

Photo Talk

A newsletter of photographic trends
and the world through these eyes.

Vol1 Number 2 1999

www.cendrowski.com



Spring (finally)



Welcome to the second in an occasional series of newsletters from Dwight Cendrowski. I photograph for a wide variety of corporate and editorial clients in the Detroit area, around the

region, and around the world.

I'm using this issue to diagram a photo assignment, from initial contact with the editor to finished image. This job happens to be editorial. I'll talk about a corporate project next time.

As always I welcome your comments and suggestions.

Photo Tips...Portraits

There are ways to take head and shoulder portraits on location with a minimum of pain. Some things to remember:

- Almost no one likes how they look in a picture. A little reassurance goes a long way.
- A plain background is best. Seamless paper comes in handy rolls, is easy to set up and relatively inexpensive. Try light gray for B&W, blue for color.
- Use a lens from 70mm to 135mm...lets you frame tightly without being on top of the person.
- Be careful of hot rooms and hot lights. A glistening forehead is not a nice look. To be really prepared, use some basic foundation powder makeup when needed. (Tip...ask permission, especially of the men.)
- Speaking of men, try to photograph in the morning before the beard kicks in.
- A studio flash setup works best, but window light will work too. Just avoid direct sun and use some white cardboard to reflect light back onto the side of the face that's away from the window.
- If someone informs you that they don't smile, believe em. Take your best shots and move on.

Workshop How to set it up

Photo assignment:

Illustrate Y2K problem

Client: Information Week

The photo editor asked for a shot of George Surdu, the lead guy on Ford's Y2K program, as one illustration for a story on the problem. The only instruction: No computers in the shot. And oh, maybe use an old-fashioned hourglass. Concerned about pinning the photo solely on this premise, I planned



for two setups, and checked with the exec's office to be sure he had a chunk of time available.

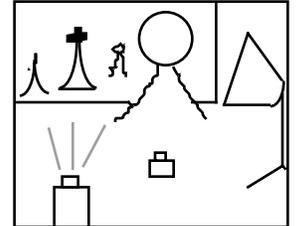
I first shot various angles and configurations with an hourglass, trying to remember to keep a smaller amount of sand in the top of

the hourglass. I included some shots with him twisting and blurring it. In addition I photographed Mr. Surdu without the hourglass, both as insurance and as an extra shot they could drop elsewhere in the article or on the contents page.

While he went back to work, I set up a shot I thought would make the point a little more subtly. I had brought several slides of my own showing a chessboard and various pieces. (Be sure you have the rights to use a projected image). The written story focused on various companies' strategies for beating the Y2K problem, and showing him with the chess pieces seemed a fitting and fairly discreet link to the

story.

I projected the horizontal images onto a white wall in a conference room, and placed Mr



Surdu on the right side of the frame, just far enough to the right and at a suitable angle to keep the projected image off his face.

Using Polaroids, I balanced the light on the screen with that on his face. One slide with a hand moving a queen proved too glaring, so I settled on the pieces alone. I then used the time he had remaining to shoot variations: looking in the camera, then away, chin in hand, camera tilted, and holding a king chess piece. The tone of the story was obviously serious, so I went mainly for composed, confident expressions.

Information Week used a chess shot, which I think worked well.

On this as with every editorial shot, it's important to give the editor or art director as much variation in content and layout as possible. Also be sure to arrive early enough to be ready to shoot when the exec walks in, and know just how long he or she has to give you. A light and respectful tone is also appreciated and helps immeasurably.



Visit Dwight's web site for more information and sample images: www.cendrowski.com

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