing sequence, these photographs tell their own story without the need for many words. This is a considerable encouragement for foreign editors to buy them, as translation costs are minimal.



My take-home message to any photographer wishing to pursue photojournalism is this: Instead of being content with taking single shots, why not start telling stories with your pictures? As with every story, this means starting at the beginning, developing the middle, and reaching a logical conclusion.

I followed the eight golden rules described in the next tutorial to achieve this.

For details about my various assignments, how they were conducted, and what they reveal regarding the fundamentals of photojournalism, read *People I Shot*. It is available on Amazon or from [www. photojournalism.uk](http://www.photojournalism.uk) in an edition autographed by the author and with FREE UK postage at the same price.

