



## **AN INCREDIBLE EPIC**

Memoir of A Multi-Image Maestro

The “Incredible” History of Slide Shows

Together With

A Confabulation Based on The Author’s Autobiography

For Audiovisual Aficionados

By Douglas Mesney — As Told to Himself

File Under: Geriatric Narcissism

## Notes to Reader

- *An Incredible Epic* was started ten years ago, in 2015. It is a work in progress; being expanded and upgraded as new articles and pictures become available. New versions are periodically published. You can see your Edition Number on the title page (iii).
- Volume Nine is filled with pictures that relate to the first six volumes. Volume Eleven has even more, woven into a 1982 treatise called "Confessions of A Multi-Image Maniac"; that is a precursor to *An Incredible Epic* about how to produce multi-image shows. Volume Thirteen, currently in the works, is a 'catch all' for additional material being continually re-discovered in my archives.
- Videos of forty-one Incredible slide shows can be seen on Vimeo (search for 'Mesney') or [www.imcredibleimages.com](http://www.imcredibleimages.com), threaded into an abbreviated biography. Additional shows by other producers have been restored and curated by Steve Michelsen and can be seen at [www.youtube.com/@AV\\_archaeology/videos](http://www.youtube.com/@AV_archaeology/videos).
- As the Epic has evolved materially, so too has the refinement of its style(s). Please excuse the small inconsistencies you will encounter. And please don't fret about any spelling errors; they are elusive little buggers; but let me know about them, please.
- The original Epic was split into seven parts when the size of the single volume overwhelmed Microsoft Word (I should have used Adobe InDesign). The index (Volume Eight) could not be split and ceased being updated. Thus, the index is of limited usefulness, covering only the content in the original manuscript – about 80% of Volumes One through Seven.
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<sup>1</sup> Confabulation has been variously described as so-called 'honest lying' or false memories fabricated, distorted, or misinterpreted about oneself or the world, without the conscious intention to deceive. I would add that, we remember (and edit) selectively what we like and repress what we don't.





# An Incredible Epic

## Memoir of A Multi-Image Maestro

### Volume One

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*An Incredible Epic* is a confabulation<sup>1</sup> based on the circumstances of my life. No part of this book may be used or reproduced without written permission except in the case of brief quotations to be used in critical articles and reviews. The electronic form of this book can in no way, partially or entirely, be copied, reproduced, or forwarded. For exceptions, licenses, permissions, and other information, contact the author:  
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The author has researched the information contained in this book to check accuracy.

The opinions expressed in this book are solely based upon the author's own experience.

The author assumes no responsibility for errors and inaccuracies.

Resemblances to persons living or dead may be coincidental.

Some names may not be real.

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<sup>1</sup> In *The Trip to Echo Spring* by Olivia Laing, confabulation is described as "so-called 'honest lying' or false memories." I would add that, we remember (and edit) selectively what we like and repress what we don't. Wikipedia defines the term as: "... a memory error defined as the production of fabricated, distorted, or misinterpreted memories about oneself or the world, without the conscious intention to deceive."



Dedicated to my wife Pamela Swanson,  
who convinced me to write this memoir;  
with special thanks to those woven into the fabric of my life.





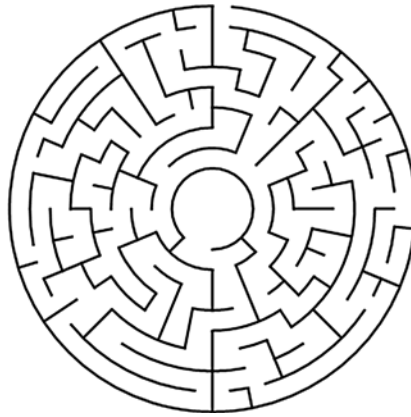
Third New York International Film & TV Grand Award; toasting champagne with my parents and Swedish writer Björn Ericstam, 1988.

*"Those were the days, my friend;  
We thought they'd never end."*

Gene Raskin (full lyrics in Appendix)



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*"You have to go where the story leads you."*

Stephen King (PBS interview)

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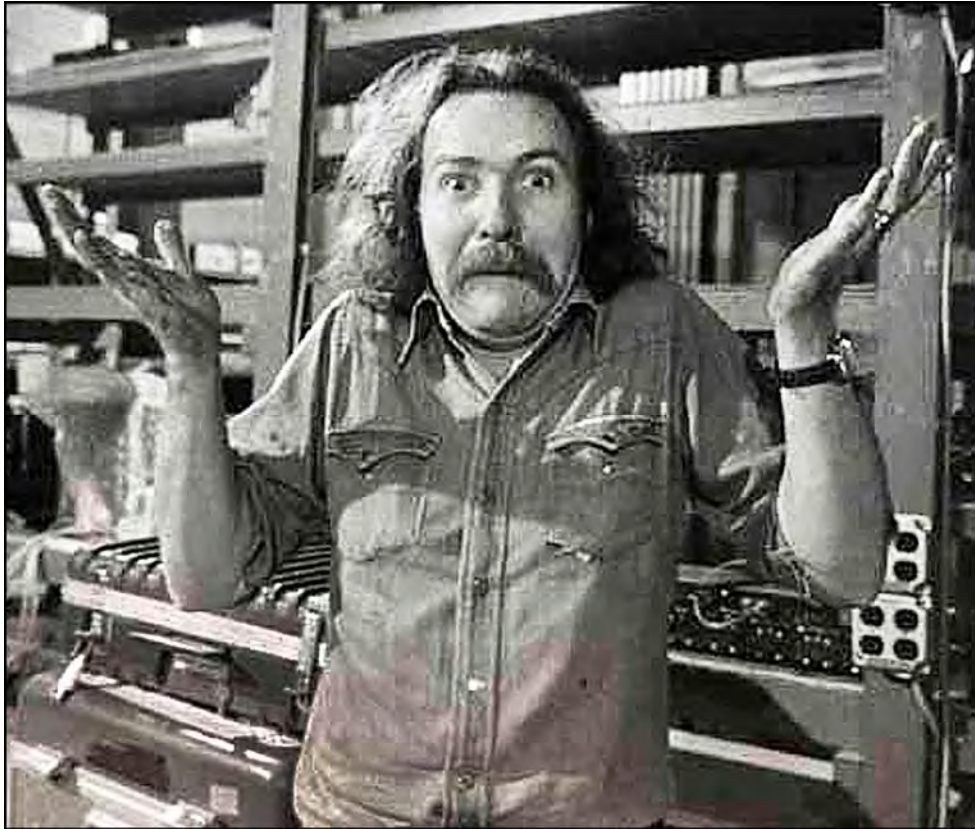
- Acuetone 12-tone tone programmer
- Mark IV 2-projector dissolve
- Mark VII 3-projector dissolve
- Accessories:
- Exhibit Master 40-channel playback programmer
- Electric Punch for ShowPro I and II punched-tape programmers
- 40A Encoder for 40-channel expansion of ShowPro I and II
- 20A Encoder for 20-channel expansion of ShowPro I and II
- Power control box – programmable switch with 110-volt, AC outlet
- ShowPro VB digital, memory programmer
- ShowPro V Memory Test
- PD-3 programmable dissolve
- QD2 & QD3 computerized playback modules (dissolvers)
- Enhanced Procall
- Pocket Procall – cue guide for Procall Version 5
- Reliance Audiovisual (New York) rental catalogue

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Self-promotion shot during pack-up for move to Honolulu, 1981.

*"The problem with nostalgia is [that you] only remember what you liked and you forget the parts you didn't."*

John Edwards



## INTRODUCTION

*Love at First Sight* | by Todd Gipstein

Just as I was wrapping up the first edition of this tome, Patricia Corley called me.

I'd been trying to get hold of her for more than a decade, to say thank you, for writing a letter of recommendation for me to present to the immigration authorities when I re-entered Canada in 2003, after a 20-year hiatus.

Trish is the daughter of David and Sue Corley, whose DSC Laboratories became the go-to supplier of the very best multi-image alignment and masking products.

I met Trish when she became the Corley's brand ambassador at slide-show festivals held by the Association for Multi-Image. My first sight of her was across the pool at an AMI festival; she was easy on the eye in a conservative bikini and smart enough to catch Todd Gipstein's attentive eye. The two were engaged for some time but eventually went their separate ways, as did everyone in the slide-show business.

Although we live just 30 miles [~45 km] apart in Canada, Trish and I never met, until just a little while ago. And when we finally got together, at the Sylvia Hotel in Vancouver's English Bay, I was surprised to discover that she hadn't been married to Todd and wasn't really a *slide gal*. More surprising was her candid confession that, back then, she was intimidated by me; I was twenty years older and my (self-created) reputation preceded me. Damn, I thought to myself, silently; I had hoped Trish could add some color and depth to the stories about the family's legendary lab that her parents contributed to this book. All was not lost, though. Through Trish I got connected with Gipstein. That was high on my agenda when I started writing *An Incredible Epic*

Back in the day, there were only a handful of producers whose work I respected; Todd Gipstein was one of them, for all the reasons he'll tell you about. We met, I'm sure; but I can't remember where or when. It must have been odd, like DaVinci meeting P.T. Barnum; poet versus propagandist. Todd and I were polar opposites; that's why his story is so appropriate. As he points out, Slidemakers came from all walks of life.

Gipstein's account of his life as a slide-show producer is remarkably similar to my own, although our opportunities to explore *melting slides*, the French term for dissolve effects) came from radically different sources; mine were more commercial. Gipstein was an educator, I was an advertising man. He was a minimalist; I was a maximalist. (Is that a word?) The underlying red thread in both our careers was the use of slides to manage perception and impart knowledge.

Thus, at the eleventh hour, Todd Gipstein sent me the article that follows; and with just a day to go before my (self-imposed) deadline of July 31<sup>st</sup> (2019), Gipstein's article has become the introduction to *An Incredible Epic*.



## Love at First Sight

By Todd A. Gipstein

Multi-image began for me my freshman year at Harvard in 1970. In a photo class, a guy walked in, set up two Kodak Carousel projectors and a Kodak dissolve unit — a black box that connected to the two projectors.



The guy played some bluesy music and presented a series of images of Boston at night.

It was love at first sight; a few minutes that changed my life.

After the show, I asked him to show me how the magic worked. Through a clunky mechanical servo, the Kodak dissolve made one projector's bulb dim for two seconds and the others to light up. When the two projectors were aligned so the images overlapped, it created a two second dissolve of one image into the next. He caused this to happen by pushing a remote button. He couldn't vary the length of the dissolve, and he couldn't record the cues. So every show was a live performance. He listened to the audio, tried to remember the sequence of photos, and pushed the remote to create a cross-dissolve.



I wanted to explore this new medium, one that combined my love of photography and filmmaking in a unique, hybrid form of media. The college had a few projectors and that amazing black box, and I planned to use them.

At college, I studied writing and filmmaking. I studied a lot of things — a good liberal arts education. And across my four years, I kept doing an independent study course where I could make slide shows and the professor would look at them and give me a grade. There was no instruction. Not many people had done this kind of slide show, so I was on my own to figure out and define this nascent medium.

I quickly discovered that slide shows — what would be later called *multi-image* — had a unique feel. They combined the power of still photos with the sequencing, flow, and audio accompaniment of film. A good photograph can capture the essence of a person, place or moment. Film can show action or change over time and give a sense of the reality of something — it is less abstract than a single photograph. And it has more time to tell a story. There was something special about slide-shows / multi-image. Presented as a series of discreet images without motion, slide shows were more poetic than film or video. They left a lot to the viewer's imagination and invited the viewer to make connections. Each picture was like a word in a poem. I discovered that a simple dissolve was actually a rich language. The cross-dissolve was like a verb in a sentence, linking words. In this case, photos. It was active. One photo BECAME another, and in the process, a third image was created. Even in two seconds, the sense of metamorphosis was compelling. Picture A evolved into Picture B. The graphic shapes would change. The idea of each picture would connect to the one before and lead into the one after. It invited interpretation: is the idea of this image LIKE the next one or perhaps CONTRARY to it? Is there irony created? Mystery?

The more shows I made, the more richness I found in this simple process of one still image becoming another still image. Music added emotion and pacing. Narration, when I used it, added another layer of content. Multi-image is not a passive medium. To work, it requires involvement, and that leads to immersion in the story of the show. Even as I studied and made films, as I wrote short-stories, throughout my four years in college I experimented with different narrative forms of slide shows. That love at first sight blossomed into something deeper.

When I graduated Harvard, the guy who ran the media equipment office gave me the black Kodak dissolve unit. No one else had used it and he thought it would be a nice memento of my years experimenting with its limited but inspiring capabilities.

After college, though I applied and got into film schools, I decided I wanted to start work for real. I turned away from filmmaking. Through a family connection, I showed my slide-shows to National Geographic in 1974. They weren't interested in them. They weren't doing multi-image back then, and slide-shows weren't right for TV. Through another family connection I ended up working for Time-Life in New York turning two book series into filmstrips (you can Google to find out what they were). Making them involved photography, scripting writing, picture research, soundtracks and programming. I was learning how to be a real producer, and to make documentaries with still photos.

I worked for Time-Life Multi-Media for about a year, then headed back to Boston where the professor who had sponsored my independent projects making slide-shows had recommended me to the New England Aquarium. They wanted a slide-show as a permanent exhibit. I was the only person the professor knew of who made slide-shows. So, I returned to Boston and started "Gipstein Multi-Media," my own production company. I started slowly, but my business grew. After a few years in business, my father, looking over my financials, explained to me that I was supposed to take in more than I spent. I understood the theory, though I found it difficult to enact.

I specialized in making small-scale documentaries for museums, historic homes, and corporate clients who wanted something artsy and based in storytelling. My liberal arts education turned out to be perfect for making documentaries — I had been exposed to all sorts of subjects and ended up doing documentaries about many of them. My non-profit clients had meager budgets so most of my work was 2 or 3 projector shows. Minimal media. That scale didn't allow for much audiovisual wizardry. I was forced to inspire and connect with powerful photos, soundtracks and stories, all presented with simple media. I couldn't dazzle with media fireworks. These limitations proved liberating. They forced me to be conceptually and creatively innovative.

I had some commercial clients, and over the years, I did do a few larger shows of up to 21 projectors. But not many. I preferred the power of the imagination and striking a responsive chord in the heart over a lot of media fire-power with its attendant gear. I've always had a bit of a love-hate relationship with gear. I love what I can do with it, but I hate the wires and batteries and fickle nature of things that plug in. So, the less the better.

My goal, formed early, has been to transport people into the world of my show. I want the media to be invisible, so I use full-frame images and subtle effects — if any. I found true *multi-image* shows, with multiple images being projected at the same time, distracting. They draw too much attention to the media itself, and I felt that strained that fragile thread of involvement I was after.

The multi-image industry started to mature in the mid to late 70s. The medium became very popular for both non-profits and corporations. The Association for Multi-Image (AMI) was created. It was a worldwide organization that had regional chapters. At both levels there were events that included competitions, trade shows, educational seminars, magazines, and networking. There weren't a lot of us making shows back then. Perhaps 50 or so studios worldwide. It was a unique skill set.

Making multi-image shows, even small-scale ones, was a laborious, difficult, expensive process. It was very hands on.

We had to work with graphic houses to design graphic images and get them created, a slow process. We had to work with labs to process our film and duplicate images. We worked with sound studios and engineers to record and edit narration and interviews, then create rich soundtracks of music and sound effects.

We looked through huge rolls of films containing duplicates for show sets, finding the best exposures and cutting them from the reel. Panoramic shows required two overlapping

images and soft-edge chips of film to create a (more or less) seamless blend of the two overlapping sides of the image. We had to spend days cleaning endless glass slide mounts, one for each slide. They were little hinged things, glass on both sides, where we put the chip of film with the image. Sometimes, we added graphic masks to the slides, requiring more cleaning and precision alignment. Some slide mounts were bulging with film and other layers of special masks. This was always a danger because if one of these thick slides jammed in the tray, that tray would hang up in the projector and not advance to the next image. That was not good, as the show would lose a sequence of visuals. Nothing tightened the sphincters of a producer more than that horrible clack-clack-clack sound of a jammed slide trying — and failing — to find its way back up into its slot in the slide tray. You had to ride it out as fixing it as a show played was impossible. The projectors were locked into racks of three that held them in alignment and there was no room to fiddle or fix. If it was a 2-projector show and the slide jammed, half the show would be missing. A real disaster. Maybe with 9 or more projectors it might be less noticeable, but then again, the odds of a stuck slide increased. It wasn't a medium for the faint of heart.

Sound mixes were tedious. At the start we had to cue up records for music. We had to physically splice audio tape with razor blades, then connect the pieces with splicing tape. Sometimes, if a piece of tape containing a word or a syllable was dropped, it required a lot of searching in a pile of tape fragments to find it, then splice it in to see if it was the right word after all. Looking back from today, where I can see the whole soundtrack displayed as waveforms on a computer, it seems ridiculously archaic and crude. But, back then, it was *state of the art*. Only in retrospect do we see the chunkiness of our technologies. In their time, we embrace them as great improvements over what came before, which they are. At least for a while.

Once a multi-image show was done, changes were expensive and difficult. For shows that traveled, as many of mine for National Geographic did, duplicate sets had to be made, mounted, cleaned, put in trays and sent around the world with attendant projectors, audio and cables. Shows that ran in permanent installations like museums had to be set up, and monitored. The slides would fade and turn purple so new duplicate slides had to be created and installed. Calls from panicked curators when a slide jammed had to be handled. Blown bulbs had to be changed.

Multi image was about 95% drudgery and 5% creativity. With all its hands-on work, it was kind of old-world craftsmanship, and we were like a strange sect of monks who worked in dark rooms laboring over illuminated manuscripts. Though I would never want to go back to that era, I am in some ways glad I lived through it. It taught me patience, planning, determination, and faith — faith that somewhere down the road, maybe in weeks or months, the damned media cathedral I was laboring over would be finished and inspire others with its beauty. It is the same with shooting photographs digitally versus with film. Now, I have maybe 3,600 frames in my camera. For nearly 50 years, I had a roll of 36. That taught me to make every shot count and try to get it right in the camera (we had no Photoshop to fix our mistakes). I don't miss film at all, but I appreciate the discipline it gave me as a photographer. Likewise, multi-image taught me disciplines of production that still serve me well in the digital age.

Over time, though, the medium of multi-image became richer and more flexible.

Audio started on cassettes and then quarter inch tape, usually four channels. Over time, 8-track then 16-track then 24-track recorders became available, making for much denser and richer soundtracks.

The technology for creating visual effects also evolved. The clunky mechanical Kodak black box that had only 2 second dissolves was replaced by more sophisticated boxes that allowed for many different length dissolves and other effects achieved by playing with the light projectors emitted. They also allowed the dissolves and effects to be synchronized with the audio and stored in the machine or on tape as a cue track. In the 1980s, computers entered the scene and allowed for ever more sophisticated work. We became computer programmers, writing a specialized code that controlled the projectors and audio. I even worked on an interactive show in the mid-1980s that allowed the audience to vote on what would happen next in the show. It was a technological and scripting challenge (nightmare) to say the least.

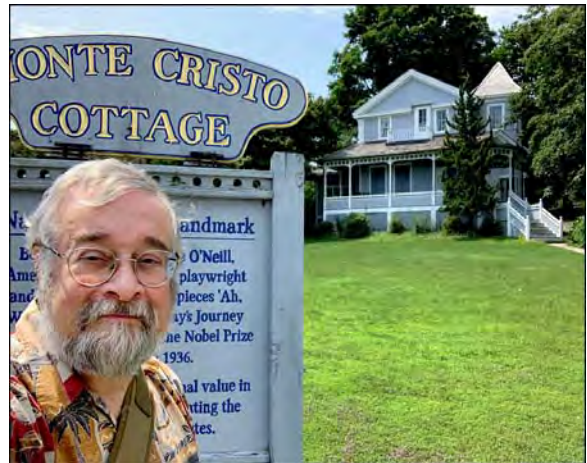
As the technology became more sophisticated, I was able to embrace more dissolves, and I became particularly enamored of slow dissolves (sometimes as long as 12 seconds) that created very long, evolving third images. Others went for more razzle-dazzle, speed and projectors. My work kind of defined one end of the spectrum: slow, elegant, storytelling shows with a lot of heart and soul. *Media with a Message* as my company motto promised. Others embraced cinematic-like media, where there were truly multi-images projected on large screens moving quickly, delighting viewers with their rich visual tapestries.

The house of multi-image had many rooms, and all of us who were practitioners of the art found our room, our style, and our clients. We existed amicably together, sometimes collaborated, often competed in festivals.

AMI became a driving force in the industry. Its festivals and magazines gave us all great exposure, not only to potential clients but to each other. At festivals, I saw shows that boggled my mind. I admired and respected the producers who created the big, extravagant shows, even as I knew I could never hope to create them myself. I hope the big guys appreciated what I did in my modest shows as well.

While I collaborated with others, especially Arklay King of Silver Linings Audio Productions, I was somewhat of a one-man band. I wrote my scripts, did interviews, did my own photography, and sat at the computer and programmed it all to create the presentation. This helped keep the creative process fluid. If something came up in the field while I was photographing, I could write it into the script. If, on the other hand, a script idea did not work out, I could change it. There were really no layers of approval. And my clients tended to leave me alone and let me do my work without meddling or second-guessing. They looked at me as an artist and hired me for my artistry. That was not always the case in our business, and I felt blessed to have so many hands-off clients. I'd often meet with them to discuss the concept and needs of the show, then go off and make it and eventually show them a completed product — the way the audience would see it. I had very few revisions on the hundreds of shows I created.

In 1981, I created an orientation show for the Monte Cristo Cottage, the boyhood home of Eugene O'Neill, the great American playwright. That house was in my home town of New London, Connecticut. The budget was small. I could use only 2 projectors. I had an all-star cast of volunteer Broadway and film actors to do the narration (which we recorded in an office supply room/closet in New York City on a tiny cassette recorder). I had limited visual resources, and only one room of the modest summer home had decor. I used a mannequin to play O'Neill's drug-addicted mother.



All those limitations, and there were many, ultimately proved liberating to my creativity, as they always do. I had to create a piece that implied more than it showed, that was evocative and told a compelling story with a rich soundtrack and sparse and symbolic visuals, like jewels on a necklace.

I entered the show in an AMI international competition. In the finals of the documentary category it went up against a complex 18-projector show about the mills in Lowell, Massachusetts. My modest two-projector show won me my first Crystal AMI, the industry's equivalent of an Oscar, for best documentary. Not only was I thrilled, but many producers of small shows took heart. In multi-image, we all learned, size doesn't matter. It's the story, the effect of the show on people, how it engaged them emotionally. You could do that with dozens of projectors or you could do it with two.

I continued to compete in AMI festivals and won dozens of Gold awards, two more Crystal AMIs and numerous other Grand Prizes with my little 2 and 3-projector storytelling shows.

I didn't know it, but National Geographic was watching. They had also come to embrace multi-image as a way to feature their great photography and tell their stories. They found in me a kindred spirit. Someone who liked photography and didn't mess with pictures but just showed them. They liked my emotional, thought-provoking stories, my quiet, elegant media presentations. Like the Geographic, I was into content.

So after having no interest in me in 1974, in 1986, they approached me to do a show about geography, its style based on a show of mine they had seen at a festival. I created that show, which was very successful on all levels. That led to another and then to my doing all the media for National Geographic's Centennial celebration in 1988. I produced over an hour of media for that event, mixing 9 projectors and film. Mixing media was always a bit cumbersome, not only technically but conceptually. Film or video showed up the static nature of the still photos. And still photos, with their iconic symbolic nature, made video or film seem less compelling and powerful. Nonetheless, I did mix media and the event and my shows all worked wonderfully to celebrate the 100th birthday of this unique institution. And it served to cement my relationship with National Geographic. I did more shows for them and they became my biggest client. In 1989, they offered me the position of Director of Multi Image / Executive Producer. I liquidated my business in



Boston and moved to their headquarters in Washington, D.C. I've been working with them ever since as a photographer, writer, producer and lecturer.

The Geographic has been an amazing place to work, as one might expect. With its mission "the world and all that's in it," I've had an incredible diversity of subjects to work on. History. Photography. Nature. The Environment. Cultures. Science. Exploration. Adventure. The Geographic. Social Issues and many more. I worked for almost every department, from photography to books, mission programs to the President's office. If an outside group came to the Geographic wanting a show, I was given the assignment. My shows enjoyed featured presentations, highly visible forums, and global audiences. They often became the "voice of the Geographic," presenting their viewpoint on issues or events. And best of all, I was given complete artistic freedom to create them as I chose. My budgets were generous and I had the millions of photos in the Geo's archives to pick from when needed. Just looking through those archives was an ongoing education in photography. Often the Geographic would just give me a topic and leave me alone to make a show about it with minimal input. I mixed writing, photography in the field, researching the Geographic's photography files, interviewing, and production. I've worked alongside some of the world's best photographers and met and interviewed some remarkable explorers and adventurers. As of this writing, I'm still doing photography and lecturing for the Geographic on its Expeditions around the globe. It's been a long and amazing career with them.

In the mid-1990s, AMI and the multi-image media it nurtured began to fade as video took over. It would hang on in some places for almost another decade. In 2003, I began participating in the Fantadia multi-image and photography festival in Italy. Seeing other producers from other countries slowly but surely embrace digital media, I followed suit and began to work creating shows digitally. I love digital production. It is so much easier than analog. It is so immediate. I can sit at my laptop or desktop computer and just play with ideas, with music and images, graphics and production techniques. I've used different programs to create shows. Currently, I am using Adobe Premiere.

The technology that defined multi-image has become obsolete. But not necessarily the aesthetic of the medium. At least for me. I am using incredibly high-powered computers and software to create, essentially, what I created almost fifty years ago: very simple storytelling shows with full-frame images dissolving, set to music and sometimes words. I can do it so much more easily. With so much more precision, subtlety and nuance. Because every aspect of the production is now in my hands— photo tweaking, graphics, soundtrack creation, sequencing and effects — I can try ideas that would have, in the past, taken weeks and cost thousands of dollars. If I don't like something, I can hit "undo" or go back to a different saved version. And instead of ending up with 2 or 3 or 9 bulky slide trays, projectors, audio players and interface gizmos, now I can send the completed show as a file through the internet to anywhere on the planet almost instantly. I no longer have to clean hundreds of glass slide mounts and tiny chips of film. I no longer deal with a tangle of gizmos and wires. There is a new equation now: it is 95% creativity and 5% drudgery (if that).

So while the technology has changed, I believe that "multi-image" was always more a state of mind, a media viewpoint than any of the many machines we used to create our shows. I hope I am keeping that flame burning.

As I write this in 2019, an extraordinary opportunity has come my way. After screening my show about Eugene O'Neill for years as a slide show, then as a video, now the O'Neill Theater Center has asked me to re-create it digitally. How often does an artist get a chance to go back and reimagine a piece 38 years later? The sound studio dug out the old master multi-track tapes. I had insisted they keep them just in case we got a chance to rework someday. We found a studio in England that has the machine that can run and digitize a tape format abandoned long ago. The incredible actors and actresses who read the script and brought such vitality and emotion to it have passed away, so I will work with what was recorded decades ago.

Part of the charm and power of the original Monte Cristo Cottage show was the limitations of my skills at the time and having only two projectors to work with. They forced me to create a minimalist show that evoked more than it showed. Looking at it now, the visuals seem crude and clunky. I will re-photograph the entire piece and remake it using my digital video editor. The challenge will be to not over-produce it. To retain its inherent poetic power while adding nuance and finesse. I can't wait to rework this classic piece that launched my career and has withstood the test of time.

After 55 years of taking photographs, and almost 50 creating media presentations, I still love capturing the world in images. I love writing scripts. I love working with audio to create compelling presentations that will strike a responsive chord in my viewers. I still love the challenge and satisfaction of creating "media with a message."

Multi-Image lasted for about 30 years. It was a lovely, compelling medium that had a sense of poetry, of uniqueness that has never been duplicated. Those of us who were its practitioners enjoyed an era when a new form of media was born, flourished and then faded away — like one of our slides. I was lucky to be one of those who helped usher the medium from birth to maturity. I was able to help define a particular style and esthetic. And I was lucky to meet incredibly talented, visionary people from around the world.

Now, all these years after that seminal night in that photo class at Harvard, I still have that black Kodak 2-second dissolve box that got me started on my career. It is in my studio, where I can see it and reminisce fondly about the old multi-image days. That black box didn't do much, but what it did was magic. I will always be grateful to that anonymous photographer who came into class that day and showed his slide show. Like an angel, or maybe Yoda, he showed me the way to a lifelong love of telling stories with still photographs. It was a love at first sight that has endured a lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Todd is a member of the AMI Producers Hall of Fame and the recipient of several lifetime achievements awards. His shows have won over 50 Gold Awards in regional/international competitions as well as numerous Grand Prizes. He lectures about photography and media on National Geographic Expeditions. He spent a decade as head of a non-profit group restoring and creating a museum in an offshore lighthouse. Todd still participates in photography and media festivals in Italy. You can see some of Todd's work at his website: [www.Gipstein.com](http://www.Gipstein.com), learn about his novels at FaceBook/GipsteinBooks and see some of his shows on his channel on YouTube.



## BACKGROUND



Photo by Pam Swanson, 2014.

*Yogi Berra said: "Half the lies they say about me are true."  
That's why I'm writing this memoir—to set the record straight on a few matters.*

Burt Holmes taught me journalistic writing; I learned to *begin with the end*, to lead with the take-away, the point of the story. It was like learning to write all over again, although it has since become second nature. In school, they taught scholarly writing, a linear structure—starting with a premise; then building the argument, step-by-step; then summarizing the argument and drawing a conclusion. A scholar writes, *That caused this*. A journalist would rearrange the story: *This is because of that*.

When I began writing this memoir my approach was linear and scholarly, as though writing the script for a documentary, starting at the beginning and working through to the end. That didn't work very well; I was having a hard time remembering things in historical sequence. After struggling for a year, I found that the best way to recall the past was to go with the flow—to let my mind float down winding streams of consciousness, in and out of past, present and future; daydreaming, for example. Thinking about any one thing triggers a cascade of other recollections and/or projections that are related in some way to the parent thought—like a river branching into streams and tributaries.

When I stopped forcing memory to be sequential, and allowed thoughts to go where they wanted, the situation improved. I found that key thoughts, like key words, trigger associations that compare present experiences to past ones, searching for similarities, a context with which to better understand the present and, possibly, project hypothetical futures. The result is an autobiographical confabulation that began as a documentary and ended up an assemblage of randomly-ordered streams of consciousness, pieced together on a timeline.

## PRELUDE



Empty stage before Burger King show.  
From left to right, Pat Billings, Don O'Neill, Glen Wilhelm, Douglas Mesney.

*"When I sit alone in a theater and gaze into the dark space of its empty stage, I'm frequently seized by fear that this time I won't manage to penetrate it, and I always hope that this fear will never desert me. Without an unending search for the key to the secret of creativity, there is no creation. It's necessary always to begin again. And that is beautiful."*

Josef Svoboda

The number of times I stared into the dark space of an empty stage or showroom would be hard to count. For a screen designer, an empty stage is like a writer's fresh sheet of paper; both are voids where nothing exists, one black the other white. Being able to look *into* the nothingness and *see* something is the trick; the challenge is to conjure the ideas that are in your head; if you stare deeply into the void, eventually the world around you will fade away; you lose consciousness of the outside world and enter an inner one; I call that the Zen of Creativity. I've never been challenged by writer's block nor have I ever had trouble designing things; the ideas always seem to be there when needed. Was I born with that or did I acquire the ability? There are those that say we are born with innate personalities and abilities; I tend to agree with that although I was also raised in a culturally rich, stimulating environment. I had the best of both worlds.

My parents encouraged all my interests; my mother kept reminding me that, "You can do anything you set your mind to." Life taught me that she was right. Mom's words are echoed by the channeler, Esther Hicks.<sup>4</sup>

Hicks channels the words of Abraham.<sup>5</sup> Abraham espouses *The Law of Attraction*; it's the idea that "you are what you think." According to Abraham, you first conjure an idea; if you like the idea it will stick; then, the more you think about it, the more manifest it becomes; your dream comes true; it is a self-fulfilling cycle, a virtuous circle of creation. Nike captures that idea perfectly with their slogan, *Just Do It*.

Unlocking creativity is about doing things you like to do. If you don't like what you are doing you will resist it and spiral down. Liking what you do gives upward thrust, like a vortex, empowering you. Coming up with ideas is bound by the same *Law of Attraction*; you can't do a good job with an idea you don't like. To get on the trail of an idea, I just begin; I just do it. Simply beginning gets the mental ball rolling, building momentum. If you like the idea it will grow, eventually taking on a life of its own. It is like growing plants; the plant that gets the most attention grows biggest and best. This applies to everything in your life; you are what you *think* you are. Hopefully you are a legend in your own mind and if you are, *Mazal Tov!*

Certainly, I am a legend in *my* mind, otherwise why would I be writing this?

The answer is clarity. I want to clear up any misconceptions about me that might still exist in people's minds. There was a certain amount of controversy that swirled around me; I want to set my record straight, especially for those who know me or may have heard about me by reputation—that's maybe 5,000 people at best. Besides them, I can't imagine anyone else reading this memoir—unless they are students of audio-visual history; for them I hope this confabulation gives a sense of what life was like back in the days of high times, free love and slide shows.

That said, my proof-reader, John Grinde, strongly disagrees with me. He says the book will appeal to history fanatics, photographers, expatriates, Mad Men and gearheads.

Time will tell.

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<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia: (A channeler is) "...a person who conveys thoughts or energy from a source believed to be outside the person's body or conscious mind; specifically, one who speaks for nonphysical beings or spirits."

<sup>5</sup> Wikipedia: "Abraham" consists of a group of entities which are "interpreted" by Esther Hicks. Abraham have described themselves as "a group consciousness from the non-physical dimension". They have also said, "We are that which you are. You are the leading edge of that which we are. We are that which is at the heart of all religions." Abraham has said through Esther that, whenever one feels moments of great love, exhilaration, or pure joy, that is the energy of source and that is who Abraham is. Esther herself calls Abraham "infinite intelligence"

## BEGINNING WITH THE END

I knew something was wrong when I started having suicidal thoughts, but didn't know what to do. In the doldrums of retirement, there was no wind in my sails and my wife got tired of endless tales about the glory days of slide shows. She said I ought to write a book.

"Think about it," she insisted, "you became a citizen of the world and the first slide-show producer to be inducted into the Multi-Image Hall of Fame. People would be interested in how you did that."

A colleague [John Grinde] termed my story "an incredible epic;" the name stuck.

In fact, I worked in 68 countries for 198 blue-chip clients:

### Countries Where I Have Worked

Australia		
Austria		
Bahamas	Guatemala	
Bahrain	Holy See	
Belgium	Hong Kong	Poland
Belize	Hungary	Portugal
Brazil	India	Puerto Rico
Bermuda	Indonesia	Romania
Cambodia	Italy	Russia
Canada	Jamaica	San Marino
Canary Islands	Japan	Singapore
China	Jordan	Slovakia
Columbia	Kenya	Slovenia
Czech Republic	Laos	South Korea
Denmark	Latvia	Spain
England	Lithuania	Sweden
Estonia	Luxemburg	Switzerland
Ethiopia	Malaysia	Taiwan
Finland	Mexico	Tanzania
France	Monaco	Thailand
Germany	Montenegro	Tunisia
Gibraltar	Netherlands	Turkey
Greece	New Zealand	United Arab Emirates
	Norway	United Kingdom
	Philippines	United States
		Vietnam

## **Client List – Partial [excluding Forox clients]**

ABB [Asea Brown Boveri]  
Adato Music  
Air Progress Magazine  
AISI – American Iron & Steel Institute  
Albert Frank Gunther Law  
Allan Heller [designer]  
Allan Grayson, Demitron  
Allison Automotive  
Amalie Oil  
American Bible Society  
American Home Sewing Association  
American Medical Association  
AMR – Advanced Management Research  
Apple Records  
Ardell | Hennaluscent  
Arlen Realty  
Armco Steel  
Associated Spring  
Atlantic Records  
Atlas Copco  
AT&T  
Avions Marcel Dassault Brigue  
AVL – Audio Visual Laboratories  
Babcox & Wilcox  
Bahamas Realty Corporation  
Ballentine's [scotch]  
Beeline Books  
Bergen Industries  
Black Beauty Model Agency  
Boat Owners Council of America  
Boating Magazine  
Boeing  
Brown Brothers Harriman  
Burger King  
Burson-Marsteller  
Business Committee for The Arts  
Car and Driver Magazine  
CDC – Centers for Disease Control  
Cessna  
Chrysler  
Cincom Systems  
Clairol [Bristol Meyers]  
Coca Cola  
Colgate  
Collectors Silver  
Continental Can  
Corro-Vendome

Creative Leisure  
CSSP – Committee of Stainless-Steel Producers [AISI]  
Cummins Diesel  
Cycle Magazine  
Daniel & Charles  
Dataton  
David Hagenbush Agency | Woolsey  
DeBeers  
Diamond Council  
DHL  
Doctor Shiny Teeth Healthy Teeth Club  
Dodge Editions  
Disney  
Duke Power Company  
EJA – Executive Jet Aviation [Net Jets]  
Electrolux  
Ericsson  
Escapade Magazine  
Falcon Jet  
FEEC – Field Educational Enterprises Corp. [*World Book* encyclopedia]  
Fermenta  
Flower Fifth Avenue Hospital  
Flying Magazine  
Ford  
FMC  
Fulton & Partners  
Gallery Magazine  
Gatorade  
Gemeentekrediet  
Gillette  
Glemby International [salons]  
Gordon Paulsen Family  
GM [Holden]  
Great West Life  
GQ [magazine]  
Gulfstream Jet  
Hartfield-Zody  
Hess Corporation  
Hoffman-LaRoche  
Howard Beck Agency  
IBM  
IKEA  
InterCoiffure  
ISSI – Integrated Silicon Solutions  
Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation  
J. DeBow & Partners  
JD Edwards  
Jerome Salon  
J. Loring

Justine Model Consultants  
JVC  
Kay Walkingstick | Artist  
Kodak  
Land Rover  
Learjet  
Leslie Blanchard [salon]  
Liaison Agency  
Linjeflyg  
Lincoln Steel  
Look Out Farm [musicians]  
Lynn Stewart | Mister Pants | Ratty Furs  
Lord Abbott  
Malaysia Airlines  
Mannequin Magazine  
Marcel Dassault Brigue Aviation [Falcon Jet]  
Marion DeLand  
Matrix Essentials [Bristol Meyers]  
Mercedes Benz  
Merrill-Lynch  
MIC – Motorcycle Industries Council  
Michel Cather  
Microsoft  
Mister Pants  
Models Circle Magazine  
Mortimer Tiley  
MTPB – Malaysia Tourist Promotion Board  
MW Kellogg  
Nadler Stainless  
NAEBM – National Association of Engine & Boat Manufacturers  
National Constitution Center  
National Starch  
NEC – Nippon Electric Company  
New York Life  
Nintendo  
Nike  
Nikon  
N.W. Ayers  
Optisonics  
Owens Corning  
OCF Owens Corning Fiberglas  
Patterson Music  
Penthouse Magazine  
Peppermill Casino  
Peter's Place [salon]  
Petit Jean Steel  
Piper Aircraft  
Popular Photography Magazine  
Renault USA



Rite-Diet Cola  
RKM  
Roland Partners | Land Rover  
Ronson [lighters]  
Royal Jordanian Airline [ALIA]  
Rostmark  
Saab  
Sail [magazine]  
Samsung  
Sandvik  
San Jacinto Museum  
SAS – Scandinavian Airlines  
Scania  
Schaffer Beer  
Seeburg Industries  
Shaw Communications  
Shell  
Show Magazine  
Sikorsky [helicopters]  
Sinclair Refining Company  
Singer Sewing Machine  
Skanska  
Skechers  
Snowmobiling Magazine  
SPI – Society of the Plastics Industry  
SSCI – Steel Service Center Institute  
Swedish Match  
Swedish Tourism Bureau  
Texas Museum of History  
Ticor  
True Magazine  
Union Carbide  
USI – US Industrial Chemical Company  
Valentino  
Vidal Sassoon  
Village People, The  
Volvo  
Wärtsillä  
Washington Post, The  
Watersport Magazine  
Westchester Medical Center  
Western Union  
William Hawkey, author | Living With Plants  
William Pahlman, AIA  
Willy Nelson  
Wings Club  
Woolsey Marine  
Wood Council  
World Book Encyclopedia



Xerox  
Yamaha  
Zinc Institute  
Zotos

How did I do all that?

By making slide shows on a grand scale; shows that involved one hundred or more slide projectors.

But what are those?

## FORWARD

What is a slide show?



During my lifetime, there was a mini-epoch when slide shows were the most popular media for business communications; when *multi-image* was all the rage. A niche industry that once employed 20,000 people, whose work was seen by millions, came and went in just twenty years; and it all happened on my watch. Early on, I hitched my wagon to the multi-image train; I got the ride of my life. My story is intertwined with the history of contemporary slide shows. Let me tell you about it.

Wikipedia: A slide projector is an opto-mechanical device for showing photographic slides. 35 mm slide projectors, direct descendants of the larger-format magic lantern, first came into widespread use during the 1950s as a form of occasional home entertainment; family members and friends would gather to view slide shows, which typically consisted of slides snapped during vacations and at family events. Slide projectors were also widely used in educational and other institutional settings. Photographic film slides and projectors have mostly been replaced by image files on digital storage media shown on a projection screen by using a video projector or simply displayed on a large-screen video monitor. (And now, LCD and LED screens).

In case you don't already know, a slide show is a picture show. Movies and videos are also called picture shows; however, the pictures in a slide show are usually images that do not move, called *stills*. Today, people make their own slide shows using digital cameras and computer apps (applications); PowerPoint was one of the first digital-slide-show applications. Before digital imaging, few people made slide shows because special projectors and equipment were needed; only professional and advanced-amateur photographers got involved in audiovisual (AV) programs like slide shows.

Slide shows evolved from the development of photography and cameras, which in turn evolved from the invention of lenses, dating back to early Greece. Around 1000 BC, an Arabian physicist, Ibn al-Haytham al Hazen Alhazen, developed theories about the optics of a *Camera Obscura*, a pin-hole camera. In the 1400s, Leonardo da Vinci had this to say:

“If the facade of a building, or a place, or a landscape is illuminated by the sun and a small hole is drilled in the wall of a room in a building facing this, which is not directly lighted by the sun [i.e., a dark room], then all objects illuminated by the sun will send their images through this aperture [small hole] and will appear, upside down, on the wall facing the hole.

“You will catch these pictures on a piece of white paper, which placed vertically in the room not far from that opening, and you will see all the above-mentioned objects on this paper in their natural shapes or colors, but they will appear smaller and upside down, on account of crossing of the rays at that aperture. If these pictures originate from a place which is illuminated by the sun, they will appear colored on the paper exactly as they are. The paper should be very thin and must be viewed from the back.”<sup>6</sup>

About 100 years after Leonardo’s optical investigations, [Gerolamo Cardano](#), an Italian polymath (person with wide-ranging knowledge) described using a camera obscura with a [biconvex lens](#) in his 1550 book *De Subtilitate*. With the passing of another century someone figured out that a camera in reverse is a projector. Thus, the very first picture shows are said to have been made in the 1650s using a candle-powered projector called *Lanterna Magica* (Magic Lantern) to show drawings that were hand-painted on glass, called *lantern slides*, and later, in the 1800s, photographic slides. That is likely when the word *slide* came into use; prepared pictures were inserted into the projector using a sliding gate, or just *slide*.

*Lantern slide* is defined by Google as “a mounted photographic transparency for projection by a *magic lantern*.” They go on to explain:

“The magic ‘lantern’ used a concave mirror in back of a light source to direct as much of the light as possible through a small rectangular sheet of glass—a “lantern slide”—on which was a painted (or photographic) image to be projected, and onward into a lens at the front of the apparatus. The lens was adjusted to optimally focus the plane of the slide at the distance of the projection screen, which could be simply a white wall, and it therefore formed an enlarged image of the slide on the screen.”<sup>7</sup>

As just explained, there are two elements to a slide show: the projector and the slide(s); three elements if you include the screen. Important parts common to all projectors are the light source and the lens. A slide placed between the light source and lens is projected out, through the lens, usually onto a screen. The first light sources were oil lamps and candles. Today, light is still indexed in terms of its “*candle power*,” which is a measure of brightness.

Improved brightness came with the invention of the Argand lamp [a brighter-burning oil lamp] in the 1790s; then *Limelight*, was invented in the 1820s [made by burning a cylinder of quicklime (calcium oxide) with an oxyhydrogen flame]; followed by the electric-arc lamp in the 1860s [burning pure carbon rods with an electric arc]; each successive type improved the brightness of projected lantern slides. Finally, the electric light was invented by Thomas Edison between 1878 and 1880; that revolutionized the lighting industry. For lantern slide projectors, Edison lights were more convenient than arc lights. [Arc-lights—like what you see when you watch a welder—give off noxious gasses.]

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<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lens\\_\(optics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lens_(optics)) and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_photographic\\_lens\\_design](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_photographic_lens_design)

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic\\_lantern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magic_lantern)

However, electric lights were not as bright; so, the brightest light source for slide projection continued to be electric-arc lamps until the 1940s when the xenon/mercury short-arc lamp was developed by Osram [a German company]. Xenon lamps, first introduced in 1951, are still widely used today when extreme brightness is required (for example to project very large pictures). Today there are myriad types of light sources: traditional incandescent; tungsten-halogen; fluorescent; mercury vapor; and most recently light emitting diodes (LEDs). Projectors were normally equipped with tungsten halogen or incandescent lamps; however, as I write this LEDs are becoming the future of lighting, bright enough for the headlights of cars and for image projection.

Projector chassis and slide-handling mechanisms have likewise evolved through a wide variety of iterations. As photography evolved, projectors had to keep pace. Then, like now, technological improvement was all about miniaturization; cameras got smaller, lighter and easier to handle. Likewise, film sizes got smaller, to accommodate compact cameras. In 1913, the first ultra-compact 35 mm camera—the *American Tourist Multiple*—became a big seller. [35 mm refers to the width of the film.] A year later the *Simplex* camera introduced a larger aperture (picture area); it measured 24 X 36 mm, maximizing the efficiency of 35 mm film. The new format was almost instantly adopted by the German camera maker Leica whose *miniature* cameras were probably developed for purposes of spying and journalistic reportage in WWI. By WWII, 35 mm cameras dominated the market, made popular by famous war photographers like Robert Capa and W. Eugene Smith.

Slides, as I refer to them in this book, were/are individual “chips” of 35 mm photo film, each 8 *perfs* (perforations) in length, with an aperture (picture area) measuring 24 X 36 millimeters, mounted in frames made of card stock or combinations of plastic, glass and metal. [See: *Film Apertures & Perforations / 35 mm* in the Appendix.]

Until a film chip is mounted into a frame, it is referred to as either a negative or a positive, aka diapositive. A film positive is also called a *transparency* (or just *trannie*). Once in a frame, a film chip becomes known as a *slide*. In the 1980s, the famous Swedish camera maker, Hasselblad, brought out projectors for the larger slides produced by their cameras; those shot pictures on 70 mm and 120 size film. [120 films are nominally 60mm wide (2.4 inches); the size was also called *two-and-a-quarter*, *square* or  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$  (inches).

Call me a traditionalist, but for me slides will always be 35 mm film, just like the originals made for Thomas Edison by George Eastman in 1892. Edison's *Kinetoscope* was the first movie player, made possible by Eastman's flexible film, which replaced glass plates. Edison's patented format, calling for a 1:133 aspect-ratio frame, made with four sprocket holes per frame on 35 mm film, became the international standard of the motion picture industry, and it still is to this day. Although patented for stills photography in 1908, and first used in 1913 (the *Tourist Multiple*) it was the German-made *Leica* camera, created by Oskar Barnack for lens-maker Ernst Leitz in 1925, that popularized the 35 mm format. The Hollywood-standard 4-perf frame size (four perforations) was doubled to 8-perf; that became the 1932 Leica Standard for 35 mm stills cameras that dominates the photo industry, even today.

Also, in 1932, the first true color film was made by *Technicolor* for Hollywood movies; however, the process was too technical for use by stills photographers.<sup>8</sup>

However, in 1936 Eastman Kodak introduced *Kodachrome*, a reversal film that produces a positive image on a flexible transparent base (acetate at first, then triacetate). *Reversal* means that during processing a negative image is first developed on the film strip, then that negative is chemically removed and what is left becomes the *reversed* positive image; the process is called *subtractive color* for obvious reasons. Kodachrome was originally made for the movie industry; it became available for stills photographers in 1936. Later that year, Agfa-Gevaert introduced *Agfa Neu*, a reversal color film that had built-in *dye-couplers* (simply put, the color dyes are already in the film), resulting in simplified processing. [Kodachrome dyes are added during processing.]. Shortly after, in the early 1940s, Eastman Kodak introduced *Ektachrome*, a reversal film that produced better colors than Agfa and, more importantly, that could be processed by professional and amateur photographers alike.

It was the development of reversal films like Kodachrome, Agfachrome and particularly Ektachrome that gave rise to the modern slide show. Before that, films produced negatives, which had to be printed onto another piece of film or paper to make a natural looking *positive* picture. Early color prints were expensive and their color dyes were impermanent. Reversal films produced images that could be projected and shown on a screen, bypassing the need of expensive prints; that created a market for slide projectors.

Kodak introduced their *Kodaslide* Projector in 1937 to capitalize on the growing interest in color photography and peoples' desire to save money. Over the years, the Kodaslide morphed into seven improved models culminating with the *Kodaslide Signet 500* in 1954. All the early model projectors required slides to be changed one at a time. Kodak's *Cavalcade* projector, introduced in 1958, featured the first *slide tray* (a straight one holding 40 slides) as well as a timer for automatic slide changes. It was followed quickly by the *Cavalcade 500* projector (1958) which offered a choice of either metal magazines to both show and store 30 slides (or 36, using *READYMATIC* trays). The *Cavalcade 540* was next; the first projector compatible with synchronized sound programs from tape recorders. Then in 1961 Kodak launched the *Carousel 550* projector and with it their revolutionary *round* slide tray, holding 80 slides. The Carousel projector took slide presentations to a new level; they were more portable, had interchangeable lenses, and remote control of forward, reverse and focus.

After that, things happened fast. In 1964 Kodak Germany began production of the Carousel S, a 50 Hz, heavy-duty projector for professionals; although it was a superior projector in many ways, the German-made machines were never introduced into the USA. Instead, Kodak introduced the *Ektagraphic* projector in 1967; that model eventually dominated the US market. [I greatly preferred the standard Carousel models; they were the only ones we ever used at Incredible.] After their introductions, the Carousel and Ektagraphic models went through sixteen upgrades. Although Kodak dominated the slide projector market, they eventually had plenty of competition; there were fifty-one

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<sup>8</sup> Technicolor process involved three separate black and white negatives, one each for the primary colors—red, green and blue; those three negatives had to be recombined onto a single, fourth film strip, by a form of dye-transfer printing.

projector brands when the slide show business peaked in the '80s; imagine that, from zero to fifty-one in as many years; and now, zero again. Wow.

The fact that people continue to call images for projection or display “slides” is a testament to how ingrained they once were in peoples’ lives; there was a time when nearly every business and many homes had a slide projector; slide shows were used for entertainment, amusement, education, advertising and more. It was during that time that I became a *pioneer* of multi-image slide shows; in two decades, I garnered more than 150 international awards for my slide-show work and was honored to become one of the first three producers installed in the *Multi-Image Hall of Fame*.

NOTE: Having a basic knowledge of multi-image will make parts of this book more understandable. I encourage you to read Wikipedia’s article about Multi-Image at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multi-image>.



Yours Truly was the first producer installed in the AHF Hall of Fame.

**Part One:**  
**EARLY YEARS**

The acorn falls far from the tree.



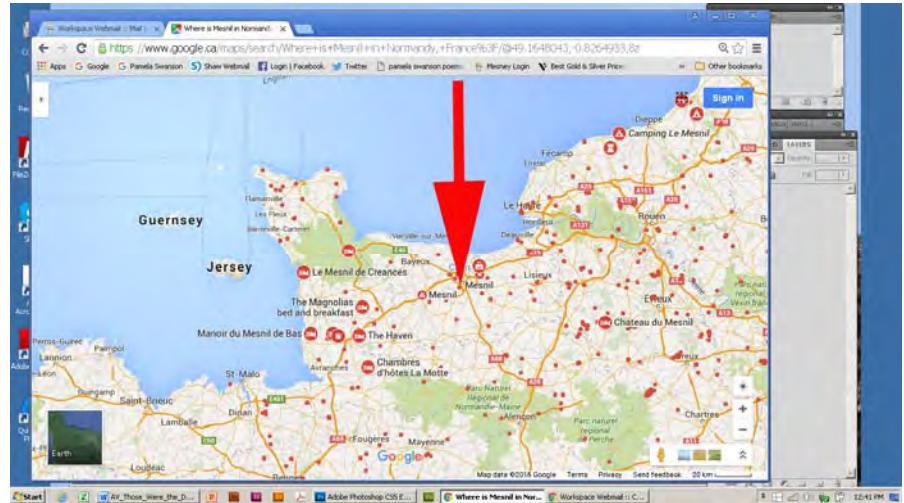
Dorothy Mesney with baby Douglas, 1945.  
Painting by Katheryn Monro Taylor



## 1945 – Lucky Star – Born in Brooklyn

I wasn't born a slide guy, slides came later. Like my paternal ancestors, I was born a *renaissance man*, a jack of all trades, bitten by the travel bug.

The name Mesney was derived from Mesny, pronounced *may-knee* in French; it's an Anglicization of the French name Mesnil, the town in Normandy where my ancestors lived before crossing to the Channel Islands with William the Conqueror in 1066<sup>9</sup> and settling on the island of Alderney, where I am supposedly the hereditary sheriff.



On that fair Isle, Pierre Mesny and Marguerite Gaudion produced two sons: William and Michael. They, in their turns, produced sons of their own—both named William—who lived remarkably similar lives as adventurers who left the Islands, one for the church the other for his ego. My great grandfather, William Ransome, was Michael's son. In 1862, at age 23, he became a missionary in Borneo, converting head hunters to Christianity at the behest of the so-called "White Raja" of Borneo [and later, Brunei], William Brooks. In 1897, he resigned from the church because of ill health. [Many missionaries in Borneo succumbed to malaria and other tropical maladies. In fact, WR was sent to Borneo to replace missionaries who had succumbed to illness of attacks by the Island's three ethnic groups: Chinese, Muslim and indigenous Dyak tribesman (head hunters)]. He achieved the position of Arch Deacon and, although weakened, had sufficient vigor to conceive my Grandfather, Roger James Mesney, with his second wife, Alice, after fathering two other children with her and five more with his first wife, Henrietta.

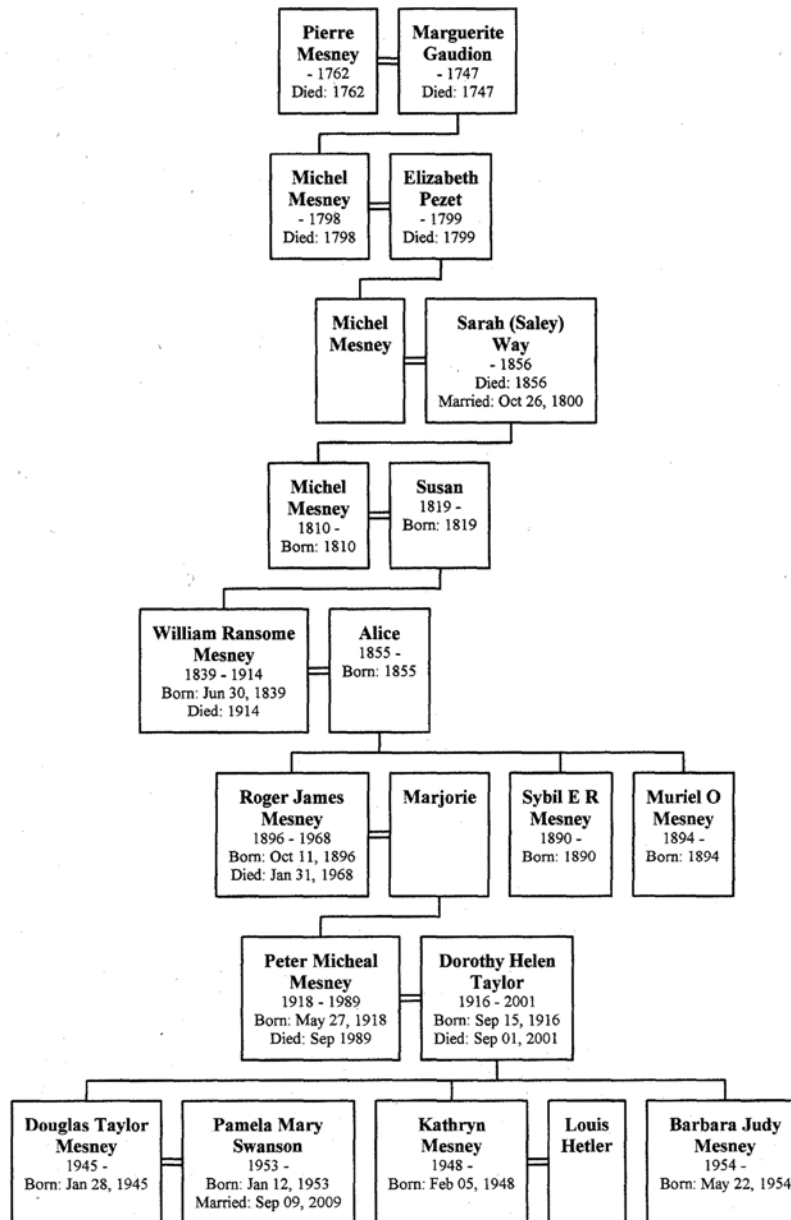
### Descendancy for William Ransome Mesney

- 1-William Ransome Mesney b. 30 Jun 1839, Great Ryburgh, Norfolk, England
  - +Alice M b. 1855
    - 2-Sybil E R Mesney b. 1890, Sarawak, Borneo
    - 2-Muriel O Mesney b. 1894, Sarawak, Borneo
    - 2-Roger Mesney b. 1897, Sarawak, Borneo
- +Henrietta Charlotte Blennerhasset Woolley b. 1845, Kensington, d. 31 Oct 1884
  - 2-Annie Mesney b. 1873, Sarawak, Borneo
  - 2-Francis Mesney b. 1879, Sarawak, Borneo
  - 2-Clarence Mesney b. 1880, Sarawak, Borneo
  - 2-Charles M C Mesney b. 1881, Sarawak, Borneo
  - 2-Reginald Mesney b. 1884, Sarawak, Borneo

<sup>9</sup> According to Ned Dubin, a French language historian, Mesney derives from maisné which means house dweller. However, I was told, as a child, that the name meant "dweller by black waters."

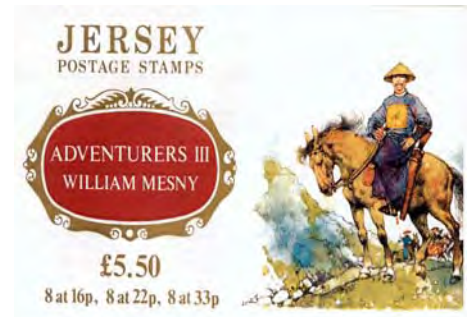


## *Descendants of Pierre Mesney*



William senior's son, William Jr., sailed to China at age 12 and spent the rest of his life there, going native, becoming a General in the Imperial Chinese Army during the terminus years of the Ch'ing dynasty, and marrying two Chinese women. His second wife, a teenager whose slave contract he purchased (liberating her from a life of prostitution), bore his two children: son Pin (aka Hu-sheng) in 1885 and daughter, Marie Wan-er, in 1894. Following their history would take us far off the path of this tale; but there's much more about him; William thought and wrote a lot of himself. (It runs in the family. Ha!)

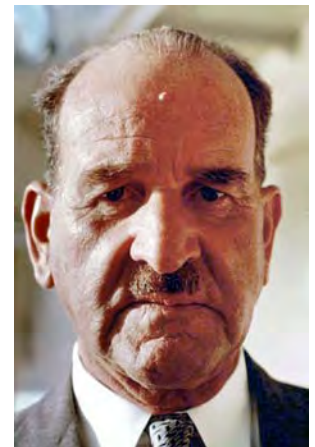
[See, *Mesney Family History*, in the Appendix.]



Above: William Mesney in 1875. Photo courtesy David Leffman, *The Mercenary Mandarin*. Top right, 1992 commemorative Channel Islands postage stamps commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mesny's birth. Bottom right: family photos marked, simply: "Chinese Mesney."

Roger James was baptised Mesney, not Mesny. [There's no record of when Mesny became Mesney; David Leffman postulates that it was a transliterative spelling added by non-French speaking people, who read Mesney as Mess-Knee instead of May-Knee.]

My grandfather, was one of William Ransome's three children: two daughters, Sybil (1890) and Muriel (1894), and my grandad (1896). RJ was born in Sarawak, Borneo, but schooled and for the most part brought-up in England, where he was sent to school and lived his life. Roger inherited his father William Ransome's travel bug and lived overseas most of his productive years, as an engineer supervising operation of the Anglo-Dutch Mining Corporation in Peru and Curaçao.



R.J. Mesney by Yours Truly, 1957.

Aged 22, Roger married a stage actress named Marjorie Unett aka Walker; she was six, seven or eight years older (records conflict). She would have appreciated having a sponsor, i.e., sugar daddy. I'm pretty sure it was an infatuation between the two; that he knocked her up and that spurred their marriage. Whatever, their union produced a single son, my father, Peter Michael Mesney. Or maybe not; Dad once confessed to being a bastard, or so I recall; but damn if I can't remember those details. Whatever his origins (his red hair was not a Mensy trait) he was my dad.



Mom's side of the family—the Taylors—were *all-Americans* among the first migrants from Europe after the Colonies were settled in the 1700s. I am supposedly related to Zachary Taylor, the 12<sup>th</sup> President of the USA. There's a bit of Scottish blood in my veins, too; my maternal grandmother was part of the Munro clan that emigrated to Canada, settling in Montréal, Québec.



Nanna, , was proud of her roots; she gave Kathy and I flannel shirts with the Munro's green blue and black plaid called Black Watch.<sup>10</sup>

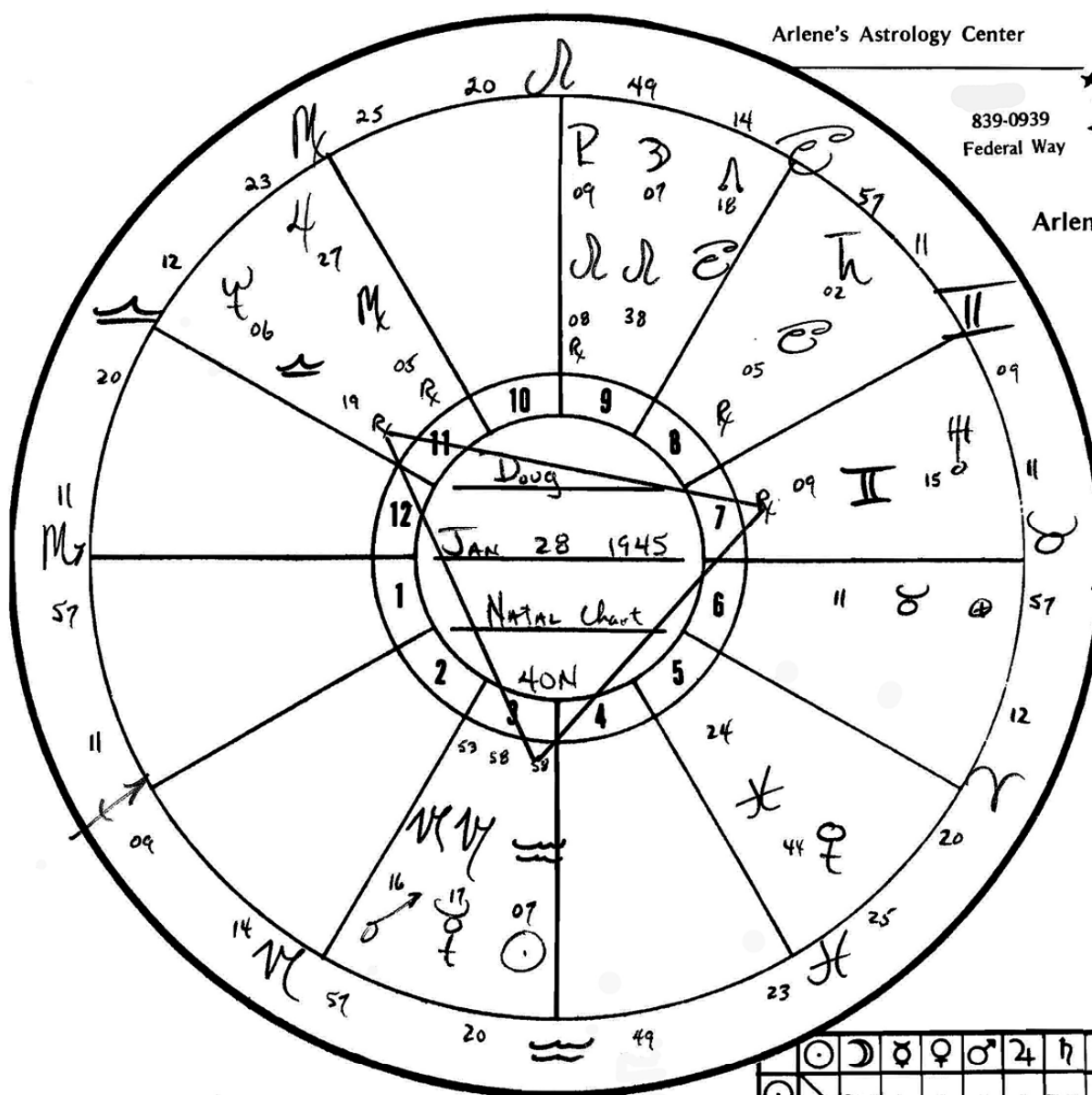
The stars were well ordered the night I was born. As a result, I have a powerful astrological chart [next page] with a grand trine. My birth star (Aquarius) forms 120-degree alignments with Moon (Leo) and rising Star (Scorpio)—Air, Fire and Water (nothing solid; except maybe ice). I came to realize the potentials of that trine in the '60s. Aquarius gave me intellect and intuition; Leo gave me confidence persistence and tenacity. Scorpio dialed up the intensity of the other two along with the gift of deep thought. Understanding that gave me the feeling that I was some kind of Superman and confirmed something I already suspected about myself—that I was born with a lucky star.

I was born with a silver spoon, into a kind of Camelot; mine was the good life. Mom was the daughter of a powerful New York Circuit Court judge, Franklin Taylor.



<sup>10</sup> For more see: <http://www.tartansauthority.com/research/tartan-spotlight/the-black-watch-tartan>





Name Doug  
Place Brooklyn NY War-Time  
Date JAN 28 1945 Time 2:00 am/pm  
Lat. 40N Long. 73W  
LMT, \_\_\_\_\_ Var. \_\_\_\_\_  
E. T. \_\_\_\_\_ S. T. \_\_\_\_\_

	FIRE +	EARTH -	AIR +	WATER -
CARDINAL	.	♂ → ♀	♀	♂ ♀
FIXED	♂ ♀	♂	♂	ASC
MUTABLE	.	4	4	♀

[illegible]



Judge Taylor married Katherine Munro, a French Canadian from Montréal, Québec, seen at left on Easter Sunday, 1958.

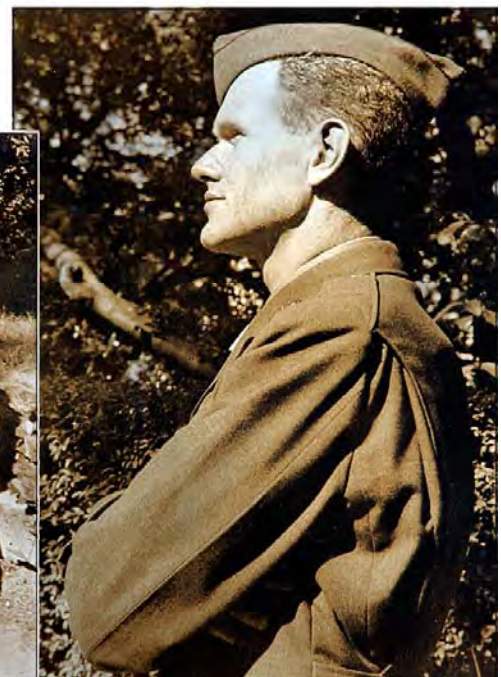
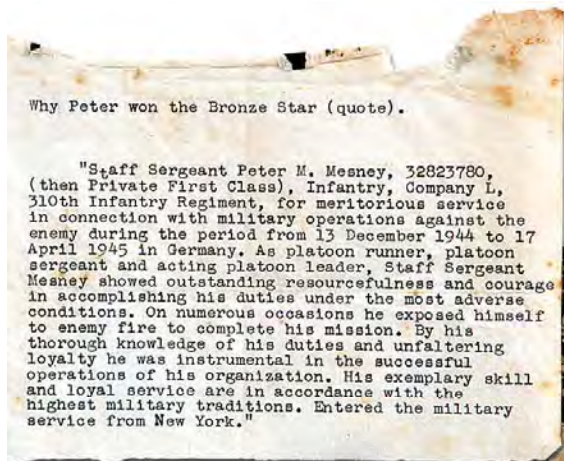


The Taylors lived a sweet life, spending summers on the tennis courts and around the dancefloors of exclusive lakeside resorts in the Adirondacks Mountains, socializing with the likes of singer Kate Smith; she was famous for her rendition of Irving Berlin's *God Bless America*, a song that became an iconic anthem during WWII.

Kate Smith was my sister Kathy's godmother.

Douglas Mesney photo, 1958.

It is no wonder that my father—who came to the US as a Spanish-English translator for the BBC before enlisting in the US Army—was taken in by Judge Franklin's daughter, Dottie. And, for her part, Dorothy Helen Taylor was no doubt intrigued by Peter Michael Mesney, a well-mannered Englishman with dashing red-hair and an accent to die for.



Possibly too, Mom reckoned that Peter could help her escape from her dominating, hard drinking, judgmental father, who she claims treated his wife abusively when he got drunk. [My cousin, Paul Taylor, didn't recall the Judge as being either a drunk or an abusive man, when I asked that specific question.]

As for me, I can't recall any of my first years. Perhaps I repressed those thoughts because they were too painful; I'll never know. After conceiving me in the spring of 1944 while on an extended leave from the Army, Dad disappeared back into the fog of war for the next two years. He was somewhere deep in Germany fighting the infamous Battle of the Bulge when I was born.

Dad may have been at war, but what did I know? I never met the guy. Mom and I lived under Franklin's roof for the better part of my first year, before the Judge moved us into our own apartment at 514 Third Street. Life was good, the Judge was well endowed and our family even had police protection (from the Mafia—Judge Franklin had prosecuted the Murder Incorporated trials and put away the infamous Lucky Luciano). We lived just off Prospect Park when that part of Brooklyn was upper crust. Through his rank and position Judge Taylor had plenty of *political capital*; he was a well-connected insider; part of the *Intelligentsia*, the so-called *Deep State*; a powerful voice in *Tammany Hall*, the octopus-like, Democratic, political organization that controlled New York government for decades.

## 1948 – Sister Kathy Born – Family Dynamics

My sister Kathy—Kathryn Muriel Mesney—was conceived in the lusty month of May, a year after Dad returned from the War.

She was born an Aquarian, on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1948. At the time, I was outraged at my parents focus on Kathy; in some respects, I still haven't gotten over it. The source of my rage was another perceived betrayal by Mom.

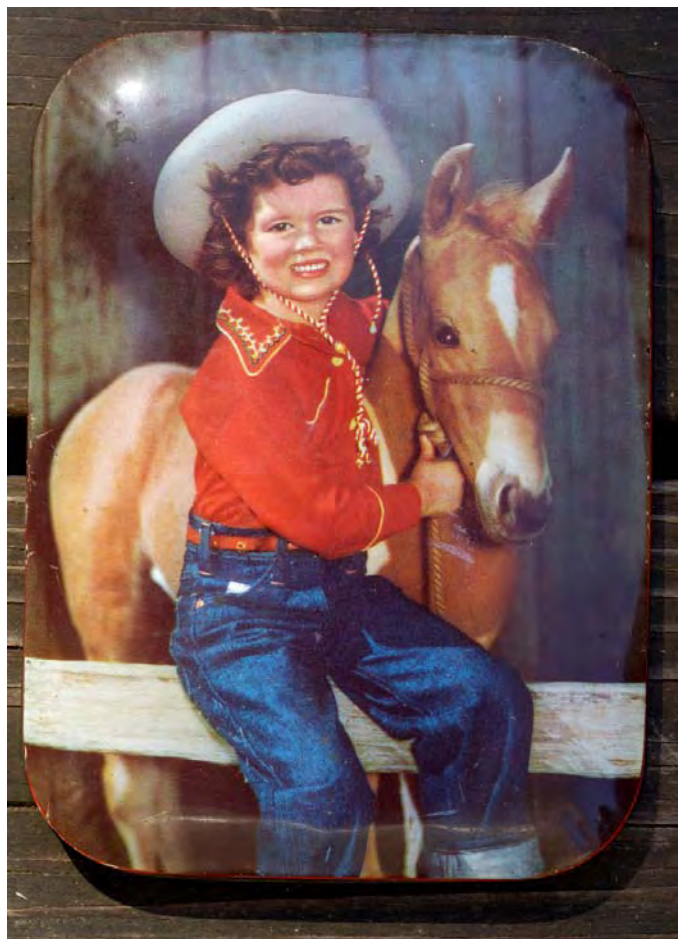
When I was born, I had Mom all to myself for the first year and a half; then Dad came to live with us and her attention shifted to him. When Kathy was born, attention shifted to her and I got even less. I took out my anger at Mom on Kathy; at least that is my explanation for the slings and arrows of extreme jealousy that I cast upon my sister in our early years. It's only a theory because I can't remember many specifics; I rely on anecdotal evidence and other people's recollections.

To elaborate on that: I provided Mom and Nanna (Grandma Taylor) with a human shield from Franklin's purported abusive treatment of them. As a result, I was over-mothered; Mother love turned into *smother love*.

I've heard that, for the first year and a half, Mom kept me in bed with her at night and that I got her full, undivided attention all day every day. However, that comfortable cocoon was stripped away when my father returned from the War. I was parked in a crib in another room at night and Grandma Taylor took over my upbringing more often than not. That resulted in a permanent, subconscious anger with Mom; it was an anger that I took out on virtually every woman in my life until late middle age—when I came to realize we create our own self reinforcing reality and circumstances.



Unfortunately for her, my sister bore the burden of my oedipal rage. My anger with Mom was dumped on her new little favorite—Kathy. Although we were three years apart, my jealousy was intense; I teased her unmercifully and experimented with her during early adolescence, deeply scarring her and eventually leading, I suspect, to her total separation from not only me, but from the Mesney name itself. [She legally changed her name to Patti Pimento. Seriously.]



*Although the cowgirl on the antique match box is not Kathy Mesney, it might as well have been; the likeness to her is uncanny, in every way; Dale Evans (Roy Rogers show) was her heroine.*

One time, when me and my friends, playing cowboys, rounded up my sister and her friends (the Indians) into a fort made from the huge corrugated box from Mom's new washing machine; once the Indians were in the box, ~~the cowboys~~ I set the box on fire.

Writing about that episode makes it sound more dramatic than it was; the flames never got too big; but the experience spooked the girls. My parents freaked, of course; they didn't know how to deal with my jealous nature, my meanness.

On another occasion I gave Ex-Lax chocolate candies (laxatives) to my sister and her friends on Halloween. There were serious repercussions to that prank. The laxatives worked so well that Cindy Connolly's parents took her to the doctor.

Those memories are fragmentary, but they give me pause. Eventually, Mom sent me to see some kind of child psychologist, in the guise of a mentor; he was an elderly man in excellent shape, tall with silver gray hair. We'd talk about all kinds of things; he taught me how to walk (seriously—not all strides are created equal). There was a lot of man-to-man stuff; that kind mentoring never came from Dad—he was brought up by an elderly spinster aunt in a remote village in the English Moors [Sticklepath] because his dad lived on another continent.<sup>1</sup> What did he know about fathering? Not much.

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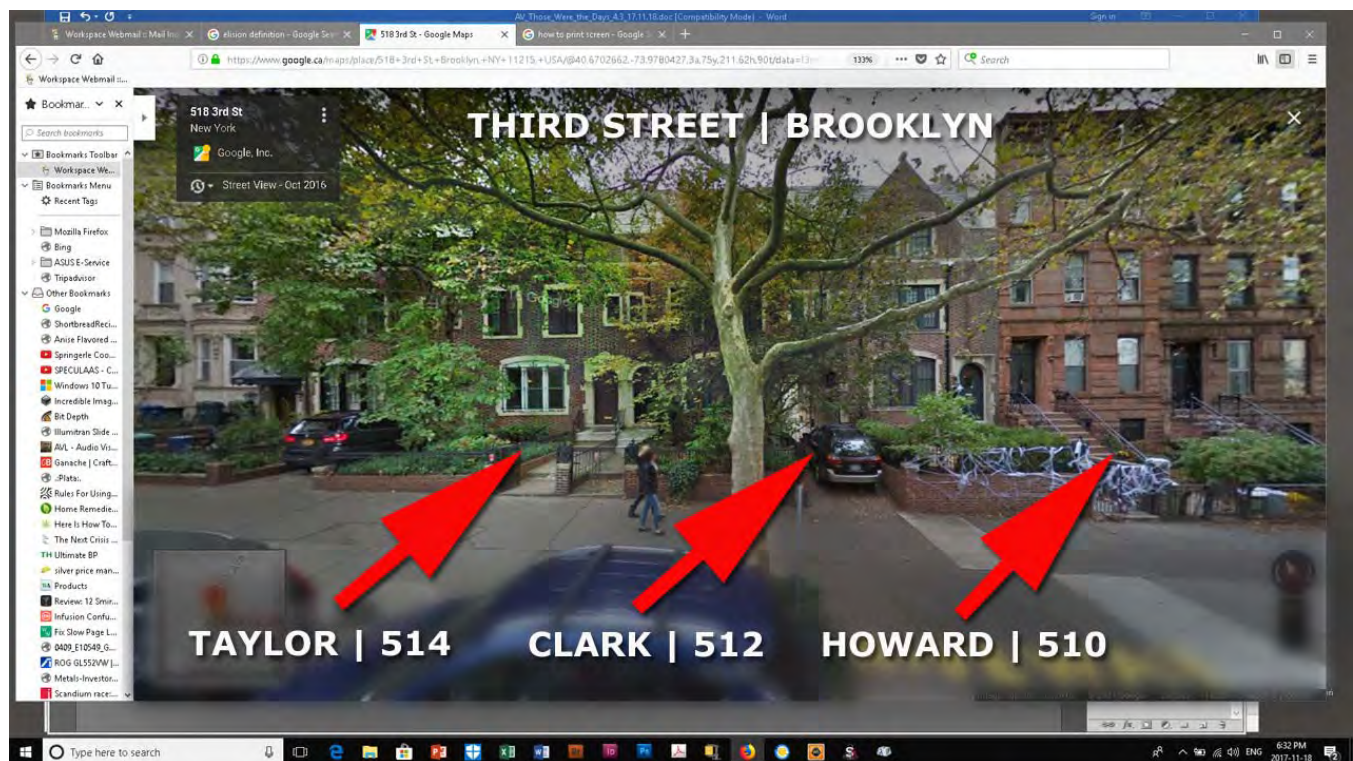
<sup>1</sup> Late in his life, Dad confessed to my sister, Kathy, that he wasn't sure if Roger James Mesney was his biological father; because his mom, who was an actress was also a player; she wanted no part of bringing up Peter; her rejection of him must have hurt young Peter deeply. I know what it feels like to have your mother reject you; I felt that sting when Peter returned home after the war, took my place in Mom's bedroom and replaced me as her primary love interest. Roger likely never knew what his wife, Marjorie, was up to back in London; he was bivouacked 6,300 miles away [~10,000 Kilometers] in Lima, Peru, the Chief Engineer for the Anglo-Dutch Mining Corporation's enormous copper-mining operations there; he had little time to raise a son, either; his or anyone else's. For Peter, that was a double rejection, by both of his parents, who shuttled back and forth between London and Lime sometimes with Peter in tow, or not; to them, he was more like a pet than a son.



When I was a young boy, Dad and I did some carpentry together in his basement workshop; he got me an electric jig saw; I used it to make jig-saw puzzles, which I sold door-to-door around the neighborhood. But Dad and I grew apart and by the time I was ten, he left me to my own devices and I started drifting away from him. Dad stopped being my role model because he was so unlike my friends' fathers; they liked baseball, football, hunting, fishing and a bunch of other stuff that Dad wasn't into.

## 1949 – Earliest Memories – Influential Events

They say now that the first three years of your life are more formative than was formerly thought—that what happens in those first three years shapes your basic persona. Others suggest that we are born with intact personalities. The truth lies somewhere between the two theories, no doubt. My own memories can't support either, because I have none. A lot of people seem to be able to remember things from earlier ages than I can. I think I am repressing a lot of stuff that is too uncomfortable to remember.



While I don't remember much about those earliest days in Brooklyn, one thing I do remember is a view of our house at 514 Third Street.<sup>12</sup> Ours was a typical, three-story townhouse, called a Brownstone. Just next to us lived Alex Clark and his wife; they were immigrants from Scotland; he worked at the Fulton Street Fish Market and every so often brought us a bounty of fish and other seafood. Down the street, at 510 Third Street, lived the more affluent Dr. John Howard with his wife Florence, who was mom's close friend; they had two sons my age, John and Noel, who became my best friends.

<sup>12</sup> See picture in the Appendix – Mesney Family History.

Their house was way bigger than ours; it was a 19<sup>th</sup> century townhouse originally built for a family with servants; it had twice as many rooms as ours, three sets of stairs, and hidden hallways everywhere, through which the hired help once circulated, unnoticed. For kids like John, Noel and I, who liked to play games like hide and seek, the Howard's was a real fun house. John was the eldest of the three; he had a year on me, making him the de facto leader of the group. John was a prankster; he came up with the idea for our Stinky Behind Club. To be a member of the club, you had to moon our parents and their friends during one of their cocktail parties. Far from being offended, the inebriated adults found us entertaining; they even applauded. John upped the ante—membership required the “full Monte”; that drew even more applause. Eventually, members in good standing bared it all and became flashers; running fully nude among the parental party goers. At that point our parents said enough is enough. The club was quashed; but it was fun while it lasted—exhilarating and titillating. The roots of my exhibitionist tendencies likely reach back to those episodes, getting applause and tacit approval for displaying myself.

### 1950 – Douglaston – Twin Tudors



When I was five years old, Judge Taylor bought us a house in Douglaston.<sup>13</sup> We lived at 324 Manor Road, in a quaint Tudor-style house, on a 40 X 100-foot plot (12.19 X 30.48 meters). It was small by Douglaston standards. Land became more valuable after WWII; when the soldiers came home, the economy went boom. Developers doubled Douglaston's density; they built two houses where, in the past, just one would have stood on the same plot; we had one of those new, smaller homes; it was one of two twin Tudors, originally owned by an elderly British couple, the Southworths, as their retirement home.

Next to us, on the west side, was the twin of our house. Nelly Alewyn lived there with her two daughters,

Veronica (“Vroney”), a lanky dark-haired beauty, and Kristal, a tall, tawny blonde. Nelly had worked as a librarian but was retired. Her friend and house-mate, Maja, earned money babysitting and cleaning houses.

The four of them fled Germany to escape WWII.



<sup>13</sup> Wikipedia: [Douglaston is] a rich suburban enclave, 14 miles east of downtown Manhattan. Situated on a peninsula, surrounded by Little Neck Bay, Douglaston is the next best thing to a private, gated community. There is only one main road in and out. William Douglas once built his estate on that idyllic land, in the traditions of a wooded English manor. When he died, his heirs sold plots of land to an emerging class of affluent New Yorkers who were making money on preparations for the American entry into WWII. His private estate became Douglas Manor, an exclusive property that offered the wealthy an upscale suburban lifestyle. Long Island was being transformed from potato farms to new communities of all sorts, some more exclusive than others.



I never knew what happened to Nelly's husband, but he left his family enough to afford a home in Douglaston, even in a lower-priced house, like ours. Plus, Nelly had a farm house in Vermont; it was a magical place that we visited for our summer holiday, when I was eight and Kathy was five. The century-old farmhouse was nestled in the Green Mountains near Rutland; the setting was picturesque, like a scene on a post card. Nelly's farm had no electricity; that made living there all the more exciting; water was pumped from a well by a hand crank; meals were cooked on a wood-fired stove; and kerosene lanterns were used for illumination after dark.

It was a working farm; the land and barn were leased to a dairyman who had a dozen cows; I never got the hang of milking them, but Kathy and I had fun running through the grassy fields with the animals—until I stepped in a huge hidden cow plop. What a mess!

Nearby was an abandoned marble quarry; in its center was a pool about 40 feet square (12.19 meters) and equally deep; the ice-cold water was crystal clear; sunlight danced in the deep, lighting up the white-marble walls until turning blue, and then black; to a kid it seemed infinitely deep. There was never anyone else there, so we swam in the nude; my parents were open and natural about things like that, which is probably another reason I became an exhibitionist.

The farm was about 300 miles [~480 kilometers] from Douglaston. Dad drove us there in the family car—a light-blue, 1950 Studebaker Champion, which Dad got second hand.

*Although not our actual family car, this one could have been, in a light blue color.*

There were no super-highways back then; President Eisenhower hadn't yet signed the 1956 Federal-aid Highway Act, paving the way for the interstate highway system we all enjoy today. The roads being what they were, what would today take a mere five hours was an all-day drive.



<https://www.classicnation.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/9610d5ddf3938ceae2c9ed07fd6482cc.jpg>

We nearly didn't make it; the brakes couldn't handle the long, steep descents through the Green Mountains; they started smelling, then smoking, then failing. I had a panoramic view of the roadway speeding past faster and faster; in the back-seat Mom and Kathy were wide eyed; Dad was unsuccessfully trying to force the car into a lower gear to get engine braking; nobody panicked but it was real white-knuckle stuff. The car must have hit 100 miles per hour (160 kmh) by the time we got to the bottom of the hill; fortunately, there wasn't much traffic and the two-lane road became an uphill incline; the car eventually rolled to a stop on the side of the road. We were towed into the next town, repairs were made, and we arrived at Nelly's farm a day late. Although shaken, Dad was unfazed; the incident hardly dampened his enthusiasm for driving adventures, especially camping trips.



Clockwise from top: Eustace Taylor, Dad with sister Barbara, Polly Taylor and Kathy. Photo by Mom.

We camped a lot, mostly in upstate New York, in a big M\*A\*S\*H-style tent with more than enough room to fit the four Army cots we slept on. Dad borrowed the tent from Uncle Eustace Taylor and his wife Polly. The Taylors lived in Forest Hills, Queens and had a country house in Fort Salonga, on the south shore of Long Island. They had a five acre [2-hectare] parcel of woodlands there; it's where our family first went camping. Eustace was a hoarder and had five big Army tents permanently erected on his property; he used four of them to store stuff. Members of the Taylor family all seem to share the hoarding affliction trait; we call it the *Taylor Tick*. I certainly inherited a bit of it. I tried to befriend Randy Taylor, Eustace and Polly Taylor's son; however, he was a couple of years older; we had nothing in common and he lived too far from Douglaston to see with any regularity. Much later, when I moved into Manhattan, I became friends with Randy and his wife Amanda; by then he was a super-successful as a stock analyst and she was an attorney. They lived near my 73<sup>rd</sup> Street studio in a posh suite on Fifth Avenue & 82<sup>nd</sup> Street.

The last time I saw him was when my then wife Sandra and I had dinner with Randy and Amanda at their home, while we were on holiday together, after the Cadillac Fairview show; some time later, in a phone call, I learned that Amanda had gotten sick and died; after that, I never heard from Randy again. But I am getting way ahead of myself.... My parent's enthusiasm for camping suffered a setback when young Kathy fell off a wooden bridge onto the stony riverbank below; it was a little ol' country bridge that forded a large stream deep in the woods; probably more horses crossed it, than cars. We were camped in a quiet place near the bridge, where we were bathed and frolicked together in the stream.

Part of the fun was jumping off the bridge into the deepest part; but Kathy tripped on the rough-hewn planks and fell about six feet [2 meters] onto the rocky banks, well short of the deep water. Instant panic ensued. Kathy was shaken and bruised, but she seemed OK. To be sure, camp was broken and we went off in search of a hospital. I don't remember any family camping after that trip.

During the summer months, while Nelly was away at her farm in Vermont, her Douglaston house was rented to a pair of American Airlines pilots who used it as a party palace; they would party all night long with gorgeous ~~stewardesses~~ flight attendants and then go fly. (!) I spied on them through my parents' bedroom window. Their nihilistic behavior was an eye-opener; as was the sight of those scantily clad (and sometimes naked!) gals prancing about. The example they set may not have been a good one, but it stuck with me; I wanted to party like them when I grew up.

I still think of Nelly every Christmas. Her European-style Christmas tree was lit by candles. For safety reasons, the tree was rarely lit; but on those special evenings when it was, Nelly and Maja would invite guests over for a lighting ceremony, a kind of ritual, accompanied by traditional Christmas songs, home-baked cookies, and red-wine *glögg* (spiced wine, served warm). Nelly baked buttery, German-style cookies that were scrumptious and nothing like the sugar cookies that Mom baked, with green- and red-sugar sprinkles on top. It took a little time to light the three dozen or so candles; as the candles were lit the darkened room brightened with a rosy glow that lasted about an hour. Those candle-lighting ceremonies have epitomized Christmas for me ever since.

To digress for a moment: two decades later, I acquired a set of antique European clip-on Christmas-candle holders and used them for the big Christmas trees I had at the 73<sup>rd</sup> Street studio.

One year the tree caught fire and I was nearly blinded when hot wax splattered into my eyes while I fought the fire.

That happened during a tree-lighting party for some close friends and colleagues. Everyone was stoned; I was serving a cocktail that

I called *Slimy-Limeys*; an intoxicating concoction based on the gimlet cocktail—vodka mixed with enough Rose’s Lime Juice to be colored bright green. Ha!

Yours truly and Dona Lakin-Plink Tracy lighting Christmas-tree candles in the 73<sup>rd</sup> street studio.



Well, after a few of those and a bottomless bowl of weed, we weren’t watching the tree closely enough. A candle-lit tree must be watched like a hawk; candles burn at different speeds due to drafts or to wax inconsistencies; there was always risk of a rogue candle burning extra fast, or falling out of its clip; that’s what happened to us that scary night.

It wasn’t as dramatic as it sounds; simply a matter of clipping off the burning branch and shoving it into the fireplace, which was already burning logs; but it put the fear of God into me. The living room was oak-paneled, with wall-to-wall oak shelving [it was the former library, when the Wanamakers lived there]; the place would have gone up in a flash had the fire not been nipped in the bud. Twenty years after that, I was going to set-up another candle-lit Christmas tree in the Vashon studio—the living room had cathedral ceilings that were 14 feet high (4.26 meters) at the peak—perfect for a big spruce or fir tree. However, my sister Kathy reminded me that Vashon’s volunteer Fire Department was several miles away; by the time the firemen got the call, drove to the firehouse, got their firetrucks on the road and found my cedar house, there wouldn’t be much left it. Besides, there was probably some fine print in my insurance policy, on page 100-something, about candle-lit anything.

Christmas in Mesneyland was another matter entirely; it was an exercise in excess. Preparations began shortly after Thanksgiving, sprucing up the house with holiday decorations; the mantle was decked with fir-tree greens, special candles and a Crèche scene.



In the dining room there was a model that Dad and Mom made, of a white church bedecked with cotton-wool snow that took over the top of the sideboard; the church lit up from the inside, showing off simulated stained-glass windows made from hand-painted Cellophane; it wasn't Christmas until that snowy church was set-up.



As Christmas cards arrived, they became a big part of the decorations, strung around the room and perched on every available shelf.

Just about everyone sent Christmas cards back then; my Christmas mailing list hit 350 at the high point, in the '70s; everyone on the list got a hand-made picture. I don't do that anymore, but Pam carries-on the card tradition; she makes cards by hand, featuring fanciful origami decorations; she makes about 100 unique cards each Christmas; it takes her three months.

At Christmas (or any other major holiday for that matter), we never had a normal family dinner. There were always eight or ten guests squeezed-in with us around our 12-seat dining-room table; they were an eclectic collection of people who Mom didn't think should be alone on Christmas; over the years there were dozens of them, too many to recall.



Mom would drive all over the city, fetching guests who were too frail to find their way to our house using public transit. Most of her guests were quirky, the kind of people that you'd probably avoid socializing with; Mom seemed to like the orphaned ones best—people like Rita Redlich, a Christian Scientist friend of Nanna's who was once married to jazz trumpeter Harry James; Rita lived alone after her husband's death.

Other regulars included: Myron McPhearson, Mom's piano accompanist; Eva Hellvarg, a seductive Scandinavian painter and proprietress of the local art gallery; and Blanche Dickie, a Taylor-family friend since Mom's childhood, who was like a second Grandma.

Blanche Dickie in 1957; Douglas Mesney photo.

Mom was generous to a fault, but she had no sense of time; as a result, she could be quite rude; guests invited for dinner at 6:00 pm [18:00] wouldn't eat until 9:00 pm [21:00]; Mom was invariably late, every time.

After dinner, my parents nearly always entertained the guests. If Myron was there, he would accompany my mother on the piano, while she sang a repertoire of Negro spirituals and early-American folk songs. Dad and Mom frequently sang duets to Nanna's or Myron's accompaniment.



On special occasions, Mom would accompany Dad on the piano while he treated us to his overly-dramatic version of an old folk song from Devon [England] called "Widcombe Fair;" it is a long song, I don't know how he remembered the whole story:

Tom Pearce, Tom Pearce, lend me your grey mare.  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
For I want for to go to Widcombe Fair,  
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobby and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobby and all.  
And when shall I see again my grey mare?  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
By Friday soon, or Saturday noon,  
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobby and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobby and all.  
So they harnessed and bridled the old grey mare.  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
And off they drove to Widcombe fair,  
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobby and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobby and all.  
Then Friday came, and Saturday noon.  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
But Tom Pearce's old mare hath not trotted home,  
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobby and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobby and all.



So Tom Pearce he got up to the top o' the hill.  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
And he seed his old mare down a-making her will,  
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

So Tom Pearce's old mare, her took sick and died.  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
And Tom he sat down on a stone, and he cried  
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

But this isn't the end o' this shocking affair.  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
Nor, though they be dead, of the horrid career  
Of Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

When the wind whistles cold on the moor of the night.  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
Tom Pearce's old mare doth appear ghastly white,  
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

And all the long night be heard skirling and groans.  
All along, down along, out along lea.  
From Tom Pearce's old mare in her rattling bones,  
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,  
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all,  
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

Dad always closed his repertoire with this quick song:

Be kind to your web-footed friends,  
For a duck could be somebody's mother.  
She lives in the south in the swamp  
Where the weather is warm and damp.  
Now you may think this is the end,  
And it is....

While my sisters and I still believed in Santa Claus, my parents staged incredible gift orgies. On Christmas morning, we had to wait until our parents were ready; when they gave us the go ahead, an amazing scene would unfold as we came down the stairs; the living room would be overflowing with gifts of all shapes and sizes, spilling out from beneath the tree. My sisters and I got more presents than any of our friends; the bounty was almost embarrassing; far beyond the means of my parents; Nanna was a big contributor, as was Grandpa Mesney, who sent first class gifts from England; one of the best was an erector set; another was a chemistry set; those in addition to a full set of *Lionel* electric trains and a *Raleigh* 3-speed bike.

Dad had a passion for our model railroad, even more than me. It started when he took us to see the model train set-up at Macy's, the world's biggest department store; it was a jaw-dropper; a huge miniature landscape with four different railroad lines crisscrossing through farms and towns. Dad and I got hooked; we set-up our model trains in the basement; over three years our railroad grew to occupy so much space that Mom complained; she was still doing the laundry semi-manually down there, using one of those early washing machines, the kind with a roller setup to wring-out the washed clothes before hanging them on clothes lines; we were infringing on her drying space.

Within Mom's confines, we snaked two railroad lines through a landscape made with papier-mâché on chicken wire frames; in one corner were three-foot-high [1-meter] mountains with railroad tunnels going through them, at different levels. A model Santa Fe Railroad diesel locomotive pulled passenger cars on one line, a miniature steam locomotive hauled freight cars on the other; the steam engine puffed real smoke, made by dropping little white pills down the smoke stack.

When I got to Junior High School life got too complicated; the trains got neglected and eventually given away to one of Mom's thrift-shop charities. Mom wanted the basement space to make a music studio, where she could teach piano, practice her singing act, and play a collection of instruments that included an auto harp (a kind of zither), vibraphones and percussive instruments from all over. When I was travelling and she still had the Douglaston house, I brought her exotic instruments from far away places.

Our neighbor, Nelly Alewyn, was full of good advice; Nelly became a second grandmother; she was the first person outside of the family that I could talk to with confidentially. When I did her favors, like shoveling snow in the winter and cutting grass in the summer, she would reward me with tea and cookies. We would sit in her kitchen *dinette* [double-sided dining booth] and she would let me ask her questions about anything.

Nelly's family fled from Hitler during World War II; her European point-of-view was very different from what I heard at home. After her kids and Maja left, she moved away from Douglaston; it didn't make sense to live alone and carry the costs, especially when she could make a tidy profit selling her desirable property into a rising real estate market; so, she sold and moved to Great Neck; that was just a few miles away, but inconvenient for visiting.

## 1950 – Douglaston – Idyllic Chimera | Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-4

*A collage of Douglaston pictures by Stephen Thomas, circa 2005.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 1: Left column, top down:*

- *The Long Island Railroad [LIRR] Station. The old ticket office seen in the picture (a historic building) has since been replaced with a new one.*
- *Public School [PS] 98*
- *Memorial Day Parade*
- *Frank & Sophie Thomas family house, 341 Manor Road*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 1: Right column, top down:*

- *Shops at the intersection of Northern Boulevard and Douglaston Parkway. Richard Schaffer used to live above the Douglaston Cleaners. Ironically, the store was a dry-cleaning establishment fifty years ago; then it became a lot of other shops; now it has reverted to its origins. To the right, where a Thai restaurant stands, were two shops, one of which was Klein's smoke shop next to the bus stop where (under age) I bought cigarettes (for 15¢ a pack) and waited for the Q12 bus to Bayside, on my way to high school.*
- *Douglas Manor village shops, adjacent to the Long Island Railroad [LIRR] Station. The center picture depicts shops that once were once occupied by: the drug store (run by Aaron Secan, Joel's father), Books & Things, and (farthest) Bernstein's, a combo news stand, candy store, toys & smokes shop. I spent many allowances there, buying baseball-card gum.*
- *Intersection of East Drive and Manor Road, the top of my block. Behind the traffic signs is the Borst house, where young Janet burned to death in a freak attic fire.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 2: Left column:*

- *The Douglaston Club was hugely influential because my family was not a member after Grandpa Taylor died; I vowed never to be poor. Going to dancing school there gave me a taste of how the other half lived; the humiliation of being a wall flower, because I was fat, lasted forever; I am still body-aware.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 2: Right column, top down:*

- *"Big Rock" was an infamous place. That's where I dug for worms, when Bob Banning and I went fishing together; it's where we'd cast for striped bass. It's where Artie McClurg exploded his biggest bombs. On the banks above, overlooking Big Rock, Ginger O'Grady and I would make out together.*
- *West end of Udall's Cove wetlands; Big Rock appears as a dot in the BG.*
- *Memorial Field, where I broke my arm the second time, playing football.*
- *Both ends of the back road between Douglas Manor and Little Neck. The sights are unchanged, fifty years after I traipsed a half-mile [0.8 km] through the swamps from one end to the other, twice a day, back-and-forth to Junior High School 67.*

*Plate Nº 3: Left column, top down:*

- *West end of Manor Road meets Little Neck Bay. There's a small, beach there where Harry McMahon shot himself. (Pam Swanson photo, 2014.)*
- *Manor Road, looking west, up the block. On the left can be seen the Banning's house and behind it the Borst's. On the right are Frank Crane's house and behind it, Mrs. Boudreau's corner house.*
- *Left is Nelly Alewyn's house; right of it is the Banning's house where, before it was built, we played as kids in the Borst's orchard.*
- *Left is the Schaffer's house (later the Reidy's). Right is the Mesney house.*
- *Right is the King's house, where Eunice Anderson grew up. Left is Frank & Lynn Tournebene's house. Not sure who lived in the third house.*

*Plate Nº 3: Right column, top down:*

- *Tom Dent's house at the bottom of Manor Road. That's where I had my first motorcycle crash; I slipped on wet leaves; couldn't make the turn onto Douglas Road; crashed through their hedges into their yard. The corner of Dick Wheeler's house is seen on the left.*
- *Right, the Thomas house (341 Manor Road), left of it, Howard Cone's house. He was two grades higher than me and his sister three; so I never got to know them very well. Their Dad was a Pam Am pilot and sailor.*
- *Right, Col. French's house, where Molly lived; left of it, the Thomas house, then the Cone's, Brown's and Crane's.*
- *Stephen Thomas and his kid sister Muriel [aka Moo], 1958; the scene on Manor Road hasn't changed much since then. Where the kids paused, on their tricycle, is about the same place I tripped on something and broke my arm (the first time), in a roller-skating race down Manor Road.*

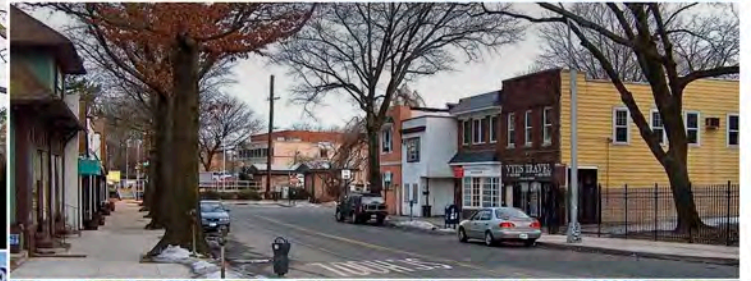
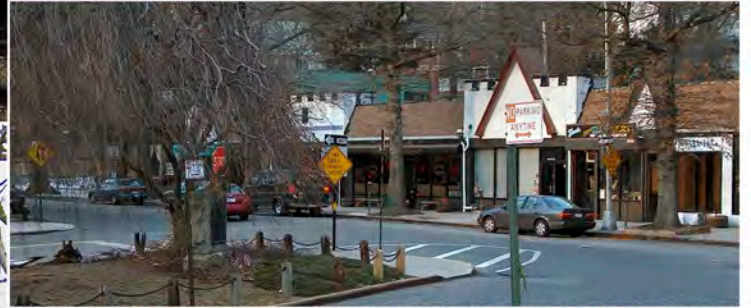
*Plate Nº 4: Left column, top down:*

- *Kiddy City was Douglaston's amusement park. It dominated the marshland strip along Northern Boulevard between Douglaston and Bayside. To the left can be seen a corner of the golf driving range. In the BG is a Shell gas station that became Rocky's ESSO garage, where my parents had their cars serviced. In the BG there's a major wetland.*
- *Douglaston Club pool: Anthony "Zeek" Zaloom, Katie Mann, Lynn Allred.*
- *Wiley Crocket and friends; the guy in white is Jimmy McDonald.*

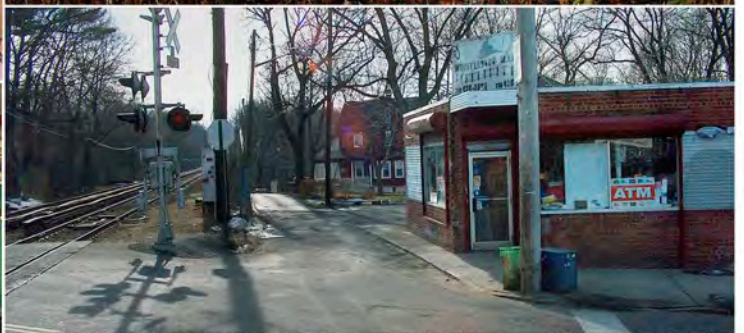
*Plate Nº 4: Right column, top down:*

- *Kiddy City (continued)*
- *Tommy Stabile & friend, Penny Martin & Brownie Haynie*
- *Biffy Sorensen*
- *John Douglas, Carol's older brother*
- *Tommy Stabile, Harry McMahon, Billy McCain, Biffy Sorensen*
- *Mark Story, Harry McMahon*



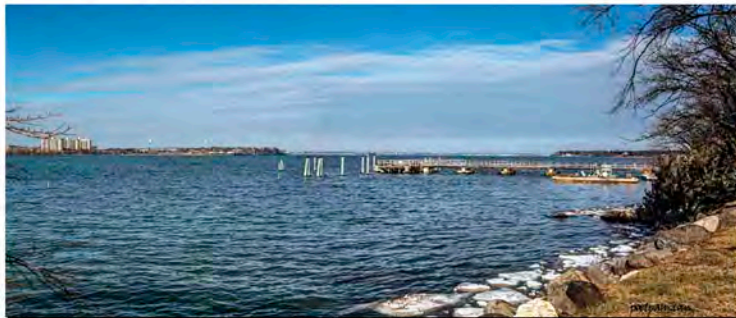






1950 | PLATE N° 2 | DOUGLASTON PHOTOS BY STEPHEN THOMAS | CIRCA 2005  
See caption for details.

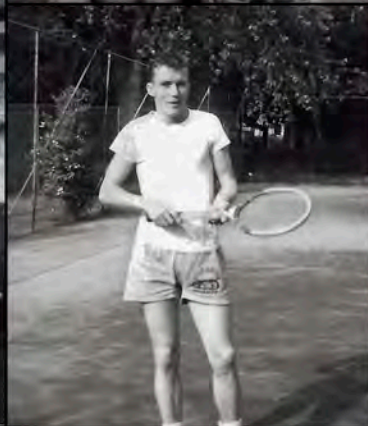




1950 | PLATE Nº 3 | DOUGLSTON PHOTOS BY STEPHEN THOMAS | CIRCA 2005

See caption for details.







## 1950 – Douglaston – Idyllic Chimera



Mom in her new house. Photographer unknown (probably Dad).

Mom and Dad were gifted the family house in Douglaston by her father, Franklin Taylor. They owned it, free of any mortgages—until Mom decided to use the house as a cash cow. She took out home-equity loans after spending all the money left to her by her father, who died when I was five years old, and then her mother, who died when I was twelve.

Moving us to Douglaston was probably Judge Taylor's idea; his mansion got too full when Kathy was born; besides, it was hip to live in the country. In the heady days after the war, real-estate developers were making fortunes creating new communities by subdividing large, landed estates;<sup>14</sup>

Douglaston was one of those—a desirable place to bring up a family; an ethnically-pure private neighborhood, like a gated community; situated on a peninsula; with a promontory overlooking Little Neck and Great Neck Bays.

The exclusive neighborhood was self-contained, with its own railroad station, grocery, pharmacy, hardware store, elementary school [PS 98], country club, yacht harbor and liquor store. The Judge spent his money wisely.

Douglaston has maintained its exclusivity and value despite subtle transformations in the surrounding communities brought about by waves of migrants, particularly Koreans, Chinese and East Indians.

We lived near the intersection of Douglas Road; I used to get a lot of ribbing about being *Douglas from Douglas Road in Douglaston*; but I was really named after Douglas McArthur, an important army general that my parents obviously admired.

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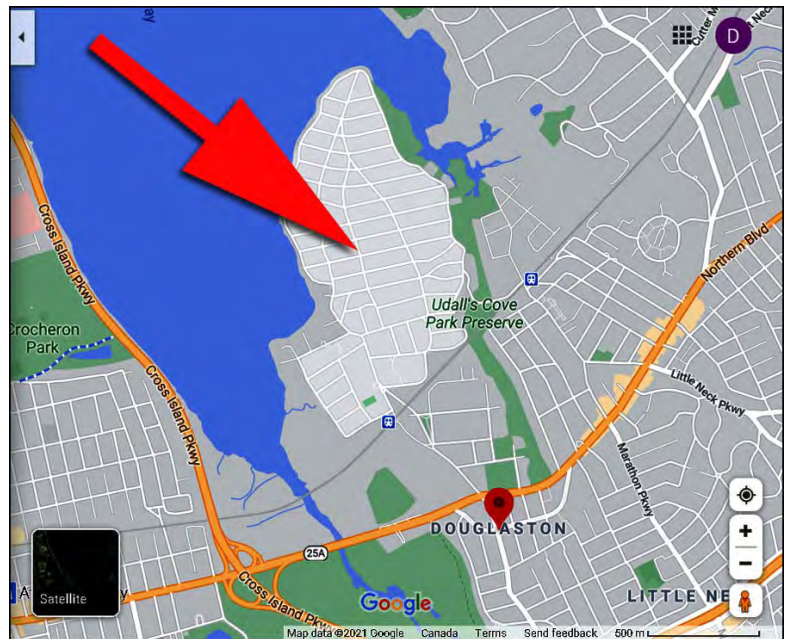
<sup>14</sup> All over Douglaston, owners of the original Queen Anne and Victorian style homes, were subdividing their properties and selling land to home builders. The character of the neighborhood changed significantly. Originally, William Douglas platted and sold a few large parcels of his 240-acre manor. In 1915, those large estates were subdivided by a New York real estate company; they formed the Douglas Manor Association and constructed one of the first “planned communities,” the homes in were built styles that were popular at the time, like Mediterranean, Colonial and Tudor. My family lived in one of two, twin, Tudor-styles houses right in the middle of the 300 block of Manor Road, between East Drive and Douglas Road. Our house was originally purchased in 1921 by the Southworths; when their kids grew up they moved to Florida and sold the property—a 40 X 100-foot lot (12.19 X 30.48 meters) with a 1,600-square-foot house [149 square meters]- to Grandpa Taylor, when I was five.

My Dad had been back from the war for a couple of years when we moved; Grandpa Taylor, through his political connections, had arranged a job for him as the Assistant Commissioner of Licenses for the New York City Sanitation Department.



That job far exceeded Dad's skill set; New York's garbage business was run by the Mafia; Dad was trained as an actor; he was gentle character; good looking with an aim to do good deeds. In his own way, Dad tried to clean things up in the Department of Sanitation. Then, one night he arrived home all bloodied-up; he told us that he had a bad fall; but when we started having around-the-clock police protection, it became evident that he had been beat-up; much later he confessed as much. He was a changed man; his already low self-confidence was shaken.

Douglaston is the last town within the New York City limits; it shares borders with the better-known, more affluent town of Great Neck, which is in Nassau County. The most exclusive part of Douglaston, located on the peninsula, was called Douglas Manor (highlighted on map). The Manor and a few other neighborhoods, including Jamaica Estates (where Donald Trump grew up) were communities of upwardly mobile middle-class families—the ones living the American Dream. Growing up there was like living in an East Coast version of *American Graffiti*.



New York's five boroughs have an assortment of ethnic neighborhoods; Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Irish, Italian, German, Russian; there's a neighborhood for nearly every nationality and religious sect you can think of; the city is a microcosm of the world. Douglaston was bordered on one side by Great Neck, an affluent neighborhood dominated by rich Jews; on the other side were blue-collar neighborhoods—Little Neck, Bayside, Flushing and Long Island City [where *Saturday Night Fever* was filmed].



While I was growing up, my liberal, left-leaning, Democratic parents encouraged me to have friends of all types; they drove me miles to play with a Chinese classmate, Robert Kung, son of the United Nations Ambassador from China. Robert's parents were never home, I never met them; and he wasn't allowed out, to play.



Fishing friends: Allan Seiden and his father, Milton. Douglas Mesney photo, 1957

I also had two Jewish classmates: Ned Rubin, who played clarinet, and Allan Seiden, who liked fishing.<sup>15</sup> I met those friends and many others when I graduated from Public School 98 and went to Junior High.

PS 98 was a small, insular elementary school attended by some 500 kids exclusively from the WASP [White Anglo-Saxon Protestant] Douglaston community.



Pamela Swanson photo, 2015



My next school was JHS (Junior High School) 67 in Little Neck, which served about 2,000 kids from a dozen different communities; there I became conditioned to multi-cultural society. Particularly Judaism.

[http://i2.ypcdn.com/blob/709500ff62c57ed30415239de80980e3d2a08b8f\\_400x260\\_crop.jpg](http://i2.ypcdn.com/blob/709500ff62c57ed30415239de80980e3d2a08b8f_400x260_crop.jpg)

<sup>15</sup> Allan and I got to be friends after noticing that we both ate cake the same way—upside down. The cafeteria at JHS 67 offered a scrumptious cake with creamy icing, served in 3-inch squares; the two of us would turn our cakes over, so the icing was on the bottom, then we'd enjoy our cake from the top down, by peeling off thin layers with a fork, enjoying the icing layer last.



Douglas Mesney photo, 1961

After that, I went to Bayside High School, a massive institution with 5,000 students. It was there that I started hanging with some counter-culture characters who were rebellious young poets.

There was no way that Dad could support the pricey lifestyle our neighbors enjoyed. No matter, Judge Taylor had our back; he picked up the tab for nearly everything until he died, when I was five, right after we moved into the Douglaston house. After that, Nanna [Grandma Taylor] took over the supplementation of Dad's salary. She sold the house in Brooklyn and moved into an apartment at 12 Wellwyn Road, in Great Neck, right across from the Long Island Rail Road station. She supported herself and us by collecting stock dividends and clipping coupons from bonds inherited from the Judge. She must have had a huge stash, because Nanna lived for another eight years, all the while propping up our family's finances enough to keep pace with Mom's spending. When Nanna (our maternal grandmother) died, Mom managed to spend the tidy sum she inherited in just a couple of years; she completely refurnished the house, got a new second-hand car and a used motorboat. Mom never learned the value of money; money was always provided to her; she never had to earn her living.

### 1951 – Theatrical Parents – Music Lessons

I was brought up by theatrically-oriented parents. Dad was trained to be a professional actor at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts; he was supposed to be a professional actor, like his mom, Marjorie Mesney; then the war, marriage, and my arrival changed his plans. Mom was a published cartoonist before taking up music, teaching piano and becoming a semi-professional singer. They both performed in the Douglaston Community Theater [DCT]; Mom considered herself a kind of Beatnik; she tried to participate in *radical* suburban life—the art scene; one of her favorite friends was Eva Hellvarg who ran a modern-art gallery in Great Neck.



I remember seeing the nude paintings in Eva's gallery and being influenced by them. To her credit, Mom was a true Liberal; if she hadn't married a stiff and had kids, she might have climbed onto a Harley-Davidson and crisscrossed Route 66.

My musical literacy began when I was in the womb; Nanna was a talented pianist; her repertoire was more socially oriented, as in life of the party; she and mom would play and sing in the parlor of Judge Taylor's house on Third Street. Mom taught me piano for a few years in my early childhood; then, when I was ten, after seeing Tommy Dorsey on TV, I got interested in the trombone. They bought me an expensive, chrome-silver, Conn trombone—the Cadillac of trombones. Mom drove me to Manhasset once a week for lessons at a music school; at home I practiced down in the basement (pity the poor neighbors).



In the high school band and orchestra, I performed in the annual *Nights of Music* concerts in 1960 and '61. Alfred Leuschner was the conductor and my teacher. Under his tutelage, I made good progress. My goal was to join the school's jazz band, the Kommodore Kats. They were the élites, the ultra-cool ones. I wanted to be as good or better than the Kats' trombone man; he was semi-pro, playing on weekends for weddings and other gigs. He also played with an improvisational quartet that played in the styles of the current jazz masters, John Coltrane and Miles Davis; it would be hard to beat him—and I never did.



My trombone got stolen and right after that Grandpa Mesney gave me a Minolta SR-2 camera. I turned toward visual arts instead of music.

It is said that we are born with more capabilities than we end up with; skill sets unused by age five are dropped. You probably know people who just can't carry a tune, or can't dance, can't get the rhythm? They were probably deprived of musical experiences during their first five years. Not so in my parents' house; there was so much music in Mesneyland that it is no surprise why music is in my DNA.

Selfie. 1960

"Indian Drum Dance"  
by  
Douglas Mesney  
age 4

Ery one

DRUM  
INDIAN DANCE

Song by  
DOUGLAS MESNEY

Arranged by  
Dorothy Mesney

Moderato

Wah see ta us goo, dance,

Wah hear ta the gum, drum,

We Round are the In-dians, camp-fire,



"Train Song"  
by  
Douglas Mesney  
age 4

Handwritten musical score for "Train Song" by Douglas Mesney + Dorothy Mesney. The score is written on three staves. The lyrics are: "Here comes the red ca - boose, Toot!"

Handwritten musical score for "Train Song" by Douglas Mesney + Dorothy Mesney. The score is written on three staves. The lyrics are: "Here comes the rail - road train, Toot!"

moderato

Here comes the rail - road

train, Toot! Toot!

Here comes the

Engine, Here comes the freight car,

coal

I couldn't get away from music. Mom took music lessons for a while; Mr. Rogers came out to the house to teach her, a meek little man who dressed nattily; he also tuned the piano. [Being anywhere near a piano being tuned is a form of torture.] Mom also took singing lessons; her repetitive singing exercises were painful—up and down scales for hours on end, every day; add to that sister Kathy's piano practice and my trombone homework—music was happening somewhere in our house every day. On weekends, my parents' musical friends would come over and they would all perform together, their voices well lubricated with copious cocktails.

Even my godparents were musicians—John Munde (seen at right) was a professional cellist who was manager of the N. Y. Metropolitan Opera's orchestra. He was also a direct descendent of John Mundy who was also a court musician during the reign of Elisabeth I, Queen of England. Clytie Munde, his wife, played the piano.

They lived in Wilton, Connecticut, an exclusive neighborhood, in a mansion, situated in a private glade, with giant weeping willows around a brook-fed pond; frankly, godfather Munde intimidated me; he was so upper crust; I felt small; but he was a good role model; I aspired to his wealth, social standing, and gentrified lifestyle; the tranquility of his glade is what inspired me to build a pond of my own, on Vashon Island, forty years later.

Photo by Roscoe Rae Tullis, New York



Musical literacy served me well throughout my audiovisual career. Because rhythm came naturally to me, I became a good visual choreographer; programming slides to music became a specialty; my work won many awards—all because I grew up in a musical household. I am still musically inclined after all these years, no matter what else I am doing, there's always a tune churning in my mind. Pam bought me a fancy keyboard for Christmas, four years ago; I was in the doldrums on Vashon Island and thought it might be fun to play piano again, maybe even do some composing—today, people can, by themselves, produce music that would have required a well-equipped professional studio just two decades ago. However, as I got into it, I realized that life is too short for me to change directions now; it would take too long to play the way I would like, and I lack the funds (and space) for a digital music suite; so, I have put music aside for the time being, although I can see the keyboard from where I sit.

### **1952 – *Captain Kangaroo* – Door-to-Door Selling**

Although my dad had a cushy, politically appointed job and the family lived in an affluent neighborhood thanks to Judge Taylor's munificence, he couldn't keep up with Mom's spending. It was hard to blame her; she was just keeping up with the Joneses, maintaining the rarified lifestyle that she had grown up with—chauffeured in limousines between exclusive schools, shops and clubs. Dad's career died along when Judge Taylor passed away. (I was told that my grandfather drank himself to death, but I think that was an exaggeration.) Eventually, Dad was fired from his politically-appointed job as Assistant Commissioner of Licenses for the New York City Sanitation Department.

After that, he was on his own and didn't fare well; he couldn't hold onto a job very long; he didn't have any marketable skills other than his affable personality and Britishness; so he ended up in the public relations business.

First, he worked for a politician in Albany and then American Express; he commuted there for a while; then he worked at the Expo '67 World's Fair in Montréal, and commuted there; so, we didn't see too much of Dad during those years, while I was in high school and away at St. Lawrence University. When I quit Saint Lawrence University and switched to Queens College—to live at home and save money—Dad worked for the Business Committee for The Arts, a group that solicited donations from Big Business to support qualified art projects, especially the performing arts. [During this time, Dad and Mom were avid supporters of the DCT—Douglaston Community Theater; they canvassed for funds, played parts in productions, and hosted lavish cast parties.] The last job I remember him having was doing PR for the Jamaica Tourist Board; he kept telling me that he was going to get me a job taking pictures of Jamaica, but that never panned out. After that, Dad got into voice-over work with some success, collaborating with Jerry Kornbluth at A&J Audio.

Way before that, even when I was in Junior High School, I realized that my parents were living a chimera; in our exclusive, Douglaston community, we were considered poor because we didn't belong to the Douglaston Club, didn't get a new car every year, and always wore second-hand clothes from thrift shops. The wealthier neighborhood kids shunned us.

I first clued in to the family's true financial situation when Mom started giving piano lessons. Before that, Mom's piano teacher, Mr. Rogers, used to come to our house to teach Kathy and me; but Mom wised up and calculated that she could save what she was paying him, and earn more teaching others. She went up against Mr. Rogers and a couple of established Douglaston piano teachers and carved out a small following she had enough students to earn more than pin money. Mom's claim to fame is having given James Conlon<sup>16</sup> his first music lessons; Jimmy was a nerdy student who went on to become a world-famous conductor of operatic, orchestral and choral music.

A few years later she put together a recital act; as the character called *Heddy Munro*, Mom teamed up with concert pianist Myron McPhearson to perform Negro spirituals and early-American music for ladies' clubs and other such organizations. Myron and Mom eventually played to more important audiences and even produced two records: an American-song collection called *Patchwork & Powder Horn* and an album of children's' songs sung under her other alias, *Dollie Dimples*. In her '60s, Mom added a comedic persona to her collection of characters; she tried to make it in New York's comedy club circuit; but that is a tough racket and her performances were less than stellar; her earnings hardly covered her travel expenses.

There were other clues about our family's fiscal unfitness; friction was fomenting between Mom and Dad, about money; they tried unsuccessfully to hide their strife from us kids. It was hard to ask for an increase in my allowance under the circumstances, so I started earning my own money selling jewelry, jig-saw puzzles and pot-holders that I made myself.

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<sup>16</sup> [www.jamesconlon.com/]



The jewelry was made from mini sea shells and colored stones I collected on the shore near the Douglaston dock; the puzzles were cut from 3/8-inch [1-cm] plywood on which I painted pictures; and the potholders were made on a hobby loom that Grandma Taylor gave me for Christmas.

I went from house to house, selling my wares. It was a brash thing to do but I was fearless; I wanted money. Door-to-door salesmen were not uncommon back then. Plus, neighbors knew the knock on the door might be a special boy called Denny, who suffered from Downs Syndrome, a condition that includes mental retardation. Denny was well into his 20s but behaved like a young boy; he had the usual Mongoloid appearance and liked to dress-up in women's clothes: fancy dresses, big hats and lots of jewelry. Denny went door-to-door around the neighborhood collecting beads and costume jewelry. Periodically, when I answered the door bell, it would be Denny, wearing a twisted smile, asking, in haltingly garbled words, for "beez" [beads]. Mom always had a donation for Denny, she kept a little box full of stuff she got at the thrift stores where she shopped for our clothes; Denny always left our house with a big smile. Anyway, I figured that if Denny can do, I sure can too. That's how my career began—selling stuff door-to-door.

At first, my parents were reticent—what were the neighbors saying? Why did the Mesney kid have to go around selling stuff? My peddling embarrassed them—*tres déclassé*. However, my persistence and tenacity won them over—they were even a bit amazed at how much money I was taking. Mom tried to be helpful; whatever I did, she gave me her critique. Sure, she was right most of the time; but her endless criticism had a lasting impact on me, both good and bad. On the positive side, Mom's critiques turned me into a perfectionist; on the negative side, I still feel insecure about everything I do—even about this book. Mom taught me to look for what is wrong with things, for what can go wrong. If Murphy hadn't written his law—What Can Go Wrong, Will Go Wrong—Mom might have; he just beat her to it. Another negative: She turned me into a critic; rarely do I compliment anyone on what they do; I usually offer a helpful suggestion, just like Mom used to do. If you are one of those I may have offended over the years with my frankness and criticism, please accept my apologies.

To supplement their resources, Dad and Mom took to writing theatrical and TV scripts; it started when Dad, through Peter Curran (a colleague of TV kid-show star, Bob Keeshan) got work writing scripts for educational interstitials on the popular *Captain Kangaroo* show.

*From left: Dancing Bear, Bunny Rabbit, Captain Kangaroo, Grandfather Clock, Mister Moose, and Mister Green Jeans.*



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain\\_Kangaroo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_Kangaroo) | Public domain

I helped them make one about potholders; they took me into a studio where a cameraman shot step-by-step close-ups of my hands, weaving a potholder on my little loom; it took a long time to shoot every step; but when they played them back speeded

up, the potholder came together in about 10 seconds. That blew me away. At the same time, Dad and Mom wrote scripts for two Broadway plays: *Here Comes Harriet*—based on our family’s experience living through Hurricane Harriet at our summer house in East Marion—and, *Angel on Wall Street*, which Dad co-wrote with Peter Curran, the well-known British scriptwriter.

## 1953 – *Captain Video* – Shattered Illusions

You couldn’t ask for a more conscientious Dad than the one I had; while I was young, he was totally dedicated to our family.

Back then people had family lives; men left the office at 5:00 pm sharp [17:00] and spent evenings and weekends doing things with the family. Whatever I was interested in, Dad (and Mom) encouraged me. When I got curious about milk, Dad made special arrangements with the Borden Milk Company who let us tour their bottling plant in Long Island City. When I got interested in how newspapers were made, Dad arranged for him and me to have a tour of the New York Times’ huge printing plant in Manhattan. That an entire newspaper can be made in a single day has always amazed me, never more so than when I saw the Times printed.

Dad had a friend at the Times, Herman Dinsmore,<sup>17</sup> so we got the royal treatment, a full tour, starting in the newsroom, where the stories were written; through the composing room, where page layouts were made; to the presses, which were bigger than houses; and finally the loading of the delivery trucks that distributed the Times to thousands of newsstands and schools, like mine [JHS 67]—all before 7:00 am.



The Linotype machines that made the biggest impression on me; there were a dozen of those giant type-setting machines<sup>18</sup> in a cavernous, darkened room; walking down the aisle between the two rows of them was an almost alien experience; the big, Victorian era machines—three times a man’s size—were like mechanical monsters, clattering loudly.

<sup>17</sup> Dad and Herman didn’t stay friends long after my sister Kathy complained that he was fondling her while she sat on his lap in a lawn chair at their Victorian house on Main Street in Greenport, their summer residence.

<sup>18</sup> Wikipedia: *Linotype*—“line-of-type”—machines revolutionized the printing business by casting (setting) entire lines of type automatically, using a simple typewriter-style keyboard. Before, in the days of “cold type,” pre-cast individual letters were assembled into lines by hand, a tedious task; imagine all the letters on this page, for example, and that you had to assemble them all, each a little metal piece. Linotype machines were invented in the late 1800s and continued in use until being replaced by photo type, in the 1970s, and subsequently computer type, which is what we use today. More at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linotype\\_machine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linotype_machine).



And it was hot in there; each machine had a furnace-fired reservoir of molten metal [lead] from which it cast type [hence the name, hot type]. The graphic artist in me was aroused; the process of designing and producing printed pages appealed to me, then and now.

When I got interested in television, Dad organized an excursion into New York to meet the stars of my favorite show. TV was new; although most of my friends' families already had one, we didn't get a TV until 1953, when I was eight years old and sister Kathy was five. My father's favorite program was Sid Caesar's *Show of Shows*; mine was *Captain Video and His Video Rangers*<sup>19</sup> about the adventures of Captain Video, his Video Ranger, and their robot, Tobor.

Somehow, through his connections, Dad arranged for me to meet Captain Video on my birthday and sit alongside him, in the Video Ranger's seat, at the controls of his rocket ship. You'd think that would have been dreams come true for me, eh? You would be wrong; the rocket controls were stove dials and plumbing parts; and robot Tobor was made of silver-painted cardboard boxes. Whoa!



Photo credits – see footnote.<sup>20</sup>

It was a slap in the face by Reality; my illusion shattered—again. (Just a couple of months earlier I discovered who Santa Claus was when I accidentally found the treasure trove of gifts that ~~Santa~~ my parents were hiding in the attic.) Illusions are confusing for a young mind; although well intentioned, they are lies. I was primed for Ayn Rand.

<sup>19</sup> [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain\\_Video\\_and\\_His\\_Video\\_Rangers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Captain_Video_and_His_Video_Rangers)]

<sup>20</sup> Clockwise from upper left:

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0041014/mediaviewer/rm1510113536>

[https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-nQ4lqZ-\\_u5Q/T\\_8ME9GsW8I/AAAAAAAAAEkc/165blriFads/s320/captain+video+2.jpg](https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-nQ4lqZ-_u5Q/T_8ME9GsW8I/AAAAAAAAAEkc/165blriFads/s320/captain+video+2.jpg)

<http://philosophyofscienceportal.blogspot.com/2013/01/assorted-robots.html>

<https://i.kinja-img.com/gawker-media/image/upload/s--E1L0441f--/18dyjteawi4jbjpg.jpg>

## 1954 – Sister Barbara Born – Expanding Tribe

When my Sister Barbara was born, it was an exciting time. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, everyone was on edge; it was a balmy spring afternoon when the phone rang with news.



Nanna was sitting in an Adirondack chair under the young cherry tree next to the porch; Dad and I were splitting firewood logs; I got startled by the ringing phone and didn't let go of wedge in time; I got my right pinky finger split open, sending everyone into a tizzy.

Six-year-old Kathy answered the call and delivered the news, which for her wasn't so good.

Attention-wise, Kathy got lost in the middle of the family; Mom and Nanna's attention shifted to our new arrival, while Dad and I spent more time together, me helping him with household chores.

Grandma "Nanna" Taylor and one-year-old sister Barbara Judy at the dining room table in the Douglaston house.

There was always plenty to do around the house and property, small though it was; as the seasons changed, they brought chores along with them; autumn was the busiest time; the storm sash [exterior windows] had to be hung, the screens washed and put away, and the gutters cleared of fallen leaves. Cleaning the gutters was a tricky business; a two-story ladder was needed to reach the uppermost gutters. My job was to stabilize the ladder; but after Dad had a wobbly episode working at the top, I got to go up while he stabilized the ladder. It was scary at the top of that ladder; I panicked, the ladder slipped and I fell through the bows of a fir tree onto a stone retaining wall; the tree saved my life; I had a badly bruised body but nothing broke. I think Dad must have had a heart attack watching me fall two stories; I had fallen to the ground before his eyes once before; when I was a toddler he would toss me high in the air and catch me on the way down; except one time he missed and I landed on my head; that time, I got a dent in my head that never went away; this time I got a fear of ladders. I can hang out of an airplane to take pictures, but being up on a ladder gives me the willies. [Oh, and I don't let anyone throw me up in the air anymore, either.]

Dad was a natural born handyman; he could fix almost anything; he couldn't stand things that didn't work right; little things like squeaky hinges irked him; or doors that slammed. At the family's vacation rental in East Marion, he'd spend his time fixing annoyances like dripping faucets and other *Mosbachery*, a reference to the landlord, Charlie Mosbach. Dad never got hand-me-down knowledge from his father; nor did he attend shop classes; he just had a tinkerer's knack. Dad's shop was in the basement; he had a beefy workbench with all his tools arranged on the wall, with their outlines painted on the peg-board; it was easy to identify which tools were off the rack. Early on, Dad encouraged me to work with him; he built an extension to the enormous bench and gave me a space on the right-hand side; that Christmas, one of my presents was that electric jig saw from Sears.



Dad and I built sister Barbara a roomy 6 X 8-foot [1.8 X 2.4 meter] playhouse in the back yard, between the peach tree and rabbit hutch, behind the swings.



Above: Caline Thomas and Barbara. Below: Kathy and Barbara at backyard swings.

Then we built her a set of small, child-sized furniture for the house—a Formica®-topped table and four little chairs. (Formica® plastic laminates were new then, expensive and quite deluxe.) Kathy couldn't help but notice that nobody ever built a house for her; sure, she had horseback-riding lessons, but it wasn't the same; she silently suffered, starved for affection, a meek girl not predisposed to demand attention.

There were more and more kids living on east Manor Road and the two streets flanking it—Beverly Road and Hollywood Avenue. As the original owners of pre-war Douglaston houses died or cashed-out and moved away during the post-war real estate boom, a new class of successful young couples moved in. The last of the old people to go were Nelly Alewyn; the Browns, who lived right across the street; and Mrs. Boudreau, a spinster who lived up the street from them. All the other houses were filled with kids.



Kevin Connolly identified the kids for me. In the back row (left to right) are: John Connolly, Phillip Thomas, Ricky Harmon, Stephen Thomas. Behind Stephen, standing, is Locky Reidy. In front of Stephen Thomas is Me (Kevin) in bathing suit. Poking out of the car is Arthur Muniz. In front are Cindy Connolly Muriel Thomas Barbara Mesney.

Back in those days, kids were still allowed—even encouraged—to get out in the world; we weren't as protected as kids are these days. "Go out and play with your friends," we were told. We stayed out as late as possible, usually dinner time. The nucleus of my gang of friends included my sister together with three of the Thomas family's six kids (Dave, Phillip, Francine, Stephen) as well as the three Connolly kids (Johnny, Kevin and Cindy).

During summer vacations the Manor Road kids would gather nearly every afternoon around a *Monopoly* board at the Thomas's house, upstairs in Phillip's room; we'd play games that would last for days on end.

For outdoor fun, we played war games and cowboys & Indians in the expansive swamp at the end of our block; we hacked networks of tunnel-like pathways through the tall grass and bulrushes; they led to secret forts in cul-de-sacs. In the autumn, we had apple wars in the Borst family's hillside orchard, next to Nelly Alewyn's house; we threw rotten apples at each other, using galvanized steel garbage can tops for shields.

In the winter, Douglas Manor was the perfect place for sledding and toboggans; the southeast part of the peninsula, where we lived, was hilly; some of the east-side hills, particularly Park Lane, Ridge Road and Oak Lane, were thrillers with elevations of maybe 400 feet [122 meters] and 20% grades; if you went too fast and couldn't make a turn onto Douglas Road at the bottom of the hill, you'd launch off a 10-foot embankment, into the swamp. Those three hillsides got plowed last, and sometimes not at all. On our block, we went sledding on the orchard hillside between Nelly's house and the Borst's place; that was before the Borsts sold the orchard and the Banning's house was built there. The one and only time I have ever seen stars was when I crashed into a tree at full speed when my sled got out of control on that hillside; I had been sitting on my sled, steering with my feet and ended up wrapped around the tree, hugging it. Ouch.

Our tribe was a latter-day, suburban version of *Lord of The Flies*; guess who was Piggy? I got beat-up by Arthur McClurg, a bully who liked to play with explosives.<sup>21</sup> Then, alpha male Dave Thomas forced me into a homosexual act (you suck mine; I'll suck yours) during a boy's sleep-over. That night changed me in a fundamental way; I knew what I wasn't, even though it would take a while longer to discover who I was. [Do we ever really know?] Ultimately, I chose not to participate in the tribal *politik*; by then Bunky Reed was competing with Dave for dominance; I came to prefer isolated interests like tropical fish, music and photography that did not involve other people.

Through those years, a lot of new kids moved in around us and the tribe grew until, one by one, we graduated from our elementary schools (PS 98 and St. Anastasia) and started attending other schools in distant parts of Queens.

Gordon Hagens lived on Hollywood Avenue up the street from Arty McClurg's house; his cocker spaniel bit me in the butt one day and I have disliked that dog breed ever since. Bill Borst's family lived on the corner of our block (Manor Road); their eldest daughter was too old for our group; but, Janet Borst, the younger of the two, played with us until one day she accidentally started a fire in the attic while playing and died.

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<sup>21</sup> Arty McClurg fascinated me; before our fight [I can't remember what it was about], I used to visit him at his house; he lived one block over, on Hollywood Avenue; we'd always play in the basement, where Arty had a little chemistry-lab set-up next to his father's electronics and wood-working workshop. Unbeknownst to his parents, the chemistry set morphed into a pyrotechnical factory where Arty made explosives; he took apart little firecrackers and used the powder to make big ones—really big ones. We'd take his home-made munitions down to the bolder-strewn shore near Big Rock [the northern tip of the Douglaston peninsula] to test them. At first, Arty put the bombs under big tin cans and buckets, to see how high they'd fly; that was harmless enough. As the bombs got bigger, he started blowing up piles of small boulders. His pyrotechnic career ended with the detonation of a six-inch [~15 cm] pipe bomb; that one blew out the windows of several nearby homes; the police bomb squad sent detectives around the neighborhood; but, nothing ever happened to Arty; he was lucky that way.



When our next-door neighbor Nelly Alewyn moved away, the Matovic family moved in; their daughter was too young for our gang; but, the two boys, Bobby and Kenny, joined in our antics; their parents were true alcoholics who died when they were in high school; then, they grew up to be drunks.

The Schaffer family lived next to us on the other side; but, it wasn't long before they moved away and the Reidy family moved in; their son Lochlin ("Lochy") was our age and he joined the gang; in high school he joined my fraternity, Phi Alpha Sigma.

Down the street lived Janey Carlson, daughter of Swedish immigrants; her parents didn't want her associating with us ruffians. Molly French, who lived across from the Carlsons, was a super-serious student who likewise didn't join our group; her British father sported a massive white mustache, was a dapper dresser, and was referred to as "The Colonel." Ed McMullan, who lived at the bottom of the block, was too interested in team sports (basketball) to spend much time with us. Across from him lived the Harmon family; they were super protective of their boy; some said there was something wrong with him.

Directly behind our house, on Hollywood Avenue, lived the Smith family; their daughter, Michele Smith, was fast friends with sister Kathy; I had a crush on her (I think she knew it). Ernie Fintell's family lived next to the Smith's, behind the Schaffer's; he was a troubled man with a ballistic temper who couldn't stand the sound of birds; his bedroom windows were blanketed with noise insulation. On the other side of the Smiths lived the Wertheim family (mother and son); Robert Wertheim was a peculiar, mysterious guy who probably should have been institutionalized; his mother kept him in the house all the time; I only got a glimpse of Robert once, when I was selling greeting cards and was invited in. Having Dicky Mott wandering around the neighborhood took the spotlight off Wertheim.

One block east of us lived the Birns family; I had a crush on Daryl Birns; she was learning to be a flirt from her parents; they were party animals; her father got caught cheating with a neighbor's wife; they sold the house and moved away because of the affair. The McEnroe family bought the Birns' house; you've heard of their tennis star son, John McEnroe? He learned tennis at the Douglaston Club. Across the street from them lived a TV star, John Tillman, the nightly news anchor on WPIX-TV, channel 11; he got in a tryst with his neighbor's wife—a real scandal (Douglaston was a little Peyton Place).

And, James Lundy, Borough President of Queens from 1952 to '57, lived a few blocks away, on Douglas Road; during those five years Douglaston had the best-paved roads in the county. Margaret Lundy, was a classmate; a shy and lonely girl who was never allowed to play with us, or anyone; everyday a big black limousine dropped her off and picked her up at school and took her home.

Bob and Ann Banning moved in up the street with their daughters Mona, Gail and Ginger; they built a house on the Borst's lot when I was ten; while the house was being built, I remember balancing my way around the top of the 10-foot-high concrete foundation, with my broken arm in a cast. Then the Sobecks [Bob and Norma], Perritas [Ernie and Ruth], and Wheelers [Dick and June] built new houses on Manor Road's last remaining open lots.

These neighbors and many others were my customers. I shoveled their snow and sold them various arts-and-crafts that I made in the basement; things like seashell jewelry, hand-woven pot holders and hand-made jig-saw puzzles. Later I sold professionally made Christmas cards. The money I earned got deposited into a savings account at the Little Neck branch of the Bayside Savings Bank.

In addition, I did charitable work; something my parents encouraged. I took up donations for the American Cancer Society and remember having my picture taken for the Little Neck Ledger, our home-town paper.

Perhaps emulating that charitable donation, my sister Kathy and her friends staged Fun Festivals in our back yard, driveway and garage. There were three, according to Kevin Connolly. Those would have been in 1956, '57 and '58. Every square foot of space was put to use. The garage became a General Store at the first Festival; later it became a theater where me and my friends staged shows. The driveway was lined with tables selling baked good and collecting money for a charity (I forget which). The rose arbor was repurposed as a drink stand. The swing set was covered with a tarp and turned into a spooky lair for the fortune teller, played by Gretchen Moody. She had a crystal ball, of course, but also a very special prop: Grandpa Taylor's glass eye, which got lost in the shuffle much to Grandma Taylor's dismay. That was the first I ever heard of Judge Taylor's limited vision. If someone once explained the circumstances of that, I have forgotten them. I wasn't really into photography until after the last Fun Fest. Mom took most of the pictures then and any snapshots she may have taken are long lost. I found just a couple of negatives (see the following plates).

As I got older, my range widened when I got my first bike. I started playing with Charlie Powell; he lived on Warwick Avenue, near the ball field; every time I ate dinner there his mom served butterscotch pudding, which Charlie loved but I hated. They had a huge yard adjoining their house; it was an apple orchard; that's where we had the first apple wars, before those battles migrated to Manor Road, on the Borst's hillside, next to Nelly Alewyn's house. Nobody ever picked the apples and by late summer and early autumn, there were tens of scores of half-rotten ones that we heaved at each other, defending ourselves with shields that were garbage can lids (back then the cans and lids were made of galvanized steel).

Other new friends were Edward Teabrock and his younger brother Otto; their *Bismarkian* father was the company doctor for GTE Sylvania [now Osram-Sylvania]; they were loaded; they had a maid and a cook, a real *mammy* who cooked the best scrambled eggs I've ever had. The Teabrock boys lived in the attic of a huge house built for a family with servants; there were hidden halls, stairways and rooms that reminded me of the Howard's house in Brooklyn, where we played Stinky Behind. Edward collected tropical fish, like me. He had a huge, 50-gallon tank that I was quite jealous of. Our mutual interest in tropical fish was how we became friends, after meeting at the C. Van Ash Pet Store in Little Neck. Old-man Teabrock was an immigrant German who was a strict and domineering parent; I never met his mother; she was never around; the brothers never spoke of her, either. Neither of the boys was ever allowed to stay—or even eat—over at my house or play with the Manor Road kids.



Kevin Connolly sent me a Facebook posting of photos with captions written by Stephen Thomas that describes life on Manor Road as well as the Mesney household and their goings on. Red arrows point to my sister, Kathy.

*DOUGLSTON - LONG ISLAND NY - "DOUGLAS MANOR" - The "ANNUAL MESNEY FAIR" for - The American Cancer Society - Held at Dorothy & Peter Mesney's Home on Manor Rd 1957-1960 - Co- Chair's of This FUN CHILDREN'S FAIR was Mesney's Daughter Kathy and Sister Fran Thomas - Kathy Was My Sister's Best Friend.*



Annual Manor Rd. "MESNEY FAIR"



American Cancer Society Douglaston, N.Y  
1957 - 1960 "Douglas Manor"  
CO CHAIR Kathy Mesney - Fran Thomas

*Across The Street Lived The "ALWAYS COLORFUL" - MESNEY FAMILY - Who were always Rehearsing A Play In Their Garage with Neighborhood Kids Galore - Singing Opera's - Mrs. Mesney was a Noted & Famous NY Opera Singer [not really] - Who Co - Founded The "NORTH SHORE FRIENDS OF THE OPERA" - Mrs. Mesney also was perhaps the BEST PIANO TEACHER in the NY Area - Son Douglas - Daughters - Kathy & Barbara ( whose nickname Was "Boo- Boo") were Always around in This "ORGANIZED CHAOS" - The Neighbors always Looked Forward to the Annual Visit to Dorothy Mesney's Home on Manor Rd of World Famous - KATE SMITH - Dorothy's Best Friend - Best Known as - "THE FIRST LADY OF RADIO" - Known for Her Rendition of Irving Berlin's - "GOD BLESS AMERICA" - Every Year on Kathy's Birthday - KATE SMITH - Who Was Kathy Mesney's Godmother - would pull up in Her Long Black Limo on Manor Rd in Front of the Mesney Home - and pick up Mrs. Mesney and Kathy - and off they went to Dinner - with All The Neighbor's & Kids cheering them on - my Sister Fran got to go with them one year.*

Annual Manor Rd. "MESNEY FAIR"



American Cancer Society Douglaston, N.Y  
1957 - 1960 "Douglas Manor"  
CO CHAIR Kathy Mesney - Fran Thomas

Annual Manor Rd. "MESNEY FAIR"



American Cancer Society Douglaston, N.Y  
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Annual Manor Rd. "MESNEY FAIR"



American Cancer Society Douglaston, N.Y  
1957 - 1960 "Douglas Manor"  
CO CHAIR Kathy Mesney - Fran Thomas





1957-59 | CHILDRENS FUN FAIR AT MESNEY'S | PLATE N° 2

*Above, Sister Barbara (R) Cindy Connolly and anonymous. | Below: 1957 Fun Fair ; Bob Bannng & twins.*



Then there was Bob Evans, a trumpet player. He became a good friend when I took up trombone playing; he lived on the west end of Kenmore Road, near the tip of the Douglaston peninsula, in a big house overlooking Little Neck Bay; his parents were loaded, too.

Douglaston Club photo by Pamela Swanson, 2015

Playing at the Teabrock and Evans mansions made me understand my family's lot in life a little better; I learned how the other half lived. Their families belonged to the Douglaston Club; they hung out with Douglaston's élites; wealthy families dominated the local population.

I never got to play with those rich kids much. My family only had a limited membership to the Club, for Mom to play tennis; however, we were *personae non grata* at the pool, restaurant and bar.



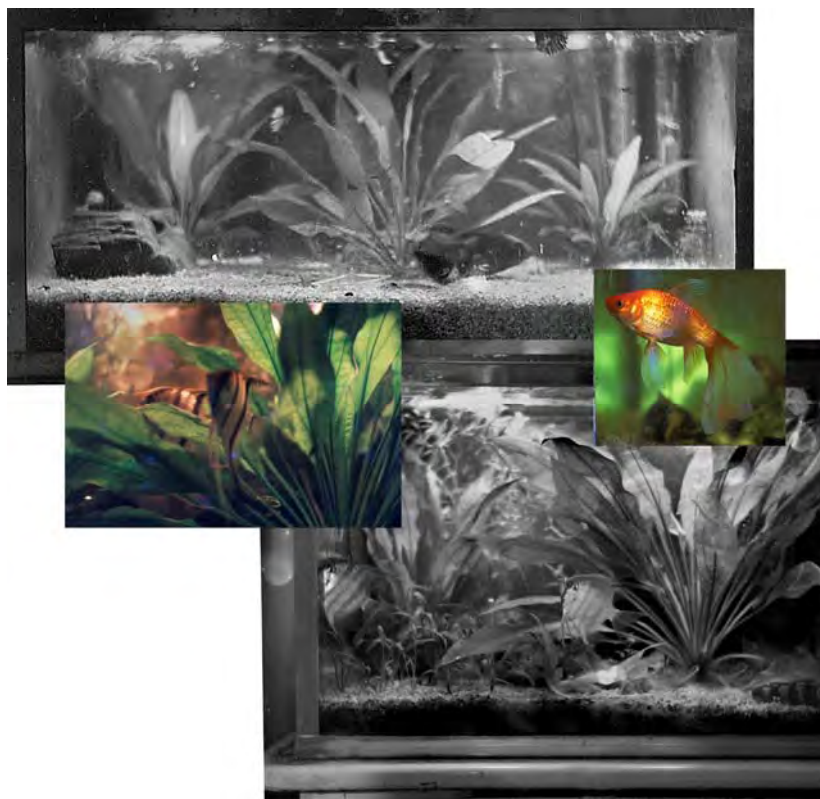
I could only wave at my girlfriend, Ginger O'Grady, through a chain-link fence. Feelings of deprivation put the beginnings of a chip on my shoulder, concerning élites. It burned me that Ginger had to escort me in to the pool area as her guest, that I was there at her invitation. The Club people were snobs; they rubbed it in; my jealousy was hard to hide; dark energy hardened my character.

## 1954 – Bedroom Shuffle – A World of My Own

About a month before Barbara was born the bedrooms got reorganized to make space for her. There were two kids' rooms on the second floor, on either side of the master bedroom. The larger of the two kids' rooms, where my sister Kathy lived, was in the Southwest corner of the house; one window overlooked our back yard and the neighbors on Hollywood Avenue, the other faced Nelly Alewyn's house and the Borst's hillside. There were twin beds in that bedroom; sometimes it was used as a guestroom. I lived in the smaller room bedroom, in the northeast corner of the house, with views of the Brown's and Cone's houses across the street and the Schaffer's house [later the Reidy's], next to ours. My room had a double-decker bed to begin with, but when my bed wetting continued that got swapped out to a single bed that was easier to re-sheet and had a plastic mattress cover. Besides the embarrassment of being a bed wetter, I suffered nightmares about bees under my pillow and crawling into my ears. Perhaps not coincidentally, I was afflicted with an ear fungus that I picked-up in a community swimming pool at the Flushing YMCA where Mom took me for swimming lessons; doctors at the clinic used a huge syringe to flush my ears with a peroxide solution; it was quite painful. Anyway, when Barbara was born; the attic was converted into a bedroom for me, so that Barbara could live in my old room, next to Mom & Dad's.

My attic room was huge compared to the little one on the second floor I had been living in. It was totally private up there, my own little world; I could hardly hear Mom practicing her singing; her repetitious warm-up scales were so annoying and impossible to get away from anywhere in the house except the attic and the far corners of the basement (where I eventually built my darkroom). Another big plus, I could play my radio as loud as I wanted without bothering anyone. Rock music was just getting rolling; many parents disapproved of Rock, especially the suggestive gyrations of Elvis Presley and his ilk. Allan Freed's show broke the easy-listening style that characterized most radio stations. For kids like me, it wasn't easy to find stations that played the music we liked. In New York, Cousin Brucie [Bruce Morrow] played the new music on WABC radio every night and Murry the K [Murray Kaufman] had a show on WINS. In the beginning, Rock music would be a two- or three-hour segment in a radio station's regular programming. I went to great lengths to receive far-away stations like WKBW in Buffalo, New York and CKLW, in Ontario, Canada; to receive those stations on my Motorola portable radio, I created a super antenna using 50-feet of wire that I strung crisscross along the ceiling to get better reception. It amazed me that I was listening to Canada, a place that was far away then, before the age of air travel.

The attic was like having my own apartment; there was enough room for two beds, four book cases, a four-drawer mirrored bureau, my desk, and a bunch of aquariums.



What started with one aquarium became a serious hobby inspired by Bob Banning; he had a big, 50-gallon tank in which he raised angelfishes.

At the high point, when I was thirteen, I had a dozen large aquaria in my attic room, raising a variety of exotic tropical fish—Oscars, Betas, Kissing Gouramis, Zebra Fish, Guppies, Barbs and Neon Tetras. My parents encouraged me.

Dad would regularly drive me into Manhattan to shop at the *Aquarium Stock Company* on Nassau Street, New York's biggest tropical-fish importer. Locally, I shopped at *C. Van Ash Pet Sore*; they got a ton of business from me. I also got in tight with Neil Van Ash, son of Charles, who was being groomed to take over the store from his father.

One of my favorite stories is about the time I asked Neil if he'd like to have my prize sucker cat fish; I had raised it for a year during which it had grown from a 2-inch baby into a 10-inch monster; that fish wreaked havoc to my aquariums, uprooting even the biggest plants. Neil said sure; so, I dropped the sea monster off at the store. Neil placed the prize-sized beauty into the store's front-window show tank—it was a prime specimen that could fetch a good price. When I walked past the shop on my way home from school a week later; that formerly pristine window-display aquarium was a murky mess. Ha!

Between my Sister Kathy and I, we had just about every kind of pet you can imagine; mice, hamsters, rabbits, dogs, cats, even a duck. At one point, I had four cages of hamsters (started with a pair). One day a pair of them escaped. I searched high and low but couldn't find them. I had given the hamsters up for dead until one night, a week later, during dinner, we heard them scratching in the walls of the dining room. Kathy and I were so excited that Dad had no alternative but to smash a big hole in the wall to get them out; when they weren't accessible from the first hole, he had to smash another... and a third. In those days, walls were made of lath and plaster; that's much harder to repair than today's wall-board materials



Jill Walters & sister Kathy, in her room on Manor Road.

At another point, I had nearly 100 white mice (started with a pair) living in high-rise cages that took up an entire wall in the back porch. At the insistence of Grandma Taylor, who couldn't stand their smell, I arranged with the pet store to sell them; I asked Neil if he'd like "a few mice." He said, sure; so, I herded the hoards into a big cardboard box; I sealed the top, poked some air holes into it, and delivered it to Van Ash's. I didn't stick around to watch the box get opened. The next day there was a big sign in the window: *Sale on Mice*. Ha!

## 1954 – Broken Arms – Two-Year Setback

In the late spring, I broke my left arm just above the wrist while roller skating. Back then roller skates had metal wheels that were clamped-on to whatever shoes you were wearing; they were primitive and much less safe than today's roller skates. Where we lived, Manor Road was a steep hill; great for sledding in the winter and roller-skating in the summer. Most of the older kids had skates; we'd have races up and down the sidewalks, zigging and zagging around rough patches and obstacles like tree roots.





During one race my skates hung up on some twigs and I went flying, breaking my arm when I hit ground at full speed; my hands were ripped-up as well. There wasn't so much racing after that; wearing a cast, I was cut out of sports and most activities for two months. It was a dreadful experience and one of the few I remember vividly. The medical clinic was in Flushing, a half-hour drive from Douglaston; and when we got there, we had to wait our turn. They didn't have pain killers in those days; I had to grin and bear it. The overworked doctor on duty was less than gentle; setting my arm hurt more than breaking it. But the story gets worse.... I got out of the cast at the end of July. Mom took me over to the clinic in the morning; then we went to Grandma Taylor's apartment in Great Neck for lunch, to talk about plans for our upcoming vacation at the Mosbach Cottages, a seaside summer rental in East Marion, a rural town situated between Greenport and Orient Point, the eastern tip of Long Island's north fork. I loved going there. Grandma would take me fishing on the charter boat Tex; she was quite a fisherman (excuse me, fisher-*person*); she learned fishing on lakes Québec; she had a picture of herself with a 20-pound pike [9.1 kg]. The house Nanna rented for us was right on the water, overlooking Gardiner's Bay. We always spent the month of August there. It was a seaside paradise for all things aquatic: from fishing and crabbing to swimming, snorkeling and water-skiing. Before we got our own boat, Dad rented them from Southhold Fishing Station. He took us fishing at the long-deserted Orient Lighthouse and crabbing in a primeval creek at Long Beach. Nearly every day I would surf cast from the jetty in front of the house, to catch snappers [young bluefish]; everyone indulged me, eating my daily catch; we ate fish every which way; the little snappers were pan-fried in butter. Anyway, our summer holiday was only a week away and I was quite excited about that—a bit over exuberant, too. I managed to trip over my own foot on the sidewalk in front of Grandma's apartment building, re-fracturing the same arm. Ouch! I was back in the clinic having a new cast put on the very same day I had the first one taken off. That time, I had to wear the cast three months. But wait, it gets even worse.... When I got out of the second cast, it was October, the beginning of football season; while trying out for the school team, guess what happened when I got tackled? That third fracture was a compound one [bone breaks skin]; it was ugly and super painful. Mercifully, they put me to sleep before straightening it. That time, I had to wear the cast for *nine* months. By the time they took that third cast off, my arm had shriveled up from lack of use; the elbow joint was so stiff that I couldn't touch my back for a year. During the 18 months that I was in casts, many activities were curtailed; but I wasn't entirely benched; I got used to wearing casts and came up with any number of work-arounds. Two years ago [2017], Pam and I had our pictures taken by a photographer who lost an arm fighting in a war; with just one arm, he was remarkably proficient; he had a work-around for every challenge; he reminded me of my days spent with a broken arm.

### **1955 – *The Case of Black Pete* – First Screenplay**

Theater was a big part of family life. While writing TV scripts, my parents were also active members of the Douglaston Community Theater [DCT] and the North Shore Friends of Opera. As kids, my sister Kathy and I went to see them whenever they performed in local productions and sometimes, we went to the rehearsals. On special occasions; they took us to Broadway plays, like *Peter Pan* and *The King and I*. Following in our parents' footsteps, us kids put on our own shows. I was the first, with a show called *The Case of Black Pete*, which I wrote by myself and staged in a theater that Dad helped me build in the basement; all my best friends played parts in that show.





1973 | GREENPORT HOUSE (EAST MARION) COLLECTION | PLATE N° 2  
 Lower right: Cindy Connolly with puppy Molly and aging Rin Tin Tin ("Rinny") | 1959





1973 | GREENPORT HOUSE (EAST MARION) COLLECTION | PLATE N° 2  
 Lower right: Cindy Connolly with puppy Molly and aging Rin Tin Tin ("Rinny") | 1959





1962 | GREENPORT HOUSE (EAST MARION) COLLECTION | PLATE N° 3

*Our Lyman speedboat was a prized possession. Fishing at Orient Lighthouse was out; water-skiing was in.*



1962 | GREENPORT HOUSE (EAST MARION) COLLECTION | PLATE N° 4

*Top: Kathy helps Mom, Dad drives & Getchen Moody spots | Ginger (center right) and I nearly sank the boat.*



After that, my Sister Kathy and her friends started putting on summer fairs in our backyard and along the driveway, as described earlier. At those summer festivals, I would put on shows in the garage, like P.T. Barnum, Jr.; that was my introduction to show business.

I was a good boy then; I read every Hardy Boys book I could find in the library, Frank and Joe Hardy were my heroes; I didn't realize then that they were agents of the adult ruling class. I believed in God; I went to church every Sunday and attended church school on Wednesday afternoons. (All kids got time off for religious education.) I was an avid Cub Scout<sup>22</sup> who took the Scout Oath seriously and lived by the Scout Law. (I still live by the Scout credo: "Be prepared.") Fortunately, my Cub Scout den was blessed with enthusiastic Den Mothers who encouraged achievement more than leadership, which was the stated aspiration of the Boy Scouts of America. As I was a project-driven boy, I won more merit badges than most of my peers; they made fun of me, called me a brown-noser. I was most proud of the badges I earned for an insect collection and a time-lapse-picture essay about how a bean plant grows from a seed.



<sup>8</sup> Yours Truly in Boy Scout troop 196, 1956. My nemesis, David Thomas is fifth from the left in the front row.

<sup>22</sup> Cub Scouting is part of the Scouting program of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), available to boys from first through fifth grade, or 7 to 11½ years of age and their families. Its membership is the largest of the three BSA divisions (Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing). The difference between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts encompasses critical categories like unit structure, leadership, parental involvement, advancement and camping. Both programs are built on Scouting's time-tested values. And beginning in May 2015, both programs will use the Scout Oath and Scout Law.  
[https://www.google.ca/search?q=cub+scouts&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws\\_rd=cr&ei=RE7hWJSzHIPY0gSqolJgDA](https://www.google.ca/search?q=cub+scouts&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=RE7hWJSzHIPY0gSqolJgDA)

When I was eleven, I graduated from the Cubs to the Boy Scouts. Unfortunately, the Boy Scouts didn't offer me any incentives. The Scout Master, Reggie Steel, was a former Marine Corps drill sergeant; the troop spent the better part of each monthly, two-hour meeting marching around the gym at PS 98; after that, we all did a calisthenics routine; Steel would bark commands using a loud whistle; it was no fun.

So, I dropped out of Scouting and got into photography. Before that, however, there was a funny episode in which Reggie Steel got his comeuppance. It happened on a spring hike at Bear Mountain State Park [a 5,205-acre state park located on the west side of the Hudson River in Rockland County]. It was late April, the 22<sup>nd</sup> if I recall correctly; everyone dressed for balmy weather.

However, nearly two-feet [~60 centimeters] of snow fell overnight; Reggie was fraught; all the cars were stuck, there was no way out; instead, we all huddled around a huge fire for the better part of two days, waiting for the roads to be plowed. "Be prepared," eh? Ha!

### **1956 – Confusing Rejection – Questions of Trust**

The fear of being abandoned by women that began with Mom was reinforced when my first girlfriend, Linda Savage, suddenly and unexplainably rejected me.

Linda and I became friends in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We would play together after school at her house or mine. Things were going great; then, *blammo*, they were not.

Once again, I felt betrayed and abandoned; it left an indelible impression. The lesson learned? Women were not trustworthy. After that, I never got close with another girl until my high school romance with Ginger O'Grady; even then, it took me some time to let down my guard; and what happened? She dropped me. (So did most every other important woman in my life.)

I haven't let my guard down completely, since then; I still keep too much bottled-up inside and shouldn't spend so much time alone. But I am making progress—I trust Pamela Swanson.

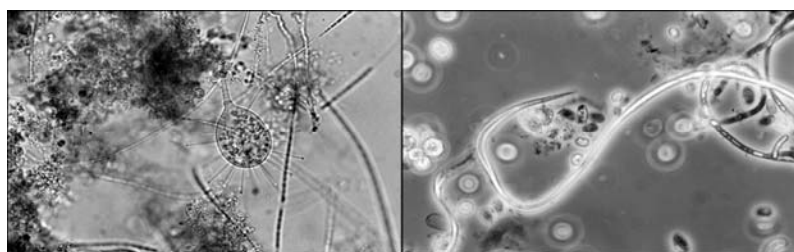
### **1957 – Grandpa Mesney Visit – Gift That Kept Giving**

The first of the two times I met my paternal Grandfather, Roger James Mesney, was when he came to visit from England, in the summer of 1954. I don't remember him well from that visit, but I do recall that he brought me an English-made, Meccano erector set that was way better than any made in the USA; my friends were totally jealous. They were even more jealous the next Christmas, when Grandpa sent me a deluxe, three speed (imagine, three!) *Raleigh* bicycle from England.

In 1957, RJ came to visit again, this time aboard the ocean liner HMS Mauritania. I have few memories of him; but that day stands out.

My parents took my sisters and I to see the ship come in. There was a big arrival celebration, with all the whoopla, fanfare and streamers. Grandpa arranged for us to have a tour of the ship, conducted by the captain himself. I could tell, Grandpa lived in luxury.

On that trip, Grandpa brought me a Minolta SR-2 camera; it was the gift that changed my life—I became a photographer.



For school, I bought a microscope adapter and photographed pond water.

Our neighbor, Bob Banning, himself an avid amateur photographer, mentored me; that felt good. He had a projector; he'd project my pictures onto the living room wall; seeing them so big inspired me. Those were my first slide shows.

## 1958 – First Slide Projector – Little Neck Camera Club

Kodak was marketing a new concept for amateur photographers—slide shows. The idea was that you didn't need to have expensive color prints made; instead, you could project them and show your pictures giant sized on a screen. The idea took off, not just for amateurs but, more especially, professional photographers, designers, and other creators of presentations and shows.

My first projector was an Ansco; my mentoring neighbor Bob Banning gave it to me for a thirteenth-birthday present, when he upgraded to a Kodak *Carousel*, the Cadillac of slide projectors, in 1958. Although the projector pictured is a European Agfa model, it's a dead ringer for the Ansco I had.

Agfacolor 250 slide projector. Photo courtesy Håkan Hansson.



In the autumn, I joined the Little Neck Camera Club, an association of about two dozen local shutterbugs. They held meetings at the Community Church of Little Neck on Thursday evenings, which were inconvenient two ways—the church was a 2-mile [~3 km] walk, on a school night. I was the club's youngest member. Most of the members were old geezers and/or wannabes who thought I was a *wunderkind*. The club went on weekend photo outings. I didn't have time to attend many of those, but did go on the trip to Alley Pond. Two important pictures came out of that shoot:





The shot of a female Mallard duck floating on colored reflections won a first prize in the Camera Club's photo contest—the first of many prizes.



The other shot, of Alley Pond, was accidental. It was the first picture on the roll and got overexposed when the roll wasn't fully rewound. Instead of being completely wiped out, the image of the pond was rendered in shades of yellow.



A fire in the swamps behind PS 98 produced another first-prize-winning picture. Winning awards became my quest. It wasn't about the attention; it was about being the best; about self worth.

Although I enjoyed the scuttlebutt and accolades, the club didn't challenge me; I sought the counsel of professionals.

To pay for my two expensive hobbies—tropical fish and photography—I continued shoveling snow in the winter and doing lawn work in the summers; to make even more money, I took a job offered by my neighbor, Bill Borst, to work on a neighborhood construction project. Borst and his family lived at the top of our block in a big house with an adjoining lot. He was president of the welding-equipment maker, Lincoln Electric (think Lincoln Building, a tower on East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in New York).



Borst was also president of the Douglas Manor Association, a community civic group that collected dues and disbursed the proceeds for neighborhood maintenance and improvements. One such project was the restoration of the shoreline that had been severely damaged by hurricane Connie in 1955; the erosion threatened the integrity of the existing concrete retaining wall built in the late 1800s to protect the peninsula's elevated promontories from the battering of storm tides. Bill hired me and Billy McCain to repair the eroded shoreline and construct a new sea wall built of railroad ties pinned together with steel rods made of concrete rebar [reinforcing bar]. Bill McCain made the whole experience tolerable; we hadn't been friends before that job; he was a year older and a big bull of a boy, half a foot taller than me [15 cm] and 100 pounds heavier [45 kg]. McCain had a keen and perpetual sense of humor; he knew when to crack a joke (or a big fart) for maximum impact; frequently, that was when we were carrying an especially heavy load.

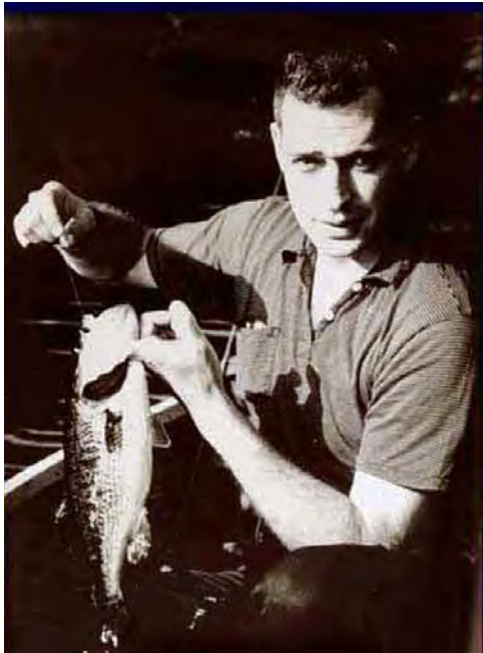


Seawall extension, 2015; fifty years later.  
Photos by Stephen Thomas.

Our job was to build a 2-foot-high [61 cm] seawall extension on top of the old 6-foot-high [180 cm] centuries-old concrete sea wall. Each week a truck would dump a pile of railroad ties at pre-determined sites along Shore Road as close as possible to our worksites. Every morning, at 7:30, our day would begin with schlepping railroad ties—each weighing between 150 and 200 pounds [68 to 91 kg]—down to the old sea wall. Then we'd do the soil-prep work, position the ties, drill pin-holes through them (using a manual *brace and bit* fitted with a 2-inch bit [5 cm] drill), then hammer #18 rebar pins through those holes, to connect the ties. Try drilling a 2-inch hole through a 9-inch beam by hand some time; you'll discover it is quite a chore.

McCain did most of the drilling and I did most of the hammering, pounding 18-inch lengths of rebar through holes that were intentionally too narrow (to insure a snug, water resistant fit); on average, each rebar-pin took three dozen strokes with a 10-pound [4.5 kg] sledge hammer and each joint two pins, hard corners three. We would sweat our way through the day; the best thirst-quencher was plain iced tea, without sugar or lemon. It was grunt work but I loved the money; and working with Billy was a treat—although I almost had a hernia more than once laughing at jokes or wisecracks, made at the most strenuous moments. One morning, while we were humping the ties down to the sea wall, Bill quipped: "Fifty years ago, people would have to do this work by hand." Ha!

## 1958 – New School – New Father



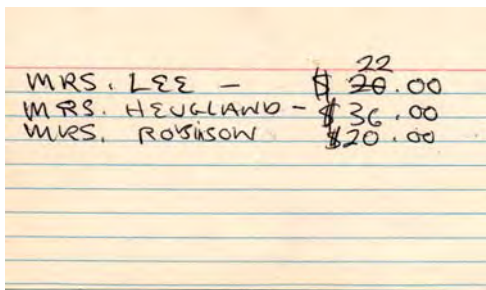
Bob Banning became my surrogate father.

My father, from England, was like a fish out of water in America; he had no interest in hunting, fishing, gardening, cooking or photography.

Banning was interested in all those things and more; he took me under his wing; I was like the son he never had (he and wife Anne produced three girls).

When I was gifted a Minolta SR-2 camera as a twelfth-birthday present, it was Bob who taught me how to use it; he got me hooked on photography.

Bob shot Kodachrome slides mostly; he never used a light meter but somehow nailed the right exposure nearly every time; he taught me to *read the light*.



To pay for my expensive new hobby I sold my services door-to-door, soliciting assignments to shoot portraits of people, pets, and properties. I totally embraced photography; my tropical fish and back-yard garden got neglected, then abandoned.

Another neighbor, Glen Peterson, also took an interest in me. I shoveled snow for him in the winter to make money. Glen owned and ran Peterson Color Lab, New York's premier dye-transfer, picture-printing company, servicing blue-chip ad agencies up and down Madison Avenue. Peterson learned of my interest in photography when I tried to sell him a picture of his house, a beauty shot taken right after a snowfall, before I shoveled the walks and driveway. He not only bought the picture but offered me a summer job as a messenger and assistant chemical mixer at his prestigious photo lab in New York. That job was another life-altering experience; I was immersed in the Zeitgeist of the New York advertising industry (think *Mad Men*); it was intoxicating; but I also saw the huge size of the pond (as in small fish, big pond). I got a realistic picture of my place in the photographic universe. It made me realize that to get good as a photographer was going to be a marathon, not a sprint.

Apprenticing at Peterson Color Lab was important because I was working for masters of their crafts. Peterson's lab was nationally known for their dye-transfer work. The dye transfer process was the best way—and the most expensive—to make color prints. The process involved taking apart a picture and putting it back together. From a color transparency, three separation negatives were made on black and white film, one each for light's three primary colors: red, green, and blue.





Each of those three separation negatives was then enlarged to the final print size (usually 20 X 24) and printed onto *matrix film*; that reversed the image back from negative to positive. The emulsion of matrix film was gelatinous, to absorb color dyes. After bathing in their respective three dye colors [magenta, cyan and yellow], the matrix films were sequentially rolled out, in register with each other, onto special paper which absorbed the dyes from the matrix films; hence the term *dye-transfer*. [Of passing interest, the dye-transfer process is how the Technicolor® process worked. The highest quality always involves the most control.]

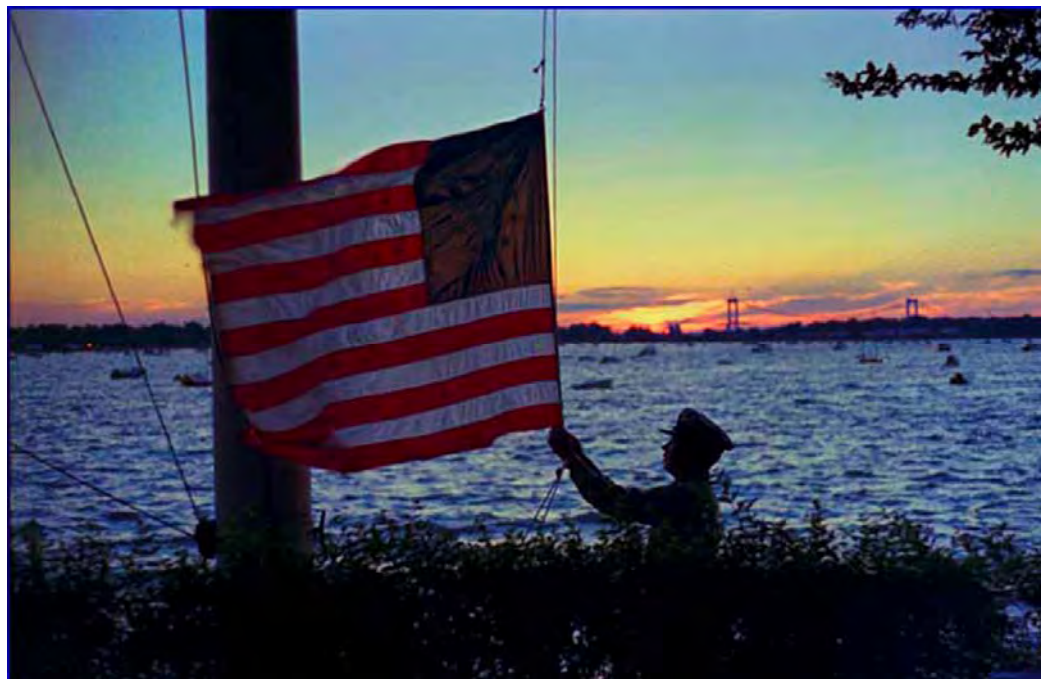
Controlling color was the reason that ad agencies used Peterson Color Lab; color control was the specialty of the house; they could turn a red car blue, or milk color from scenes shot under cloudy skies. Another Peterson specialty was their mastery of *strip-in* assembly work, whereby parts of one picture can be inserted into another; today such photo-montage work is easily done; back then it was a precise and painstaking technique only done well by a few labs, Peterson being the flagship of a very small fleet. That is where my passion for special effects took root, where I got into trick photography. It was at that point that I veered off the paths trodden by *righteous* photographers.

Why wait for the right sky, like Ansel Adams, if you can just strip-in a new one? The idea that anything is possible conceptually altered how I thought about things, how I approached photography. The highlight of working at Peterson Color Lab came when Jack Abadejian, the lab manager, allowed me to make dye-transfer prints of two favorite pictures.

One of them was a shot of Rocky, the Douglaston Dock attendant, taking in Old Glory at sunset.

Rocky was kind enough to oblige me by holding his pose long enough for me to futz with my Minolta.

I was quite chuffed when the shot came out as planned.



Old Glory at Sunset, 1958





The other shot, *Fireworks*, was made during the family's annual summer holiday in East Marion. It was one of my first tripod shots—a super-long exposure (about 6 seconds, I'd guess) of my sisters and our friends twirling sparklers. I remember being thrilled by the way that picture turned out. But the biggest thrill was seeing my work coming to life at Peterson Color Lab and experiencing the opportunities and encouragement that the lab crew afforded me.

The money I earned at Peterson Color Lab paid to build a darkroom in the basement of the family house on Manor Road. That darkroom changed everything; one can actually learn photography faster and better if one does one's own darkroom work. The darkroom is like a camera in reverse, but all the same principles apply, but in slow motion. That makes it easier to understand the behavior of light and film. It helps one understand what camera controls are actually controlling. Working in a darkroom teaches one about the technical aspects of photography, about exposures and the limitations of photo media. Printing pictures teaches one how to analyze scenes in the real world, how to determine the correct exposure, how to get the look one wants. An extreme example is shooting *day-for-night* by underexposing scenes shot in daytime to make them darker. Having my own darkroom was the stepping stone that turned photography from an avocation to a vocation, from a hobby to a career. Within two years of building the darkroom, I had also built a reputation as a photographer, around the neighborhood and at school.



One of my first customers was the Gordon Paulson family, who lived at 9 Arleigh Road, just off West Drive; they wanted a personalized Christmas card with a family portrait. The Paulsons became loyal customers; I made their cards for nearly ten years. Each year, around Halloween, the Paulson kids would be posed by a wreath hung on the front door, or singing Christmas carols, for the front of the card. Mrs. Paulson wrote the card's message in longhand, with black ink. I took the picture and handwritten text to a printer in Little Neck; they put the pieces together and made the cards; everybody was happy.

The Paulsons were good people, generous, and loyal customers, not only for cards, but for snow shoveling and yard work. Gordon Paulson was an important benefactor of the Douglaston Community Church, a member of the Reformed Church in America, the oldest Protestant denomination. Our family went to Zion Church because their Episcopalian denomination was more like the Anglican Church my father was accustomed to, in England.

That was the kind of work I was doing, that and pet portraits mostly. Business boomed and while my parents were impressed with my ambition and success, they nonetheless warned me that, as an adage has it: Once a hobby becomes a profession, it ceases to be a hobby. Their advice fell on deaf ears, but now I understand it; having been a professional photographer for my entire adult life, I can't take pictures for the fun of it.

## 1958 – JHS 67 – Social Pressures

Breaking my arm three times (always in the same place, always on Tuesdays) made me superstitious and paranoid. The doctor told me that next time there wouldn't be a cast—they would drill out my bones and insert a stainless-steel rod. That put the fear of God into me. Not wanting to take any risks, my lifestyle became more sedentary. That led to weight gain; but lethargy wasn't the sole factor. The other was my upbringing—I was taught to equate food with love. If I ate everything on my plate, Mom and Nanna showered me with approval and extra affection. But if I got picky, they commanded: "You're not leaving the table until you finish your dinner!"

Mom was an OK cook, but not as good as Nanna. She made almost everything from scratch, but wasn't beyond modern conveniences like frozen food. Home freezers became popular in the '50s; when we got ours, Mom also signed up for a food plan that delivered bulk frozen food to be stored in the big chest freezer; then we got a new refrigerator, a fridge/freezer combo; so, more frozen food. I'm not complaining, just commenting; Mom made our meals über nutritious; I thank her for that. She followed Linus Pauling and other nutritionists in the papers and on the radio. As a result, we ate vitamin pills with every meal, and Mom put wheat germ into everything, even deserts. It seemed we never had "normal" food. We even ate salad *after* the main course (Dad preferred that European tradition). My sister and I looked forwards to eating at friends' houses, where they served normal food, like spaghetti & meatballs, or mac & cheese. At my friend, Mark Cunningham's house, they had Jell-O every night, served with whipped cream; yum, no wheat germ. Besides those idiosyncrasies, and a propensity for cooking vegetables to death, Mom's meals were great, and her servings even greater. In hopes of approval (and to avoid confrontations) I ate everything that was put in front of me; there were no leftovers when I was around; I gobbled up everything and the approval that came with it; my friends even nicknamed me "The Vacuum Cleaner." As a result, I was way overweight by the time I got to Junior High School; by today's standards, I would have been classified as obese. [See photos of me at Ned Dubin's bar mitzvah, below.]

I had the dubious distinction of being the fattest kid in my Junior-High class, during the first year there; that had profound social consequences. In those more innocent times, age twelve was when boys and girls started socializing together. My parents enrolled me in a ballroom dancing class at the Douglaston Club. I was excited, having wondered what it was like in the big, white Club building, once the mansion home of George Douglas and, later, his son William—poor folks, like us Mesneys, didn't frequent that ~~self-righteous~~ exclusive establishment or associate with Douglaston's upper crust. At the dancing classes I couldn't help feeling awkward; it was not just for being poor; it had more to do with my excessive weight. The dancing classes were held in the Club's ballroom, on the top floor of the three-story former mansion. There were about two dozen kids in the class, more girls than boys.



Photo by Dorothy Mesney (?), 1960.

The girls would giggle at the sight of me, stuffed into my second-hand suit and tie; none of them wanted to dance with me; the instructors had to force them to, which made them giggle even more. It was mortifying.

In short order I decided not to be fat and went on a crash diet, losing thirty pounds in two months; that was when my anorexia became manifest, when my personality was forever altered, afraid to be fat ever again.

My parents didn't know how to cope with me; truthfully, it must have been hard for them. I steadfastly refused to eat any dinner except iceberg lettuce with tomato juice for dressing; and for breakfast, just a solitary egg.

There was an immediate showdown after I announced my dieting regime; I was made to stay at the table until I ate the meal put in front of me. But my parents blinked first, well after midnight, when they wanted to go to bed. After that, I got my way at the table.

My lifestyle was active then, especially for a fat boy; that helped me shed pounds quickly. Junior High School 67, named after Louis Pasteur (of pasteurized milk fame), was four miles south from my home in Douglaston, in the merge zone between the neighborhoods of Little Neck (mostly WASP) and Fresh Meadows (mostly Jewish). To get there I walked two miles, through the swamps and on up the back road to Little Neck; after crossing the Long Island Railroad tracks, I continued up Marathon Parkway another two miles to the school, at 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

I got a job selling and delivering newspapers [*The New York Times*] to teachers and students who ordered them from me. The papers were dropped off in front of the school at 7:30 each morning; I had to leave the house by 6:45 to meet the delivery truck on time. I also scraped dishes in the cafeteria to earn food credits, a form of money. That was when I discovered what life was like as a laborer, a serf; what it was like to be looked down upon, to be a member of the underclass. I learned that workers get no respect; they are cogs in a wheel, part of a money machine run by élites. I'd be standing behind the dishwashing machine watching the wealthier kids sling their slop at me, in a demeaning way; I felt like a "white nigger." Power and possessions became my goals (and being thin).

The paper-delivery job didn't pay enough to support my expensive photography hobby. To earn more money, I started a gardening and lawn-service business with Allan Seiden, a classmate at JHS 67 who lived in Little Neck. We took care of a prime piece of property—located at 5 Beverly Road, right across the street from the Douglaston Dock—belonging to a wealthy husband and wife team of Wall Street stockbrokers, Francis Dodd McHugh and his wife Dorothy. We trimmed the huge, 10-foot-high [3.04 meters] hedges, mowed an acre of grass, and tended to Dorothy McHugh's extensive vegetable garden and flower beds.



It was a terrific job; Mrs. McHugh kept a refrigerator in the garage, well stocked with Coca-Cola. Cokes tasted terrific back then, when they came in 10-ounce glass bottles.<sup>23</sup> On those hot and sweaty summer afternoons, those ice-cold Cokes were a real treat. Allan and I made a bundle of money; the down side was watching other kids having fun swimming and boating, while Allan and I were busting our asses, sweat dripping from our brows. The contrast gave us both determination; we both went on to take control of our lives, running businesses by and for ourselves. Working for Dorothy McHugh also had aspirational value; it gave me another inside look at how the other half lives.

Across the street from the McHugh's, at 11 Beverly Road, lived Louise and Lennart Friscia—he a successful contractor and she a lawyer—and their daughter Suzie, a Douglastonian *Lolita*. Just a few years later I ended up working for Louise and briefly dating Suzie; she was the first girl I made out with and felt-up, in back row of the Little Neck Theater. It was a conquest, albeit a small one; I felt that I had breached a cultural barrier, a poor boy dating a rich girl.

During Junior High School, I kept after my photography; it was a constant reward and I became more and more entangled in the process of making pictures, encouraged by my mentor, Bob Banning. Technically, I had already surpassed Mr. Banning; I had a darkroom and used light meters; he took pictures by the seat of his pants; he could look at almost any scene and call the exposure; Banning chuckled at my meters, but was impressed all the same, and jealous of my darkroom, where the photo magic happened.

I also joined the school orchestra as one of three trombonists, led by Mr. Parness. There I befriended Nathaniel "Ned" Dubin, a clarinetist. Ned was one of Allan Seiden's colleagues; they were both in a clique of Little Neck boys who attended the same synagogue (Temple Torah); a group that included Jay Martin and Bruce Braverman. Judaism was all new for me; the idea that Jews didn't recognize Jesus was intriguing; even more so were their strict dietary laws; I learned all about those at Ned Dubin's house; his mom kept a strict kosher kitchen, two sets of dishes, the works. Although I ate dinner at Allan Seiden's house more frequently, their family wasn't as orthodox.

Ned invited me to his bar mitzvah; I took in the proceedings with keen interest —the rabbi's chants, sung in Hebrew, Ned's reading from the Torah, and the candle lighting ceremony—and enjoyed new foods, like kreplach soup—greasy chicken broth with chicken-liver dumplings. Yum!

He was kind enough to provide these pictures of his bar mitzvah, noting that he hoped the photographer didn't get paid much, for doing a lousy job.

Pictured at left, Ned is performing the candlelight ceremony with his cousin, Sondra. If I hadn't been so fat, I would have taken keen interest in her or Karen (left); but I feared rejection and stoically kept my thoughts to myself.



<sup>23</sup> When they started using aluminum cans and plastic bottles the Coca Cola formula had to change because the original beverage was highly "reactive." (Did you know that Coca Cola can dissolve a human tooth in less than a month?) But who knew or even cared about stuff like that back then?



Ned identified the kids in this picture: I am sitting between Bunny Elkin and Sandy Rosenberg (far right). Allen Seiden is in the center. Jay Martin is sitting in front of Bunny Elkin. Left of Jay is Karen (last name?), who is hiding someone, maybe Bruce Braverman. Ned *thinks* the girl on the far left is Varda Davis. The heads cropped out in front belonged to Ned's cousins Steven and Neil.

## 1959 – Canadian Holiday – Kissing Cousins

During the summer between Junior High and High School, the Mesney clan drove to Toronto, Canada, to visit our Canadian cousins. Keith Bonner's wife, Louise, was related to Grandma Taylor; my sisters and I were their second cousins twice removed (or something like that). The Bonners had three kids: Beverly was the eldest. Denny was next; he was damaged at birth (forceps?) and suffered unusually severe autism. He was 18 when we visited and was strapped into a chair in which he rocked violently back and forth, incessantly, making unintelligible noises that were quite intrusive. [Fearing I could have such a child is one of the reasons I chose to never be a father.] Bonnie was the youngest. She was my age and was our tour guide in Canada. We visited Niagara Falls and their second home in Collingwood, on Georgian Bay. Bonnie took me on canoe trips around the lake during which we had a lot of time together. Long story short, I fell for her and convinced her to come back to Douglaston with us. On the long drive back, Bonnie and I were in the back of our Ford Fairlane station wagon. That's when I learned how to "make



out". We became pen pals and I returned to Canada during the Christmas holidays. We went skiing in the foothills of Collingwood. I broke their loaner skis when I crashed into a tree on my first run down the mountain. Then she went off to private school and I got involved with the social pressures of Bayside High. We kept in touch off and on for years but lost it in the 90s.

Bonnie is on the roof with Dad and Barbara. Grandma Taylor is riding shotgun. Mom and Kath sit on the hood.

## 1959 – Bayside High School – Expanding Horizons

The big day arrived; a thinner, made-over me was off to Bayside High School and the beginning of a new life as a small fish in a much bigger pond. More than five thousand students attended Bayside High; they came from all over northeastern Queens, a mélange of ethnicity and religiosity from all walks of life; all of us hoped to live up to Bayside High School's motto: *Primi Inter Pares* – First Among Equals.

As the crow flies, Bayside High was only 10 miles from home [16 kilometers]; but to get there I had to walk a mile and a half [2.4 km] to the bus stop on Northern Boulevard and take the Q-12 bus to Bell Boulevard, in Bayside, 5 miles [~8 kilometers] West of Douglaston; there. I would transfer to the Q-13 and take that up to Corporal Kennedy Street, a block from school. The trip took an hour and a half, each way. I had to leave the house by 7:30 am to be at school by 9:00 am. When I woke up late, I would try to sneak onto the Long Island Rail Road [LIRR] and ride that train one stop to Bayside. While that route cut a half hour off the commute, it cost a couple of bucks—that was big money when you consider I only made four bucks an hour doing yard work or shoveling snow. So, to avoid that fare I'd get on the very last car of the train and slowly walk toward the first car, pretending to look for a seat, hoping to avoid the Conductor [ticket taker] before the five-minute ride ended and I hopped off, at Bayside station.

At school, things did not go swimmingly. Because of my accelerated program at Junior High—doing three years in two, in a Special Progress class [SP class]—I was a year or two younger than everyone else; my classmates were dismissive toward me; I had to work hard to gain their respect. To appear older, I took to smoking; a lot of my classmates were smoking, dare I say most of them? My first pack was Old Gold cigarettes which I purchased at Klein's newspaper & smokes shop, at the Q-12 bus stop, on Northern Boulevard. Geez, I felt so guilty forking over 15 cents to Mr. Klein; he was a fat, unshaven old Jew who used grunts instead of words; he probably couldn't have cared less about whether I was old enough to buy cigarettes (I wasn't). I didn't open the pack until the next morning, during my long walk to the bus stop. There was a narrow trail along the crest of a hill above the railroad tracks, where nobody could see me, that's where I lit up for the first time; it wasn't a good choice; I got so dizzy that I nearly lost balance and fell down the embankment onto the tracks. Smoking was all about image in the beginning; I didn't get hooked until I started smoking at home, after some smokin' battles with my parents. Besides the peer pressure to smoke, I had other, more serious insecurities to hide from. Having only recently shed my baby fat, I was body conscious. I knew what I was supposed to look like; sexy magazines like Playboy offered plenty of role models. However, except for members of my family and a few close boyfriends, at sleepovers, I had never seen any other nude people in the flesh. That was until swimming class at Bayside High. At school, the freshmen boys swam nude, while sophomore, junior and senior men all wore swimsuits; go figure. I reckon it was either about intimidation or some perverted pedophile's idea to look at naked pubescent boys. Whatever the intent, the result was devastating for me; I discovered that I am not endowed as well as most men. No matter what they say— "It's not what you've got, it's what you do with it."—size matters. The emasculation I felt then has never left me; I think that my promiscuity was compensation for an inferiority complex. Guys with big dicks don't have to worry; women flock to them.



I had something to prove to myself; I was desperate to become popular with my new peers; my attention turned to self-image; I became a classic over-compensator—a guy with a small dick who drove a phallic car [Corvette] and worked at seducing women. I joined the high school camera club to make friends, meet girls, get credits for extracurricular activities and learn more about something I liked doing. Learning begins with emulation; we imitate the masters of our respective fields until we discover (uncover) our own point of view [POV]. Being in the camera club also brought an element of competition into the picture; there was the obvious “penis envy”—who’s got the longest lens—but more than that, who’s taking the best pictures? Who is breaking new ground?

During my first of three years at Bayside High, I joined the G.O. [General Organization – a kind of student union] as a Representative and eventually became a G.O. Captain; my job was to report back and forth between the G.O. office and my home-room class; that emboldened me to speak in front of groups and to be persuasive. I volunteered to work as a photographer for the school newspaper, the *Baysider*, as well as the *Triangle* yearbook, *Soundings* (a literary magazine) and *Scope*; working for those publications provided multiple benefits; I got to spend more time doing photography, and I got the recognition I was missing; the feeling of self-fulfillment. It was a time of change for me; I was emerging from a chrysalis into a new form of being; from the plump, geeky me who hid behind a camera or in a darkroom, to a social me who used my camera as a calling card to meet others and have my way with them. Being a photographer makes you as popular as a pianist at a cocktail party; there are few who don’t like to have their picture taken, especially young women (heh heh). My personality was bifurcated; I had no problem going up to someone, introducing myself and selling them *things*; but I had (have) problems selling myself; I am too self-conscious, too shy. To get good pictures for the paper and yearbook required dealing with people on an almost daily basis; I contacted students and staff; more and more people got to know me and I got less and less inhibited. It was a great way to meet people; I became the life of the party.

David Nolte photos.



A new version of me emerged from the chrysalis; chubby Douglas no longer existed; the pendulum swung the other way; I became totally fixated on my looks, remaining slim and emulating the suave style and dapper looks of TV star Roger Moore [*The Saint*].

I took to smoking a pipe, for *the look*—a pipe gave one a more intellectual self-image than cigarettes.

The shy me hid behind my Dapper-Dan looks; my outfits were like costumes, or uniforms; they helped me be someone else—the person I wanted to be; by managing my self-image and persona, I could manage what others thought about me. Being well-dressed and groomed gave me confidence.

Second-hand clothes weren't OK any longer; my outfits had to be *au courante*; by the time clothes got to a thrift shop, it was too late—styles changed. At the time, the Edwardian look was in—stove-pipe trousers with short, pointed shirt sleeves and skinny ties—the antithesis of our parents' traditional wardrobe. My character changed along with my looks; as a photographer, I became socially bolder and was immediately rewarded with popularity.

Midway through the fall semester I was asked to pledge for the Phi Alpha Sigma [ΦΑΣ] fraternity, one of the two most preppy (as in prep school) frats at Bayside High; fraternities were technically not allowed, but there were no fraternity or sorority police so they persisted and operated quite openly. Each frat had a sister sorority; Phi Alpha Sigma was tied with the FAF sorority, whose members were the top girls, many of them cheerleaders. My friends and associates at Bayside High School were upper echelon; they were the Politik, members of the school's most élitist organizations—Arista, Leaders' Club, Student Forum and the G.O. [General Organization]. Most of them were smarter than me, too, achieving "Major B" [they got a large sized letter "B" to sew onto their jackets], Honor Roll or Credit Roll. My camera allowed me to hang with those privileged kids, to orbit closer to their inner circle, to be part of their élite Zeitgeist.



Being asked to join Phi Alpha Sigma was an ego boost that incentivised me. There were about twenty brothers in the Bayside High chapter of the frat; about ten were chosen each year from grades 11 and 12. The brothers were all power people, guys who got things done. Even in high school, I could see the basic differences among those who produce and those who don't.



Phi Alpha Sigma brothers on the Douglaston Club porch, 1961

The frat did a small amount of charitable stuff but was essentially a social organization, allowing its members access to girls they might otherwise not have the opportunity to meet.

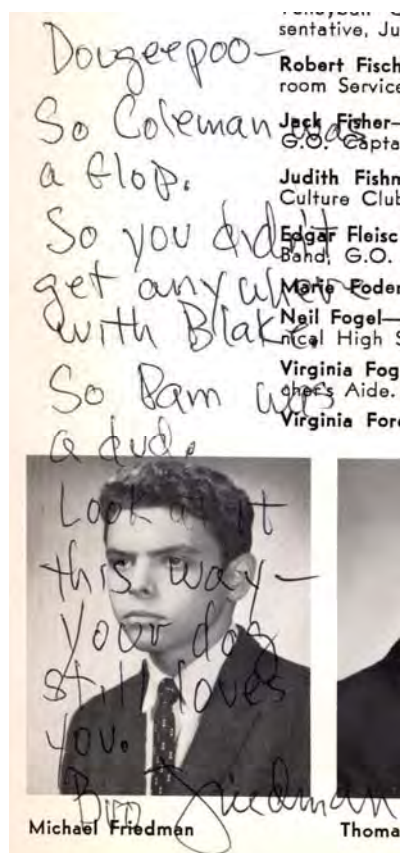


I can't remember who tapped me, it might have been Frank Cermack, who was president of the Senior Class that year, or Joe Ball, who oversaw the *Triangle* yearbook. He was my original connection; he gave out the yearbook photo assignments, which is how I started meeting the "right" people.



Part of the excitement of being in Phi Alpha Sigma was going to New York City for chapter meetings once a month at the Sheraton Russel Hotel, on Park Avenue South, at 38<sup>th</sup> Street. Being only fourteen, New York was still a new and exciting frontier. There was always a bar stocked with beer and basics. The brothers knew I was way under-age, but half of them were, too; and a wink was as good as a nod with the hotel's catering department. We were good boys; we never got drunk at those meetings; after them, the older guys went on to party around town; but I went home, usually with Mike Friedman and Randy Ettman. To get home, we three took the subway from Times Square to Main Street Flushing, then got the Q-12 bus to Little Neck, where they lived; from Little Neck, I walked the back-road home, through the swamps.

Phi Alpha Sigma brothers at the Douglaston Dock, 1961



Mike Friedman and I hit it off right away; the fact that Mike's father raised tropical fish professionally had a lot to do with fostering our friendship, even though we were culturally far apart. Mike and I came from different sides of the tracks—literally—so there was a fascination about how the other half lived. Until I got to know Mike, Allan Seiden was my only close Jewish friend.

I got my first lessons in Judaism at Allan's bar mitzva. Then, Mike invited me to his wedding; the reception was at a Jewish restaurant on Broome Street, in the Lower East Side, near the Williamsburg Bridge; what I remember most was the kreplach soup (chicken broth with chicken-liver-stuffed dumplings). I never had food like that for another twenty years, when I had kreplach soup again, for lunch at a kosher place in the same neighborhood, with my client and friend, Arnie Miller [more later about him].

Mike was my Beatnik friend; those were the days before Hippies; Bohemian people populated the subculture, called Beatniks. Mike and I went to poetry readings and jazz clubs in Greenwich Village; he introduced me to marijuana; I became part of a subculture that was semi-legal; yes, you could get arrested for weed, but probably wouldn't.

Photo: Bayside High School *Triangle* 1961 yearbook.



However, the social stigmatization was another matter; smoking dope was too hip to be Hip; some people wouldn't want to associate with me anymore, if they knew I smoked marijuana; so, I lived precariously, with one foot on the ground and the other, underground.

Randy Ettman was another Jewish friend; Mike introduced me to him; they lived near each other in Little Neck.

Randy's alter ego was the Spanish guitarist Segovia; he did his best to look the part (and was handsome enough for it). Randy fancied himself quite the photographer; he liked to take pictures of girls in various states of undress; he was good at it and had just the set-up—his parents were almost never home—at least I never met them. We had ourselves some good 'ol times, smoking seedy weed that Mike sourced from Steve Solomita. Out-shooting Randy gave me the impetus to start taking pictures of girls.



Douglas Mesney photo, 1960

Pat Broderick was my first model [1960]; she was a local girl who lived in Douglas Manor on Ridge Road and Center Drive, across from Janet Olsen, a five-minute walk from Manor Road. Pat was serious about becoming a professional model; she was testing for the Eileen Ford model agency, probably New York's most exclusive model agency. We met in late spring and worked off and on until she went to college in Boston.

As we got to know each other during the photo sessions, Pat suggested that we try more alluring shots. She invited me to her house, when her parents were away. We went up to the attic, a creaky old space that hadn't been remodeled in 100+ years; it was like a time capsule in there.

The scene was made even more interesting by the room's sky-lighting; shafts of light penetrated the raftered illuminating a bunch of antique furniture, including an old velvet love seat that we dragged into a pool of light.



It was a very seductive scene; very high style; very *Vogue* (magazine). At one point, Pat's silken blouse slipped to reveal her breast; I expected her to recover her composure but instead she just let it all hang out; I kept my composure but it was "hard" to do.

I looked forward to our next session, but right after that she was gone, off to school. I mailed her the pictures; she wrote back with a promise to make more pictures when she was home, at Christmas, but when the time came, she was too busy or not feeling well; it became obvious she was avoiding me; I never could figure out why. Was it me?

To digress for a moment: Although 143 people signed my copy of the Bayside High School yearbook, *Triangle*, I can't remember more than a couple of dozen. More perplexing (although enlightening) are some of the comments about me inscribed in my yearbook by those who signed it; among others were these: "To the...

"...butcher of Bio 3....

"...a fellow physicist....

"...the nuttiest kid I know....

"...a non-conformist....

"...a real whacko....

"...a warped sense of humor....

"...the guy with a sneaky camera....

"...the wildest photographer....

"...take it easy around turns....

"...the biggest pest in my life....

"...good luck crashing FAF parties....

"...sorry about Pam....

"...won't forget Calico Kitchen...!

"... be a judge in a cake contest."

Those judgmental comments prognosticated what came to be: I did become an unabashed, party animal; I'm still a practical joker (and a pest) and the culinary arts became my favorite avocation, particularly baking cakes. However, after high school I never followed physics and lost my inclination for biology at St. Lawrence, as you'll read, further on.

## 1959 – Peer Pressure – Polarized Life

After school, the in-crowd hung at the Tonjes & Carlson soda fountain, on Bell Boulevard.

There was plenty of peer pressure (to get a date and maybe get laid). That heightened my insecurity. I was fourteen, a year younger than the next youngest guy in my grade 10 class at Bayside High; some of my fellow classmates were up to two years older than me.



Joyce Coleman and Cliff Crocle generated the most gossip.

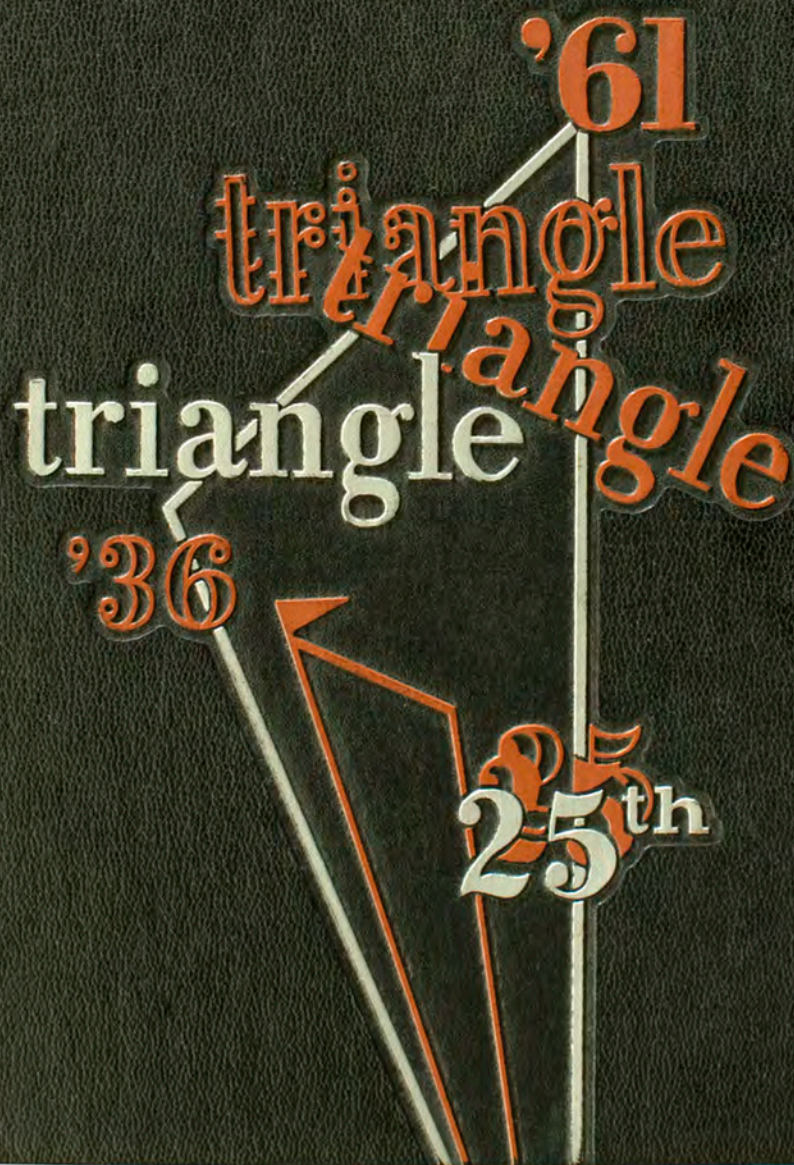
Joyce was one of the hottest of the hot girls in FAF sorority, and a cheerleader.

Clifford was senior-class president at Holy Cross High School, the Catholic high school; the two of them were rumored to be "doing it." Yikes!

Bayside High School *Triangle* '61 yearbook photo.

## 1959-61 | Bayside High School Triangle yearbook | Plates Nos 1-18

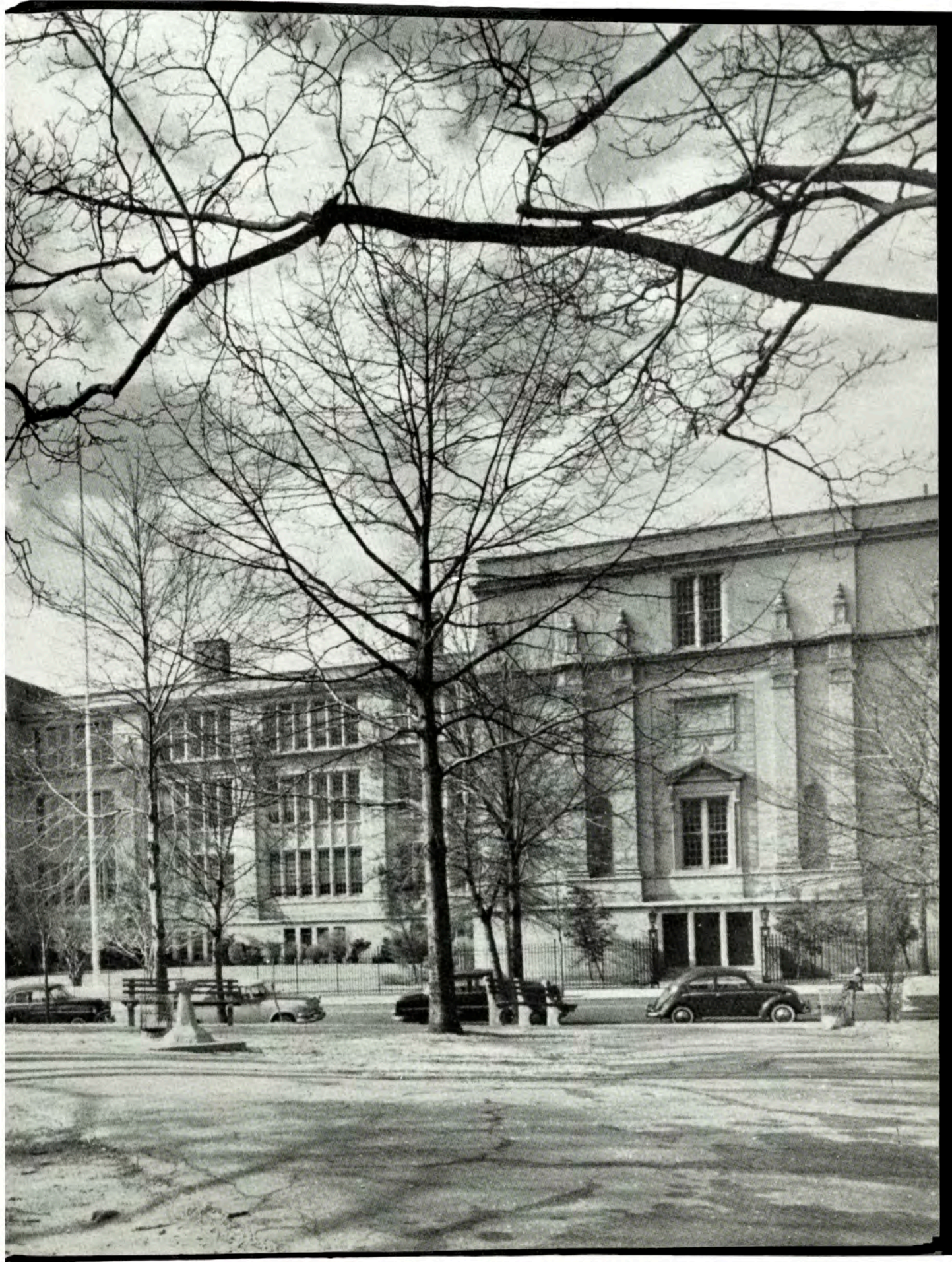












1961 | BAYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL TRIANGLE YEARBOOK | PLATE N° 3  
32-24 Corporal Kennedy Street, Bayside, New York 11361-1061





BAYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL  
32ND AVENUE AND 208TH STREET  
BAYSIDE 61, BOROUGH OF QUEENS  
SAMUEL D. MOSKOWITZ, PRINCIPAL

June 28, 1961

To the Graduates of June, 1961:

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of Bayside High you are to be congratulated for your contributions to the varied scholastic and extra-curricular activities of the school.

Your class will participate in Bayside High School's fiftieth commencement exercises at which time you will affirm the high resolve of the ancient Ephebic Oath: "to do everything within our power to make this city a more beautiful, happier and more inspiring place for all its citizens."

May you strive for the highest level of achievement of which you are capable. May you follow the advice of our young President: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

Cordially yours,  
*Samuel D. Moskowitz*  
Samuel D. Moskowitz  
Principal

SDM:dmm



## THOSE WE HONOR



*Standing: Mr. Edwin Nurnberg, Accounting Department; Mrs. Julia Willemin, Library; Mr. John Adelmann, Boys Health Ed. Department; Mr. Paul Fish, Boys Health Ed. Department; Mr. Walter Cramblitt, Art Department; Mr. Leroy Walter, Social Studies Department; Mr. George Lash, Chairman, Biology Department; Mr. George Sindel, Dean; Mr. Leonard Pincus, Administrative Assistant. Seated: Miss Matilda Rowold, Girls Health Ed. Department; Miss Delphine Acerboni, Language Department; Mrs. Ida Shapiro, English Department; Miss Emma Johnston, Biology Department; Miss Mary McKeon, Social Studies Department.*

A quarter of a century ago, in the days of vaudeville and Vallee, sixty-six teachers waded through the mud on a memorable March day to open the doors of the new Bayside High School.

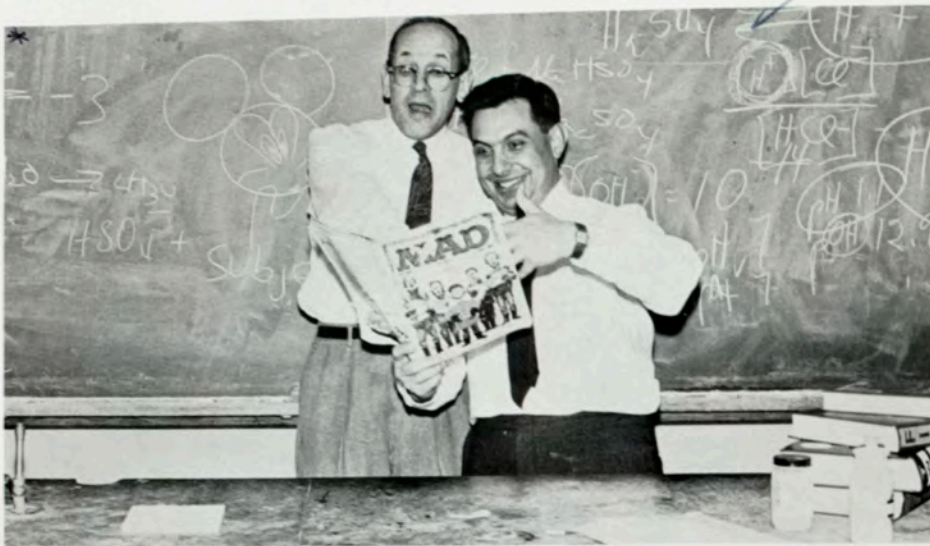
Eighteen of the original faculty are still with us. They succeeded in making Bayside High a paragon of secondary school education. Unselfishly, they have devoted their time and talents for the benefit of a generation of Bayside students.

We, the Seniors of 1961, are proud of our eighteen original teachers and to these honored few, this Silver Anniversary Issue of Triangle is respectfully dedicated.



# THE BIG EXPERIMENT

*Art W. Green*

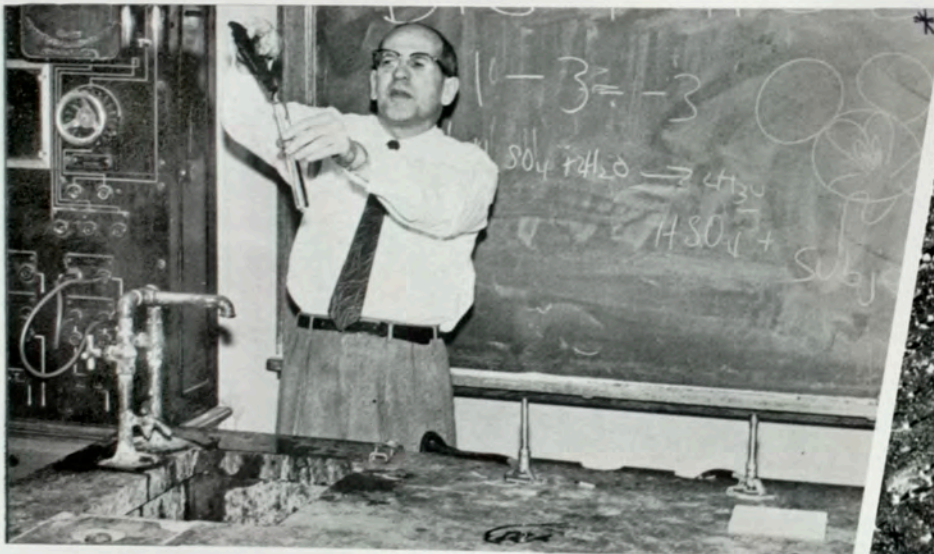


According to accepted authorities . . .

*Johnson had his Boswell  
Roosevelt his Schlegel  
I must be grateful to suppose  
for Douglas Meany  
Made of Johnson*

So long, Herman!

Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble . . .

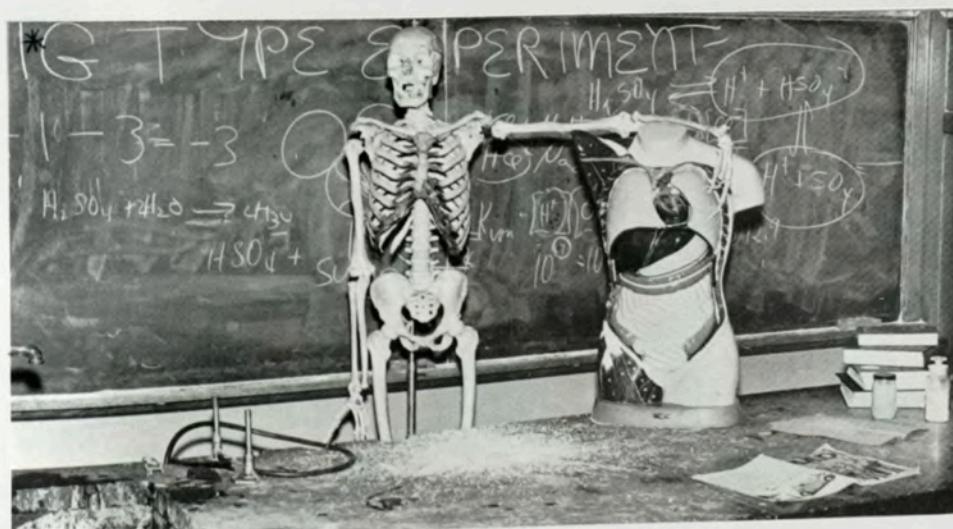
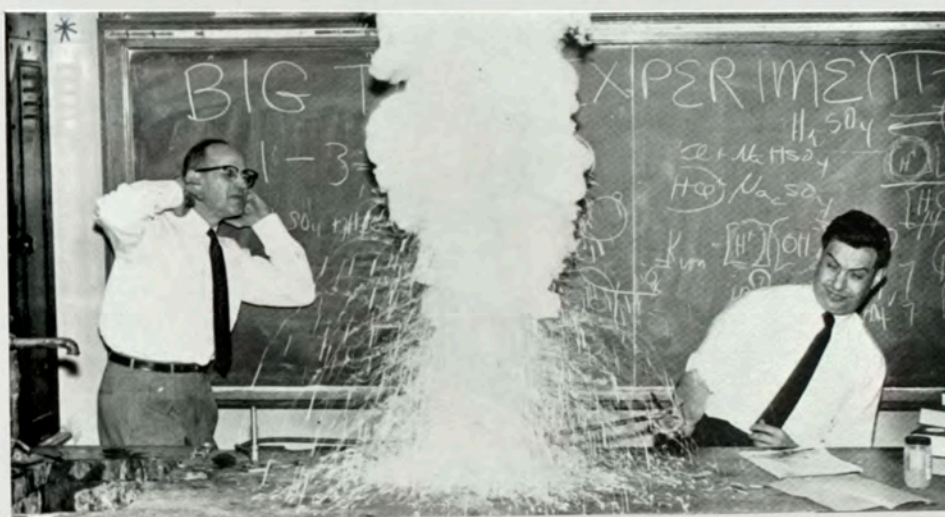






Down Egor!

By Jove, I think  
we've got it!



The best laid plans . . .



# THE SENIOR SHOW



Rockettes are safe.



Not that way, Jackie!



Sophisticated seniors?



Alohal

Don't fence me in.







Pete Bailey directs traffic.



Our casual emcee.



The gang's all here.

*a friend really means it - Lots of Luck  
"Your deal, Carole."*



Hot-Lips Mesney.





## THE CHEERLEADERS



Many of the rousing cheers heard at basketball games were first born in a cheerwriting contest held in November, 1938. These groups which play an important part in encouraging school spirit, were organized in 1936.

## THE CHEERING SQUAD



To Doug,  
Lots of luck and  
success in  
everything  
I might  
even see  
you  
next  
year  
Love,  
Linda  
F.A.F.



The Twirlers are again becoming one of Bayside's most vivacious clubs. It was originated in 1937. Many of its members have achieved fame in national twirling contests.

## THE TWIRLERS



The Leaders Club, organized in October, 1938, was originally a branch of the Leaders Class of Bayside High. The club's purpose was to train girls to be intelligent leaders.

## THE LEADERS CLUB



Ginger O'Grady



# TRIANGLE

Twenty-five years is only a short span in the history of our nation as four years is only an interval in our lives. But these years have been rich, productive, and memorable. To Bayside High School, which has breached the gap in those years between our being merely youthful spectators and our becoming adult contributors, we extend our deepest thanks.

Sincerely,

*Elizabeth J. Imundi*

Editor-in-Chief



Elizabeth Imundi  
Editor-in-Chief

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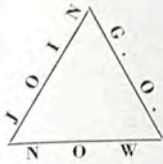


Carol Nolan  
Organizations



Roberta Meisels  
Organizations





# THE BAYSIDER

A Publication of the Bayside High School



Vol. I, No. 1

Bayside, Long Island, Friday, March 13, 1936

By Subscription

**President Ryan, Education Head Our Neighbor**

**2300 Baysiders Enter Ultra-Modern Building; Dr. Crane And Mr. Barmeyer Head School; Edifice Outstanding In Size And Beauty**

**Dr. Campbell's Life Inspiration For Baysiders**

Building Not Yet Fully Equipped. To Be Completely Furnished Within A Short Time



Gre  
Bay

To the School  
The High School in the Queens tells its story of that which is City's  
Our construction tended Now the we rejoice for the community the school will serve.

Bayside is the first school to be built entirely with Federal funds. Let us hope that its opening will herald the opening of many more schools in the Borough of Queens.

I congratulate the students of Bayside and I am confident that they will now begin the building of a fine tradition for their new school.

Very truly yours,  
(Signed) GEORGE J. RYAN,  
President, Board of Education

On May 14, 1935 Dr. George J. Ryan began his 14th year of service as President of the Board of Education of The City of New York. He has served in the Presidency of the Board for a longer period than any of his predecessors.

(Continued on page 3, col. 4)



THE NEW BAYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

Ginger O'Grady

Me

Very truly yours,  
(Signed) HAROLD G. CAMPBELL,  
Superintendent of Schools

Harold George Campbell was born on January 13, 1884 in Fraserburgh, a little fishing village on the northern coast of Aberdeenshire Scotland.

He is the son of George and Eleanor Anderson Campbell who came to this country in 1888 and established their home on Manhattan Avenue, Greenpoint, Brooklyn. George Campbell had been a shoe manufacturer in Fraserburgh, but times grew hard and he determined to come to America. His son was only four years old at the time.

After attending the primary grades at old P. S. 59, he was graduated from P. S. 34, and later from Boys' High School, Brooklyn. At Boys' High, he was particularly interested in English and History. He took part in athletics and played on the football and basketball teams.

(Continued on page 4, col. 3)



# THE CONCERT BAND

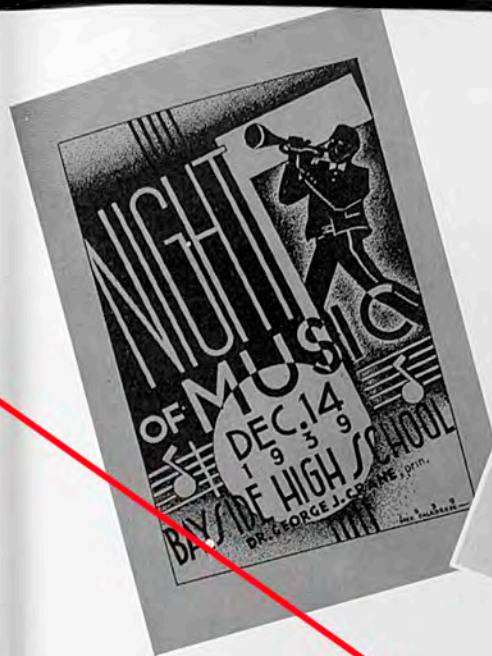
Me



*Thursally!  
All Beachman*







## THE ORCHESTRA

Doug -  
 Good luck at St. L.  
 They don't know what  
 they're in for!  
 ↓ Peter

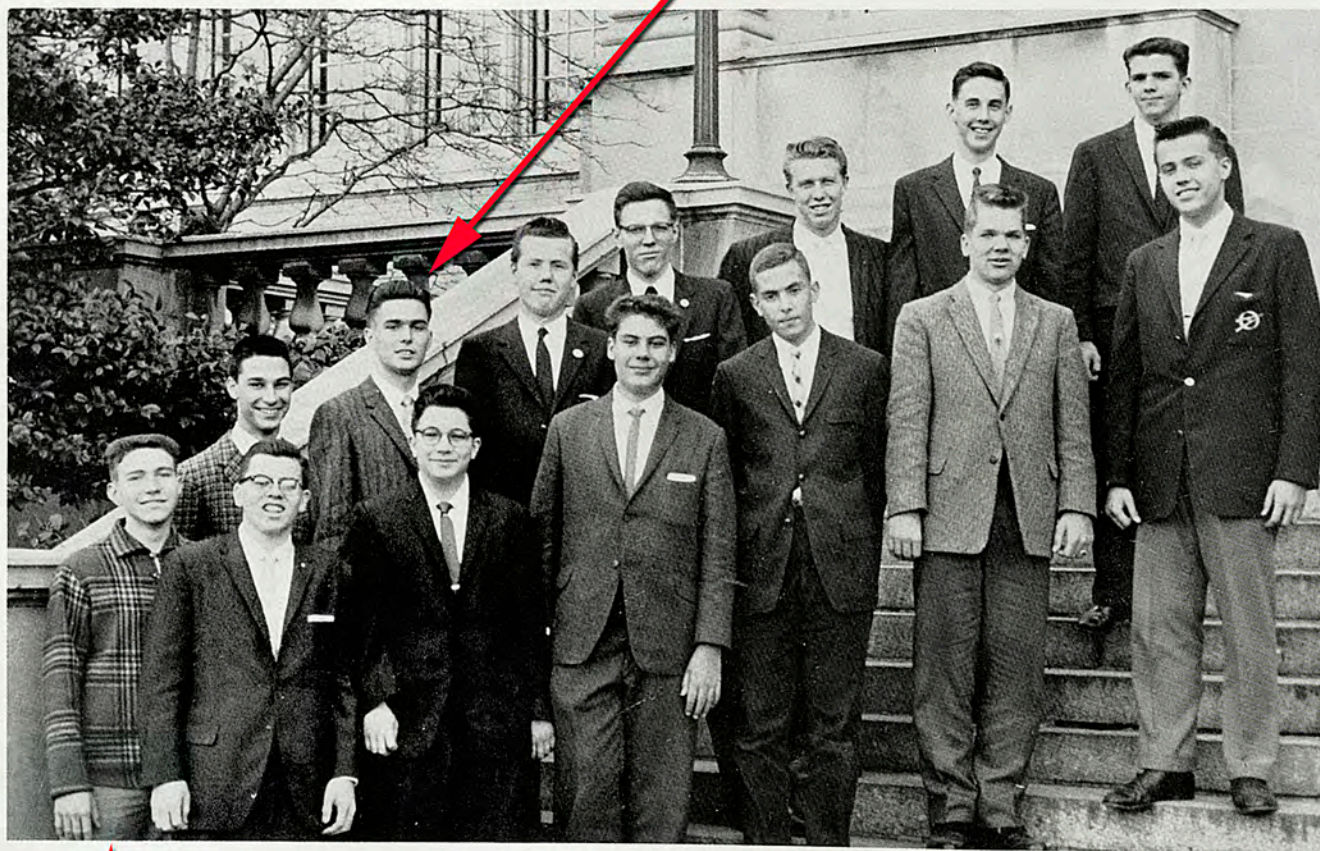


*Myx*



# THE KEY CLUB

Dave Nolte



Me



MR. COHEN and MR. SHER, G.O. Advisers



MRS. SMITH, G.O. Accountant



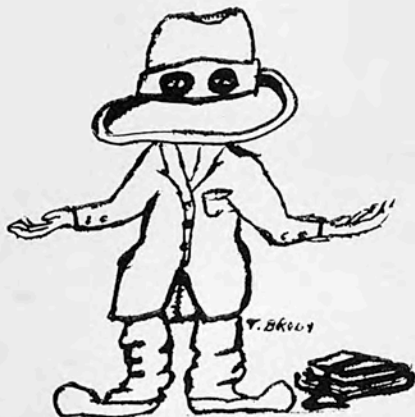
*To the master  
photographer  
and non-con-  
formist. Lots  
of luck -  
H Cohen*

*Best wishes to Doug  
Jeff Sher*

*Best Wishes for a  
wonderful career -  
Thanks for all your help -  
Hope Smith*



# SENIOR SHENANIGANS



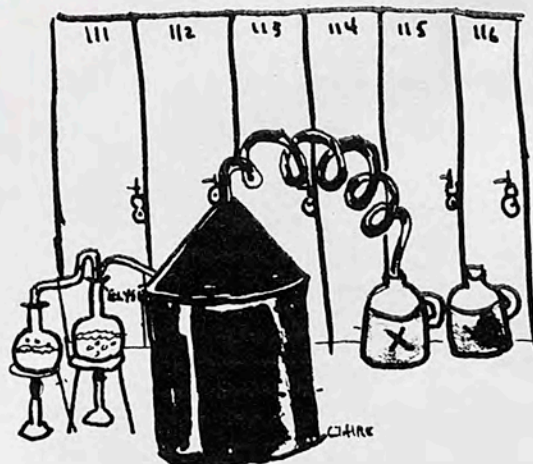
Don't tell anybody, but . . . **SANDY KRIEGER** failed five driving tests, setting a new world's record . . . three shopping bags were filled with hair when **FREDDY SCHWARTZ** finally got a haircut . . . **VICTOR KAUFMAN** scored a fantastic 42 points playing basketball against his little sister . . . **STEVE KOBLOCK** was caught wearing dirty tennis shoes with red'n white shoelaces . . . **RICKY RANN** bored and stroked his roller skates . . . **BOB ALTMAN** was in the hospital so often that he began to date the nurses . . .

**ALAN "TYRONE" HELLER** is mourning the loss of his faithful car—"A gas" . . . **BOB SHAPLEY** made the first down payment on his Phi Beta Kappa key . . . **LENNY LICHENSTEIN** was voted Most Valuable Player (by V. Buren) . . . **RICHY KLARBERG** takes money to keep your intimate secrets out of his column . . . **ALLAN SEIDEN**, two-time loser, has a habit of leaving his dirty laundry lying around . . . **BOB SCHETTINO** won a basketball scholarship to Bayside High School . . . **ELYSE SOFER** threatened to cut her hair, but didn't; **CYNTHIA ZUCKERBERG** did . . .

**NEAL CRYSTAL** got a ticket for reckless driving when he ran into the Empire State Building—at the 89th floor . . . **BARBARA SCHNEIDER** set fire to the Q15 . . . **BRUCE BRAVERMAN** finally outgrew his saddle shoes . . . **IRWIN GLADSTONE** will direct a new play on Broadway next year . . . **MERYLL ERDER** got friendly with the Youth Squad in Flushing . . . if anybody wants to buy **HARRY LEVY** a present, he wears a size 12 hat . . . **ELINOR SANFT** is writing a novel about life in a small New England town—it's called "Peyton Place" . . . **ELLEN REISMAN'S** giggle is being recorded for posterity . . . if your arm hurts, don't worry, it's just **MARK SINGER'S** famous punch greeting. . .

**FRANK AUSMAN** eats Wheaties and drinks Ovaltine . . . **DON KRISTT** was attacked on the bus by a group of irate citizens when they saw his ridiculous tam-o'shanter hat . . . out of gratitude for all that Coach Nelson has done for him, **JEFF GREEN** gave the coach a small gift—it ticks . . . after two years and seven months of steady companionship, **JACK COLE'S** gym shirt walked out on him . . . **TODD SAVITT** lost the 100 yard dash to a well trained snail . . . **TERRY BRODY** applied for membership in the "Three Stooges" . . . too bad, **MARSHA SHERMAN**, maybe you'll win the Nobel Prize for Literature next year . . . **BARRY SILBERMAN'S** pants aren't too tight—he just has plaid legs . . . **REESE HORAN** sent a letter to Premier Khrushchev challenging him to a fight . . . **JOHN NEWCOMB** was seen eating peas with his slide rule . . . **TIM SIMMONS** was almost banned from school because of his new "bare look" haircut . . . **RONNIE BARRET** was caught with a quart of Tequila in his locker . . . **JOE PETERS** tripped over his stomach while walking in the halls . . . the girls in the locker room gave **DOUG MESNEY** and his candid camera the dubious honor of "Pest of the Year" (a well deserved award)

**LARRY ROSEN** followed the Eichmann Trial very closely . . . **ARTHUR NITZBURG** (previously dubbed Bayside's Poet Laureate) read his "Ode to a Stench" over the loudspeaker in sixth lunch . . . **JACK "MUSCLES" LOTKER** set an underwater record of 2 hours and 20 minutes with no breathing apparatus (his next of kin was notified) . . . Best Dressed Boy **BARRY GRAFF** is slipping. His outfit consisting of a rhinestone-studded sports coat, saran wrap clamdiggers, and sunglasses didn't look so good—must have been the sunglasses . . . **HAL HELLMAN'S** life is being made into a movie—it's called "90 Proof".







Our last glance back sees the gates of Bayside closing as we have seen them shut hundreds of times before. Inside are locked our memories — memories of past dances, basketball games, laughter and friendships. We leave these memories entrusted to you, the future generations of Bayside. Please treasure them and add to the glories of the Orange and Blue.

The doors will open again tomorrow on the next quarter century of Bayside. May those who follow us be able to look back on these closing gates with as much affection and love as we do today.

Pre-marital screwing was a BFD back then (literally); they would have you believe it was bad, even a sin; but everyone knew someone who was doing it. Society was changing, altered by the Beatniks; my values were split and being tested. I stopped going to church; that caused a schism in the family; Mom tried to force me to go; she hit me and I hit her back; we were forever adversaries after that; things between us never got resolved. I withdrew into my attic and darkroom sanctuaries, and spent more and more time away from home.

I started dating classmate Celia Franklin; she lived five blocks from Bayside High School, near Dave Nolte's neighborhood [more below]. Celia's father was an older man, maybe sixty, and a widower; he was a severe man who lived with his daughter in a house bigger than two people needed; I reckon he'd had larger plans that failed, which soured him. I never got far enough with Celia to find out and I didn't want to mess up a good thing by prying; but I remember sitting across from him in the living room, being scrutinized, waiting for Celia to descend from above. I wondered if he could read my thoughts, my intentions; he gave me a look that told me he intended to keep his daughter virginal. Celia and I went together for a year or so. During that time my partner to be, Dave Nolte, started dating his future wife, Sue Raines; she was the daughter of the Bayside Ford-car franchise owner and lived in luxury; we double-dated a lot. It was all pretty innocent; Celia was still religious. Wanting more and not getting it, my interest waned. I had to know, was it me? All my friends were "getting it."

My failure with women was becoming a pattern, my trust in women (myself, actually) was further eroded. Without trust, I couldn't get *close* to anyone. With each failure my self-esteem drained, like a whirlpool, swirling down into darkness, void of love. I got sucked-up in my own sorrow. I reckoned that I was cursed; that lack of self-esteem didn't bode well for future relationships; little did I know then that I engineered the failure of my relationships—that it was me, not them.

When I started dating Ginger O'Grady, Celia tried to make a comeback; but she was already off my radar. I must have been upset because I have no pictures of Celia; *nada*, not a one, of my own. Nor do I remember her well; I can only chalk it up to repression; pain erased from memory, impossible to recall.

To ease the pain, I buried myself in work; that took my mind off being rejected. I was beginning to get pretty good with my camera; various people contacted me, to get copies of pictures I took of their homes and properties to amuse myself, when my parents dragged me along boring cocktail and dinner parties—the Hoi Polloi hobnobbing with the gentry. At one of those parties, Marjorie Hurst hired me to take pictures of her mansion in Manhasset. The Hurst estate was a huge spread on a peninsula overlooking Manhasset Bay; the house was like a (not so) small castle; she drove a Rolls, but there were other cars, too: a Cadillac and a gull-wing Mercedes sports car.

To say I was impressed would be a major understatement; I was blown away; I made a mental marker—that was the lifestyle I wanted, when I grew up. Marjorie's daughter, Gillian, escorted me around the estate for the photo session. She was my age and very attractive; we snuck away and found a corner to make out. I didn't see her for a long time after that; she lived too far away and we were only fourteen.



Two years later Marjorie asked me to photograph a swank reception she was throwing at the St. Regis Hotel, in Manhattan; Gillian was at the party; she made what appeared to be some advances toward me; she invited me into one of the back rooms in the hotel suite; but when I put the make on her, she got herself into a tizzy; she said she felt faint and wanted to lie down. Aha, thought I, this is it; she's being coy; but when I started reaching a bit south of her navel, she totally freaked out; she was even more frigid than Celia. Or, was it me? Old doubts returned.



Some friends of Marjorie's subsequently hired me to photograph their luxury suite at the Sherry Netherland Hotel,<sup>24</sup> at Fifth Avenue & 59<sup>th</sup> Street, adjacent to the famous Plaza Hotel, across from the southeast entrance to Central Park.

I couldn't imagine that some people actually lived in hotels—that they had *that* much money.

Their gilded apartment was like an antique furniture gallery; it reeked of wealth.

The owners were a silver-haired retired couple, philanthropists who sponsored North Shore Friends of Opera. They told me to spare no expense on their job; they wanted color prints (a pricey luxury) in a leather-bound book.



Those parameters challenged me; I had to up my game; shooting for color prints was new to me. I got a lot of support from the proprietor of Great Neck Camera; he had other customers who were wedding photographers; he organized the film processing and printing for them—and me; and he introduced me to Mildred Roth, who ran an album bindery business in Brooklyn; the resulting little book looked so slick that I adopted it as a portfolio style and during the next six years produced five leather-bound volumes.; among those were portfolios made at motorcycle and sailing events.

## 1950s | Portfolio | Luxman Residence | Plates Nos 1-4

<sup>24</sup> Wikipedia: The Sherry-Netherland is a 38-story apartment hotel located at 781 Fifth Avenue on the corner of East 59th Street in the Upper East Side neighborhood of Manhattan, New York City. It was designed and built by Schultze & Weaver with Buchman & Kahn. The building is high, and was noted as the tallest apartment-hotel in New York City when it opened.





1950s | PORTFOLIO | LUXMAN RESIDENCE | PLATE N° 1  
*Sherry Netherland Hotel | 1959*





1950s | PORTFOLIO | LUXMAN RESIDENCE | PLATE N° 2

*Sherry Netherland Hotel | 1959*





1950s | PORTFOLIO | LUXMAN RESIDENCE | PLATE N° 3

*Sherry Netherland Hotel | 1959*





1950s | PORTFOLIO | LUXMAN RESIDENCE | PLATE N° 4  
*Sherry Netherland Hotel | 1959*

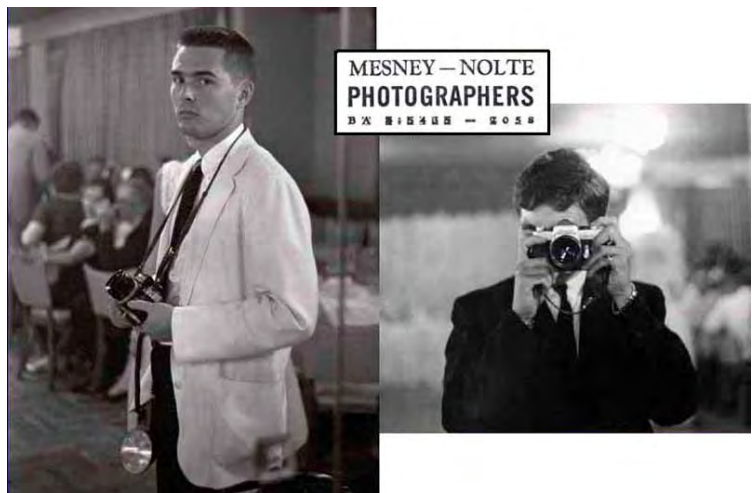
Photographing the suite at the Sherry Netherland was the biggest photo job I ever had until then; they paid me so much that I bought a second-hand Rolleiflex camera to shoot the job; that camera made me feel like a real professional; between that job and the new camera, my hobby was becoming a profession.

Be careful with your wishes; people get what they want; it is the Law of Attraction. I thought for years that I wanted to be rich, powerful and popular; I wondered why I wasn't happy despite evident success; now I realize that I didn't want fame and fortune at all; I like my quiet, private life; I am rich in Time; I love the fact that my flip phone only rings once a month; the solitude allows me to examine myself and write these pages without distractions.

### 1960 – Mesney-Nolte Photographers – Practice Makes Perfect

*"Once a hobby becomes a profession, it ceases to be a hobby."* Anonymous

At Bayside High School, I started Mesney-Nolte Photographers with classmate David Nolte;<sup>25</sup> we shot weddings and bar mitzvas as well as portraits and people's homes; it was a good business that paid for our expensive gear and we got plenty of learning experiences, dealing with customers of all types. Most importantly, it gave us opportunities to shoot lots of pictures; that propelled me forward—practice does make perfect, after all.



Learning photography involves many aspects not the least of which is the operation of the camera itself. Oriental philosophers axiomatically speak of the 10,000 bad letters one must write before a good one can be written; substitute pictures for letters and you can understand that it takes literally thousands of pictures to get to the point when the camera is an extension of your body; when your fingers automatically turn the right dials at the right times; when it is second nature.

Wedding photography was a lot of work and a thankless endeavor. Nobody likes pictures of themselves, 90% of the time they have nothing nice to say about them, no matter how good they seem to you and others. Dave and I worked hard to please our customers. In the beginning, I shot reportage style, the kind you might see in Life magazine; but, it turned out that people wanted schmaltzy, posed pictures and gimmicky prints, for example, the bride & groom printed in a heart-shape. Dave was better at the posed pictures and I was best at candids.

---

<sup>25</sup> When Nolte signed my high school yearbook, he wrote: "To the biggest pest I know...." Recently, I tried to contact David, to fact check for this book; I found him in Florida where he is—and has been for some time—the property-tax assessor tax of Orlando. Dave acknowledged receiving my first email, but he never replied to any others.



We'd shoot a couple of dozen rolls of film at a typical wedding; then came the time-consuming tasks of processing the film and making up to 100 proof prints of the best pictures; that post-shoot work was a hefty task and an expensive one. After that, exhibition-quality prints had to be made of the client's selects; those prints were then taken to Mildred Roth for assembly into leather-bound books; they did a fabulous job laminating the prints to heavy-paper pages with gilt-edges and assembling them into polished leather bindings with gold-embossed lettering. If you added up all the time a typical job required from start to finish, we ended up earning about one dollar per hour; but the work was about more than just the money; it gave me plenty of opportunities to polish my skills behind the camera and in the darkroom.

Today, I would not have had the opportunities that I was afforded along the way, whether serendipitous or self-made. But during the '60s and '70s opportunities abounded; America was in a post-war super-boom; people had money; they bought things that were made in America, the only country left with a functioning industrial sector after the ravages of two World Wars. A kid could go around the neighborhood, knock on doors and sell stuff, like Girl Scout Cookies, Hallmark Cards or even just labor i.e., snow shoveling and gardening. Today, well, you probably wouldn't want to do that sort of thing. How times change. Back then selling door-to-door was an honest way to make a living; businesses like World Book Encyclopedia and their arch-rival Encyclopedia Britannica were based on door-to-door marketing; then there was Avon, Tupperware... I could go on; but all that is mostly gone now; nobody goes door-to-door anymore.

The world has always been about disruption and change; metamorphosis; upheaval; survival. The opportunities for personal fulfillment have narrowed; the factories of the world don't need people anymore, just machines of various sorts. Today, factories are run by people using robots; tomorrow, it will be robots using people. Stephen Hawking warned that by 2040 artificial intelligence will surpass human intelligence. Then, possibly, the paradigm will shift to robots *versus* people. However, back in my day it was all about people; there were jobs, you could advance, afford to live on your earnings and even save or invest a little, too; that was the environment I grew up in; a world of opportunity where the only thing holding you back was yourself—Ayn Rand made sense.

## **1960 | Photo Essay | Barbara's Birthday | Plates Nos 1-8**

*I shot from every angle. Plate N°2, Left to Right: Jill Walters, Gretchen Moody, sister Kathy & Mom; one of the Banning twins faces camera at right. I don't know the names of Barbara's other friends.*

## **1960 – Young Love – Split Personality**

Somewhere along the line I met my High School sweetheart, Virginia "Ginger" O'Grady. She didn't go to JHS 67, so I didn't meet her there; and my family didn't belong to the Douglaston Club, so it wasn't there either; nor was it at the Catholic Church, St. Anastasia's, because we were Episcopalians who went to Zion Church; so, it had to be at Bayside High; maybe she was a FAF girl or cheerleader; wherever it was, I was smitten.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> I recently got in touch with Ginger; according to her, she was in Theta Sigma Chi sorority; she says we met each other working on the high school newspaper, the *Baysider*; then we doubled dated with her friend, Betty, and Tim Simmons.





1960 | PHOTO ESSAY | BARBARA'S BIRTHDAY | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 1

*Walking Rinny down Manor Road*



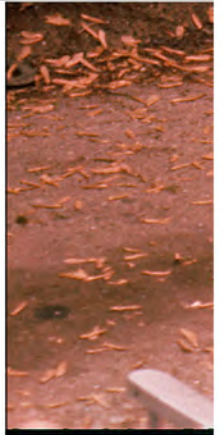






1960 | PHOTO ESSAY | BARBARA'S BIRTHDAY | PLATE N° 3  
*Party games.*





1960 | PHOTO ESSAY | BARBARA'S BIRTHDAY | PLATE N° 4  
*Party games.*





1960 | PHOTO ESSAY | BARBARA'S BIRTHDAY | PLATE N° 5  
*Party games.*





1960 | PHOTO ESSAY | BARBARA'S BIRTHDAY | PLATE N° 6  
*Party games.*





1960 | PHOTO ESSAY | BARBARA'S BIRTHDAY | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 7  
*Party games.*





1960 | PHOTO ESSAY | BARBARA'S BIRTHDAY | PLATE N° 8

*Dad enjoyed the swings as much as Barvara and her friends.*



Ours was a textbook high school romance; Ginger and I went steady during our last two years of high school and well into our sophomore year at college. Before she said goodbye; I had planned to marry her. Her family were relatively new to Douglaston; they lived in a modern-style, split-level house at 41 Knollwood Avenue. Ginger lived there with her parents, Joe and Ginny O'Grady, and her younger brother, Jimmy. Her Mom was a terrific cook—unlike mine. I loved it when they invited me over for dinner; they served yummy dishes like chicken fricassee and spaghetti & meatballs. Mrs. O'Grady totally approved of me—I ate all the leftovers!

Ginny ran the house; when she re-did the kitchen with a flowery wallpaper pattern, she called it, "*Floribunda Glorioski*;" a descriptive term that I use to this day. Joe O'Grady worked on Wall Street; he approved of me because I was a go-getter and a good, clean-cut kid. Little did he ever know—or Ginger, for a good long time—that there was another part of my life that I kept hidden from them; that I had a second set of friends; that I smoked dope and hung out with Beatnik poets.

Dope—cannabis, that is—was new when I was in high school. Sure, some celebrities were smoking marijuana, everyone knew that; but marijuana wasn't as prevalent among kids as it is today. Back then, it was also commonly thought that smoking grass would inevitably lead to bigger things, that smoking weed led to drug addiction. In a community like Douglaston, a dope smoker would have been stigmatized, ostracized, shamed and shunned; so, I was discreet.

I was a good actor; I lived a split life. In one, I was a WASP from an exclusive neighborhood born with a silver spoon, who belonged to Phi Alpha Sigma fraternity and dated FAF girls and cheerleaders. In the other one, I was a dope-smoker who hung out in Greenwich Village coffee houses listening to the likes of Allen Ginsberg. Ginger's parents would not have approved of such behavior; so, I tread "gingerly." Ginger never met Mike Friedman or Steve Solomita; then, when I went to college and my connection to Mike and Steve was severed; I became a collegiate version of myself; Ginger remained clueless about the other me. Or, did she?

## 1960 – First Nikon – Win One Lose One

I bought my first Nikon—their original F model single-lens-reflex (SLR) model—in my sophomore year at Bayside High School. I was so proud of it; I felt like a pro.

The first picture I took with the Nikon was of my latest girlfriend, Ginger, reclining by the white-brick fireplace in their family home on Knollwood Avenue. That picture was a big deal for me, not just for its symbolic qualities, but also because it wasn't "just" an available light shot; I lit the scene using flood lights; that presaged the studio shooting I would be doing a decade later.



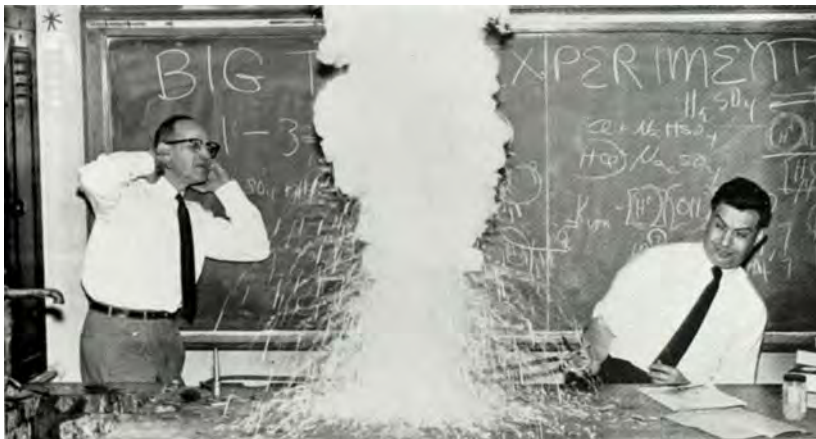


Photography had become a serious avocation; I was working on making it a vocation. Ginger's father didn't approve of photography—or any of the arts—as a career choice. The night that I showed off the new Nikon to the O'Gradys, everyone congratulated me; but afterwards Joe made a point of advising me that there were better ways to make money. Later, when I bought a Corvette Stingray, I got another lecture about leveraging (borrowed) money. Ha!

Until then, I had been shooting with the Minolta SR-2 (my Grandfather's gift) and a Rolleiflex that I purchased with my earnings. [Rolleiflex was a medium-format, twin-lens reflex camera (TLR) featuring Zeiss lenses, built in Germany by Franke & Heidecke, later Rollic-Werk; it used 120-size, medium-format film, producing square, 6 X 6-centimeter [2.39 inch] negatives.] Everything was good until I met another photographer at school—Steve Sherbel—who was as good (sometimes better) than me; he shot with a Nikon. After that, I had an inferiority complex that needed assuaging.

Steve and I both worked for *Triangle*, the Bayside High School yearbook. Dave Nolte worked on yearbook pictures, too; but the real competition was between me and Steve; he was a reportage photographer like me, whereas Dave was more into doing posing and tripod stuff. The friendly, unmentioned competition between us was about getting page space; whose pictures were bigger and who had more of them in the yearbook.

To be fair, Steve was a more advanced photographer than either Dave or I; he was really into electronic flash (strobe), which was a relatively new thing. Before electronic-flash *strobes*, photographers used flash bulbs to light dark scenes; but there was a limit as to how many flash bulbs you could stuff into your gadget bag and pockets; having a strobe was like having an endless supply of flash bulbs. Strobes gave Steve an edge on me for sports and action pictures. To counter Steve's technical prowess, I relied on my imagination. Whereas Steve shot stuff as is, I made-up picture stories in my head and then shot them.



One of my favorites was the sequence of our chemistry teacher doing an experiment that explodes in a great cloud of smoke.

The picture editor chose to run the whole sequence as a double page spread.

Steve just about turned green when he saw that.

I never liked the Rolleiflex camera; it was clumsy to use; with two lenses, one lens for composing the picture and another for shooting it. With a single-lens-reflex camera, a mirror system allows the photographer to see through the same lens that is taking the picture; the mirror snaps out of the way, just before the picture is taken, and snaps back into view right after the exposure is made. As the picture is exposed and the mirror cycles, there is a split-second blackout in the viewfinder, which was aggravating.

Rolleis didn't have mirror bugs; but its characteristics were even more annoying; without a special prism viewfinder, the composing image was upside down and backwards; that may be OK for tripod work; but, not for shooting moving objects. I'll never forget the first time I had the Rollei at a car race; it was at the Bridgehampton Can-Am in 1967. I thought, wouldn't it be great to shoot a race with a medium-format camera, to have larger negatives with more detail? However, when viewing the camera's ground-glass composing screen, the cars appeared to go from left to right, not right to left, making it impossible to follow them. OK, that's an extreme case, but I never got comfortable with the Rollei's reversal of reality.

Another camera I experimented with was the Kodak Target SIX-16. It shot negatives that were 2 ½ X 4 ¼ inches (63.5 X 108 mm). Those large sized negs produced beautiful enlargements with much more detail than 35 mm film negs which were 75% smaller. However, the extra width of 616 films made them flimsier than 35 mm films, thus more difficult to load onto film-processing reels without buckling; that created blotches during the development process.

So, after I got the Nikon, the Rolleiflex and Target cameras got put aside as I concentrated on photojournalism... storytelling. Perhaps the reason I went that direction was because of the high praise I got taking time-lapse sequence pictures of a sprouting string bean seed for a junior high school science project; or maybe it was watching Ted Russell; both were examples of pictorial storytelling, which remains my primary skill, to this day.

## 1961 – St. Lawrence – Identity Crisis

I was 16 when I graduated from Bayside High School and went to college at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York; near the Canadian border; a few hours south of Montréal.

You never heard of that school? You are not alone. SLU is one of a group of small northeastern colleges and universities that go unnoticed; they're on the B-list, so to speak.

Nonetheless, St. Lawrence was a perfectly good university, with a decent academic reputation and a world class ice-hockey team.

Yours Truly and Judy Blake at the Senior Prom, 1961



St. Lawrence wasn't even third on the list of schools where I applied, for admission. Like many parents, mine hoped I'd become a doctor or a lawyer; I chose doctor.

My grades in high school were not the best; I had a B+ average, and lots of extracurricular activities (band, school newspaper, yearbook). Mom insisted that I interview at Harvard, despite pragmatic protestations; she was a dreamer; I knew I would never get in there. After Harvard's rejection, even Mom aimed lower.



She sent me up to Hobart College together with my good friend Allan Seiden; everyone thought it would be cool if we both went off to college together.

It was a real adventure going there; we were just 16, our worlds were expanding. We took a Greyhound Bus to and from Geneva, New York [about 5 hours northwest of Manhattan, near Syracuse]. Neither of us ended up at Hobart.

Then my application to St. Lawrence came through and so the choice was made, and ratified by a student loan for \$7,000. My parents drove me up to Canton that autumn and installed me at the Men's' Residence, on campus.

St. Lawrence is a small school with about 2,400 students. Roughly 45% of those students were in the top 10% of their high school classes. I was nowhere near the top 10% at Bayside High, so I guess I was lucky to get in. Now, I wonder why I ever chose to borrow so much money to go *away* to school; after all, the City University of New York and others like it offered an equally good, maybe better, education for much lower costs. However, I had to get away from my parents.



It pained me to say goodbye to Ginger, but she promised to visit—and did, for the school's annual Winter Carnival.

Life at St. Lawrence didn't turn out to be everything I had hoped it would be. For one, I was only 16; most of the other students were a year or two or three older. It was hard to get respect from other guys or a date with any girls. Worse, my room in Men's' Res was in a section of the building occupied by a bunch of football players.

The room next to mine was occupied by Barry Feldman, a cocky jock from Great Neck (a community next to Douglaston) who was a star football quarterback in high school—that's how he got in to St. Lawrence, the team wanted him. He was a rich Jew; I was a poor WASP; maybe that's why we hit it off. Barry took me under his wing. I became a sort of mascot in our hallway, for Barry and his fellow footballers. There was a fat boy from Manhasset (another rich, Jewish community, near Great Neck) named Roger Adelson; he was a fat slob, but a dominant figure due to his dimensions.

Roger became the butt of many practical jokes. The worst was the afternoon when everyone on our hall pissed in the globe of Roger's overhead room light. As the days wore on the stench became unbearable—without a reaction from Roger (!) We fessed up and fixed the fumes. Later in the year, during Christmas break, some guys, who didn't go home for the holidays, took apart another guy's VW bug, while he was away, and reassembled it in the Commons Room of the Men's' Residence. Imagine coming home from holiday and discover that your car is in your living room? Ha! That topped them all.

I felt like a fish out of water; not only were my hallmates athletes, they also came from rich families; in fact, most of the students at the school were "*affluent*." In fact, I never met another student who was on a student loan; it gave me a real inferiority complex. The real hub of student activities was at a bar in town called the *Tick Tock*; there was standing room only most nights of the week; on weekends, you might not get in. For me, getting in meant the risk of getting thrown out, for being a minor.

I remember that, in the late spring, the guys would grab a bottle of hooch and take their dates to the boonies [boondocks]—a remote area overgrown with high grasses, with discreet clearings ideal for coupling. Those are places I never saw, just heard about. I got through by keeping Ginger on my mind. (I never got Ginger off my mind.) I was being true to my girl; that is how I rationalized my existential sense of deprivation and inferiority.

## **1961 – KSLU – New Identity**

It was almost inevitable that I would meet Jack Downey, and that he would become a mentor. He had a jazz show on the St. Lawrence University radio station, KSLU, and he did it well; listening to Jack you'd swear you were hearing a New York jazz station. One reason is that—if you were in the know—you could hear, in Downey's voice, that he had probably inhaled the smoke. Ha!

I never heard of anyone smoking weed while I was at SLU; Ed never let on if he had any; but, as a dope-smoker, I recognized a possible friend. I got a job at KSLU as a newscaster. I would show up at the duly appointed hour; rip the news-roll from the UPI machine (a teletype printer for news from United Press International); step into a sound-proof announcer's booth; and read for five minutes. Trying out for that job, I discovered that I had a New York accent. I worked hard and got my voice under sufficient control to read the news; however, I never succeeded entirely; to this day, a few people still say they detect my New York slang. Anyway....

I met Jack Downey and he took me under his wing. I impressed him with stories about my trips into New York's East Village, going to poetry readings and listening to modern jazz at hip cafes. We had mutual musical tastes, Ed and I, for artists like John Coltrane, Cannon Ball Adderley, MJQ (Modern Jazz Quartet) and Miles Davis.

Finally, I had a friend... and a job, as a DJ! Ed gave me the graveyard shift, but what did I care? I suspect that nobody ever listened to my marvelous show, because they were all asleep, including Jack; therefore, I did whatever I wanted.



I spent many late evenings alone, in an amazing radio studio, spinning my favorite disks, and saying whatever I wanted. It was another dream come true—me, a DJ! Who could resist thinking ahead to the possibilities of being a real DJ on a big-city station? In terms of future-planning, it was a big lesson that paid off several ways: I became unafraid of microphones; and I had the opportunity to listen to how I sound and work on my presentation skills; to do something about myself; that something paid dividends a decade later, when I started producing soundtracks for shows.

In the middle of it all, Ginger came to visit, for the Winter Carnival weekend, a super-special occasion at SLU; the dozen or so fraternity and sorority houses competed for biggest and best snow sculptures; they made the campus surrounds like a winter wonderland; it was so cold that the snow crunched under your feet.

When Ginger arrived, my status on campus skyrocketed; nobody could believe I had *such* a girlfriend; they all thought I was a nerd (comparatively, I was). But it was an awkward meeting. Both of us were a half-year older—a very I-o-n-g time for teenagers in love. We both knew that other (older) couples were doing it but, being younger, I wasn't sure of myself; I wasn't bold enough to take advantage of what would have been a perfect set-up; I was too honorable.

Much later, I came to appreciate the wisdom of an old Swedish saying: "The bashful boy never kisses the girl." Ginger reported that other boys were pursuing her, back in Douglaston; John Blaha was being a persistent pest from his perch at Syracuse University; and Wiley Crockett was a more direct threat; he didn't go away to school, preferring a stagehand job at Radio City Music Hall, dating Rockettes and living in Douglaston, a short drive from the O'Grady residence.

I didn't sleep well after Ginger went home.

## **1962 – Night School – Day Job**

Photography got put aside for the year I was at St. Lawrence University.

There, I was supposed to concentrate on preparing for a *real job*—being a doctor. By mid-term I knew that a medical career was not for me; I couldn't get past dissecting a fetal pig. By the end of year one, I decided that I did not want to finish college owing thousands of dollars for student loans; the economy was heading south; I was worried about the money I already owed for my first year.

I quit St. Lawrence and went to night school at Queens College, working days in the mailroom of CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) to pay-off the student-loan debt and begin a self-sufficient life of my own.

When I came back from college, I was still living at home with my parents in Douglaston; that was more problematic than ever. I had changed while I was away. I didn't feel like I was part of the Douglaston community culture; it was like living in a goldfish bowl. The world opened for me when I started commuting into Manhattan, to work at CBS; I felt invigorated again, being in New York City, like I did the summer I worked at Peterson Color Lab as a messenger.

There was something about coming up out of the subway and, suddenly, being in the heart New York City; it's a feeling of freedom, power and *opportunity*—that exudes in me still, when I visit there, as a tourist, an observer, vicariously reliving the past. When I was young, I used to wonder, what will New York be like when I am an old man?

[Spoiler Alert: Now old, I see that much has changed. The building at 42 East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, where I had my fifth-floor studio—Mesney's Mad Medicine Show—has stood vacant for a dozen years and has become a derelict eye sore waiting for redevelopment that never seems to happen on East 23<sup>rd</sup> street, except for one pencil-thin condo tower that stands in total contrast to the decrepitude surrounding it. But that is now and we were talking about then.]

Everyone was shocked by my decision to quit St. Lawrence University, especially when they heard that I was going to night school. People rightly figured that there were financial reasons for my total change of direction; poor Doug. The worst was trying to explain my decision to Ginger's father, Joe O'Grady, the successful investor; he was losing confidence in me; she was, too. It was tough living through the stigmatization for the year or so it lasted; but I was soon too busy to see my friends, or care about what they thought. I had other plans; first and foremost was to pay off the money I borrowed to go to SLU. Sure, being away at school when you are 16-17 was a life altering experience; it helped me understand a lot of things that I *wasn't*.

I was tired of feeling inferior and paying \$7,000 for the experience. Hell, I would be \$28,000 in debt, or more, if I got my degree at St. Lawrence—that would be ~\$240,000 today [2018]. The idea of being a slave to that much debt didn't sit well with me. I knew all about debt and what it does to people, as repeatedly taught by my parents' examples. Every dollar of debt is like adding another weight to your backpack; after a while, you can't carry it and at that point you are in a negative spiral; your ship is starting to go down. No, I wanted to pay-off the debt first, and start a career as a businessman.

There was a popular Broadway show playing at the time, called *How to Succeed in Business (Without Really Trying)*;" the show, which starred Robert Morse, parodied fraternal, *good-old-boy* business culture; the take away was that success depends on who you know; it reinforced a belief I already owned. There were plenty of opportunities during the post-War expansion; everybody was making a living wage; nobody had excessive loans; the term "debt slave" had yet to be coined.

Joe O'Grady (Ginger's father) didn't buy my rationale, to be debt free. Why would he? For him, debt was good. Joe's life was all about leverage and margins on debt instruments (*obligations*). In his world, debt was the new money. He thought I was short-sighted, trading short-term benefit for the long-term benefit of a "good" degree; he thought night school wasn't "as good" as full-time day school. Most people thought that way; little did they know that night school was a better experience; night-school students take their education—and life in general—more seriously; possibly because they have day jobs and spend that half of their life in the real world, not in a bubble, a coddled life on a college campus. Such is the stuff of judgement.

I stayed at Queens College night school for seven years as the war dragged on, accumulating 160 credits; I was an English major; but my favorite class was advertising, taught by Ed Malecki, a production manager at the top-ranked Jay Walter Thompson ad agency.



I knew that night school was the right decision as soon as I started work at CBS. I didn't make much (\$855 in four months, or ~\$57/week) but i was inspiring to stride into their prestigious offices at 485 Madison Avenue, at 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, the heart of mid-Manhattan, business capital of the world; the Upper East Side was only a few blocks away; just being in that neighborhood made you feel like you were *somebody*.

Talk about incentives, I loved going to work every day and going to night-school; it was a tough life; I only slept six hours a night and ate more pizza than most; but I knew I was going places, and that incentivized me. It felt good earning money and paying off debt; and it felt good working in the mailroom at CBS; the first step up the ladder of success.

My mail run was the CBS Radio building at 49 East 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. Every work day, I took the 6:00 am Q-12 bus to Flushing; there, I got the IRT subway into Manhattan, transferring at Grand Central Station [42<sup>nd</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue] to the E train north, to 49<sup>th</sup> Street, walking the rest of the way. It meant getting up at 5:00 am [5:00] because I had to be at work by 7:30, to be able to get the mail on peoples' desks by 9:00 am. That wasn't too extreme; I had lived a similar life when I delivered newspapers at JHS 67.

*An Incredible Epic* | © Douglas Mesney 2019-2021

Three of us were “sharp,” using the job to move up the ladder; we became friends; us three took our 10:30 breaks together at Shelley’s Coffee Shop, kitty-corner on East 52<sup>nd</sup>; everyday we ordered coffees with the fabulous, huge blueberry muffins that Shelley’s was famous for. One day we had muffin eating contest; I bet that I could eat a dozen; the other two took me on; we got back to work late that day, but I won the bet. Ha!

Delivering mail at the CBS Radio building was transformative. No, it was more than that, it was inspirational; like being at the heart of the universe. The Cuban missile crisis was unfolding; talk about exciting times!

After every mail run, I would hang out in the newsroom, where the UPI teletype machines tapped out the latest reportage from correspondents all over the world.

News was real then; biased maybe, but never fake, as we have today. Most news organizations—newspapers, news magazines, and TV stations—sent out their own reporters, they *gathered* news; then, trained editors would fashion the raw material into well-written, finished stories.

In the ‘60s, news got *rationalized*. Instead of every station having its own reporters, they pooled their resources and staff; few reporters serviced more stations. United Press International, Associated Press and Reuters were the two most relied on news-source syndicates.

Today, few have actual reporters; worse, the reportage of most news stations has become dominated, not by news, but by the editorial opinions of pundits voiced in *fair and balanced* discussions by panels of experts espousing—equally—the pros and cons. We live in a news bubble, an imaginary world, a virtual reality that is scripted by the Deep State; is the glass half empty or is it half full? We will never know; half the experts are pro and the other half, con.

Unlike other mail runs that serviced specific departments on various floors of the main CBS building (485 Madison Avenue), I had the whole CBS Radio building (49 East 52<sup>nd</sup> Street) to myself; I delivered mail to every department and saw how the whole radio thing worked; what an opportunity it was.

Since we had five runs per day, two in the morning and three in the afternoon, if you were efficient, you’d have some time to spare; I spent mine watching radio professionals at work, seeing how things were done.

Watching the Arthur Godfrey show being taped, I learned that famous people aren’t who you think they are; when the microphones were off, sweet ol’ Arthur was an obnoxious, foul-mouthed pig; his jokes were so filthy, it made me squirm; but I was nonetheless fascinated, by the oxymoronic dichotomy of his success.

On the other end of the intellectual and moral spectrum, I befriended Charles Osgood, a prominent news analyst and anchor. He and an assistant, an older woman, his own age, read more than a dozen books a day between them, researching for Osgood’s stories. I was totally impressed by that effort and by the wisdom gleaned from every conversation with them; yet, I really wanted to be part of the advertising department.



That never happened before I got impatient and moved on. However, I did my best, while I was there, to work my way into the CBS advertising-department art studio on the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor of the main building [485 Madison Avenue].



I got my big chance when I won a third prize in a CBS photo contest, with a picture of construction workers blasting bedrock for what would be the new CBS building at 52<sup>nd</sup> Street and Sixth Avenue (Avenue of The Americas).<sup>27</sup>

Herman Aronson, creative director of the advertising department, interviewed me to get my background for an article about the award, in the company newspaper.

I seized the opportunity, showed him my picture portfolio, and explained my circumstances—that I was studying advertising at college, yadayadaya. Herman took me under his wing and let me hang out in the department and watch the graphic artists at work. It was the first time since my summer job at Peterson Color Lab that I had the opportunity to learn from so many talented people.

I took what I learned from them—about setting-up artwork for printing—home with me and put the knowledge to practical use producing the program book for my high school fraternity's annual fund-raiser dance. Herman guided me through the whole process and even got one of his CBS printing suppliers to run 100 copies of the 24-page booklet for free... in two colors!

When that came off the press, I felt that I had passed some kind of big exam; I had learned so much, how to manifest ideas into printed material.

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<sup>27</sup> Wikipedia: The CBS Building in New York City, also known as Black Rock, is the headquarters of CBS Corporation. Located at 51 West 52nd Street at the corner of Sixth Avenue (Avenue of the Americas), the Eero Saarinen designed building opened in 1965. It is 38 stories and 490 feet (150 m) tall with approximately 872,000 square feet (81,000 m<sup>2</sup>) rentable of space. The interior and furnishings were designed by Saarinen and Florence Knoll. The building was the result of intricate planning between Eero Saarinen and CBS's then president, Frank Stanton. Its concrete structural system was developed by Mario Salvadori. Unlike some major skyscrapers built in that section of midtown Manhattan during the 1950s and '60s, its pillars are more dominant than its windows. It received its nickname "Black Rock" for its dark granite cladding. *Gastrotypographicalassemblage*, a 35-foot (11 m) wide by 8½ foot tall mural designed by Lou Dorfman decorated the cafeteria. The work (removed circa 1995) used varied typefaces of hand-milled wood type to list all of the foods offered to patrons.

It was a giant step forward, and it made me chomp at the bit, too hard; when it became evident that there wouldn't be any openings in the ad department for the time being, I left CBS in search of opportunities to use and profit from my new skills.

When the O'Gradys realized how serious I was about what I was doing—that I wasn't a flunky—they changed their tune and even started encouraging me.

Ginger and I were closer than ever, even though we didn't see each other that much. With my new job came financial independence; I had enough money to entertain Ginger in new, more impressive ways.

I took her to the upscale *King George V* restaurant, on East 50<sup>th</sup> Street, a simulated castle, where we crossed a bridge over a moat on our way in, to a private table in a romantically lit restaurant, accompanied by European-gypsy violin serenades.

Thanks to my father's connections, Ginger and I attended night clubs like the *Copacabana* and *Basin Street East* (as pictured).

None of us realized at the time, that the Mafia bosses who extended Assistant Commissioner of Licenses, Peter Mesney, such indulgences, for his present and future progeny, would one day beat-up Dad, when he (apparently) didn't extend the favors they demanded.



It felt good to have money; I wanted to impress people; I bought custom-made suits at Brooks Brothers and imported shoes at Old England. At Christmas that year, I bought Ginger's present at the exclusive *Sport & Travel* shop, in the CBS building; that's where the rich girls were shopping.

I got Ginger a suede-leather jacket that cost me a week's wages; she loved it; but, when I explained that it was chosen to go with her favorite gray outfit she laughed; that's when I learned I was color blind—what I thought was gray, was green.



## 1963 – J. Charles David – Advertising Career Begins

Switching jobs, I became a trainee at J. Charles David, a small, two-man ad agency (Joel *Charles* Holiber and Seymour *David* Levy) at 295 Madison Avenue [40<sup>th</sup> Street].

My job was to assist art director Seymour Levy. Seymour taught me about board work, making mechanicals, the paste-up layouts used to make printed things. For Seymour, I pasted-up things like those little newspaper coupon books that people still receive, in the mail.

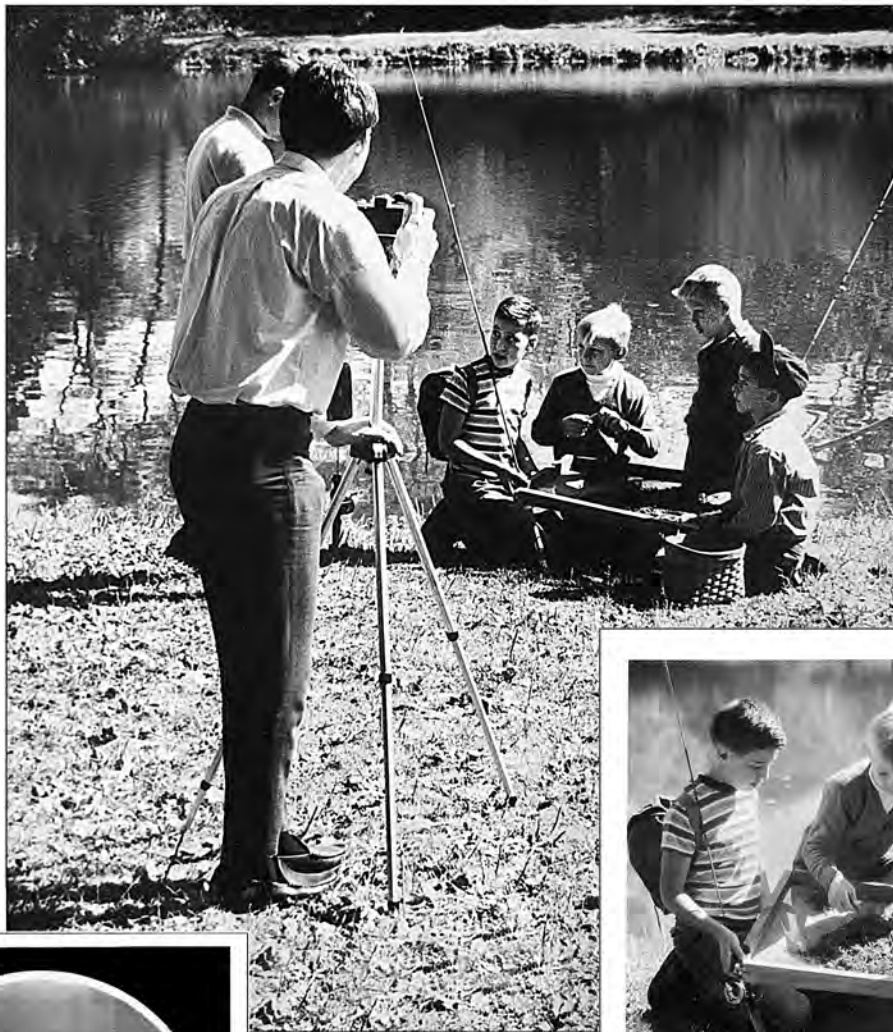
More importantly, Seymour encouraged my photography and gave me opportunities to shoot pictures for advertisements; seeing my work appear in big-world publications was inspiring. I was most proud of the shots I made for the Multi-Metal company; it was a studio shot that forced me to figure out lighting. I also did a location shoot for ski-fashion outfits. We were driving back from that shoot when news came over the car radio that President Kennedy had been shot.



Levy family portrait taken at 73<sup>rd</sup> street studio in '73.

While the work was fun, and Seymour was the best supervisor a person could have, working at the little agency wasn't fun; the internal politics were stressful; Joel Holiber was eaten by ambition; he lived in a world of self-created anxiety; although married, he was in love with his young, blonde secretary, Annette. Besides those politics, I discovered that you can get only so far as a paste-up guy; so, when I had learned enough about design, layout and pasting-up mechanicals, I decided to move on when I was offered a completely different job by Louise Friscia.

A curiosity of the time was how we got paid. Every Friday the boss would give each employee a pay envelope, a dollar-sized Manila [brown-paper] envelope containing your wages in cash, with the appropriate adjustments and taxes detailed, by hand, on the back of the pay envelope. My base wage was \$65 a week at J. Charles David; but I always made a lot more, working overtime; and more than that doing photo jobs for their two biggest clients (Multi Metal and P+M skiwear) that Seymour threw my way. Seeing my work in print was – and still is – a thrill.



**meet  
the  
newlyweds**

lost" and the "biggest concern" was  
working with the newly dismissed  
Minister. Many questions for the com-  
ing January-type sessions. "Now, let  
us take, under a certain heading,  
with the following being a discussion

ImmuneLife for Active Living lowers injury and illness, protects quality of life, fights stress, fights back and against hazardous living. The Micro-Merix and gel waxes



**Multi-Metal** WIRE CLOTH CO., INC.



the house that Multi-Metal built

Piecing together the solution to a problem sometimes takes creative imagination. For filtration problems in pulp and paper mills, that's where Multi-Metal comes in!

The pieces in MULTI-MATERIAL's "house" include top-quality filtration media in all commonly used mesh and wire combinations, as well as complete filter components such as strainers, filter leaves and separating screens... fabricated to any size and shape in standard, corrosion-resistant alloys.

From custom-design of components and weaving of wire cloth...through fabrication and installation of face wires...Multi-Metal finds the answer at the most economical cost.

A special piece of this Multi-Metal "house" can help you reduce costs or improve end-product quality in your mill. Contact your Multi-Metal representative and learn how.



**Multi-Metal** WIRE CLOTH CO., INC.

1943 GARRISON AVE., BOSTON 16, U.S.A.

**a  
filter  
screen  
for  
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important job**



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over fifty years Multi-METAL  
ing filtration media and equip-  
tant industrial jobs. To meet  
ing demands of a more com-  
Multi-METAL must, and does

provide a full range of wire cloth, filter cloth and fabrication. Through research, MULTI-METAL continues to add to its knowledge of cloth structures, flow rates and particle retentivity and applies this knowledge to the solution of customers' problems through consultation and engineering design services. For that important job in your backyard... to get the screen you need to meet your filtration requirements... contact your MULTI-METAL representative.



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## Départ

No sooner than sold out! Color keyed skiabes direct from continental ski capitals. Sell P & M, and you sell fashions that really swing around the world!



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P & M DISTRIBUTORS, INC., 40 New York Avenue, Westbury, N. Y. 11590 □ Showroom: Suite 1803, 1407 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10018



## Arrivé

We're back from where the action is—from every country that counts in skiing. Our P & M load includes everything that is "now" in color-keyed skiabes.



PANTS, PARKAS, TURTLENECKS, POLES, BINDINGS, BOOT PRESSES, RACING SWEATERS, SOCKS, CAPS, MITTENS, HEADBANDS, GLOVES, LACES, APRÈS-SKI BOOTS



## 1963 – Louise Friscia – New Mentor

Louise Friscia was a Douglastonian business woman trained as an attorney; her husband Leonard ("Lenny") was a semi-successful local home builder.

Louise called herself a public-relations specialist; that she truly was, with a reputation for being a well-connected power woman. Louise got things done because she knew a lot of people, of all sorts (and I mean *all*). She hired me to be her assistant; I learned that success has less to do with talent than you might believe; success is all about politics. We worked out of Louise's office in Little Neck, at 252-24 Northern Boulevard; most time was spent driving around in her Cadillac, attending meetings, running errands, and connecting with people; she had friends everywhere; she spent a lot of time in Jamaica, socializing at the *Golden Door* restaurant.

The first project we did was a press kit for the *Doctor Shiny Teeth Healthy Teeth Club*, a charitable organization endowed by Louise's college friend, Helen Blum, [seen in picture] and managed by her daughter, Roz Rothchild. *Doctor Shiny Teeth* disseminated educational toys and ran a club for young children, encouraging them to take care of their teeth, and teaching them how. Most of my work was photography.

Larry Hoff played Professor Smiley (clown) and Doctor Shiny Teeth. Helen Blum, founder.



The press kit included a variety of news releases, about the club, its objectives, and the founder's biography. Also included was 45-RPM recording of *Do the Brush*, the Club's theme song, sung by the Smiley Brothers. The job taught me how to write press releases and get story placements in newspapers and magazines. It was my first lesson in the fundamentals of Public Relations, communicating with the press. Soon after that, Louise landed a contract from John Moynihan & Co., a New York public relations firm, handling the affairs of Sinclair Refining Company at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. Louise kept me on as her assistant; I helped her produce a home-town-newspaper, story placement



program; it was a brilliantly simple idea that generated hundreds of press clips, from papers all over the country.

To digress for a moment about the corporate-communications business: PR agents and their clients subscribed to clipping services, companies that read magazines and newspapers looking for stories about subjects their clients specified, usually themselves. Moynihan's service clipped any and all stories about, or mentioning, Sinclair Dinoland; once a month, the agency delivered the clips in nicely-bound books, as evidence of their successful coverage.



I photographed visitors posed in front of the huge model dinosaurs at Sinclair's *Dinoland* pavilion, then sent those pictures to the visitors' home-town newspapers, with captions describing their visit to *Dinoland* at the World's Fair. It was a killer idea; home-town newspapers are always hungry for *happy* news involving their readers local citizenry.

As a result, the program generated tons of press clips from papers across the nation and overseas; for Sinclair's PR manager, Ed Malcovic, Louise became a hero. He was a trip. More than once, we found him asleep at his desk, snoring (!) drunk from too many martinis at lunch. That was when I learned the true meaning of the Peter Principle, that people rise to the level of their incompetence.

Watching Louise operate was an eye-opener for me. We spent many lunch hours feeding Ed drinks at New York's famed *Twenty-One Club* (21 West 52<sup>nd</sup> Street), an upscale speakeasy popular with the press corps. That's where Louise made her connections and placed stories.

Jay DeBow also liked to lunch at Twenty-One Club; he carried 250 pounds [113.4 kilograms] on a six-foot frame, had an ego of similarly large proportions and ran a boutique Public Relations agency, named after himself, J. DeBow & Partners. In 1965, Louise got betrayed by her boss at John Moynihan, Harold Farkas—I never knew the details; she left the Moynihan's agency and took the account to DeBow's; for me it was an uninterrupted work flow; I just kept on truckin' out at the Fair.

As a PR man, Jay DeBow was essentially a schmoozer; he was a big man, very imposing; he dressed to kill and his life was a masterful performance. The Twenty-One Club was an exclusive place; the élites of the Fourth Estate were the members, together with their entourages of publicists, press relations people, politicians, socialites, and a potpourri of various other VIPs. DeBow had his own table there, where he lunched nearly every day from noon 'till mid-afternoon; dressed in three-piece Brooks Brothers suits, silk ties, a gold vest-pocket watch topped off with a Homburg hat, he arrived in a chauffeured limousine which waited outside, on busy West 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, while he dined; the doorman and valet were handsomely tipped. Nearly always, DeBow entertained top journalists and editors one-on-one.



I tried to guess the schemes that were unleashed during those private tête-à-têtes; but he got results. Invariably, DeBow's clients got the best ink; their stories were prominently positioned, not buried in the back pages. If he had a really important meeting, I would be instructed to hand-deliver a special package to him, during lunch; other times I would call Twenty-One and have him paged; it was all part of pumping-up his act, to appear important. From DeBow I learned the importance of looking the part. However, DeBow's was not a sleazy PR firm; most of his employees didn't have greasy palms; in fact, they were themselves among the best journalistic writers in New York; they wrote the material that DeBow "placed" [arranged to get published] at Twenty-One. Lou Brigham was one of those writers; I accompanied him on several stories, as a photographer; he took me under his wing and taught me a thing or two about doing investigative interviews; he and another writer, a gal named Lila, frequently teamed up; when they married, I was their photographer.

DeBow had me work on more than Sinclair assignments; one of the biggest jobs I worked on was the grand opening of a *Plesser's* department store in Riverhead, NY. [Plesser's was like a discount Sears or Canadian Tire store.] It was hard to imagine all that went into such an event; the editors of every newspaper, radio and TV station within 100 miles were personally contacted by phone; those calls were followed up by slick invitations sent by messengers bearing either a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label scotch whiskey, for men, or Godiva chocolates, for women. For the public event, opening day, we organized everything from bunting and balloons, a ribbon-cutting ceremony, a brass band from the local high school, catering, midway games for the kids, and flowers, tons of flowers; everyone had a flower pinned to their shirt by a bevy of buxom beauties who strolled through the crowds with trays of blossoms provided by Orchids of Hawaii. It was a good show; a ton of press clips were generated; I saw how it was done.

**1963 | Doctor Shiny Teeth Healthy Teeth Club | Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-16**

**1963-65 | Sinclair Dinoland – New York World's Fair | Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-16**







## THE DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB

The Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club, founded in September 1963 by Helen Rothchild Blumberg, is a non-profit organization designed to promote childrens' good dental health.

With headquarters in Rydal, Pennsylvania, the organization acts as an educational liaison between young dental patients, their parents, and dentists. The Club's program assists parents and dentists to teach children the principles of proper dental care and the necessity of regular dental visits.

To motivate children toward its aims, the Doctor Shiny-Teeth Club utilizes educational replicas of dental hand tools and office equipment which familiarize children with their dentist's work. These, together with educational songs and literature, are age-oriented and work to replace fear of the "unknowns" with fun through understanding.

The Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club has thousands of members across the nation. Although most are children and teenagers, there are members of all ages.

A royalty from the sale of all Doctor Shiny-Teeth products is donated to the American Society of Dentistry for Children and its program to establish more and better dental health for the nation's children.





For further information regarding the DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB and children's dental health, contact: Louise Friscia, DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB, 252-24 Northern Boulevard, Little Neck, New York 11363 Telephone: 212 FA 1-1900

Helen Rothchild Blumberg, founder of the Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club, is shown here demonstrating two of the Club's educational dental toys.

The giant toothbrush and mammoth molar tooth, that is a crayon case, can be used to teach children how to brush their teeth properly.

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For further information regarding the DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB and children's dental health, contact: Louise Friscia, DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB, 252-24 Northern Boulevard, Little Neck, New York 11363 Telephone: 212 FA 1-1900

## DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH PROMOTES GOOD DENTAL HEALTH FOR CHILDREN

The Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club was founded in September, 1963 by Helen Rothchild Blumberg as a non-profit organization designed to promote dental health for children.

With headquarters in Rydal, Pennsylvania, the organization acts as an educational liaison between young dental patients, their parents, and their dentists. The Club's program helps parents and dentists to teach children the principles of proper dental care, and emphasize the necessity of regular dental visits.

To aid this program - to allay fear of the dentist and his mysterious-looking tools, the Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club utilizes educational harmless plastic replicas of these tools. These, together with educational songs and literature, are age-oriented and work to replace fear of the "unknown" with fun through understanding.

The Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club has thousands of members across the Nation. Although most are children and teen-agers, there are members of all ages.

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NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1965.

59

### SHINY TEETH CLUB BOON TO DENTIST

Youngsters Taught He Is  
No Ogre in a Smock

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

Who has 600 molars, 400 bicuspids, 400 incisors, 200 cuspids and no cavities? The membership of the Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club.

About 50 youngsters, their

teeth as white as a dentist's smock, gathered in Sherry's Rendezvous Room at Philharmonic Hall yesterday for the annual awards luncheon of the club. It was founded in 1963 as a nonprofit organization to lessen the fear among children and teen-agers of the dentist and his mysterious-looking tools and to promote better dental health.

"The club really started with my little boy," remarked the founder, Mrs. Helen Rothchild Blumberg, while the club's marching song ("Scrub-a-dub-dub - Scrub-a-dub-dub, We're Marching Along to the Shiny-Teeth Club") blared over the gold-carpeted cafe.

"He had green decay along

the ridges of his teeth and he screamed with fear whenever we went to the dentist," Mrs. Blumberg, a 41-year-old businesswoman of Rydal, Pa., continued. "There were no dental kits any place, anywhere, and I decided I had to do something about it."

#### The Toys Pay Off

Mrs. Blumberg, working with schools, churches and fraternal groups, mailed out brochures, records and plastic dental toys. Each item cost 25 cents. Free "report cards" spurring youngsters to brush their teeth were also sent out.

"Thousands of youngsters have joined," said Mrs. Blum-

berg, a slim, animated woman wearing a gray tweed suit trimmed with silver fox and a silver fox hat. "We've sent out enormous numbers of plastic head mirrors, scalpels and even mouth gags."

As she spoke, children and parents began munching turkey and cream cheese and jelly sandwiches. Another song, "Do the Brush" ("Keep your smiling face. Doctor Shiny-Teeth is everywhere") roared over the loudspeaker and guests began marching onto the dais.

The guests included Drew Pearson, the columnist; Dr. Bernhardt S. Gottlieb, a psychoanalyst, and Gordon C. Lange, special assistant to the Na-

tional Association for Mental Health.

Mr. Lange, the master of ceremonies, arose, stared at the audience and cried:

"Everyone who has good teeth say 'Yeah.'"

"Yeah," the youthful voices shot back.

While many youngsters popped balloons, stretched or yawned, the guests spoke on the need to overcome childhood fears of dental care.

"Mothers make a horrendous mistake when they tell the child, 'Your teeth look like they need dental care and tomorrow we will go to the dentist,'" Dr. Gottlieb, president-elect of the American Society of Psychoanalytic Physicians, observed.





For further information regarding the DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB and children's dental health, contact: Louise Friscia, DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB, 252-24 Northern Boulevard, Little Neck, New York 11363 Telephone: 212 FA 1-1900

## HERE IS DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH

Doctor Shiny-Teeth is the universal image of the child's dentist and the celebrated star of the Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club.

Here he is, pictured with his famous "patient" Peri-Wimple, an honorary Club member.

Larry Hoff, twenty-two, ventriloquist-magician of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was selected by Helen Rothchild Blumberg, founder and President of the non-profit Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club, to represent Doctor Shiny-Teeth. His purpose is to tell children how the dentist works to help them and why proper dental care is so important.

Peri-Wimple, Mr. Hoff's ventriloquist figure is no dummy. Peri is an elf. He is a three hundred year old elf - the only kind you know.

Through their toothsome dialogue, Peri and Doctor Shiny-Teeth blend the fantasy world of children with the world of reality. They project one image and one message. The message: by understanding the importance of proper dental care, dental fear can become dental fun.

Who said that? Peri-Wimple - and he said a mouthful.

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1963-65 | DOCTOR SHINY TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB | PLATE Nº 5  
Examples of press kit photos.



# I brushed my tooth!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
★	★			★
★				



The honor of your presence  
is requested at the ceremonies  
attending the  
Annual Awards Presentation  
of the

*Doctor Shiny-Teeth  
Healthy Teeth Club*

at noon on Saturday  
February sixth  
nineteen hundred and sixty-five  
Cafe at Philharmonic Hall  
Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts  
Broadway and Sixty-fourth Street  
New York City

Please present  
this invitation

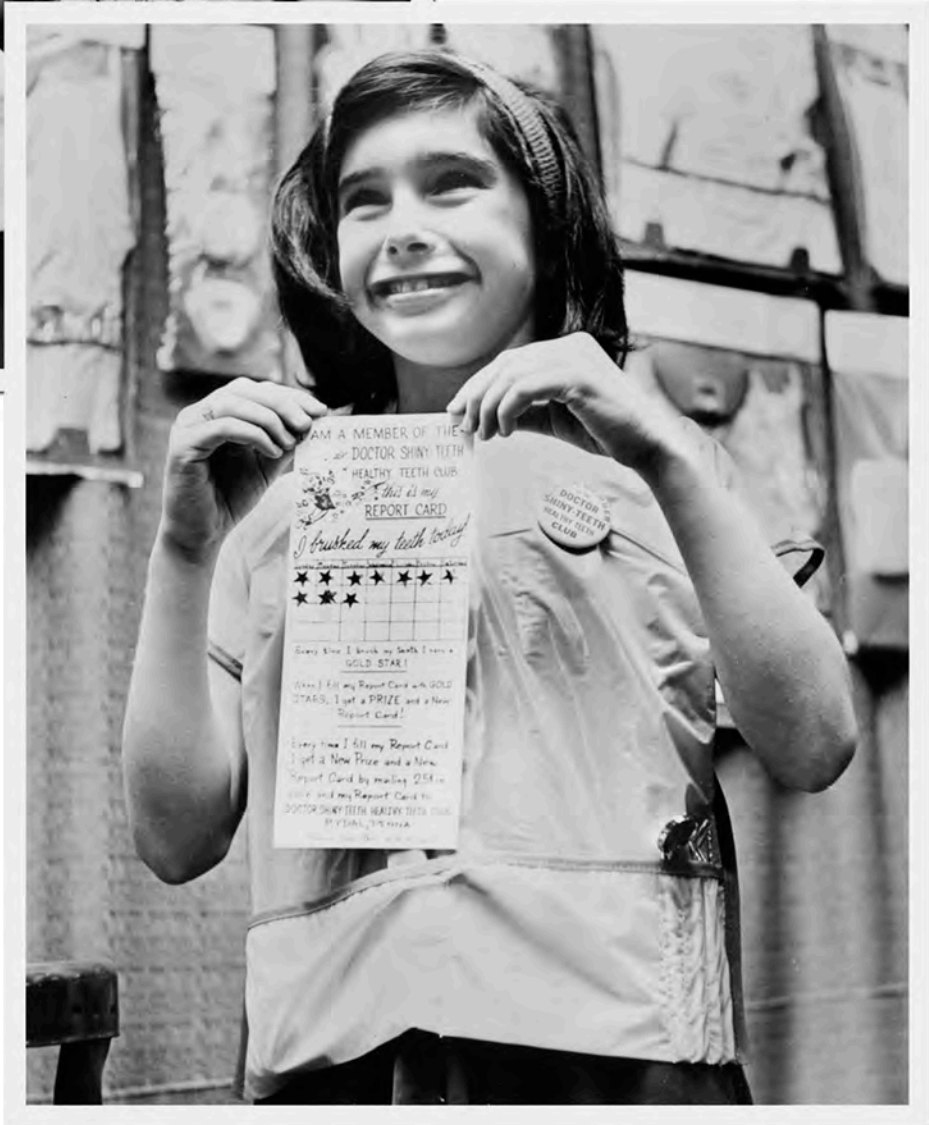
Buffet Luncheon

# y teeth!



1963-65 | DOCTOR SHINY TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB | PLATE N° 6

Examples of press-event photo coverage.



1963-65 | DOCTOR SHINY TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB | PLATE N° 9

Examples of press-event photo coverage.





**Shy One.** Encouraged by Professor Smiley (Jerry Hoff), 6-year-old Lisa Cavaturo shows her pearly-whites and gets set to keep them that way with giant brush. She's only missing one. They met at Lincoln Center to begin National Children's Dental Health Week. (NEWS foto by Hal Mathewson)



1963-65 | DOCTOR SHINY TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB | PLATE N° 13

Example of music promotion materials.





For further information regarding the DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB and children's dental health, contact: Louise Friscia, DOCTOR SHINY-TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB, 252-24 Northern Boulevard, Little Neck, New York 11363 Telephone: 212 FA 1-1900

### BITING FACTS

Russian Citizens have the most dazzling smiles! Reason: in the Soviet Union false teeth are made out of Stainless Steel.

Tyranosaurus was the largest and most ferocious Dinosaur that ever lived. His dagger-like teeth were six inches long and he had over 70 of them.

Trachodon - a North American dinosaur - lived about a hundred million years ago. He was 32 feet long, 14 feet high, and had about 1500 teeth. When a row of teeth fell out, another replaced it. (Life size models of Tyranosaurus and Trachodon can be seen at Sinclair Refining Company's Dinoland Exhibit at the New York World's Fair. Not so human beings. They have 32 permanent teeth. "Permanent" so long as their "permanence" is not "temporized" by neglect. If a permanent tooth is lost, only a false one can replace it.

George Washington's false teeth were made of wood. Porcelain was not used until the end of the 18th Century. Before that time, teeth were crudely made of wood, ivory, and cherry pits.

Over 100,000 dentists practice in the United States and approximately two billion dollars was spent on dental services of all sorts in 1963.

In the same year, almost 250 million dollars was spent on toothpaste and tooth-powder and over 67 million dollars was spent for toothbrushes. A sweet 2½ billion dollars was spent on candy and a like amount on soft drinks. A comparison worth noting.

Just some information to chew on.

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1963-65 | DOCTOR SHINY TEETH HEALTHY TEETH CLUB | PLATE N° 15

Example of press-story tie-in with Sinclair *Dinoland*.





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BY PROCLAMATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

the week of

February 7, 1965

has been declared NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH WEEK

In his State of the Union Message, President Johnson stressed his desire to lead our Country to the Great Society where poverty would be abolished and adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care would be furnished to ALL Americans.

The Doctor Shiny-Teeth Healthy Teeth Club hopes everyone will cooperate in this Program.

Club members learn that Healthy Teeth and Healthy Bodies are synonymous. Parent's are urged not to wait until a toothache demands a trip to the Dentist, but to make regular preventive visits. The Dentist becomes a friendly figure rather than one to be feared. Dental hygiene becomes a pleasant habit.

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# THE EXCITING WORLD OF DINOSAURS

**Sinclair** DINOLAND ■ NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1964-65







1964-65 | SINCLAIR DINOLAND - NEW YORK WORLDS FAIR | PLATE N° 4

Press-release photo about Dinoland-brochure school program.





For further information regarding SINCLAIR DINOLAND  
please contact: Louise Friscia, JAY DEBOW & PARTNERS,  
40 East 49th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017  
Telephone 212 HA 1-2233 TWX 212 867 6331

DINOLAND, NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR -- With the re-opening of schools across the country, and the return of youngsters to their classrooms, Sinclair Refining Company has received a host of mail from numerous educators requesting copies of the Sinclair booklet, "The Exciting World of Dinosaurs."

A 16 page full color publication, the 5-by-8 inch "Exciting World of Dinosaurs" contains factual information about the prehistoric era, passages on the evolution of dinosaurs, as well as descriptions and scale drawn color illustrations of the nine giant prehistoric dinosaurs whose life-size models are on display at Dinoland. Originally produced for free distribution at Sinclair's Dinoland pavilion at the New York World's Fair, the booklet has had an average daily distribution of 25,000 copies from Dinoland.

Many academic instructors, school and camp counselors visiting Dinoland requested the Sinclair booklet. Over 1,000 teachers from all over the country and several European schools sent requests. These requests have totalled more than 15,000 booklets.

At this rate, "The Exciting World of Dinosaurs" may be the first pamphlet on prehistoric life ever to reach the top readership list.

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At World's Fair — Karen Beekman of 1447 Sullivan Street, Rock Hill, is shown here in front of one of the nine life size dinosaur models at the New

York World's Fair on May 20th, 1964. Karen is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Beekman.

ROCK HILL, S. C. HERALD—May 27, 1964



## NEWS from DINOLAND

SINCLAIR REFINING COMPANY • NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

John Moynahan & Co., Inc. 155 East 44th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017, Tel: MUrray Hill 7-2545 • Dinoland Tel: AR 1-3992

FOR: Sinclair Dinoland

FROM: John Moynahan & Company, Inc.  
155 East 44th Street  
New York, New York 10017

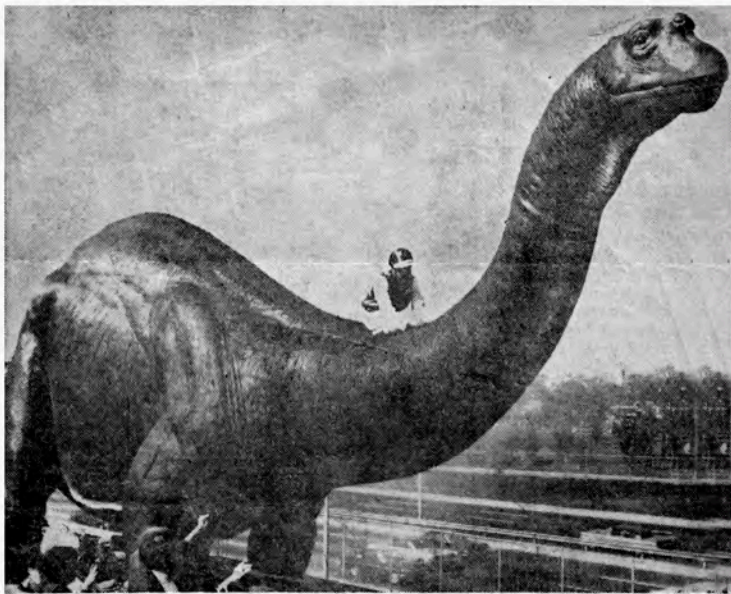
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Harold Farkas or Louise Friscia  
MU 7-2545, World's Fair AR 1-3992

### HARD-BITTEN GREETER AT WORLD'S FAIR

New York World's Fair, N.Y. May-- "Why Grandma, what big teeth you have!" But the little Red Riding Hoods who visit the New York World's Fair this year needn't worry. This fellow is just a fibre-glass made Tyrannosaurus Rex, one of the collection of life-size dinosaurs on exhibit at Sinclair Dinoland. Tyrannosaurus, most terrifying creatures that ever lived, roamed the earth 100-million years ago. He stood five stories high from tip to tip and his teeth were the size of six inch daggers. In the background is the Unisphere, symbol of the World's Fair.





**HORSE OF A DIFFERENT COLOR** — Ronald Cartwright, noted British steeplechase jockey, tries his hand at a different kind of mount, a brontosaurus at Sinclair's Dinoland.

*S-slurrrppp!*



One of the friendly dinosaurs at Sinclair's "Dinoland" at the World's Fair seems to be taking a more-than-passing fancy to the hero sandwich in the hand of Teddy Polchak of the Bronx. But it's OK . . . Dino's a vegetarian.

JAMAICA, N. Y. LONG ISLAND PRESS—May 4, 1964



BRONTOSAURUS (Bront-o-sawr-us) is now residing at Sinclair Refining Company's "Dinoland" Exhibit at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. It and eight other life-size dinosaur models were built for Sinclair in Hudson, New York. Called "thunder lizard" because the ground supposedly shook when he walked, this creature was 70 to 80 feet in length and weighed about 30 tons.

For further information, call:  
**JAY DeBOW and PARTNERS, INC.**  
 40 East 49th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017  
 Telephone: 212 HA: 1-2233 TWX 212 867 6331





## NEWS from DINOLAND

SINCLAIR REFINING COMPANY • NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

John Moynahan & Co., Inc. 155 East 44th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017, Tel: MUrray Hill 7-2545 • Dinoland Tel: AR 1-3992

### SOMETHING NEW AT DINOLAND

New York World's Fair, N. Y. -- Newest attraction at Sinclair Dinoland at the World's Fair this year is this reproduction of a nest of dinosaur eggs and a newly hatched Brontosaurus. The size of the eggs, about twelve inches in circumference, and the infant "Dino", nearly four feet long, is sharply contrasted by the size of the baby chicks in the photo. Sinclair officials expect attendance in 1965 to exceed the nearly 6,000,000 visitors at Dinoland last year.

###



## World's Fair To See 'Service Station Of The Future'

Motorists visiting the New York World's Fair next year will be treated to a look at the "Service Station of the Future"—thanks to a company contest conducted by Sinclair Refining Co.

Sinclair plans to build its unique futuristic station in the vast Meadow Lake parking area north of the main exhibits.

The station's main building, an eight-sided, glass enclosed structure, will appear to be suspended from spider-like exterior girders that rise from the ground and meet at a point. Interior walls will be made of plastic for durability and easy maintenance.

Circular pump islands spaced around the building will carry rocket-shaped gasoline pumps mounted on wheels. When motorists pull up, attendants will roll the pumps to their cars for faster, easier service.

IOWA OIL SPOUT, DES MOINES,  
IOWA—October, 1963



## NEWS from DINOLAND

SINCLAIR REFINING COMPANY • NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

John Moynahan & Co., Inc. 155 East 44th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017, Tel: MUrray Hill 7-2545 • Dinoland Tel: AR 1-3992

FOR: Sinclair Dinoland

FROM: John Moynahan & Company, Inc.  
155 East 44th Street  
New York, New York 10017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Harold Farkas or Louise Friscia  
MU 7-2545, World's Fair AR 1-3992

### SINCLAIR EXPANDS MARINA FOR 1965

New York World's Fair, N.Y. -- This Sinclair floating fuel station at the World's Fair Marina in Flushing Meadow has been enlarged for the 1965 season and will be the registration point for assignment of boat berths and moorings. Two ninety-foot long floats, with 360 feet of docking space have been added. The fueling station is equipped with nine pumps to supply Dino and Dino Supreme gasoline as well as Sinclair diesel fuel. It is also stocked with a full line of lubricants and can handle boats from the smallest of outboards to sea-going cruisers over one hundred feet long.

###



# Age And Beauty Seen At Sinclair's Dinoland

By LES MATTHEWS

Pretty Shirley Bailey, one of the guides at Dinoland, a World's Fair exhibit sponsored by Sinclair Oil Corp., said: "I don't know how people lived with those reptiles roaming around. Some of them weighed tons and were 50 feet in length. Why, they could crush houses and everybody in them."

Shirley walked over to three youngsters and began telling them the name of strange but life-like creatures. "This is the dinosaur, and this one is called a brontosaurus and over here we have the pteranodon, an ancient lizard that could fly."

"This is called the trachodon. He was 32 feet long and 14 feet high and he lived on plant life and over here we have the stegosaurus. He lived in the United States and weighed about four tons but he lived on soft vegetables," Shirley told her wide-eyed guests.

"What has that got to do with oil?" a teenager inquired.

"The Dino symbolizes age and oil is the result of age," Louise Friscia, publicist for the oil company said.

"You mean to tell me that a man caught those and started oil company?" another youngster who was listening inquired.

"No, no," Miss Friscia said. Sinclair Oil Corp., which is one

of the largest oil companies in the world, was founded by Harry Ford Sinclair in 1916. He drilled the first oil well in 1905.

"No, his father was not in the oil business," she answered a little girl.

"He was born in West Virginia and moved West with his family to Independence, Kans., where he worked in his father's drug store until he had the urge to drill oil and start his own empire. He died at the age of 80 in 1956. Edward L. Steiniger is now chairman of the board of directors and O.P. Thomas is the president of the company now, Miss Friscia told the youth.

A little girl asked Guide Ken Allen what became of the animals and where they live now. "The animals," he answered, "faded into eternity. As the world grew older and man became smarter, the animals were eliminated."

"But where did they go?" the persistent child asked.

"They starved to death. They could not find anything to eat and no one gave them anything to eat so they died," Allen said, and the youngster skipped away with her parents and roamed through the garden which is equipped with a water fall.

"Sinclair Oil has more than 21,000 employees, an integrated staff," Miss Friscia said. "We



AGE AND BEAUTY — Attractive Shirley Bailey, a Dinoland guide, stands beside a Triceratops, a giant horned dinosaur, which is on exhibit at the World's Fair. The dinosaur was recreated by Sinclair Refining Company for the Fair.

have about 35 working at the Fair and Sinclair is fast becoming an household word since we have household oil, lubricating and petro-chemical oil. The managers of the company are Jim Degan, George Stone, Jim Delaney Jr. and Vincent McIntosh. We have refineries all over the world."

"This exhibit attracts every-

one who comes to the fair. It appears that way," Miss Bailey said. "The youngsters and the adults are fascinated by the exhibit and some wonder what would happen today if we had animals like these wandering in our forests. Some of the replicas are so realistic that a number of viewers look at them from a distance."

N. Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS—May 9, 1964



ORNITHOLESTES (Or-nith-o-les-tes) weighed little more than a turkey, was lightly built, with many hollow bones. He was about 6 feet in length, had a long tail, bird-like feet and sharp claws. Built by Sinclair Refining Company for the 1964-65 New York World's Fair, he is now residing at the "Dinoland" Exhibit along with 8 other life-size dinosaur models.

For further information, call:  
**JAY DeBOW and PARTNERS, INC.**  
40 East 49th Street, New York, N. Y. 10017  
Telephone: 212 HA: 1-2233 TWX 212 867 6331



AVL fishing trip, 1975; kindred spirits.

*"Ambition is what makes you successful."*

Janis Joplin (paraphrased)

Janis Joplin said that life is not a zero-sum game. She noted that there is a lot of talent around; however, *ambition* is the attribute that forges success. I related to her advice; ambition was (is) my middle name. Right from the start I had ambition for fame and fortune, to be successful; maybe then someone would love me. I also related to Janis Joplin's cavalier, ostentatious lifestyle, even her excessive drinking. Growing up, I played music before I ever took a serious picture. Maybe I would have gone into rock and roll, if I wasn't so introverted and insecure.

Deep down inside me lives an exhibitionist caged by inhibitions. My feelings sometimes led me to unconventional behavior; there's no doubt I offended some people who thought me improper. As I passed through middle age and spent more time stoned, many inhibitions largely disappeared or were masked enough to seem like they did. Being fit became an obsession; I worked hard at staying in shape. After years living overseas and playing it straight, I reverted to dressing more like some latter-day hippie, wearing colorful clothes and risqué costumes; all to get attention; in search of love. But I was looking for love in all the wrong places. And that's all over now, Baby Blue.





Well-worn wallet picture taken in East Marion, Long Island, 1965.

While it lasted, my gig at the World's Fair was a dream job; I got paid to do things I like doing; earning enough to support payments on a '63 Corvette Sting Ray coupe (the classic one with the split rear window); Corvettes were the hottest cars on the road back then.

My '63 split-window coupe was modified with model-year '65 front-quarter-panel "gills" as well as Jaguar E-Type louvers mounted on the hood.

I'd cruise to the Fair every day in my 'Vette and spend the days photographing families; before the evening rush-hour traffic began, I'd return to Douglaston—I still lived with my parents—to process and print the pictures in my basement darkroom. The next morning, at Dinoland, I'd type out and attach the picture captions to the prints and get them out in the post. After lunch, the cycle started again; photographing families, then going home to develop the pictures.

I was good at my job; childhood experiences selling door-to-door gave me the people skills I needed for the Dinoland job; persuading people is what it is all about in life; you must be able to answer their question, *what's in it for them?*

During the same period, I worked for the American Bible Society; I can't remember the name of the woman who was my client contact there—Dorothy something—but she was influential because she accepted my agnosticism and hired me only for my professional skills.

## 1964 – World's Fair – Metamorphosis

Talk about formative years, 1964 was a peak on my chart, a real doozy. I went through so many changes that year that old friends began to wonder who I was (so did I).

Working with Louise Friscia stimulated my transformation from passive aggressive to active aggressive. I learned how to get things done; how to dress, how to act, what to do, what not to do; I was becoming cosmopolitan; that distanced me from my neighborhood friends, in Douglaston. The Corvette changed everything. Suddenly, little 'ol Douglas had the hottest car in the hood. My car said a lot about me, that I was successful and independent. My Douglaston friends already had nice cars by the time I got the 'Vette; Mike Plink had his parents' Avanti, Wiley had his Austin Healy *Sprite*; John Blaha had a Corvair (and soon after that a TR-4 convertible); and even Charlie Cabello, who lived above the Douglaston railroad station, was driving a new Chevy Impala convertible. When I showed up in my Corvette, the unofficial hierarchy of our group shifted; I had the hottest wheels.

Not to be outdone, Billy Thomas had his wealthy parents buy him a 'Vette too, a '64 convertible; but his had an automatic Powerglide transmission, standard suspension and fluid valve lifters; mine had a four-speed manual gear box, Koni shock absorbers, and solid valve lifters that supported engine RPMs up to 7,300. (Gasp!)

The torque was sensational; you could get a mild whiplash from the acceleration if you weren't ready for it. At speeds, over 60 mph (90 kmh), my car would leap away from Billy's. (Heh heh.) I could wind-up 73 mph [117.5 kmh] in first gear. When I shifted to second with the pedal on the floor the car literally jumped forwards.

We proved that during a night of drag racing on Plandome Road in Manhasset; there was a flat, two-mile straightaway on that road that attracted dragsters from miles around; everyone went there to top-end-time their cars. The police were hip to the road racing going on, but we managed to get our kicks.

I bought the Corvette from Ralph Aiello who lived in an Italian section of Queens adjacent to the Worlds Fair grounds in Flushing. I'll never forget the afternoon when I took the bus over to see the car; it was love at first sight; I had to have it. That was easier said than done. My parents were skeptical; but they finally agreed to co-sign my loan with Chemical Bank; the car was mine!

Almost immediately, I set about adding racing stripes to the paint scheme. There were no auto-body shops near Douglaston; the ones in neighboring town wanted an arm and a leg for what seemed like an easy job, to me; just a couple of stripes running front to back across the hood, roof and rear deck. I decided to do it myself and took over my parent's garage, converting it into a paint shop, relegating their car to street parking. When the stripes didn't come out quite right, I decided to repaint the entire car; I wasn't fond of the original metallic blue anyway. After sanding the body down to its bare Fiberglas®, I spray painted it with a metallic mint green that looked good as a swatch but not as a car, especially a 'Vette. Worst, bits of crap rained down from the rafters in the old garage, ruining the finish.

Frustrated, I sought the advice of Vinnie Comparetto, elder brother of my Phi Alpha Sigma fraternity brother, Rick Comparetto. Vinnie had refinished his Jaguar XKE and it looked great. He introduced me to Bob Firmery at Academy Auto Body, who had worked on his Jag. Academy was a complete auto service in Flushing; they did everything from engine diagnostics and repairs to custom paint and body work. When Vinnie took me to Academy the first time, I felt I was in heaven.

Firmery let me prep the car myself, saving a fortune; then he shot [spray painted] the car with a high metal-flake silver lacquer that cost \$100 a quart, a small fortune in those days... hell, even now. Bob sprayed 16 coats of paint on that car, each one hand rubbed between coats. When it was done, the car gleamed like silver pearl.

The bitchin' part was that the exterior paint was detailed with a deep-blue pinstripe around the belt-line, and old-English monograms of my initials—DTM—on each door, to personalize the car and make it *mine*.



## 1964 – Ted Russell – Alter Ego



A transformative change happened when a professional photographer, Ted Russell, was sent by *Life* magazine to do a picture essay about a children's opera organized by my sister Barbara and her friends, particularly James Conlon, who grew up to be a famous conductor.<sup>28</sup> His parents and mine were organizers of the North Shore Friends of Opera, together with Edith Mugdan and her husband. They sponsored the 1963<sup>29</sup> children's opera.

The opera they staged (*Rigoletto*) was the subject of Ted's picture story, and of my own as well. Meeting Ted, with three Nikons slung around his neck, his pockets bulging with rolls of film, and watching him at work was inspirational. For three hours, Ted never stopped shooting; he was all over the place getting everything from every angle; in the trade, they call that *coverage*. I was awe struck. I had two rolls of film in my pocket; he shot at least three dozen rolls that night. Gadzooks!

Ted Russell supplied this picture of himself, circa 1963.

Lucky for me, Ted took me under his wing. He lived nearby, in the old section of Little Neck, which was like an extension of Douglas Manor; that's why he got the assignment from *Life*, to cover the children's' opera—he lived nearby. Ted could see that I was a serious amateur photographer. I volunteered to be his assistant and he accepted. Thereafter I would hike two miles from Douglas Manor, through the swamps, up into Little Neck, and meet him at his house. Then we'd go out and shoot something.



The best excursion was in 1965 when Ted rented a brand-new Buick *Le Sabre* to shoot for a new portfolio collection; he was aiming to pick up some new business from Detroit ad agencies and car magazines. I modelled for the pictures with my new girlfriend, Leslie Shirk. The three of us drove around until we found a nice little off-road forest scene; it was high autumn; Nature's color scheme complimented the burgundy-red Buick.

Ted did his usual thorough reportage; he shot the car from every conceivable angle; he even climbed up in one of the trees, to shoot down on the car with blurry leaves in the foreground. It was an important lesson that I applied to my own efforts to get car clients

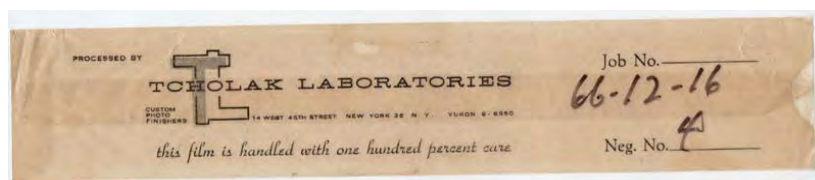
<sup>28</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Conlon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Conlon)

<sup>29</sup> Although we met at the Children's Opera in the summer of 1963, Russell's mentoring began in earnest in 1964.

just a few years later. My first *Car and Driver* shoots were somehow derivatives of that afternoon spent with Ted.

Through Ted, I met Arthur Tcholak, a master photo printer who immigrated from eastern Europe. Tcholak Labs offered exclusive custom-printing services; exclusive insofar as excellence is concerned.

Arthur Tcholak was one the very best printers I ever met; he was an artist with light. He also took an interest in me, thanks to Ted. He let me watch him at work. That was all it took for me to become an acolyte. My own printing went from good to superb; I was one of the best, thanks to what I learned from Arthur Tcholak.<sup>30</sup>



People don't realize it, but making a good picture isn't a snap; the different parts of a picture need to be adjusted to get the result desired. For a printer, the strategies for getting the most out of any picture can be quite complex.

Arthur Tcholakian. Date and photographer unknown.

How a picture is printed—you could say, how it is *interpreted*—can make or break it. Imagine, for example, Ansel Adam's *El Capitan* with a washed-out sky; suddenly the same picture is a dud.

Before digital imaging, laying an image onto a piece of photo paper or film involved multiple exposures, to give various parts of the picture different amounts of light; one's hands, fingers and other flags [masks] were used to paint with light. For example, storm clouds can be made darker, or a sunburst brighter.

Learning *interpretation* was a matter of practice—working one's way through the proverbial “ten-thousand letters” (an aphorism that contends that 10,000 letters need to be written, before one can be a good writer), or in this case, prints.

I have heard said that there are only two or three people allowed to print Ansel Adams negatives; supposedly, only they know the printing techniques necessary for the maestro's trademark dark skies and dramatic contrasts. That's a laugh; any good printer could do it; Adams and his ilk were all about myth-making, otherwise called marketing or, these days, *branding*.

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<sup>30</sup> Tcholak was a wannabe fashion-photographer; when I met him, he was printing his new portfolio of designer gowns shot along the jagged coastlines of Maine; they were dramatic scenes that cost him a fortune to stage and photograph; I was humbled by the extent of his efforts to achieve his goals; that was the more important lesson, for me. I don't know if Tcholak ever “made it” to *Harpers*, *Vogue*, *Mademoiselle* or any of the others that were on his list of prospects; but, he deserved to. [Update, 2019: Tcholakian did become a well-known fashion photographer; he died in his 50s.]



## 1964 | Children's Opera | Ted Russell photos | Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-12

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>1: The children's performance of Rigoletto<sup>31</sup> was first staged in the garage of my parent's home on Manor Road, as a charity fundraiser for the local ambulance corps. It was a hit and \$75 was raised. [Adjusted for inflation, today that would be about \$630.]*

*The show's success spurred the North Shore Friends of Opera to stage a more elaborate production of the children's opera at the community hall at Zion Church. My mother sang in the choir there and my father served as an acolyte to the Reverend Canon Downs, assisting him perform communion. (After the services, Dad and Downs drank whatever consecrated wine was left, which was usually a lot. The Canon turned out to be an alcoholic who was later defrocked and lost his position at Zion Church.)*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>2: Top -Walter Mugdan's costume is adjusted by Robert Schiavo; peering from behind is Larry Kristiansen and Ronnie Ramirez. Bottom – Dorothy Battestin styles Cynthia "Cindy" Connolly's hair.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>3: Sarah Downs, the (Zion Church) Canon's daughter, applying make-up to James "Jimmy" Conlon.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>4: Barbara Mesney in one of two costumes; behind her is Phillip Silver.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>5: Eugene Green coaches Jimmy Conlon; at right is Phillip Conlon (Jimmy's brother).*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>6: Jimmy Conlon played the starring role of Rigoletto, the hunchback court jester. Lower photo: Paul Schiavo, Jimmy Conlon, Robert Schiavo, Bill Battestin, Arthur Seder, anonymous and Cindy Connolly.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>7: Linda Borst in as Rigoletto's daughter, Gilda. Upper: Linda and Paul Schiavo.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup>8: Top – Walter Mugdan as the assassin, Sparafucile. Below, Rigoletto tussles with the Duke of Mantua's courtiers, the farthest right of which is Robert Schiavo. Partially obscured: Bill Battestin, Arthur Seder and Jimmy Conlon.*

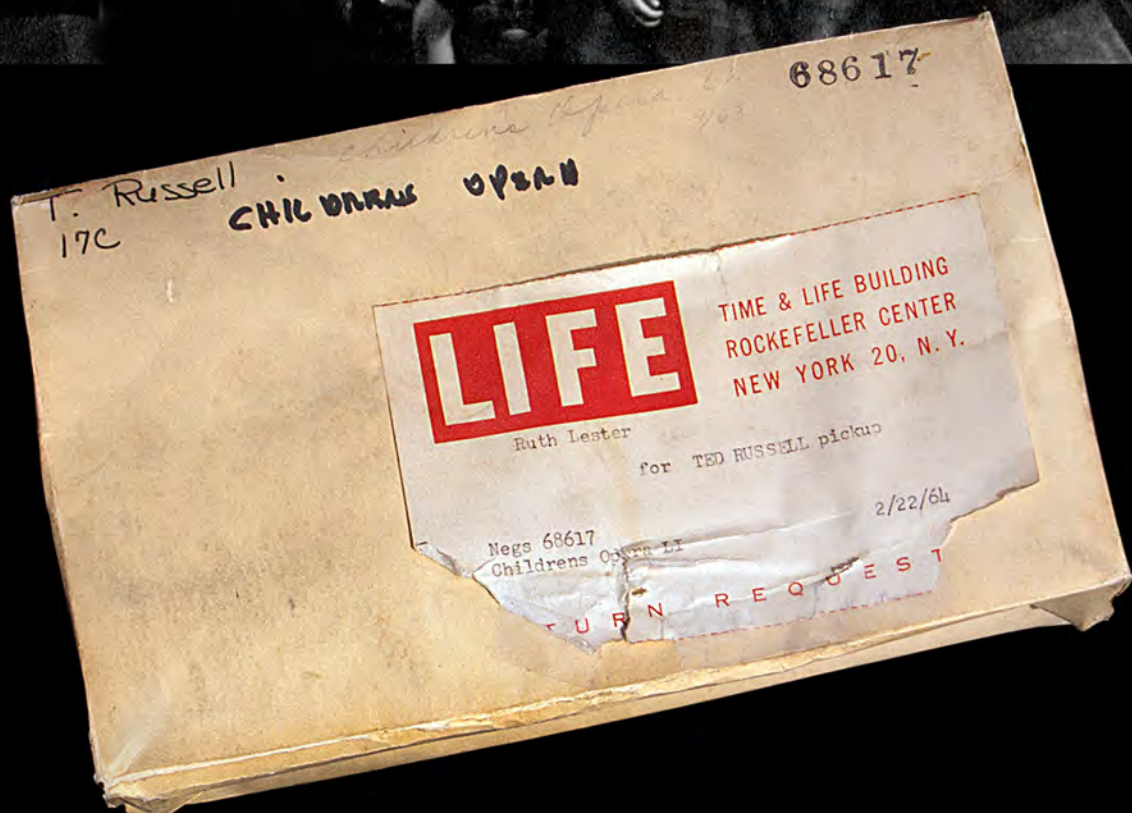
*Plate N<sup>os</sup>8: Top: Walter Mugdan. Lower: William Rose, Arthur Seder, Robert Schiavo and Jimmy Conlon.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup>10 & 11: Curtain call. Left to right: Linda Borst; Larry Kristiansen; anonymous: Robert Schiavo; Cindy Connolly (in a second role); Bill Battestin; Arthur Seder; Jimmy Conlon; Paul Schiavo; Walter Mugdan; Barbara Mesney (in her second role; Susan Rose.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>12: Casting and rehearsals for Rigoletto were held in the living room of my parent's house, on Manor Road. Top (left to right): anonymous; Linda Borst; Dorothy Mesney (my mom); Phillip Silver; Peter Mesney (my dad, president of the North Shore Friends of Opera); anonymous; Phillip Conlon (Jimmy's brother.)*

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<sup>31</sup> For the plot and other details about Verdi's *Rigoletto*, see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rigoletto>

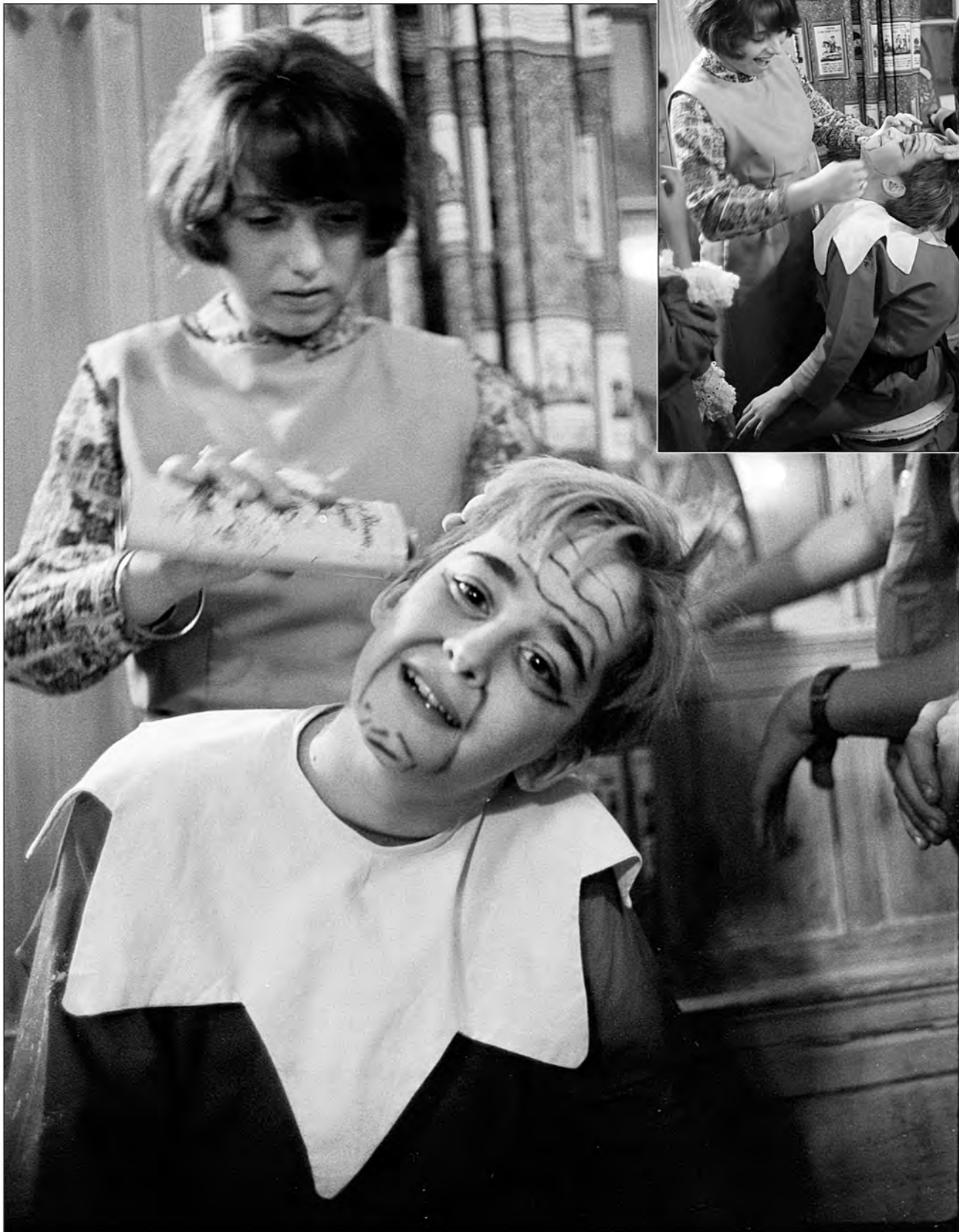






1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 2

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*



1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 3

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*





1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 4

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*



1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 5

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*





1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 6

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*



1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 7

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*





1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 8

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*



1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 9

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*





1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 10

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*



1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 11

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*





1964 | CHILDREN'S OPERA | PLATE N° 12

*Photos for Life magazine by Ted Russell*

## 1964 – Goodbye Ginger – Hello Trudy

Ginger's parents were not happy when I bought the Corvette; their disapproval created a rift between us. Meanwhile, I was smoking more dope, making more money and generally feeling more like *myself*.

Ginger was torn. On the one hand, I certainly seemed successful; I had a good job, a great car, and was carrying a full curriculum of 15 credits every semester at night school, to boot. To give myself credit where due, in the Douglaston neighborhood, I was (suddenly) somebody... the guy with the Corvette. I had status everywhere I went.

However, unbeknownst to me at the time, the trappings of success I was so proud of—Brooks Brothers suits, silk ties, Florsheim shoes etcetera (no more second-hand clothes for this kid)—were undermining the very foundations of my relationship with her; she reckoned I was becoming a materialist; and I guess I was. But what do they say, "Clothes make the man?" It's true. Even my grandmother used to say, "You can judge a man by the heels of his shoes." I heard what she said; the truth of it was born out in the reality I lived in; my materialism paid off in the respect I garnered from my neighborhood peers—but not with Ginger. Although she didn't show it (or I was blind—more likely) animosity towards me was building within her.

For Ginger and me, the end came in a violent ride through the Douglaston streets in the Corvette. As Ginger broke the news that we were through, I went ballistic. When she returned the gold brooch that I gave her—the one I designed, with our initials intertwined, and had custom made—I threw it out the window in a fit of anger while speeding dangerously downhill on East Drive; that scared the hell out of Ginger and sealed my fate. Ginger never forgave me for that wild ride; she still says our separation was because of *that car*. It broke my heart; that hurt has never healed.

The break-up crushed me; I felt betrayed. For weeks, I surreptitiously stalked her, driving by her house and sometimes following her car. I pulled an overly-dramatic, passive aggressive stunt; I feigned suicide, downing enough aspirin to get me sick, scaring the hell out of people.

The selfish prank backfired on me; I was hauled off to North Shore Hospital and my stomach was pumped; then I was interviewed by the police and put under psychiatric observation for a few months.

I shaped up after that; I didn't want to lose my job at the World's Fair; I had car payments to make. The busy-ness of that job assuaged my discord; I was working a minimum of 12 hours a day, making good money having fun, taking pictures; the repetitive, daily practice honed my skills considerably; I was becoming a good photographer and skilled darkroom technician; I learned how to "read" a negative and my printing techniques became more "interpretive."

It was only as matter of time before I started taking pictures of girls. When I was going steady with Ginger I couldn't really do that, nor did I want to; but, as a single guy, my sentiments shifted; I started noticing other women.



The Dinoland pavilion served multiple purposes for Sinclair; an important one was to entertain VIPs and the Fourth Estate. Jim Downey managed the operation with the help of attractive young people hired to be guides in the park and hostesses in the private, Dinoland lounge, hidden behind a waterfall, where guests were entertained with a full bar and canapés.

The discreetly secluded lounge was a 40 X 60-foot living room [12.19 X 18.29 meters] featuring a glass wall overlooking the theme park's pond, through a waterfall. Guests could enjoy a panoramic view of the dinosaurs while remaining out of a visitor's sight. It was a fabulous room that frequently served as Louise's office.

Louise got things done by schmoozing; she was trained as a lawyer and had an active practice besides working as a PR woman; I never saw her in court but she must have been good because she sure had the gift of gab. Unless there were special functions, I had the room to myself when Louise wasn't there; I used the lounge as an office, as she did.

One of the hostesses, Trudy Shepper, caught my eye; her long red hair contrasted her forest-green, Sinclair-hostess outfit; she cut a sharp, well-tailored figure, tall and thin. Trudy was a sophisticated lady; her Czech mother, an immigrant who came to America fleeing WWII, brought her up with European traditions; those qualities made her one of Jim's favorite lounge hostesses; as a result, Trudy and I spent a lot of time together, especially on rainy days, when I didn't want to shoot pictures in the park. That she was eight years older made Trudy even more appealing, in a mysterious way.

Things really got rolling between Trudy and I the evening that I drove her home from work. It was the day I shot color pictures and needed to drop the film off at K&L Color Lab,<sup>32</sup> at 44th Street and Second Avenue; I offered Trudy a ride home and she accepted. That surprised me because she usually rode home with a good-looking, older guy, let's call him Joe, who ran a concession at Dinoland that made a fortune selling little plastic dinosaurs which were molded before your eyes in machines that looked like jukeboxes. Trudy and Joe were tight; I could tell that, anyone could—which is why I was surprised when she accepted my ride offer.

When we left the Fair, it was well past rush hour. With light traffic, I was able to show off the Corvette's capabilities on the Long Island Expressway; Trudy wasn't intimidated by speed; she seemed to enjoy it, especially when we rocketed through the Queens Midtown Tunnel—the tubular tunnel enhanced the feeling of speed. After leaving off the film at the lab, we headed up Third Avenue to her apartment, on the top floor of a four-story walk-up, on East 92nd Street and Second Avenue. Amazingly, I found a parking spot right across from her building; she asked me up for a drink; the plot thickened.

Trudy lived with her mother and baby daughter; their one-room apartment was a tenement; the bathtub was in the kitchen; the toilet was curtained off in an adjoining

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<sup>32</sup> Among professionals, K&L Color Service (Kirshan & Lang), run by co-owner Leonard Zoref, was probably New York's most popular custom color labs. The lab was sold to Berkey—a huge lab that sold their services at drug stores and camera shops. Zoref stayed on as president until 1982 but got increasingly unhappy as K&L grew from a small, custom service, for top pro photographers, to a giant lab, servicing hundreds of photographers, with an increasing proportion of amateurs; he longed to start over, keeping it small and exclusive; the way Glen Peterson ran his shop. In 1982, he left Berkey K&L, took 18 of their top talents and opened Zoref Color Labs at 10 East 39<sup>th</sup> Street, *in the same space formerly occupied by Peterson Color Labs*, where I worked as a messenger. It's a small world, eh?

closet; there were two beds, two chairs, a small kitchen table and a crib, but no TV. I had never been in such a place and was frankly shocked. After a brief introduction, her mother left with the baby; Trudy broke out the *Slivovitz*; I sampled Eastern European schnapps for the first time. Being a martini man (Tanqueray, *s'il vous plaît*) I found the Czech plum brandy a bit sweet and wrongly assumed it less potent than it actually was. One toast begat another; Trudy matched me shot for shot; soon enough we were solving the world's problems, at least conversationally. I don't know who kissed who first; I have to believe she kissed me because I was pretty bashful then. I had a lingering inferiority complex left over from SLU, and Trudy was way older.

Trudy sensed that my timidity was mixed with eagerness; she turned me on; but I was insecure and hesitant; I had no experience aside from making-out with Ginger; that only amounted to heavy petting. Although I knew *what* to do (with my dick), I didn't know *how* to do it—but not for long. Trudy made the first move; she became my teacher; she showed me the way.

That was not my last experience with Trudy. After a while it was impossible to hide from the rest of the Dinoland crew that Trudy and I were an item. Reactions were mostly negative; Louise told me to be careful; I thought she meant about my job; I knew all those sayings, like, "Never shit where you eat;" or, "Never pee within a mile of the flagpole." In the end, none of that mattered; we threw caution to the winds, but should have been more careful.

## 1964 – Goodbye Trudy – Hello Leslie

Trudy became pregnant after we had been going out for a month or so; it would have been a miracle if she didn't; we were spending every other night together, unprotected. The pregnancy changed everything; what to do? I was terrified of being trapped and having to marry Trudy, or being blackmailed; getting an abortion was hard to do in those days; abortions were totally illegal, performed in secret by only a few legitimate doctors (and a whole lot of fake ones); one also risked being caught in a police raid and ending up on the front page of the newspaper. Although it was the only practical solution our pregnancy problem, finding an abortionist was a challenge; I certainly didn't have any connections. Trudy eventually came up with the name of a doctor in Jersey City [New Jersey]; to get that name, Trudy confessed to her friend Joe, the concessionaire; thankfully, he had connections.

Our drive to the abortionist was like going to a funeral. (It was, technically.) I felt like a criminal. (I was, according to current law.) Jersey City was a rough-shod industrial town; the doctor's office was in the sleaziest part. The doctor's store-front office was a dingy place that smelled of stale cigarette-smoke; the furniture upholstery was thread bare; the pictures on the wall hung at odd angles. The waiting room was packed with a dozen desperate looking women; most of them nervously puffed cigarettes; some were weepy; others were more stoic; all looked down on their luck; classy Trudy stood out like a sore thumb—as did my Corvette, parked down the street. I felt worried that my car might be stolen; so, I excused myself and waited in the 'Vette; I cringed whenever a patrol car went by and passed the time making up *excuses* explanations why a nice boy like me was in a place like that.



After a couple of hours Trudy emerged from what she described as an ordeal; she was pale and shaken; I probably should have stayed with her that night and held her hand; but I couldn't; I had to get away from the whole thing. Leaving her alone was a cruel thing to do, a form of self defense, a kind of denial; I can see that now and am ashamed at my selfishness, my lack of empathy.

As bad as I felt then, I felt even worse when Trudy resigned—at least I thought she resigned; but Jim might have fired her; he was pissed when he finally heard (presumably from the Joe) what had gone down “behind his back.”

The day after the abortion, I must have looked shaken; when Louise heard about it, we took the afternoon off and went over to the African Pavilion, where her Golden Door colleagues ran the bar; she bought the drinks and we got pretty plastered; the subject of Trudy wasn't mentioned again after that. Louise was forgiving in her own pragmatic way, although she never let me forget that she had warned me to be careful.

## **1964 – Life After Death – Small World**

After the demoralizing demise of Trudy Shepper, I looked up my neighborhood friends for solace; I hadn't seen them during my two-month sexual excursion with Trudy. I noticed some changes in the group; there was a new member of Douglaston's informal car club—a gal named Leslie Diane Shirk who drove a classic Triumph TR-3 sports car. Leslie's family lived on Alameda Avenue, on the “other side” of Northern Boulevard, the dividing line between neighborhoods, and *classes*; élites on one side, serfs on the other; but Leslie was no serf—she lived on her own and was a character straight out of an Ayn Rand novel.

Despite her being a pretty girl—and a blonde—I hadn't paid much attention to Leslie; I was going out with Ginger and she was dating Charlie Cabello, a loud-mouth Italian guy who lived with his parents in an apartment above the LIRR train station and drove a brand-new blue Chevy Impala convertible. Although Charlie was a fraternity brother, I wasn't close with him; he was in the class of '62, a year behind me.

Like the rest of the car club (Wiley Crockett, John Blaha, Billy Thomas and Michael Plink), I felt that Cabello was a rung below us on the social ladder; his car didn't make the grade, it was *déclassé*; we travelled in different circles. But there was Leslie, out and about without Charlie in tow. She was looking good (very good).

I got to know Leslie through the car club at first; we all hung out at the Little Neck Inn, a bar on the east end of Little Neck, tucked away in the Sears parking lot next to the Bohack's super market, across the street from the Sunoco gas station where most of us bought our gas (Sunoco's blue-colored gas had the highest octane). On most nights, just about everyone ended up at the Little Neck Inn, for a beer or two and some scuttlebutt with buddies.

Leslie, a Capricorn, was the embodiment of enthusiasm and confidence; she had the temperament of a man; it made her fiercely independent; that intrigued me.

Leslie had the chutzpah to move out of her parents' home—a half mile away on Alameda Avenue—and rent a basement apartment suite in a fashionable Tudor house on Hand Road in Little Neck, a couple of blocks from town center.

*Leslie and her cat, Archimedes, 1965.*



It was in her Hand Road abode that Leslie seduced me one night, after we got back from Academy Auto; we had spent the afternoon at Academy having Bob Firmery check out Leslie's TR-3; it had some electrical gremlins. (Like most British sportscar of that era, Triumph cars had notoriously finicky Lucas ignition systems.)

As a thank you, for turning her on to Academy Auto, Leslie turned me on to a home-made meal with a special desert. We drank copious amount of Gewürztraminer wine and fell into bed together. Leslie was hungry for sex, always an eager partner, but she never climaxed, at least with me; that was demoralizing, not being able to satisfy my partner.

I just kept on trying, until I didn't.

Leslie was working as a program-flow analyst at a tech company called Management Assistance Incorporated. MAI made custom software for companies getting involved with computers, the new way to run businesses; it was the perfect job for her; Leslie's mind worked in analytical, logical ways. We both shared an affinity to pragmatic philosophies, like those of Ayn Rand; *Atlas Shrugged* was our Bible.

Dating Leslie became a regular thing. For the first couple of months, Charlie Cabello tried his best to win Leslie back. It was awkward.

Charlie was my fraternity brother; we almost became friends; he taught me how to make *Spaghetti A 'la Vongole Bianco*—white clam sauce. He made it at my parent's house; we had a spontaneous, informal dinner party that included me, my parents and Leslie. Charlie wanted to be a good sport about losing Leslie to me.

So be it, thought I. Leslie was suspicious of Charlie's intentions; she had nothing good to say about him; before capitulating, he became a real pest.





1966 | LESLIE SHIRK AND HER TRIUMPH TR-3 | PLATE N° 1

*Photographed in Douglaston at "The Point".*





1966 | LESLIE SHIRK AND HER TRIUMPH TR-3 | PLATE N° 2  
*Photographed in Douglaston at "The Point".*





Soon enough, Leslie and I were getting serious. She took me over to meet her family.

Ken Shirk was a custodial engineer; a gentle, down-to-earth man; a realist.

Ken could fix anything and always had some good advice, given with a dry sense of humor. Leslie admired him a lot.

Her domineering mother, Ethel, was another story; Leslie had issues with her. Ethel Shirk was a psychologist. (I thought she *needed* a shrink.)

*Left to right: Kenneth, Margaret, Leslie, Janet, and Ethel Shirk, in 1965.*

Ethel was a high-strung control freak; an overbearing woman, hypercritical of everything and everyone; being around her was a real downer; all she could talk about was herself; she was quite proud of the doctoral degree she earned at night school, while raising Leslie and her two younger sisters.

Margaret Shirk, the eldest sister, was just finishing junior high school. Janet Shirk was in her last year of elementary school; she was the most outspoken of the two; at dinner, she unabashedly said that she liked me better than Charlie Cabello; everyone was nonplussed.

## 1964 – Off to The Races – A New Road

Wiley Crockett's attention made a radical shift, from sailboat racing to motor racing; he was racing his Austin-Healy Sprite in gymkhanas and his Husqvarna dirt bike in motocross events.



Photographing Wiley in races, and later as a model in set-up shots (jumps and trick-riding stunts), sparked my interest in motorcycles and bike-racing photography. Wiley used to hang at Ghost Motorcycle, out in Port Washington; Ghost was the number one bike dealer on Long Island; after accompanying Wiley there a few times, I bought a second-hand Norton Atlas 750.

Leslie and I went with Wiley on a couple of trips to professional motorcycle races; the first one was the 1965 Pepperell International Motocross. Next year, we went on a camping trip in upstate New York, to the Watkins Glen US Formula One Grand Prix.

Photos of Yours Truly by Leslie Shirk.



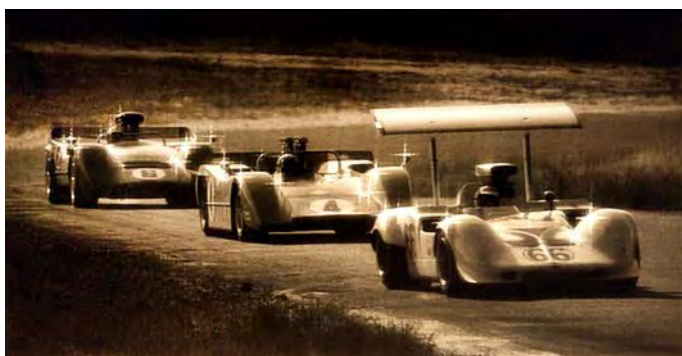
At the Glen, I was lucky enough to find a good spot at the first turn, overlooking the start; from that coveted viewpoint, I got a great shot of the flagman, jumping in air. I wasn't the only lensman after that classic shot; I had to elbow my way through a crowd of forty other shooters. When a photo team from Kodak got thrown out, for being too close to the track, I found a spot.

Unfortunately for them, the Kodak photographers couldn't just step back into the safe zone; they had set-up a huge, 11 X 14-inch [27.94 X 35.56 cm] view camera, to shoot a picture for Kodak's giant, illuminated billboard in New York City's Grand Central Station—a 100-foot-wide [~30 meters] backlit transparency; it had taken them all morning to get the big camera lined up; then, just before the start, race officials gave them ten minutes to move; that was a bummer for them, but a bonus for me.

For three years running, I also shot the Can-Am [Canadian-American Challenge Cup] auto races at the *The Bridge*—Bridgehampton race circuit, out on Long Island. [I quit shooting races after watching Graham Hill's car disintegrate, after a crash at Watkins Glen at the 1969 Watkins Glen US Grand Prix; I was shooting with a telephoto lens so I saw the whole thing up close, in detail; it shook me up; I never shot another race after that.]

My action-photo skills were polished during those years photographing car races. I bought a couple of new lenses for my Nikon F; a super-wide-angle, 20 mm Nikkor lens; and a Russian-made 500 mm MTO lens. The 20 mm wasn't that car-friendly, although I did make some pictures of bike racers with nice streak effects; those were done by panning with a slow shutter speed (1/2 second or more). To shoot ultra smooth streaks I held the camera well in front of me, using the strap as a brace, and panned with the bikes. [See upper right picture, above.] The 500 mm became a well-used lens, one of my favorites; besides being tack sharp (unusual for a mirror lens), it was compact and light enough to hand hold, thanks to its folded-optics design. As a bonus, the MTO's internal mirrors produced donut-shaped highlights; those differentiated my shots from my competitors'; mine looked *artistic*.





One was stretching a piece of a woman's silk stocking over the lens (above); that provided a soft-focus look with star effects (above). Tiffen filters made more spectacular star effects, particularly the 2 mm (right).

Above, *Follow the Leader*, 1967. Right, *Flashy Driving*, 1968.

In my quest to produce stylistic racing pictures, I used two old Hollywood tricks.



[Note on star filters: 1 mm versions (cross-hatched lines are 1 mm apart) give high diffusion and short-shafted stars; 2 mm filters have less diffusion and longer stars; 4 mm produces almost no diffusion and very long stars, as in *Flashy Driving*, above.]



Another trick was to dab Vaseline on a glass filter over the lens; that provided selective focus.

Those artistic touches captured the eye of Noel Werrett, art director at *Car and Driver* magazine when, for the hell of it, I mailed him a small collection of racing-picture *Pixies*—miniature exhibition prints [4 X 6 inches (10 X 15 cm)].

*Seventh Heaven*, 1967

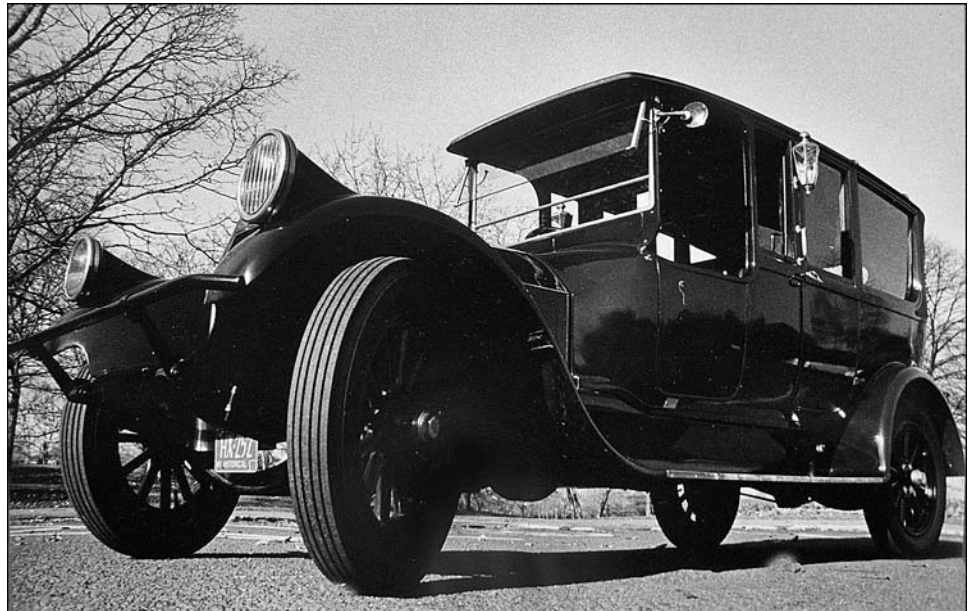
Werrett published *Seventh Heaven* as a double-page spread in the *Car and Driver* Yearbook. He also gave me a two-column shot in the December issue of the monthly. That earned me nearly \$300—a lot of money, back then.

Better yet, it earned me the opportunity to meet Werrett and show him my portfolio.

Subsequently, Noel hired me to shoot for a story about an antique, 1937 Pierce Arrow; he turned me over to the writer, Leon Mandel; he was a big bear of a man, very intimidating. I decided to use my new Hasselblad 500C; that was a mistake; I wasn't familiar with the camera and found it awkward to use.

I didn't have a penta-prism viewfinder, didn't even know I needed one, until that afternoon with Leon. Without the prism, everything in the viewfinder looked upside down and backward. Ha!

The length of time I was taking with each shot began to annoy Leon; he became agitated and even more intimidating.

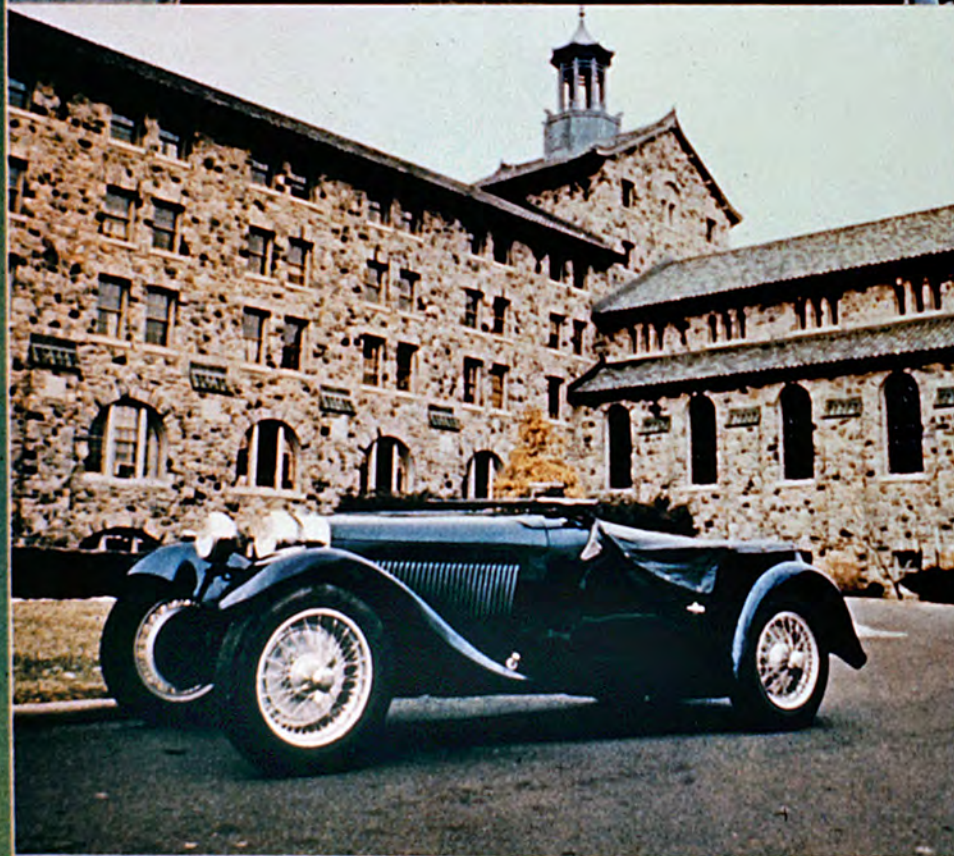
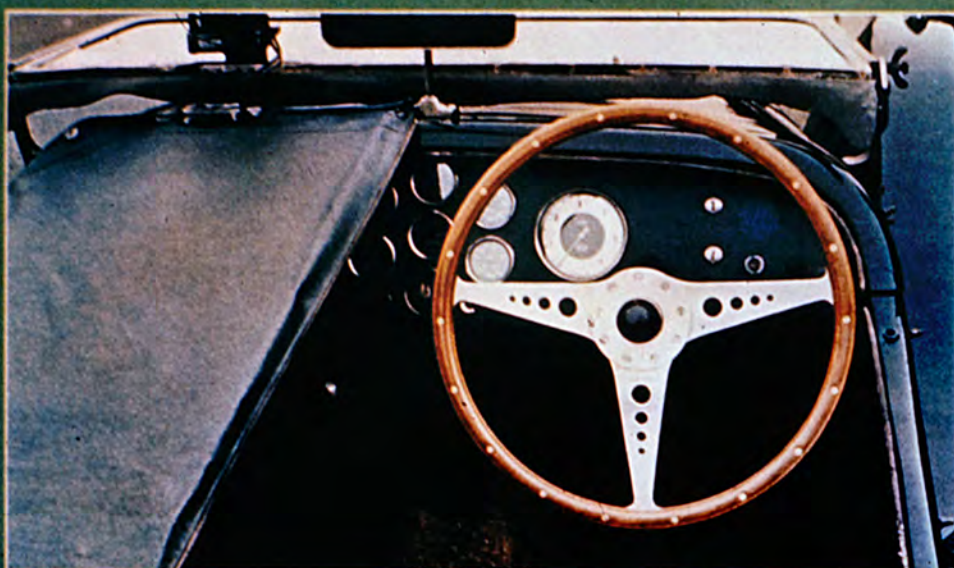


To top things off, it was a frigid, mid-winter day; we froze our asses. The upshot was that my pictures looked like stilted snapshots that anyone could have taken with a Brownie *Hawkeye* [a simple box camera made by Kodak]. It was a mortifying experience, sitting with Leon as he went through my trannies on his lightbox; he didn't say much, just kind of grunted, pulled one from the bunch, and excused himself; that was my cue to leave. I reckoned that was my first and last assignment for *Car and Driver*. Fortunately, I was hired again for another antique-car piece by Leon Mandell about a British sports car called the HRG (overleaf). After that, I became a regular contributor to the magazine; it was the unofficial beginning of my career as a big-league photographer. My car-enthusiast friends were impressed with my new press credentials—and jealous of my *Car and Driver* jacket.

During my first years with *Car and Driver* I became infatuated with the magazine's managing editor, Carolyn "CJ" Hadley; a brilliant, unabashed British gal who held her own (and then some) in the male-dominated world of cars. CJ had boyish looks and impish style; she captivated everyone with endless adventure stories and sage advice. Carolyn wasn't just living life; she was *doing* life. Her feistiness was what I liked about her. Disregarding an unwritten law—the one about pissing within a mile of the flagpole—I started seeing CJ socially. We got close on a spiritual level; both of us were counter culturalists, into Astrology and the occult.

CJ gave me a set of *I Ching* coins that I wore on a simple string necklace for years. (I'm still wearing those coins, and always will.) Before giving me the coins, CJ threw them for me and interpreted them; the coins prophesized that my life was going to change. Things changed, all right—but not the way I would have liked. When I made an advance, Carolyn made it clear that she had no romantic interests; so, we reverted to a professional relationship. There were no hard feelings and we keep in touch to this day, as friends and C/D alumni. Courting Caroline got me into the inner circle of *Car and Driver*; being on the inside track, I was recommended for high-paying assignments shooting for the magazine's advertisers. The first of those jobs was a Sunbeam Alpine ad—a night shot by the Brooklyn Bridge, with the New York skyline in the background, reflected in the East River. The most lucrative job was a week-long ad shoot for Mercedes Benz; but that was in 1972 (story and pictures in Volume Two).





# H

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It is hard to resist such e  
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had taken the family across  
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and had immediately fallen  
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PHOTOGRAPHY: DOUGLAW MENNET

JUNE 1969



# R.G

after World War II that the Hurg flourished despite the fact that, having begun its life as a then practically an antique—by Leon Mandel

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courtesy of a Marles steering

The Sunbeam Alpine G.T. seen against the famous New York skyline. This is one of three Rootes models built specifically for the North American market. Exports to the U.S.A. and Canada showed a substantial increase during the year.



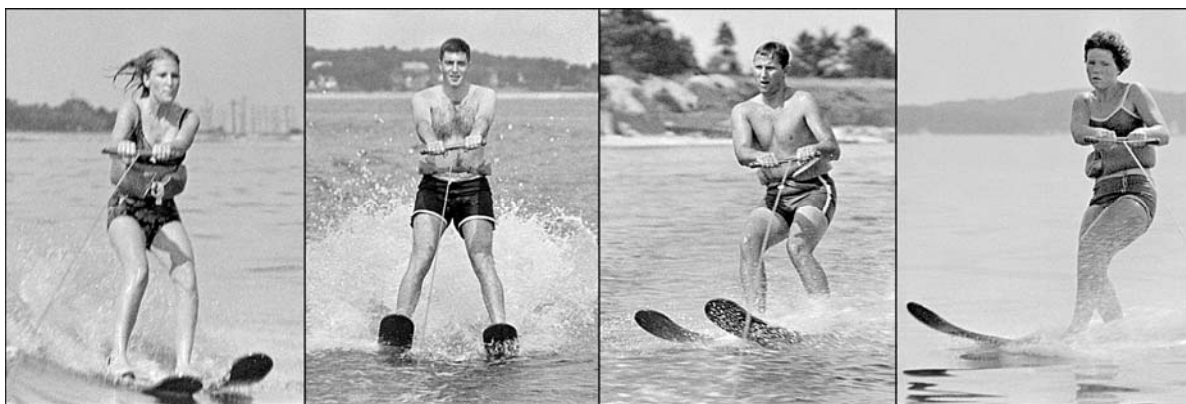
1970 | CAR PORTFOLIO | PLATE N° 2

First ad assignment | 1970 Sunbeam Alpine | for importer, Rootes Motors.



## 1965 – End of The Road – Parting Shots

Billy Thomas invited Leslie and I to go to Florida with him and his girlfriend Mary McMahon and stay with them at his parents' condo in Ft. Lauderdale, during the Christmas holiday. I used the trip to shoot new portfolio pictures (overleaf); Leslie didn't seem to mind (yet) and I had new gear to try out. Billy and Mary had just gotten married; Little Billy was due in the spring; the trip was a last fling for them. They enjoyed being hosts and took us everywhere, from Miami Beach to Everglades National Park; I used the 500 mm MTO lens a lot on that trip shooting everything from wildlife in Everglades Park to race horses at the famous track in Hialeah, Florida; Billy was in his element at the track; he liked gambling. Another afternoon he took us to the Jai Alai games in Miami; they were a challenge to photograph and I got engrossed in the process; meanwhile Leslie got in on the gambling with Billy and Mary; when I caught up with them during the intermission, Leslie cheerily flashed the cash she'd won, a couple of hundred bucks. Billy was up by a hundred, too. Wow! That was something I had to get into. I put away the camera and started betting from ~~Leslie's~~ our \$200 bank roll; by the end of the session, I lost it all and more. I should have stuck to pictures, eh? [See, *Miami Holiday Scrapbook* | *Plates 1-6*]



Left to right: Leslie, Billy Thomas, John Blaha and sister Kathy water skiing in East Marion, August 22, 1965

After the summer of 1965, the Douglaston gang started going their separate ways; it was the end of the road for the car club. Before that, I invited everyone out to a party at the family's rented Mosbach cottage, in East Marion. We left Leslie's TR-3 home and she drove with me in the Stingray. John Blaha showed up in his Triumph TR-4 with Ellen Miller on his arm; she was Leslie's best friend; a svelte, dark-haired Jewish beauty who lived across the street from Allan Seiden, in Little Neck. Billy drove out in his new Corvette convertible, together with his steady girl (soon wife), Mary McMahon; they modelled for me with Bill's new car, for my auto portfolio. Wiley, and his new girlfriend (and eventual wife) Barbara were the last to arrive, in his Austin Healy Sprite. The drinking started almost immediately; the afternoon was spent at the beach water skiing and sipping gin & tonics, and then we turned to serious cocktails around sunset before beer and wine with a BBQ dinner. We were smashed by the time we needed to leave; none of us was legal to drive; even if my parents had offered to let us crash on the couches or the beach; would we have even listened? I doubt it; we were drunk, in denial and rambunctious. A race back to Douglaston seemed like a great idea; so, we blasted off in great clouds of dust.

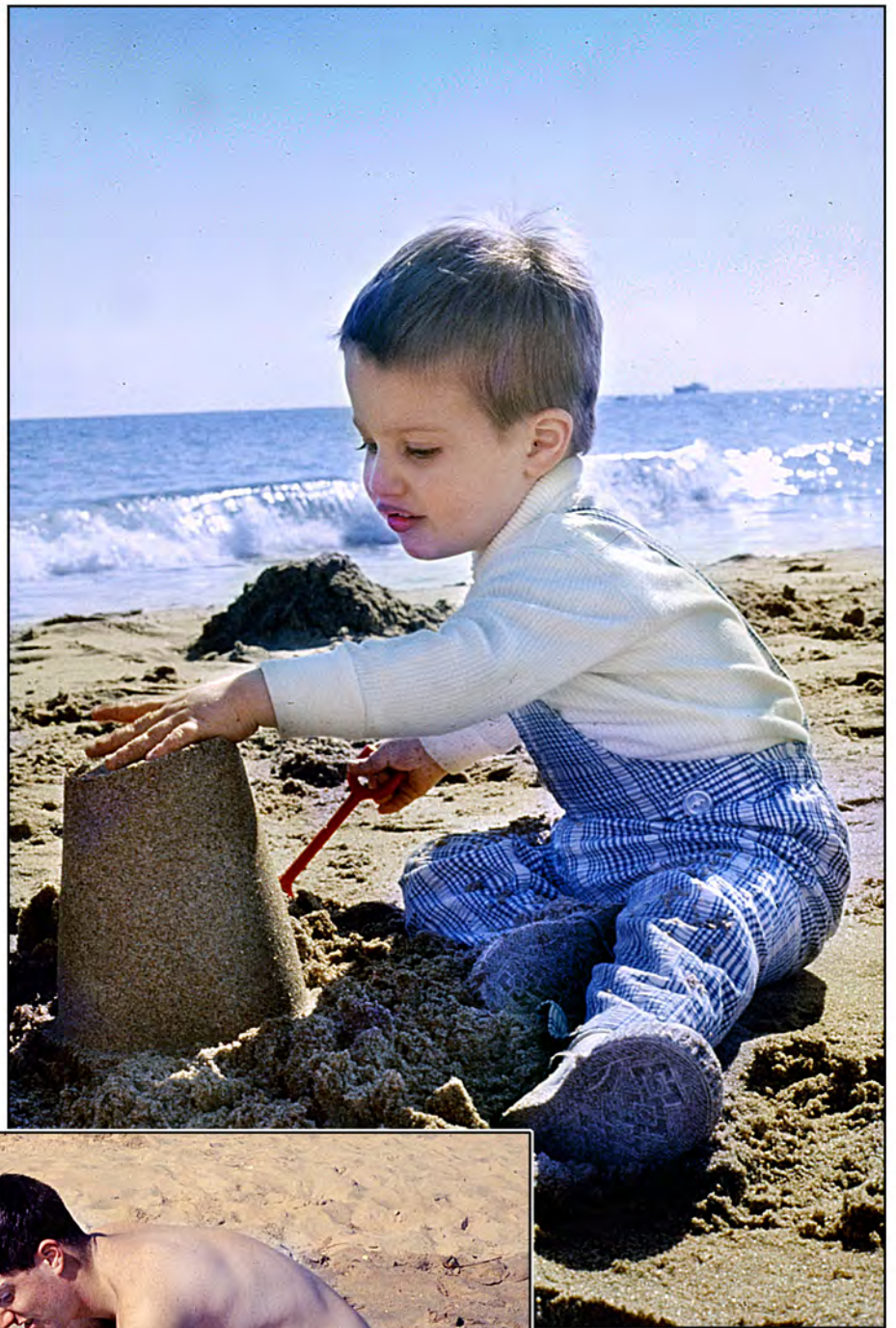
## 1968 | Miami Holiday Scrapbook | Plates 1-6





1968 | MIAMI HOLIDAY SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 1  
*Bill and Mary Thomas with their son, "Little Willie" | Thomas's Miami condo building.*





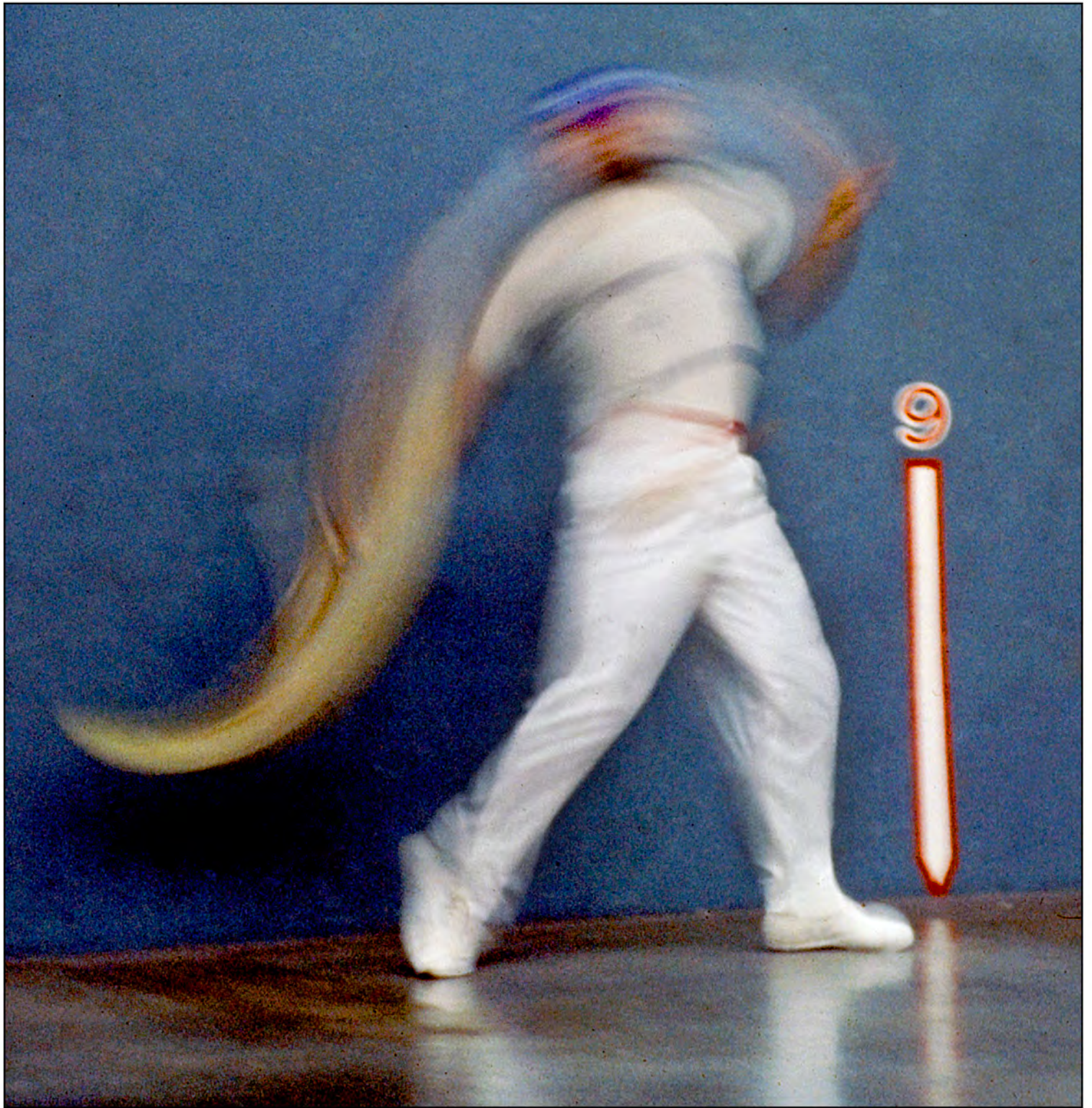
1966 | MIAMI HOLIDAY SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 2  
*Billy and "Little Willie"*





1966 | MIAMI HOLIDAY SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 3  
*Hialeah Park | Billy and Mary Thomas | Racing shot with 500 mm Russian-made MTO mirror-telephoto.*





1966 | MIAMI HOLIDAY SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 4  
*Miami Jai-Alai player photographed with slow shutter speed.*





1966 | MIAMI HOLIDAY SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 5  
*Experimental infrared-color pictures at Everglades National Park.*





1966 | MIAMI HOLIDAY SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 6  
*Everglades National Park*



It was a Sunday evening and already dark when the race from East Marion back to Douglaston began; the police were tucked in bed or watching Johnny Carson; racing conditions couldn't have been better. I don't remember much other than two moments during the race. The first was approaching a two-lane bridge at over 100 mph (160 kmh); there was another car approaching from the opposite direction; who would chicken out first? Nobody! Both cars crossed the bridge at the same instant; the side mirror on our facing doors audibly clicked as we passed each other at death-defying speed; I have never, before or since, come so close to dying, or to killing someone else.



There was another close call a half hour later when I took a turn too fast on a rain slicked road in Riverhead and slid across two lanes ricocheting off an oncoming car, plowing through a sign post and hitting a tree. The only thing that saved our lives was that the curve in the road was so tight that we were only going about 20 mph (30 kmh); still, the damage to my car was severe; and to think, I had just finished the custom body work and sixteen coats of hand-rubbed lacquer a few weeks earlier. That was a lesson hard learned but not well learned. You might think that after that I would never drink and drive again—but you would be wrong. Just a short while later Mike Plink threw a party when his parents went away for the weekend; the featured drink was Greek ouzo made by his grandmother. I had never tried Ouzo; the odd licorice flavor made me think it was mild, like wine. How wrong I was. I got so drunk that I drove home without Leslie. Uh oh! There's not much I remember about the 10-mile drive from Little Neck back to Flushing; but I'll never forget Leslie's wrath the next morning; she was never more embarrassed in her life. It took me years to live down that episode.

### **1965 – Basford – Burt Holmes**

I got squeezed out of my World's Fair job when Louise Friscia got caught in a political power play at Jay DeBow & Partners. It happened during the second season of the Worlds Fair. In the winter months, when the Fair was closed, Louise and I spent time working on other projects for DeBow. The next spring, when the Fair opened again, the account moved to John Moynihan & Company; and a syndicated newspaper editor (who shall remain nameless) came to them with a deal: he would insure Dinoland prominent story placements if his photographer son was hired to replace me. No amount of cajoling on Louise's part would sway them. So, I was out, just like that. What a lesson that was; as a crass saying goes, "it's who you know, not who you blow." Of course, at the time I was devastated and humiliated. Worse, I felt betrayed—yet again, by a woman.



I had busted ass for Louise; but, when push came to shove, she caved and let me down to save her own ass; so much for loyalty, eh?

Work was essential, I had car payments to make. I started interviewing immediately. With a letter of recommendation from Jay DeBow himself, I landed an assistant account executive job at G.M. Basford, Inc., one of New York's most prominent "industrial" (business to business) advertising/PR agencies, after interviewing with a half-dozen agencies, including Burson-Marsteller and the world's biggest PR agency (at the time), Hill & Knowlton.

Basford offered the most opportunity to learn because they were a full-service agency involved with promotion at many different levels—advertising, sales promotion, traditional PR and crisis management.

The other agencies were more traditional PR operations doing essentially the same kind of work that I learned from Louise and DeBow, albeit on a larger scale; but I already knew how to do that stuff and was ready for more.

The most lasting lesson that I learned from Louise Friscia was how to *milk* a story; that is, get the most mileage, get the story seen by more readers or heard by more listeners. That's done by writing multiple versions, each with a different slant, each slant aimed at a different market segment. For example, versions of a story about a mountain resort could be aimed at fishermen, sportsmen, newly-weds, business-convention planners, etcetera.

What lured me to Basford was seeing the range of sales promotion materials that were being produced by the department I would be working in—John Paluszek's AISI [American Iron & Steel Institute] group. Sales promotion was a new field for me, I knew nothing about it; which is why the job was appealing.

Another plus: I would be part of a small group; my work would count for more; there was a better chance to get ahead—that is, if people were judged according to the merit system, instead of the fraternal system.



John Paluszek was an elusive leader, largely inaccessible. He was tasked with overseeing a huge chunk of business, the multi-million-dollar AISI account that represented 25% of the agency's gross billings. His client was a committee of twenty men, each representing one of the big steel companies [US Steel, Armco, Bethlehem, Republic, *et al*] Paluszek's day-to-day client contact was with Larry McDevitt, a bit of a dimwit who, despite holding the title of Communications Director, had the mind of a clerk, unable to grasp the big picture. Paluszek's job was to keep the client happy and encourage them to buy more agency services; every year he went in pitching new projects and requesting budget increases for existing ones; and, every year, he got them because the programs were generating results—that is where Burt Holmes came into the picture.

Above, John Paluszek (foreground, Paul Votano)

Burt (right) was the brains behind the successful AISI promotions. Burt's specialty was direct mail promotion—newsletters sent to specific industrial segments. For example, literature about steel agricultural buildings was sent to farmers, information about steel guard rails mailed to highway construction engineers and shipping-container fact sheets to cargo companies.

Burt took a journalistic approach to promotion—more facts with less hyperbole, more nouns and fewer adjectives.

Holmes was more than a thinker, he was also a writer whose factual copy was readable, understandable and memorable. As a boss, he was a tough customer, hard to please. Burt was constantly sending copy drafts back to his staff for re-writes; it infuriated them as much as it did him.

Right, Burt Holmes; at AISI strategy meeting, 1965.



Working for Holmes, I soon became depressed; whatever I wrote came back to me, over and over, for re-writes; but I couldn't complain because Burt was always right; his critiques invariably improved my work.

There were three of us who reported directly to Burt. Paul Votano was a thirty-five-year-old, seasoned writer who left the Fourth Estate, writing for industrial trade magazines, for his higher-paying job at Basford, writing promotional copy. Paul was a serious, no-nonsense guy; he stayed away from after-hours office politics and went home to his wife, in Westchester. Neil Landey was a tired old lackey, a left-over from the old days of PR, which was more about buying drinks and entertaining than producing anything useful; he reminded me of my father, they both presented well and won jobs they couldn't keep because they didn't know how to do them. Landey was a hopeless case; Burt gave up on him and ended up writing Neil's stuff for him; I never knew how Neil avoided getting canned; I seem to remember that he was a friend or relative of one of the client committee members; in politics, nepotism trumps, all. Then there was me; I started as a trainee, assisting Burt, but was soon promoted to an assistant account executive position.

When he saw that I was a hard worker and had half a brain, Burt tucked me under his wing. I was invited to join him and his closest Basford buddy, Bill Schroeder, for lunch nearly every day. We ate at a little French place on West 49<sup>th</sup> Street, the Champlain restaurant. Schroeder shared Burt's elevated status in the agency; he had his own domain in the AISI account group; Schroeder's was the Committee of Stainless-Steel Producers. Bill was a one-man band, promoting stainless steel across a huge swathe of industries ranging from the food and healthcare industries, to automotive and marine applications. Like Burt, Bill was a crack writer, with an even wider vocabulary. Bill had a way with words; one day, at the Champlain, when a waiter dropped a basket of flatware, Bill commented, "Ah, the ting of tinny tines." He meant that facetiously; the Champlain was an upmarket establishment, a lunch restaurant that served fine French cuisine at fair prices.



Back then many people had their main meal at lunchtime; the Champlain catered to them, serving a full dinner. We always had a cocktail before the meal and a bottle of wine with the food; occasionally, when others joined us, to celebrate one thing or another (there was always something) we'd have an extra cocktail or two or three; it wasn't just us, either; most of my colleagues came back from lunch a bit tipsy; I don't know how they did it. More often than not, I would be too comatose after lunch to write anything; I'd spend the afternoons doing telephone research and sobering up for my evening school classes; it was a delicate balance.



I really liked my job at Basford. Burt let me off the leash to report my own stories—case histories about businesses whose success was somehow tied to steel products. Burt passed several of his publications to me; he was more interested in making movies. I worked on two series of direct mail fact sheets: *Farm Facts* and *Containerization Today*.

While some friends called my work junk mail, I learned that direct mail could be—at least it used to be—a totally legitimate means of disseminating valuable information. Special interest publishers served a valuable role in society; that is how I saw the work that we were doing for the American Iron and Steel Institute [AISI]; we were fighting the good fight as far as I was concerned. Plus, it was fun being a cub reporter for Burt; it got me out of the office and on the road. My stories took me almost anywhere I wanted to go. In the few years that I worked at Basford, travelled to two dozen States. Whenever possible, I rented exotic cars instead of flying; there were so many hot cars then—muscle cars like Corvettes, Pontiac GTOs and Plymouth Barracudas; nobody complained as long as the costs were equal to or less than flying.

*Containerization Today* was the first publication that Burt assigned to me; the fact sheet series promoted inter-modal steel containers for shippers and shipping companies. Containerized shipping began in the late '60s and caught on in the early '70s.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Malcolm McLean, owner of a large US trucking company, was convinced that conventional shipping was highly inefficient because shipping companies typically broke bulk at dockside, and cargo ships spent most of their time in port being loaded or unloaded. In 1955 he hired an engineer to design a road trailer body that could be detached from its chassis and stacked on ships. McLean acquired a small steamship company, renamed it Sea-Land Industries (it eventually became absorbed into the Maersk Line). He developed steel frames to hold the containers, first on the top decks of tankers, and then on the world's first specialized cellular containership, the Gateway City, launched in 1957. To promote the standardization necessary to develop the industry, McLean made Sea-Land's patents available royalty free to the International Standards Organization (ISO). Sea-Land began service on North Atlantic routes in 1966. When R. J. Reynolds bought Sea-Land for \$530 million in 1969, McLean received \$160M for his share and retired. C. W. Ebeling, *Evolution of a box: the*

Many companies were eager to realize the cost savings and standardization benefits of cargo containerization; those companies appreciated receiving *Containerization Today*. Their interest was measured by the number of requests we received for more information, via postal-reply cards attached to each fact sheet. In the direct mail business, a response rate of 3-4% was considered good; *Containerization Today* garnered a 5-6% post-card return rate. With a success rate like that, I had no problem justifying expensive travel all over the country in search of case histories. I crisscrossed the country interviewing container manufacturers and users.

On one such reportage assignment, writing about a truck company in Detroit, I had lunch with my father at the exclusive Pontchartrain Wine Cellar restaurant. It was serendipity that Dad and I were both in Detroit at the same time; the meeting brought Dad and I closer, but in an odd way. I had become Dad's equal; we were both account execs at our respective companies (he was working for the Jamaica Tourist Board). It was one of those special moments, between a father and son. I never knew my father well; I grew up too fast for him. However, at that luncheon, we got closer than ever before (or after). It was Christmastime; everyone was in the holiday spirit; the restaurant was decked with boughs of holly; on our table, little candles floated in crystal bowls filled with red and green colored water, adding to the warmth Dad and I felt towards one another. We had drinks, wine and a fine lunch; it cost a fortune; I happily paid the check; my father beamed with pride.

Later that night, I went out prowling and found a topless go-go bar at Seven Mile Road; way out in the industrial suburbs of Motor City; it was packed; there must have been 100 cars in the parking lot which is what attracted me. Wherever I went I liked to explore, sometimes driving great distances, finding sleazy bars where I might pick-up a date, or at least watch some pretty girls dance while I got drunk. That night, perched at the bar, feeling important in my Brooks Brothers suit, drinking Tanqueray martinis, I nearly fell off my stool when the go-go dancer dropped her top. *That* was new; I'd never seen a go-go dance like that before, even in New York. Having drank enough liquid courage, I worked my way through the crowd and managed to get back-stage; nobody stopped me, probably because I was nattily dressed (proving the axiom that, clothes make the man). Suddenly, there I was, in her dressing room; up close, she was even foxier looking than on the stage.

Smitten, I played my New York card and asked her out for a drink; we ended up getting a midnight snack before going back to her place; she lived with her parents in the rough, Polish section of an auto-workers' neighborhood, in a small, meagrely furnished row house. We had to be quiet because her parents were asleep in the next room; only a thin wall separated them from the couch we reclined on, making out. She was a trophy, the embodiment of what I call sexy—blonde, thin and small-breasted; but I can't remember her name.

For another steel-container story, I travelled to Springfield, Ohio, to report on the Champion Company. It was the one of my best reports because the executive I was interviewing, Dean Conger, treated me as an equal despite my young age.

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invention of the intermodal shipping container revolutionized the international transportation of goods, *Invention and Technology* 8-9 (2009)



He took me on a complete plant tour; whenever I wanted things rearranged for a better picture, he saw to it that my requests were fulfilled. Toward the end of the day, as the plant tour wound down, he asked me if I wanted to see Champion's laboratory. I was baffled; why would this steel-box builder need a laboratory? My curiosity intensified when we entered a hospital-like building that smelled like a mixture of formaldehyde and disinfectant; those were aromas I recognized from my pre-med dissections at University. Everything became clear—and I nearly fainted—when we entered a lab filled with a dozen cadavers, each pierced with stainless steel tubes and plastic tubes; they looked as though an acupuncturist on steroids had gone mad. Seeing me turn green, Dean quickly explained that Champion Company was the world's foremost maker of embalming fluids; steel containers, it turned out, were a new business for the company. Ha!



One reader of *Containerization Today* was the advertising manager of American Export Isbrandtsen Lines [AEIL], one of the world's leading overseas-shipping companies.

They hired Basford to create an advertisement about their containerized-freight capabilities, which they called *Total Transportation*. The assignment got put on Burt Holmes plate; Kurt Boehnstedt was the art director; I got to take the shot.

The picture was taken at AEIL's *Container City* terminal at Stapleton, Staten Island, using a Rolleiflex camera rigged with a yellow filter to darken the sky. The ad was printed as a duotone of black and orange.

*Farm Facts* was my other fact sheet series. It wasn't as much fun doing that program; there aren't many hip bars or clubs in the farm belt. Fortunately, I was able to find a solution that didn't require me to get any mud or manure on my wing-tip, Florsheim shoes: I hired Roy Reiman at the Farm News Bureau; his company provided farm news to a host of clients including trade publications as well as nationwide radio and TV stations. On a bi-monthly basis, I would fly out to Milwaukee [Wisconsin], meet with Roy, and purchase stories about steel farm buildings. I looked forwards to those trips, especially after Roy introduced me to the Safe House, the hippest club in Milwaukee. There was always a bevy of young beauties, and only a few men dressed as well as me. I had plenty of money to buy drinks and whatever else might be offered. It was on trips like those, far from home, that I felt safe cheating on Leslie. On one flight I met a *Playboy* cover girl, Pam Nystul, and we had a brief fling in Chicago. [See, *Basford Scrapbook* / *Plate No. 12.*]

At my request, Burt sent me to photograph a steel mill; that was a generous gesture; he liked taking pictures, too, and usually shot his own. Our boss, John Paluszek, was not pleased; although to Burt and I it made perfect sense for us to illustrate our own stories—it was more economical, too—he didn't see it that way; in his view, the art department was supposed to handle design and artwork production.

The steel mill provided me with some spectacular shots for a portfolio that I was putting together, after hours. (I wanted to be ready to change careers, if necessary; plus, I had a growing desire to be a photographer.)

Anecdotally, it was a memorable assignment—I learned to doubt the word of pundits and pols. New York was in a drought that lasted three years. Citizens were asked to save water. John Lindsay, who was running for Mayor, organized a photo op at the reservoir in Central Park; there, he admonished New Yorkers to, “Shower with a friend.” However, at the steel mill, bazillions of gallons of water were being consumed to cool hot-rolled steel extrusions and castings; veritable tidal waves cascaded onto red-hot beams, bursting in billowing clouds of steam while all that water disappeared down the drain. Ha! Fix a drip? Are you serious? From then on, I’ve seldom felt guilty taking a long shower, with or without anyone else.



With my own projects under control, Burt brought me along on a film about pre-engineered steel buildings that he was making with Murray Fairbairne, Basford’s in-house movie producer; he wanted me to get to know the film-making process, so I could back him up.

Charlie Haas was the cinematographer; he was Murray’s favorite cameraman. Cinematographers like Charlie were actually camera operators; they ran the cameras, but somebody else called the shots. It was clear to me (and Burt) that Charlie had better ideas than Murray, which was probably why he was Fairbairne’s pick—Charlie made Murray look good.

However, Burt had a good eye for shots, too. Burt was a terrific photographer who produced *National Geographic*-quality work. He had his own ideas about how the film should be shot and got into a pissing contest with Murray.

They had a show-down one morning; Murray walked off the set and flew back to New York, where the fight boiled over. John Paluszek had to intervene in the battle; he ruled in favor of Burt; so, Murray bowed out, leaving Burt and Charlie to work together. For all that, it was a better film; however, I became a *persona non-grata* in Murray’s world; around the office he disparagingly called me *Baby Burt*.





Murray Fairbairne was old school; he was 60+ then, just about to retire. Murray anachronistically thought that the camera should always be stationary, on a tripod; that only the subject(s) should move. For Murray, moving cameras were cine blasphemy; he resisted using the new zoom-lenses that were becoming trendy; he derogatorily called zoom lenses a lazy man's excuse for a dolly shot.<sup>34</sup> Burt was new school; he liked to zoom in & out and have Charlie walk around with the camera, emulating moving-camera style made popular by Murray's nemesis, Hitchcock.

After the day's shoot, we'd have dinner around 7:00 pm [19:00] after which I'd wave g'bye to Burt, Murray and Charlie and head off, into the proverbial sunset, hunting Texan pussy. I rarely scored but always got drunk, making the next day's shoot an excruciating experience. Never, before or since, have I eaten as much hot chili, seeking relief from those tequila hangovers.

I don't know how I made it through that week in Houston, between the politics, the oppressive summer heat and the fact that I was out every night until nearly dawn. I was only getting three hours of sleep a night.



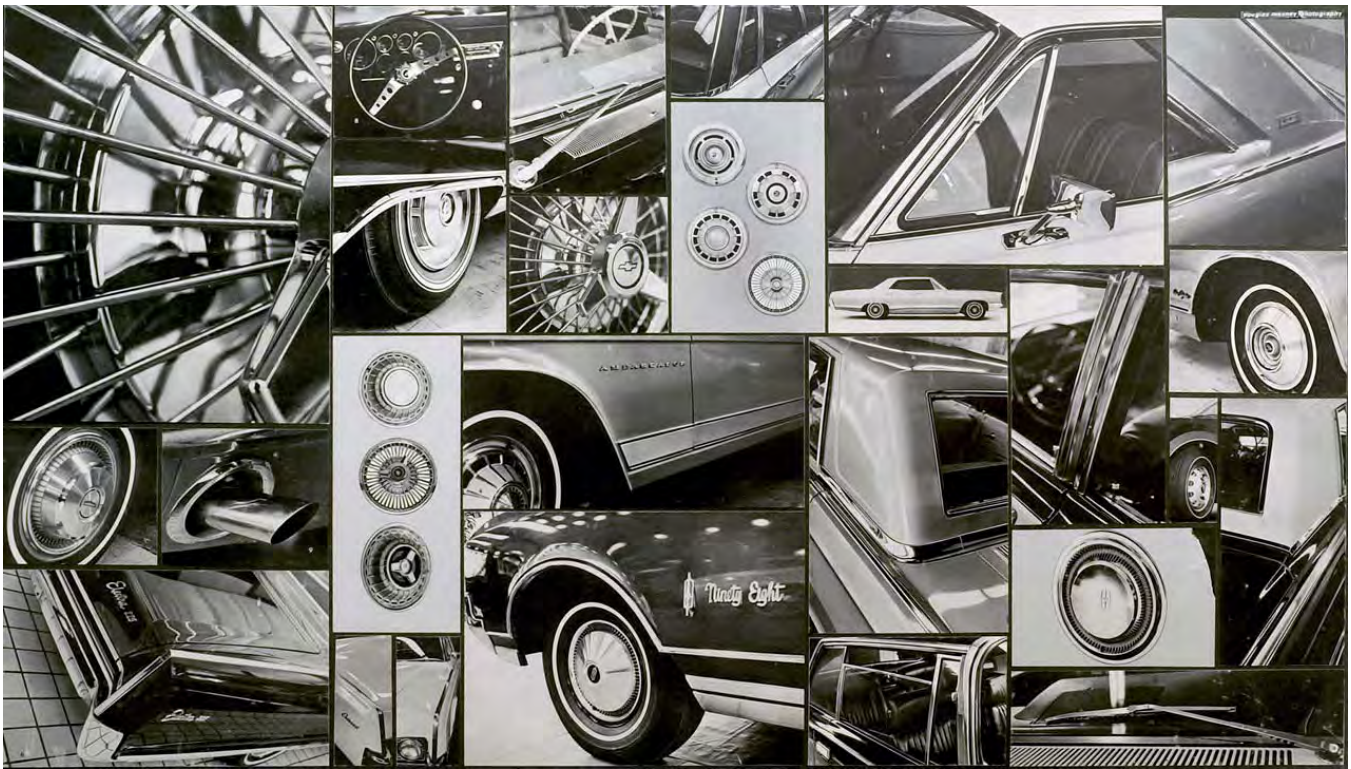
Back at the office, I was gaining a reputation for being a good photographer. The more pictures I made, the more I was convinced that I should be a photographer.

Every spare nickel was spent on new gear, usually sourced at Alkit Camera, on Third Avenue at 52<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Alkit's clients included most of the Life magazine photographers; I think Ted Russell turned me on to them. It was a little family run shop in those days. Ed Buchbinder, the eldest son, was taking the reins from his father; he's the one I dealt with; he always gave me good deals; he helped me along with my photo career, in a big way. In return, I spent a small fortune there on Nikon equipment and (especially) filters.

Ed Buchbinder photo, 1966

<sup>34</sup> For dolly shots, the camera moves back and forth on a set of tracks; zoom lenses push in and pull out of scenes optically, without the laborious time and expense of setting-up tracks.



The illustration above was a portfolio collage made from many pictures in the 24-page booklet that Shroeder produced.

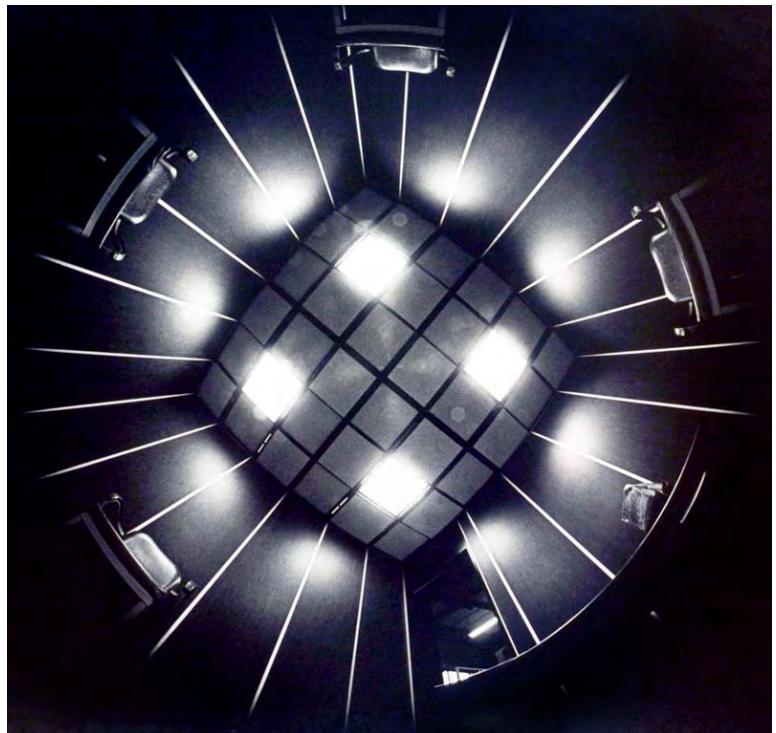
Bill Schroeder asked me to coordinate the pictures for a brochure he was writing for about stainless steel in the auto industry, for the Committee of Stainless-Steel Producers of the American Iron and Steel Institute [AISI]. I hired Ted Russell for the job.

After that, Bruce & Pat Leslie asked me to shoot architectural wall and ceiling panels for the Keene Corporation, seen at right.

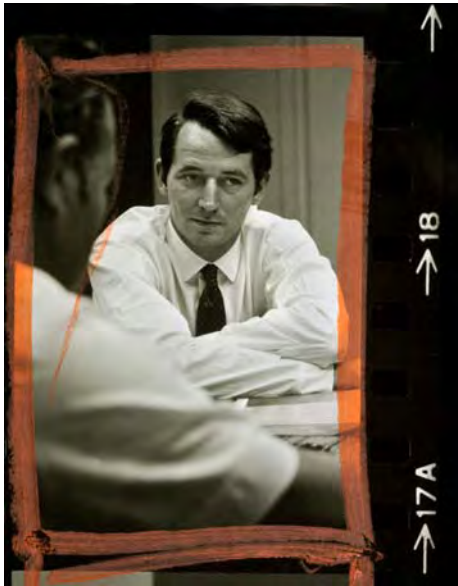
For this shot, I placed a Nikkor 8 mm Fisheye lens on the center of conference-room table, aimed at the ceiling, creating a rosette effect to focus attention on the Fiberglass-plastic, modular ceiling panels.

It was my creative use of exotic lenses that caught peoples' eyes.

Expensive glass paid for itself in spades. The more lenses I had, the greater the variety of shots I couple produce. Clients were getting "more for their money."







There were many others who I befriended at Basford, among them Mike Echols and Bill Flanagan. Echols worked at Basford while I was there but subsequently left to join Hill & Knowlton first, and then *Consumer Reports*.

Mike and I hit it off one night when we were both working late. I was mounting photo prints onto black illustration board in the art department when I smelled something burning; it wasn't the hot press; it was reefer (!) and Mike was the only other person there. Ha! He turned out to be quite a "head;" we got along famously.

Below, *Kneeling Nude*, © Kay Walkingstick 1969



Echols was married to Kay Walkingstick, an American-Indian artist. She was just beginning her career and has since become famous and expensive. Kay gifted me this painting in 1969. I had it until the Vashon rout, when it was given to Kerri Johnson Codd. Walkingstick wanted an open marriage (fuck anyone you want) but Mike was too conservative for that; nor did Leslie and I want to be involved in the trendy, group-sex scene made popular by the movie, *Bob and Ted and Carol and Alice*. Leslie never approved of dope smoking, either.

Bill Flanagan was another Basford colleague who I befriended; he was an introverted writer and a seemingly-confirmed bachelor at age 40. Back at Basford, we hardly spoke; he was a private guy; he kept his cards close. I had no idea that Bill admired my picture work. However, Flanagan eventually married and hired me to photograph his wedding.<sup>1</sup> Almost a decade later, Bill hired Incredible Slidemakers to produce a show for his client, AT&T, about Bell Lab's internet modems, in 1978. [See: *1978 – AT&T – Engulf & Devour*]

## 1966 / Basford Scrapbook / Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-12

<sup>1</sup> Flanagan's was the last wedding I photographed; it was a near disaster, when all the pictures were nearly lost. I had driven my Norton Atlas into New York, to pick up the processed film at K&L lab; on the way home, the package fell off my bike. Yikes! I retraced my steps, cruising back and forth on the Long Island Expressway a few times, but to no avail; as a last resort, I called the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, who operated the Queens Midtown Tunnel; miraculously, they reported that someone had found a yellow Kodak-paper box at the side of the road, near the tunnel entrance, on 34<sup>th</sup> Street, and turned it in; even though there was no official Lost & Found department at TBTA, they hung onto the box; and sure enough, it contained my pictures. That was my own version of the "Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street!"

## DOUGLAS TAYLOR MESNEY

324 MANOR ROAD  
DOUGLASTON, N. Y. 11363

RESUME - FEBRUARY 1964

### EDUCATION:

June 1961 - Academic Diploma - Bayside High School.  
September 1961 to June 1962 - St. Lawrence University (Liberal Arts).  
September 1962 to present - Queens College of the City University of  
New York (Liberal Arts, Major: English).

### EXTRACURRICULAR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

#### High School:

General Organization Captain.  
Trombone player in Concert Band, Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Band.  
Photography Editor of School newspaper and yearbook.

#### College:

Newscaster and Disc Jockey on St. Lawrence Radio Station KSLU.  
Member, St. Lawrence Photo Service.

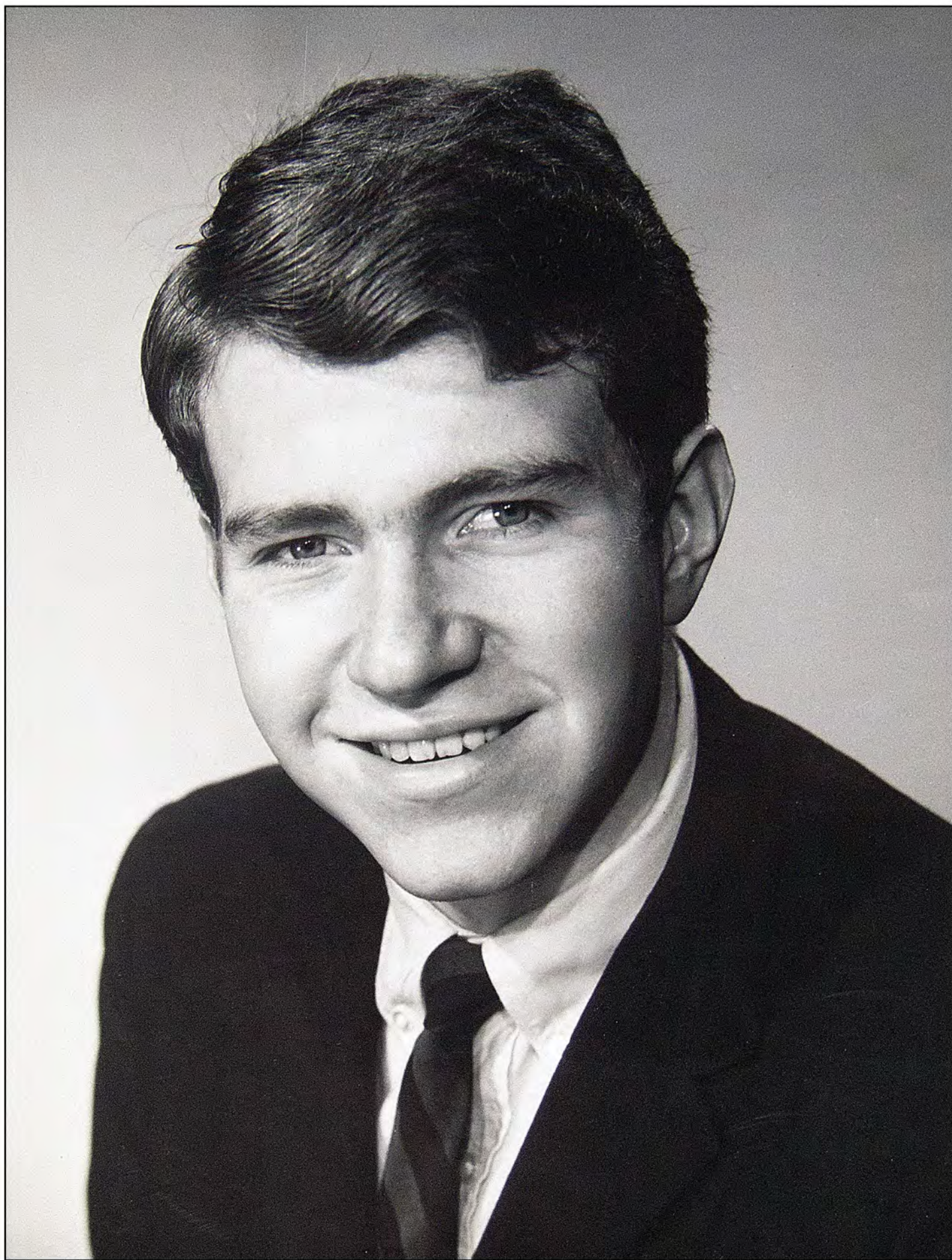
### EMPLOYMENT RECORD:

Summer 1960: Peterson Color Laboratory (10 East 39 Street, N. Y.).  
Lab assistant: Black & White and Color Photo processing.  
Summer 1961: Started my own photography business: Mesney / Nolte.  
Summer 1962: Continued Mesney / Nolte.  
September 1962: Columbia Broadcasting System (485 Madison Avenue, N. Y.).  
Mailroom and some work in advertising department.  
June 1963: J. Charles / S. David Co. (295 Madison Avenue, N. Y.).  
Director of Photography, Asst. Art Director, mechanical  
work, press release writing, media research, some copy  
work.

### PERSONAL DATA:

Date of Birth: January 28, 1945  
Height: 5' 9"      Weight: 155 lbs.      Health: Excellent





1966 | BASFORD SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 2  
*Employment portrait, 1965 (photographer unknown).*



# NEW from BASFORD

For Release: IMMEDIATELY

## DOUGLAS MESNEY JOINS BASFORD AS PUBLIC RELATIONS TRAINEE

NEW YORK -- Douglas Mesney has joined Basford Incorporated as a Public Relations trainee. He will spend a few months in each of the P.R. account groups familiarizing himself with the agency's complete scope of P.R. services and methods before undertaking any specific account responsibilities.

Doug, who expects to receive his B.A. degree from Queens College in June, 1966, was with John Moynahan & Co. working on the Sinclair Refining Co. account before joining Basford.

# # #

B-658



For further information contact: Jim Morton - (212) 956-5378  
Frank Demarest - (212) 956-5297

BASFORD INCORPORATED / 1301 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS / NEW YORK, N. Y. 10019

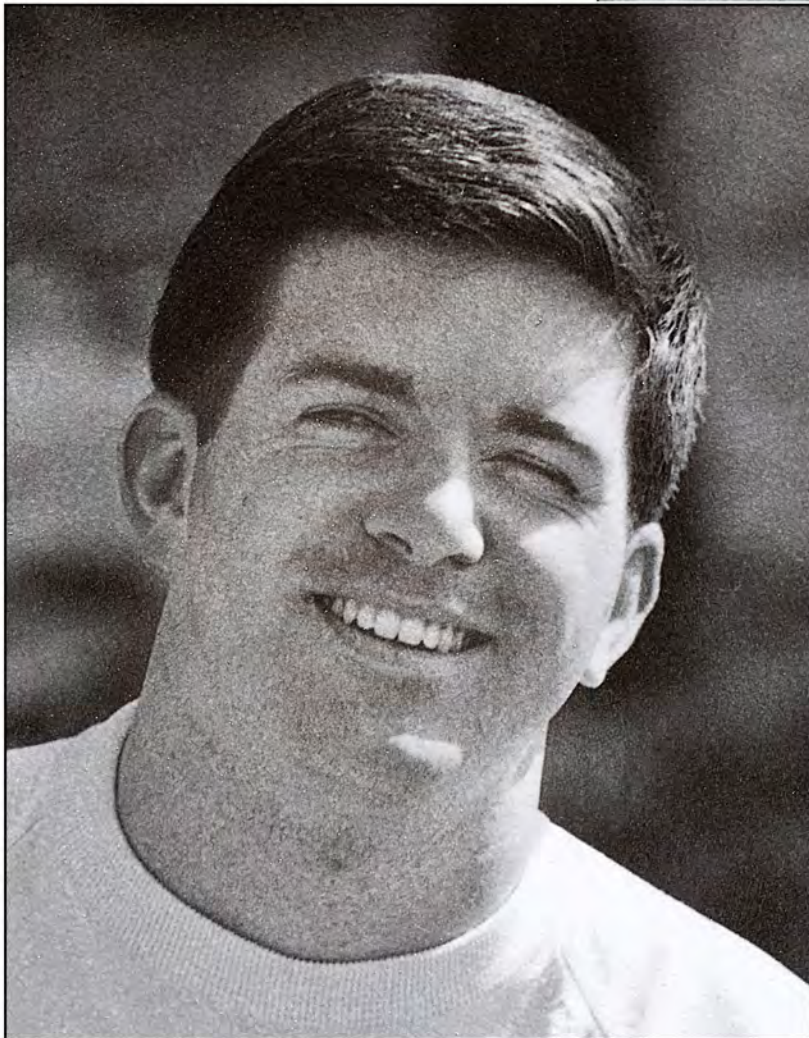
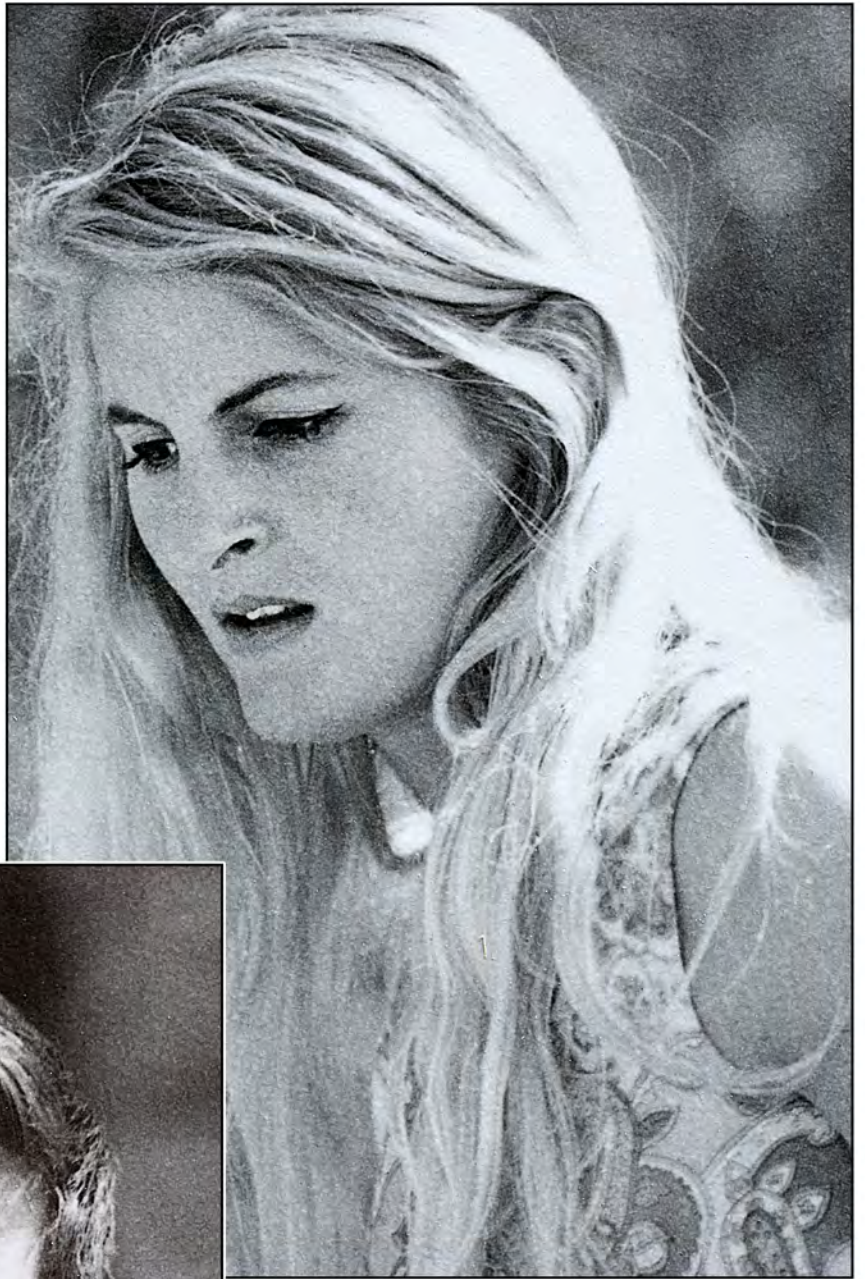




1966 | BASFORD SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 4

*Above: Yours Truly | Below: Group shot for unkown purpose, 1965*





1966 | BASFORD SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 5

*My secretary, Judy Murphy and her husband, Mike.*

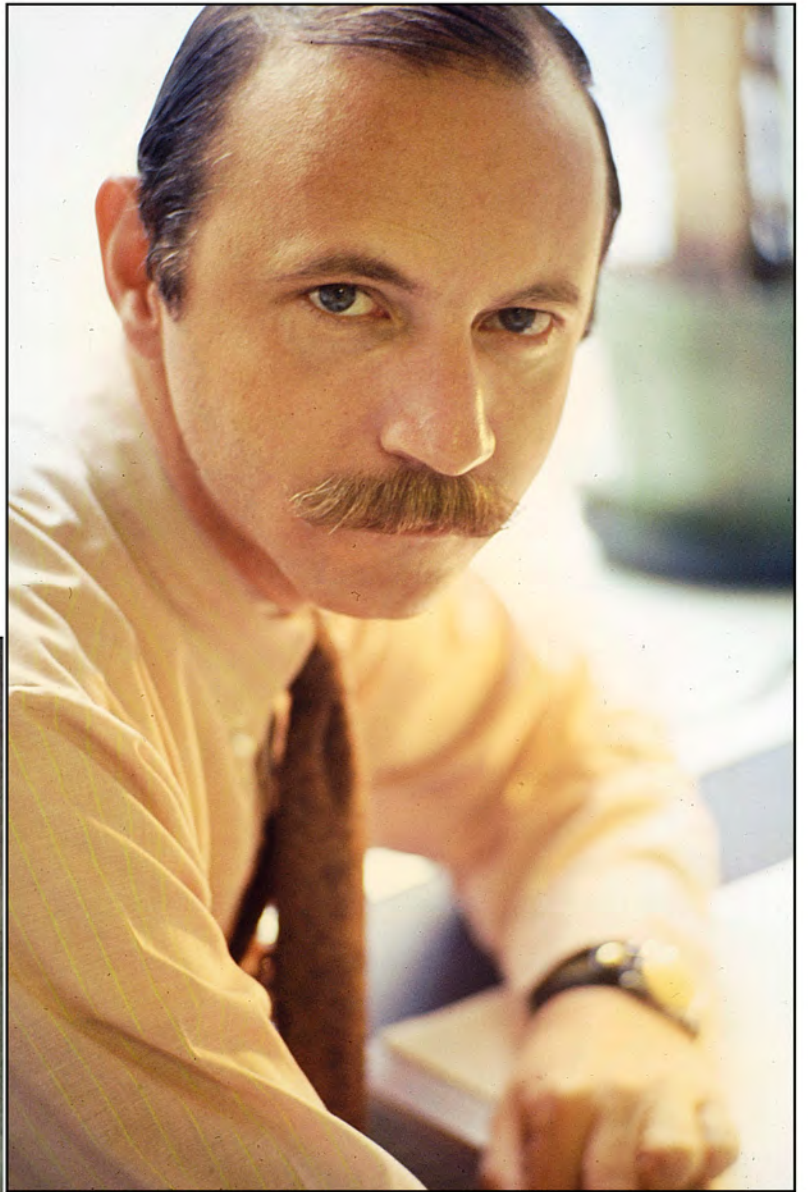




1966 | BASFORD SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 6

*Paul Votano (below) and Dick Mariani*





1966 | BASFORD SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N°7  
*Burt Holmes (below, photographer unknown) and Kurt Boehnsted.*



# ***You make, We take.***



We'll take containers filled with whatever you make to Northern Europe and the Mediterranean. Fast. Frequently. Inexpensively.

Because first we provide you with the containers. Then we make sure they get pronto to our "Container City" at Stapleton, Staten Island. If you don't have your own truck, rail and freight forwarding arrangements, don't worry. We have our own.

Next, your products go overseas on our specially-built container ships. We'll even deliver them to your customer's door on the other side. All because you made one phone call here.

To your freight forwarder. Or to us.

That's Total Transportation. Just like a container, it's a real package. A package without peer. On any pier.

There are a lot of other things we've got in the launching stage that you and your traffic or distribution manager should get the details on. Ask for our Total Transportation Kit.

We only want to take your products. Not your profits.

**AMERICAN EXPORT  
ISBRANDTSEN LINES**

26 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10004 TEL. 212-797-3000





This month's AIA Tips cover is a specially-designed collage of elements used in recent industrial ads.

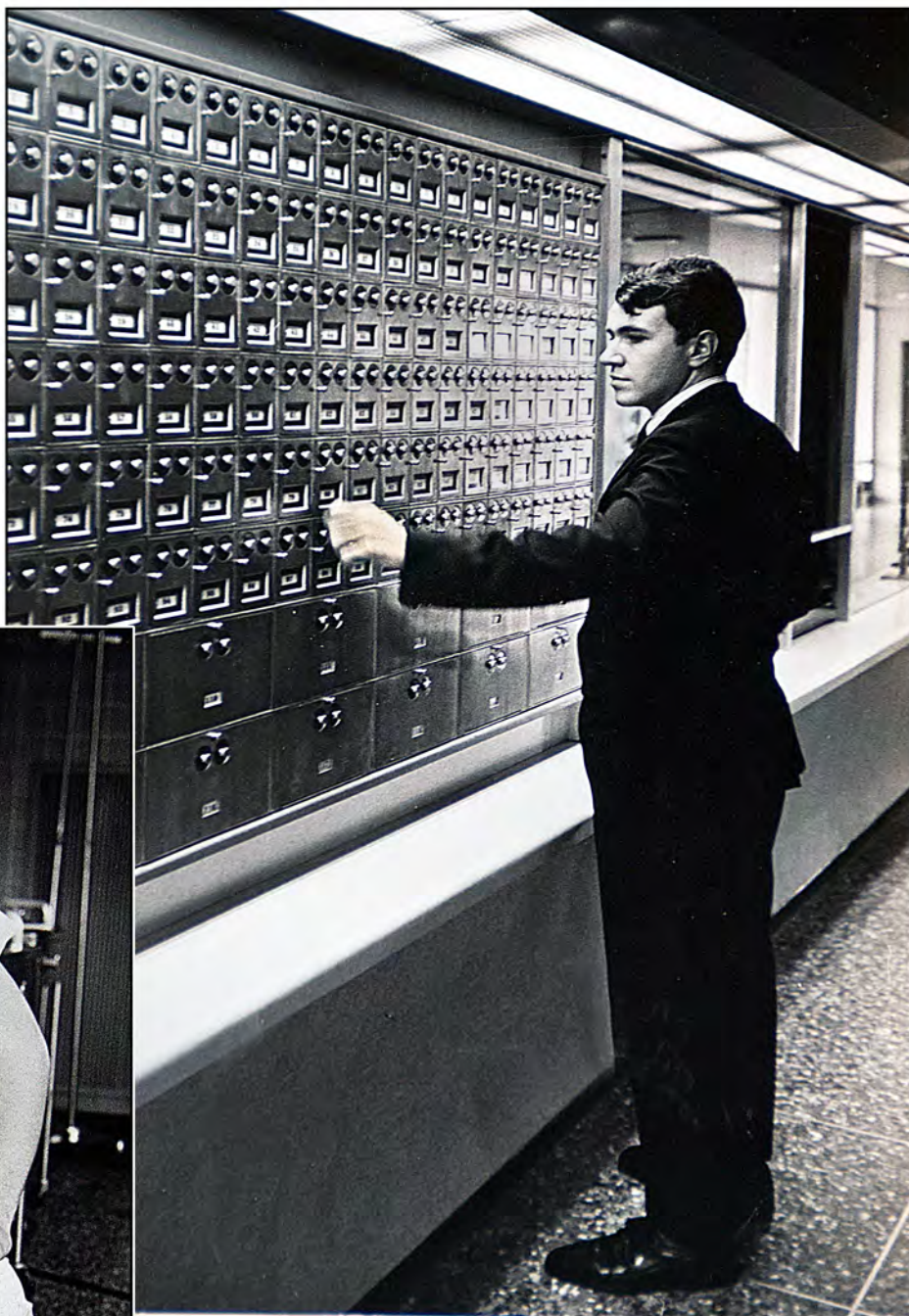
The collage was conceived and executed by Kurt E. Boehnstedt, Basford Inc. Art Director.

It was photographed by Douglas T. Mesney, Basford Account Executive, with print production handled by Richard Giordano of the agency's Production Department.

The printer is Andrew Milo Press, Inc., 304 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y.







1966 | BASFORD SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 10

*Yours Truly modelling for AISI stainless steel brochure | Photos by Ted Russell.*





1966 | BASFORD SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 11

*Basford proof reader, Zoë Zelinsky,(above) and secretary, Linda Gans, modelled for my photo portfolio.*



ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

APRIL 1970 • ONE DOLLAR

# PLAYBOY

THE GIRLS OF ISRAEL  
CAMPUS MANHUNTS  
PLAYBOY'S MISS ENGLAND  
FASHION FORECAST



1966 | BASFORD SCRAPBOOK | PLATE N° 12

*Pamela Nystul modelled for me at the Chicago Hilton; but not for pictures.*



## 1966 – Illusionary Facade – Marriage to Leslie Shirk

Once we were a couple, Leslie and I got invited everywhere.

It was part of a chimera, the illusion of a perfect life; we were subconsciously emulating life as defined by the TV shows we watched when we were growing up; shows like *Leave It to Beaver* and *Make Room for Daddy* [aka *The Danny Thomas Show*] were like training films for kids. As teens and young adults, *American Graffiti* defined our lives; they could have shot that film in and around our neighborhood.

Having recently helped me through the Trudy Schepper episode, Louise Friscia thoroughly approved of my new romance with Leslie Shirk. She and Leslie took to each other instantly. Louise helped Leslie get a new job, as a bartender at the Golden Door restaurant & bar, a hip club in the blackest section of Jamaica (Queens).

The Golden Door was one of Louise's clients; it was run by the same people who operated the African Pavilion bar concession at the Worlds Fair. Leslie became an important asset to the Golden Door; in that predominantly black neighborhood, folks came from miles around to see the cute white chick behind the bar. When Leslie took that job, I was blown away; I wasn't used to that level of hipness in the girls I dated. I got concerned, but I needn't have been; Leslie was always on my side.

At work, colleagues took me more seriously when I announced that Leslie and I had become engaged. Ironically, I chose to announce our betrothal during cocktails before a family dinner on April 1<sup>st</sup>, "Fools' Day." A script writer couldn't ask for better foreshadowing.

Leslie immortalized our April Fools' Day announcement with this sequence of Yours Truly, taken in the living room of the Mesney house.

The pictures were made with a "half-frame-35" camera, which doubled the number of pictures on a roll of 35 mm film.





Our announcement wasn't the only thing that made that occasion memorable. To accompany the champagne that Leslie and I brought to toast our news, Mom, ever the prankster, served special *hors d'oeuvres* that everyone raved about; her secret topping turned out to be canned dog food. Ha!

Getting married is when you learn that weddings are for everyone else except the bride and groom; they are pawns in a larger game. Neither of our families could afford a big wedding; but they staged one anyway. The ceremony, on September 3, 1966, at Zion Church in Douglaston, was picture perfect. The grooms were dressed in black tie and the bridesmaids wore matching outfits. Leslie's gown was hand made. My photo mentor, Ted Russell, took pictures of the wedding. All the right people came to the wedding ceremony, including my Basford boss, Burt Holmes, and department manager John Paluszek. A coffee and cake reception was held in the Shirk's back yard after the service; it didn't seem adequate, considering the lengths that many had travelled to be there; I'm sure many would have appreciated a stiff drink; but that was not my decision. Later that evening a bigger reception was held at a seafood restaurant in Whitestone, for the wedding party and their close friends.



Well before the wedding, Leslie wore her wedding dress in a "secret garden" of dogwood blossoms, for my portfolio (left). The shots were made at Planting Fields Arboretum (Oyster Bay, Long Island).

## 1966 | Wedding | Photos by Ted Russell | Plates N<sup>os</sup>1-14

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>3: Leslie and I flanked by Randy Taylor (left), Kenneth Shirk and Ellen Miller.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>4: Blanche Dicke (left) with my parents. Behind Mom is cousin Eustice Taylor.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>7: The wedding party. Front row (L to R): Kathryn Mesney; Margaret Shirk; Janet Shirk; Barbara Mesney (Bridesmaids); Ellen Miller (Maid of Honor); Leslie and yours truly; Allan Seiden and John Blaha (Groomsmen). Back Row: Peter and Dorothy Mesney; Kenneth Shirk (Ethel Shirk was camera shy) and Randolph "Randy" Taylor (Best Man).*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>10: (Above) Ethel Shirk serving. (Below) John Blaha, Michael Plink and Allan Seiden observe the cake ceremony.*



1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 1

Photos by Ted Russell





1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 2

Photos by Ted Russell



1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 3

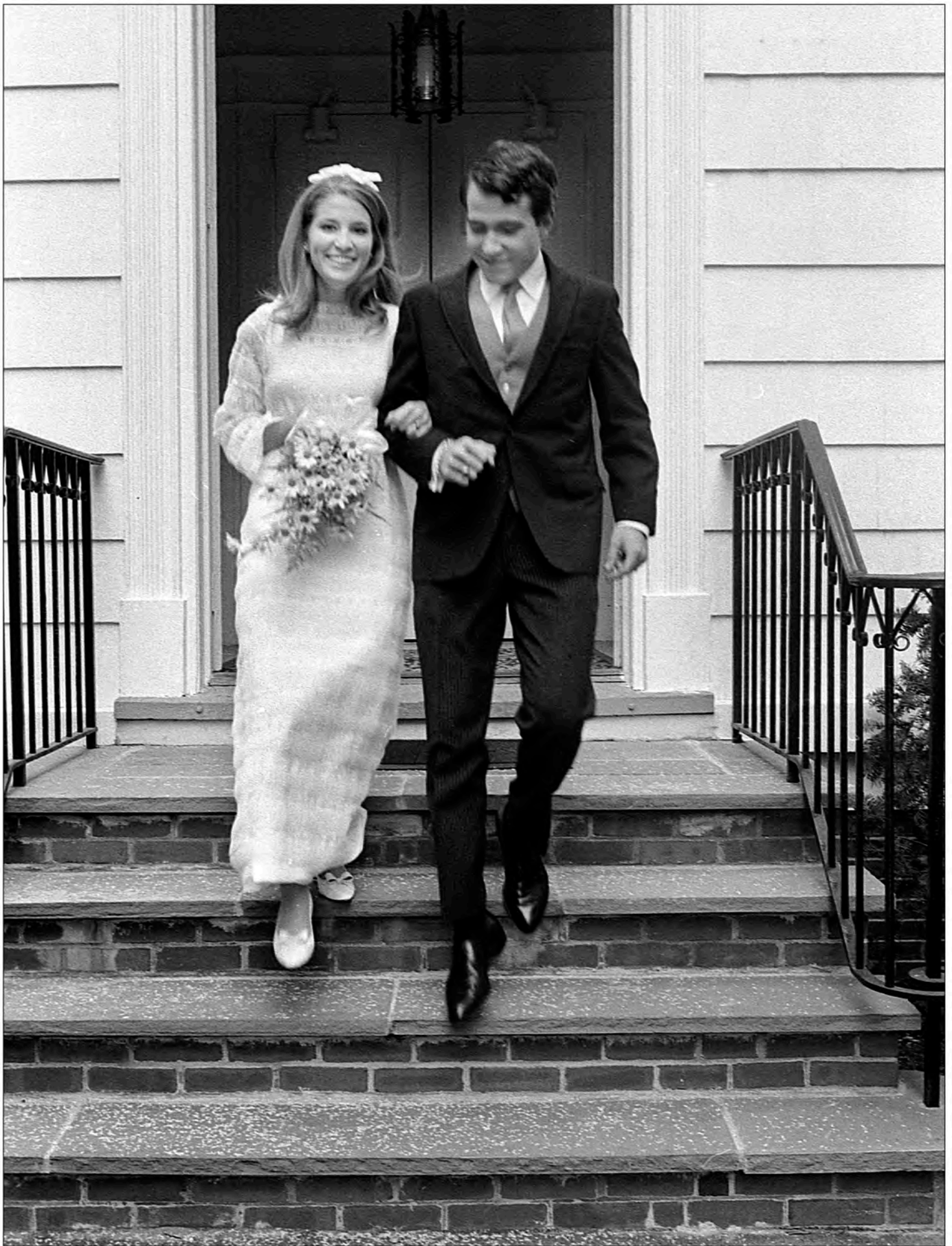
Photos by Ted Russell





1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 4

Photos by Ted Russell



1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 5

Photos by Ted Russell





1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 6

Photos by Ted Russell



1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 7  
Photos by Ted Russell





1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 8

Photos by Ted Russell



1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 9  
Photos by Ted Russell





1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 10

Photos by Ted Russell



1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 11

Photos by Ted Russell





1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 12

Photos by Ted Russell



1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 13  
Photos by Ted Russell





1966 | WEDDING | PLATE N° 14

Photos by Ted Russell

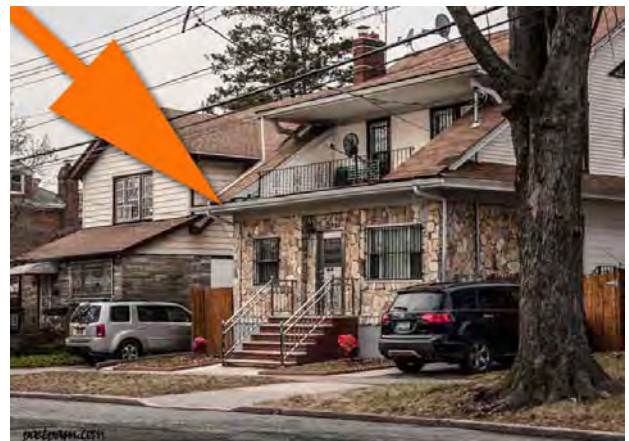
Our honeymoon was spent at a mountain retreat in the Catskill Mountains (part of the Northeast Appalachian Mountains).

It was an alien experience for me; living in the mountains, in a log cabin didn't appeal to me. There wasn't much to do at the lake, either.

So, our honeymoon was a bit boring and I was glad to get home—in this case a new home, in Flushing, near Queens College, where I was still attending classes.



We rented the ground floor of a house at 143-15 Quince Avenue, a block off Kissena Park. It was walking distance (a long mile) from school and a single bus fare to the subway terminus in downtown Flushing, a mile and a half north down Kissena Boulevard. Upstairs lived a Polish couple, Marco and Magda; she was a first-class baker. Our landlord was James Rae, a captain with the New York Fire Department who moved to a nicer spread out on Long Island and used his former residence to generate extra income.



Pamela Swanson photo, 2015.

The Flushing house had a glassed-in porch (since enclosed) which we slept in during the summer and where I grew a few pot plants. Well into my first grow there, as the plants neared the ceiling, I became aware that our next-door neighbor was a cop.

I didn't worry too much because pot was semi-legal then. (Ronald Reagan made marijuana taboo fourteen years later.) Still, I camouflaged the crop with curtains and strings of crystal beads; and we burned a lot of incense. Ha!





## 1960s | Portfolio | Early Work | Plates N<sup>os</sup>1-74 (Condensed)

*The following are notes for collection of plates showcases pictures made from 1958 through the first half of 1966. I made pictures before '58, having been the proud owner of a Brownie Hawkeye camera; those pictures were sent for processing by the local Douglaston pharmacy. A couple of those are included. However, it was the gift of a proper camera by grandpa Mesney in 1958 that piqued my interest in photography. Once hooked, the years between '58 and '66 were spent learning the ropes and emulating the work of star photographers who worked for Life magazine and National Geographic, among others.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 2 & 3: The picture of me was taken by someone else; likely it was my mom. She was a keen photographer who took snapshots of everything and everyone. I reckon she took the shot because I don't look very happy about having my picture taken. That said, I was very self-conscious of my weight and had just shed 20 pounds [~9 kg]. By Christmas I lost another 10 pounds [~4.5 kg], as is evident in the family portrait, taken with the Minolta SR-2 that grandpa gave me, using the self-timer. Plate N<sup>o</sup>3: Noteworthy is the portrait to my left, of me, by Grandma Taylor.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>4 & 5: Nanna Taylor's portrait of my sister Kathy, overlooks her 8<sup>th</sup> birthday party (1956). Two-year-old Barbara Mesney (pointing) is at the extreme left. To Kathy's immediate left are Gretchen Moody and Francine Thomas, her two BFFs. Portrait of Mom was made with a Rolleiflex camera in 1959 or 60. Plate N<sup>o</sup>5: Dad relaxing variously.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 7: Bonnie Bonner was my first serious crush. We met when my family travelled to Canada in 1959 to meet second cousins twice removed: Keith and Louise Bonner. Bonnie was their youngest of three; she had an older sister, Beverly, and brother, Denny, a "special" child with severe autism. The picture was taken during her visit to Douglaston. She's clutching a necklace pendant that I made for her by twisting wire around a aquamarine-glass crystal. I was into jewelry-making at that stage and sold my wares around the neighborhood. Bob Banning was like a second father; we fished together frequently. This shot was made when he hooked a striper (striped bass) off Fort Totten.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup>8 & 9: My sister Barbara's portraits were made in 1959; it's the best shot of the East Marrion summer house that I've got. Gretchen Moody was a pal of my sister Kathy. She was a late bloomer who blossomed into a real beauty.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>14 & 15 show the power of the storm that me and my family endured out in East Marion, where we were vacationing at the Mosbach cottages. The hurricane was so fierce it wiped out the Douglaston dock, which I documented upon our return from vacation. My parents subsequently wrote the script for a Broadway play called Here Comes Harriet, about a family's ordeal with a hurricane named Harriet, based on our experiences.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>18 & 19 were pivotal pictures; both won prizes in contests held by the Little Neck Camera Club; the accolades spurred me to greater accomplishments.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>20 & 21 Queen Anne's Lace was made nearly a decade after Golden Pond. The latter was a fluke that opened my eyes to the possibilities of altered colors; the film was overexposed, but the latent image survived. "Lace" was shot with infrared color film.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>24 & 25, of Ginger O'Grady, were my first serious attempt at studio lighting.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 28 & 29: Another pivotal picture. By winning third prize in the CBS company-wide photo contest, my work came to the attention of ad manager Herman Aronson, who took me under his wing and started me on my way as a graphic designer.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 30 & 31 were both made at the Flushing apartment shortly after Leslie Shirk and I got married. I turned the living room into a mini photo studio to make tabletop shots like these two. It was around that time that I began giving serious thought to becoming a professional photographer and started putting together the beginnings of a portfolio.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 32 & 30: Chris Hanson was a friend of model Pat Broderick (see next plates). Leslie was photographed in the Flushing "studio." She encouraged my photography; she put her whole self into it, as is easy to see.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 34 & 35: Pat Broderick was the first semi-pro model I photographed; her shots made great samples; they gave me the creds to entice other young ladies.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 36 to 39: These two, of Carol Douglas, were possibly the most pivotal pictures because they defined my emerging style: a stark, graphic, look made with extremely wide lenses and dark red filters (Red 25 and 29).*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 40 to 47 (except 45): I shot these pictures as part of a photo-essay about the yacht Wanderer, a 70-foot [21.3-meter] English Cutter owned by Douglastonian Van Waring.*

*I was into essays—collections around a theme—in leather bound books with gold-edged pages.*

*The idea was to sell such books to folks like the owner of the yacht, Van Waring. They were also a unique way to present my work; most photographers used standard presentation binders with acetate pages—trés ordinaire.*

*Five such volumes were created between 1968 and 1970. They have survived remarkably well, considering they are now a half-century old.*



*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 45: The story behind this picture of the racing yacht Intrepid will be elaborated upon in the coming pages. Without being a spoiler, I can say that I made more money on "stock" sales of these pictures than on the original assignment, for Union Carbide.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 48 to 59: The Wanderer essay opened doors—hatches, in this case. I became a valued crew member (people love to be photographed). During the Block Island Race Week, I had ample opportunity to expand my collection of sailing pictures. Nikon made my work famous when they published Night Sail in Nikon World magazine.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 60 & 61: Early on, optical effects became my trademark. Star effects were a favorite; I had all kinds of star filters. These were shot with a Tiffen 2 mm cross-star.*



*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 62 to 67: I was still working on a “diversified” portfolio that demonstrated my versatility. I didn’t realize the game was all about specialization.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 63: While this shot is a bit cliché, it’s got sentimental value. It was while staring at that scene, of the Throg’s Neck Bridge, that I realized, the first time, what being stoned was all about; the shimmering bridge lights reflected on the water morphed into a kind of transfixing movie.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 68 & 69: These were part of my diversified portfolio—deliberate efforts to produce shots that could be used in ads, or record album covers (think Pink Floyd). It wasn’t easy organizing friends and associates – in this case Kurt Boehnstedt and his kids, Curtis and Kimberly - into posing for what must have seemed like abstract shots.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 70 & 71: Marriage to Leslie Shirk was a photo op. We were betrothed on April Fools Day; a little later, we took these photos of her in her wedding dress, amidst dogwoods. Leslie was always on my side... until she wasn’t.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 72 & 73: Even when we went camping, it was all about making more samples. Yellow Kite was made to show off a new fisheye lens attachment (I couldn’t afford a real fisheye lens). Leslie was my biggest fan. Note the camera; it’s equipped with the famous and rare Nikkor 21 mm lens, which required the use of the view finder, seen on the upper right.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 74: This collection of early work ends kind of where it started, in high school, with a picture of my business partner, David Nolte, who died last November (2018), from many conditions that suggest an unhealthy lifestyle. God bless. The last time I saw him, in 2002, in Orlando, Florida (where Dave was the tax collector) he had already forgotten most of our times together. Perhaps he was pissed off that I screwed his first wife, Susan Raines?*

Sorting my 60s work wasn’t easy; so much happened, so fast; the edges blur. However, there was a fundamental change when I started working for Basford, Inc. There, working in the Big Leagues, I began to specialize and became an “industrial” photographer with, given my work for Car and Driver, the moniker *sheet metal man*.

Returning to the story....

## **1966 – Life in Flushing – New Friends**

Life was good on Quince Avenue. A newly-wed Polish couple lived above us on the second floor. Marco was a laborer; his wife, Agnieszka, worked as a clerk. We entertained each other now and then. Occasionally, Marco’s wife would surprise us with a cake; and not just any cake, either; her butter-cream confections rivaled the finest European bakeries.

Together, Leslie and I were pulling in enough money for a comfortable, middle-class life. She was still working at MAI [Management Assistance Incorporated] doing flow charts for computer algorithms; I had my job at Basford and continued doing occasional wedding photography. In those days people still ended each month with enough “discretionary” cash to have some fun; and we were no exception.





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 1

*"Selfie" | Aboard Wanderer | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1960*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 2

*"Selfie" with a little help from Mom | Family Christmas card picture Douglaston, | 1959*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 3

*Christmas record-album-cover picture | Douglaston | 1964*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 4

*Kathy Mesney's Birthday | Portrait of Mom | Douglaston | 1959*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 5  
*Peter Mesney | Douglaston, New York | 1959*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 6

*Grandparents Katheryn Monro Taylor and Roger James "RJ" Mesney | Douglaston, | 1958*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 7

*Cousin Bonnie Bonner | Mentor Robert "Bob" Banning | Douglaston | 1957*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 8

*Barbara Mesney | East Marion, New York | 1960*



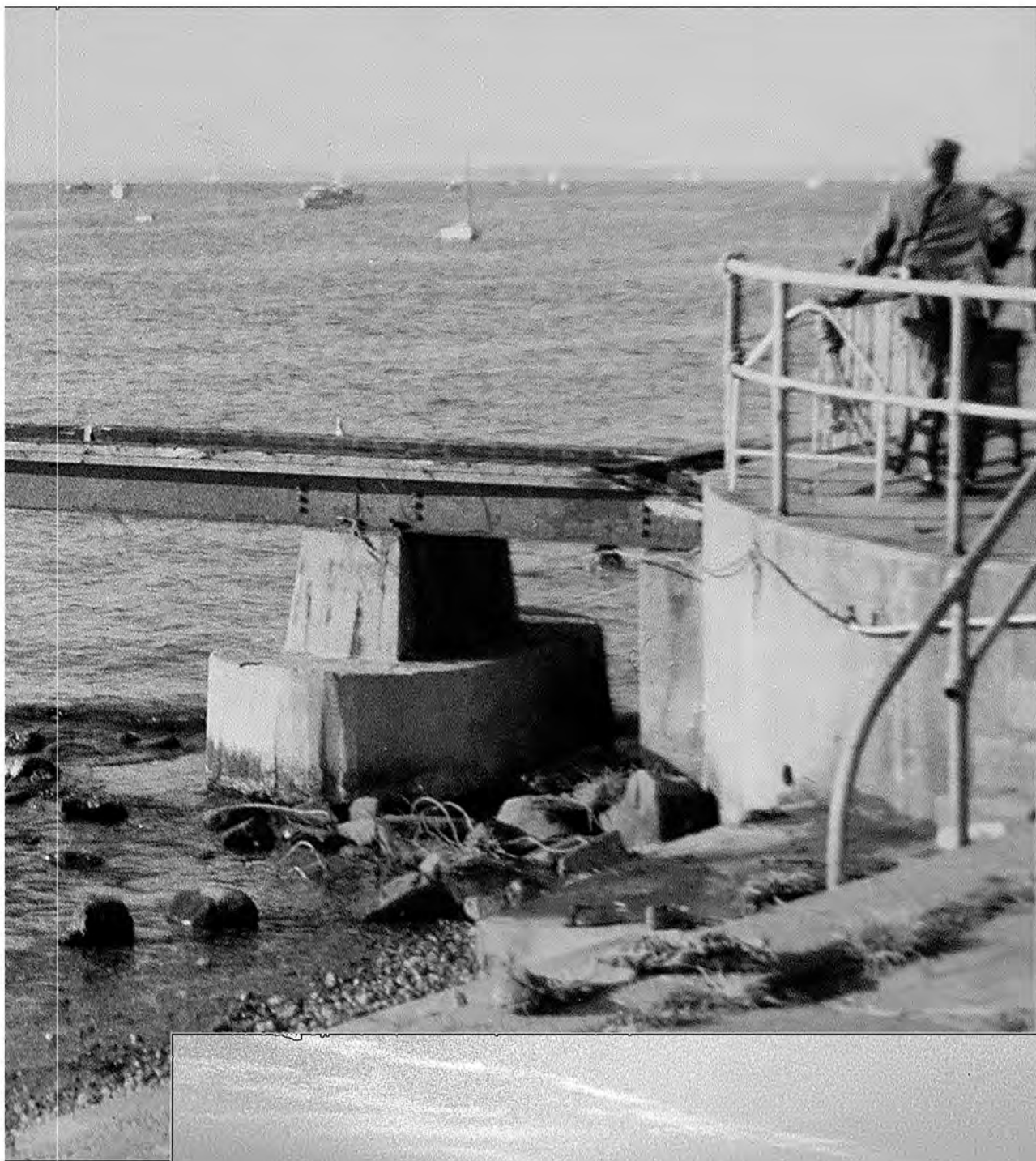
EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 9

*Gretchen Moody | East Marion, New York | 1962 (below) and 1965*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 14  
*Douglaston dock hurricane damage | 1958*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 15

*Douglaston dock from a negative on my very first roll of 35mm film | 1957 | The fuzziness is camera shake.*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 16  
*Aquarium Goldfish | Douglaston, New York | 1957*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 17

*Easter Sunday | Zion Church | Douglaston, New York | 1959*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 18  
*"Fire Fighter"* | Douglaston, New York | 1958





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 19

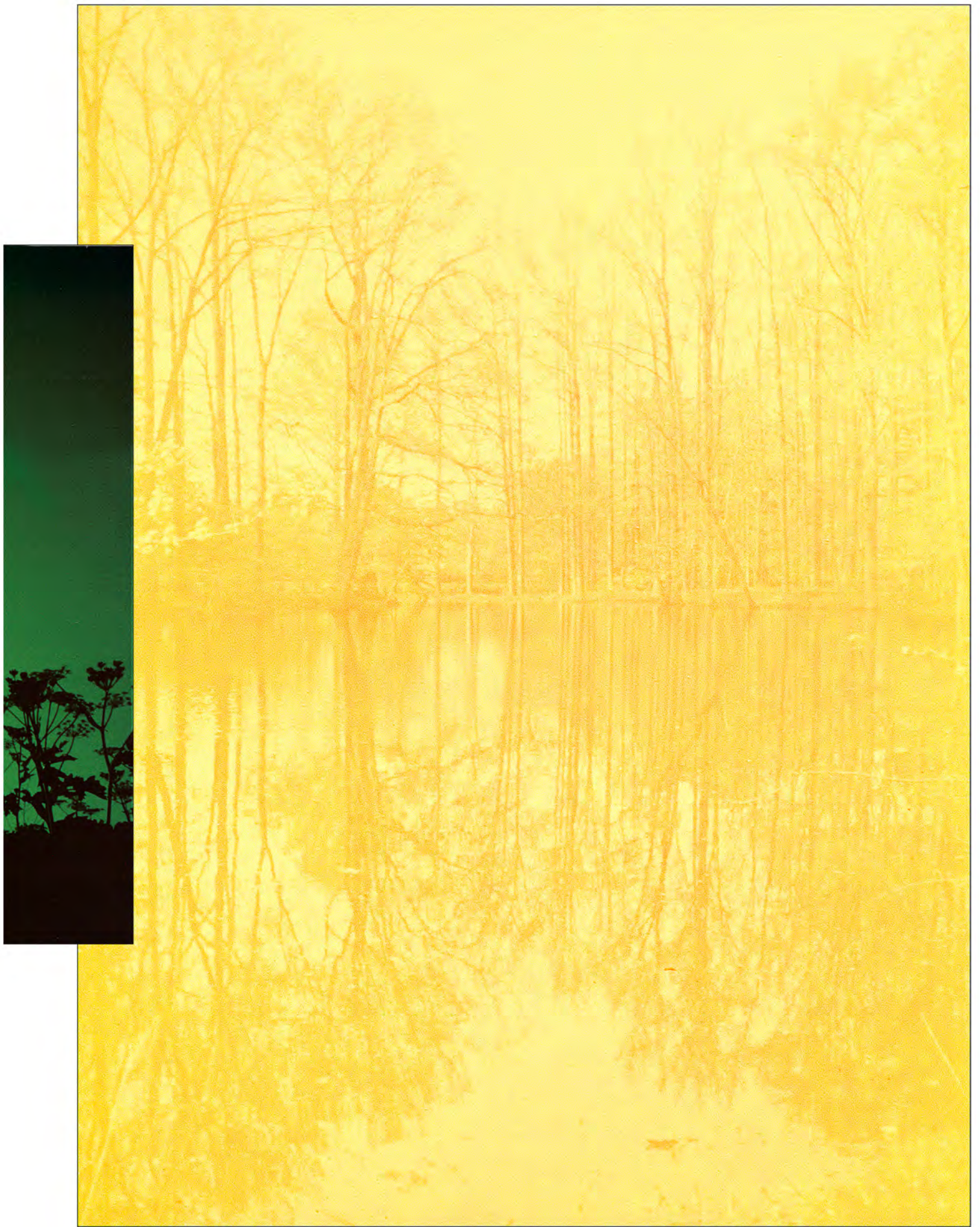
*"Reflections" | Alley Pond, Bayside, New York | 1958 | First "First" Prize*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 20  
*"Queen Anne's Lace" | Floral Study | 1967*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 21

*"Golden Pond" | Alley Pond, Bayside, New York | 1958*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 22  
*"Sparklers" | Greenport | New York | 1958*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 23

*"American Sunset" | Douglaston Dock | New York | 1957*

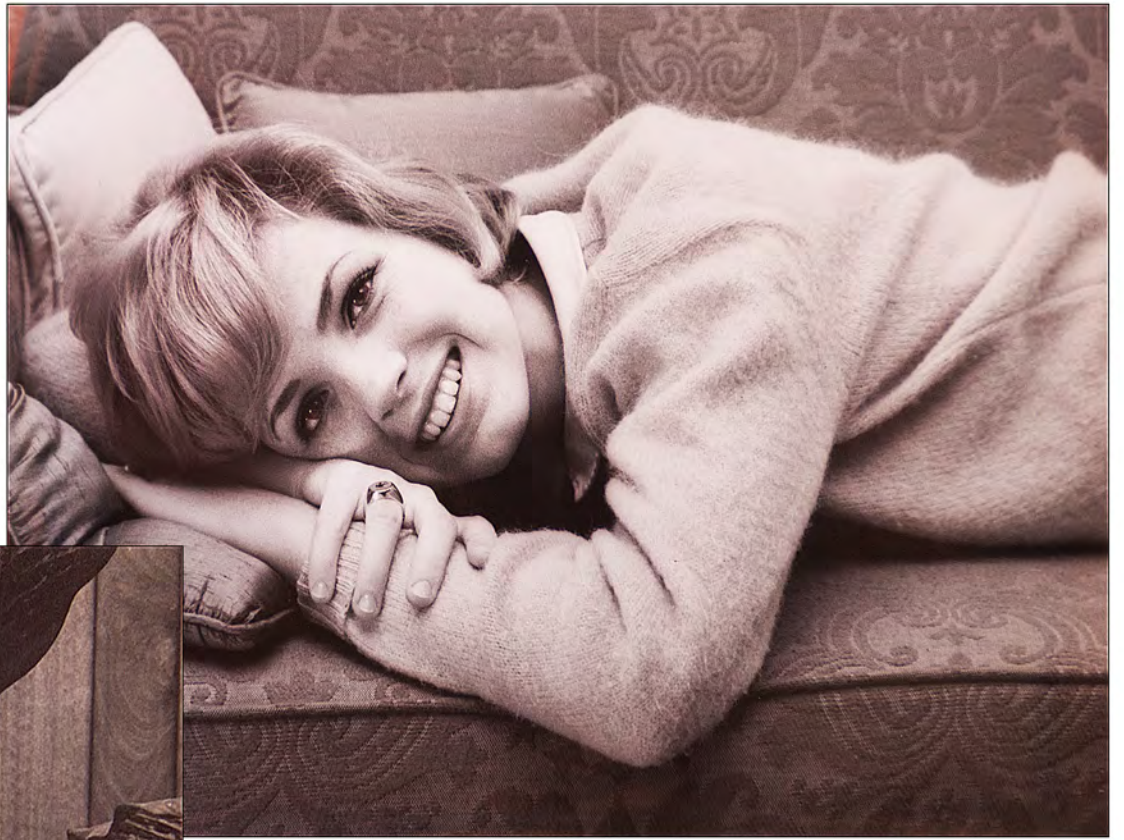




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 24

*Ginger O'Grady | Douglaston, New York | 1963*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 25  
*Ginger O'Grady | Douglaston, New York | 1963*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 26

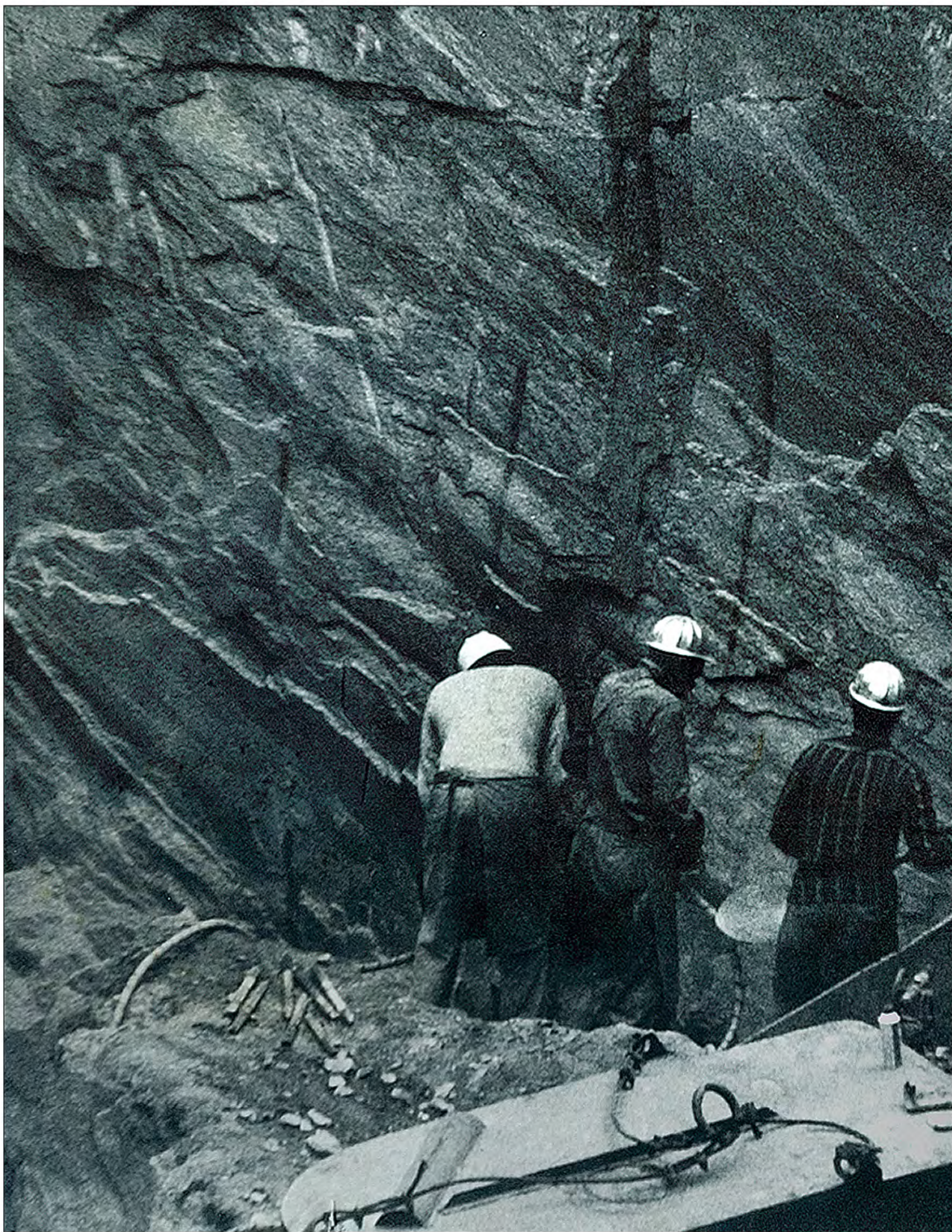
*Your's Truly and Ginger O'Grady at St. Lawrence University | 1962*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 27

*Your's Truly by David Nolte | Ginger O'Grady at St. Lawrence University | 1962*

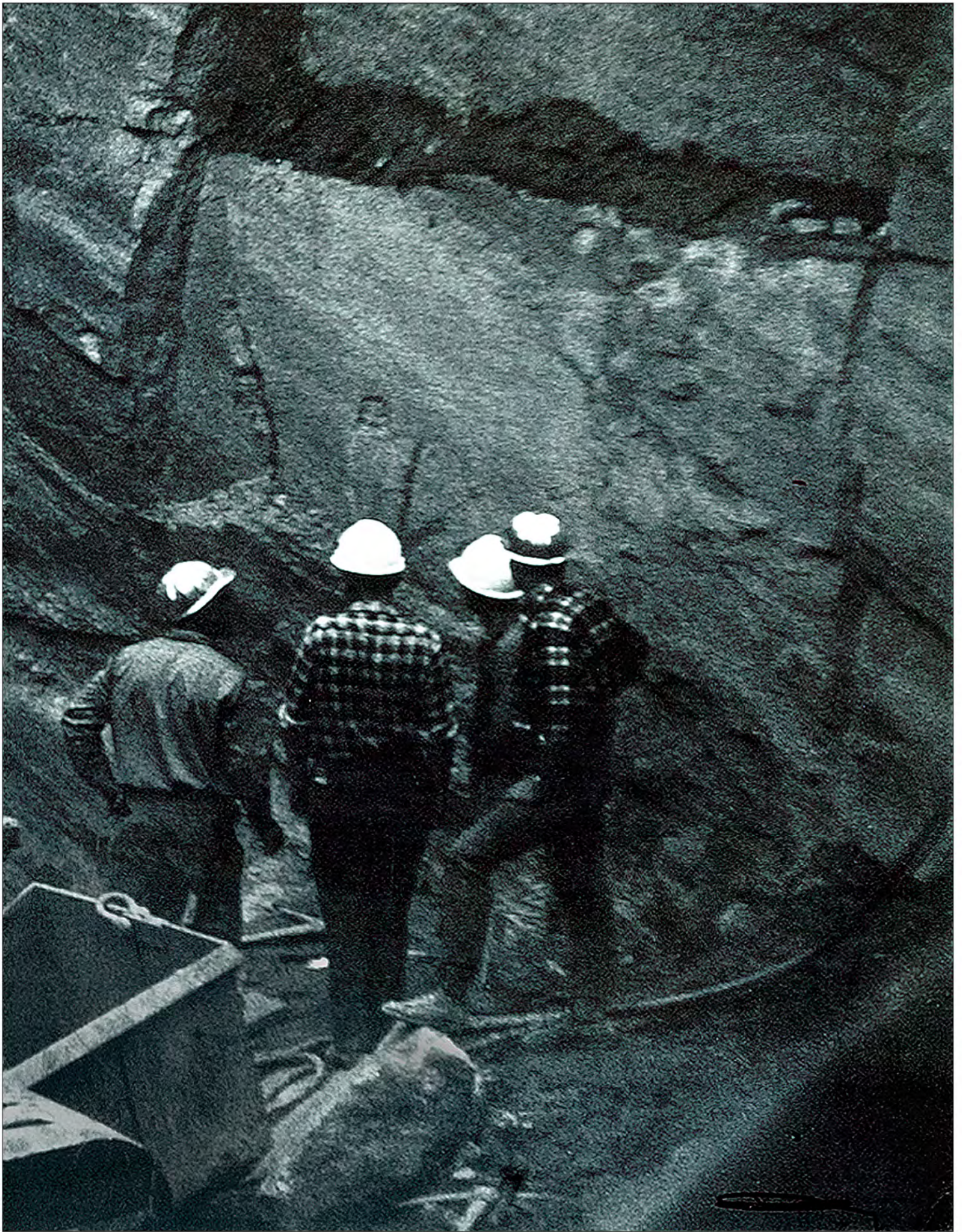




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 28

*CBS Headquarters Building Excavation | New York | 1962 | Winner: CBS photo contest.*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 29

*CBS Headquarters Building Excavation | New York | 1962 | Winner: CBS photo contest.*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 30

*"Tanqueray for Two" | 1966*

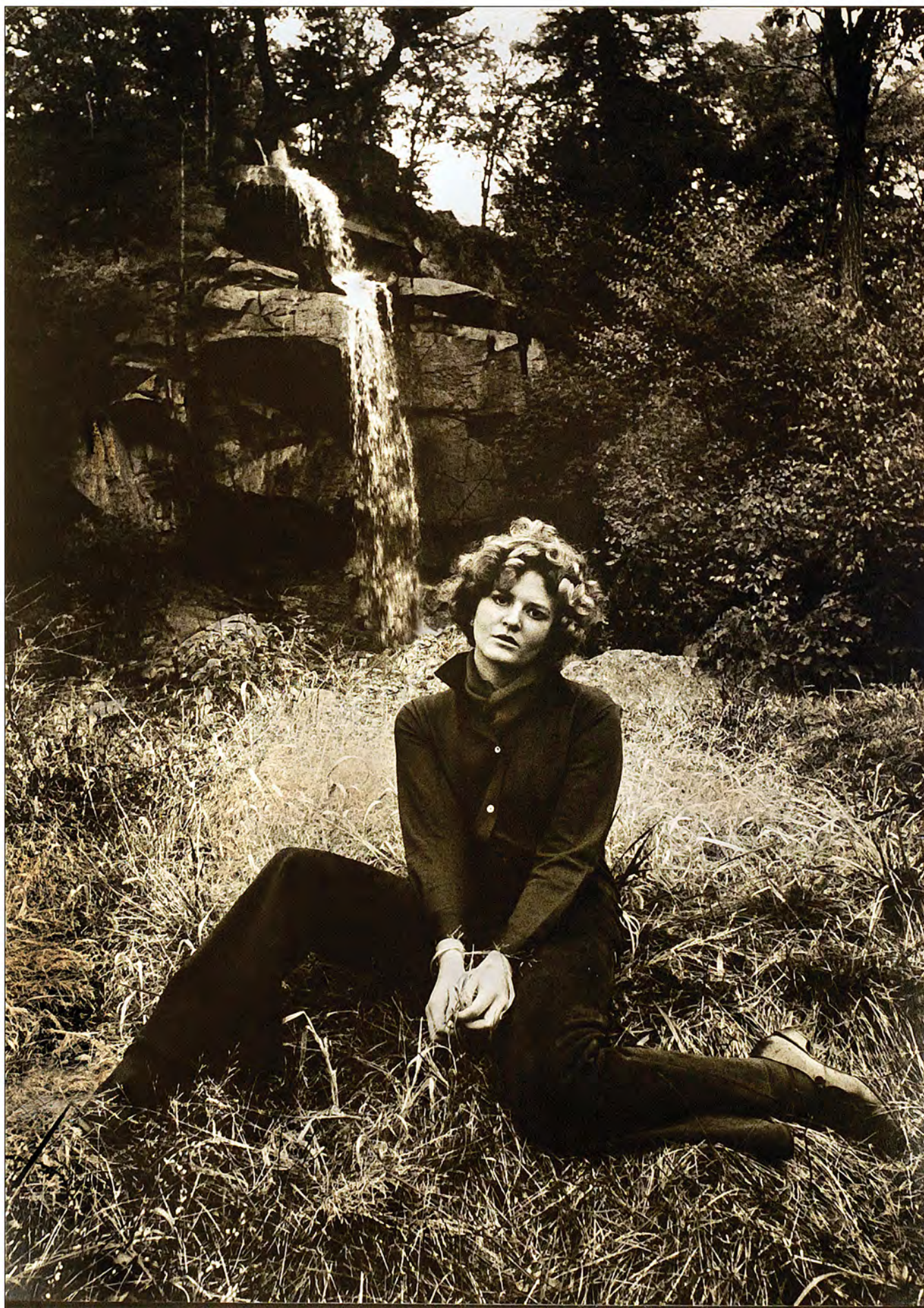




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 31

*Floral Still Life | 1966*

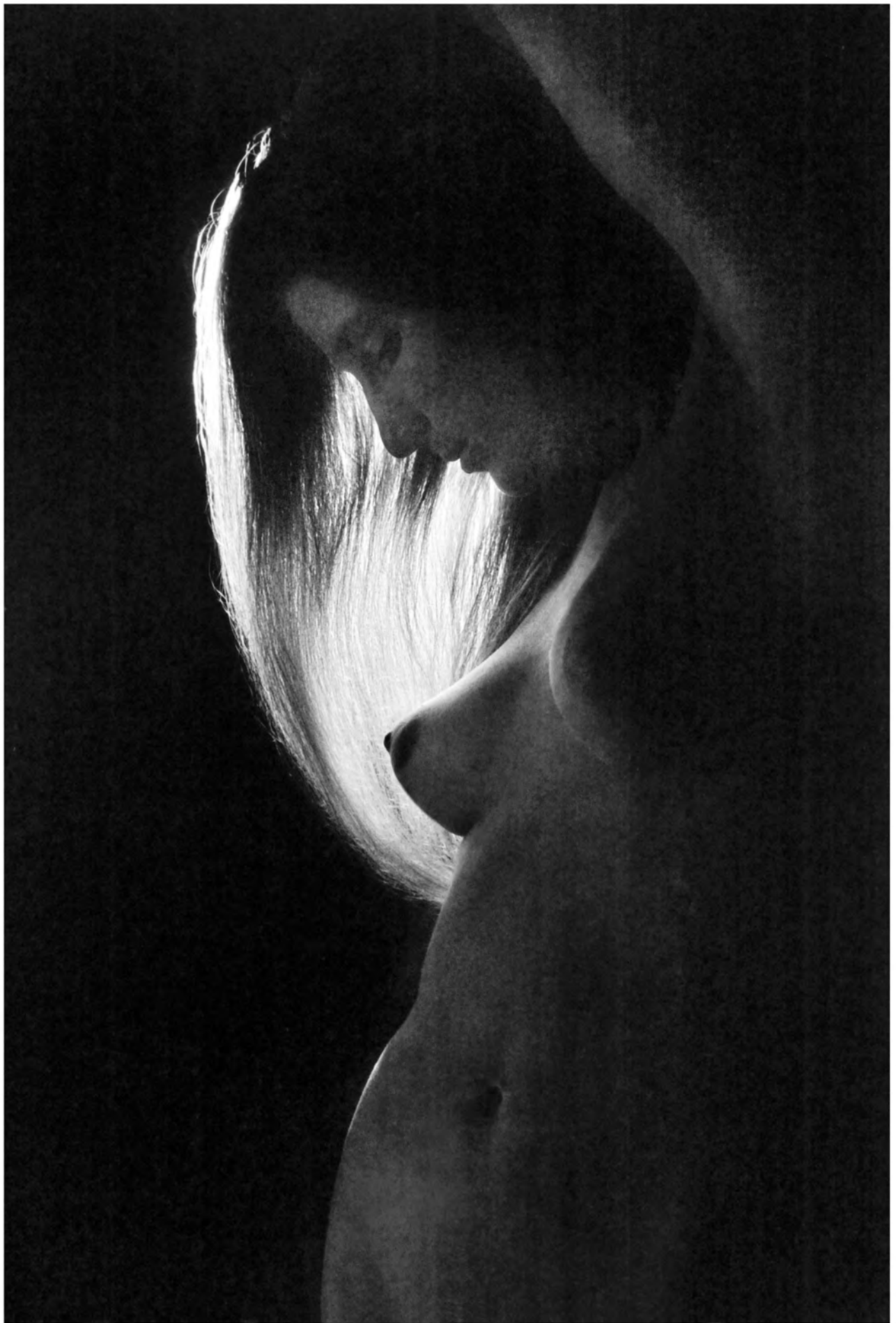




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 32

*Chris Hanson | Test Shot | Lake Minnewaska, New York | 1964*

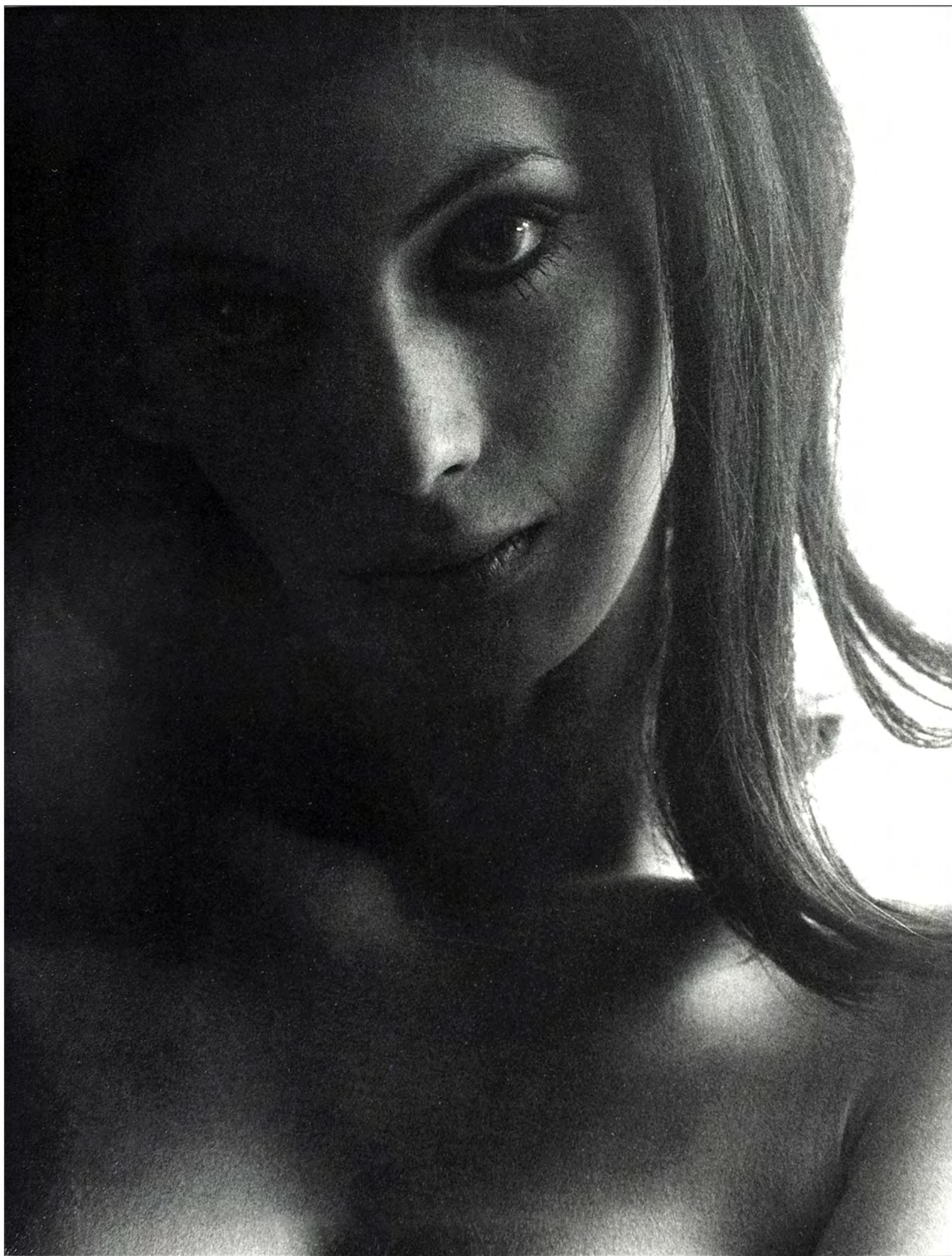




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 33

*Leslie Shirk | Nude Study | 1966*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 34

*Pat Broderick | Test Shot | 1959*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 35

*Pat Broderick | Test Shot | 1959*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 36  
*Carol Douglas | Fire Island, New York | 1964*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 37  
*Carol Douglas | Fire Island, New York | 1964*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 38

*Carol Douglas | Test Shot | Fire Island, New York | 1968*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 39

*Carol Douglas | Test Shot | Fire Island, New York | 1968*

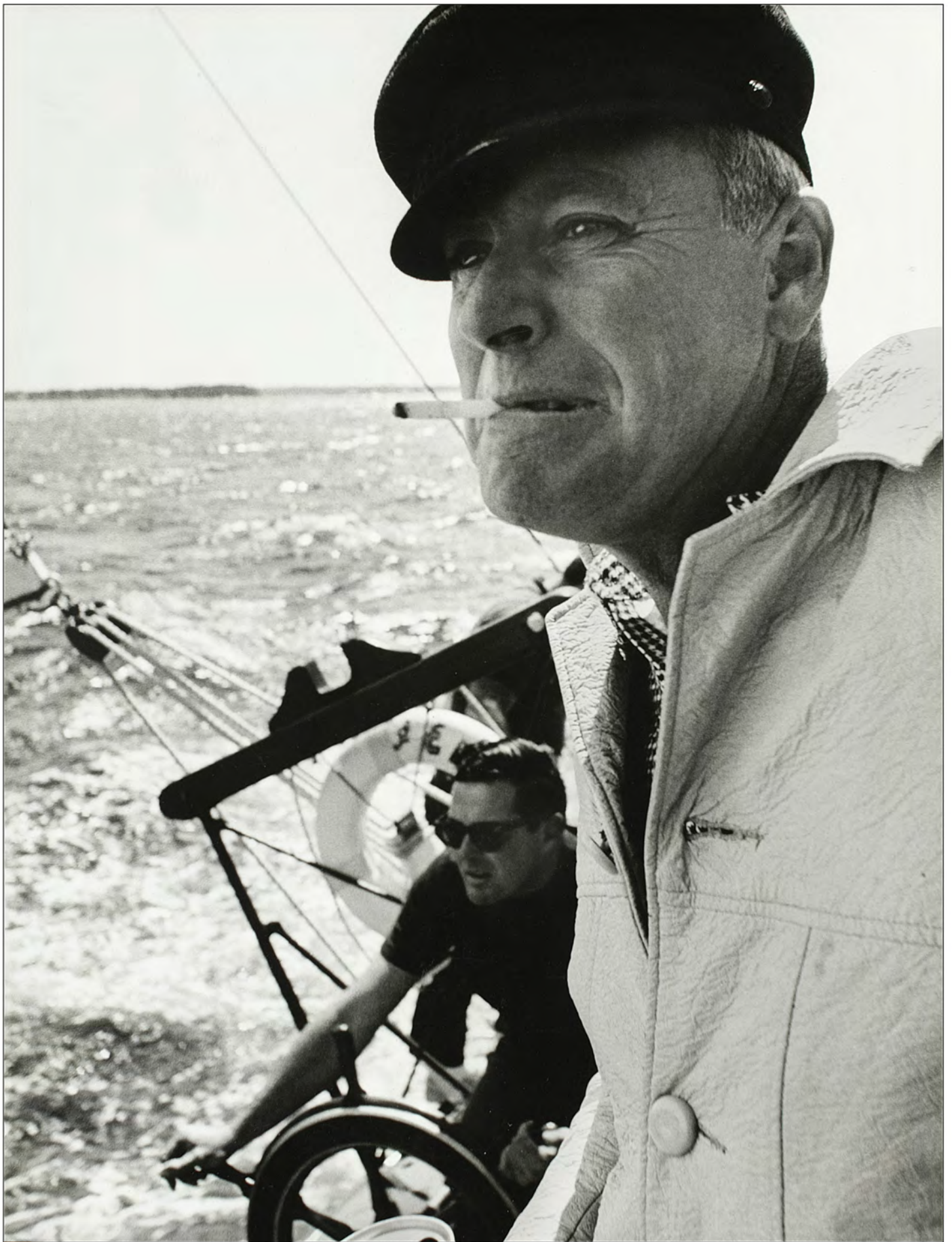




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 40

"Wanderer" | 70-foot English Cutter | Van Waring | 1967





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 41

*"Resolute" | Van Waring, Skipper, Wanderer | 1967*

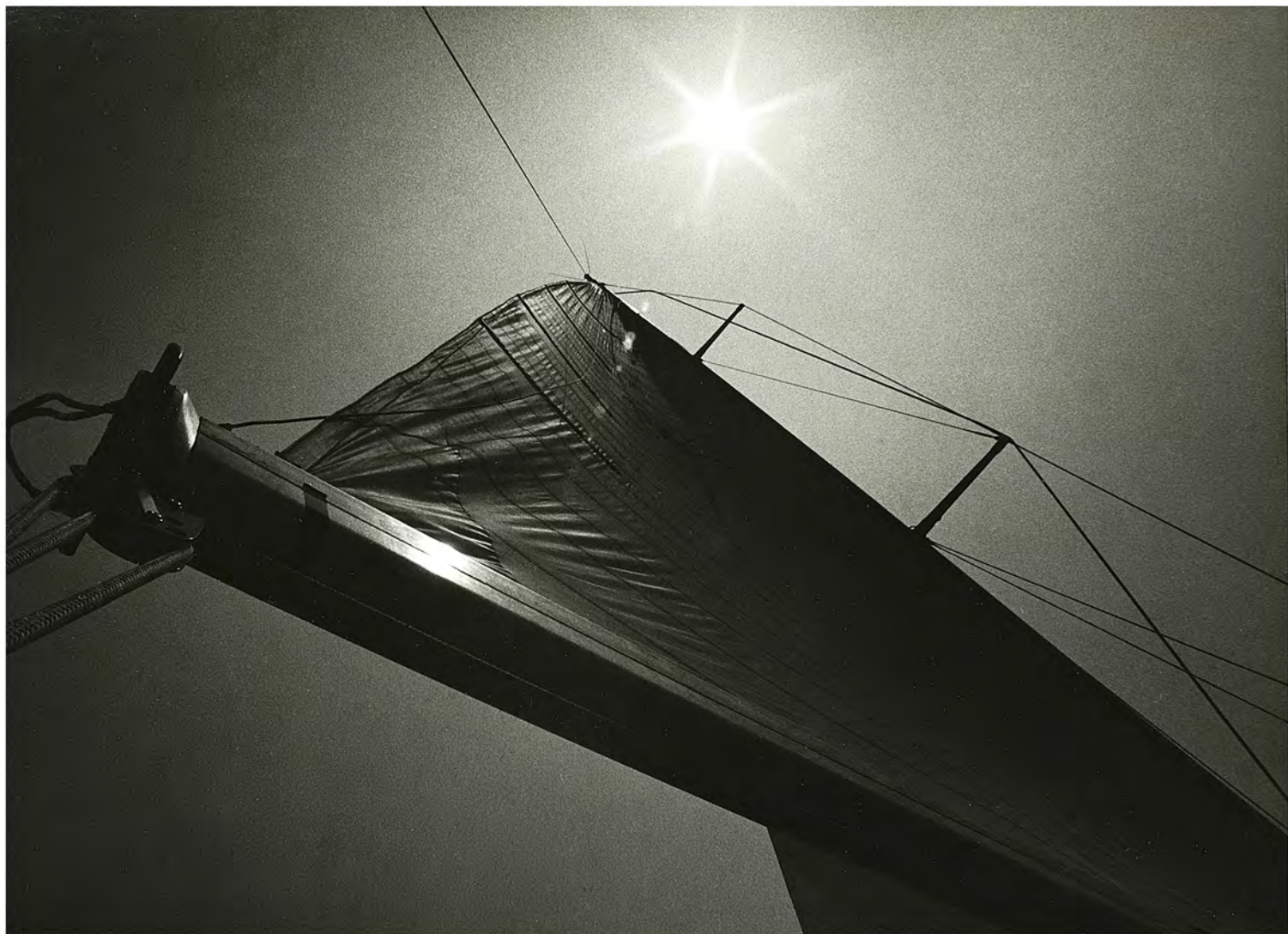




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 42

*"Ice Fire"* | Wanderer | 70-foot English Cutter | Van Waring | 1967

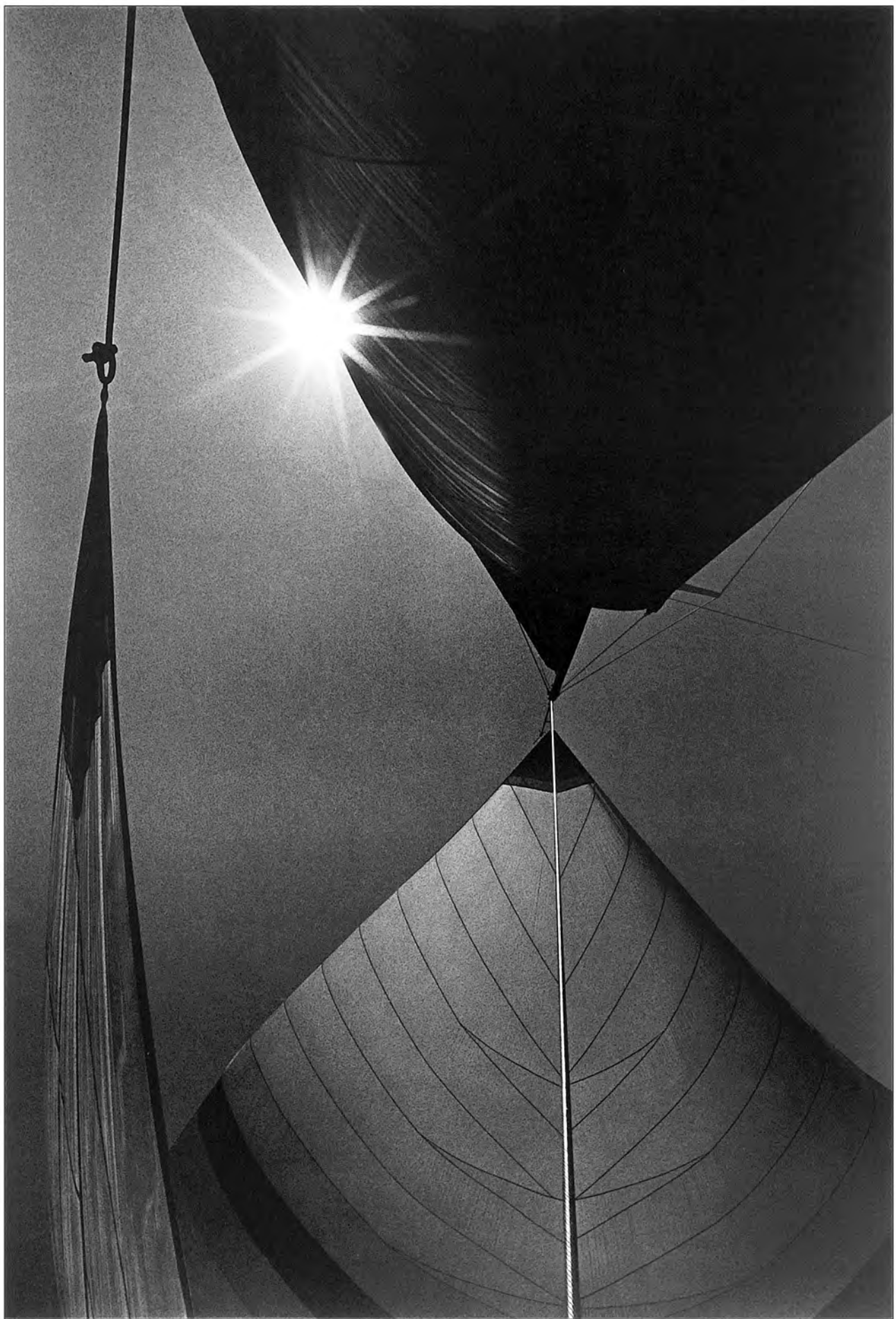




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 43

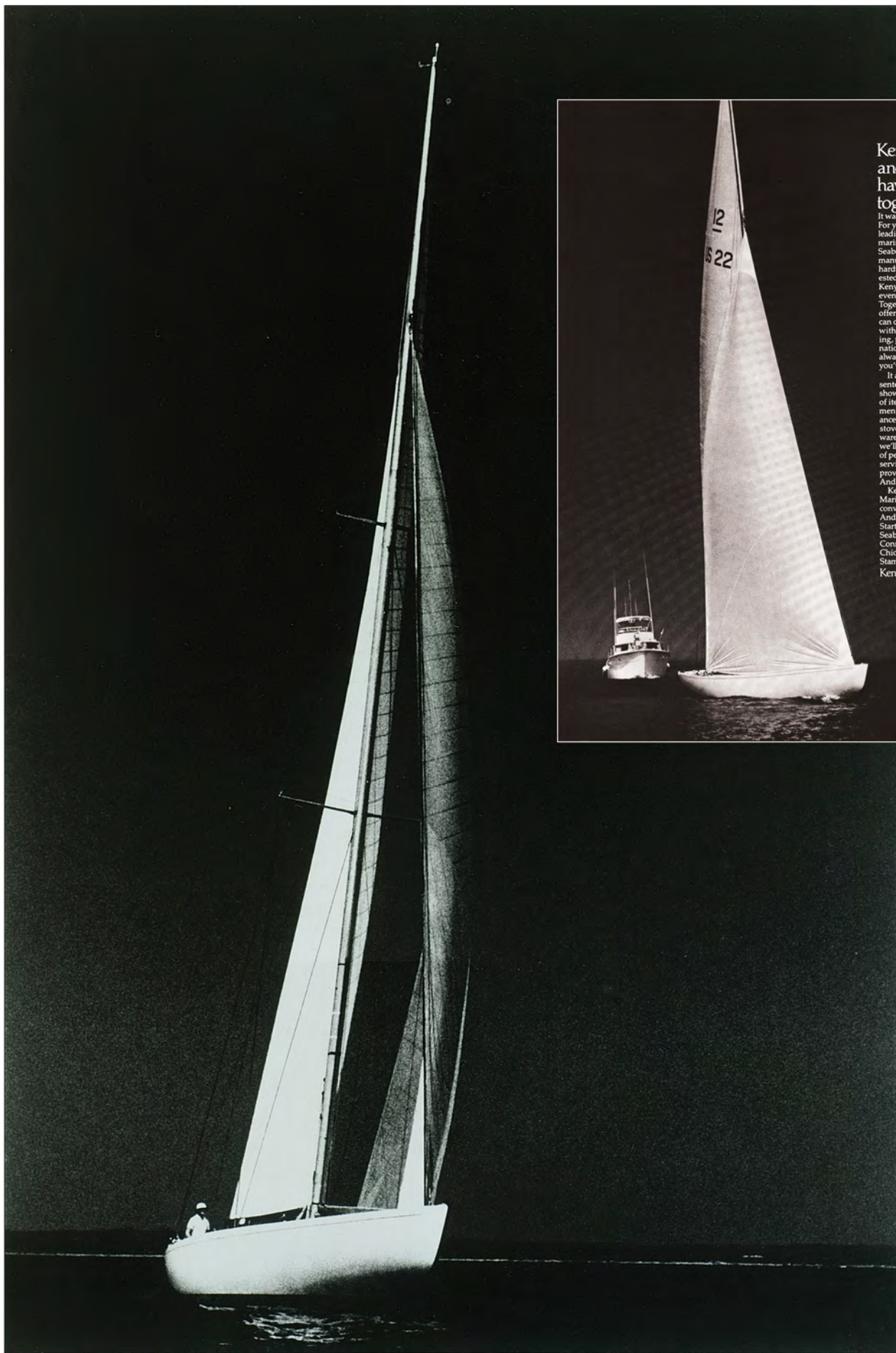
*"Star Fire" | Wanderer | 70-foot English Cutter | Van Waring | 1967.*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 44

*"Sun Fire" | Wanderer | 70-foot English Cutter | Skipper Van Waring | 1967*



# Kenyon and Seaboard have joined together.

It was only fitting. For years Kenyon has been the leading manufacturer of fine marine instruments. For years Seaboard has been the leading manufacturer of performance hardware. Seaboard was interested in doing even more. Kenyon was interested in doing even more. Now we both can. Together. Because now we can offer the most complete line you can carry. And then back it up with the kind of delivery, pricing, point of sale help and national advertising that we've always wanted to give and you've always wanted to get.

It also means we'll be represented at every single major boat show with the biggest selection of items ever. Kenyon instruments, Seaboard high performance hardware, Homstrand stoves, Star deck and spar hardware and Kenyon spars. It means we'll be able to give you the kind of personalized and coordinated service we've always wanted to provide. The right way. Fast. And well.

Kenyon Marine. Seaboard Marine. It was a marriage for convenience. Your convenience. And we're going to prove it. Starting now. Kenyon Marine. Seaboard Marine. Guilford, Connecticut 06437. See us at Chicago, Annapolis, Newport, Stamford and Long Beach. Kenyon & Seaboard Marine

EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 45

*Americas Cup Yacht US-22 "Intrepid" | Long Island | New York | 1972 | Inset: Union Carbide poster*

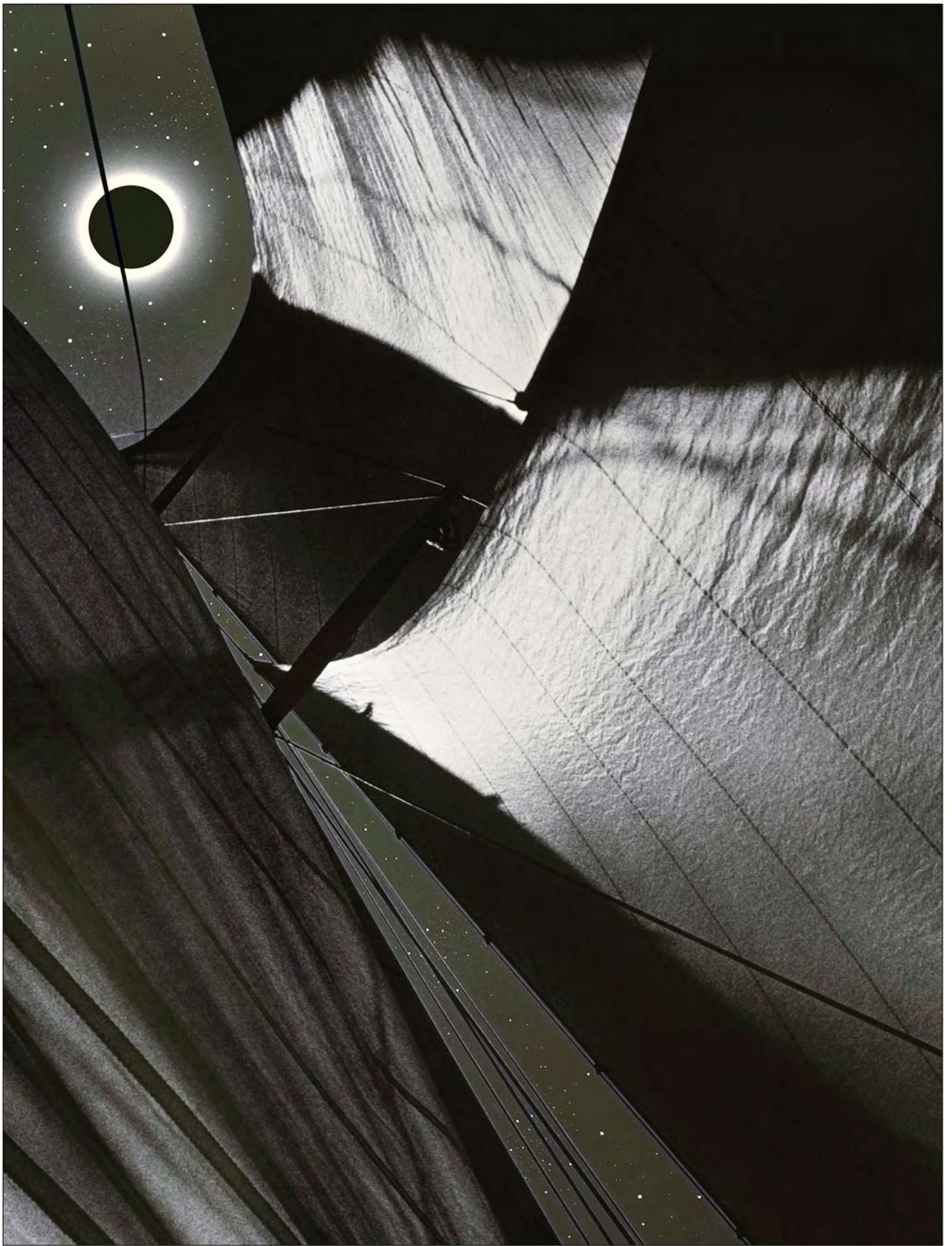




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 46

*"Loose Lines"* | Wanderer | Skipper Van Waring | 1967

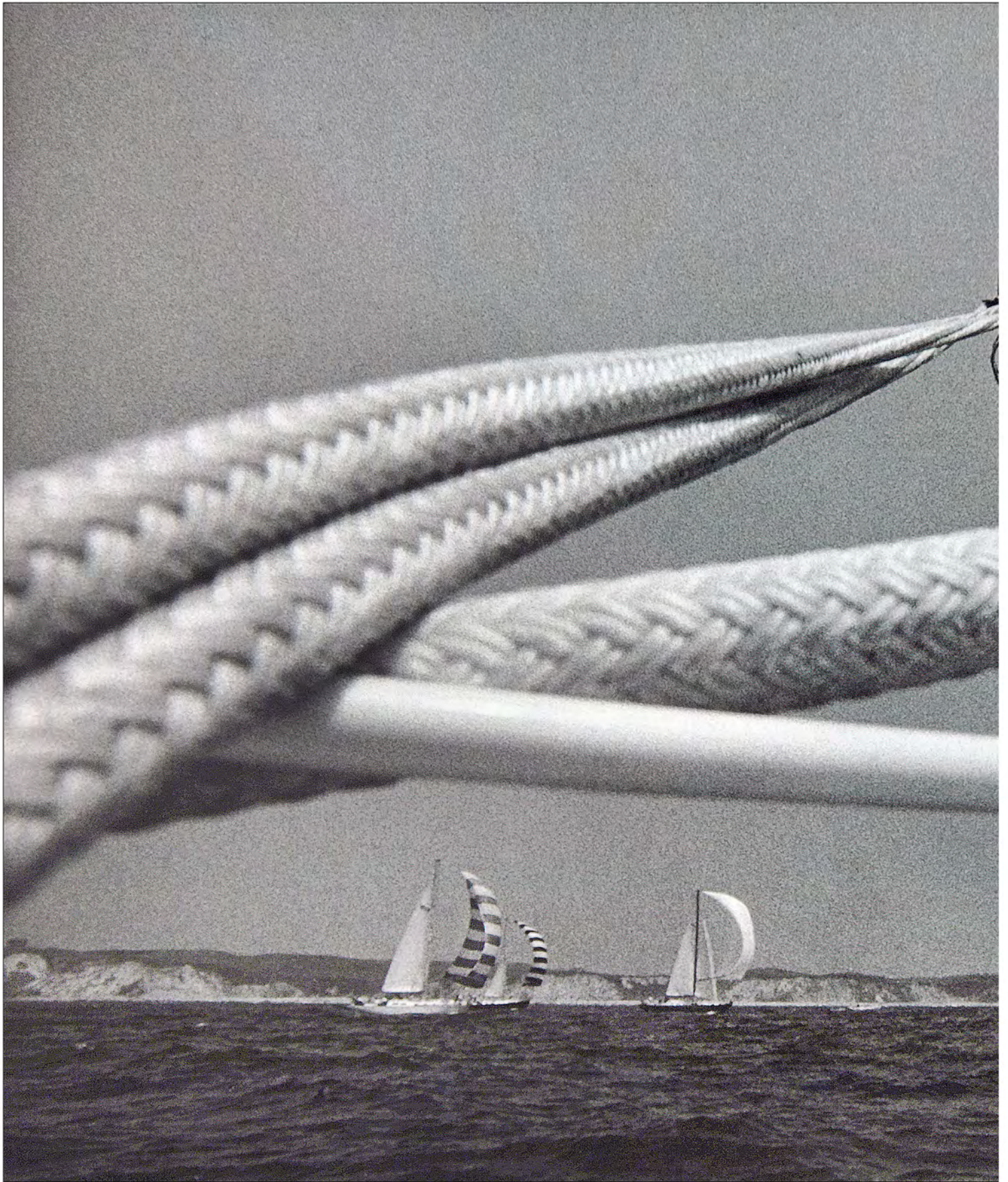




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 47

*"Heading Up"* | Wanderer | *Van Skipper Waring* | 1967 | *Enhanced* 1972

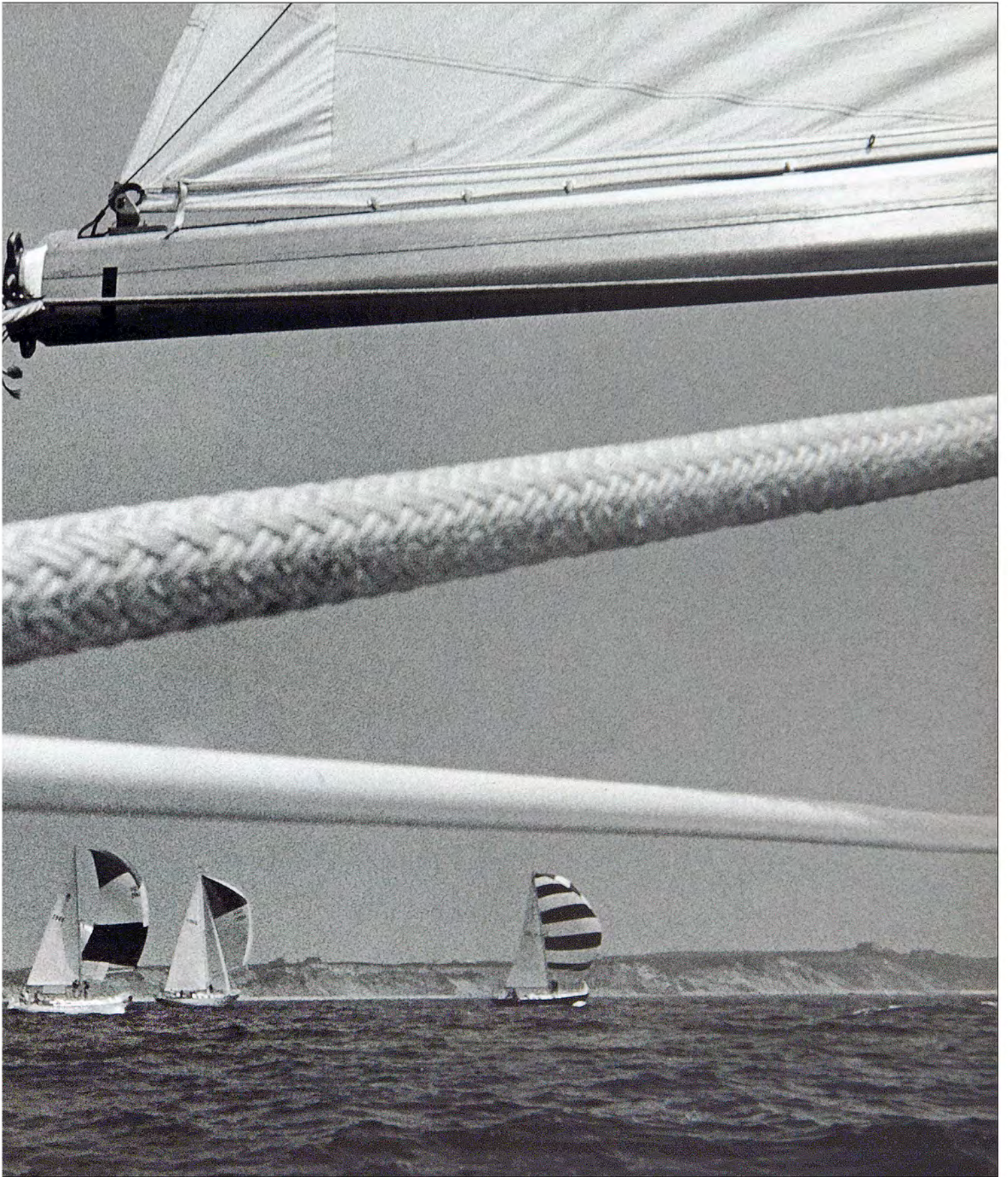




EARLY WORK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 48

*"Spinnaker Run" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island, Rhode Island | 1967*

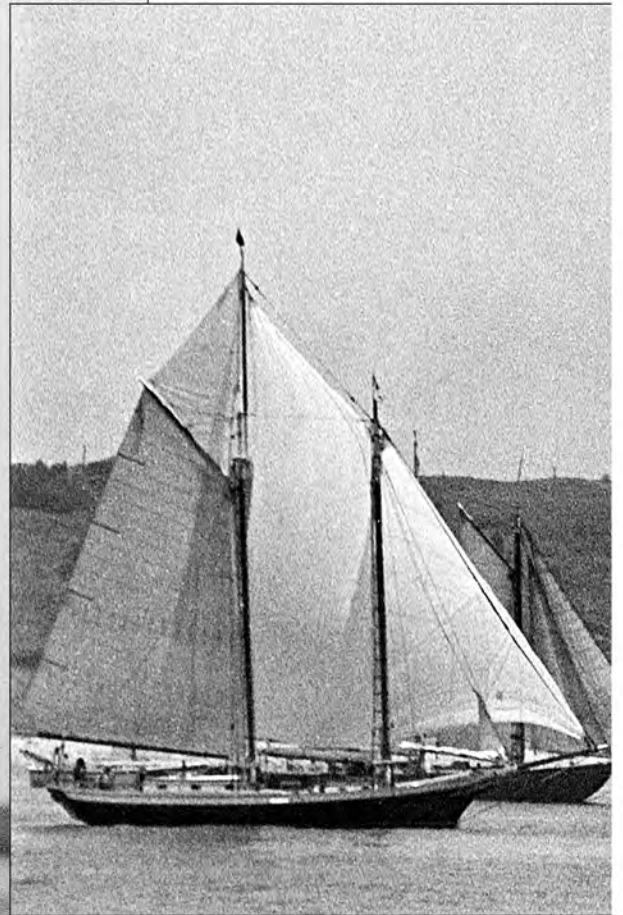
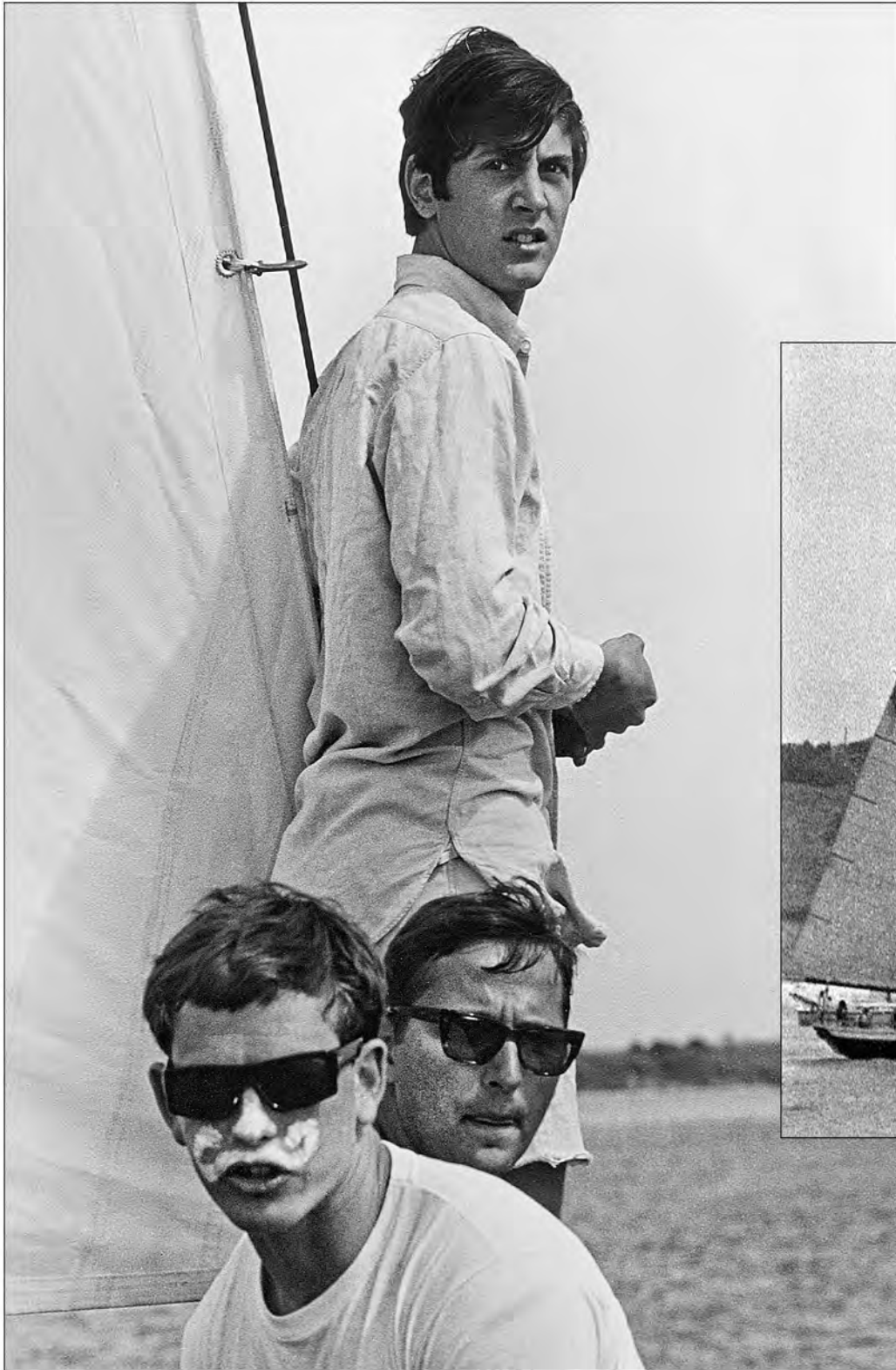




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 49

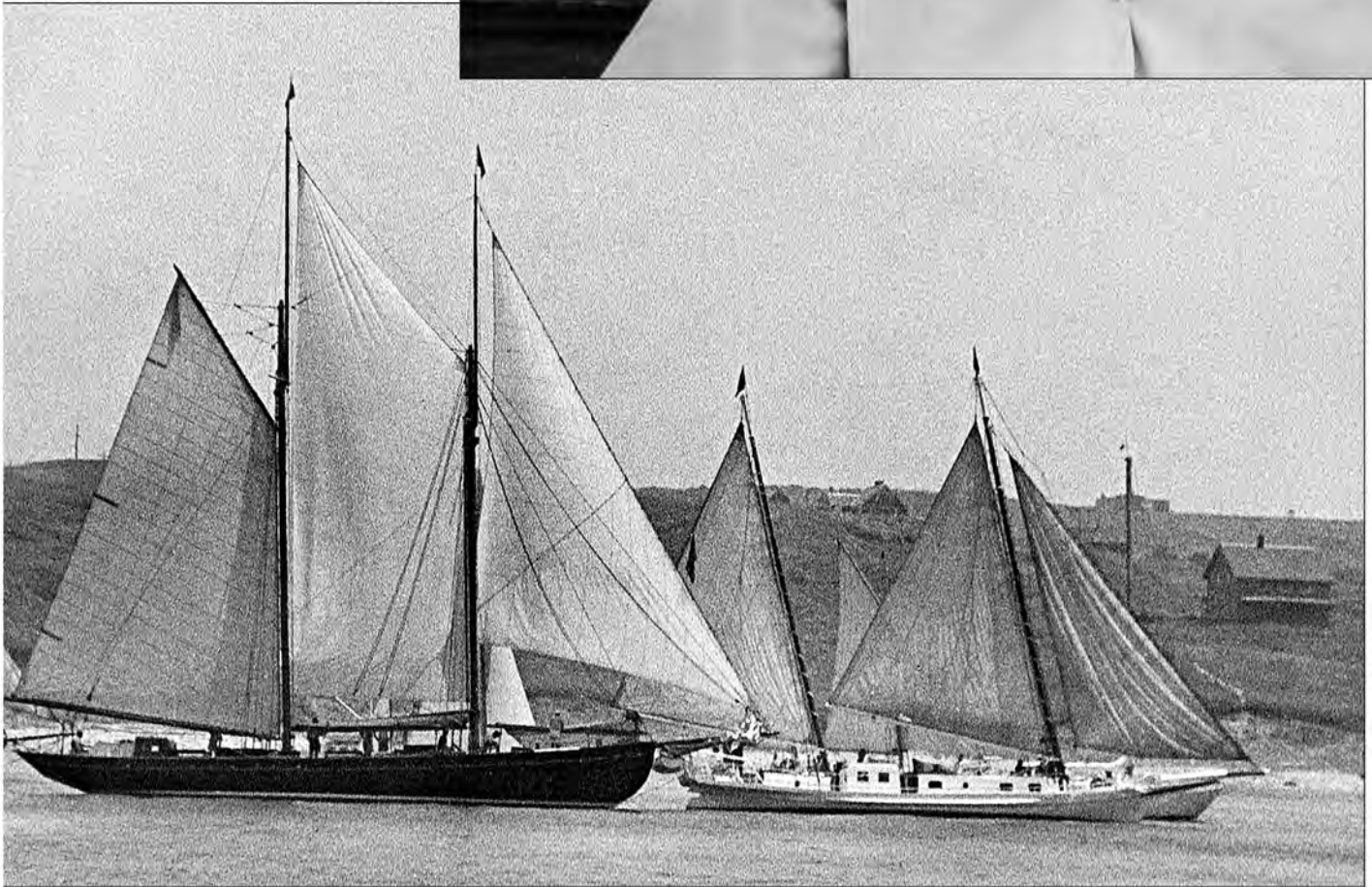
*"Spinnaker Run" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island, Rhode Island | 1967*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 50

*"Schooner Race" | Wiley Crockett, John Blaha, Anonymous (standing) | 1967*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 51  
*"Schooner Race"* | Leslie Shirk | 1967





EARLY WORK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 52

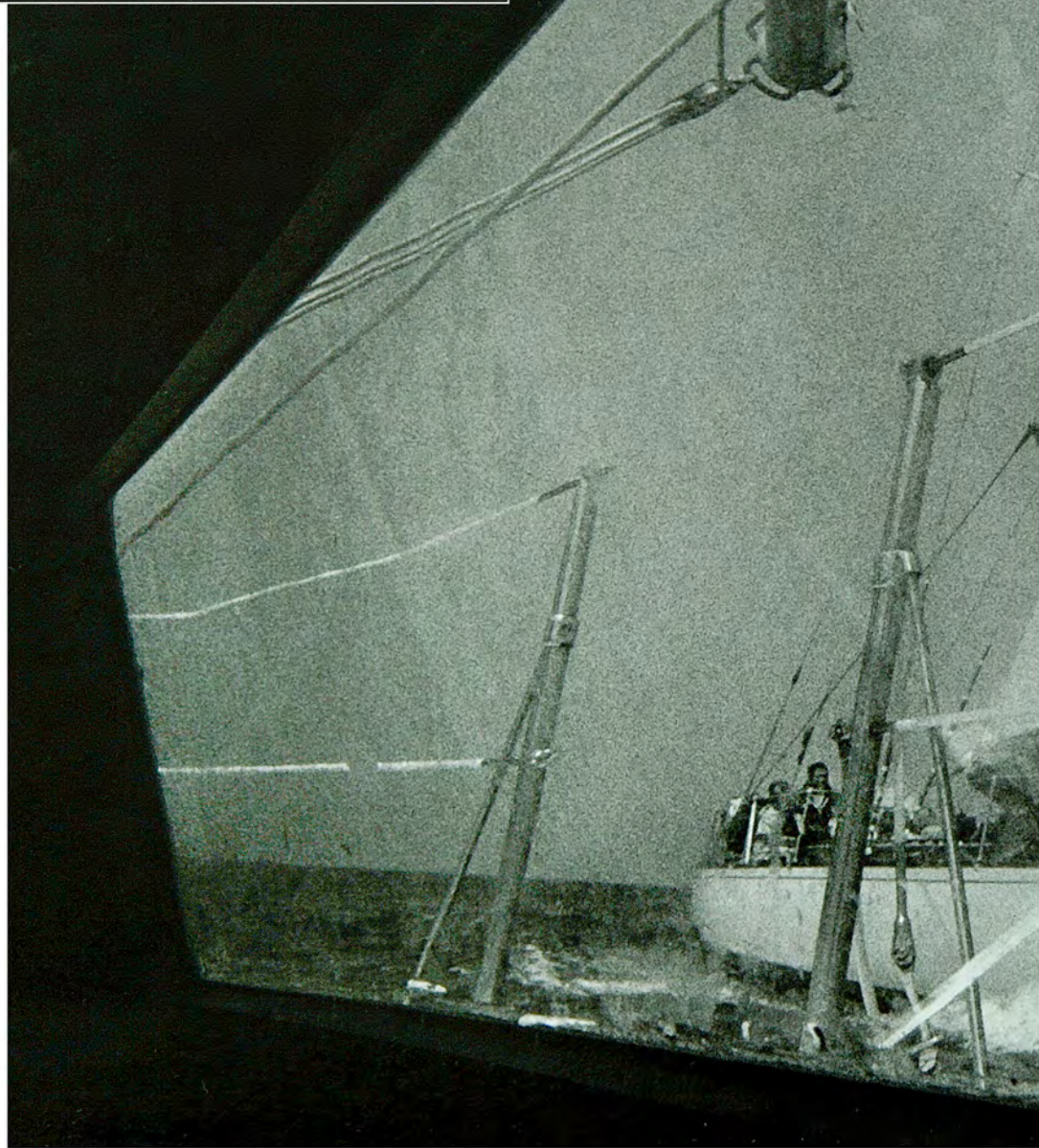
*"Fogbound" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island, Rhode Island | 1967*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 53

*"Ghost Ship Albatross" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island, Rhode Island | 1967*

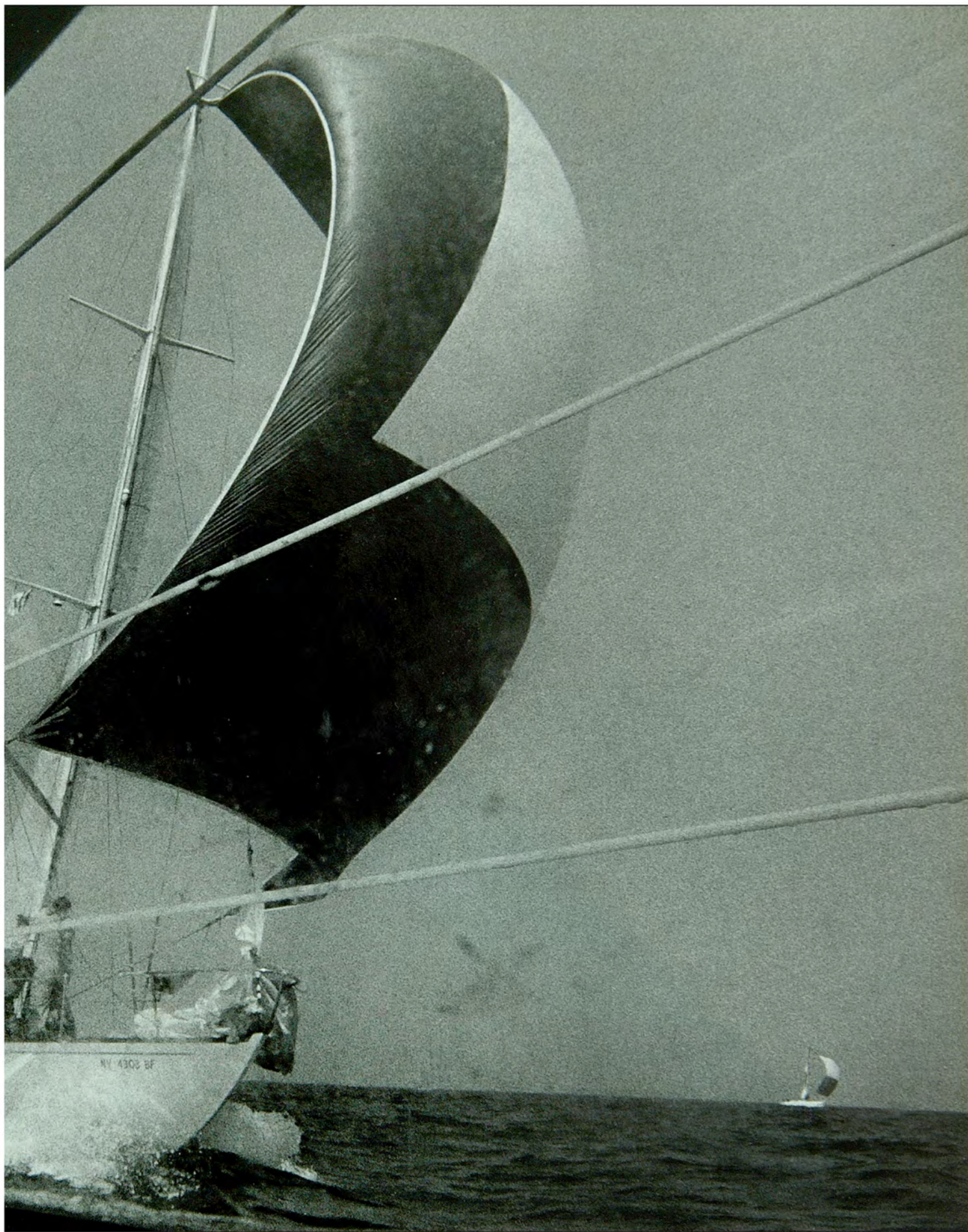




EARLY WORK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 54

*"Wet Ride" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island, Rhode Island | 1967*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 55

*"Overtaken" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island, Rhode Island | 1967*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 56

*"Making Sail" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island, Rhode Island | 1967*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 57

*"Third Place" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island, Rhode Island | 1967*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 58

*"Night Sail" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island | 1967 | Nikon World, 1971*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 59

*"Night Sail" | Atlantic Ocean Off Block Island | 1967 | Nikon World, 1971*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 60

*Cathedral of St. John the Divine | Lakin-Plink Wedding | New York | 1963*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 61

*Cathedral of St. John the Divine | Lakin-Plink Wedding | New York | 1963*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 62

*Lower Manhattan Skyline | 1968*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 63

*Throg's Neck Bridge | 1965*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 64  
*Lower Manhattan Skyline | 1968*



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 65

*Selfie* | 1968



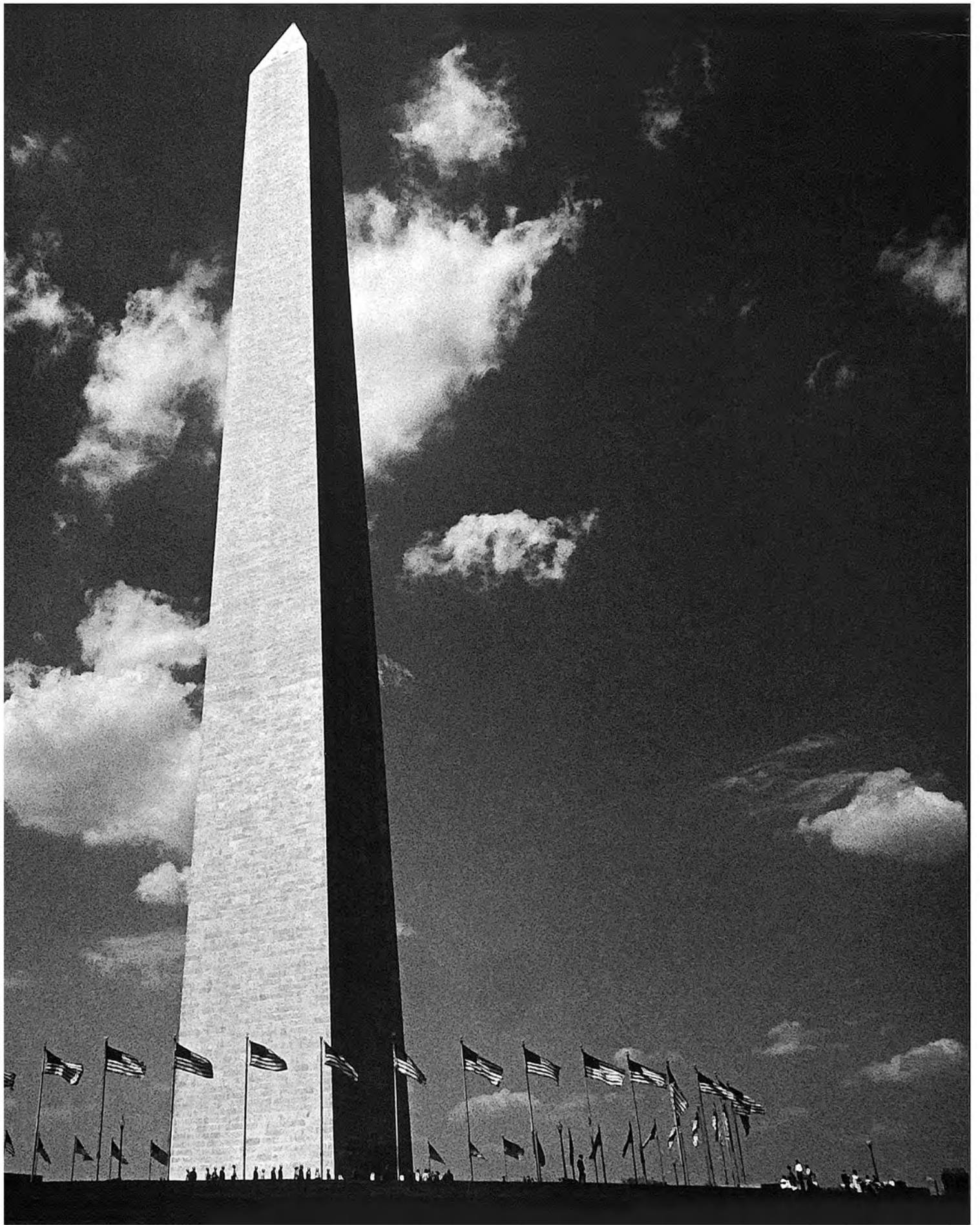
EVEN LIKE THE PASSAGE OF AN ANGEL'S TEAR / THAT FALLS THROUGH THE ~~SEA~~ ETHER SILENTLY.  
KEATS, 1816



EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 66

*Empire State Building | Christmas Card | 1965*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 67

*Washington Monument | 1966*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 68

*"Running Free" | Curtis & Kimberly Boehnstedt | Southamton, New York | 1965*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 69

*"Dying for A Drink"* | Kurt Boehnstedt | Southampton, New York | 1966





EARLY WORK | PLATE N°70

*Leslie Shirk | Wedding-Dress Portrait | Alley Pond Park, New York | 1966*

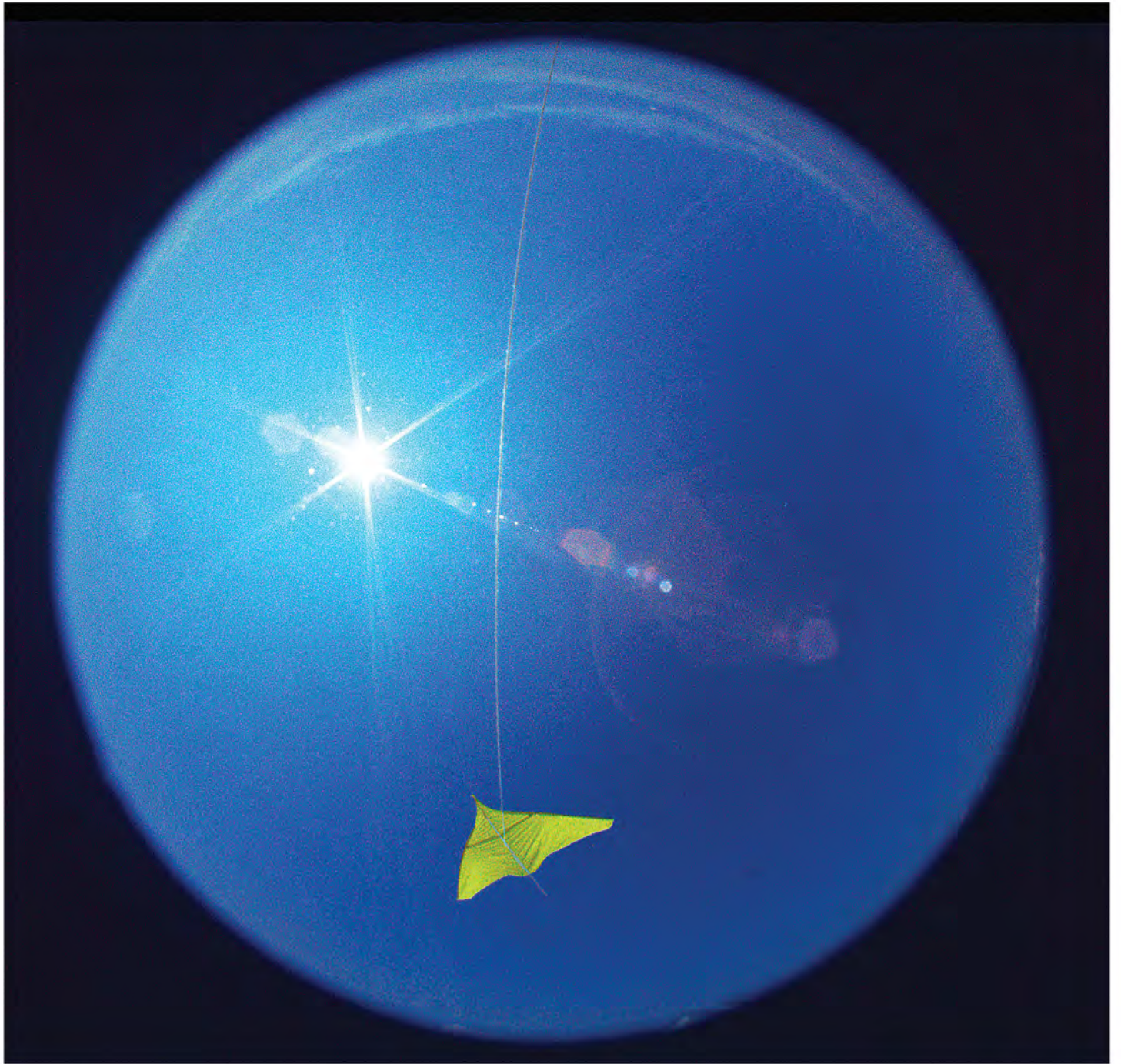




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 71

*Leslie Shirk | Wedding-Dress Portrait | Alley Pond Park, New York | 1966*





EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 72  
*Yellow Kite | Southampton, Long Island | 1967*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PLATE N° 73

*Leslie Shirk & Your's Truly | Peter & Diane Reynold's wedding | 1966*

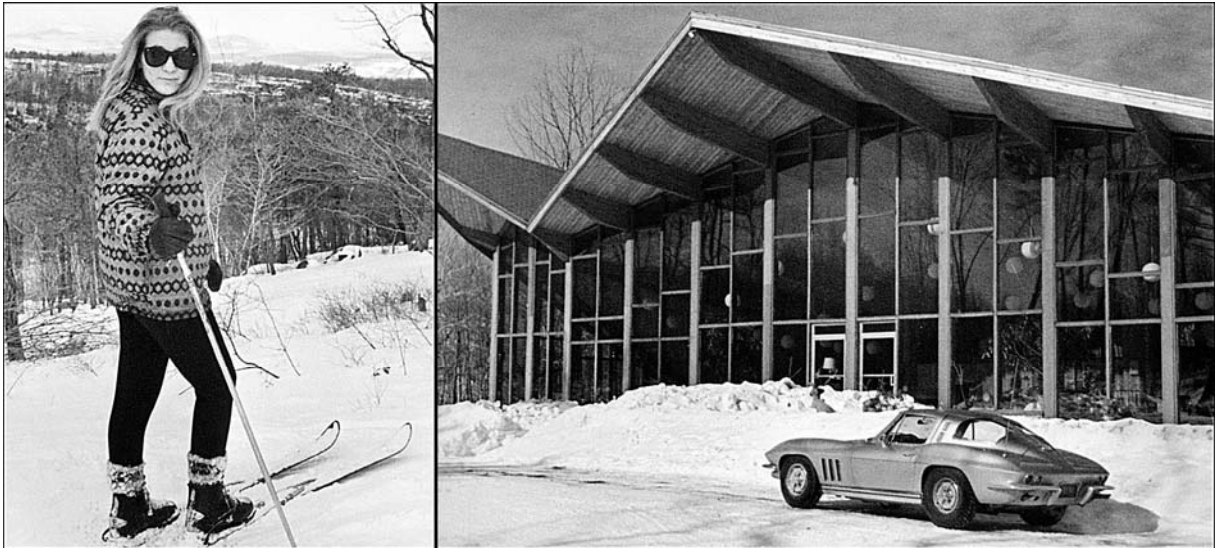




EARLY WORK | PLATE N° 74

*In Memorium | David Nolte | Mesney-Nolte Photographers | 1960 & 2016 | Below: with wife, Sue Raines.*





Together with our Douglaston friends—the sports-car club—we went on camping trips to watch car and bike races and took weekend ski trips to Lake Minnewaska, an upscale resort, two hours north of New York City. To save money, Wiley brought a propane camp stove and we cooked meals in his room; the odors wafted through the hallways offending others, but we managed to duck being discovered by the manager.

Between work and school there was little time for a social life of any breadth. Ties to Douglaston began to devolve; Billy Thomas got Mary McMahon pregnant; they married and moved away. John Blaha was also away, at Syracuse University and Allan Seiden was at Penn State. Leslie and I spent more time in Manhattan and Flushing; new friends replaced old ones. At Queens College, I befriended Peter Reynolds and his wife, Diane. Pete was a fellow student, a free thinker and a dope smoker who, like me, was wearing the tracks off his *Creedence Clearwater Revival* and *Doors* LPs. Leslie and Diane didn't get along that well after Diane started flirting with me. Was she trying to organize an orgy?

Photos of himself and his wife, Diane, by Peter Reynolds, 1966







Besides the Reynolds, our circle of friends came to include Mike and Judy Murphy (left). Judy was my secretary at Basford; a buxom blonde who was going steady with (and later married to) Mike Murphy, a handsome Marine who could have been a professional model. Little did I know that befriending work colleagues was considered a taboo; people gossiped about us at work, but Leslie and I kept seeing the Murphys, until he went off to war and she moved to North Carolina, to be closer to her family. Mike and Judy introduced us to their friends, fellow Marine Frank Levin and his wife; the six of us hung out together frequently; Levin drove a sweet Porsche 911, which he kept in tip top shape and graciously allowed me to photograph. We took Frank's car to Fort Totten, an ancient army base built on a promontory at the entrance to New York harbor. Abandoned long ago; the architecture of the old fort was stark and reminiscent of ancient Greece or Egypt.



Gene Butera thought so too. He liked my Porsche pictures so much that he gave me a Saab 99 to shoot for Car and Driver. For that shoot, Leslie donned a *hippiesque* costume resembling a latter-day Tibetan shepherd—form-fitting, bell-bottom pants and a fur vest accessorized with a long walking stick.



I positioned her on top of the fort and gave her a pocket mirror to flash sunlight at the camera. By using a Tiffen 2-mm cross-star filter, the sun's rays diffracted into a star. I also used a Red-25 filter to darken the sky and shot on fine-grain Panatomic-X film.

The graphic, stylized look of those pictures brought me a step closer to a look I perfected about a year later, photographing Carol Douglas on the beach dunes at Fire Island. Saab was a relatively new brand in America; the Swedish car had a safety feature I was unfamiliar with—the motor wouldn't start if the driver's seatbelt wasn't fastened.

Nobody told me about that—I was busy when the Saab dealer left the car at my office [346 East 50<sup>th</sup> Street]; he left the keys and split. Later that evening, I went to move the car to the other side of the street; but darn if the engine wouldn't start. I never even thought it could be the seat belts—I never wore them after what happened to my motoring buddy, Vince Comparetto; he had a terrible crash; being thrown from the car was what saved his life. Besides, there were no seatbelt laws back then. [New York passed the first seat-belt law in 1984.] Making matters worse, it was a Friday; when I finally capitulated, got over my embarrassment and called their offices, Car and Driver was closed; I didn't have anyone's home number, either. My frustrations were turning to despair when my office mate, film maker Eddie Carr, suggested that he give it a try. Do I need to tell you what happened? The first thing he did when he got in the car was to fasten the seatbelts. Geez, did I feel dumb, especially since it was my first assignment.

## **1967 – Lucky Number – New Persona**

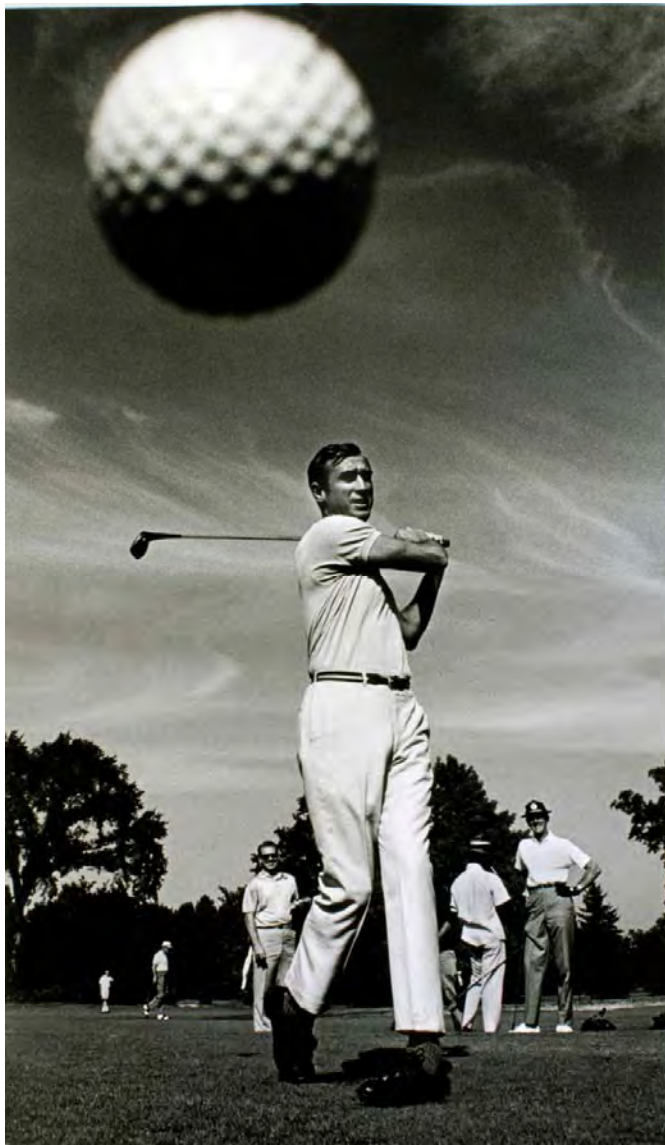
The situation was getting dicey; those with my Draft-Lottery number—77—had been called-up for military service in Viet Nam a year before. Being married and going to school gave me a deferment, but that wasn't enough anymore; as the war dragged on, the Selective Service started inducting deferred guys like me. To avoid serving in a war I thought immoral, I created the persona of a suicidal gay guy; that kind of “girly man” (as Arnold Schwarzenegger called them) was still able to flunk the pre-induction physical, be classified 4F and be barred from military service.

To succeed in my charade, I needed to establish a credible track record that “proved” that I was mentally imbalanced. To that end, I met with a Queens College guidance counselor and presented as a potential suicide; I told her that I just couldn't take the pressures of life any more; that I wanted to end it all. The fact that I had been carted off to North Shore Hospital a few years earlier (when I feigned suicide after Ginger O'Grady left me) bolstered my story. The counselor referred me to Florence Lipsig, a Freudian psychiatrist with offices on West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, the outskirts of Greenwich Village. I visited Florence at least once a week for three years, on my own dime; I could hardly afford \$50 per session, on a salary of \$200 a week; but it was money well spent; like some kind of insurance policy. At first, I made up stories to convince Lipsig that I was a nut case; but, about a year into therapy, I realized that, even though I was making-up stories, the stuff came from my head; so, I figured I might as well take the analysis seriously and get my money's worth.

In preparation for my pre-induction physical exam, at Fort Hamilton [Brooklyn], I grew my nails really long and buffed them to a high shine. At the exam, when they saw my long hair (it looked great that day; I did a little henna treatment, for color and shine), make-up (just a little lip gloss) and long, shiny nails, they took me into a little room for a talk; I made it a point to tap the desktop nervously with my long nails and answer queries using a well rehearsed, queer-sounding “whiffp” [lisp]; all that, and the perfume I was wearing [Chanel No.5], earned me the 4F disqualification I was after. Life is an act; it's about management of perception; about how you want to be perceived by those important in your life—your wife (partner), your boss (client), your friends and colleagues; maybe even the police. Shakespeare said, the world's a stage. You can play any part you want. Successfully avoiding the draft, by assuming a new persona, boosted my self-confidence and reinforced my belief that I had the power to manage peoples' perceptions about me.



Of course, nobody at the office ever saw me in the full regalia of that gay persona; but they could see that I was changing; my hair got long and shaggy and I grew a Fu Manchu moustache. Among my colleagues, I was the odd man out: a hippy wearing pin-striped suits and wing-tip shoes; they didn't know what to make of me. However, despite looking like a hippy (perhaps because of that), I was enjoying new notoriety at the agency. After getting assigned to shoot pictures for the agency's employee newsletter, everyone knew about my photography hobby and that I was good at it. One shot in particular got the attention of the agency's new VP of creative services, Ben Colarossi; it was an action shot of him playing bocce ball at an inter-agency tournament, taken with a motor-drive Nikon that shot at up to four frames per second. Besides appearing in the company house organ, Colarossi had the picture framed and hung it on his office wall, above his trophies.



Don Creamer tees-off at Basford Open.

Soon after that I was asked to photograph the Basford Open golf tournament, an annual junket for clients, VIPs and the agency's top brass. I showed-off a bit at the event, making dramatic, trick-shots of agency president Don Creamer and his cream-of-the-crop (sorry, couldn't resist) VPs; I made sure each got a 16 X 20-inch [40.6 X 50.8 cm] exhibition print of their pictures.



And soon after that, Colarossi asked me to shoot more golf pictures, this time for an advertisement. That shoot turned into a traumatic experience.

After being flown down to Florida for the shoot, the big studio strobes that I brought along for fill-in flash wouldn't fire. Eventually, I figured out that the electronic flashes were grounding, literally. Some rubber doormats placed under the generators solved the problem (and restored my reputation).

Basford had recently changed hands, having been acquired by a new, "boutique" consumer-advertising agency, Creamer-Colarossi. The merger was a sleazy deal in which Basford's CEO, John Sasso, and the Board of Directors, allowed the new owners to abandon Basford's pension plan and move the funds into the new agency's current account, enhancing the value of Creamer-Colarossi stock. In the process, all the former Basford employees got screwed, especially those near retirement, who had dedicated their careers to the old agency. It was the first time I saw grown men (and women) cry. However, my point of view was more pragmatic; I was young, had little to lose and saw working for the company's new masters as an opportunity.

## 1967 – Sailing with Wiley – Catching A Breeze

Although I've never been a sailor, I've dreamt of it; still do.

Sailing is a metaphor for life itself, of how we lead our lives. Some choose to let the winds and currents take them where they will; to go with the flow. Others use the winds to navigate, towards destinations chosen by them; some of them are fanatic about it; Wiley Crockett was such a sailor.

He began racing Blue Jays<sup>36</sup> around Little Neck Bay and made a name for himself among Douglaston sailors: an *outsider* was consistently out-classing them in the weekly summer races. Outsider because the Crocketts—Wiley Senior, his wife Doris, and younger siblings, Jay and Debbie—lived on the other side of the Long Island Railroad tracks and the other side of Northern Boulevard, the dividing line between Douglaston and Little Neck. Although it was a blurry line, Douglastonians in general were quite snobbish about the distinction between the two neighborhoods. Wiley's domineering nature was likely a reaction to an inferiority complex about being an outsider. Even though he hung out with the Douglaston Club crowd, he had penchant for proving himself to them, to everyone. His determination drove him to join the Marines, during the Viet Nam War, and endure the world's most extreme boot camp, at Paris Island [South Carolina].

Wiley didn't have his own Blue Jay; he crewed for others. Success beget success; soon, Wiley's tactical prowess put him in demand among the skippers of larger craft; in particular, Van Waring, owner and skipper of a 70-foot [~21 meters] English Cutter named *Wanderer*. Wiley knew how to catch a breeze and was soon made first mate.

I knew nothing more about boating than operating the family's 17-foot [~5-meter] Lyman lap-strake skiff, although I had taken a Coast Guard sponsored course called *Piloting, Seamanship and Small Boat Handling*. I got to know Wiley through our mutual interest in cars and motorcycles, described elsewhere in this tome. He modeled for my motorcycle

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<sup>36</sup> Wikipedia: Blue Jay is a class of sailboat used primarily in the Northeastern United States. It is generally sailed with two people and features a mainsail, a jib, and a spinnaker. It is approximately 14 feet long,



portfolio [see *1960s / Portfolio / Part One*]. Wiley took a fancy to having his picture taken; thus began a symbiotically beneficial episode in our friendship that changed the course of my career. In late May, Wiley got me invited aboard *Wanderer* when skipper Waring sailed her into the Atlantic Ocean for a night sail that was a practice run for Block Island Race Week, in June. As sailboats go, *Wanderer* was palatial; she needed to be, to house the crew of six needed to sail her and their guests in blue water. On smaller sailboats, photographers like me were excess baggage; my weight could slow them down or upset the balance at the wrong time. On *Wanderer* my 135-pounds meant nothing; and she was so big that I was never in the way. What a joy it was photographing that ride. To say sailing the ocean on that starry night was exhilarating—thrilling—is an understatement. The big ship, making way under full sail, crashing through the high seas was an awesome experience. The photos were equally impressive, to Wiley and Van Waring, who invited me to join the crew sailing at Block Island Race Week. (!)



Douglas Mesney, Wiley Crockett & Leslie Shirk '65

At that point in my life, my interest was focused on building portfolios of marketable pictures. Those were the years before “stock photography.” Picture libraries were limited to historical resources, like the Bettmann Archive. Communicators hired professional photographers to illustrate their prose. To land those jobs, a photographer had to demonstrate skills; i.e., to get a job shooting toothpaste, one needed a portfolio of toothpaste pictures. So, I kissed Leslie goodbye and sailed to Block Island.

Race Week was everything I imagined it would be: a “poor” man’s version of the Newport, Rhode Island regattas. No matter; it was all new to me. I was loving the photo ops, and the crew, having seen my work from the sea-trials shoot, were willing models, and helpers. On one foggy day—Block Island is infamous for its fog—the crew hoisted me to the top of the mast, in the bosun’s chair, where I shot *Ghost Sailboat*.

1967 was the second bi-annual Block Island Race Week; the first, in 1965, was an extension of the Larchmont-to-Block Island race, originated by Block Island’s Storm Trysail Yacht Club in 1938. Being part of a new, big event, not only made it more exciting, it added value to my pictures. If there was ever an All-American way of life, certainly those yachtsmen—and their women—were living it; for me it was an eye opener, a glimpse into the upper crust of society, the prep-school crowd. *Wanderer*’s crew lived aboard; I had the upper berth in the port side (left) of the bow—possibly the worst place to be on an English Cutter, designed to slice through the surf. In port there were no such problems. I quickly learned how to operate the toilet pump and put the paper in the basket; nobody swam near the harbor. The sailors were a hard-drinking bunch; I managed to keep up but balked at beer for breakfast.

## 1967 | Portfolio | Sailing with Wiley At Block Island | Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-10



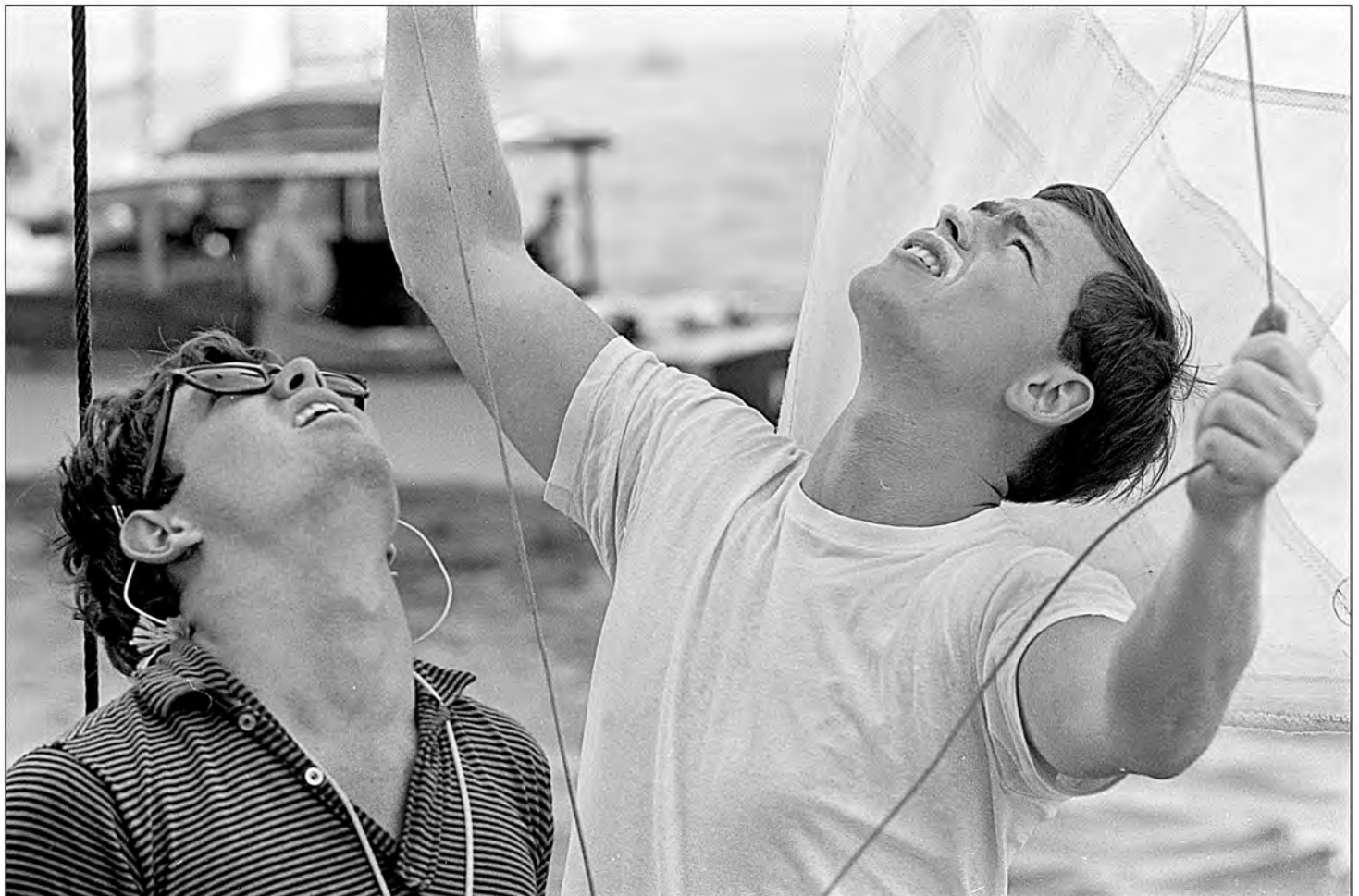
1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 1

Block Island ferries, *Quonset* & *Eugenia* | Wiley & Barbera Crockett with Yours Truly (photo Leslie Mesney).



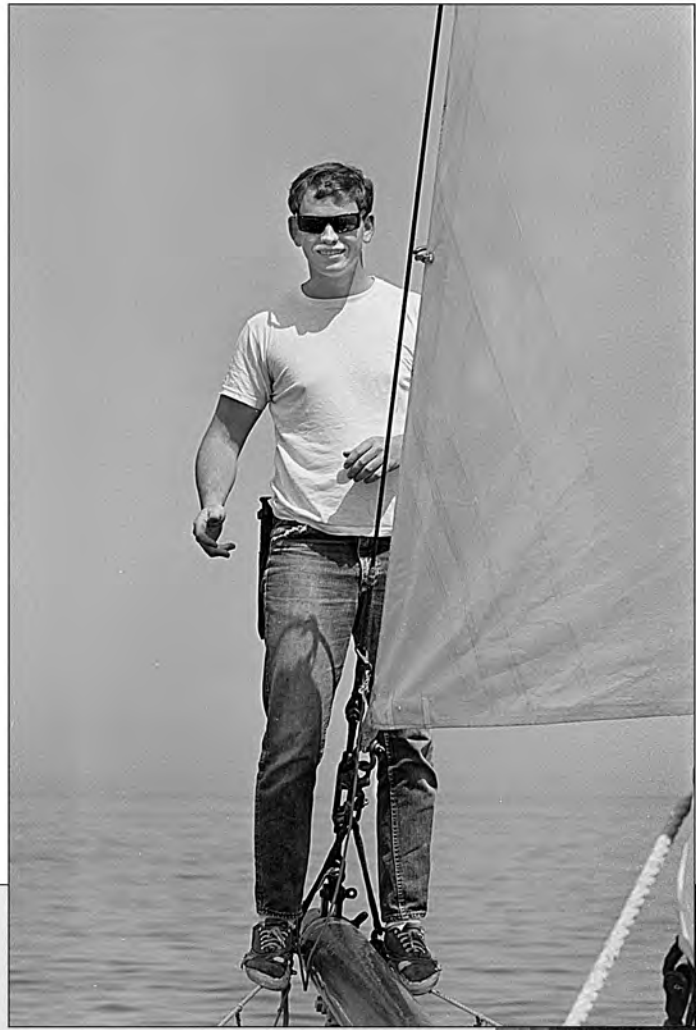


1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 2  
Above, Block Island Inn, the party house | Below (left), Wiley Crockett & Gnger O'Grady.



1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 3  
 Aboard Aquaris | Above left, Wiley Crockett; right, Leslie Mesney | Below left, Wiley Crockett.





1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 4

Above: Wiley Crockett | Below: Wiley & Leslie Mesney.



1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 5  
Eugene Carduna, Skipper of *Aquarius*.





1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 6  
Van Waring, Skipper of *Reville*, with John Blaha and Wiley Crockett.



1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 7

Wiley Crockett | Center, John Blaha & friend.





1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 8

Wiley & Barbara Crockett horsing around.



1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 9

Above, Leslie and Your's Truly | Below, Wiley photo-bombing Leslie's picture.





1967 | PORTFOLIO | SAILING WITH WILEY AT BLOCK ISLAND | PLATE N° 10

Leslie Mesney riding the bow sprit of Van Waring's *Reville*.

Most of the crew partied all night and needed the *hair of the dog* to hoist sail the mornings after. When the seas were roiling, they warned: “Don’t go below.” That was because the cabins were filled with the fumes of the sloshing bilge; it was a disgusting odor which, combined with the pitch and yaw of the boat, made puking a virtual certainty. I tested my mettle when Nature called but managed to win the battle.

Wiley also got me invited aboard the *Aquarius*, a 41-foot [12.5-meter] *Newport 41* sailboat owned by Eugene Carduner of the Knickerbocker Yacht Club. It was on that sail that I got the shots that became my sailing portfolio [see *1960s | Portfolio | Part One*]; the *Third Place* series was shot from that boat.

Of course, prints of the pictures from Block Island made their way into the right hands—those who helped me make them, the skippers and their crews. They greased the wheels for my return to Block Island, with Leslie, in 1969, at Wiley’s invitation. He was then dating a gal he met at the 1967 event, the late Barbara Healy, from Providence, Rhode Island. We stayed at a well-weathered 19<sup>th</sup> century house called The Sea Chest, owned by Barbara’s late cousin, Elizabeth L. Kiley; it was like a museum and I decided to make a photo-essay about it.

The house was a powerful subject, perched high on a bluff overlooking the vast ocean, holding steadfast in the dune grass against mighty winter winds. Inside, the house was well preserved example of 19<sup>th</sup> Century life. *The Sea Chest* portfolio was shot as an exercise; to add some *sport*, I challenged myself by putting a one-hour time limit on the shoot, of the house and grounds; the sailboat pictures were added to round-out the essay. I mostly shot color of the races; the only stuff that looked any good were pictures taken with Infrared-Aero Ektachrome film. That’s because most times, the weather was either foggy or dull. Plus, I couldn’t get close enough to the boats to get any dramatic angles; I would have needed a power boat to do that. However, I managed to sell two cover shots to Boating magazine.



Hoping to exploit my work at the last race [1967], I brought along a few dozen “Sailing Pixies” and tried selling them at a pop-up stand near the big tent where sailors met to scuttlebutt after the day’s sailing events. I made a slick display on silver illustration board and offered the Pixies at \$2.95 apiece; I reckoned I could coin some cash; but they didn’t sell. Part of the reason might have been the way I looked; my hair was growing out as part of my new identity; my hippie-like hair looked out of place. In fact, one night, at the bar, a couple of drunk sailors started picking on me, calling me a sissy homo. When they started shoving me, Wiley intervened and saved my ass. I didn’t sell even one Pixie. But the exposure helped build my reputation as a nautical lensman. And, by then I was on the cusp of a change-of-life.

## 1960s Portfolio | The Sea Chest | Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-22





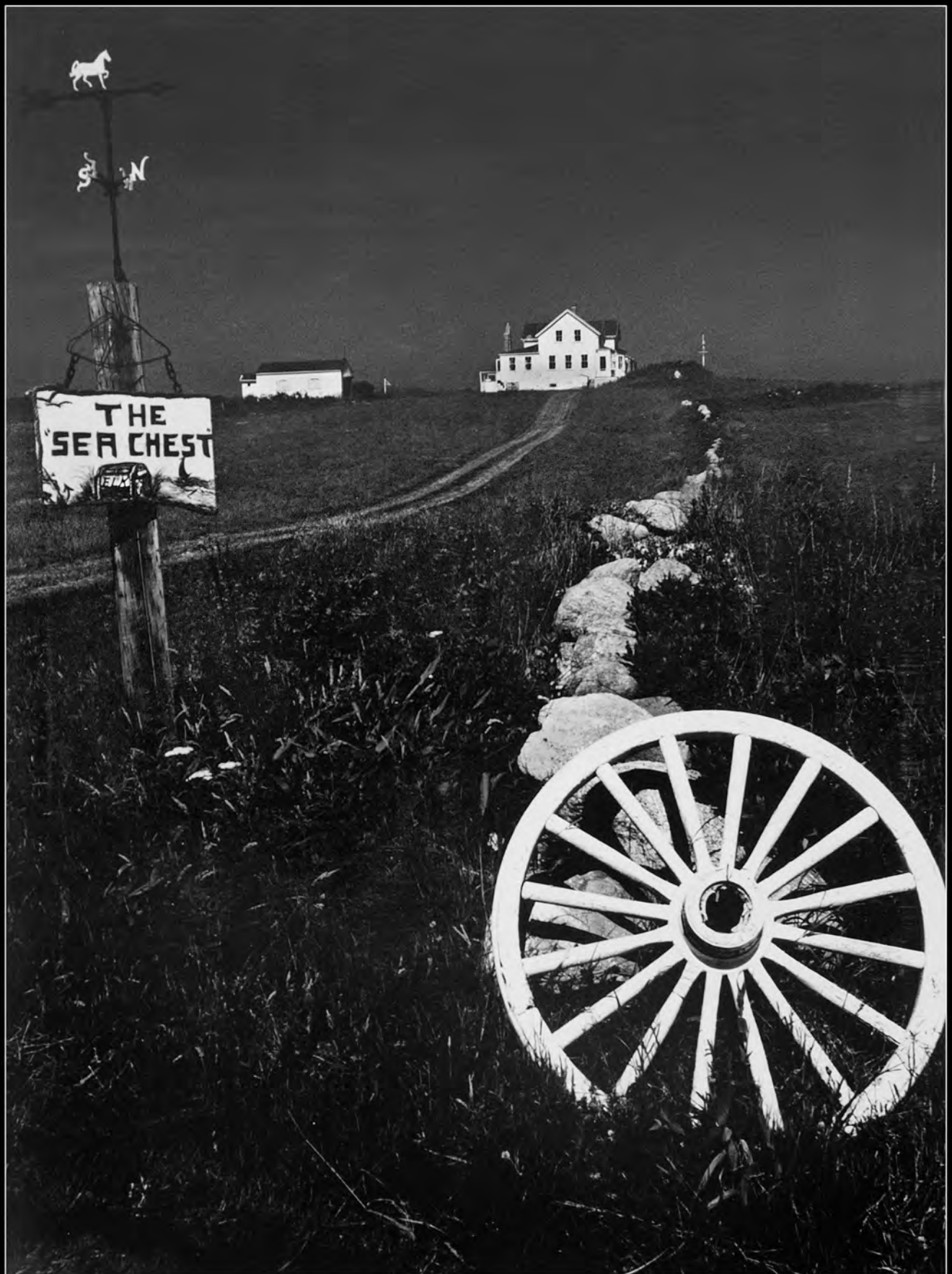


1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 1  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 2  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 3  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 4  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 5  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 6  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*

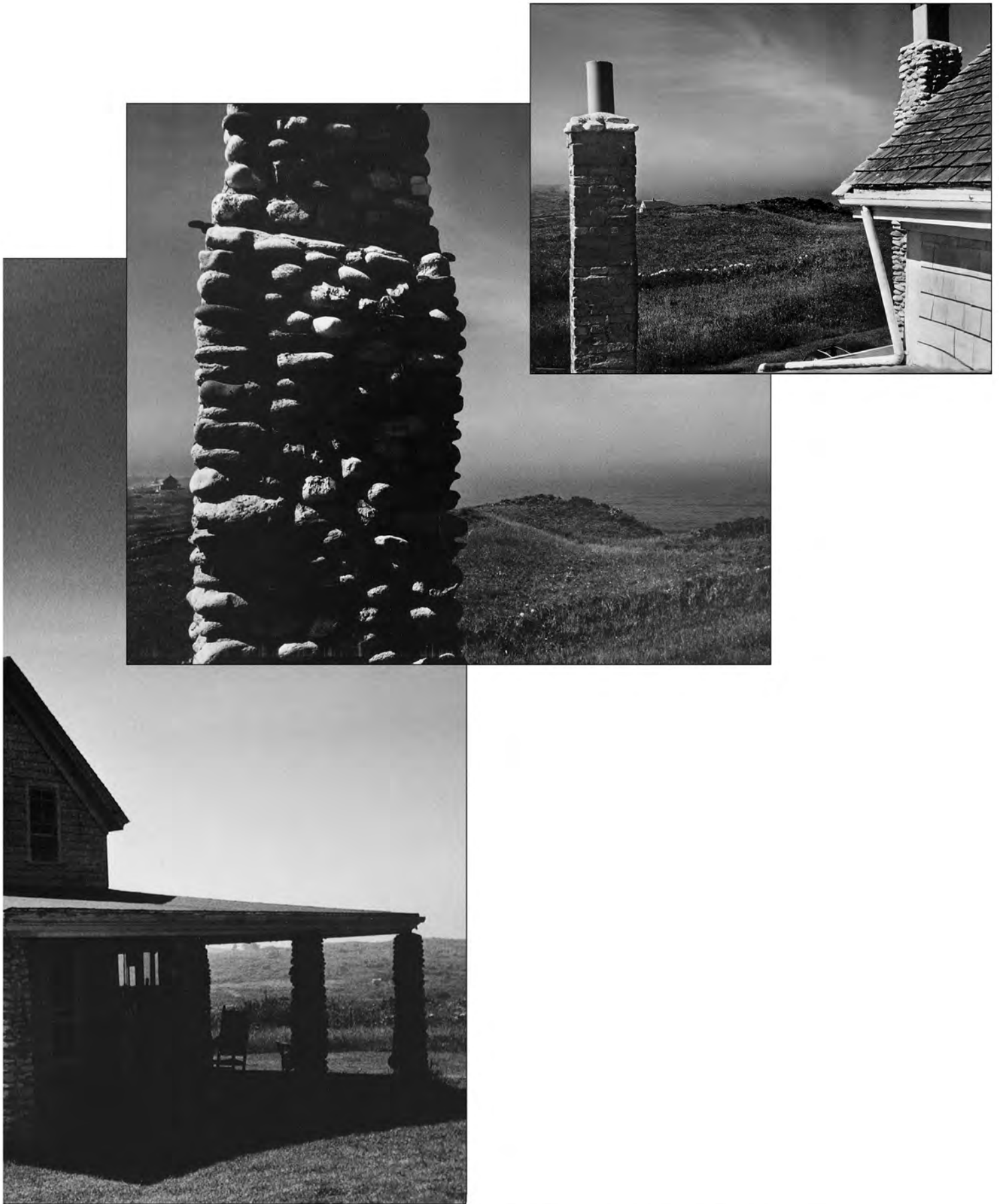


1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 7  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 8  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 9  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 10  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*

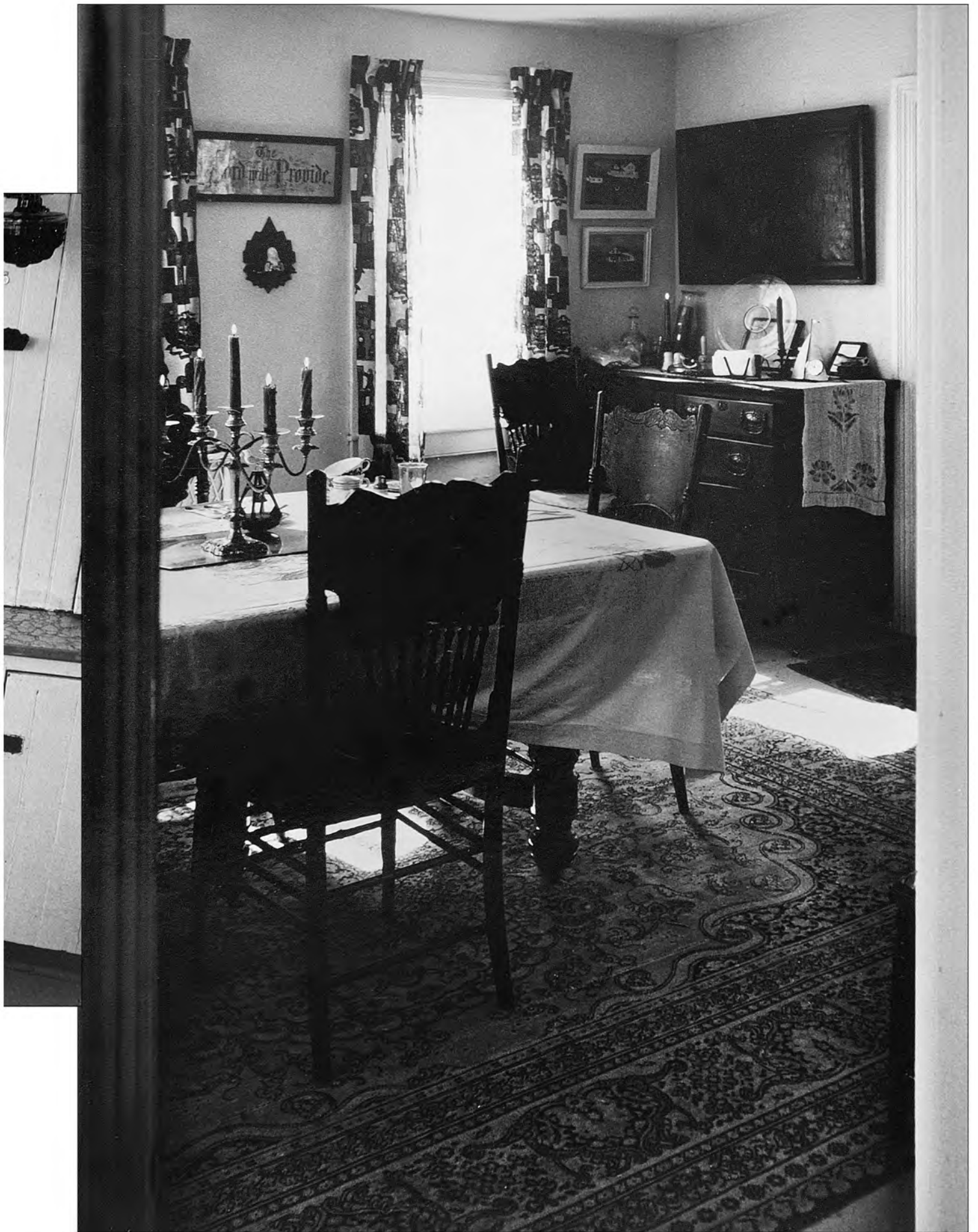


1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 11  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*



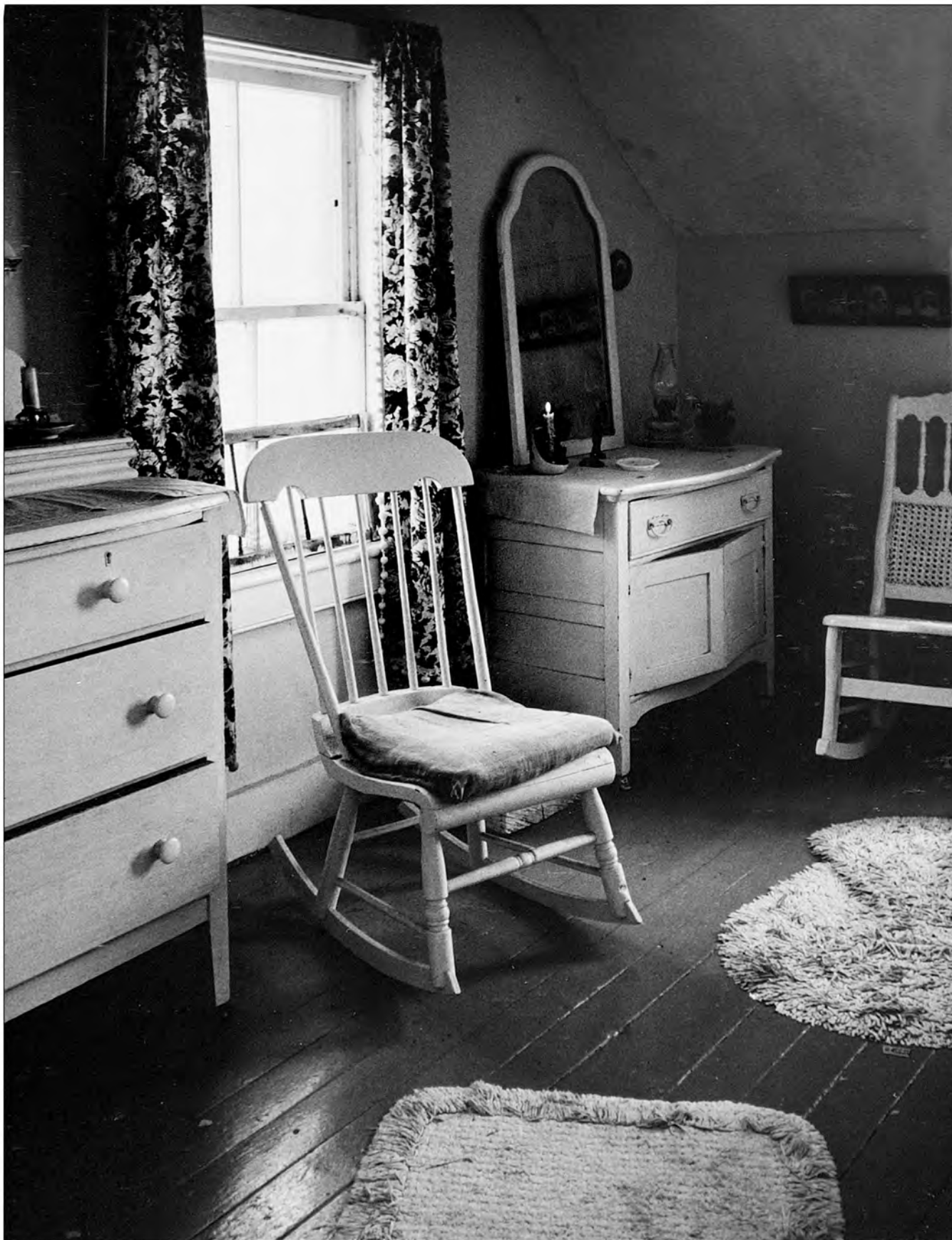


1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 12  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 13  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 14  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*

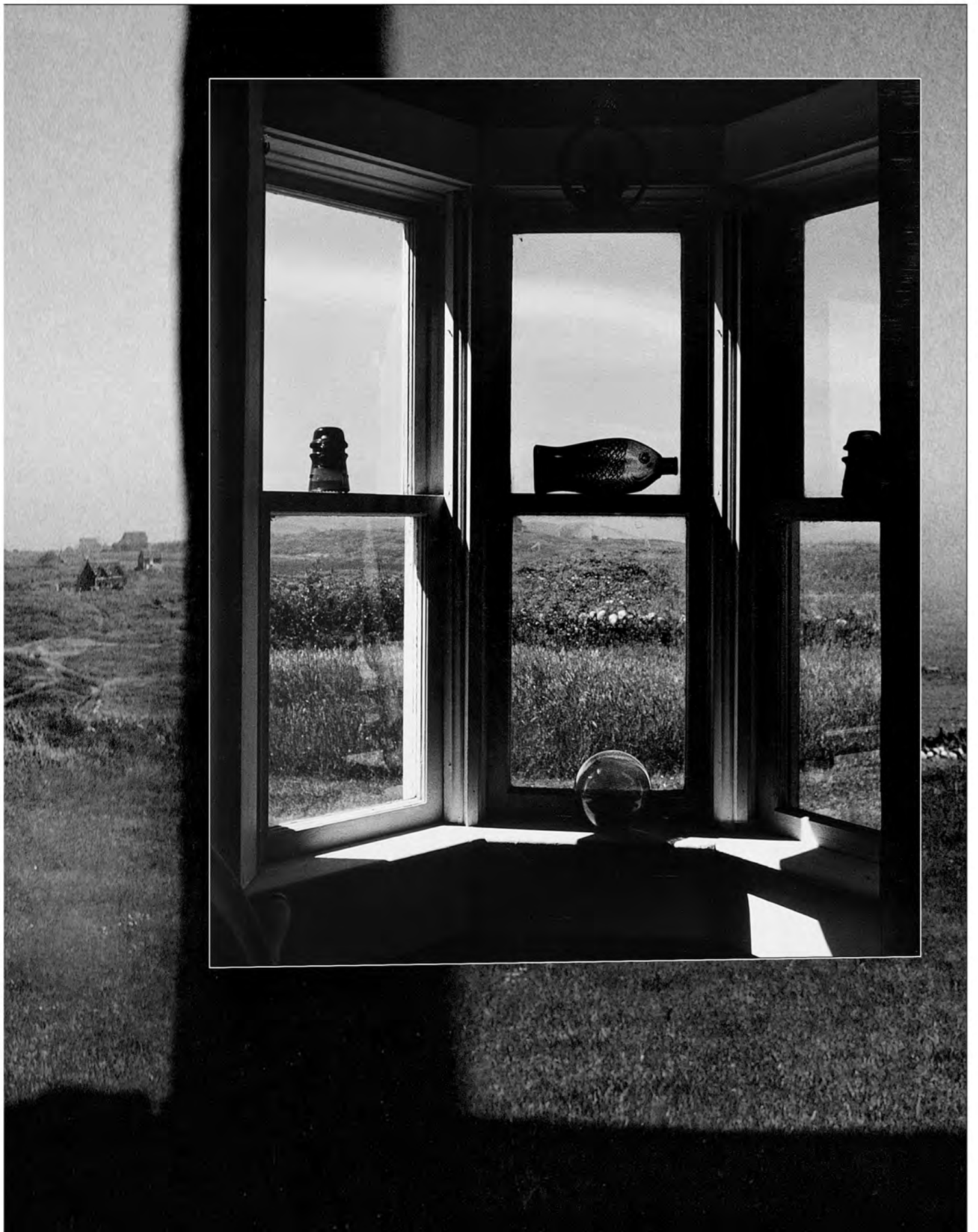


1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 15  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 16  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 17  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 18  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 19  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 20  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 21  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | THE SEA CHEST | PLATE N° 22  
*Elizabeth L. Kiley Residence | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1969*

## 1967 – Worlds Within Worlds – Change from Within

It was my photography that caught the eyes of the agency's new management and opened doors for me in the Art Department.

Although a good photographer, I hadn't a style of my own yet; I was still emulating (polite for copying) the styles of other great lensmen, particularly Pete Turner. Turner's look was achieved by shooting with super-wide optics and infra-red-sensitive film emulsions that produced the kind of wild, vivid hues that fit right in with the current, psychedelic art and fashion trends.<sup>37</sup>



To digress for a moment: Pete Turner was probably the first photographer to seriously explore the creative potentials of infrared color film; he figured out a few wild color combinations and made them famous. I took his work a step further. By becoming a filter expert, I hit on Turner's combinations, and went on to discover more spectacular color effects. Infra-red photography became my speciality; I marketed the looks I developed under the name, *Atomicolor*.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Infrared [IR] color films rendered reality in "false colors;" for example, green leaves turned red and magenta.

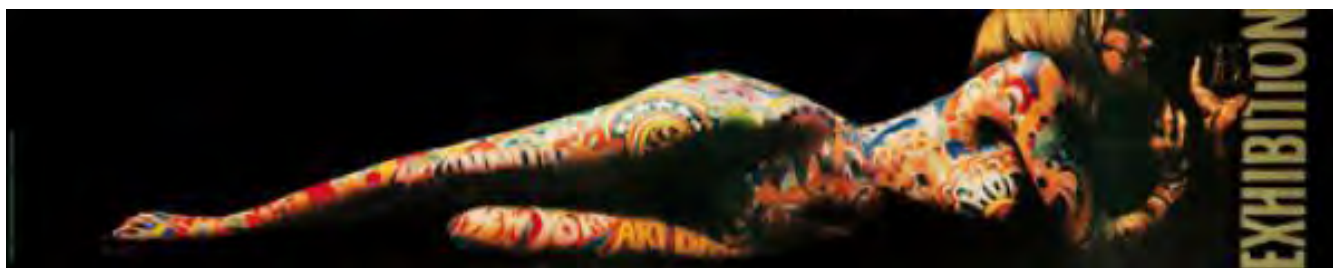
<sup>38</sup> The secret to my infra-red [IR] photography was using Kodak Infrared Aero Ektachrome film with filters that narrowed the visible spectrum [white light] to its primary colors—red, green and blue—and their secondary ones—cyan, magenta and yellow.



Although experimenting with infra-red, I didn't do that much color work because it was too expensive, both for me and my customers. Most of my work was shot black and white. Using certain red filters (#25 and #29) with normal Kodak black and white film emulsions (Panatomic-X, Plus-X and Tri-X) produced a *faux* infra-red look—notably, black skies. However, those techniques didn't create the ethereal look of true infrared photography. Using IR film turned green colors (foliage) light gray, red colors (like fleshy tones) white, and blue colors (skies) black. Those false colors produced surreal-looking pictures. As much as I loved those effects, I didn't use infra-red-sensitive films very often, because they were just too tricky to handle; IR film had to be loaded, unloaded and processed in complete darkness; and to get the full effect required the use of an IR cut-off filter (#87), which is opaque. With that filter attached, I couldn't see through the lens; shots had to be lined up before attaching the filter. Anyway....

My picture skills, obvious dedication to my craft and rebellious looks gained me admission to the agency's art department, on the 27<sup>th</sup> floor (account people worked on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor). There was an invisible barrier between the art directors and account executives. For openers, Art is not something well done by committees. Then too, for an art director, selling a design to the account people was like going before the Inquisition; whatever was presented, the account execs would pick it apart mercilessly; art directors were beset with questions like: Why is it blue? Why don't we use the other picture? Can we make it bigger? ADs needed to have good arguments to win those ego-driven, politically-charged debates about their designs.

Kurt Boehnstedt was the art director assigned to John Paluszek's AISI group. The sheer volume of stuff that our 8-man group produced—films, videos, brochures, newsletters, fact sheets and ads—was enough to keep Kurt busy full time. To his chagrin. Kurt felt himself somehow diminished by being relegated to working for a commodities producer instead of a more glamorous, fashion-oriented client... something involving women.



Kurt was a lady's man. His office was decorated with Tom Daley's iconic painted-lady poster, made for the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual New York Art Directors Club Exhibition.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In early 1966, when psychedelic body art was in flower, one of its all-time classic examples was created at the behest of New York's Art Directors Club for their 46th Annual Exhibition of Advertising & Editorial Art Direction & Design call for entries. Designer Tom Daly did the actual full-length body painting on model Wanda Embry. Ken Harris was the photographer. The final poster, unfolded, was over five feet in length!

An in-depth article on the making of the poster, from the November 1966 ART DIRECTION Magazine, demonstrated the care that went into the concept and execution. A short excerpt: "Show Chairman Bob Reed said the Call got underway last spring when the exhibition committee began looking for a design to fit their "Innovation" theme. The club wanted something to represent the New York annual as the most desirable and enticing show to enter... Designer Tom Daly was picked to do the Call and came up with the idea of a skyline painted on a nude. His first idea for applying the design to human skin was tattooing but research led to experiments with various media. The best one turned out to be theatrical greasepaint and water-soluble acrylics... Finding the right model was a major concern. Too sultry or voluptuous a model, it was felt, would cheapen the effect. She had to be enticing enough to symbolize a worthwhile prize that was not easily attainable..."

He liked that poster so much that he hired Daley to paint—of all things—a garbage can, for an American Iron & Steel Institute promotion aimed at boosting sales of steel garbage cans at a time when plastic trash bins were gaining popularity and market share. The theme of that promotion was, Make America Beautiful; the idea was that everyone should decorate their garbage cans; the message was that steel cans were easier to paint. Although that far-fetched meme didn't hold much sway, the decorated can was a hit with the media and got the steel industry a load of free publicity. Kurt also interviewed Peter Max for that job; Max and Daley originally partnered in the Daly & Max Studio; after they separated, Max went on to become the more well-known of the two.

Like all his German ancestors, Kurt wore a bushy moustache, possibly as compensation for his inherited premature baldness; he was one of only a few in the agency who appreciated my Fu Manchu. Importantly, he also approved of my photo work. Kurt could have objected to me shooting for the AISI mailers, possibly preferring to hire another photographer of his own choosing; but Kurt liked my pictures; that was a huge, complimentary incentive.

Kurt, who is eleven years older than me [his birth date is 1.2.34] lived in Flushing, near Leslie and I; as a result, we became fast friends quickly. It was the Summer of Love; Kurt invited us to join his family—wife Beatrice ("Bea") and their kids, seven-year-old Curtis and five-year-old Kimberly ("Kim")—at their summer house in Southampton; a trendy, exclusive, Long-Island-beach community.



The Boehnstedts had a bungalow there, tucked away in a forest glade, two miles from the ocean beaches. Southampton was affordable back then; since then, it has become a playground for millionaires. Driving around Southampton in the Corvette made me feel like a Master of the Universe. Leslie and I had the times of our life with Kurt and Bea; we drank wine, smoked weed, danced to Sergio Mendez, and cooked fabulous meals.

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The poster, which has become a sought-after collectors' item, arguably influenced other graphic statements of its day, such as Robert McGinnis' beautiful poster for the 1967 movie "Casino Royale." It was also "swiped" for a 1968 Italian film poster.  
[<https://www.facebook.com/ATimeofChanges/posts/1523543977962958:0>]



During one of our visits to Southampton, Kurt volunteered to model for my portfolio; we did a concept shot for Schweppes Tonic Water; Kurt played a parched desert explorer, reaching for a frosty bottle of "Schweppervessence."



We spent an entire afternoon doing that shot; it was a BFD involving fill-in flash, faux-infra-red filters, super-wide lenses, and buckets of ice (to keep the bottle frosty looking). It was worth the effort; the shot worked.



Thanks to those pictures, and others of the Boehnstedt kids running through a field, Kurt and I became underground heroes in the Art Department.

From then on, the other art directors, including Kurt's boss, Executive Art Director Al Shaw, didn't object to me hanging around the art department.

After a while, they gave me access to the bull pen, to use the agency's dry press (and a lot of their black illustration board) to mount my pictures, after hours.

Hanging around in the art department was way more fun than the 26<sup>th</sup> floor executive offices; art directors were more happy-go-lucky; they had more fun. For example, most of them had binoculars with which they kept tabs on the shenanigans going on in the New York Hilton Hotel, across the street from Basford's offices. One of the guys in the bull pen, Vince was his name, knew which rooms were which. When he saw some action, he'd call around to tell us where to look. On more than one occasion, women staying in the hotel stripped and parade around in the nude in front of the windows —some even danced and waved at us. Vince was known to have called such women, in their rooms, with great success; his colleagues started an office pool, betting on whether Vinnie would score.

As time went by, other account people and art directors started asking me to shoot for them. It was a perfect symbiosis—a chance to build a portfolio of published work. With every in-house assignment at Basford, my confidence grew along with my desire to go pro; but I kept that goal secret to all but a few; I wasn't ready to go out on my own; there was another year's work to do, building a portfolio. To that end, it wasn't long before I was asking certain secretaries at work to model for my portfolio.

## 1960s | Portfolio | Part One | Plates N<sup>os</sup>1-54

*The picture of Yours Truly that begins this collection puts me into perspective; I was living a bifurcated life—a “suit” with a secret desire to be a photographer.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>1- 8: When I went to work for Basford Incorporated, suddenly I was in the Big Leagues. Fortunately, my supervisor and mentor, Burt Holmes, was a keen photographer and a good one. He understood my desire to take pictures for the projects I was working on. Those provided a wide spectrum of new opportunities to make “industrial” pictures. Otherwise known as process photography, industrial work fascinated me. I’m a curious fellow and loved learning how things were made. Plus, industrial scenes could be especially dramatic.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>1: A selfie taken at the Biltmore Hotel in New York during a cocktail reception held during one of the American Iron and Steel Institute’s quarterly meetings.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup>2-3: These pictures were taken at the Armco Steel plant in Middletown, Ohio. [The company merged with Kawasaki in 1989 and is now called AK Steel.] It felt like the furnaces of Hell in there; but, in that dramatic environment, I got plenty of “hot” shots.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup>4-5: Balancing Act was one of a half-dozen top selling stock photos. The picture was shot at the Houston refinery of USI [US Industrial Chemicals Company, now a part of Dow-Dupont.] It was done with a 20 mm Nikkor lens. Welder was shot at an Armco Steel foundry, shot with a 200 mm Nikkor (the 80-200 zoom).*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup>6-7: My biggest job at Basford Inc. was a series of two dozen four-page fact sheets about steel shipping containers. Shown at left are the covers of Containerization Fact Sheets #13, #16 and #18. On the right is a shot made at the Elizabeth-Port Authority Marine Terminal in New Jersey, the first dedicated container terminal. Containerization was just beginning; the case histories in the Containerization Fact Sheet series were all about the pioneers of an industry that came to facilitate and dominate world trade.<sup>40</sup> Burt Holmes, my boss and mentor, and the men I met, reporting their success stories, (there were no women in the shipping business back then) had a huge impact on me. Analyzing their ventures was an education that seemed far more relevant than the theoretical diatribe I was taught at night school. As a result, I didn’t pay much attention to my studies and stayed in school just to stay out of the war.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>8: Pickled Steel was shot for my Basford colleague, Neil Landey, who was writing a series called Highway Construction Fact Sheet, about steel guard rails. The shot illustrated an article about how galvanized steel is made. The simple act of shining colored lights onto a sheet of hot-dip galvanized steel turned the crystalline surface into a thing of beauty.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>9: That’s my boss, John Paluszek. At first, he wasn’t happy that another on his staff was a photographer wannabe; he said Burt and I should, “Leave the pictures to the art department,” i.e., Kurt Boehnstedt. He was very closed-minded about that, which made this picture especially ironic.*

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<sup>40</sup> For a concise history, go to: <https://www.freightos.com/the-history-of-the-shipping-container/>



*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 10-11: When I split from Basford to go pro, former agency colleague Harry Mote was one of my first clients. By then, I was getting into assembly work—combining pieces of different pictures to make a new scene. Tube City and In the Stars both started as tabletop shots of pipes, in one case; and in the other, a miniature nuclear- containment dome model and a 24-inch [~60 cm] section of stainless steel pipe insulation (around the sun star). I didn't have a proper studio yet; I was still working out of the house, in Flushing.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 12-13: My first job for St. Regis Paper Company was illustrating a press-release story written by Dave Tonsing, the company's assistant public-relations manager, about turning paper bags into Halloween costumes—a kind of "recycling." The nitty-gritty of the PR business was sending newspaper and magazine editors useful material to fill the pages of their publications. Investing in good photography improved the chances of one's material getting "placed."*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 14-15: This pair of pictures were shot in the QC lab of USI's petro-chemical refinery in Houston, for the company's annual report. On the left, alcohol is tested for purity; on the right, something is getting zapped in a vacuum chamber.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 16-17: Cars were still a big part of my life and photo career; Car and Driver remained my biggest, most loyal client. My modified '63 Corvette Stingray, was a favorite subject. This shot was made out in East Marion, in the field across from the Mosbach cottages. It shows off the car's three-gill front fenders, a customization done by Bob Firmery at Academy Auto Body, using parts from a 1965-model-year 'Vette. Another was the installation of Jaguar E-Type hood louvers, to replace the car's phony original ones, which were merely decorative.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 18-19: This shot was nicknamed Commander Boehnstedt. It features my Land Rover 109, which replaced the Corvette (boo hoo). Kurt is dressed in my safari jacket and hat; he's smoking a corn-cob pot pipe that I still use occasionally.*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 20-21: Star Attraction was shot at the 1969 Canadian-American Challenge Cup (aka Can-Am) race at Bridgehampton, Long Island. Car #5 was a McLaren driven by Denny Hulme; in the background, either Dan Gurney or Bruce McLaren were bearing down on Hulme in another McLaren. The shot was made with the Russian-made MTO 500 mm mirror telephoto; a piece of stocking material was stretched over the lens to create the star effect. [See, <https://cars.mclaren.com/can-am/timeline.html>].*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 22-23: These were the shots that got my foot in the door at Car and Driver magazine. The two on Plate N<sup>o</sup> 22 were shot with the Russian 500 mm MTO mirror lens. In the lower shot, you can see the donut-shaped bokeh that lens delivered. For the upper shot, the lens was covered with a piece of a woman's silk stocking, to get a star effect on the specular highlights. Plate N<sup>o</sup> 23 was shot with a 200 mm Nikkor (the 80-200 zoom).*

*Plate N<sup>os</sup> 24-25: Two more pictures from the Bridgehampton Can-Am races. Both were shot with a 35 mm Nikkor lens on a Nikon FTn motor-drive camera using slow shutter speeds (1/8<sup>th</sup> and 1/15<sup>th</sup> second), to streak the backgrounds. For Seventh Heaven, a 1A (UV) filter smeared with Vaseline was placed over the lens, leaving a clear spot in the center.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 26-29: Wiley Crockett loved being the center of attention. It was easy to talk him into posing for me and doing some hot-dog stunt driving on his Husqvarna motorcycle. N<sup>o</sup> 28 was shot with an 8 mm fisheye Nikkor lens mounted on a motorized Nikon FTn equipped with a 25-foot-long release cord. The camera was put in a hole in the ground, which Wiley jumped over on the bike. His portrait, on the right, was shot with a 28mm Nikkor lens and a #25R (deep red) filter, to darken the sky.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 30-31: This shot of Wiley Crockett at the Berkshire Trials was shot with a Nikkor 20 mm lens panning quickly with a slow shutter speed of 1/30<sup>th</sup> of a second.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 32-43: When Wiley entered the Pepperell International Motocross, Leslie and I tagged along. Those shots became the portfolio that got the attention of Cycle magazine. N<sup>os</sup> 32-33 and N<sup>o</sup> 36 were shot with the Russian MTO 500 mm mirror telephoto lens; Plate N<sup>o</sup> 36 presents a good example of the donut-bokeh provided by the folded optics of mirror telephoto lenses. N<sup>os</sup> 34-35: This was shot for a couple of my friends, who came along on the camping trip to the Pepperell race. Wiley Crockett's wife, Barbara, seems to be amused by whatever the guy on her right was pointing at; John Blaha is on her left. It was shot with a 200 mm Nikkor (80-200 zoom). N<sup>os</sup> 37-39: These pictures are two of the Blurry Bikes series, shot with a 28 mm Nikkor lens fitted with a Vaseline filter (described above, N<sup>os</sup> 24-25:). Slow shutter speeds were 1/8<sup>th</sup> and ¼ of a second.*

*N<sup>os</sup> 40-41: The super-steaky bikes were shot with long, ½-second exposures using a 20 mm Nikkor lens. N<sup>os</sup> 42-43: Shot with a 20 mm Nikkor lens (without the Vaseline filter) at ¼-second.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 44-45: The surfers were shot in Rincon, Puerto Rico with the MTO 500 mm mirror-telephoto lens, on Ektachrome 64 color film. For Red Surfer, a 25R filter was mounted on the back of the lens.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 46-50 and Plate N<sup>o</sup> 54: These pictures of Angelique Monique cost me my marriage to Leslie; they were straw that broke the camel's back, as far as she was concerned. A Hasselblad 500C camera was used for all except the infrared, Atomicolor shot, which was shot on 35 mm film with a 28 mm Nikkor lens fitted with a #58G (green) filter (Plate N<sup>o</sup> 48). A pair of Honeywell Strobonars were used for fill light. Plate N<sup>o</sup> 50 was shot 35 mm, without fill light, using a 20 mm Nikkor.*

*Plates N<sup>o</sup> 51: The shot of Adrienne Hawkey (Bill's brother's wife) was shot on Panatomic-X film with the Hasselblad 500C, using a 50 mm wide-angle lens fitted with a 25R (red) filter. Only Panatomic-X would deliver the kind of black skies that simulated the look of pictures made with infrared-sensitive films; the difference was that infrared film rendered green foliage shades of light-gray and white. My wife, Leslie, made the outfit; she was likely annoyed that I photographed somebody else wearing it.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 52-53: These shots of Angelique Monique were among the very first made at my new, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street studio. A month later, Leslie left me and moved to Virginia with her boss (at AMI—Advanced Management, Inc.), Ray Grinstead.*

*Plates N<sup>o</sup> 54: I chose an ironical shot to close the first part of my 1960s portfolio; the stud on the bike next to Angelique, in Rincon, Puerto Rico, is Wayne Hussing (?); he's the guy that seduced Leslie, that she rode away with, to live in sin on the island of Barbados.*







1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 1

*"Betwixt and Between" | AISI cocktail reception | Biltmore Hotel, New York City | 1965*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 2

*Foundry | Armco Steel | 1965*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 3

*Foundry | Armco Steel | 1965*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 4

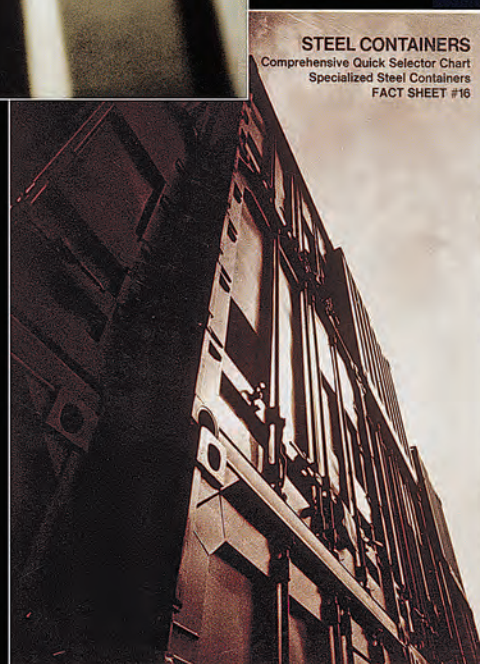
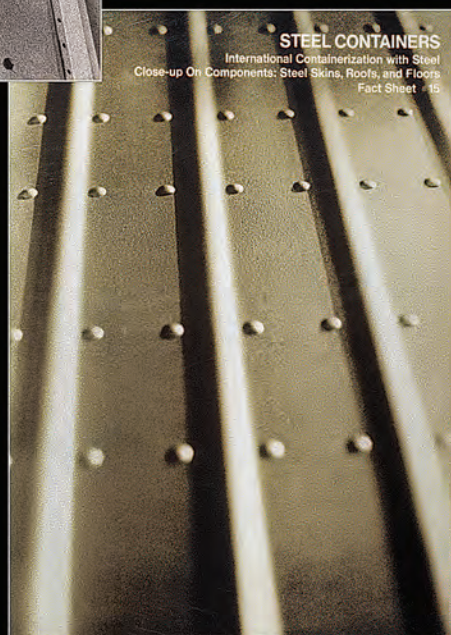
*"Balancing Act" | USI refinery worker | Houston, Texas | 1972 | Top-selling stock photo.*



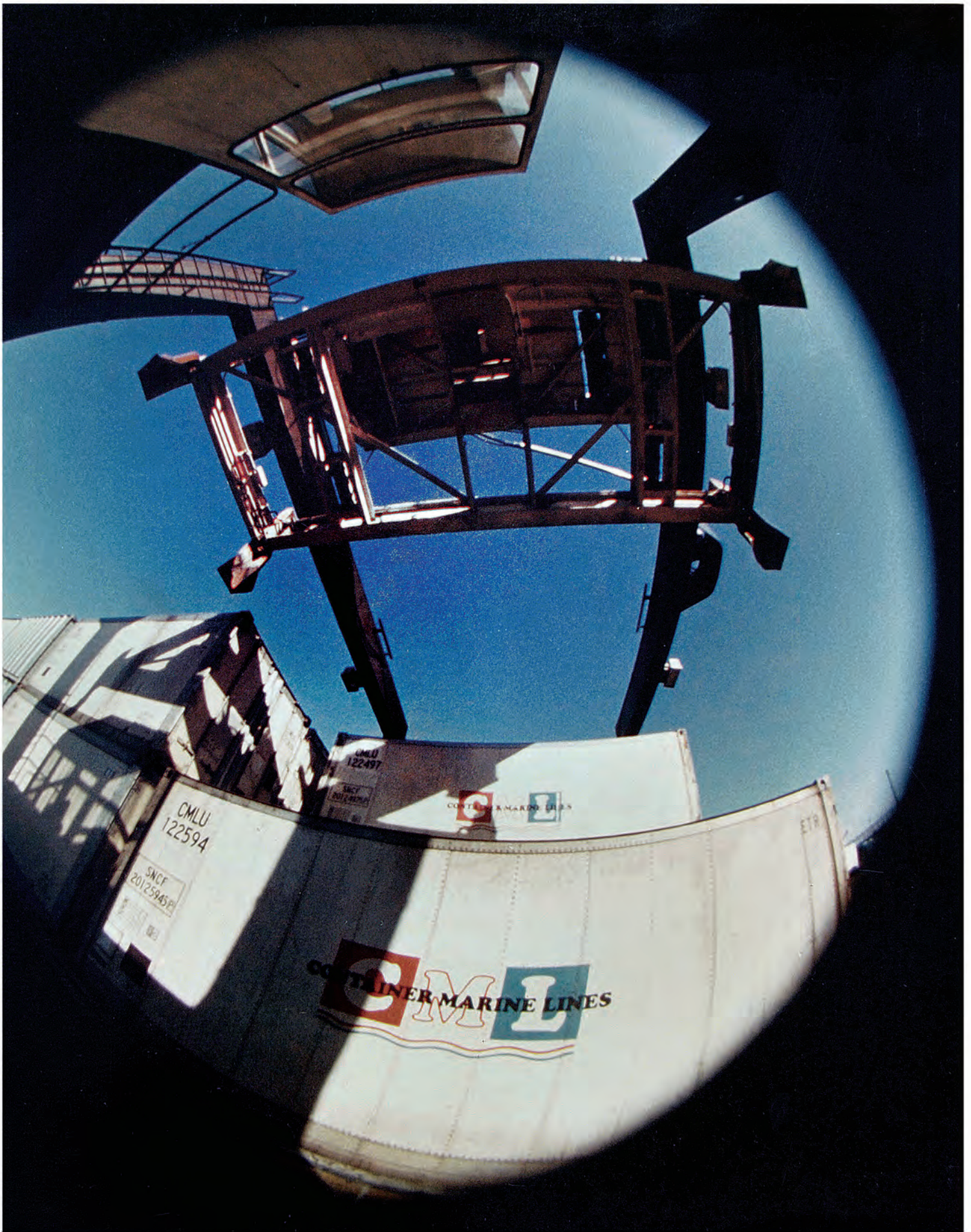


1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 5  
*Welder | Armco Steel | 1966 | Top-selling stock photo.*









1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 7

*Containerization Fact Sheets | American Iron & Steel Institute (AISI) | 1965-67*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 8

*"Pickled Steel" | Galvanized Sheet Producers | American Iron & Steel Institute (AISI) | 1965*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 9

*John Paluszek | Basford, Inc. | American Iron & Steel Institute (AISI) sales pitch | 1965*

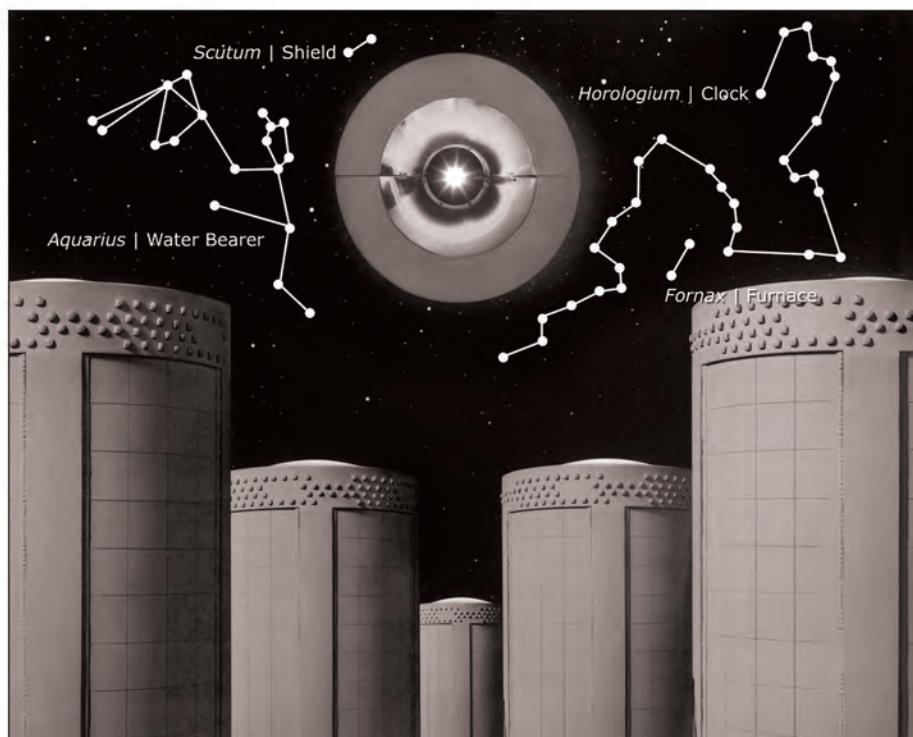
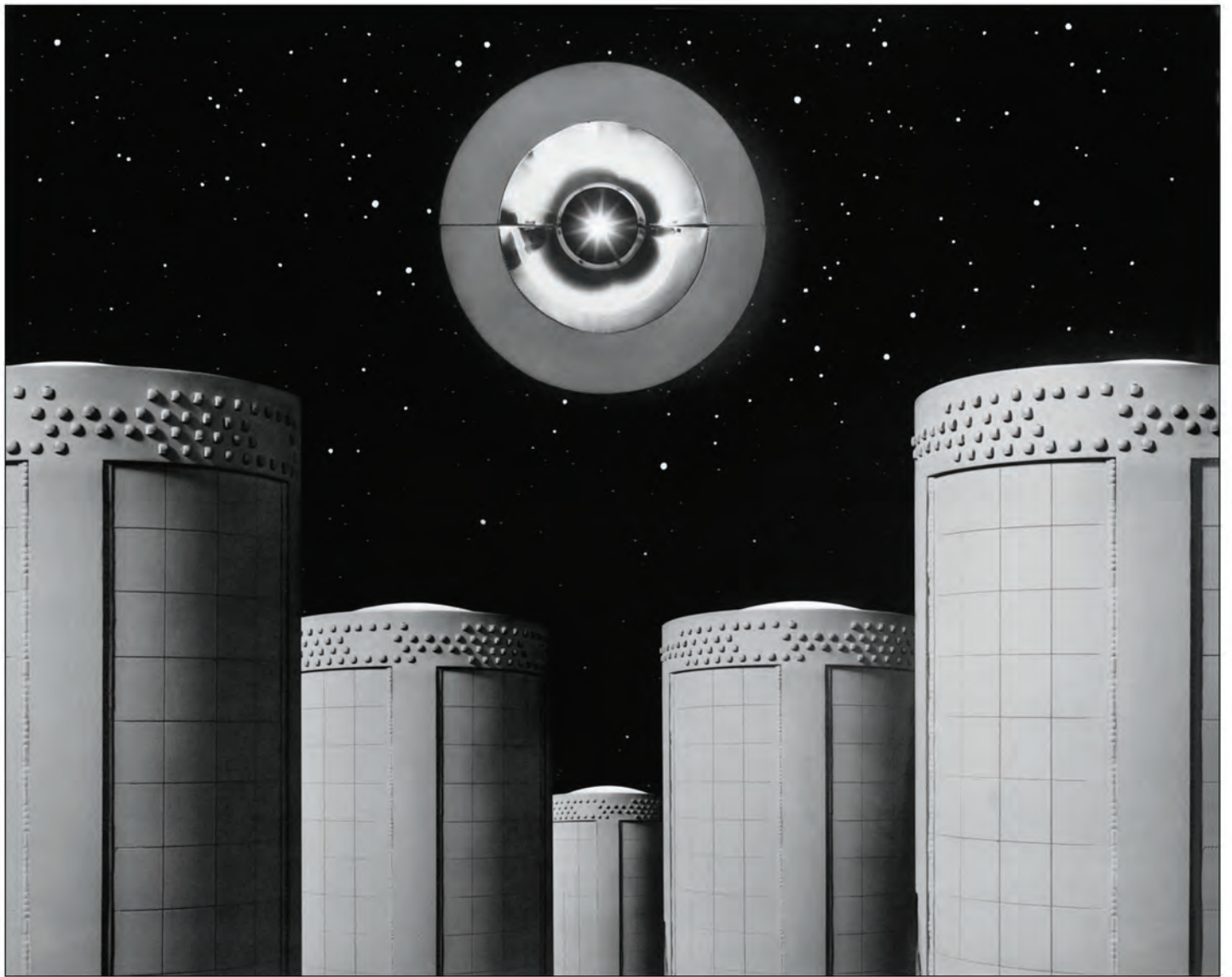




1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 10

*"Tube City" | Pipe & Tube Committee | American Iron & Steel Institute (AISI) | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 11

*"In the Stars" | Babcock & Wilcox | 1968 | Lower version shows picture with acetate star-guide overlay.*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 12  
*Paper-bag Costumes | St. Regis Paper Company | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 13  
*Paper-bag Costumes | St. Regis Paper Company | 1969*

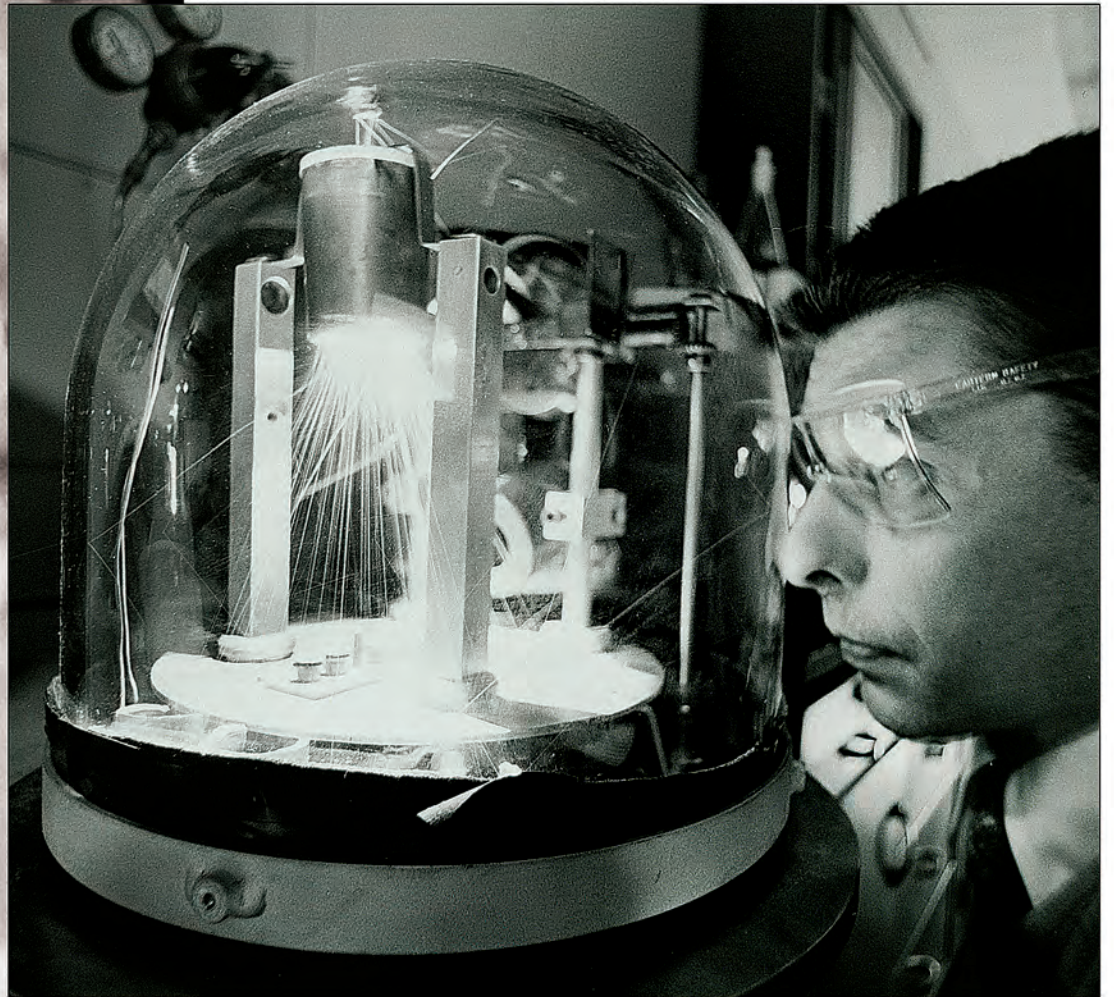
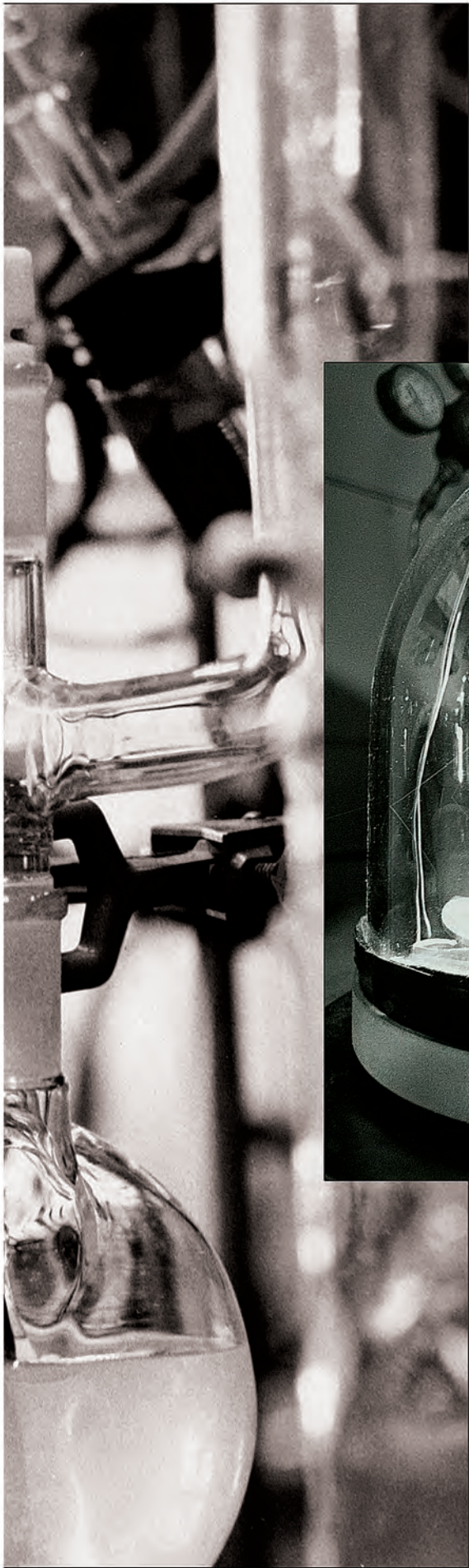




1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 14

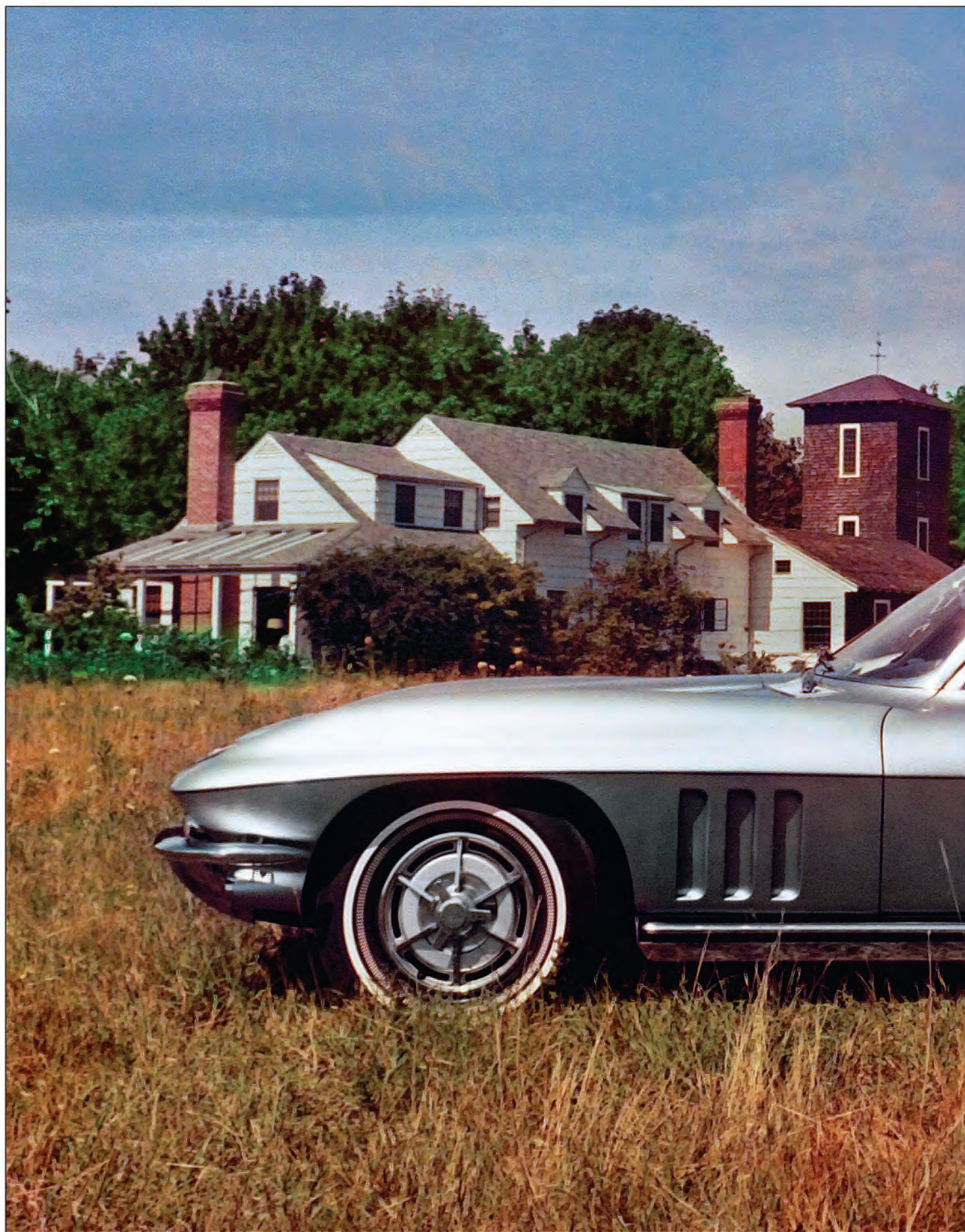
*Lab Technicians | USI | Houston Refinery | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 15  
*Lab Technicians | USI | Houston Refinery | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 16  
*1963 Corvette Stingray | East Marion, New York | 1965*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 17  
*1963 Corvette Stingray | East Marion, New York | 1965*





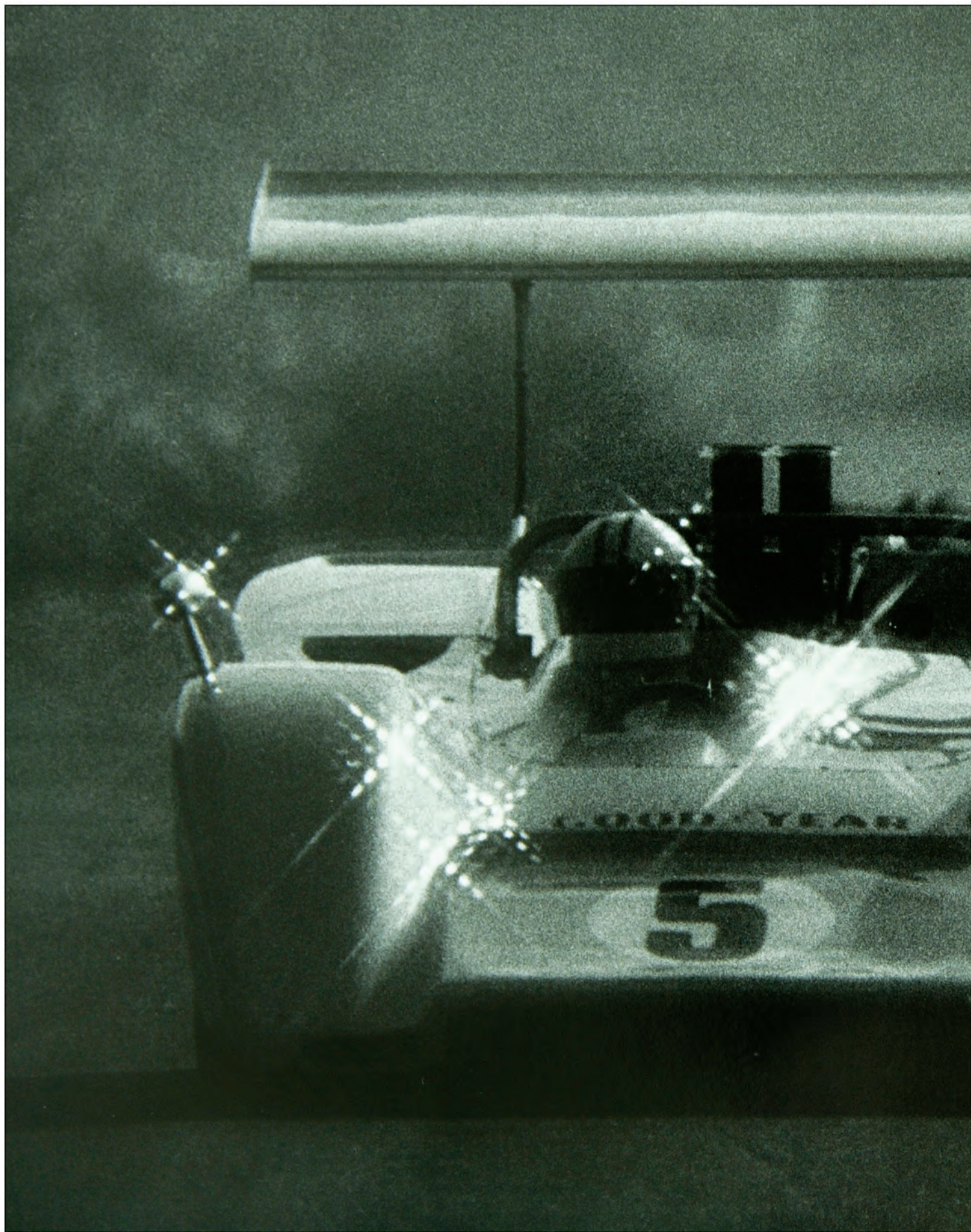
1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 18  
*Land Rover 109 | Kurt Boehnstedt | Southampton, New York | 1967*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 19  
*Land Rover 109 | Kurt Boehnstedt | Southampton. New York | 1967*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 20

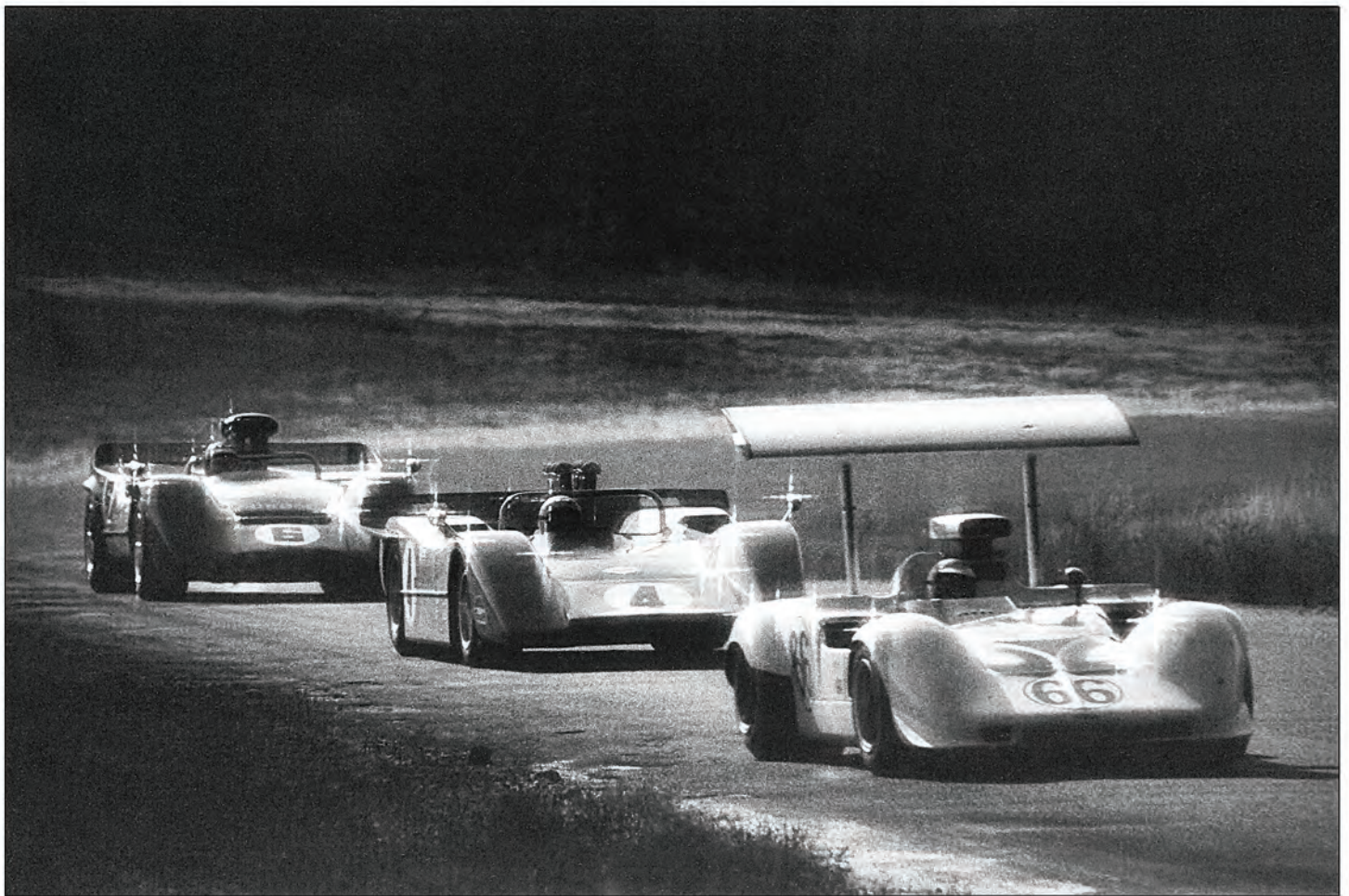
*"Star Attraction" | Canadian-American "Can-Am" Challenge Cup | 1969*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 21  
“Star Attraction” | Canadian-American “Can-Am” Challenge Cup | 1969





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 22

*"Follow the Leader" (top) & "Tailgater" | Canadian-American "Can-Am" Challenge Cup | 1967*





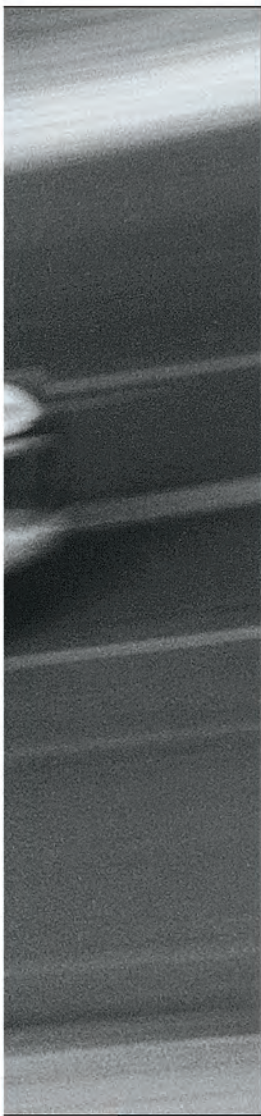
1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 23  
"Brake Job" | Canadian-American "Can-Am" Challenge Cup | 1967





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 24  
*Ron Courtney | Bridgehampton Can-Am Race | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 25  
*"Seventh Heaven" | John Surtees | Bridgehampton Can-Am Race | 1968*

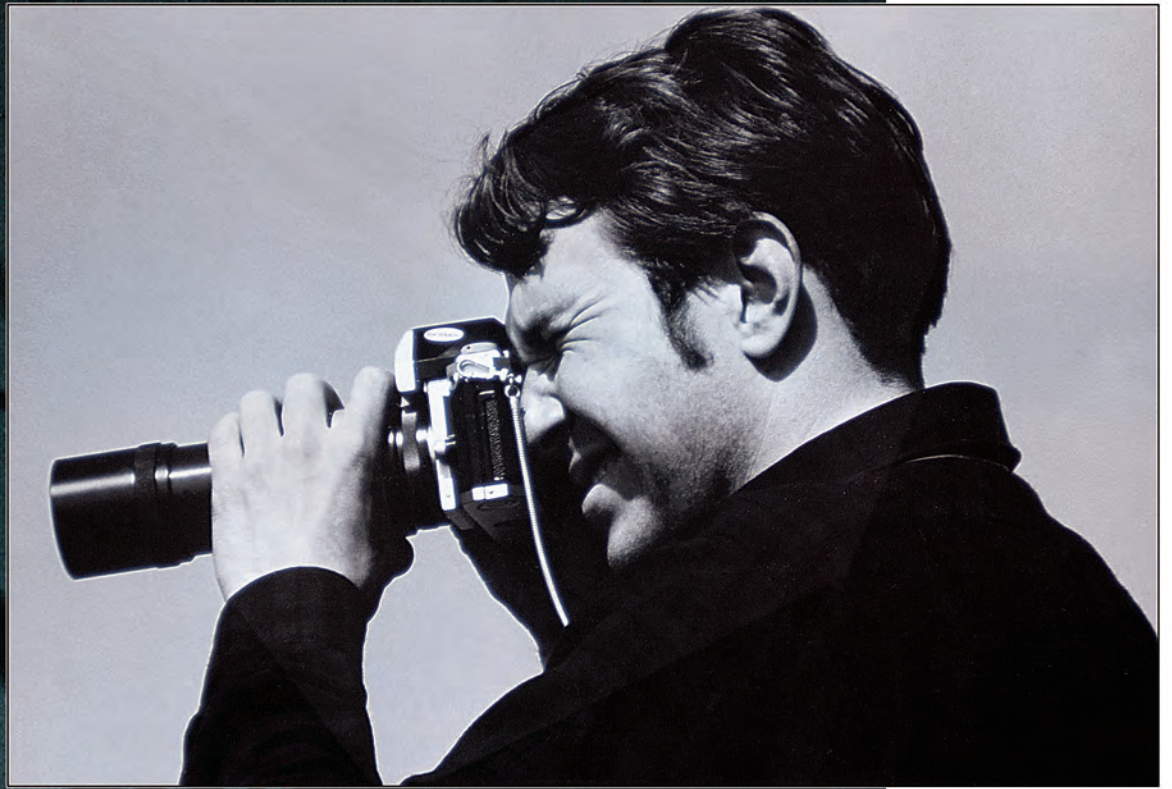




1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 26

*Wiley Crockett | 1965*

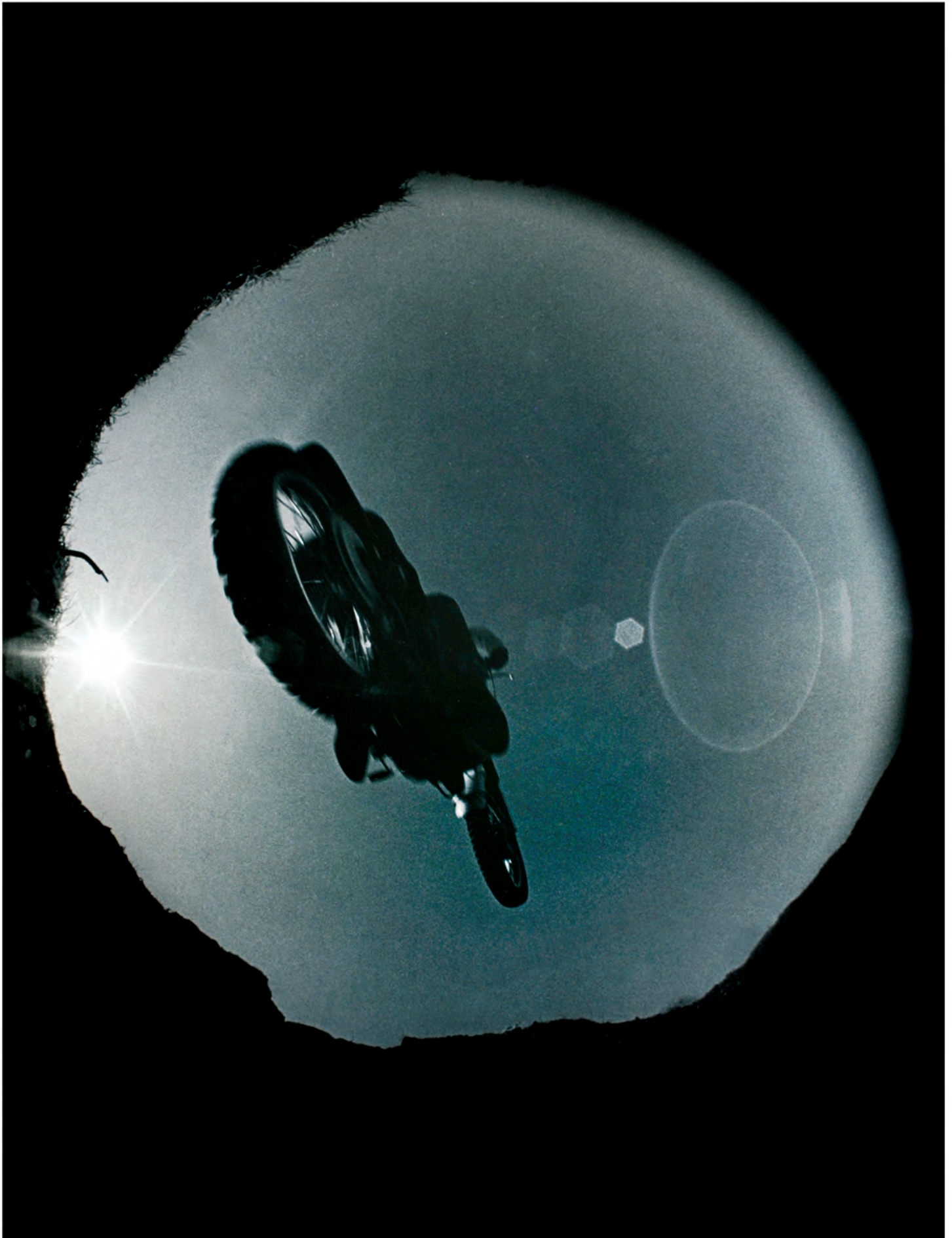




1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 27

*Your's Truly* | 1967





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 28

*"Jumping Bike Fisheye"* | Wiley Crockett | 1965





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 29

*Wiley Crockett | 1965*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 30

*"Dirt Bike" | Berkshire Trials | 1970*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 31

*"Dirt Bike" | Berkshire Trials | 1970*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 32

*"7 Ate 9" | Pepperell International Motocross | 1965*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 33

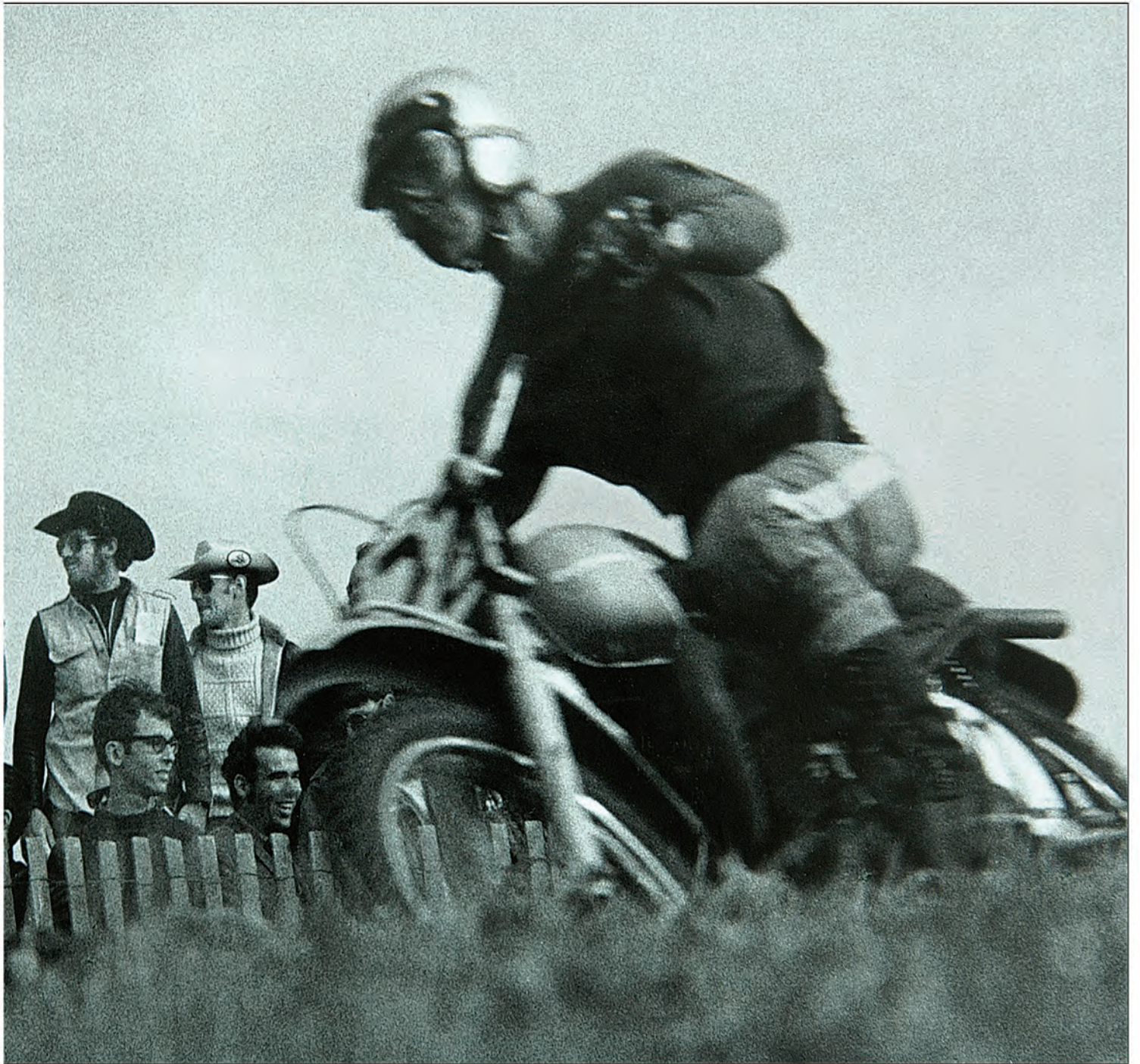
*"7 Ate 9" | Pepperell International Motocross | 1965*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 34  
"Who's Cutting In?" | *Pepperell International Motocross* | 1965





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 35  
“Who’s Cutting In?” | *Pepperell International Motocross* | 1965





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 36  
*"Bearing Down" | Pepperell International Motocross | 1965*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 37  
*"Blurry Bike #1" | Pepperell International Motocross | 1965*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 38  
*"Blurry Bike #2" | Pepperell International Motocross | 1965*





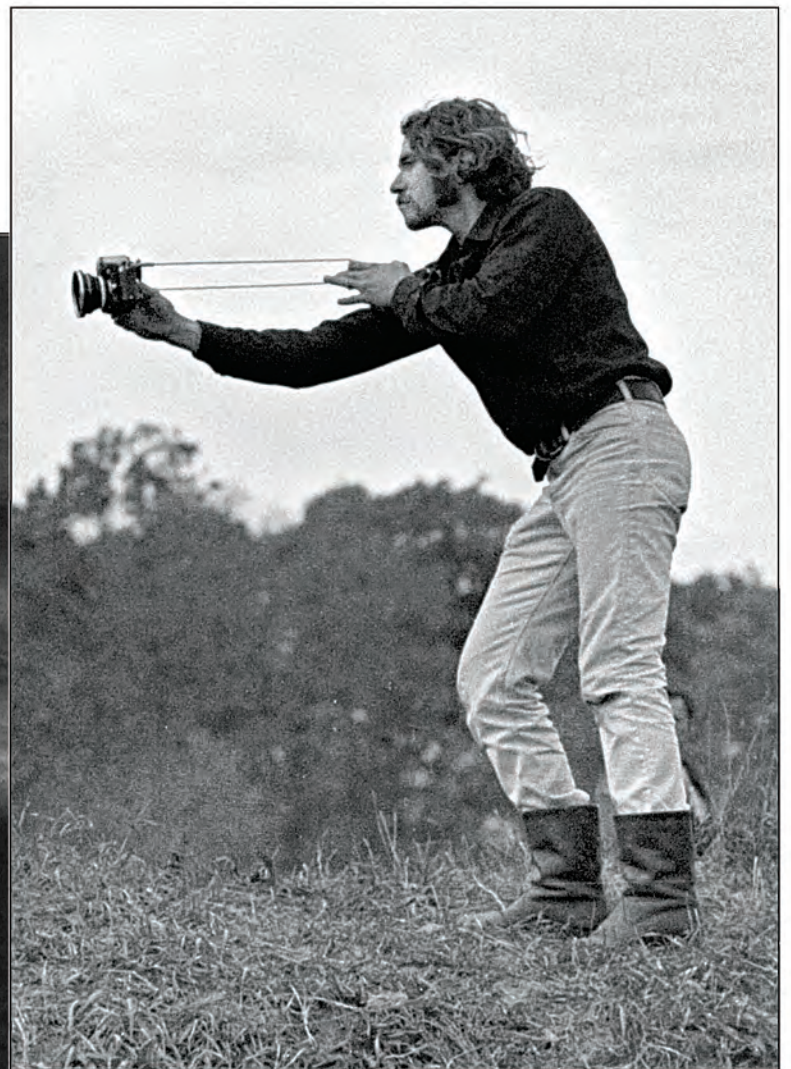
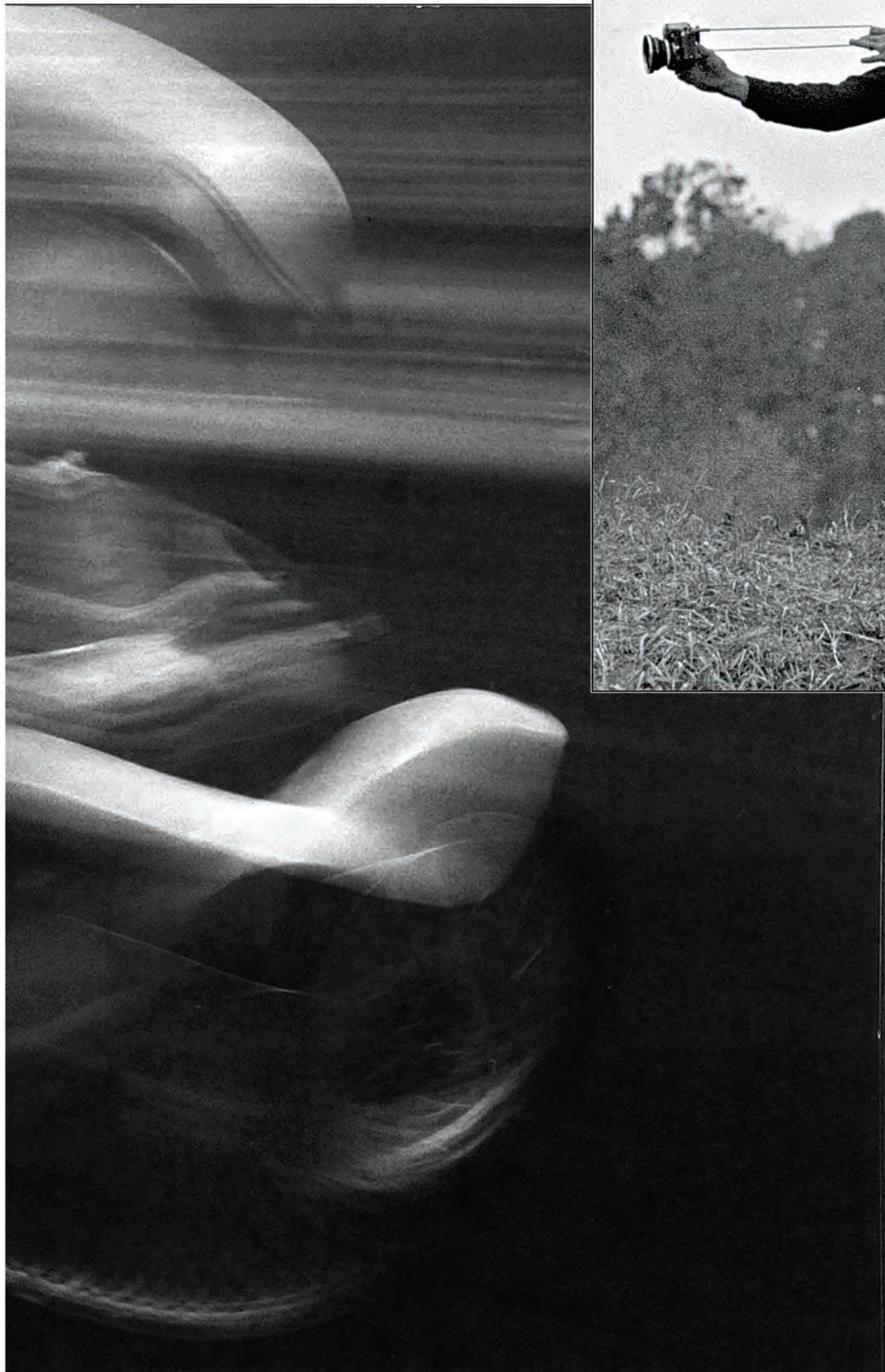
1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 39  
"Blurry Bike #2" | *Pepperell International Motocross* | 1965





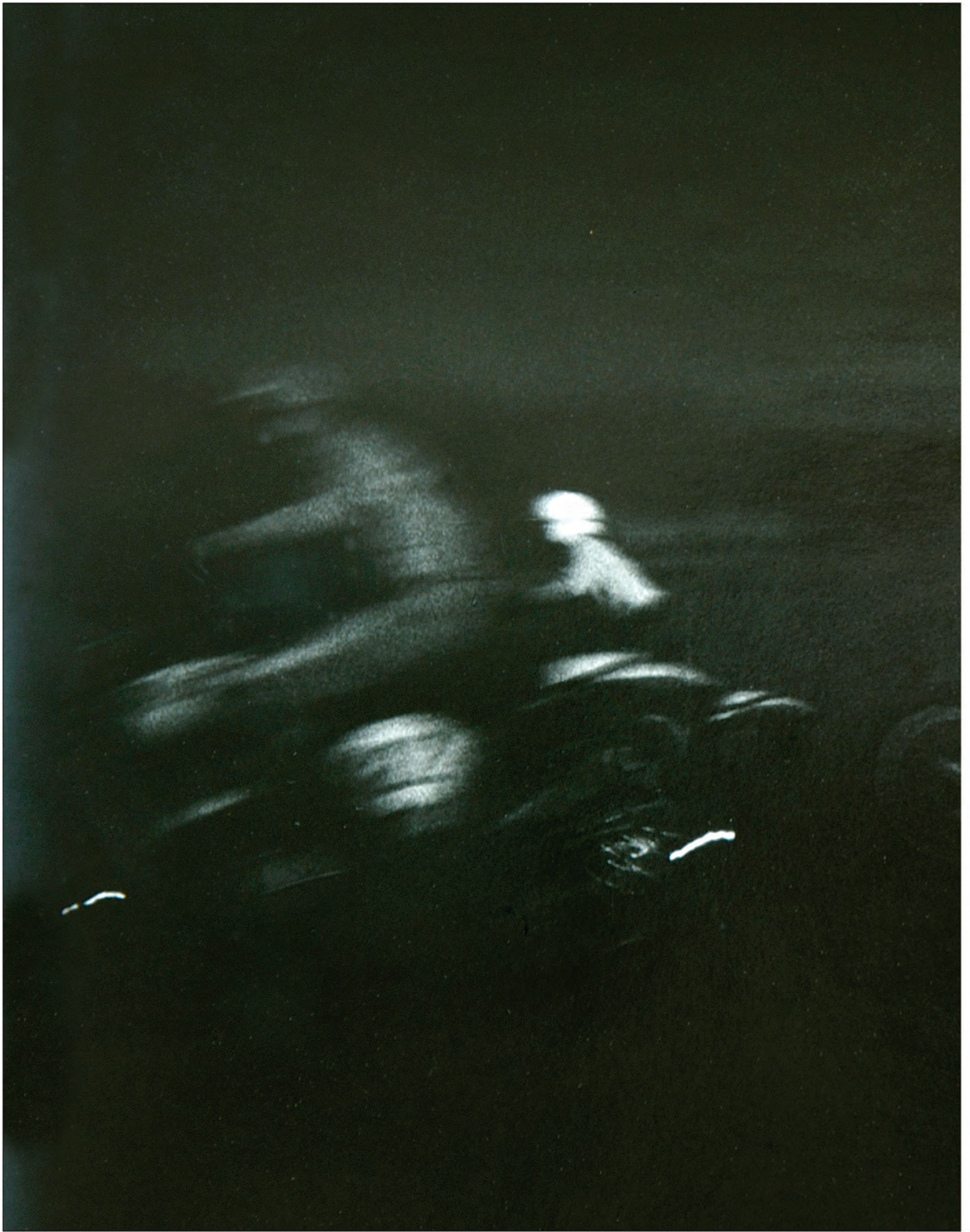
1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 40  
*"Streaking Bikes" | Pepperell International Motocross | 1965*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 41  
"Streaking Bikes" | *Pepperell International Motocross* | 1965





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 42  
*"Flashy Driving" | Pepperell International Motocross | 1965*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 43  
*"Flashy Driving" | Pepperell International Motocross | 1965*

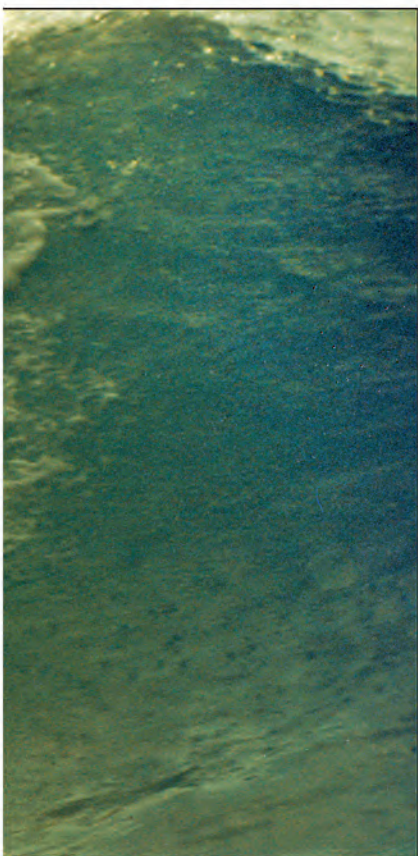




1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 44

*"Green Surfer" | Rincon, Puerto Rico | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 45

*"Red Surfer" | Rincon, Puerto Rico | 1968*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 46

*Angelique Monique | Rincon, Puerto Rico | 1968*

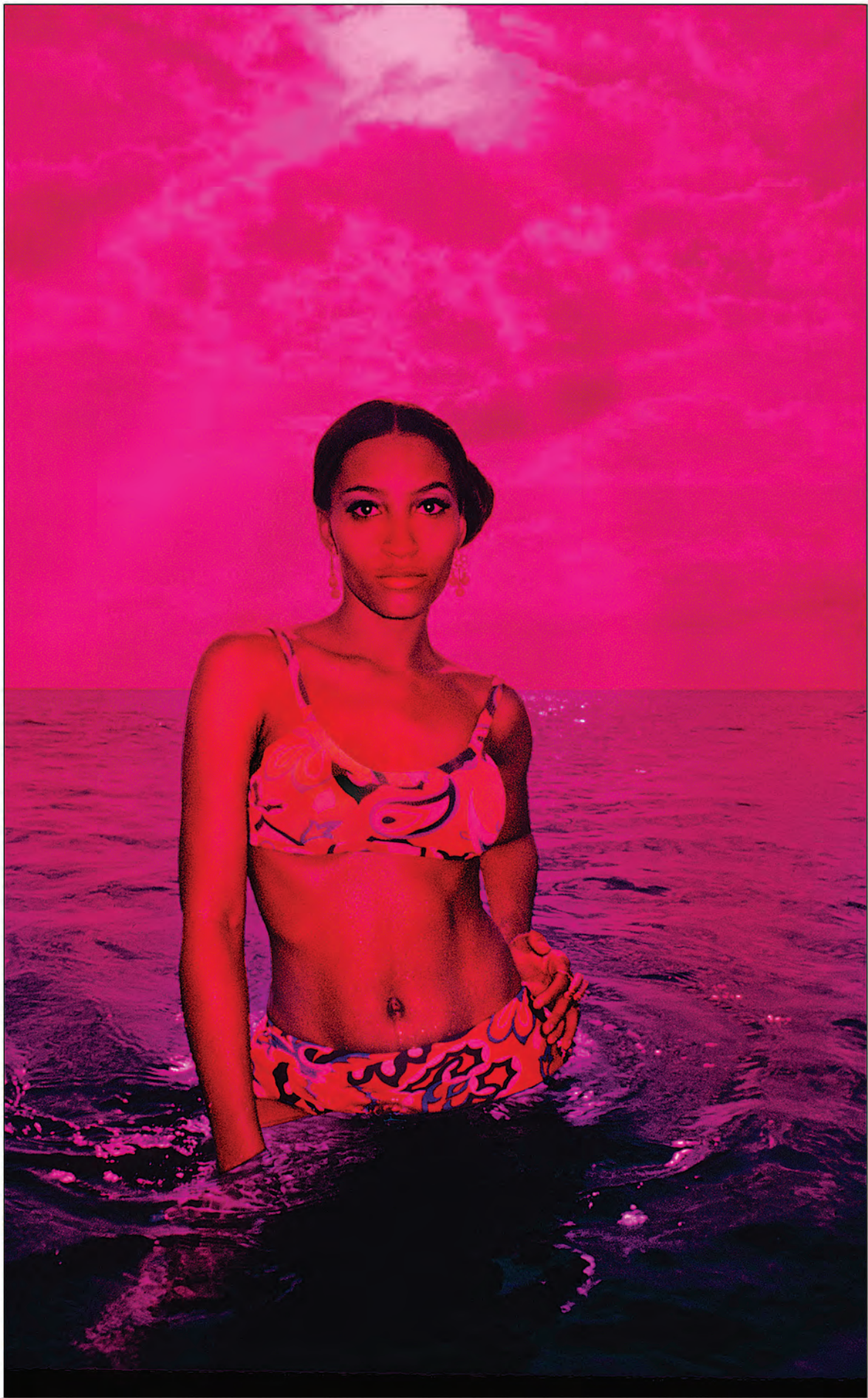




1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 47

*Angelique Monique | Rincon, Puerto Rico | 1968*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 48

*Angelique Monique | Rincon, Puerto Rico | 1968*

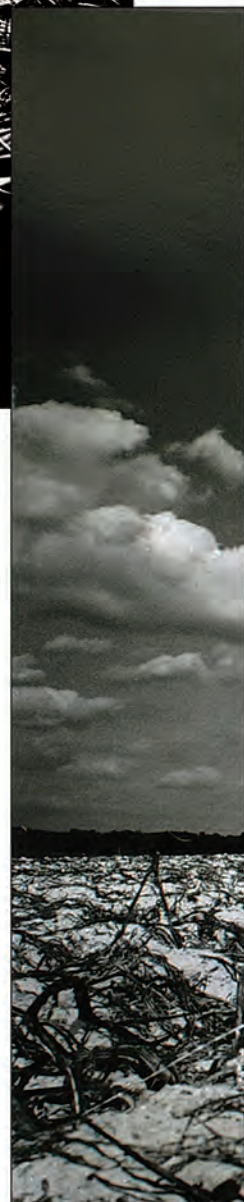




1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 49

*Angelique Monique | Rincon, Puerto Rico | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 50  
*Angelique Monique | Rincon, Puerto Rico | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 51

*Adrienne Hawkey | Greenport, New York | 1968*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 52

*Angelique Monique | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 53

*Angelique Monique | 1969*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 54

*Angelique Monique with nemesis Wayne | Rincon, Puerto Rico | 1968*



## 1968 – Office Affair – Breach of Trust

In and out of the office, I was hanging with Kurt Boehnstedt.

As we spent more time together, we got close enough to exchange confidences; one of those was that Kurt was dating Linda Gans, one of the secretaries. Linda was a svelte brunette, a real beauty who, with Kurt's blessings, I photographed—in color—for my portfolio. Kurt was also pursuing Linda Tortorella, a hot blonde who would have reminded you of Goldie Hawn; but she was smart enough to avoid getting involved with a married man. Following in Kurt's footsteps, I started having office affairs. I tried my luck with Linda T, too, until I came to realize that she was just a cock-teaser, that she was never going to do it, at least with me. My moral convictions had been stressed for some time; it was the Age of Aquarius, of free love. Kurt wasn't the only one in the office cheating on their partners. I was jealous, I longed for lust, more so when I began to photograph girls and opportunities arose. For Leslie and I, the bloom was off the rose; we were heading in separate directions, that much was clear. Our lifestyles and ambitions were at odds with each other; she wanted dinner on the table at 6:30 pm [18:30]; I was more inclined to eat much later, when I got back from night school, near midnight. More seriously, our sexual relations deteriorated; no matter what I did Leslie just never seemed to "make it." I was no expert; but I'd had enough experience to recognize the difference between a real female orgasm and a faker. I felt frustrated; was it me, or her? I wanted to find out, which made me vulnerable to seduction; but the seduced became the seducer—I became a bit of a Svengali.

Seduction is a two-way street; sometimes it is hard to tell who is seducing who. When Robin Ross heard that I was photographing office gals, she asked if I'd make pictures of her. Robin was Don Creamer's secretary; there were rumors about her, that Robin was sleeping with her boss.

The rumors were right; but I didn't find that out until I started sleeping with her, too. What started as a fling became semi-serious; Robin's appetite for sex was voracious; for a while, she invited me to her apartment every other day. When we weren't in bed, Robin gave me the scoop on what was going on behind the scenes at the agency; I knew so much that I thought my job might be in danger; people in the office were starting to gossip and Don Creamer gave me the evil eye whenever he saw me. On the other hand, sex with Robin was outstanding, except for one thing—an unidentified STD [sexually transmitted disease].



I was clueless about that until Leslie invited me into the bathroom, to show me the venereal warts on her pussy. Yikes! Leslie didn't buy my lies protestations; our relationship suffered an irreparable wound. Unlike a TV melodrama, we were not brought closer together; there was no sense of forgiveness or renewal; far from it; we became civil to one another went off on different directions.

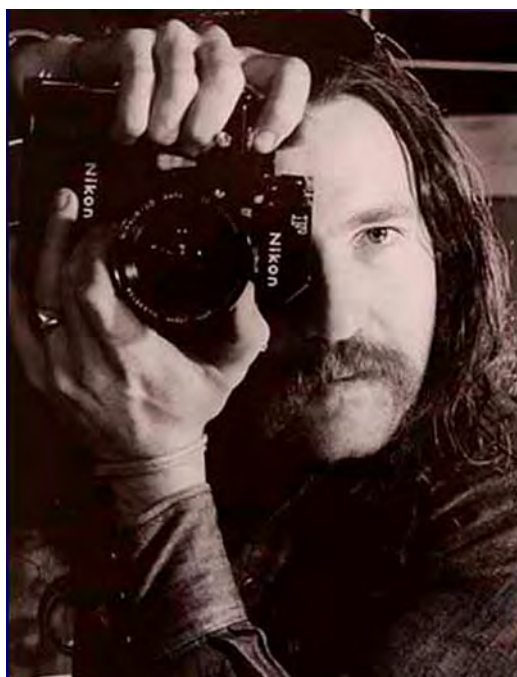


When I quit Basford (read on), I could have looked for a new job in the PR business; I had a good-looking resume. Instead, I went into business for myself as a professional photographer. To my surprise, Leslie not only approved of my idea, she encouraged me and helped in any number of ways, from modelling (even nude) to helping me build my first studio, at 42 East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. On the night we finished building the studio, while celebrating, Leslie announced that she was leaving me, that she was going-off with her former boss, Ray Grinstead, to live in Virginia. What!

From my distorted perspective, I saw myself as the victim—abandoned by a woman, *again*. I still didn't realize that, with just a few exceptions, I was engineering every relationship to fail—to get even with my mother.

## 1968 – Break from Basford – Mesney Photography

The war dragged on and society became more polarized; I found myself on the left side of the equation.



Mesney by Mesney, 1968

The longer my hair grew, the more it irritated John Paluszek; he liked my moustache even less. My long hair and hippie attitudes presented him with an image problem—everyone else in the agency was clean-cut and conservative, except me. And, I was getting more and more uncontrollable.

When I hired a young black man to be my new secretary (when Judy Murphy moved to North Caroline), Paluszek thought that was over the top; he didn't think Robert's black face fit the agency's lily-white image; so, he fired Robert while I was away on a business trip.

Discovering that on my return, I wrote Paluszek a stinging letter of resignation. He indignantly returned it, marked-up with snarky comments that said: "Glad to see you go," in so many words,

That very same evening, I cleared my office; by nine that night [21:00] you'd have thought nobody had ever worked in that office. In a flash, I was gone; that's how things happen sometimes. According to the Law of Attraction, I created the circumstances that led to my dismissal to get what I really wanted—which was to be a photographer.

Wanting to be something and being it are two different things; I could have probably found an equivalent job or even a better one at any of a half-dozen big PR companies. Mike Echols had moved on to Hill & Knowlton, so I had an in there. Instead, I decided to make a go for my own business, with Leslie's blessings and support—until she left me.

As my new life began, all the pieces of the puzzle started falling together. Not everyone at Basford shunned me, there were a handful that stayed friendly and/or threw work my way. One of those people was agency owner and creative director Ben Colarossi (right). We were just getting things going between us when I suddenly quit the agency. Ben invited me for drinks, at the Hilton Hotel piano bar, across the street from Creamer-Colarossi; it was a dark place, mysterious, with private booths, full of intrigue; one could barely overhear the whispered tête à-tête of others.



Ben confessed to liking my rebellious assertiveness; he was not only supportive he also organized an office space for me to work at a colleague's studio. Hallelujah!

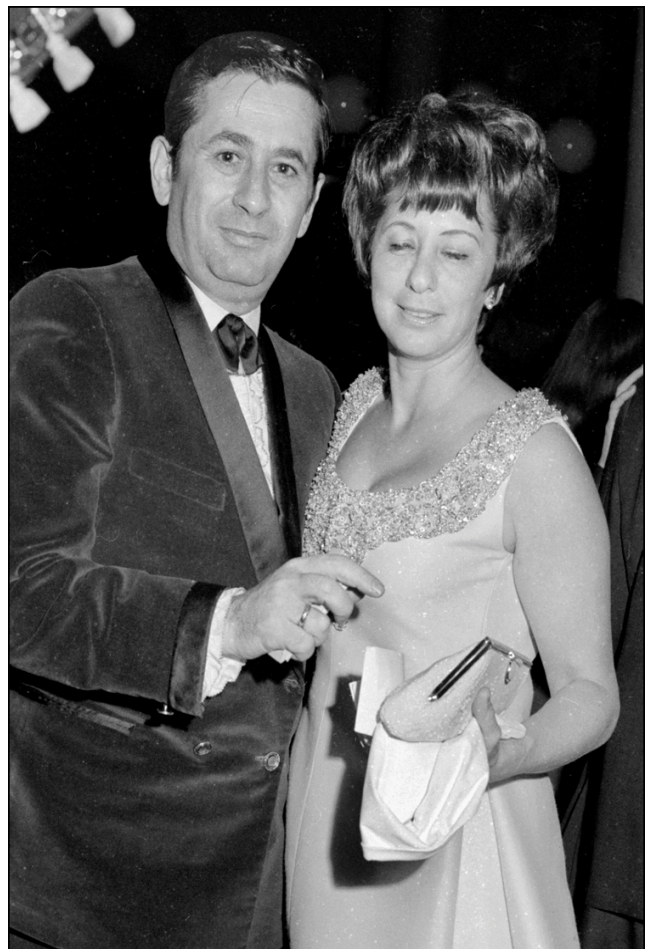
Bob Gurvitz with wife, Elaine, at their son's bar mitzvah.

Colarossi introduced me to Bob Gurvitz, an independent film producer who did a lot of work for Creamer-Colarossi. Gurvitz leased an entire townhouse at 346 East 50<sup>th</sup> Street, a very classy address. He worked in cahoots with cinematographer Ed Carr (below), who shared the space with a four-man crew.

Carr's operation occupied the entire second floor; I rented a small office on the third floor; that space became available when one of Eddie's crew left due to the faltering economy. Gurvitz's company was recession-resistant; he



and Eddie sub-contracted work from other producers, who might be understaffed and didn't want to hire people during the downturn. Bob wrote the scripts, and Eddie's crew produced them. What I learned from Gurvitz and Carr about movie making came in handy when I worked for film-maker Lindsay Rodda at Sonargraphics, a multi-media company in Melbourne, Australia, in 1982.







*"If you do not expect the unexpected, you will not find it;"*

Heraclitus (c.535 BC-475 BC)

In 1969, when I left the Basford agency and opened my first New York studio at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street [Mesney's Mad Medicine Show], Robert Crumb's comic strip character, Mr. Natural<sup>41</sup>, was popular. Crumb dismissed professorial academics and intellectuals. When asked, "What does it all mean?" Mr. Natural replies "Don't mean shee-it." However, there was a moral to every story. For example, in one strip Mr. Natural rounds a corner and gets hit on the head by a guy with a big hammer; moral of the story, you never know what's coming.

I have never let go of that metaphor because, over and over, life has affirmed it. Being prepared for any eventuality has always been an obsession; it still is. Since adolescence, I have envisioned my life as a sailor, crossing the sea. Life can knock you down—and maybe out—if you aren't ready for every eventuality. I expect the unexpected; it used to take me two hours to get to sleep—no matter how much I drank—because my mind would not quit running "What if...?" scenarios about every possible thing that could go wrong. I still do that, but what I worry about now is more benign, like: What do you think of the book so far?" or, Will I make it to the end? Will I finish the book?

Apparently, I'm not alone in my foreboding; recent research has revealed that most men dream about catastrophes (women dream about relationships).

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<sup>41</sup> [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr.\\_Natural\\_\(comics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr._Natural_(comics))]

## 1968 – Have Camera Will Travel – Uphill Battle

There was an intimidating statistic that was thrown around when I was in my twenties, that 99,000 new photographer and model business licenses were issued yearly by the City of New York, and that 99% of those businesses failed within 9 years.

The Chinese consider 9 a lucky number, symbolizing endings. However, somehow I knew that statistic didn't apply to me; that I could make it despite the economic headwinds buffeting the US economy in 1968.<sup>42</sup>

But it was a tough time to start a new business and I had a few close calls. When I couldn't pay the rent, Bob Gurvitz let me pay in kind. We bartered photos of his son's Bar Mitzvah for three months' past-due rent.

I was getting business, but not earning enough to cover my office in New York, the house in Flushing, and the costs of night school at Queens College. *Car and Driver* was feeding me jobs, and their sister magazine, *Cycle*, became a new client when art director Eberhard Luethke became intrigued with the streaky pictures of dirt bike riders that I shot at Pepperell.

I also got business from former colleagues at Basford. Bruce Leslie hired me to shoot polyethylene terephthalate [PET] plastic bottles; Harry Mote commissioned *Tube City* and *In the Stars*; even John Paluszek hired me—however his job turned into the most humiliating experience of my professional life.

Paluszek's assignment was to cover an AISI cocktail reception and get shots of a guy giving a speech. The location was a dimly-lit hotel banquet room. I didn't use flash but should have because, as I found out later, the client didn't want available-light reportage (the kind of pictures made popular in *Life* magazine), they wanted "party pictures," the kind that are shot with a flash.

The shoot went well, but I struggled hard in the darkroom to make good prints—available light pictures required a lot of dodging and burning to balance the tones.<sup>43</sup> Having learned from Arthur Tcholak, I was a good printer, but Paluszek's job was a bear; the lighting was just too low. Mid-way through, I was ready to throw in the towel. My alternative would have been to send the printing work to a professional lab; but that was money I needed to earn; plus, there was the matter of pride.

It took two days work and endless test prints to come up with useable results from a set of negs that were just too thin [very faint images].

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<sup>42</sup> 1968 is remembered by economists as a year of surging balance-of-trade deficits, to support Lyndon Johnson's war efforts; access to money was constricted by an economy ruled and restrained by the gold standard set in place at Bretton Woods (dollars could not be created without gold in the vaults to cover them.) Those "golden cuffs" were cleaved by Nixon, three years later, when he reneged on international agreements and took the US off the gold standard; that shocked the world and changed everything; the government could henceforth print as much money as it wanted. In 1968 the crisis that provoked that transformative change was beginning to unfold; people were on edge; they could sense the economic danger; it was a tough time to start a new business; the competition was fierce.

<sup>43</sup> Dodging lightened tones by giving selected areas of a print less exposure; burning darkened tones by giving them more exposure and or rubbing those areas of a print with hot, concentrated developer.



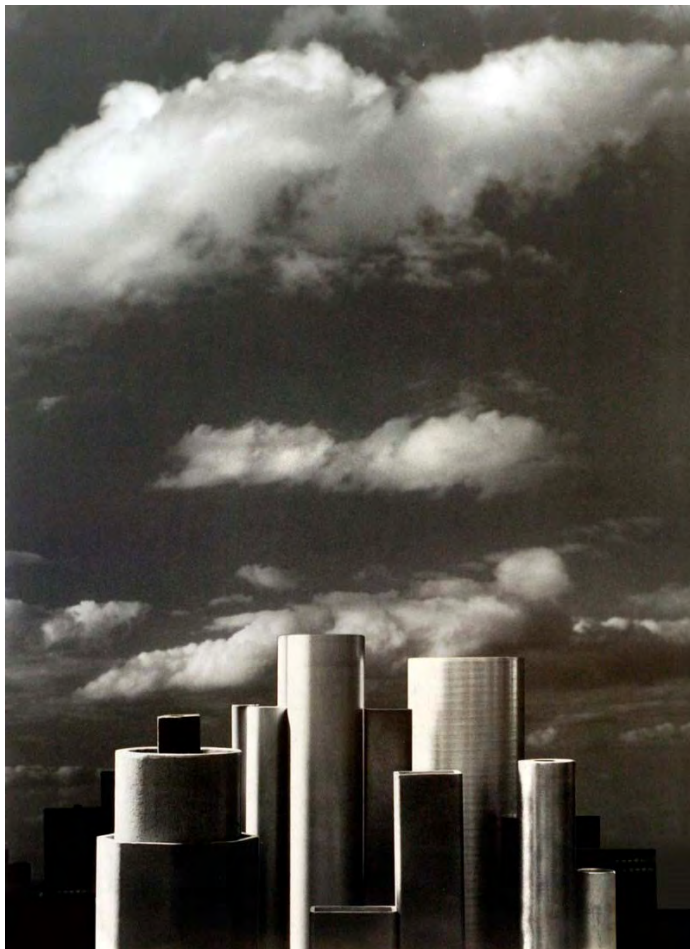
I was losing my shirt on that job, but that didn't matter; it was my first assignment from Paluszek; if he liked my work, he could throw a lot of business my way.

After two days in the dark and an inordinate amount of photo-paper (most of it on test prints), I got a good-looking set of "artistic" prints that I was quite proud of. I was anxious to hear what Paluszek thought about my work, but I would have to wait; he wasn't in when I delivered the prints to ~~Basford~~ Creamer-Colarossi, so I left the package and went home.

I was at my parents' house when Paluszek's call came in; I took the call on the kitchen extension—it was the closest to my darkroom; Mom was puttering around, making dinner, trying not to be too obvious about eavesdropping; she could tell that I was upset—because Paluszek summarily rejected my prints; he was beyond angry, apoplectic; he said that none of my pictures were useable. Yikes!

[Spoiler Alert: I never heard from John Paluszek again.]

I reckoned that word of Paluszek's rejection would spread around Basford, that I would never work for that agency again. However, the very next week Harry Mote commissioned me to make a picture that could be used by the Committee of Pipe and Tube Manufacturers of the American Iron and Steel Institute as Christmas gifts for steel-industry VIPs and the Fourth Estate.



The result was a photo-illustration called *Tube City*, a futuristic-looking cityscape made with scraps of stainless tubes in various lengths and diameters.

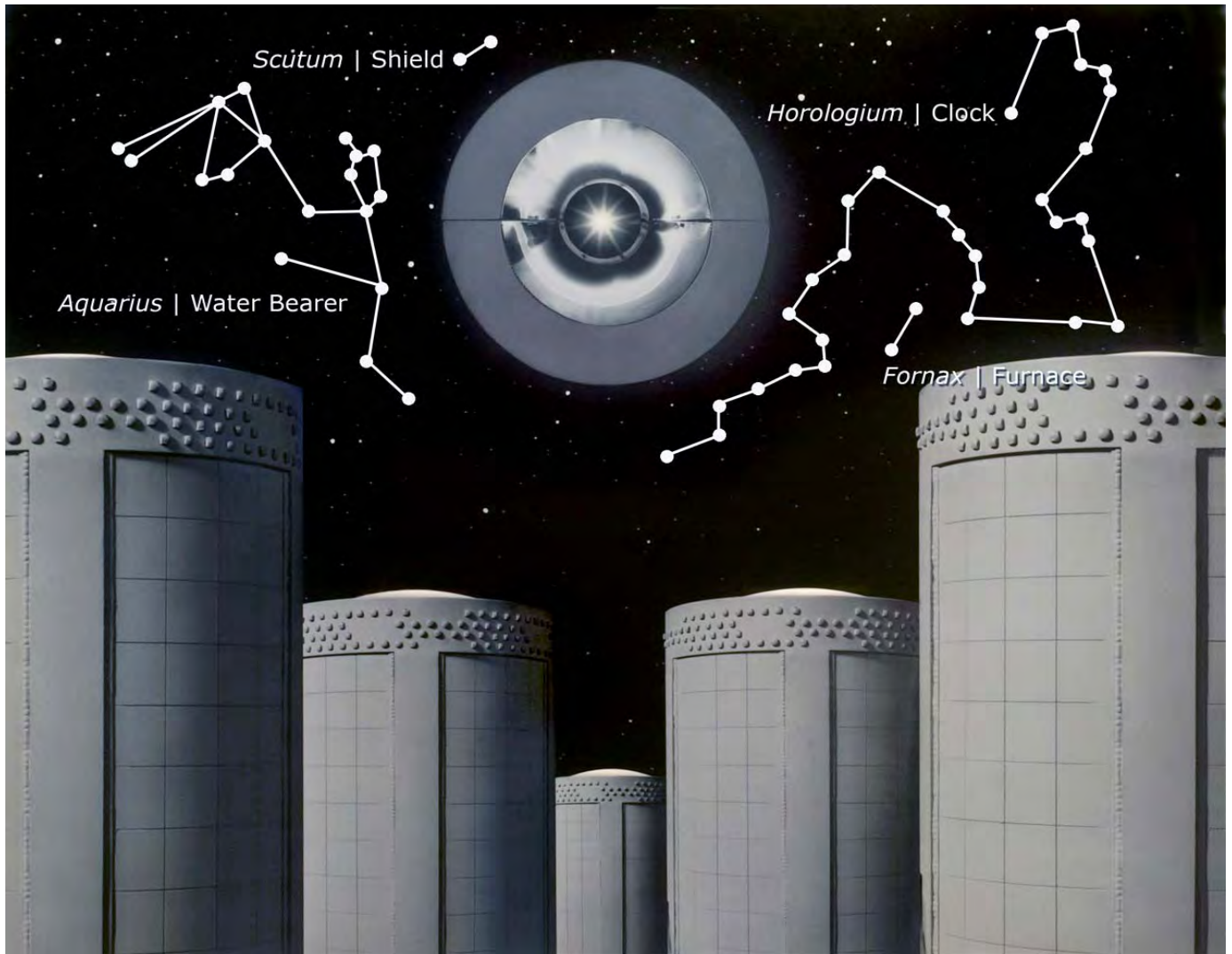
Framed, signed prints were sent to the Committee-members' top clients and trade-press editors.

Tube City was the first of several fine-arts promotions and was such a hit that Mote ordered another the following year, promoting stainless steel pipe insulation.

It was a tie-in promotion involving AISI's Committee of Stainless-Steel Producers and Babcock & Wilcox, one of the world's top-ranking construction companies.

*Tube City, 1968*

That illustration, *In the Stars*, featured a “planet” surrounded by stars arranged in “constellations” bearing the names of stainless-steel insulation’s best attributes; a legend identifying the constellations was printed on an a clear-acetate overlay that accompanied each framed print (shown in picture).



*In the Stars*, 1969

The illustration was made from a picture I had taken in North Carolina at the Keowee-Toxaway Project, the first nuclear reactor run by Duke Power Company [now, Duke Energy]. I was sent there to do reportage photography of the stainless-steel pipe insulation that was used throughout the reactor.

That was a shoot I’ll never forget, because I almost caused a nuclear “incident.”

You see, the insulated pipes I was interested in were hung high in the ceilings. I needed a big, twenty-foot ladder. The plant manager was happy to oblige me and I happily set off up the stairs with said ladder. Suddenly a commanding voice shouted from the level above: “Stop! Don’t move! Put down the ladder! *Slowly!*”



I was being watched by a video surveillance system; they saw that I nearly hit some pipes while trying to negotiate the tall ladder up a narrow stairway. Had I broken or even just compromised any pipes, the plant would have had to shut down. Yikes!



Soon after, Kurt Boehnstedt, gave me a huge assignment, photographing a concept car—called *Zn-75*—for the Zinc Institute; a trade group promoting the use of zinc (chrome) in cars.<sup>44</sup>

Kurt's job required a studio, to shoot the car in *limbo*, (in a seamless white space). He knew that I didn't have a studio big enough for a car, but called me anyway when the bids he got from a few big-studio photographers busted his budget. I sorely needed that job, especially after the Paluszek fiasco.

So, I convinced Kurt that there was no problem, that we could build a studio around the car in Creamer-Colarossi's parking garage; and with the help of two guys from the Zinc Institute, that's what we did. However, building a seamless background was easier said than done.

We constructed a 20 X 40-foot [6.1 X 12.2-meter] frame with 10-foot [3.4 meters] 2X4s from which were hung twelve rolls of overlapping 7.6-mil white seamless paper, 107 inches wide [~272 cm] by 36 feet long, the largest size made. It was hard to get the curves right, especially in the corners and across the ceiling, where the heavy, 100 lb. [163 gsm] paper was prone to sagging. In fact, we never achieved a totally seamless background; that problem was solved by photo retoucher Thad McGar.

Lighting the car was an exercise in frustration. Photographing cars is like taking pictures of mirrors—you are actually shooting what they reflect. It took an inordinate amount of time to achieve an even wash of light across the 40-foot-wide seamless-paper background. It was nearly impossible to avoid hot spots with the little 12-inch [30 cm] bowl reflectors and 500-watt photo-flood lamps that I was using. (It was a very amateurish set-up.)

It was a good thing my helpers were being paid by the client, given the amount of overtime they put in on that job. What was supposed to take two days ended up requiring more than a week. (!) There were moments when I feared I had bitten off more than I could chew; but it was worth the effort—the *Zn-75* brochure was cited with an Award of Merit in 1970 the New York Art Directors Club Exhibition.

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<sup>44</sup> The Institute hired two renowned Italian automotive designers—Nuccio Bertone and Ferruccio Lamborghini—to design a high-end sports car that maximized chrome detailing. (John Grinde noted that it looks like a Lamborghini Miura.)

The *Zn-75* job changed the way my former colleagues at Creamer-Colarossi perceived me; thenceforth, I was a professional photographer. Kurt's boss, Executive Art Director Al Shaw, gave me my next assignment; it was for a new line of office furniture being introduced by Steelcase, for which Shaw had designed full-page, color advertisements as well as a giant poster that was part of a POP [Point of Purchase] promotion in Steelcase's showrooms.

I was quick to take Shaw's assignment before I fully understood what was involved. Whereas I thought the assignment would call for reportage-style, shot on location in some modern office building, I couldn't have been more wrong. Shaw wanted a studio picture shot with a large-format swing-and-tilt camera; I had no experience with one of those, nor with large-scale studio lighting, other than what I learned shooting *Zn-75*. But how was Shaw to know that?

To digress for a moment: The larger the camera, the greater the detail it can reproduce. For large sized reproductions—like posters and billboards—4 X 5 inches [~10 X 13 cm] was considered the minimum size. Other large-format camera sizes were 5 X 7 [~13 X 18 cm], 8 X 10 [~20 X 25 cm], 12 X 20 [~30 X 50 cm] and 20 X 24 [50 X 61 cm].

Here's what photo-blogger Ken Rockwell says about sheet-film cameras:<sup>45</sup>

Most amateurs don't realize that these old-fashioned bellows-type sheet film cameras are the dominant format for professional landscape photography in 2005. They always have been. I wish I had realized that when I started in the early 1970s and didn't waste two decades shooting landscapes on 35 mm. These cameras use sheets of film usually about 4 x 5."

Less popular formats are 5 x 7," which is more popular in Europe than the USA, and 8 x 10," which is mostly popular with hobbyists and studio photographers shooting items requiring obscene levels of quality. Cameras as large as 12 x 20" and 20 x 24" are still in daily use by serious artists in 2005. 4 x 5" is the dominant format for serious landscape photography. The photo magazines all talk about digital cameras because their advertisers are digital. Look at the tech info behind the leading landscape photographers portrayed in *Outdoor Photographer* magazine or at my links page and you'll see most carry 4 x 5" cameras into the wilderness.

These were the most popular film formats from the invention of photography until the 1950s, when medium format cameras like the Rollei rose in popularity. It was replaced in the 1960s for journalism use by the Rollei medium format TLRs (Thru-The-Lens Reflex cameras).]

If you are concerned with ultimate image sharpness and other technical aspects, forget 35 mm and step straight up to 4x5 or at least medium format. 35 mm is really only for things that move quickly, like sports and wildlife. The reason people who mess with 35 mm for landscapes are always worrying about sharpness is because 35 mm usually leaves something to be desired when compared to larger formats. 35 mm can look spectacular at 20x24" until you see what larger formats can do.

The biggest advantage is not film size. The things that set large format completely apart from all smaller roll film formats are:

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.kenrockwell.com/tech/format.htm#4x5>



- 1.) Perspective correction with every lens, and
- 2.) Tilts that allow you to bring the entire image into perfect focus WITHOUT needing to stop the lens down, and
- 3.) Each sheet of film is separate:
  - 3a.) You can shoot the same thing on three sheets and develop differently after you've seen the first sheet developed, or
  - 3b.) You can shoot color and B/W in the same camera at the same time, and
  - 3c.) You can process just what you've shot without having to finish a roll, and
- 4.) 4 x 5 costs LESS than any other format.

It's been around for a hundred years so you can buy everything used. I paid \$150 for my used enlarger complete with several lenses for all formats (35 mm, 120 and 4x5). I paid \$300 for my first used 4x5 camera including lens. This \$300 camera made half the photos you see on my site. This \$300 used 4x5 is sharper than a new \$3,000 Hasselblad and worlds beyond a \$5,000 Leica or Contax. 4x5 film is also CHEAP. Sure, it costs \$3 per shot instead of \$0.50 for 35 mm, but you never can shoot as much 4x5. I blow off a few hundred dollars in 35 mm with my motor drive 35 mm camera each weekend, but I still haven't finished off the \$70 box of 4x5 film I bought 3 years ago. 4x5 is so far beyond 35 mm that you just won't appreciate it until you shoot it.

Now you know why Al Shaw wanted the Steelcase furniture shot with a large-format camera. While that was understandable, it left me in a pickle: I had neither a big camera nor a studio. What to do?

I called my mentor, Tom Andron, at K&L Color Lab. Tom was the lab's production manager; he supplemented his lab income by shooting professionally in a studio that he built a few floors above the lab. Tom generously offered to let me use his studio and shoot the Steelcase job with his 8 X 10 bellows camera. Hallelujah!

When I arrived at Tom's studio, I was surprised (and worried) to see that there were no strobes [flash units], just a few hot lights [incandescent lamps] in bowl reflectors. My work on the Zn-75 job had taught me a thing or two about studio lighting. To light that 800-square-foot [74-square-meter] studio, I used two dozen 500-watt lamps—that's a lot of light—to get a decent exposure of 1/15<sup>th</sup> second at f8 (using ASA [ISO] 64 Ektachrome film) However, Tom only had five lights. I thought it was a very amateurish set-up and said so, in so many words; but Tom reassured me that his minimalistic lighting gear would do a fine job. He showed me examples of work he'd shot with the little hot lights and judging by the quality of that work my trepidations were assuaged.

The low-level lighting was compensated for with time exposures (another way of saying "long exposures"). For the Steelcase shoot, ~~Tom~~ I used 30-, 45- and 60-second exposures; I couldn't believe my eyes how well that worked. Using such long exposures was a revelation, an important lesson that I still use today.

Of course, you can't use long exposures with anything that moves, unless you want a blur effect; for moving objects, strobe lighting is necessary because the flash duration is so short (thousandths of a second) that the action is frozen. Also, there are situations when you can't use hot lights because they are too, well, hot. For example, subjects like hair styles call for strobes, if only to keep the models from sweating.

After we got the office furniture in position on the studio's Cyclorama,<sup>46</sup> it was time to set-up the camera. With a little help from Tom, I soon got the hang of shifting the image, moving it up and down and from side to side, as seen in this Wikipedia illustration:

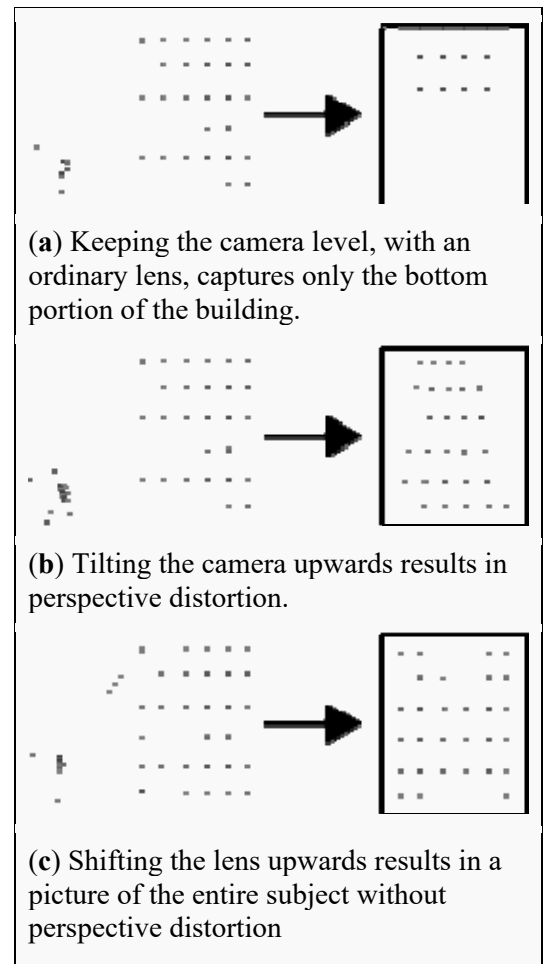
After giving me a run through with his gear, Tom returned to the lab and left me in the studio, to shoot the job. I spent the afternoon futzing and fuming; however, I never came to understand swinging and tilting the lens (to control the plane of focus)—and I still don't get it.<sup>47</sup>

Basically, the front lens board and rear film plane can be independently tilted, up and down, side to side, or both; doing so affects what is in focus and what is not as well as the perspectives, i.e., the shape of the subject. Those features can be used to create pictures with no discernable distortion--or to creatively distort the subject(s) of a picture.

In this case, the desired results were distortion-free images, with rectilinear lines; however, I couldn't line-up the shot and was nearly in tears by the time Tom returned to the studio that evening. In the end, he shot the job—although I got the credit and Al Shaw was none the wiser

With two big jobs under my belt, more Creamer-Colarossi business soon came my way. Owens Corning Fiberglas [OCF] became a client, thanks to Bruce and Pat Leslie, who ran the lucrative Society of the Plastics Industry [SPI] account; SPI was the agency's second largest client.

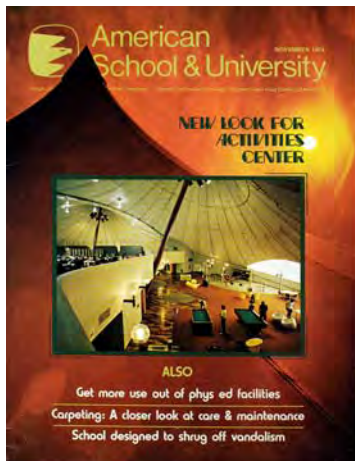
The Leslies introduced me to Marty Evans, OCF's PR manager; she was looking for a photographer to illustrate press stories about complex industrial processes. She became my loyal client for several years. Once a month, at the crack of dawn, I would fly from LaGuardia Airport to some remote factory, shoot a "how it's made" photo essay, and catch the last plane back to New York; it became a way of life; too bad they didn't have "air miles" yet.



<sup>46</sup> Wikipedia: An infinity cyclorama (found particularly in television and in film stills studios) is a Cyc which curves smoothly at the bottom to meet the studio floor, so that with careful lighting and the corner-less joint, the illusion that the studio floor continues to infinity can be achieved. Cycloramas or "Cycs" also refer to photography curving backdrops which are white to create no background, or "green screen," to create a masking backdrop.

<sup>47</sup> Wikipedia: A camera lens can provide sharp focus on only a single plane. Without tilt, the image plane (containing the film or image sensor), the lens plane, and the plane of focus are parallel, and are perpendicular to the lens axis; objects in sharp focus are all at the same distance from the camera. When the lens plane is tilted relative to the image plane, the plane of focus (PoF) is at an angle to the image plane, and objects at different distances from the camera can all be sharply focused if they lie in the same plane.





A photo spread in *American School & University* was a typical OCF assignment. I flew to LA on the night flight, arrived at the crack of dawn, rented a car at LAX and drove 30 miles east to Pomona, to photograph a unique Fiberglas building system at LaVerne College.<sup>48</sup>

The shoot extended into a second day when it became apparent that I couldn't get complete coverage in the six hours I had before having to leave for my return flight on the red-eye to New York; Marty approved the extension, without question; we didn't have cell-phones back then; I had to track her down making long-distance telephone calls; that cost me close to a hundred bucks; but the job got done; my shoot list was a mile long and included: architectural coverage of the building(s), inside and out; plus, reportage of key personnel, to illustrate their care histories. My portfolio filled with more and more industrial tear sheets; I got known as a B2B [Business to Business] photographer who specialized in *process photography*. I was called upon to illustrate the making of some weird products, in even weirder factories—examples were an auto-distributor-cap factory in Indiana as well as an Alabama manufacturer of molded Fiberglas shower enclosures and bathtubs. Trying to make those places look good was a tough row to hoe.



One of my most challenging industrial assignments was photographing a water-jet slag-fracking system built by Diamond Power division of Babcox & Wilcox [B&W]; it was like taking a picture inside a blast furnace.

The efficiency of boilers decreases over time as soot—the carbon by product of combustion—accumulates in the fire chamber and forms a thick crust around the water-circulating pipes and/or vessel(s).

<sup>48</sup> . That method of construction has been much replicated since that first structure was erected in 1974; today, the tent-like buildings, made possible by Fiberglas-reinforced cloth, are almost ubiquitous; Denver International Airport's main terminal complex is an example, as is BC Stadium in Vancouver.

In the past, the boiler had to be shut down to remove the crust (by manual chipping). With B&W's fracking system, the boiler did not need to be shut down for cleaning; squirting high-pressure cold water onto the hardened carbon deposits shattered them, causing the crust to fall off.

My job was to illustrate that.

When I met with the client, they made the job sound easy—simply aim the camera through an observation porthole that opened into the fire chamber of the industrial boiler. However, what looked easy on paper proved damn near impossible to shoot.

The observation porthole turned out to be just six inches [15 cm] in diameter. The glass was thicker than a Concorde's window (about four inches thick [~10 cm]) and made to withstand heat, not for optical purity.

Whatever lens I tried, the thick porthole glass threw the pictures out of focus. The only solution was to open the porthole.

The plant manager didn't want to open the porthole; he said they had never done that and he didn't want to be the first to try it. I explained that there could be no picture without opening the window; so, he did and that's when I understood his reluctance. The sustained blast of heat from that small hole was so intense that you couldn't stand closer than three feet away [~one meter]. Hmm.

Feeling the heat (in more ways than one), I ordered the porthole closed; I needed time to think. According to the plan I devised, one guy would open and shut the window, a second guy would hold an asbestos shield in front of the hole—to block the heat—while I positioned the camera directly behind the shield.

Then, on my cue, the shield would be pulled away and I, wearing thick asbestos gloves, would ram the camera lens into the hole, click the shutter and pull the camera out, as fast as possible.

Well, on the first try, the protective filter I had on the lens, melted. Wow!

There was no way to measure the exposure for those pictures; no way to look in the camera when it was in the hole; I had to best-guess the exposure settings. To be safe, I shot a variety of exposures and kept shooting until I ran out of protective filters; fortunately, I had enough filters to cover a five-f-stop range and that was enough to get the shot.

Considering that it cost me (only) a hundred bucks in filters—20% of my day rate—I reckon I got off light.

[Reality Check: What cost a hundred bucks in 1968 would cost a thousand dollars today—seriously. If you don't believe me, check out the picture of my Mercedes ad; you'll see that the 1972 price of a 450 SL was \$13,500; today, an equivalent Mercedes Benz car would cost \$113,500, or more.]





Although industrial photography was lucrative, fashion fascinated me. Aside from the obvious ego perks and hanging with the Beautiful People, there was the chance I might become famous and make a fortune.

Such chances didn't exist for lensmen working in the unglamorous industrial sector.

To build-up fashion business, I made the rounds of the New York model agencies, showing my portfolio and offering my services; their test models were my targets.

Doing portfolio pictures for testing models was a great way to get my work seen by art and creative directors all over town—they interviewed new models all the time. (Heh heh.)

For example, I got hired to shoot a ski-wear trade ad for Mister Pants, based on model test shots I did for Barbara Wing (below). The art director saw my shots in her portfolio.



The Mister Pants job was shot in Central Park, using a rocky outcropping to double for the Rocky Mountains.

Eddie Carr (above) posed as a fashionable playboy for that shot, with three gals sporting the client's rags.

Then I was hired to an ad for the Ratty Furs division of the company. For that ad, I shot model Barbara Wing (left) at dusk, on the beach dunes at Fire Island, using flash fill light. Later, I added birds, stars and other effects in post-production.

The work got me a lot of exposure but no money. Mister Pants were the first in a string of deadbeat clients who never paid their bills—all of them in the fashion and music businesses.

As mentioned earlier, the nation's economy was faltering.

## 1968 – Transformation – Metamorphosis

In the beginning, Leslie and I were all excited about setting up house together.

We bought an expensive couch and chair set with beige and olive-green stripes; the plush furniture went well with the antiques given to us by our parents; Leslie's orange-striped cat, Archimedes, made himself right at home in my chair.

The apartment looked terrific; the living room was decorated with prints of Escher drawings and Nanna's painting, *Venetian Fishermen* (which unfortunately got lost in the shuffle that was soon to follow). Most summer evenings were spent in our enclosed porch; it was decorated with scads of plants and faux-lace curtains; there were three single beds that doubled as couches, with throw pillows in rainbow colors. We entertained our friends there; it was a groovy room, lit by a dozen candles, with incense wafting in warm breezes. On hot nights, we slept out there, too.

Leslie worked 12 blocks south of my office, on 40<sup>th</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue. After work, she usually walked up to my office on 50<sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue; then, we'd drive home together in the Stingray and have dinner together before I headed off to night school. I did most of the cooking, although Leslie made some favorites that I liked, particularly gazpacho soup and a shrimp curry made with Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup.

That routine changed when Leslie had her pocket book stolen, on the doorsteps of Gurvitz's townhouse. We could hear Leslie screaming, through the intercom. I ran down the stairs and chased the thief to Second Avenue, where he disappeared in the rush hour crowds and traffic. After that, Leslie took the subway back to Flushing and a bus down Kissena Boulevard, to Quince Avenue; it was a long commute but she felt safer (and I felt liberated).

No longer driven by Leslie's schedule, I took to driving to and from Manhattan in off-peak hours. It was a relief not having to deal with rush-hour traffic. Sometimes, the traffic got so bad between 5:00 and 7:00 pm [17:00 and 19:00] that it could take an hour to move just ten blocks, from my office to the 59<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, crawling at a snail's pace in stop-and-go traffic on First Avenue. (Try that in a muscle car with a racing clutch!) In the new scheme of things, I came home too late for dinner with Leslie; she was usually off to bed by the time I got home from the office, ready for my first Tanqueray martini.

Although I was still attending classes at Queens College—to maintain my student deferral from the Draft—I was spending less and less time attending them. As far as I was concerned, school was an impediment to my professional progress; I'd have dropped out if it wasn't for the war. Instead, I had confabs with my teachers and made arrangements with them to home school myself and only go to the school to take tests. That allowed me to focus on my career.

[Spoiler Alert: I remained in school until 1968, amassing 161 credits; graduation required only 128; I would have been out of school in '66 had I graduated. Instead, I avoided graduating by never taking Physical Education (aka gym).]



Spending more time at the office, I got closer to Eddie Carr and his team on a social basis. Everyone at the Gurvitz studio ended each day around 6:30 pm [18:30] with a cocktail hour. When I drove home with Leslie, I had to forgo those socials. Eddie frequently invited the gals he dated to the cocktail hour; they went out partying after the office social hour. Eddie invited me to join them on several occasions and I was introduced to a new crowd—the Night People, the ones who come out to play after dark. Experiencing that slice of life with Eddie inspired me to work harder at breaking in to the fashion industry; I wanted to live his lifestyle, in lusty, lucrative Manhattan. Leslie wasn't pleased when I arrived home at all hours, after clubbing with Carr.

Leslie and I were beginning to go our own ways; our tastes were incompatible; she liked dinner on the table at 6:30 [18:30], I liked to eat at 11:00 pm [23:00]; she liked folk music (Joan Baez and Judy Collins were her favorites) and I preferred psychedelic rock music (*The Doors*, *Procol Harum*, *Pink Floyd*, *Iron Butterfly*, *Sly Stone* et al); I was a stoner and she was chemically pure. We spent less and less time together.



Despite my inattentiveness, Leslie was still on my side; she was genuinely excited by my progress as a photographer and was a great help, as a model and stylist. I loved it when we worked together; she was an eager and talented model/stylist.

One of our best gigs was the time we shot a cover for *Cycle* magazine; they gave me carte blanche and I chose to do a spacey scene in psychedelic colors, using infrared-sensitive color film (lower right).



We shot that scene in one of my favorite locations, a sand quarry near the Sag Harbour [Long Island] home office of Jess Thomas, the magazine's Technical Editor; he was writing the cover story about Norton's latest muscle bike.

Leslie was dressed in an iridescent, silver lame, bell-bottomed pants suit (which she made especially for those pictures), topped with a chrome helmet fashioned from a light fixture. I shots were made with Infrared Aero Ektachrome using a green filter [#58] to render the scene in hues of pink, magenta, blue and silvery white. While Leslie posed on the bike, Jess's job was to stand on top of a bluff in the background, flashing a mirror at the lens, as if signaling to Leslie; that adding a dramatic element of "mystery" to the shot. We had walkie talkies, but getting the mirror to flash into the camera lens was a major pain in the ass.



1968 | LESLIE MESNEY BODY-STUDY PORTFOLIO | PLATE N° 1

*Leslie was an enthusiastic model and promoter of my work. | I couldn't help imagining what "lay" ahead.*





1968 | LESLIE MESNEY BODY-STUDY PORTFOLIO | PLATE N° 2

*With these pictures I garnered the confidence and credentials to approach other women as models (etcetera).*

We did the shot over and over dozens of times; I was afraid Jess would grow impatient; but he bore with the situation; he was impressed with the technical nature of my photography. Ironically, a shot without the mirror flash made ink.

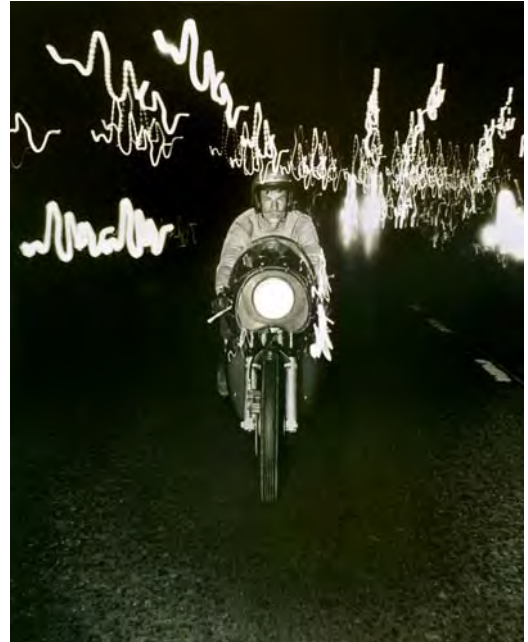
To digress for a moment, about Jess Thomas' patience:

On our first assignment, together, Jess followed me for an hour, driving a bike behind my station-wagon, from which I filmed him, hanging out of the back of the car, using a strobe (to freeze action) with a slow shutter speed (to blur action).

I made at least 100 exposures of that shot, to get one where all the elements came together. In such cases, I was shooting blind; I had no idea whether I was getting the shot because it was experimental; I wouldn't see the results until the film came back from the lab. (So different from the instant results provided by today's digital cameras!)

Why did I go to such great lengths?  
In two words: John Senzer.

He was my arch rival at *Cycle* magazine, my nemesis.



Senzer's stuff was pretty good; but his trump card was going out with one of the magazine's writers [Diedre Haley]; and she was chummy with CJ Hadley, who was a power figure at *Car and Driver*; Senzer was making inroads there, too; every job he did, I didn't.

I reckoned the only way to out-shoot Senzer (and Humphry Sutton, my nemesis at *Car and Driver*)—to produce pictures that were more complicated than they might endeavor; Sutton worried me the most, especially when he started copying my black-sky look.

## 1968 – Making Lemonade – *Intrepid Effort*

*"If Life gives your lemons, make lemonade."*

Elbert Hubbard

Life is filled with irony; I probably don't need to tell you that; nor that things aren't always what they seem.

Such was the case when I was lucky enough to win a choice gig from an old colleague at Basford Incorporated. Pat Leslie, a group supervisor at the agency and her husband, Bruce, who was a Vice President of the Public Relations Division, jointly managed press relations for the Society of the Plastics Industry—aka SPI—a major trade organization.



SPI's members included all the big plastics manufacturing companies, one of which, was the chemical giant, Union Carbide.

As a PR ploy, the company sponsored the 1967 and 1970 America's Cup yacht, US22 *Intrepid*,<sup>49</sup> after receiving a contract to produce a light-weight, carbon-fiber boom for the famous yacht. The space-age material allowed the construction of a flexible boom; the curvature (bow) of the flexed boom reshaped the main sail, improving its qualities as an air foil, making it able to scoop more wind. For the yachting press, the story about the flexible boom, designed by Britton Chance, Jr., was big news; Union Carbide want to drive that story; Basford's job was to write and place (in magazines and newspapers) feature stories about the benefits of Union Carbide's carbon-fiber technology; my job was to illustrate their stories with dramatic photographs of the flex-boom in action, on *Intrepid*. Getting such an assignment was a big deal for me; Union Carbide tear sheets added considerable luster to my portfolio, to say nothing of the fat shooting fee and subsequent stock-photo sales. [I negotiated to retain the copyrights for the work.]

The big shoot was scheduled for a high-summer afternoon in August. The agency hired *Intrepid* for an afternoon sail in Long Island Sound. I was told to meet the boat at a yacht club in Norwalk, Connecticut and connect with its skipper, Bill Ficker,<sup>50</sup> who would later take *Intrepid* to the 1970 America's Cup race. Ficker was less than enthusiastic; he was not a publicity hound; but he was bound by contract to participate in Union Carbide's promotion of the yacht and its unique boom.

When I woke up on the morning of the shoot, I was ecstatic to see a crystal-clear sky; for days I had lived in dread of overcast weather, which would have cast a pall on my pictures. Engulfed in enthusiasm, I set off for Norwalk with high hopes, decked out with a new pair of top sider shoes and a waterproof camera bag. In my mind's eye, I saw the perfect picture, conceived in dream the night before: a super-wide-angle shot taken on-board while *Intrepid* was under full sail, beating upwind, with the boom under maximum stress and curvature. My plan was to position the camera at the point where the boom connects to the mast and aim the lens upward, to include as much of the main sail as could be captured by a 20 mm lens. The resulting picture was meant to be a study in curves; the swoop of the sail intersecting with the scoop of the boom, with Ficker at the helm, in the background.

The skipper had no problem understanding the shot, when I sketched it for him at a pre-sail scuttlebutt aboard *Intrepid*. Ficker told me there was already a camera mount in that position, for one of the onboard video cameras used to surveil the craft under sail. (Videos were shot for training purposes and publicity as well as yacht-design alterations.)

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<sup>49</sup> *Intrepid* was a breakthrough design in the history of yachting and the 12-Meter Class. Olin Stephens' aim was to reduce the wetted surface by cutting away the keel at the aft end and redistributing the saved volume in the after line of the hull. Not only were her hull lines completely innovative, she also had the first fin and skeg configuration with a trim tab at the aft end of the keel combined with the rudder and the same steering mechanism. A new deck layout moved the crew below decks allowing for the boom to be lower to the deck which added greater stability. The rig was also innovative with a bending boom and top sections of the mast made of titanium. *Intrepid* outclassed *Dame Pattie* by a score of 4-0 easily winning the 1967 America's Cup. For the 1970 Cup Defense she was modified by Britton Chance. Her keel was redesigned and recast, she was given a longer waterline, a reduced wetted area and her weight increased. She became the second yacht (after *Columbia* 1899 and 1901) to successfully defend the America's Cup twice, the first 12-metre to do so. *Intrepid* won the Caritas Cup (NYYC) in 1970 and the Chandler Hovey Gold Bowl (NYYC) in 1967 and 1970. More at <https://12metreyachtclub.org/intrepid-us-22/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/socal/daily-pilot/news/tn-dpt-me-0317-ficker-obit-20170316-story.html>

Ficker agreed with me, that point of view was the only way to clearly show any bow in the boom; however, he pointed out that the maximum deflection in the arc of the boom was only six inches [15 centimeters]—hardly noticeable at best—and that the boom didn't start flexing until wind speeds hit 40 knots [46 mph | ~74 kmh]. Uh oh.

My big idea was blown away; there was little to no wind; Long Island Sound was as calm as a lake. Ficker didn't want to take the yacht out, even though the weather was gorgeous, because Intrepid had no on-board engine and would have to be towed back to port if she got becalmed. To motivate Ficker, I suggested that I shoot from a motor boat (a 20-foot [6.09-meter] Boston Whaler with a 100 horsepower Mercury outboard) shadowing Intrepid, rather than shoot on board; if Intrepid stalled, the camera boat could double as a tow boat. There was no point in taking any on-board pictures other than an unremarkable beauty shot of the boom; without flexing, the special boom looked like any other. Ficker agreed and we went ahead with the shoot.

It took an hour to sail Intrepid just one mile off shore. There was hardly enough breeze to fill Intrepid's sails; and without wind, there was no action on-board; the grinders sat idle; the rigging rap-rap-rapped against the mast, annoyingly. By 4:00 pm [16:00] it seemed as if the offshore breezes that typified August afternoons on Long Island Sound weren't going to materialize that day; by then the great yacht had flopped around in the doldrums for two hours; everyone was getting antsy; their annoyance could be easily detected by the vocabulary bantered back and forth on the boats' radios.

Through it all, the Whaler slowly circled Intrepid and I shot what I could. Aside from the yacht, there was little else to provide any visual excitement—the sea was nearly flat calm; there wasn't a cloud in the sky; and the shoreline in the background appeared as a faint, featureless strip defining the horizon. How ironic, to have such a beautiful day and such a unique opportunity turn into a photo disaster. It was depressing.

That was when Hubbard's adage came to mind: I needed to think about making some visual lemonade.

To do that, I pulled out my high-contrast filters and went for a graphic look, using infra-red [IR] color and black-white films. "Normal" color shots would have looked ho-hum.

The winning combination turned out to be a black and white shot made with a red-29 filter that turned the blue sky and water into deep tones of ebony. Set against black, Intrepid popped out.

The best angle was a front  $\frac{3}{4}$  view in which the craft looked as slender as an aircraft wing, with the camera cocked on an angle, to create a visual dynamic. The dark, graphic look of those pictures foreshadowed my emerging style.

There were also a couple of decent IR color shots; the best was one of the spinnakers which I was lucky enough to capture during the 30 seconds or so when there was enough wind to fill it.





However, even in that picture you can see that the yacht was making little to no way; there was no visual excitement besides the psychedelic colors.

To say that my clients were disappointed is an understatement. While claiming to be sympathetic to circumstances, they seemed to be blaming me for the situation. I offered to reshoot the job for expenses only; but they declined.

(One of the funny things about being a photographer was that, when the weather didn't cooperate, it was somehow my fault. That's how I got into special-effects; it was a way to create dynamic pictures even if Fate rained on my parade.)

As luck would have it; soon after I put the picture of Intrepid into my portfolio, Kenyon Marine bought the publishing rights for a limited-edition poster of it, to use as a fine-arts gift promotion at Christmas. And, a year later, Kenyon bought four more of my marine pictures—including two color shots of Intrepid—for another Christmas-gift promotion: a boxed set of four, frameable fine-arts prints. They also used a shot of Intrepid for an ad announcing the company's merger with Seaboard Marine.

Then, more good fortune: Woolsey, the marine-paint maker, who used the same ad agency as Kenyon Marine; saw the Kenyon art-print promotion and hired me to do a studio product shot for an advertisement. That gig paid good money; but I often wondered why I was hired for it; after all, sailing photography has little or nothing to do with studio photography.

## 1968 – Emerging Style – New Directions

More and more of my time was spent working on my fashion portfolio and experimenting with new gear, especially filters.

For years, I had been emulating the masters; it was a process of discovery, to understand the looks delivered by different lenses and filters as well as various film and processing techniques. I preferred black & white [B&W] photography—it was way cheaper; I could process and print my own pictures.

Black-and-white photography was still vogue in the late '60s; but color photography was getting an increasing share of page space and in some cases, more; great debates were held among photo pundits, in magazines like *Popular Photography* and *US Camera*, about the *legitimacy* of color photography as a true Art form; color, many of them said, made it too easy to make an appealing picture.

I went both ways; I agreed that it was easier to make eye-catching pictures in color; but black and white pictures were more *cerebral*. With black & white, the brain must do some interpretive work because we don't naturally see the world in black, white and shades of grey; thus, black & white is interpretive, more *artistic*. That is why I preferred to shoot in black & white.

I was searching for an interpretive style, a look I could call my own, that would set me apart from the crowd. I discovered that style one fine summer day, photographing Carol Douglas on Fire Island. Carol Douglas was the foxiest girl in Douglas Manor, as far as I was concerned; she was cute as a button, with a Jodie Foster air of sarcasm and twinkles in her eyes. There were rumors that Carol wasn't the saint that her brother John was; he was a religious sort of guy (they were Catholics), a do-gooder; but the word was out that she was a naughty girl. Carol had spunk; she didn't hesitate when I asked if she'd pose for some pictures.

We drove out to Fire Island in the Corvette; that made a great impression. During the work-week almost nobody came out to the far-easterly reaches of Fire Island; the famed beach communities were thirty miles back, closer to New York City. I knew of a semi-private section of beach there and sure enough, we had the dunes to ourselves. We set up camp on a high bluff with a view of the sea on one side, and the parking lot on the other (to keep an eye on the 'Vette). Tall grasses held back the wind-blown sands; there were enough hollows in the drifts to afford privacy when needed. At my request, Carol brought a bunch of outfits; I narrowed down the selections and asked Carol to try them on, so I could see how they fit; most were a half size too big and needed taping and pinning to improve the fit. While changing outfits, she made no bones about prancing about in the altogether. Hmm.



Things got serious while I was fitting her bikini; I discovered that Carol was an eager beaver in more ways than one.



When we got back to taking pictures, the sun was getting low; rather than fuss any further with the bathing suits, I asked Carol to just throw-on a silky shirt.

To photograph her, I used a 20 mm Nikkor lens with a #29 red filter to darken the sky; that's the filter that's used in Hollywood to shoot "day for night" shots. I used a Honeywell Strobonar as a fill-in flash: but the battery was running low and after grabbing this winning shot I abandoned the flash when the re-cycle time between shots got too long. Without being tethered to the flash, the shoot was more fluid; there was no need to stop and wait for the flash; nothing interfered with the flow of the *magic*.



I could move around easier and so could she; as she posed, I followed focus and shot bursts of exposures with a motor-drive Nikon. That afternoon, everything “clicked.” Later, while printing the negatives, I saw on paper exactly what had been in my mind’s eye—dark, somewhat surreal-looking images. It was the first time that my intentions came out exactly as planned. I liked what I saw and adopted the look—of super-wide-angle shots with ebony skies—as my signature style, my trademark. [Spoiler Alert: I didn’t see much of Carol after that; she said she didn’t want to see me or take more pictures even though she liked the ones we made. Truth told, I had fumbled our seduction on the dunes, cuming almost instantly, all over her; what a humiliating mess that was.]

Infra-red pictures—faux-night B&W and *Atomicolor*—soon dominated my portfolio. Those looks fit right in to the psychedelic styles of the moment; it was a time when colors went mad, when Peter Max’s wild graphics and Andy Warhol’s Pop-Art set the trend. My career started moving in new directions; instead of being told what to shoot, art directors started asking me for suggestions; and model agencies began responding to my offer to test their talents.



Wilhelmina began sending me girls to photograph. Willie’s girls were top of class, svelte beauties who adorned the covers of *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Vogue* and *Glamour*.

Naomi Sims, a soon-to-be super star, was one of them.

I shot Naomi in a sand quarry out on Long Island, [the location used for the *Cycle* magazine cover shot described earlier]; my pictures of Naomi impressed Wilhelmina, who then introduced me to Justine Reynolds, a model turned consultant.

## 1968 – Justine Model Consultants – Expanding Network

Justine Model Consultants was a self-improvement business, not a booking agency. Justine worked with model agencies to prep their neophytes in everything from make-up to business practices. Although she positioned herself as some sort of guru, Justine’s modeling credentials were modest. Nonetheless, people bought her spin and her disciples believed in her. They say that if people hear something three times, they’ll likely take it as true. Justine capitalized on that; she confabulated an impressive story about herself and repeated it over and over.

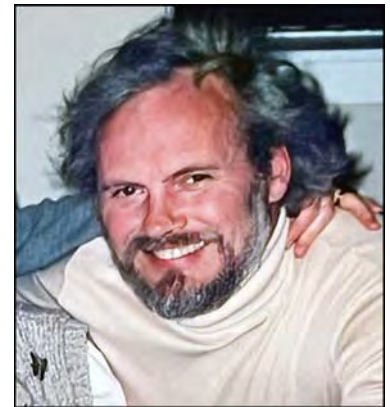
Eventually, people stopped questioning her credentials; most were overwhelmed by her über enthusiasm and energy; she was an impressive presenter; I would have liked to have had Justine as my rep.

[Editor: The fashion business was full of pretenders; Justine was one of them. I am not saying Justine was a bad person; her intentions were good; she just had an inflated idea about herself and believed her own stories. For example, Justine would have you believe that she was instrumental in the success of Richard Roundtree, the star of the hit TV series and movie, *Shaft*; in fact, the well-known actor took only two lessons from her.]

Justine proposed sending me her students for test-shot sessions and for lessons about how things work in a photo studio; she said I'd get paid for my work. (Ha!) After I did test shots of her students, Patti Martin and Season Hubley, Justine came to me with a big idea. She made her pitch in a high-rise penthouse apartment owned by one of her investors, a rich architect who let Justine use his suite when he was away (which was a lot of the time). She laid out her plan while judiciously seducing me; her big idea was that the two of us join forces and share a studio on the fifth floor of 42 East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, right across the street from the landmark Metropolitan Life Insurance building [MetLife].

Lucky for me, Leslie bought into the plan. I think she saw her own liberation as a possible outcome. Leslie's income had been supporting us; if I succeeded and was able to support myself, she wouldn't be leaving me in the lurch. So, the deal was made and we went to work renovating the unfinished industrial space to build my studio and Justine's classrooms. The place needed a lot of work.

On the weekends, Justine's husband, Barney Barger, would drive in from New Jersey with his van; while Justine baby-sat their two and four-year-old sons, Sean [who grew up to become the well-known developer of *Debabelizer* software] and Newton.



Barney and I shopped and schlepped building supplies from Jersey; he and his friends built-out the interior of Justine's offices in the front half of the space while Leslie and I worked on my photo studio and darkroom in the back half. There was a mood of optimism; we were on a mission; the four of us soon bonded.

In the interim, I shot more pictures of Season Hubley, at her request; she and I hit it off on our first shoot, out at a ranch in southern New Jersey.

Despite the fact that Season was too small to ever make it as a big-league fashion model, Justine capitalized on her; she pandered to her, promising the possibility of a career in Hollywood, citing the success of Richard Roundtree. Ha!





Season kept coming back for more; she had little else to do, or needed to do; she was the rambunctious daughter of a Wall Street tycoon who lived in an enormous Park Avenue apartment. Season was a little rebel; her hero was Patty Hearst [revolutionary daughter of famed publisher William Randolph Hearst]; but you'd never think—she looked like a little girl; casting agents would book her age range 12-20.

After Justine and I moved into the space on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Season and I got into a near tryst during a shoot in my studio; it was the beginning of a flirtation that would not be consummated until years later when I looked her up, in trendy Toluca Lake [a wealthy suburb of Los Angeles], where she was living with her pre-teen son—by actor Kurt Russell<sup>51</sup> (yes, that one, the movie star)—in a pricey, secluded, hillside home featuring a fabulous pool. By then, Kurt was seeing Goldie Hawn and divorcing Season. I could see why; Season had become another starlet gone stoner; but she was still charming and seductive, mischievous and irresistible, more so than ever.

To digress even further for a moment: Season entertained me poolside where she sunbathed in the nude and I floated around the pool on a raft in my birthday suit. Later that day, after dinner—and a lot of cocktails—we repaired to her bedroom. She was so out-of-it that she didn't remember a thing the next day; at least that's that she claimed.

For the next ten years, I looked her up on every one of my trips to LA. She moved to Venice Beach and lived in a condo a block from the beach; Kurt left her with the kid, but kept paying the bills (which in Venice Beach were not insubstantial). As the years passed, Season withered; the last time I saw her, she was a chain smoker with a bad cough who drank screwdrivers for breakfast. I lost track of her twenty years ago and wonder if she is still alive. Anyway....

When the studio was completed and our mutual businesses got going, the affairs between Justine and I got going, too; it goes without saying that we had a fling, but it was brief, something we had to get out of the way. Although I found Justine very attractive, it was I who put the kibosh on it; I saw how she used sex to empower her over the men in her life; she ensnared them emotionally then entangled them in her business, her web. Men were objects for Justine. Correction: everyone was an object for her; people were stepping stones; if she couldn't use them, she didn't bother with them. I recognized that, as long as we were sleeping together, Justine would have a hook in me; so, I backed out. Justine and I made a kind of pact, to keep our fling a secret and to start over, on new terms. My fear of women—their gaining control of me with sexual favors—has always been a barrier; for my entire life it kept me from letting go, even at times I clearly should have and wanted to.

[Rant Alert: In my humble opinion [IMHO], sex ends about as many relationships as it begins; eventually, one party wants more than the other; that sets up an imbalance, a negative dynamic; one party begins to feel deprived; that leads to anger; the other party may start using sex as a reward for good behavior—a kind of control; in the end, one or the other seeks satisfaction with another and that, as they say, is that.]

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<sup>51</sup> Season played the role of a hooker with Kurt Russell in the 1981 film, *Escape from New York*

Justine didn't need to sleep with me; I was a willing collaborator; it was going to be one of those, "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours," deals that I liked so well. Working with Justine would give me access to important people in the world of fashion and beauty—or so I thought.

Justine was, as the Swedes say, *expert på allt*—a know it all; she was a legend in her own mind and considered herself a gift to the New York fashion industry. To be fair, she was well intentioned. As she explained, she was on a crusade to help people, to teach them better ways. Her consultations amounted to telling her model wannabes the most basic, most obvious stuff; but like good doctors and lawyers, she had a way with words, presenting simple thoughts in complex terms; she was a master of obfuscation. But I could see through her; she became clay for me; someone I could shape and mold. It turned out that Justine didn't actually have any brilliant ideas or plans; she talked the talk, as they say; but she didn't walk the talk—that was where I came in.



I became Justine's default promo man. I figured out a communications strategy for her, and built her brand. That included designing her logo (which was a graphic treatment of her name embellished by a prominent daisy-like asterisk)<sup>1</sup> as well as business cards, stationary and a brochure. To save money, her cards and stationery were printed in black and white; they were given the look of more expensive two-color printing by hand-coloring the daisies, filling them in with yellow (or other color) markers.

However, the slick-looking branding didn't automatically open the doors for Justine; she was encountering resistance from important people; I think that's because they thought she was an upstart (she was); many people probably thought the way I did when I first met Justine; I thought: who does she think she is? Justine could be very pushy; she didn't go with flow; she made waves.

To redefine Justine in the eyes of her peers, pupils and prospects, I came up with the idea of making Justine the sponsor—and star—of a Public Service Announcement [PSA];<sup>2</sup> or, in this case, a PSP—Public Service *Program*.

<sup>1</sup> For Justine's logo and typographical style, I chose the thinnest typeface I could find; Justine was the thinnest woman I ever knew; I thought it was a fitting selection—thin, yet curvaceous.

<sup>2</sup> The term PSA used strictly, applies to free commercial time that TV and radio stations are required by law to qualifying organizations and institutions: messages from the CDC or the Red Cross are PSAs, for example; the highway safety PSA that Burt Holms and I made in 1966, for the American Iron and Steel Institute (to promote steel guard rails) is another; as was the *Secret of The Forest* PSA that I made for St. Regis Paper Company, a conceitful piece promulgating respect for timberlands.



The idea was to make a slide program—a documentary—about the modelling industry; it was called *Modelling: A Creative Experience*; it revealed the inside story of the modelling business, as told by the insiders. It was a brilliant PR ploy—one that would get Justine [and me] into the C-suites at every major model agency in town, interviewing the movers and shakers.

It didn't take much to convince Justine and the idea sold itself to everyone she presented it to; and why not? It was a way for all the participants to grease their own skids, to promote themselves to their number one target audience—people who want to be models. Every year, about 100,000 guys and gals come to New York and throw their hats into the ring; by the end of the first year, only 1,000 remain; of those, you could count how many succeed with your fingers.

I've heard the same story about photographers; although the voracity of the anecdotes is questionable, the fact remains that a huge number of wannabes entered the fashion food chain every day of every month of every year; all of them were prospects for education, training, and representation.

Being the producer of the PSA, I photographed Justine with the owners of nearly every top model agency in New York—Wilhelmina, Wagner, Perkins, Stewart, Zoli, Black Beauty *et al*—as well as the cr me-de-la-cr me of fashion designers and stylists—among them Vidal Sassoon,<sup>1</sup> Georgette Klinger and Oscar de la Renta. Justine presented the single-projector show live, ad-libbing to a basic script outline. You could say it was my first slide show.



In keeping with our barter arrangement, Justine repaid me in kind, modelling for assignments like this 1971 Car and Driver feature spread about the Fiat 124 Spider.

As a model, Justine excelled; she was a natural actress, which is what modelling is really all about—role playing, putting on airs, becoming someone you're not, in the default world.

## 1970 | Scenes from *Modelling: A Creative Experience* | Plates N s 1-24

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia: Vidal Sassoon CBE (17 January 1928 – 9 May 2012) was a British-American hairstylist, businessman, and philanthropist. He was noted for re-popularising a simple, close-cut geometric hair style called the Bob cut, worn by famous fashion designers like Mary Quant and film stars such as Mia Farrow, Goldie Hawn, Cameron Diaz, Nastassja Kinski and Helen Mirren. In 1964, Sassoon created a short, angular hairstyle cut on a horizontal plane that was the recreation of the classic "bob cut." His geometric haircuts seemed to be severely cut but were entirely lacquer-free, relying on the natural shine of the hair for effect. Advertising and cosmetics executive Natalie Donay is credited with discovering Sassoon in London and bringing him to the United States, where in 1965 he opened his first New York City salon, on Madison Avenue.





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 1

*Below: Justine (left) and her assistant, Shiela, review Richard Roundtree's portfolio.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 2

*"Make-overs" were Justine's specialty | A network of colleagues provided other specialized services.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 3

*Justine's business was consultation with commisionable referrals | Producing the show opened many doors.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 4

*The support of Wilhelmina (above) gave Justine huge creds | Below: Wilhelmina's model-booking agents.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 5  
*Justine's business depended on referrals from model agencies (and vice versa).*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 6  
Cye Perkins | Perkins Models





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 7  
*Cye Perkins (left) meeting with clients at the agency's townhouse office on fashionable East 53rd Street.*





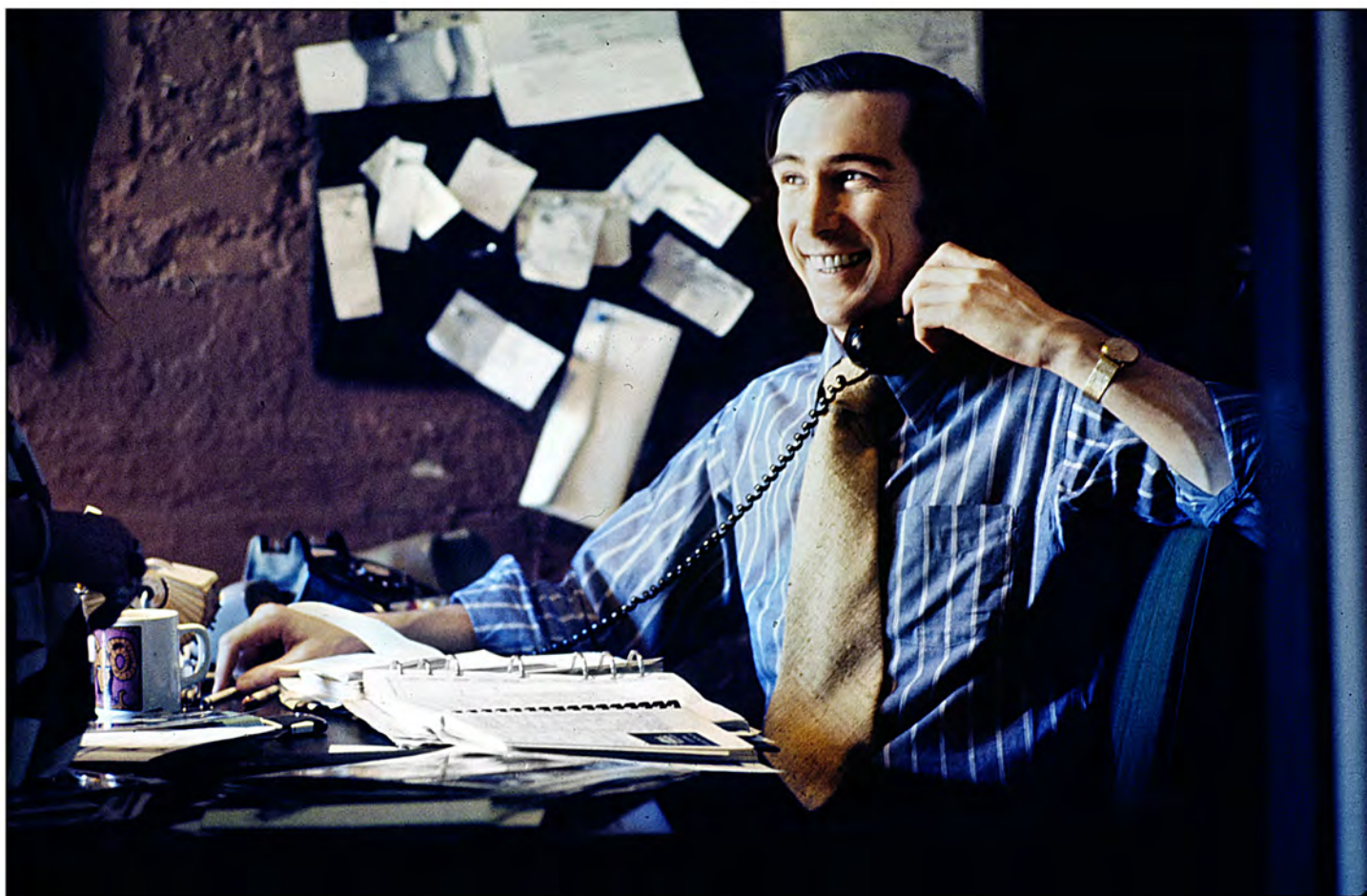
1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 8  
*Diane von Furstenberg*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 9  
*Zoli Model Agency*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 10  
*Kevin Barry | Kevin Barry Models*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 11  
*Jane Beaton | Talent Agent | Casting*





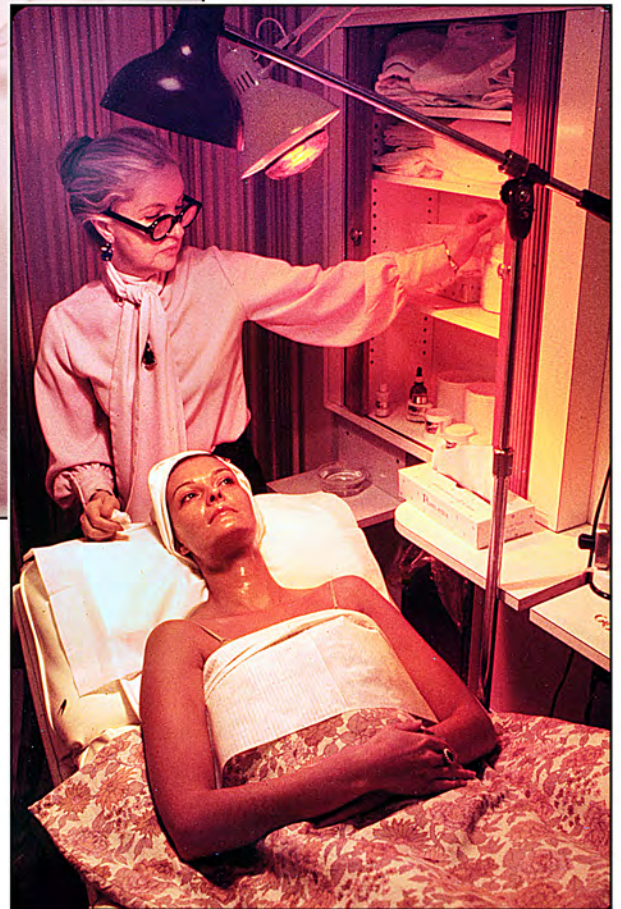
1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 12  
*A page from the October 17, 1969 issue of Life Magazine | Black Beauty models | Yale Joel photo.*





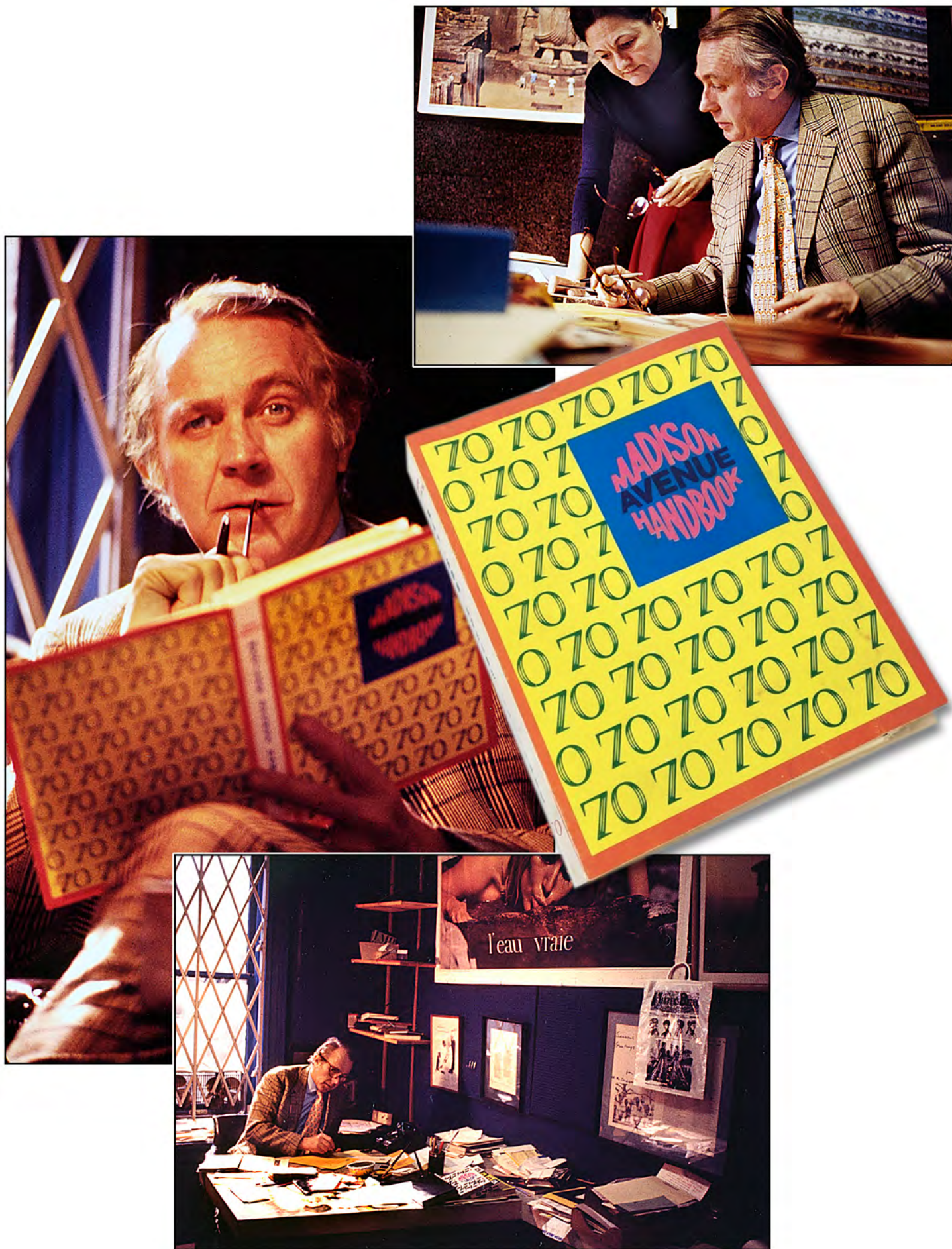
1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 13  
*Above: partners Betty Foray (left) and Dee Gipson | Black Beauty Model Agency.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 14  
*Georgette Klinger's Fifth-Avenue salon | European skin care few models could afford | Below: Sue Keeton.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 15

*Sponsorship by Modelling Association of America president and publisher, Peter Glenn, was a coup for Justine.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 16  
*The studio of Madison Avenue haute-couture fashion designer, Oscar de la Renta.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 17  
*Madison Avenue haute-couture fashion designer, Oscar de la Renta.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 18  
*Voice training at Actors' Workshop.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 19  
*Rehearsing with video assist at Actors' Workshop.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 20

*When her business floundered, celebrity stylist Vidal Sassoon offered Justine space in his Madison Avenue salon.*





1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 21  
*Justine moved out of the 23rd Street office and Yours Truly took over that space, doubling the size of my studio.*



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1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 22

*Above: End title | Below: Yours Truly photographing "Jane Doe"*



FOR THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE PUBLIC EYE  
First of A Series

## LOOK AT YOUR MARKET AND FACE IT

Varieties of Facial Expressions  
Can Mean Extra Hours On Set

When agencies and photographers buy models' time, they do it for the extra benefits a model provides their endeavor; the value of your human appeal and selling power -- face it, it's your body and your "look" that are making the photograph or film.

When a specific art director or photographer come up with a concept, they need specific people to fill the bill. It therefore stands to reason that the more people you can be, the more benefits you can provide a client; and the more dollars you will be capable of earning for yourself.

### Who Are You?

You, as a model, are capable of being an almost infinite variety of people -- not even considering the wonders of properly executed make-up and hair stylization. You are capable of being almost anyone you can imagine yourself to be -- and if you can't, you may be in the wrong business.

One of the easiest, but least understood methods to convey these many people is through variety of facial expression.

### You Never Say It Through Words

Before going further, imagine the last interpersonal relationship you encountered and try to remember how much of the basic information was transmitted via words. Chances are you'll recognize that most of the emotional material was conveyed in other than verbal manner:

via facial expression, gesture and tone of voice.

Considering the print environment, you as model cannot provide words or tone of voice; you must therefore communicate by face and body position. Most people, after immediately observing body posture, will study the face to get the details of the situation.

### Achieving Facial Differentiation

To best get your maximum number of good facial expressions, you must first get some basic limits established. You probably cannot be all people to all people; you can be some people to most people. The more universal and "pure" the types, the more people understanding, and the more value you have. The best thing you can do for openers is to figure out which people you can be, and then work on perfecting those, down to the last detail. But you must really get into being those people since your face can do no more than reflect and project who you essentially are, or can be.

Once you've established your limits, work at getting maximum variety for the basic types. You'll probably find that as you increase the variety of basic expressions, other new ones will spring to mind. Important: work at going from the obvious to the sublime; try to include Love and Hate and everything in between.

### Why Freeze Up?

If you look closely at it, you'll see that there are two basic types of top models: those that have their "special" look -- usually an instantly-recognizable Twiggy or what have you -- or those that can "do anything." Most of you went into modeling so that either your being could sell anything, or anything could be sold by you. There's a big difference between the two. The first implies that your presence is sufficient to do the job; the second that you will have to augment an existing marketing situation by changing yourself somewhat to become what is necessary. And that can be hard, especially considering the molecular rigidity of the egos in this business.

## WHEN SHOOTING FUNNY COLORS...

When your photographer starts rapping about how the photo's going to be rendered in fabulous funky funny colors... watch out!

Very often these specialized photographic techniques can ruin otherwise perfect make-up and hair!

The reason's simple: many of these processes photograph colors differently than they appear. For example, if your photographer mentions "Infra-Red" you can be absolutely certain that your roots will show -- even if they are nearly invisible to the naked eye!

Still other processes strip away certain colors from the visible spectrum. For example: if your make-up is primarily red and the process is stripping away red, the photograph will show you with darker than normal tones.

What to do: when the photographer says (and he should) that funny colors are the order of the day, let him be the consultant on your make-up and hair. Since he knows what will happen, and you don't, he should either provide you with a stylist or some specific information. Don't leave it to chance; you may not be able to use the results if you do.

## MAKE MONEY ON A TAN...

Models have fetishes about fair, light skin; but clients and photographers can often use a good healthy tan.

To avoid hang-ups over skin tones and relax at the same time, try to get "advance tan bookings" then take a break to prepare.

 douglas masney photography 42 east 23rd street new york, 10010

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That's why it's so ironic why so many models facially freeze on set. They just can't hack it by themselves. And I will grant that many photographers' sets are hot and tiresome. Music can go a long way to help, but ultimately it's up to you. And the more you freeze the more you limit your markets.

### How To Un-Freeze With The Un-Cola

Music is perhaps the best key to discovering who you are. Advice: let yourself space out. You are a manifestation of your mind; no matter who you are or what you do, you can be no more than what you let yourself be; and in this business your dreams are your key to success.

Most people dream of what they wish they were; you get a chance to play at it and get paid for it. But, since few people like to pay for experiments, it's best to practice beforehand -- and that should be your way of having fun.

Sink into your favorite music; drink your favorite drink; relax and do your thing; play at being whoever you imagine yourself to be. If you can take it, watch yourself in the mirror. Watch! And you will be amazed!

If you do that you will be ready for an "advanced" step: method acting for modeling. To do that is to work at being other people for extended periods of your daily life. For example, on your day off play at being a saleslady at Henri Bendel's or Gucci's, or anyone. Go to the store as her. Talk to people as her. Understand who she is and measure the reaction of other people to you as your success or failure at being her. For those of you intent on film commercials, this latter step will be especially useful in getting extra punch into your shootings.

### Don't Be Bashful

No doubt the first few times you make an extended voyage as another person it's almost got to be a heavy trip. The reactions of people to you will not be to you; and it will take you a while to get used to being measured as someone else. But your ability to be people on set will quickly reveal itself in black and white (maybe even color!).







1970 | MODELLING: A CREATIVE EXPERIENCE | PLATE N° 24  
*Justine with her horse, Banner, and sons, Newcomb (left) and Sean at Blue Crest Farms, Long View, New Jersey.*



Justine's connection with Vidal Sassoon proved providential: In 1970, she ended up opening a branch of her business as a boutique within Sassoon's flagship salon at 803 Madison Avenue [between 67<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> Streets].

That was a big step up—from the photo district to the Upper East Side—in one giant step. Justine re-branded herself, "Justine at Vidal Sassoon."

Once she got inside Sassoon's business, her schemes inflated to enormous proportions and eventually imploded. But before that, she used her influence to help my sales rep, Sue Keeton, snag me a gig shooting Sassoon's styles for a series of in-store posters.



Model: Sue Keeton

**VIDAL SASSOON WIGS**

## 1968 – *Mannequin* – For Dummies

For probably many of the same reasons Donald Trump owned the Miss Universe beauty contest, Shelley Ascher published *Mannequin*, the magazine for models (and actors).

Ascher was a nerdy promoter from Chicago who loved hanging out with beautiful girls. Shelley had inherited a small fortune and set himself up in the exclusive Sherry Netherland hotel, at 781 Fifth Avenue, across from the more famous Plaza Hotel. Flashing his *Mannequine* business card got Shelley into a lot of cocktail parties; people were taken in by his address. He met Justine at the American Modelling Association convention at the Waldorf and subsequently used her for access to the major model agencies.

I got to know Ascher when Justine asked me to photograph Wilhelmina, for Shelley's article about her model agency. We hit it off and he asked me to write an article for the magazine's premier issue. He promised Justine a feature story about her consulting business in the second issue; but that never made ink because the magazine folded after the first edition. For her part, Justine loved the prospect of Shelley's reportage, as well as his model referrals, one of whom was Angelique Monique (right), represented by the Black Beauty model agency. Angelique Monique was not her real name, which was actually Angelique Martin; but I didn't know her by any other name, except her chosen stage name, Monique, until a few weeks ago [2017], when I re-discovered my old "black book".



## 1968 | *Mannequin* magazine | Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-2





## It's all in your head

By Douglas Mesney



*Editor's note: It is generally assumed that the photographer and his model share a rapport which instantly and automatically turns each one on to produce that perfect photograph. Well, that just ain't so, says our writer-photographer Douglas Mesney. A superior effort is needed, he says, and he explains some of his theories in the following article. Mesney is especially articulate on and interested in models and photography. His exposure to their machinations, during seven years as an advertising account executive, piqued his interest to the point where in 1968 he became a free-lance photographer himself. We feel that articles such as this will give substance to our intention of serving models and the modeling industry with credible, helpful ideas.*

### (Face It, You've Got To Express Yourself)

Models appear in print and film not only to lend appeal and reality, but also to lend magic elements of mood and mystique. Mood simultaneously captures and reveals the "head" elements of a campaign; the slightest deviation of mood can subtly alter the message unit. These elements are best achieved through facial expression. And not so ironically, differentiation of facial expression is the hardest obstacle for aspiring models to overcome.

The inherent difficulty most testing models have in achieving variety in facial expression is usually a product of their inability to imagine themselves in the situation called for by the client. And the studio, no matter how funky, can never really encapsulate the purity of real situations. Therefore, the model must herself be able to get her head into a situation and scene. If the head gets there, the face will follow automatically.

This type of imagination is the "magic" element. Some people come by it naturally while others have to work hard at it. As an example of how easy it is for some, the Benny Fabre series shown was photographed in a half hour. In all some 83 exposures were made.

*\*It's interesting to note that generally speaking Aquarian, Pictan, and Leo models come by variety of facial expression easily, while Capricorn, Sagittarian and Libra models must work hard at it.*

Selected contact sheets here reveal about average facial differentiation... and Fabre isn't even a model!

### It Isn't All The Model

The model can't be exclusively blamed when facial expression is not achieved. Too often the client or photographer are to blame for not having effectively enough communicated what they wanted. Then again, they are often too lazy to go through head sheets an extra half hour to select the perfect girl; they select a close one and try to re-create her into their dreams. On top of that, little attempt is usually made to create mood in the studio.

For openers, advertising agency personnel should be made more aware of the complexities of a model's life and the need for her to have as much information as possible before the shooting to adequately prepare herself. In fact, some models go out of their way to obtain such information since they like to practice method acting beforehand to enhance the sophistication of moods. Perhaps model agencies should start using "Model Mood Summaries" — simple sheets which spell out for the model such campaign requirements as: location, dress, hair style, make-up needs, headlines and subheads, themes of the campaign, moods essential during the shoot, and who she represents in the campaign. Such sheets could be quickly filled-out by a booker in a brief call with the appropriate art director, then be forwarded to the model or re-read over the phone.

Then too, the photographer should go out of his way to obtain as pure a mood situation as possible for the model to work within. A very excellent sound system should be considered requisite studio equipment; accompanying arrays of mood and effect music create instant mood. If you know beforehand you'll be having a lengthy shoot, why not prepare an extended play tape? Nothing is worse than having to change a record in the middle of a shooting; it's like getting the shot all set up and discovering it's time for a Chinese-fire-drill film change.

Photographers can also help by maintaining low light levels in areas where clients and others will be during

the shooting. This provides two benefits. First, with a theater-like effect it concentrates a client's attention on the shooting. More importantly, it helps eliminate their presence from the model's attention. Nothing is worse than eager, staring eyes.

### Helping Accomplish Your Own Facial Variety

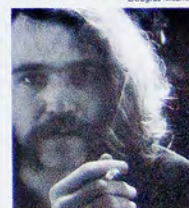
The best way to overcome difficulty attaining facial expression is to overcome the inherent ego factors of modeling. Many people are dying to have their picture taken — but when it's time to mug they get self-conscious of their own normal, healthy egomania.

The best way to overcome lens shyness is to get in front of a mirror and try to get as many expressions as possible. Jot down on paper how many you have that day and which ones give you the most difficulty. Then put on whatever music you think appropriate and sink into it. Work on one expression at a time. One day work on Joy. The next day Sorrow. Still another on Anger. For added sophistication, method-acting works well for some. While walking down the street, think washwoman.

Think how she would feel. What is she thinking about? Where is she going? Next day try being Patricia Nixon. Or Mrs. Miller.

When you've got a few good ones under your belt, rap with your photographers about your facial projects; you'll probably find yourself testing more frequently and more easily since lenses love models with methods and results. That's because most don't. And face it, the bigger your repertoire of facial expression, the more of a head start you'll have on set. □

Douglas Mesney





# WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, WILLIE?

Wilhelmina, one of the great starshine figures of modeling, talks about her own agency, the handling of nudity, and other inevitables in the business.

Observing the dynamics of Wilhelmina, one might say she's being unfair to other women. Visually, she is.

She has perfect looks which she combines with a personality that's powered with positive thinking. She can be seen day in and day out spreading sunshine and hope to the striving lambs at Wilhelmina Model Agency, Inc., which she owns, along with her husband, and where she serves as the good shepherd.

The story of Wilhelmina, top international model of the 60's, begins in Europe 30 years ago. She was born in the Netherlands, raised in Germany and has a mellow, curled accent to prove it. When she was 15, she came to Chicago with her parents and within three years was on her way to a significant modeling career.

What with locals Shirley Hamilton and Victor Skrebnesky behind the new darling of modeling, Wilhelmina's career naturally reached the top in Chicago. Where else would she do the same? Why, Paris and New York, of course. And that's where we get around to Wilhelmina as high priestess.

At her peak, we figure, she must have earned more than \$100,000 a year, and since that takes a bit of doing, we asked Wilhelmina how she did it.

"It was hard work, and required a great deal of devotion," she offered. "For two years I lived on a bowl of soup a day. I don't recommend that for my girls now for it can ruin their health. Fortunately, it didn't affect me."

From 1960 to 1967, Wilhelmina appeared on no less than 225 magazine



covers across Europe and the United States. Vogue used her often and she has been photographed by all the greats in fashion photography. Skrebnesky in Chicago helped to launch her career, while Penn, Avedon and numerous others continually bid for her time.

Willie, as her friends call her, is now married to Bruce Cooper, former production executive on the "Tonight" show. As her partner in the agency, he uses his experience in business, public relations and related fields to enhance the business.

"He is a great help here. I feel we overlap — where he's strong, I'm weak, and vice versa. We're both very active people and we don't mind working 12 to 14 hours a day. We love it, and it means we're together too."

It seems as though Wilhelmina has the best of both worlds — a career and marriage, both of which are working out nicely. In addition, she has consented to do a Letters to Willie column for Mannequin which will take the form of an advice and counseling vehicle for aspiring models as well as professionals.

"I get so many letters as it is," she says, "and I thought some of them would benefit a lot of girls if we could publish them with my answers, which we hope will turn out to be good advice."

Wilhelmina has ideas about models that would send the uninitiated into orbit — she expects so much of them. But she has a right to. "I've been there and back," she points out, "so when the girls come to me with their problems, I usually know how to solve them."

She wants a girl in her agency to be beautiful, but with a certain look of her own. Her face and body must be co-ordinated for the type of work she is best able to do.

Wilhelmina's requirements for her girls sound like earthly impossibilities. But then, Wilhelmina is quite heavenly anyway. She wants and gets only the best for her agency.

"A girl must, above all, have character," she continues. "She must be personable, able to take the constructive criticism I offer from time to time, helpful to the other girls around her, and very pleasant and courteous to my secretaries and others in my office who are valuable to me. I expect a lot from my models, but it is certainly a give and take arrangement. I am here to help them in any way I can, but I do demand a certain respect from them, for myself and everyone else who works with me."

"When I feel a girl has the potential to be a model with my agency, I put her on the testing board to gather pictures and experience. I want to know how she treats people she works with."

Wilhelmina lives and breathes success and she desires strongly that all her models be of that special success-oriented fiber also. We asked her about that special niche at the top, the spot she occupied during the middle 60's.

"If and when a model reaches the top, she has only reached this point through hard work and by taking excellent care of herself. This is a 24-hour job. It means eating and sleeping properly, being lovely all the time."



"It depends on the age of the model when she reaches the top as to how long she will be able to earn top money. If a girl is 16 when she becomes a success, with proper care she might still be earning a considerable amount of money when she is 30."

"Modeling is also a question of timing — one can't overstay or understay a welcome. If a girl is doing quite well in the U.S., she must not stay too long or be seen to overstay, for she might spoil her career by not utilizing it to its fullest. I am here to make the suggestion to my girls as to when it would be to their advantage to take a trip to Europe. This is a talent I have learned from years of experience. My models are benefiting from it now."

Age is a critical factor with Wilhelmina. She would rather have them very young than too old. "Most of the girls that I accept are between the ages of 15 and 24. If a girl is younger than that, but has great potential, I often give her summer work until she decides to continue her education with a private tutor."

Where does Wilhelmina find the talent which nourishes her agency?

"I find them everywhere," she explains. "As I walk down the street or run through an airport, my eyes are always open and I'm always looking. When I spot a girl who I feel has all the assets of beauty, I ask her if she has ever thought of modeling and if she would be interested in coming to my agency and doing some test shots. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, I interview new girls — as many as I can see."

"When I talk with a new girl, I am completely honest. If she has a junior

face but a high fashion figure, I tell her exactly that. If I feel she would do better in another field of modeling, which I cannot offer her, I don't try to lead her on to believe I might possibly want to test her at some later date."

With the subject of nudity a common one today, we asked Wilhelmina how she treated this special area of modeling. Being pretty straight herself, she quickly answered: "Let me tell you that during my career as a model, I said no to all requests involving nudity. One client went so far as to offer \$1,000 an hour, but I just couldn't do it. I guess you might say I'm not psychologically equipped to handle it. I think the answer is whether or not a girl is emotionally mature enough."

Wilhelmina said that some models earn large fees for doing nudes for fragrances and cosmetics and other products, but that these are usually done in excellent taste and photographed under the most discreet conditions.

"The set is always closed," she explained, "with only the photographer and one female assistant present. The model gets into position, fully-covered, and disrobes only at the time of shooting. I insist on large fees as well as closed sets and picture approval."

"I'm neither for nor against nudity in modeling. It simply exists as a small part of the modeling business and consequently must be recognized. With new models I stress that nudity is not a prerequisite for success."

Wilhelmina expects perfection from her models and sets up strict patterns of behavior for them to follow. She would have them be full-time diplomats.

"A girl might be irritated," she explained, "with a stylist or a photographer who just can't get the shot right. But she must be patient, and considerate all the time because these people are her whole life. Without them she wouldn't have a career."

"She must know when to be talkative or quiet, and with whom. She must learn where and with whom she dare ask for a five minute break for a bite to eat. Everyone must adore her all the time for this is her livelihood."

Wilhelmina's agency includes male models also, and she has developed a respected list of men who have registered with her. "I have a man in charge of male models," she says, "and I trust him implicitly. He knows my taste and if there is ever any real problem or question, he comes straight to me for advice and my opinion."

There is no doubt that Wilhelmina runs a tight ship, and presently a successful one. Her agency is relatively new, though, and she is in stiff competition with other longer-established New York agencies, such as Ford and Wagner, not to mention the emergence of the newest one — Black Beauty.

Watch Wilhelmina, Mannequin advises. She is a woman who could spring surprises on the industry. □

You'll want to read Letters to Willie. Watch for them in the next issue.



Remarkably, neither did (nor does) her son, who is trying to discover who his biological father is. He tracked me down by my ID stamp on the back of Angelique's portfolio pictures and he called me two years ago to ask if I knew his father's name; he explained that Angelique had legally changed her last name to Monique, that she suffered from Alzheimer's and had recently died. He thought I might know something about the rumor that he was the progeny of Canadian poet and songwriter, Leonard Cohen. I was able to tell him what Angelique had told me: that she was Leonard Cohen's secret girlfriend; I had no reason to doubt her; her suave demeanor and professionalism had to have come from somewhere.

Angelique never spoke of her past, only the present and future; she was aiming for the stars; her ambition was Olympian and her mixed-blood heritage gave her the kind of exotic looks that were hip and trending in the media. However, Angelique's ambition was not blind. She put her skin in the game, and was more than willing to pay her way; she invested the time and money necessary to assemble a killer portfolio.

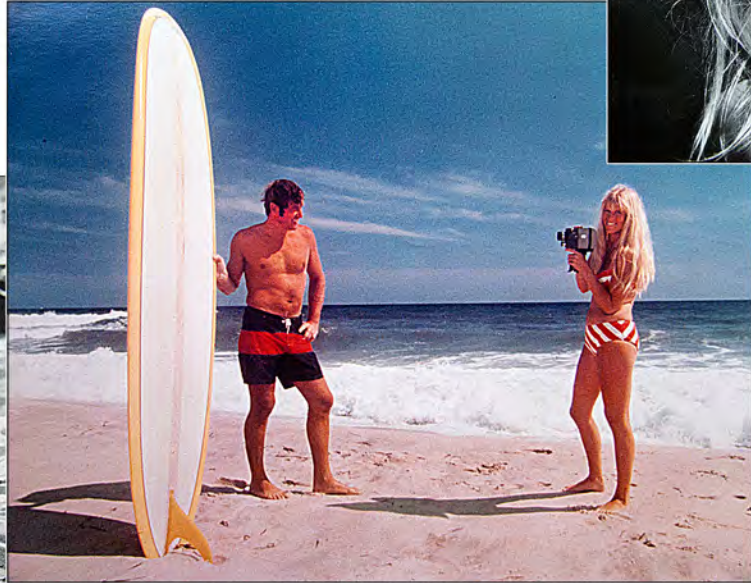
There was never any hanky panky between Angelique and me; it was strictly business. But that is not what everyone else thought. Leslie was especially suspicious—I was a known philanderer. She and I were making plans for a vacation trip to Puerto Rico when Angelique came on the scene. I told Angelique about those plans during our first shoot, in Central Park. She came up with an idea: why not let her come along? She enthusiastically suggested that we do a big fashion shoot on the island and said she'd pay her own way. Who could say no to an offer like that? Not me. Neither did our trip mates (Bill & Penny Hawkey and Chip & Sue McGlaughlin) have any objections; they were as intrigued as I was about the prospects. Angelique was a wild card; bringing her along would be controversial; but controversy generates publicity, aka *free advertising*.

## 1968 – Surfing Safari – Brush with Death

The Corvette got sold (for only \$2,750!) to Leslie's boss at MAI, Ray Grinstead—the same Ray Grinstead that Leslie would run away to Virginia with a year later. Instead, I bought a (used) Land Rover 109, the classic one you see in all the old black and white explorer movies.







1969 | CAMPING ON FIRE ISLAND WITH THE HAWKEYS | PLATE N° 1

*Above: Leslie Shirk, Bill & Penny Hawkey | Below: Bill's brother (right), his wife Adrienne & Chip McGlaughlin.*





1969 | CAMPING ON FIRE ISLAND WITH THE HAWKEYS | PLATE N<sup>o</sup> 2

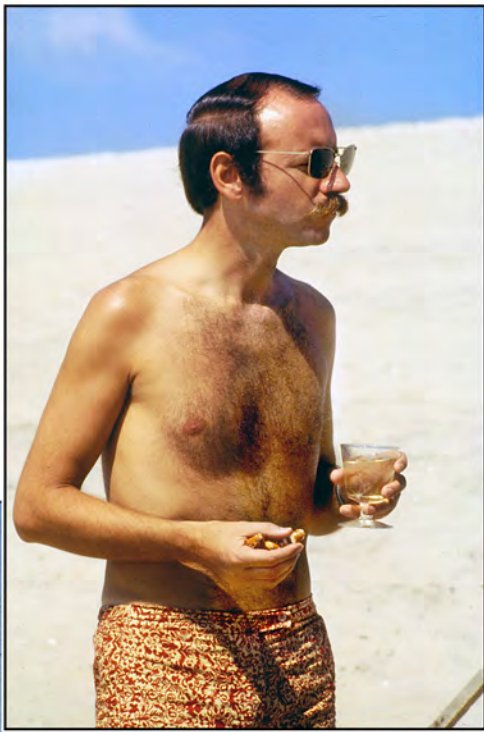
*Center: Yours Truly, Chip McGlaughlin, Bill's brother, Richard, his step-son Scott, wife Adrienne, Leslie, & Sue McGlaughlin*



Chip                      ?                      Kurt  
 Maglaughlin                      Boehnstedt  
 Sue                      Penny                      ?                      Birgita                      Curtis                      Kimberly                      Leslie  
 Maglaughlin                      Hawkey                      Boehnstedt                      Boehnstedt                      Boehnstedt                      Mesney







1969 | HOLIDAYS WITH THE HAWKEYS | PLATE N° 2

*Fire Island camp | above: Kurt Boehnstedt | below: Anonymous, Penny and Sue*





1969 | HOLIDAYS WITH THE HAWKEYS | PLATE N° 3  
*Fire Island camp | Penny and Bill Hawkey | foreground: Sue Maglaughlin*

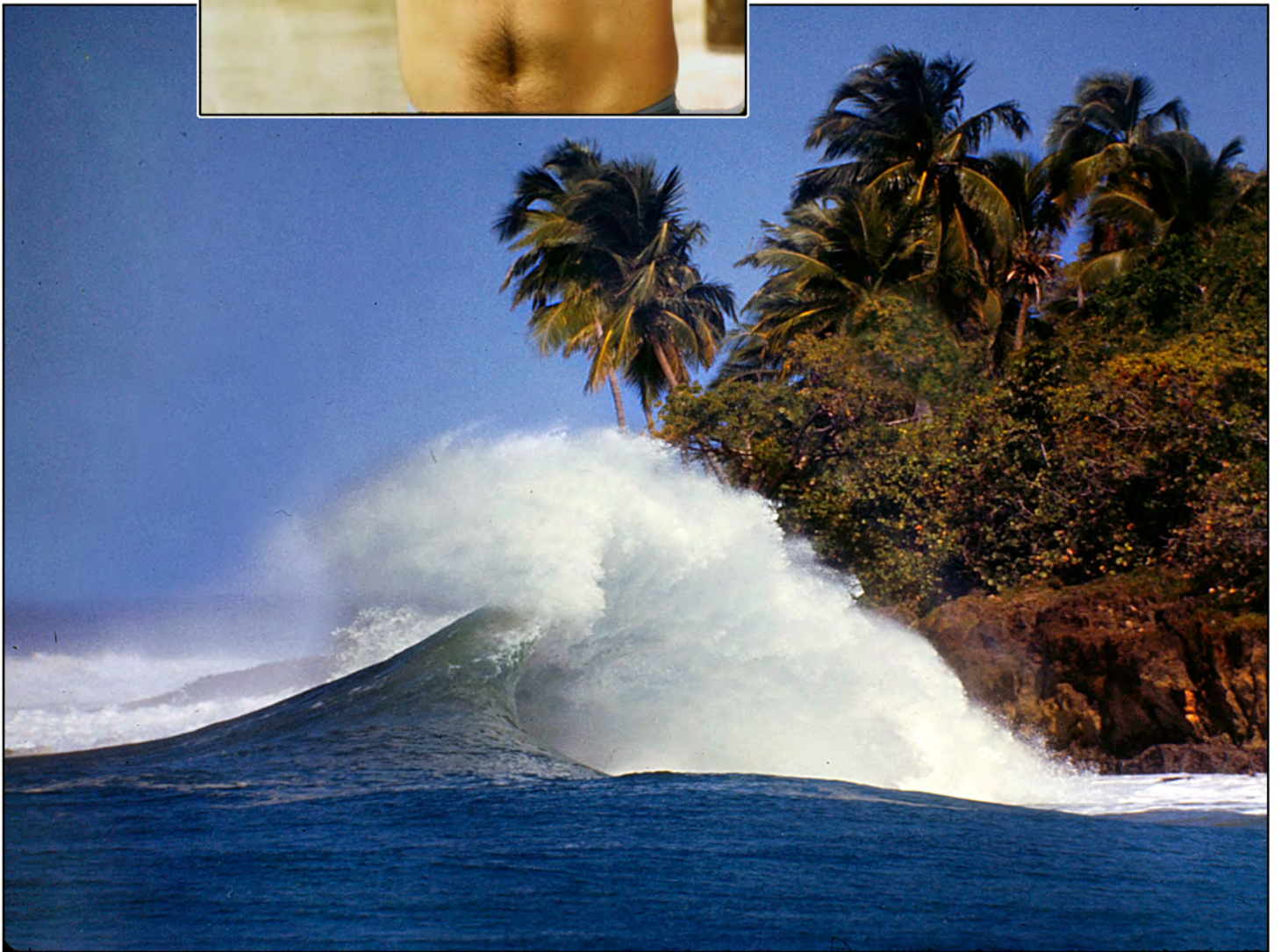




1969 | HOLIDAYS WITH THE HAWKEYS | PLATE N° 4

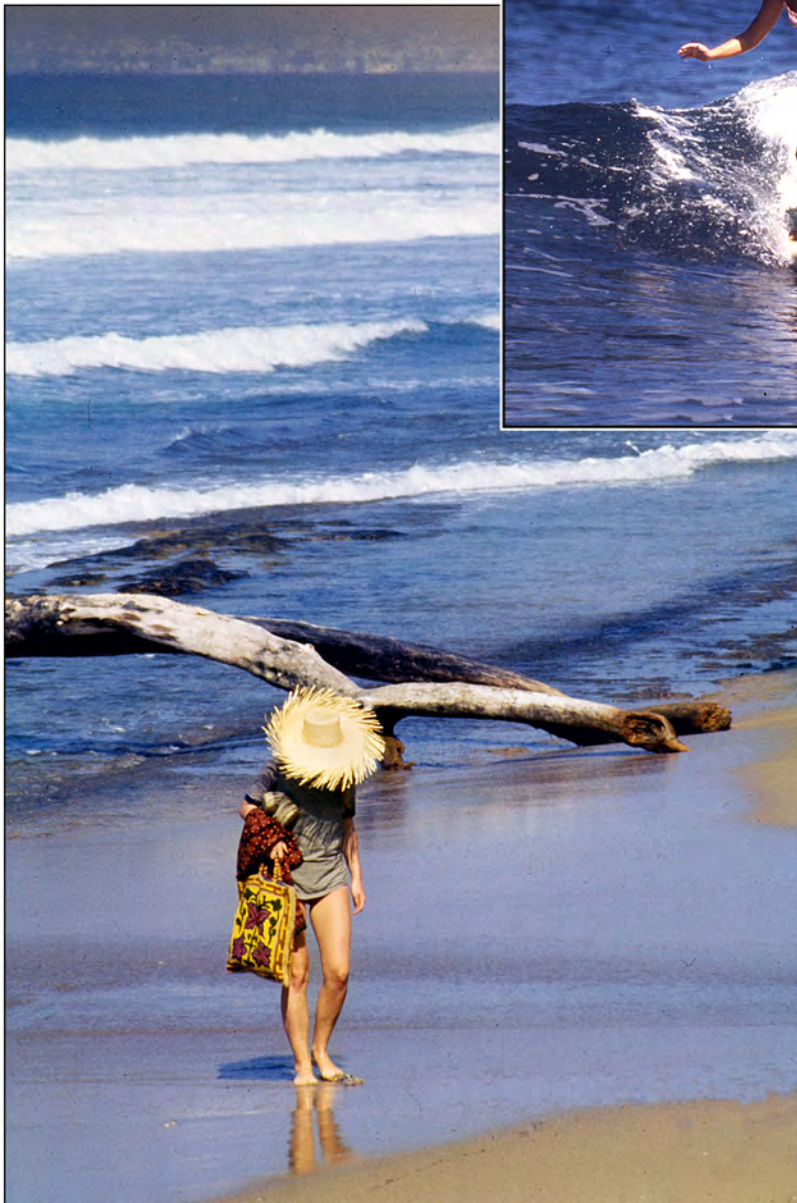
*Bill and Penny Hawkey posed for these and other pictures made for my professional portfolio.*





1969 | HOLIDAYS WITH THE HAWKEYS | PLATE N° 5  
*Aguadila, Puerto Rico, surfing safari | Chip Maglaughlin*





1969 | HOLIDAYS WITH THE HAWKEYS | PLATE N° 6

*Aguadila, Puerto Rico, surfing safari | Chip and Sue surf while Leslie searches for sea shells.*

I hated to see the 'Vette go, but I needed a utilitarian vehicle, a car that could go to any location. Unfortunately, the Corvette wasn't much use off road, where the good pictures were. The coupe de grace was getting bogged down in the sand on Fire Island, when I drove to the beach to take shots of Leslie modelling a vampy outfit featuring a cape.

One of the first things I did was drive the Land Rover out to Kurt Boehnstedt's summer house in South Hampton, to shoot portfolio pictures of Kurt on the beach and dunes. Disappointingly, the Land Rover bogged down in the sand before we got over the first dune; I had to dig it out twice before we got over the crest of the dunes. On the other side, a dozen VW bugs and campers were scurrying about, happily coursing through the sands. Harrumph! Be that as it may, we did get to the beach and while getting set up to photograph Kurt was approached by one of the surfers, who introduced himself as Bill Hawkey, a fellow Land Rover owner; his gorgeous blonde wife Penny Hawkey, trotted up shortly after; they invited us to join them at their camp, for cocktails and BBQ; we accepted and became new fast friends, just like that.

[Spoiler Alert: The Land Rover didn't last long; when the axle broke for the third time (!) I sold it and bought two old VW Beetles—one to drive and the other for spare parts; Leslie's father, Ken Shirk, swore by Volkswagen Bugs and never ran out of good things to say about them. Ha! Mine broke down on the Long Island Expressway, on the ramp leading to the Queens Midtown Tunnel, at the height of rush hour; I caused a massive traffic jam; other drivers cursed me in no uncertain terms for a more than an hour before a tow truck came to my aid.]

Bill and Penny became more than just friends; Bill had recently quit his job as VP of the big New York ad agency, J. Walter Thompson; Penny was a creative director at another big ad agency; and their friend, Chip McGloughlin, was an account executive at a third; between them, they could send some significant work my way if I played my cards right. Bill asked me to photograph a book he was writing, *Living with Plants*; I did it for the photo credits and to get a foot in the door to Penny's office, or Chip's; that never happened; but knowing them was nonetheless trippy. The Hawkeys lived in their own townhouse on Great Jones Street in the trendy West Village. They were pretty loaded; Leslie and I couldn't afford to keep up with them. But when they suggested that the two of us join the four of them on a surfing safari to Puerto Rico, who could resist?

The trip turned out to be life altering for Leslie and I; she was hoping for a kind of second honeymoon; I was hoping to shoot a new portfolio; thus, we were at odds from the start and things got worse when I asked Angelique Monique to come along on the trip to be my photo model. Leslie was pissed and I was losing her; everyone knew that, except me.

Angelique was a self-propelled human dynamo, an achiever, one of the most driven people I ever worked with. Using Leonard Cohen's connections, Angelique scored three suitcases full of haute couture, all borrowed for publicity purposes. Between Angelique's clothes and my camera gear, the shoot morphed into a monster-sized logistical undertaking. In addition to two Nikon motor-drive cameras with six lenses, I brought a full Hasselblad 500C system, two Honeywell strobes (for fill-in light), and a bunch of effects filters.



We rented three VW Beetles from a local agent near the San Juan airport and drove 93 miles [150 kilometers] down Route 22 to Rincón, the most easterly point of the long, skinny island. We stopped in Arecibo along the way, where Chip disconnected the odometers of all three cars, to avoid the mileage fees. [Spoiler Alert: That was not a good idea.] Arriving in Rincón, the four surfers surveyed the scene and decided that the beaches at a place we passed, in Aguadila, maybe twenty miles back, looked to have better wave action; plus, the hotels were probably cheaper.

Hotels? What hotels? In Aguadila there were no hotels. Aguadila was plantation country; we were lucky to score a small complex of three sheds that a local farmer had built to accommodate surfers; it was take it or leave it. We took it. There was one small shop down the road where we bought our cooking supplies—beans, rice, blackened chicken (gag) and rum (yum) was about all they had; but that was it, unless you wanted to drive to Rincón. Surfers are a lot like mountaineers; both go to the ends of the Earth and put up with physical discomforts and deprivations to reach new heights, be they mountains or waves. For the Hawkeys and McGlaughlins, our meager accommodations and menus were of no concern; all they cared about was how the surf was breaking, and where. As it turned out, the best waves formed a short distance from the city's sewage outflow pipe; surfers nicknamed the beach "Turds."



I accompanied them one afternoon to get some stock pictures of the surfers. The conditions were perfect for the surfers and me: rosy, late-afternoon sun sparked on emerald green water with a 10-foot-high waves [~3 meters] that curled in a long break toward the white-sand shore of a mile-long [1.6 km], horseshoe-shaped beach.

From the shore, my 500 mm Russian MTO mirror telephoto lens was long enough to get some decent close-ups of the action.

(This surfer might be Wayne, the bike riding dude who seduced Leslie.)

I used some fruitcake filters,<sup>55</sup> to get beyond standard-looking surfing image.



There was a long jetty that extended the right end of the beach 300 feet [~100 meters] into the sea; it was a massive construction of huge boulders, built as a barrier to protect the beach from erosion. It took me a good half hour to negotiate the rocks and get my gear to the end of the jetty. From there, I hoped to get even closer to the surfers and shoot across the wavetops for a profile view of them—an unusual POV that one didn't see in pictures very often, unless a surfer brought a camera. That was easier said than done.

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<sup>55</sup> Slang for photo filters that add colors and effects (like star-flares and diffractions).

Although the 500 mm MTO lens was compact, lightweight and easy to hand hold, it's angle of view was so telescopic that it was difficult to keep the surfers in the frame. Being on different waves, they bounced up and down asynchronously; while one wave rose, another fell, etcetera. I was concentrating so hard on composing pictures that I failed to notice that the tide had risen; I also failed to notice a rogue wave which smashed against the jetty with such force that I was knocked off-balance and drenched. Shocked and devastated, I made my way back to the beach to assess the damages; the lens was OK, all it needed was a fresh-water rinse; but the camera was another story, it was a write off. Thank goodness I brought two of them.

There were fantastic locations for fashion photography in and around Aguadila and Rincón, although some driving was involved. One of the best scenes was a deserted beach with the remains of a sunken ship, a dramatic visual counterpoint for Angelique to work with. I had the sun at my back and was shooting with a polarizing filter to enhance the saturation of the brilliant tropical colors: blue sky, aquamarine ocean, sepia sand and vibrant-green foliage.



With perfect conditions there was no excuse for anything less than perfect; I rigged four Honeywell Strobonars to provide a fill light that was strong enough to balance the intense tropical sun; each of strobes had a large battery, worn on my belt; with all of them attached to me, I looked like I was wearing a suicide vest; in fact, it almost was just that.

While shooting Angelique, the scene went dark. I turned around to see what happened to the sun and saw that a huge storm was right upon us.

At that instant, a giant raindrop hit me in the eye and we were promptly deluged by a tropical downpour.

I managed to strip the four battery packs off my body and get them covered before they blew up.

But it was a close call.







Everyone else had something to do, except Leslie; while Angelique and I went out shooting in remote corners of the island, she spent her time on the beach with the surfers.

Eventually, a guy named Wayne, took an interest in her and she in him; I can't say (now) as to how I could blame her.

Wayne was an ersatz James Dean; a character straight out of the movie, *Endless Summer*; a blonde-haired, sun-browned, body-building biker.

Free-spirited and independently wealthy, Wayne cruised around the Caribbean (and maybe the world, for all I knew) in search of the perfect wave.

Before cuckolding me, Wayne posed with Angelique.

I was so involved in my work that Leslie had disappeared from my consciousness; I didn't notice her drifting away until I got back to our shack early one evening when heavy rains washed out everyone's plans. Leslie wasn't there; she turned up later with a lame excuse. It wasn't long before Bill and Chip clue'd me in that I was being cuckolded, by Wayne.

Reality crashed on me like a tsunami. Leslie confirmed her affair; she was proud about it and announced that she was not returning home with me, she was going to Barbados with Wayne. That news put me over the top.

I wandered down the hill that night, to the beach bar that stayed open late. I sat under the palapa alone, until the wee hours, feeling sorry for myself, getting smashed on rum, listening to the jukebox play Donovan tunes; I played *Lalena* over and over again, silently singing the lyrics:

### *Lalena*, Donovan

When the sun goes to bed  
That's the time you raise your head  
That's your lot in life, Lalena  
Can't blame y'a  
Lalena

Arty-tart, la-de-da  
Can your part get much sadder?  
That's your lot in life, Lalena  
Can't blame y'a  
Lalena

Run your hand through your hair  
Paint your face with despair  
That's your lot in life, Lalena  
Can't blame y'a  
Lalena

When the sun goes to bed  
That's the time you raise your head  
That's your lot in life, Lalena  
I can't blame y'a  
Lalena

Arty-tart, oh so la-de-da  
Can your part ever get, ever get much sadder?  
That's your lot in life, Lalena  
I can't blame y'a  
No, no, no, Lalena  
Oh, Lalena

Conjuring images of Leslie and Wayne—cruising beaches on his candy-apple-red Harley, searching for the perfect wave together, making candle-lit love in his beach shack—got to me. In a drunken stupor, I wandered off into the crashing surf and swam into the moonless darkness with the intention of ending it all. When the shoreline started disappearing behind wave crests and the beach bar was a mere dot on the horizon, I came to my senses—and was scared shitless. With the help of the liquid courage provided by the rum, I managed to swim back to shore. I realized that dying would only punish me; that Leslie no longer cared; that I had to start over.

Leslie stayed with Wayne on Barbados for the better part of a half year; we sent letters back and forth; mine were addressed to her c/o General Post Office; in them, I professed my love for Leslie and pleaded with her for a chance to try again. Eventually, Leslie returned and we tried to get the ol' mojo back; by then I had sealed the deal with Justine and was about to start building the studio at 42 East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. We never did get our mojo back; we were going in opposite directions; but she agreed to help me.

During the build-up things were good between us. I thought we had patched things up; but the night we finished, while we were toasting each other with champagne, she announced that she was leaving me and moving to Virginia with Ray Grinstead.

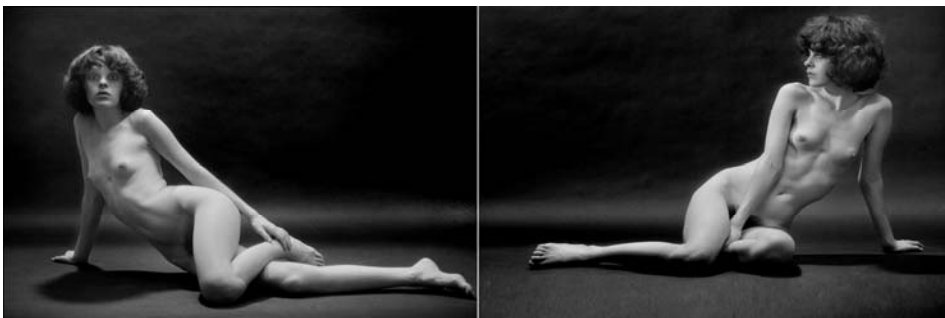




## 1969 – 🌹\* Goodbye Leslie – Hello Girls

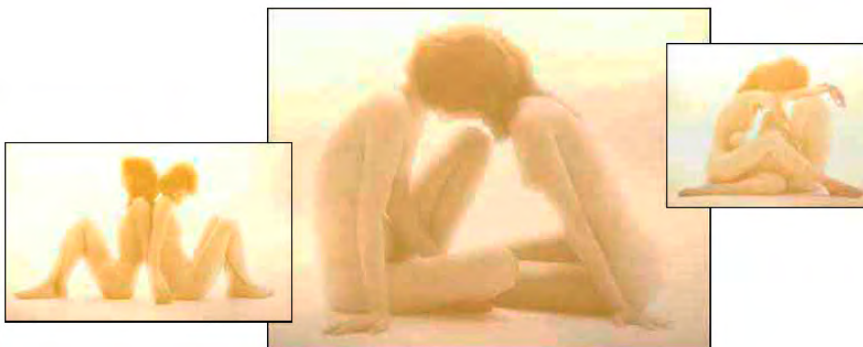
Once their plan was revealed, Leslie and Ray wasted no time leaving town. I'll bet Ray's wife was as surprised as I was. Suddenly, they were gone; soon after that I was served divorce papers from a court in the State of Virginia. There was little time to grieve, with so many other transformative changes going on; I was financially on the hook for two rents (Flushing house and Manhattan loft) as well as the added costs associated with starting a new business.

There was a lot of promoting that needed to be done, not only for my business, but for Justine's; that was part of the deal between us, to help promote each other's businesses wherever possible. For me that meant a heavy investment of time and materials doing publicity photography of Justine as well as designing a logo, brochure and stationery for her; and that on top of doing test shots and training sessions for her models in training. The first model was Patti Martin who Justine stage-named Marney English.



Marney seemed to have potential. Our first test session produced some portfolio shots That gave me the incentive to make more pictures of her (and possibly more than pictures).

After doing some fashion work in Central Park and over on the Brooklyn Bridge, we retired back to the studio; it was late; we had the place to ourselves; Justine had gone home, to West New York, a small town just north of Ft. Lee, New Jersey (situated on the bluffs overlooking the Hudson River and the Upper West Side of Manhattan) It was the perfect set-up. With the flick of a few switches, the studio was transformed into a private lounge; the stereo played my current favorite—Isaac Hayes singing *Walk-on By*; a mirror ball cast orbs of light that danced on the dark-blue walls, giving the room an underwater feeling. After a couple of *slimy limeys* (vodka with Roses' Lime Juice) Patti was game for anything. Need I say more? Thus, began a brief but intense fling that lasted until Justine caught wind of it and threw a fit; it wasn't be the last time she blew a gasket.



Photographing Justine's girls was fun and rewarding in many intangible ways. But *pro bono* work didn't pay the bills, even if "pro-boner."

Marney English and Vera Beato, 1969.

Although I had a solid client base—former colleagues at Basford and Ziff-Davis' motoring magazines—I needed more business to make ends meet. Generating new business meant promoting myself; I needed to create a favorable identity for Mesney's Mad Medicine Show.

My communications mentor, Burt Holmes, taught me that people respond favorably when they are sent something of value. Many other photographers sent out posters, but I couldn't afford to do that; besides, who had enough wall space in their office? Who even *had* an office? Cubicles were the new standard in office design.

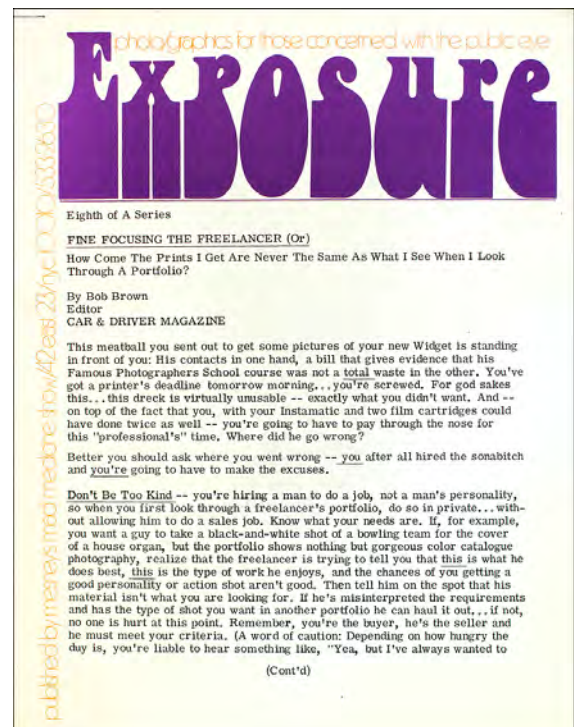
Instead of big posters, I mailed out miniature exhibition prints, called *Pixies*; each was a 4 X 5-inch [10.2 X 12.7 cm] picture—printed on double-weight Kodabromide paper—mounted on a 5 X 6-inch [12.7 X 15.24 cm] black mount board. I made hundreds of Pixies; each month I would mail out a new one to art directors at ad agencies and publishing houses.

The idea worked; Pixies were too nice to throw out; those who didn't want them passed them on to others that did; most ended up being displayed on people's cubicle walls or desktops; they were so small; a place could always be found for them. Pixies were my most successful promotion tool; I felt they were an *honest* way to advertise, giving people an actual little sample of my product—like a baker who gives customers a little taste of their confections.

Pixies were supplemented with a series of *Exposure* newsletters, written to promote myself to more technically-inclined prospects, like marketing, sales-promotion and public-relations executives.

The *Exposure* newsletter was launched in 1968; each issue featured case-history stories written by myself and selected clients.

The articles explained what photographers need from their clients to perform their best services. For example, in one of the two issues illustrated, Bob Beauchamps, the Fashion Editor at *True* magazine, wrote about how to stylize; Glen Helgeland, the editor of *Watersport* magazine wrote about communicating stock-photo needs with photographers; Bob Brown, editor of *Car and Driver* magazine wrote about how to work with photographers; I wrote about rising costs.



Eighth and final edition of *Exposure* newsletter.

*Exposure* was offset printed in two colors, initially; with success, I upgraded the newsletter to three-color printing, as seen in the eighth and last *Exposure* pictured above and presented in the color plates.



Those were the days before color office printers; I had the newsletters printed at a little shop in Little Neck. They ran 100 copies of each issue; then I did the folding, envelope stuffing and addressing work back at the studio. *Exposure* was a hit. I got letters and calls from new people asking to be included on the mailing list. Between them, the *Pixies* and *Exposure* promotions generated almost more new business than I could handle. One of those new clients was Dave Tonsing, assistant to Mick Biondo, the Public Relations Manager of St. Regis Paper Company. Dave was a young man, my age. Like me, Dave was resisting the draft. He was a hippie at heart. But his shaggy mane and mustache were pushing things at work—his boss, Mick Biondo, was a staunch conservative; he raised an eyebrow when he saw me in Dave's office on morning; my hair and moustache were even longer than Dave's; we looked like brothers.



I was there to present an idea that I proposed to Tonsing, for a PSA [Public Service Announcement] called *The Secret of The Forest*.<sup>56</sup>

Dave and I got to know each other when he hired me to shoot a paper mill in Pennsylvania; on the long drive to and from that shoot, I had the opportunity to whisper a few ideas in Dave's ear; those ideas tied in with St. Regis' sponsorship of Richard Ketchum's forthcoming book, *The Secret Life of The Forest*.

Like many other industrial polluters—and paper mills were among the worst—St. Regis Paper Company worked hard to look green; being associated with Ketchum was good for their corporate image. I saw an opportunity to piggy-back on the book promotion, to get the company even more attention, with a TV PSA that would be seen by millions.

PSAs were win-win-win projects: TV stations got free content; sponsors got free broadcast time; and commercial film makers like me got work. However, the competition for air time was fierce; for TV stations, PSAs were like junk mail. To cut through the clutter, I had to do with come up with a concept that could rise to the top of the heap.

Motivated by the tacit approval I got from Tonsing during that drive back to New York, I stimulated my creative juices with some Acapulco Gold and wrote a poem. What I can remember of it goes like this:

*The Forest sleeps tonight, and keeps her secret.  
She has known the wind and the rain,  
Fire and pain,  
[Etcetera]  
The Forest Sleeps tonight and keeps her secret:  
She needs your care.*

## 1968-70 | *Exposure* Newsletter | Plates N<sup>os</sup> 1-10

<sup>56</sup> Back in the day, television stations were mandated by the Federal Communications Commission (FTC) to devote a certain percentage of their broadcast time to content "in the Public's interest."



# photo/graphics for those concerned with the public eye EXPOSURE

Eighth of A Series

## FINE FOCUSING THE FREELANCER (Or)

How Come The Prints I Get Are Never The Same As What I See When I Look Through A Portfolio?

By Bob Brown  
Editor  
CAR & DRIVER MAGAZINE

This meatball you sent out to get some pictures of your new Widget is standing in front of you: His contacts in one hand, a bill that gives evidence that his Famous Photographers School course was not a total waste in the other. You've got a printer's deadline tomorrow morning...you're screwed. For god sakes this...this dreck is virtually unusable -- exactly what you didn't want. And -- on top of the fact that you, with your Instamatic and two film cartridges could have done twice as well -- you're going to have to pay through the nose for this "professional's" time. Where did he go wrong?

Better you should ask where you went wrong -- you after all hired the sonabitch and you're going to have to make the excuses.

Don't Be Too Kind -- you're hiring a man to do a job, not a man's personality, so when you first look through a freelancer's portfolio, do so in private...without allowing him to do a sales job. Know what your needs are. If, for example, you want a guy to take a black-and-white shot of a bowling team for the cover of a house organ, but the portfolio shows nothing but gorgeous color catalogue photography, realize that the freelancer is trying to tell you that this is what he does best, this is the type of work he enjoys, and the chances of you getting a good personality or action shot aren't good. Then tell him on the spot that his material isn't what you are looking for. If he's misinterpreted the requirements and has the type of shot you want in another portfolio he can haul it out...if not, no one is hurt at this point. Remember, you're the buyer, he's the seller and he must meet your criteria. (A word of caution: Depending on how hungry the guy is, you're liable to hear something like, "Yea, but I've always wanted to

(Cont'd)



Fine Focusing The Freelancer (Cont'd):

get into that type of stuff." Forget it. Let him get into it on somebody else's grant.) If, however, you like what you see, drag the guy into your office, find out what he thought he was trying to do, listen to his plaintive wails about how the client was a commercial barbarian who didn't understand anything about photography, art, whatever, how he overcame all odds, as nauseum (you can play mental checkers while this standard bit of freelancer soul-bearing goes on), and press him as to what he can do for you and how much he requires to work these further wonders. Be particularly insistent on costs: Day rates, developing (by him/by you), print costs, model fees, studio charges, taxes -- all of it. It will reduce the number of subsequent surprises.

Tell Him Exactly What You Want -- Here at Car & Driver, a freelancer has a meeting with Creative Director Gene Butera, myself and the writer of the article before he goes out on a job. Hopefully he will come away from that meeting knowing not only the specific shots we want, but our thinking behind those shots as well. This additional knowledge should allow him opportunity to experiment with variations that occur to him when he is on location -- without going 180 degrees away from our editorial concepts. More often than not, these are the shots that get used because they better capture the mood and spontaneity that cannot be predicted in advance.

Treat The Freelancer As A Regular Staff Member -- Once you've hired the guy he is, in fact, on your staff -- even if it's only for a day. Therefore he has a set budget to meet, a deadline that cannot be exceeded and a specific job to accomplish. He must know about all of this beforehand. And not just a vague idea but specifically what and when it has to be done. If he doesn't, and has other jobs with specific deadlines, budgets et al, the tendency is for him to get them out of the way first. It's a simple matter of applying the right amount of pressure -- not leaning on the guy, but a rational plan of what you expect, which, incidentally, indicates that you have attached some importance to the job and have done your preplanning rather than dumping everything into his lap (freelancers, in general, are lousy bookkeepers -- but that is your job anyhow).

Follow Through -- If you have done your preplanning correctly and given the freelancer a sufficient amount of information, it may not be necessary for you to go out on the job with him. However, it is necessary for you to see his contacts and make the selection you want. If they are junk, and you've done your job right, you have every right to ask for a re-take at this point. Also, for the future, while looking at his contacts you can see not only the freelancer's unvarnished technical expertise but what he was

(Cont'd)



Fine Focusing The Freelancer (Cont'd):

thinking about, how his mind was working as the shooting progressed. Study all the shots (and series of shots) even those you don't want, just to get a fix on the depth of his ability and creativity.

Listen To Him -- At this point, matters have subtly changed and the freelancer is in command. He should know what can be done in the darkroom to precisely get the feel that you are looking for -- but don't let him footfake you with technical bullshit about papers and filters. If he says, "This thing would look great on high-contrast paper, with a #7 filter, tilting the printing easel up on edge, and then dodging out the "no parking" sign while buring in the model's breasts" -- find out exactly what he is talking about by having him show you some samples. Also, find out how much all this trickery is going to cost. (Frankly, darkroom magicians give me a pain in the ass, if the guy is competent he should have come pretty close to what you want on the negative and I view all these after-the-fact techno-marvels as simply making a save out of something that wasn't right in the first place. But I'm also rational enough to realize that, at times, it has to be done.)

Remember Your Manners -- The job is done. You either like it or don't. One way or the other, tell the guy exactly what you think and what his chances are of doing more freelance jobs for you. Freelancers are egotists and it pays to feed those egos. (It also makes for a lot less lost telephone time to starve those egos when the occasion calls for it.) On top of that, freelancers are human animals and have bills to be paid, so pay your bill to them quickly and if you have a dispute over some of the charges get it straight the moment the bill comes in. The next time the guy works for you, it will pay off. In addition, freelancers generally are looking for more business and if you know of a job in another division of your company, or in another company, that he could do well, recommend him. Who knows, the next time you may get a "new business finder's fee" built into your own bill. Don't count on it, but don't be shy about letting the freelancer know that you are interested in seeing him do well, either. (By the way, Mesney, now that I've done this thing, I suddenly remember that Christmas is coming up and my relatives would all love to have a nice picture of my daughter....)

# # #



## HOW I KEEP 132 PHOTOGRAPHERS ON MY STAFF

By Glenn Helgeland  
Editor  
WATERSPORT MAGAZINE

As editor of a magazine which uses 60-70 percent of its editorial space for full-color illustration, I need to have a full range of photos from as many photographers as possible at my fingertips whenever a specific editorial need arises.

For the price of one master letter, a short trip to the Xerox machine, and a large handful of first-class envelopes, I keep 132 photographers "on my staff" for every issue. I accomplish this by sending the Water-sport Photo Bulletin to every photographer I know who might even remotely have the photographs I need.

Each master Photo Bulletin has a paragraph outline of the story for which illustration is needed and its specific slant. Also detailed are the photo specifications (color or blackwhite, sizes of transparencies acceptable) and what I don't need. The photographers are still free to interpret my guidelines as they see fit, but they aren't as apt to waste time searching if they have a concise outline.

As examples, two of our recent best photo essays were "Boats & Bridges," and "Boats & Fog." Bridges and fog are everywhere. So I mailed bulletins to my complete file of photographers. Within one week I thus came up with a few hundred fine photographs. The photographs which didn't click were returned within two or three weeks after editing through the incoming materials. And as the essays appeared, they showed bridges from East Coast to West Coast and fog from San Francisco Bay to the pea-soup regions of the Northeast.

The bulletin doesn't need to apply only to broad topics. If I need photos of the Everglades, or Great Lakes boating, or boating on impounded waters, or whatever, a bulletin to everyone reaches all possible sources. Admittedly the photographer may not make a sale. On the other hand, the photographer has still one more opportunity to at very least demonstrate his abilities to the editor... and editors do remember good photographers.

The continued success of your photo bulletin depends on your promptness in returning unusable photographs. Photographers are loath to send their material through the mails on speculation. If you hang them up more than a reasonable amount of time -- usually three weeks at most -- you'll not receive any photographs in the future. Also, be certain that your packaging will insure damage-free delivery. We use convenient "Jet-Pack" envelopes (the same kind that books are normally mailed in) and return all photographs via Registered mail.

# # #



## HOW TO STYLIZE YOUR SPRING '72 PHOTO/GRAPHICS VISUALS

By Bob Beauchamp  
Fashion Editor  
TRUE MAGAZINE

Spring '72 will bring the rebirth of the classic look in men's clothing and boutique fashions. There is a definite return to conservatism. Looks are cleaner and gimmicks are dead. It's to be updated classicism.

Colors and fabrics will create the excitement. Manufacturers now have the largest selection of fabrics ever; not only the older accepted fabrics, but also the new knits, stretch wovens and synthetic fibers. Spring '72 will see the return of fabrics that were favorites in the fifties: seersucker, cords, baby cords, madras, even chino.

Two and three-button single-breasted shaped suits will be the basic silhouettes for more formal wear. Natural-shoulder classics will be dressed up with wide lapels and variations on pocket treatments and vents. Contoured body lines, large pocket flaps, bellows and envelope pockets, deeper vents and an overall longer look will create individual expression.

To go with tailored clothing, shirt manufacturers will bring us:

- 1.) Softer colors.
- 2.) White grounds and accents.
- 3.) More classic striping.
- 4.) More white on white.
- 5.) More barrel cuffs.

Even the button-down shirt is trying to make its way back...this time with a longer, higher collar.

For casual wear the "Put Together" outfit will get it together. A cross between the jean-cut slack and Western/safari-style jacket will prevail. Special attention will be given to details on the jackets; they'll feature snap-button closure with impressive pocket details, contrast stitching, front panels and patchwork. Body-cut Western cowboy shirts will be worn beneath with slacks that are jean-cut in every conceivable fabric and color. Dress slacks will stretch in every direction with knits and stretch woven fabrics; they'll also have wider waist bands and fancier pocket treatments. The object: dress up or down in jeans.

For fabrics, anything goes. Most popular for semi-formal and casual wear tops and bottoms will be polyester single and double knits, chino and brushed denims, corduroy and cotton suedes. Light weight leather and suedes will be more popular than ever...manufacturers are finally marketing well-tailored leather clothing that fits as well as cloth garments.

(Ed. Note: Welcome home John Wayne.)

# # #



## THE COST OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN OUR TIMES (One More Article About Inflation)

By Douglas Mesney

Ever since the Time-Life/ASMP litigations establishing photographic rates and rights almost a decade ago, things haven't changed much in photo/visuals economics. Prices have been going up, to be sure, but primarily on the "expenses" side of the invoice; fees charged to shoot an assignment have remained relatively stationary in accordance with a generally accepted unwritten schedule. However, higher costs for fixed overhead and floating inventory have substantially raised photographers' and film makers' cost of doing business. Hence: turmoil about the cost of photography in our times.

The price established for the sale of a photograph is dependent upon many factors, among which are: the specific use of the picture by the client; the photograph's cost of production; the reputation of the photographer; and the "scope" of the photographer. By scope we refer to a photographer's range of capabilities -- his product range. Generally, a larger product range requires a greater amount of equipment and facilities, the cost of which is amortized in the photographer's overhead and in the fee portion of the typical invoice for an assignment.

Progressive photographers are constantly acquiring equipment; not only to replace worn equipment, but also to take advantage of ever increasing technological improvements that enhance their range of capabilities and techniques. Costs for acquiring equipment usually amount to between 15 and 30% of the average gross annual earnings of such a photographer.

But it's not the whole hunk. Across the board the key elements of a photographer's fixed overhead have steadily climbed in cost over the last 36 months. For example:

- 1.) Cost of Insurance (if you can get it): Many insurance companies no longer write policies for New York photographers, and those that do charge more. Reason? Simple: if you run a studio in New York you will be "hit," you can bank on it. So, given a high-cost business like photography, you shell out to stay alive. Add to that the cost of other protection like alarm systems, burglar gates, etc. ad infinitum.
- 2.) Rent: If you think residential rates have gone up, you should take a look at some "new generation" commercial leases.

(more)



- 3.) Associated Services and Props: Since it affects all, inflation has also raised the cost of services and hardware used to produce photographic illustrations. Retouching costs are higher, as are engravings, stylists, cosmetologists, models -- even messengers.
- 4.) Taxes: These did not go down, nor are there fewer of them.

When lumped together, the added costs of fixed overhead items come to a "magic numbers" total of about 40%. To that must be added the price increases for the specific costs of shooting your assignment. In that department:

- 1.) Film Prices: Film costs have been inching up steadily for the last three years, during which time they have become roughly 20% more expensive.
- 2.) Laboratory Processing Rates: The same roll of color film that cost perhaps \$3.50 to process in 1968 would cost about \$4.25 today -- an increase of about 20%.
- 3.) Accessory Items: I used to be able to get a PF-497 strobe battery for \$12.90; they now run me \$16.55; that's the average increase for such items.

What it all boils down to is that the same photographic assignment that cost, say, \$250.00 in 1968 will cost up to \$325.00 in 1972, reflecting the average photographer's gross total increase in cost of doing business.

To help combat increases in the cost of photographic illustrations, there are several things you can do to keep the cost of your shooting down to the lowest possible level:

- 1.) Be specific about what you shoot and how you shoot it. A lot of clients want everything photographed from every conceivable angle, with every conceivable lens and in both black and white and color; yet out of the take they use one, maybe two shots. Knowing what you want before-hand can save you a lot just on film and processing costs.
- 2.) Make quality a critical criterion. Quality photography is more expensive, but you'll probably end up saving money since everything will be done properly and you won't have to spend extra dollars on retouching or reshooting.
- 3.) Keep on schedule and allow sufficient time for production of your photographic visuals. That way you'll avoid rush surcharges on services.

# # #



# EXPOSURE

[PHOTO/GRAPHICS FOR THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE PUBLIC EYE]

Second In A Series

## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER

Getting the most out of your photographer is not necessarily a product of how hard you squeeze. Rather, it is similar in some respects to operating a computer -- assuming the program is correct, you must feed it the correct input to get a correct readout.

Photographers, as a rule, are not computers. But they too require certain definitive information if they are to accomplish what you need for a successful communications program. Basically, they need to know what you will require, and what they will have to work with.

### Know Beforehand What You Need

The photographs you will be purchasing must accomplish a certain number of finite goals for you. Do you know what they are? Realizing the full range of photographic goals well beforehand will help you define your requirements to your photographer. For example:

How will these photographs fit into the context of your overall promotion? Does your entire promotion have a set theme, or are new perspectives what you're after? Has your campaign a continuing visual viewpoint that the photographer must lend his abilities to? If not, do you need one? Could your photographer assist you in developing an effective one?

Who are your audiences and what are their tastes? What kind of photography do you think would create the best image for your product in their eyes? You want them to read your copy -- you also want your photographs to attract and hold their attention, leading them into your copy. Flipping through your target publications will provide you with many insights: it will show you what others are doing, for one; but as you flip through you will no doubt find yourself being "stopped" by certain visuals. What was it about them that stopped you -- is it that element that you need for your promotion? If so, flag them and show them to your photographer.



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It is also very helpful for you to have several samples of your target media on hand for your discussions with your photographer; they will give him a far clearer idea of what your requirements are. This is especially true if you are dealing with trade media; the more esoteric they are, the better the chances your photographer won't be familiar with them.

Then again, as you flip through the pages of your target publications, you may be entirely turned off by the visuals you see; you may find that either you or your photographer have a better idea. In that case you must consider exactly how far you will be diverging from the accepted norm. If you are considering an entirely new perspective, your best bet is to clear it with the editor or art director. If they seem to like the idea, go with it. If they are completely opposed to it, you just saved yourself considerable time and trouble. If they seem hesitant, go with both your idea and a selection of backup photos that suit the publication's traditional format. [Note: in the case of cover stories, it is always a good idea to check with your editor and art director; after all, cover stories are the cream of the crop and you will want to be sure to be precisely on target. Moreover, cover stories are your best chance to get creative visuals in print; and in many cases your visuals may provide you with "bonus" covers, or at very least better space, if they are truly excellent.]

While checking your media requirements, be sure to check on what formats are or are not acceptable. Will your target media accept 35mm format? Or must they have 2 1/4-square format as a minimum, preferring 4 X 5 or larger? For black and white, would they prefer to have 11 X 14 prints? Also inquire as to whether your product, if incorporated into a creative series of "artistic" pictures, might lend itself to a photo spread. Photos are your best way to increase your space allocation. Given a dynamite spread of photographs, there's hardly an editor in town that wouldn't give you an extra page or two. In fact, most editors in trade publications are literally crying for creative photography -- and in this regard, you can go a lot "further out" than you may think you can. [As mentioned, when going "far out" it is often a good idea to check ahead as to whether your idea will be acceptable. But on the other hand, it is often impossible to express a visual idea in words. Might it not be worthwhile to do some far out photography and submit it? It might even go. In fact, your editor or art director will probably love you for having thought enough about him to provide his basic requirements along with some experimental material for his book.]

#### Provide Information On Product and Location

Your photographer is also going to need information about your product and how it works; exactly what about it are you trying to sell?, and how can your photographer best express your product's advantages? What will you be emphasizing in your copy? Do those points need photo backup? Could the points be better spelled out in photos, letting your copy go a step beyond, or vice versa?



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The key to the commercial's success was that my ode would be read by Rosko,<sup>57</sup> a famous radio personality. Rosko (William Roscoe Mercer) played hip music and read poetry, particularly Khalil Gibran. He was a hero for New York hipsters, especially the anti-war crowd. One reason: On October 2, 1967, without warning the station's management, Rosko spoke for five minutes about why he was resigning, saying, "*When are we going to learn that controlling something does not take it out of the minds of people?*" and declaring, "*In no way can I feel that I can continue my radio career by being dishonest with you.*"



[<http://woodstockwhisperer.info/2016/08/09/bill-rosko-mercero/>]

After several more anti-war monologs, Rosko went to live in France and work for the Voice of America; he came back to the States and in 1980 returned to the air waves on WBLS New York where he ran a commercial free Saturday night disco party from midnight to four that I taped religiously. Anyway... I got to meet my idol when Rosko recorded my poem; we did the session at his WBLS studio; that was a real kick. For background music, I sampled Pink Floyd's *Careful with That Axe, Eugene* [from the *Ummagumma* album]; Tonsing somehow managed to get a license to use the Floyd cut in our PSA.

[Listen to the song at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8OE4gedQuc>].

To illustrate the show, I budgeted for stock photographs of forest fires and other blights; the idea was to contrast those with lush, pastoral scenes that Tonsing and I would shoot on the forested slopes of the highest peak in the Northeastern United States, Mount Washington, in New Hampshire; that was a patriotic touch, don't you think? Well, there's a saying about, "The best laid plans of mice and men...." Spring was late that year. I had visions of capturing the ultra-green look of springtime; but we were a week early, maybe two. The deciduous trees were still budding; sprouting ferns were barely fiddleheads; rotting autumn leaves blanketed the forest floor, glistening the cold, misty rain and fog that engulfed the mountain for two days. The forest looked <sup>dark</sup>, dank and foreboding—the exact opposite of what we needed. I compensated for the dreary weather by resorting to optical distortions, using ultrawide, lenses and color distortions, which matched the Pink Floyd music and worked with Rosko's recital, at least that's what Tonsing and I told each other, to console our disappointment.

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<sup>57</sup> Wikipedia: William Roscoe Mercer (1927-2000), better known to millions of radio listeners simply as Rosko, was an American news announcer and disc jockey. He is best known for his stints on New York's WOR-FM and WNEW-FM in the 1960s. Rosko and other DJs of the time pioneered alternative-format FM radio, in response to the restrictive playlist programming of Top 40 AM stations.





Fore  
st-

fire photo: Photo Researchers

To get Micky Biondo's blessings, the PSA visuals were presented as a slide show; after approval, the slide show was first converted to 16 mm film; that footage was then transferred to video on a Telecine machine; that work was handled by Leo Steiner, at Foto-Sonics. Steiner was Burt Holmes favorite production house; Burt connected me with Leo and helped me locate a mailing list of the top 100 TV stations. [There were 566 TV stations in America in 1969; now there are closer to 2,000.]

After the mailing, I couldn't sleep; I wanted to see our PSA on the air; however, most PSAs were played in the dead of night; I was up all night for a week before I saw it; after that, I saw it a lot. Hooray! When the Nielsen play stats came in, they proved that the *Secret of The Forest* PSA was a hit. I was confident that I'd be getting more work from St. Regis; but a funny thing happened—Dave Tonsing quit; he dropped out of the corporate rat race, moved to Denver and got work as a home builder. I never heard from him again. And shortly after, Biondo retired; so that was that for me at St. Regis.

## 1960s | Portfolio | Part Two | Plates N<sup>os</sup>1-60

*The second part of the 1960s portfolio begins with the opening of my first studio on the fifth floor of a light-industrial building at 42 East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, between Madison Avenue and Park Avenue South, facing the Met Life building.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup>1: The name of my studio operation—Mesney's Mad Medicine Show—described the wide variety of my photo and graphic services; I reckon it stood out and was more memorable than Mesney's Studio. The flowery style of the logo was in keeping with the times; it was the era of the Flower Children; Albert Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac were passé; whacky weed was widespread; I was smoking, in more ways than one.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>2-3: The first incarnation of the Medicine Show was housed in the rear half of the fifth floor; it was a loft space; before I moved in, it had been a box manufacturing company and then a warehouse space. I spiffed it up considerably, installing a darkroom, work counters, shelving and furniture, all hand-built from 2X4s and plywood. The walls in the reception/work area were painted dark blue; the floor was flamingo pink; the furniture fabric was a bold, blue-orange-pink-and-white paisley, which also covered the door of the small refrigerator (far left). The couch doubled as a bed and had storage cabinets under it. Yours Truly is seen at right, likely putting Pixies together. Hanging from the ceiling are a globe and a mirror ball. The ZN-75 is displayed on the wall above the fridge. A portrait of Angelique Monique is on the facing wall, behind me. Other samples were displayed on the bulletin board on the extreme left. The darkroom and shooting space were behind the camera, which was probably operated by Yours Truly, using the self-timer.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>4-5: Standing on the fire escape, this was the view from the back of the studio. The picture is unremarkable aside from the hand-coloring work, which I experimented with during 1968 and '69. The colors, which look deceptively simple, were applied by dipping the print in Kodak dye-transfer pigments. Those came in three colors: magenta, cyan and yellow. To get red, the print was dipped first in yellow and then in magenta; for green, it was yellow and cyan. Those dyes are remarkably permanent; the colors of this picture, as well as the dye-transfer prints of my sailing work, made at Peterson Color Laboratory don't seem to have changed at all—more than half a century later. All other color pictures have faded, except Kodachrome—the film version of the dye-transfer process. [More at <https://www.eastman.org/technicolor/technology/dye-transfer-printing>]*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>6-7: Yellow Bug was the first of a series of Christmas-print promotions that became a tradition that lasted for a decade. Select clients, colleagues, friends and family were gifted a matted 16 X 20-inch exhibition print, signed and in some cases numbered. Each print of Yellow Bug was sepia toned and hand tinted with dye-transfer colors.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup>8-15: There was considerable overlap between the first and second parts of my Sixties portfolio, particularly my automotive work. Plate N<sup>o</sup>8: The start of the U.S. Formula One Grand Prix at Watkins Glen; shot on Plus-X film, with a 200 mm Nikkor lens. Plate N<sup>o</sup>9: The start of the Canadian-American Challenge Cup race at Bridgehampton, taken from the bridge, with a 55 mm Micro-Nikkor lens and a 25R (red) filter, on Panatomic-X film. Plate N<sup>o</sup>10: Watkins Glen, shot with an MTO 500 mm mirror-telephoto lens. Inset is a snap of Yours Truly with the legendary racer, Stirling Moss, outside the Howard Johnson's where we had lunch. Plates N<sup>os</sup>12-13: Watkins Glen, shot through a 105 mm Nikkor lens*



*with a #58G (Green) filter on Infrared-Aero Ektachrome film (Atomicolor). Plates N<sup>os</sup> 14-15: After the crowds left, I wandered down to the pits, at the Watkins Glen Grand Prix, to photograph the mechanics who were working late.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 16-17: John O'Neill was one of many wannabe models who came knocking on my door. As a result of the studio being right next to Justine Model Consultants, I'd see a dozen a week, more or less. After a while, I got picky. O'Neill had the looks to be the Marlboro Man or any number of roles; prizefighter, for example; or James Bond.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 18-19: Record album covers were the Holy Grail for photographers. Pity the poor art directors who worked for the record companies; every photographer in the world wanted to work for them; imagine an endless line of people ringing your bell. All that to say it was tough to get a break; to get your stuff seen by the decision makers. As a music act, James and Richard had the same problem; we made a good pair. Although they have been re-cropped for this book, all the pictures were shot for the square format of a record album cover.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 20: Tom Allen was part of my entourage; he and a few others liked to hang out at the Medicine Show; for a while, I encouraged it; they could be very useful (hero worship has its rewards). Anyway, me and my entourage used to hang out and get high in the evenings; listening to Isaac Hayes and watching blue-tinted mirror-ball spots dance around the studio. One night, I had a hallucinogenic vision of Tom (and others) in their former incarnations; I saw him as Fagan. He got totally into it; he was unabashed about his gaunt looks. As I recall, another groupie, Kathy McMasters, collaborated with Tom and the two of them came up with the outfit and gold-painted jewelry box. The master prints, of which I made only two (one for Tom, naturalment), were hand colored using dye-transfer colors applied with cotton swaps—a delicate process involving the build-up of color in many layers, many applications. Color was only applied to the gold objects: the necklace, his rings as well as Fagin's gold-framed glasses. Light blue was applied to the lenses of his glasses, and their reflections.*

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 21: There would have been no Justine Model Consultants without George Brenner. The retired judge was one of Justine's several backers. (I don't want to go there.) But he had a character look; you could see him on TV, right? I did. He became part of a Karshian portrait extravaganza I called Root 13, short for The Square Root of Thirteen.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 22 & 23: These shots of Betty Shalansky on the Brooklyn Bridge were targeted at Vogue magazine and Harper's Bazaar, the top rags in the fashion business; I wanted to get a contract from Saks Fifth Avenue or Bergdorf Goodman, for catalogue work. One of those contracts could pay a year's rent.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 24-26: Barbara Wing was another model referred by Justine; unlike many of the others, there was something behind Wing's bedroom eyes; she was a smart cookie; a college girl earning her own way through school. Barbara had signed on with the Stewart Model Agency; they suggested Justine's classes. However, Barbara quit Justine after just two lessons; that alerted me to the fact that Justine was a bag of wind, self-inflated. Whatever. Wing had everything needed to be a top model... except the right measurements; she was neither tall nor thin enough for Vogue or Mademoiselle.*

*That said, she managed to get a catalogue contract from Lynn Stewart (no relation to the model agency) to model Stewart's Ratty Furs (Plate N°18). Besides these test shots, I used Barbara in a piece for Cycle magazine called The Sidecar Experience. [See, 1970s | Portfolio | Part Two | Plates N°s40-45.]*

*Plate N°s27: Yours Truly at the 73<sup>rd</sup> Street studio. Keep in mind the blaze in the fireplace, in the lower photo, when you read about the near-disastrous fire(s). At this stage, I was becoming heavily involved in board work and most of my important pictures were assemblies.*

*Plates N°s28-29: Sue Keeton was a wannabe superstar model. She, too, had everything necessary except the perfect proportions needed to fit into the designer outfits presented at the annual Fashion Weeks in Paris and New York. Instead, she became my rep.*

*Plates N°s30-37: I invested a lot in Adrienne LaRussa, a dark beauty who was likely a triple Scorpio. Adrienne didn't smile much; we didn't share much laughter; she was all business. LaRussa lived with her boyfriend, Gordon, in a fashionable East Side townhouse; she didn't have to worry about money. I think she pursued modelling to keep him happy; you know, being a "trophy" GF. Plates N°s30 to 33 were shot at Lake Minnewaska, a skiing resort about 100 miles [161 kilometers] north of New York City. I'd previously shot Chris Hanson there [see, Early Work | Plate N°28]. The original idea was to do nude shots in the waterfall; but, the glacial-stream water was too cold; the shocked look on Adrienne's face in N°30 was for real. Plates N°s34-35 were shot on the dunes of Fire Island, in Robert Moses State Park, at the same location that Carol Douglas was photographed, in 1964, right after the Robert Moses Causeway opened and the remote beach became accessible. [See, Early Work | Plates N°s32-35.] Plates N°s36-37 were shot in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street studio.*

*Plates N°s38-39: I was one of the first photographers to take pictures of Naomi Sims, a black beauty on Wilhelmina's roster credited with being the first African-American super-model. I like to think my pictures helped propel her meteoric rise to fame and fortune.<sup>58</sup>*

*Plates N°s40-43: Season Hubley was a rich hippie. She grew up on Park Avenue, the defiant daughter of a writer & entertainer. She was way too small to model anything but ingénue outfits; but she had big ambitions, to be an actress. She attended the Julliard School and was coached in method acting by none other than Lee Strasberg at the Actors Studio. She was sucker bait for Justine, who introduced her to me.*

*Plates N°s44 & 45: Black Beauty Model Agency opened in 1968. A feature story about the upstart agency in Life magazine propelled them to instant fame. As with every other model agency in town, Justine glommed onto Black Beauty as a source of students. Brenda Connors was the first Black Beauty test model to attend Justine's classes.*

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<sup>58</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/04/fashion/04sims.html>: "...Ms. Sims, showing a dash of enterprise that would later define her career, told Wilhelmina Cooper, a former model who was starting her own agency, that she would send out copies of the magazine [Fashions of The Times] to advertising agencies with Ms. Cooper's number attached. Ms. Cooper could have a commission if anyone called back. Within a year, Ms. Sims was earning \$1,000 a week...."



*About a half a year after I did the peacock-feather portrait of her, an almost identical picture (of another model) appeared in a Vogue magazine feature. Hmm.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 46-47: Andrea Suter blew through the studio like a whirling dervish. We had a hot and heavy session one long evening, then I never saw her again; someone else, possibly her mom, took the pictures when I delivered them.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 48-49: Patty Martin was an impressionable waif and one of the cutest of Justine's girls; in fact, she modelled for the cover of Justine's brochure. It didn't take me long to convince her that every model should have at least one nude photo in their portfolio; as a bonus, the night of the shoot, she brought Vera Beato along, who was feeling experimental.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 50-51: And then there was Andréa.... I can be quite naïve; sometimes it takes me a while to realize when I am being used. But I am not getting into those weeds, now. Everyone has their own idea of the perfect mate. She could have been mine; but I wasn't wealthy or cool enough for her.*



*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 52-54: Kevin Barry Models had a rep for hot girls; you know, the ones you saw in sub-prime publications (like the stuff I did for Pat Reshen). Barry was a mellow fellow (wink) and quite the Don Juan.*

*Talk about casting couches, his office was a love nest with Zebra-skin rugs, posh pillows, a full bar and, of course, mood music and lighting.*

*These pictures were made for a two-sided poster: vertical on one side, horizontal on the other. The before shots have been included to show how the eclipse versions were made.*

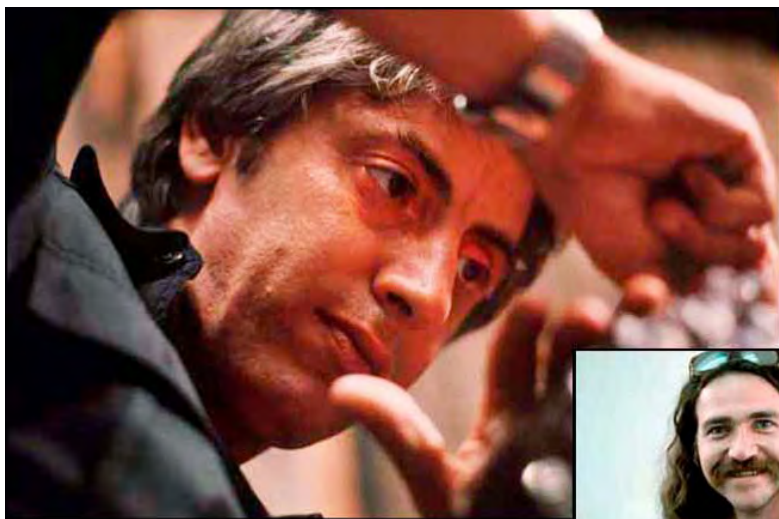
Kevin Barry, 1972

*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 55: Learning the art of airbrushing changed everything; I could create imaginary worlds and effects. "Impaired Vision" is the epitome of my black and white airbrush work and one of my top-ten favorite pictures, as much for its message as its look or the techniques used to get them. The base image was shot during the 1969 Block Island Race Week regatta, as the cutter passed the Southeast Light on Mohegan Bluffs. Block Island is famous for its fog and we'd had plenty that day. However, the fog in this picture was entirely airbrushed.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 56-57: The photos of Naomi Sims [Plates N<sup>os</sup> 38 & 39, above] inspired a subsequent shoot of my wife, Leslie, wearing a silver-lame "moon suit" disco outfit that she concocted and made by hand. For a head-dress, she added a white-plastic lamp shade. The original shot was Atomicolor; the scene was rendered in shades of red, magenta and dark blue-purple, which set-off the silver dramatically.*

*Plates N<sup>os</sup> 58-59: What a difference a year makes (a year and a half, actually). Urged by Andréa, I grew my hair longer than it had ever been; it grew longer and longer until Diego Messina cut it.*

*Yours Truly at Jack Cortner's Burger King recording session in 1976.  
Photo of me by Pat Billings (above) and Diego Messina.*



*Plate N<sup>o</sup> 60: Back side of the contact sheet for roll #1 of job #243. Thinking myself clever, I began using my thumbprint as a kind of logo. I had been using my Jus Semper (Justice Always) family crest, but using my thumb was way easier and, I reckoned, "hipper." Someone else did, too. A couple of years later, one of the big record labels started using a fingerprint as a logo. I quit using mine after that, for fear of being considered an imitator instead of the initiator that I actually was.*











1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 2  
*42 East 23rd Street, Fifth Floor, Rear | Original Mad Medicine Show Studio | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 3

*42 East 23rd Street, Fifth Floor, Rear | Original Mad Medicine Show Studio | 1969*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 4

*42 East 23rd Street | Fire-escape view | 1969*

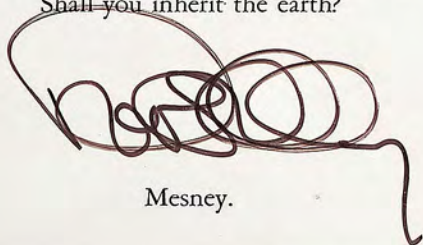




1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE Nº 5  
*42 East 23rd Street | Fire-escape view | 1969*



Molting nymph, conceived in the seventh circle,  
What is your bardo of being?  
Mosaic visionary of man's metamorphosis,  
Instinctually navigating the sphere by light,  
Speaking in tongues forever foreign,  
Arresting the solar stolsis in seasonal slumber;  
Shall you inherit the earth?



Mesney.

1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 6

*"Yellow Bug" | Christmas-gift-print promotion & card | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 7  
*"Yellow Bug" | Christmas-gift-print promotion & card | 1968*



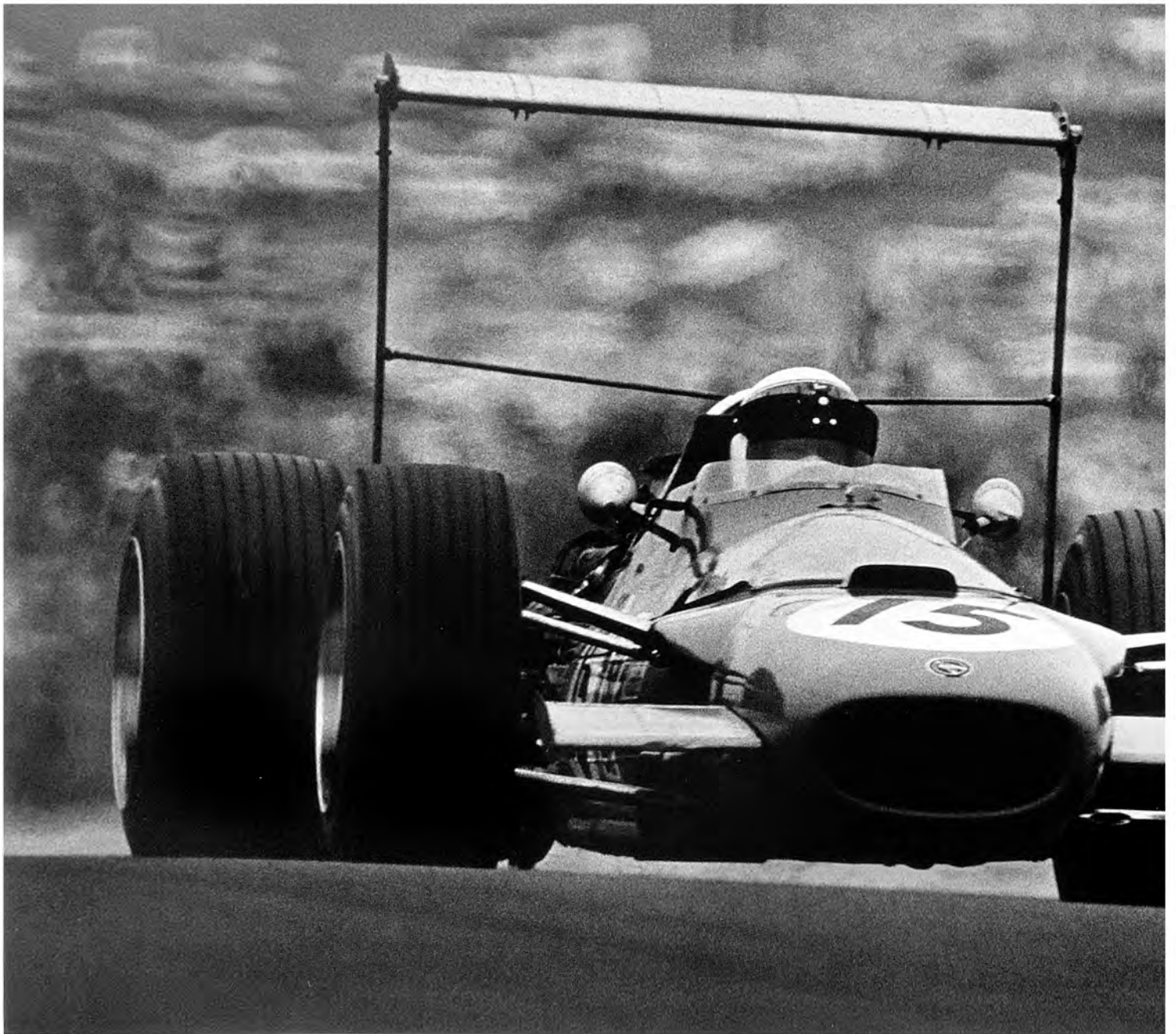


1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 8  
"Jump Start" | Watkins Glen Formula One Grand Prix | 1968



1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 9  
*"Pedal To The Metal" | Bridgehampton Can-Am Race | 1969*

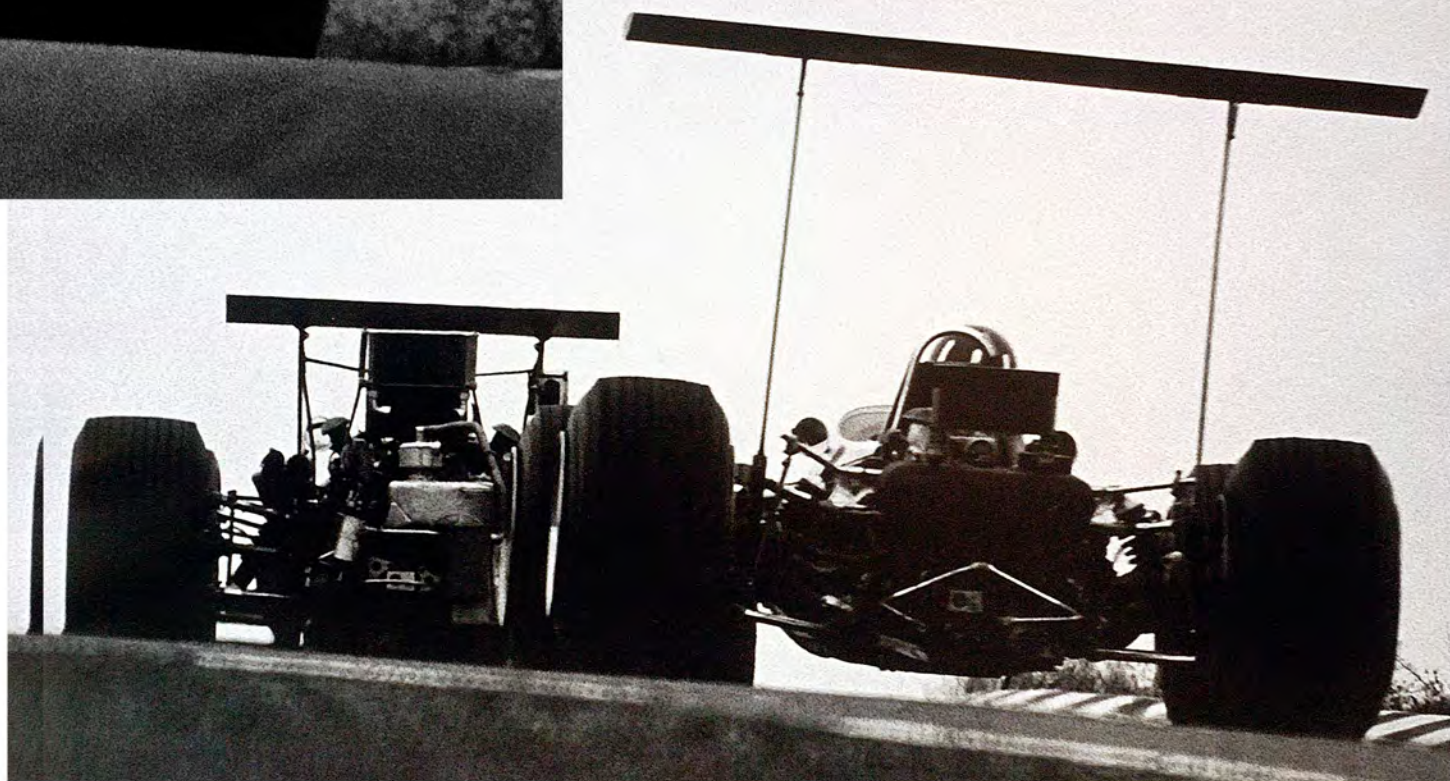
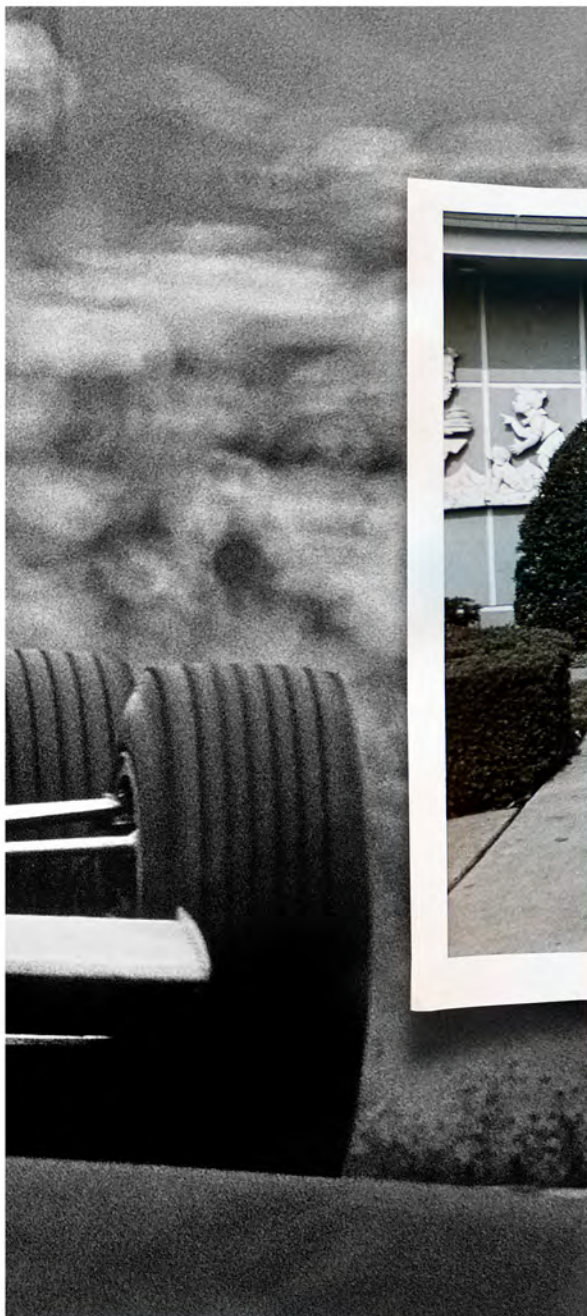




1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 10

*Watkins Glen Formula One Grand Prix | 1967*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 11

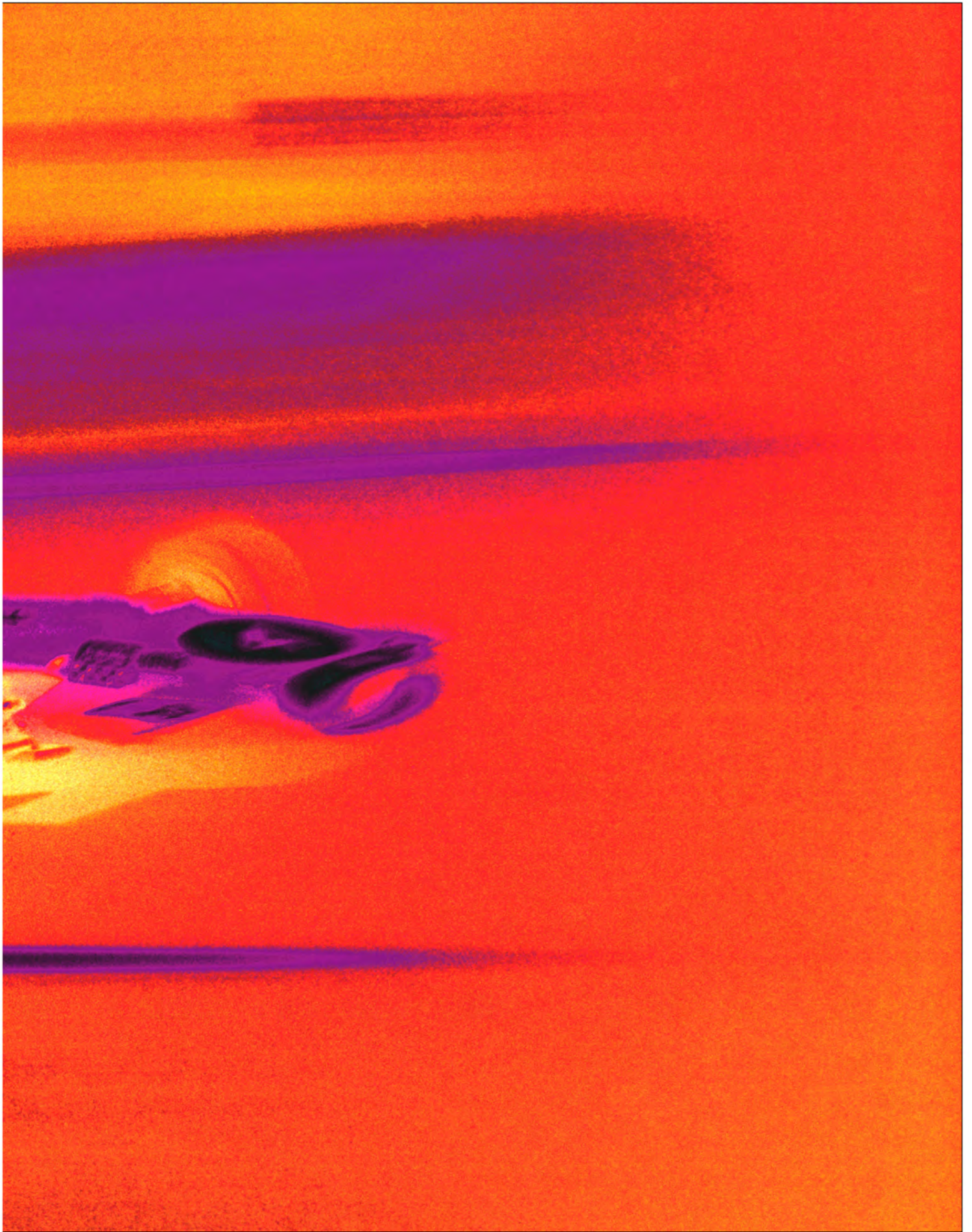
*Watkins Glen Formula One Grand Prix | 1967 | Inset: Yours Truly with Stirling Moss at HoJo's*





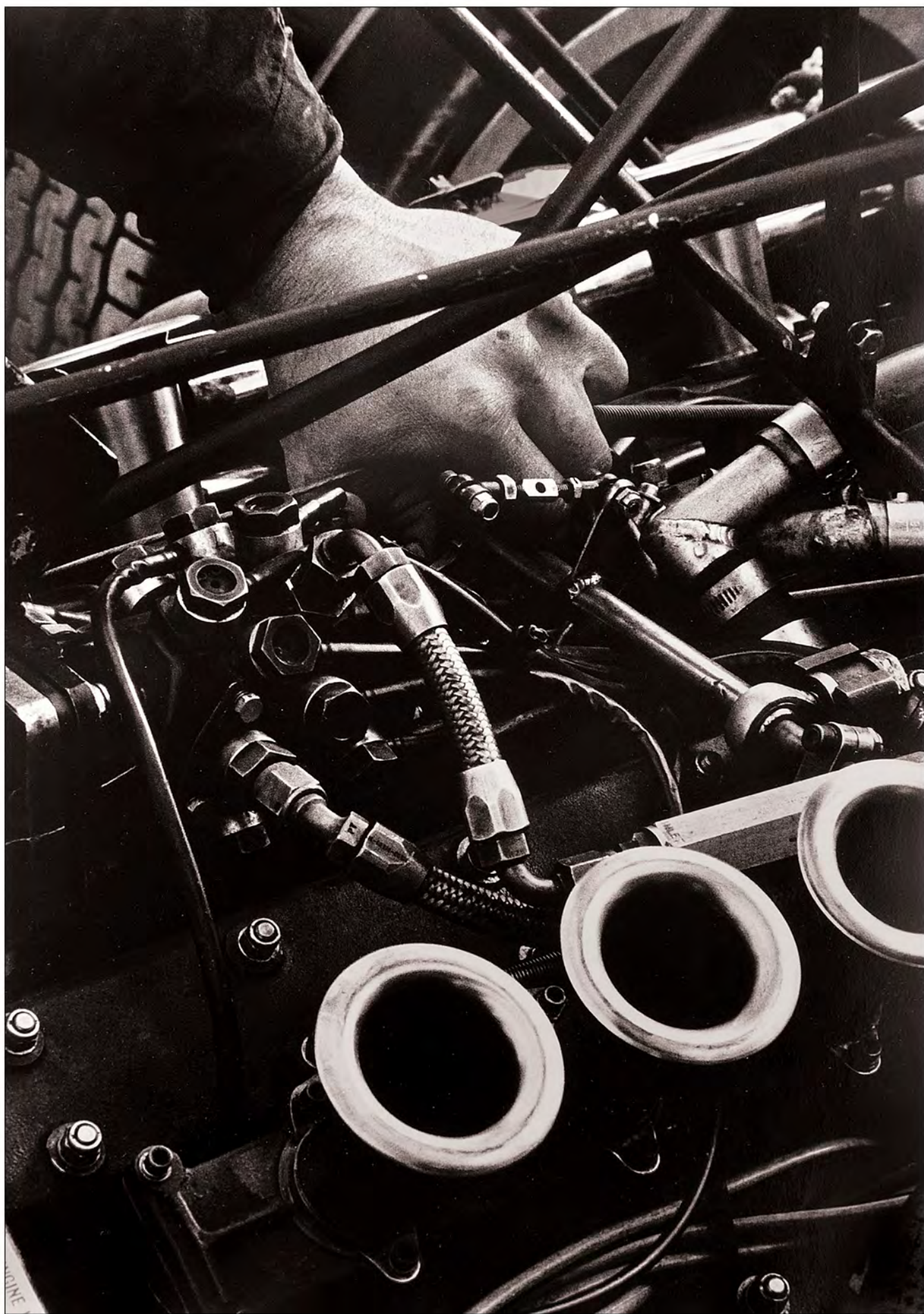
1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 12  
*"Hot Shot" | Watkins Glen Formula One Grand Prix | 1967*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 13  
*"Hot Shot" | Watkins Glen Formula One Grand Prix | 1967*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 14

*Race Mechanic #1 | Watkins Glen Grand Prix | Watkins Glen, New York | 1968*

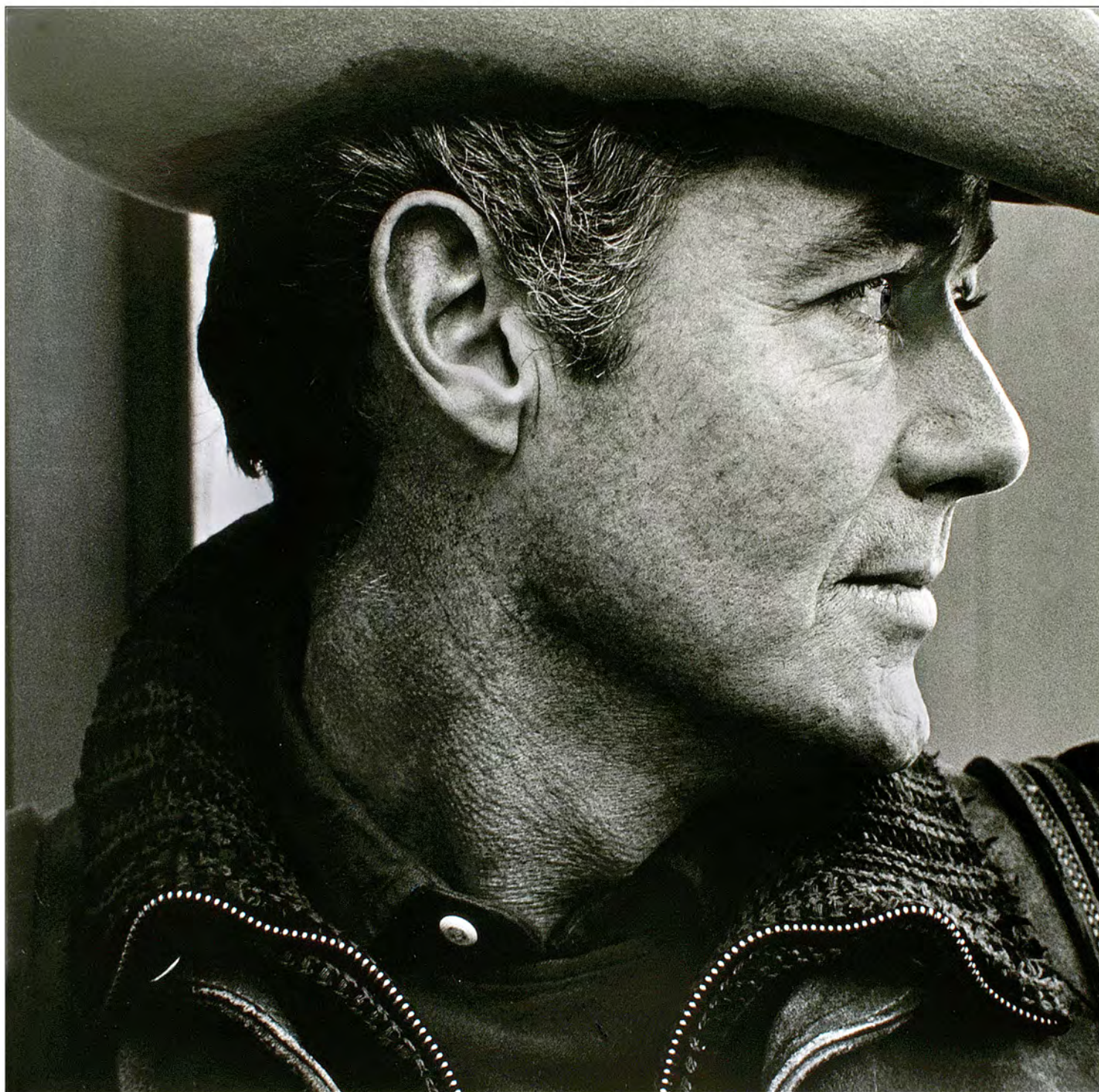




1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART ONE | PLATE N° 15

*Race Mechanic #2 | Watkins Glen Grand Prix | Watkins Glen, New York | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 16

*John O'Neill | Test shot | 1968*

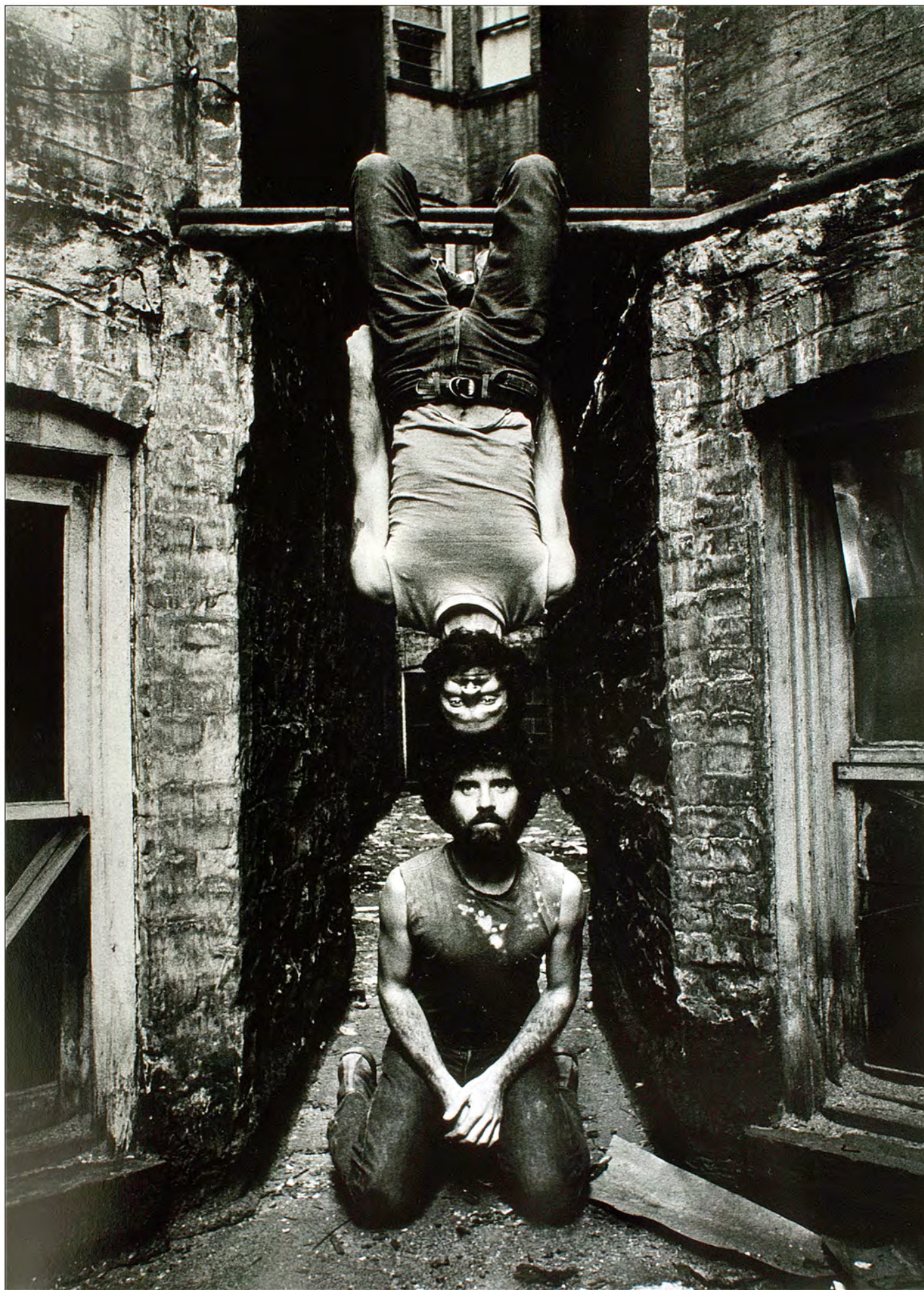




1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 17

*John O'Neill | Test shot | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 18

*"James & Richard" | Brochure collage | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 19

*"James & Richard" | Brochure collage | 1969*

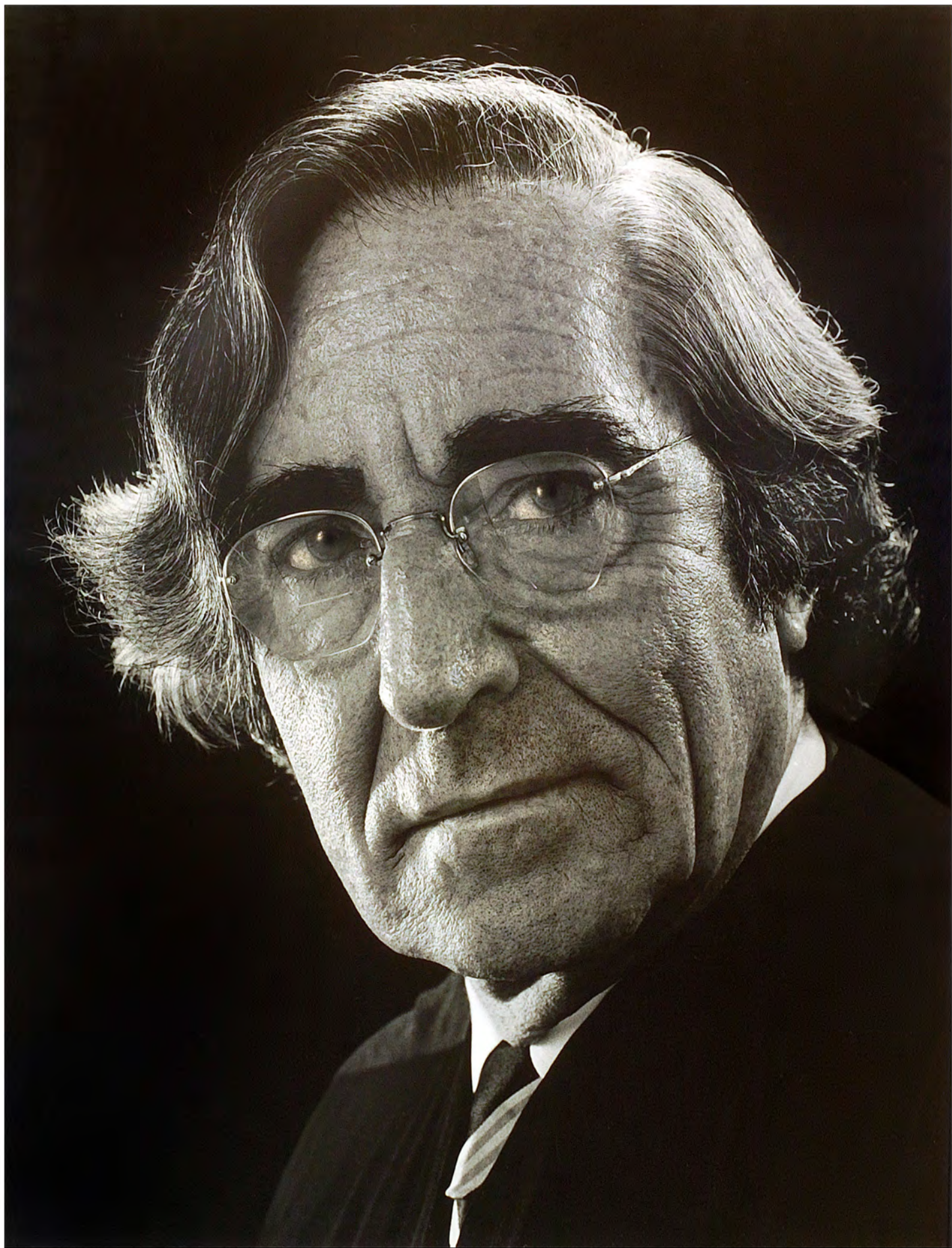




1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N°20

*"Fagan"* | Tom Allen | 1969





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 21

*George Brenner | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 22

*Betty Shalansky | Test shot | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 23

*Betty Shalansky | Test shot | 1968*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 24

*Barbara Wing | Test shot | 1971*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 25

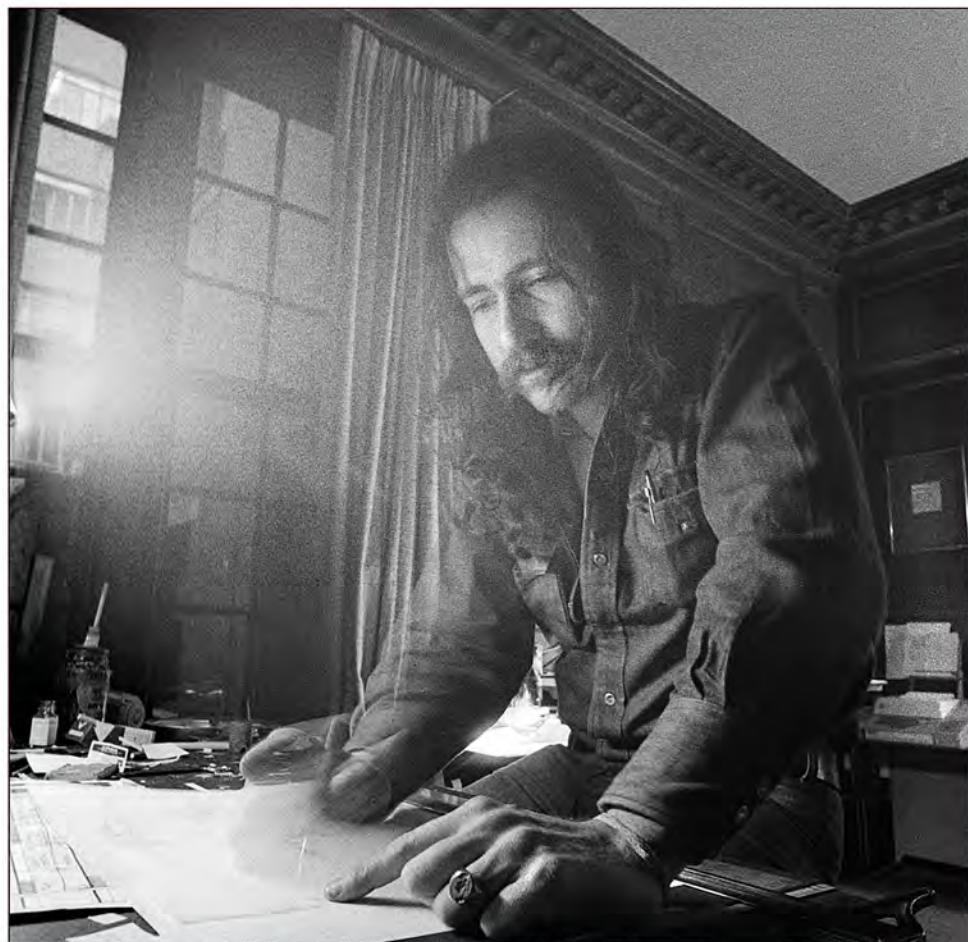
*Barbara Wing | Test shot | 1971*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 26

*Barbara Wing | Ratty Furs poster | Lynn Stewart Fashions | 1971*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 27  
*Selfies | Third Bardo design studio, 73rd Street | 1973*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 28

*Sue Keeton | Test shot | 1970*

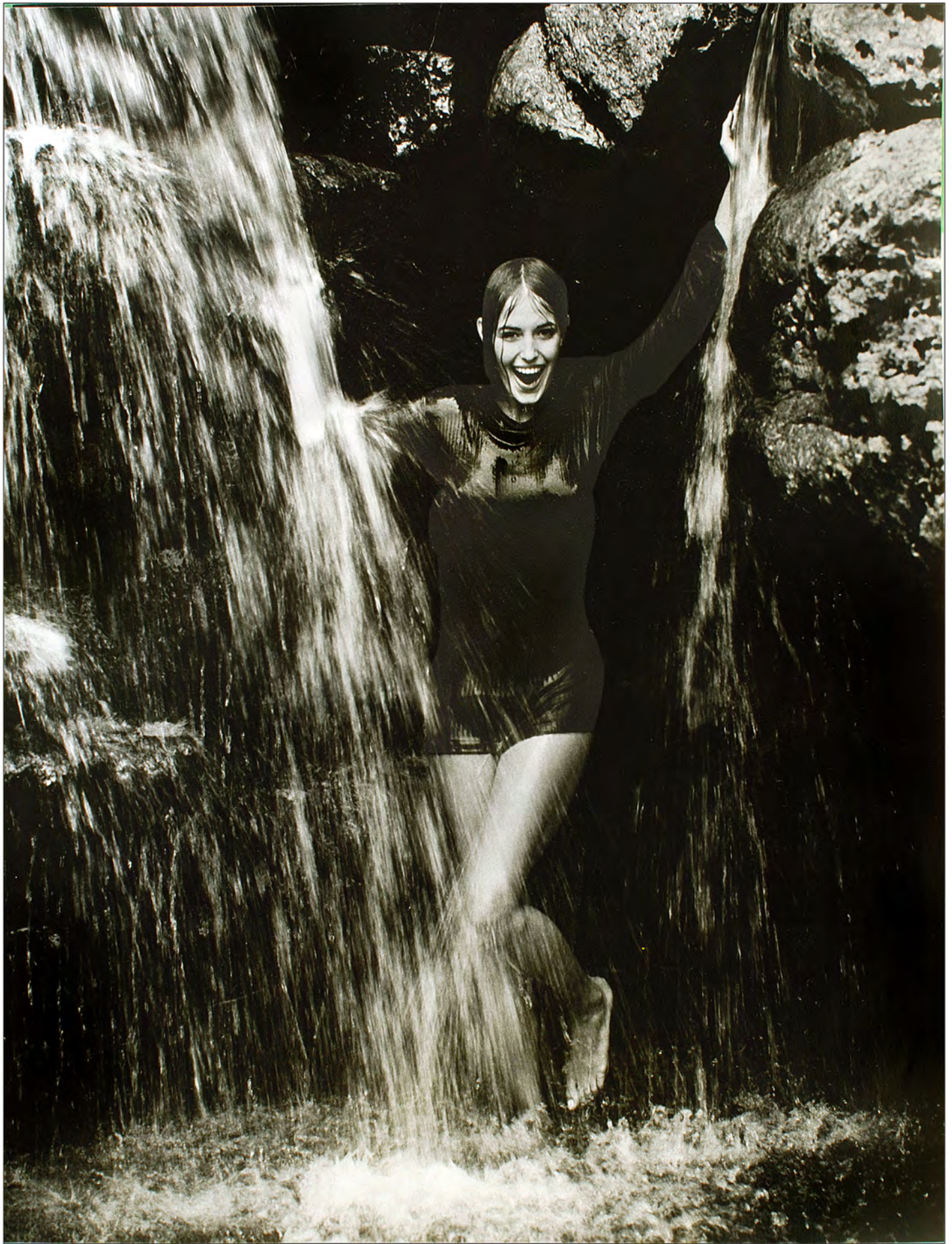




1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 29

*Sue Keeton | Test shot | 1970*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 30  
*Adrienne LaRussa | Test shot | Lake Minnewaska, New York | 1968*



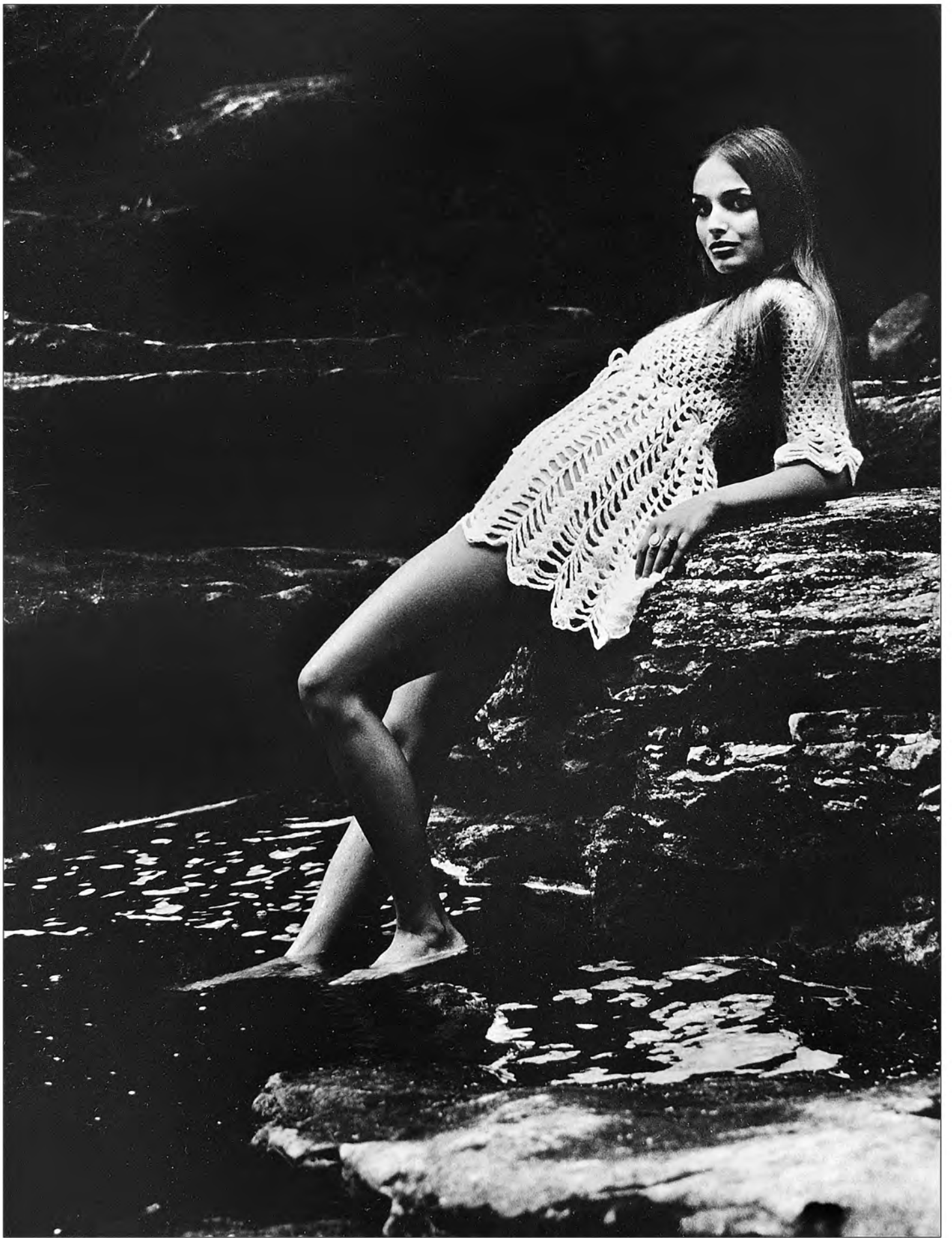


1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 31  
*Adrienne LaRussa | Test shot | Lake Minnewaska, New York | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 32  
*Adrienne LaRussa | Test shot | Lake Minnewaska, New York | 1968*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 33  
*Adrienne LaRussa | Test shot | Lake Minnewaska, New York | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 34  
*Adrienne LaRussa | Test shot | Fire Island, New York | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 35  
*Adrienne LaRussa | Test shot | Fire Island, New York | 1968*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 36

*Adrienne LaRussa | Test shot | 1969*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 37

*Adrienne LaRussa | Test shot | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 38  
*Naomi Simms | Test shots | Long Island, New York | 1968*



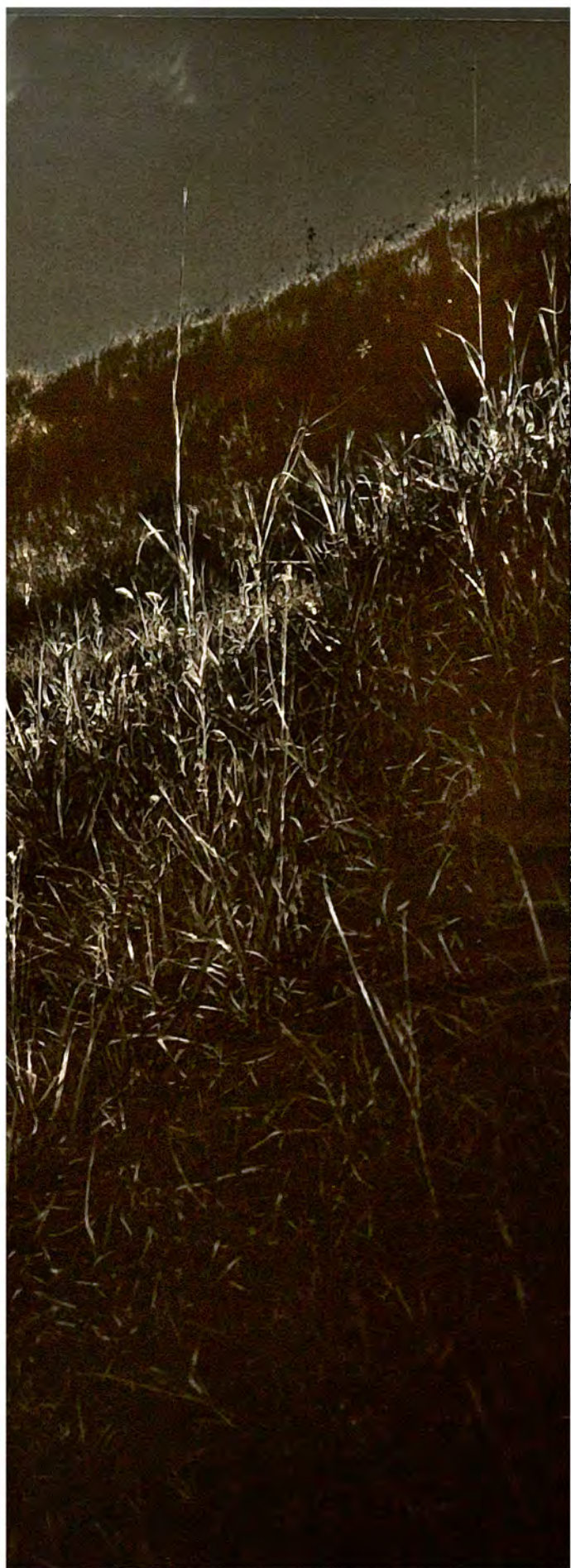
1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 39  
*Naomi Simms | Test shot | Long Island, New York | 1968*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 40  
*Season Hubley | Test shot | Fire Island, New York | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 41  
*Season Hubley | Test shot | Fire Island, New York | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 42  
*Season Hubley | Test shot | Fire Island, New York | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 43

*Season Hubley | Test shot | Fire Island, New York | 1969*





1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 44  
*Brenda Connors | Test shot | Black Beauty Agency | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 45  
*Brenda Connors | Test shot | Black Beauty Agency | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 46

*Andrea Suter | Nude study | 1969*









1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 49

*Patty Martin & Beatrice Vera | Nude study | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 50

*Andrea Lawrence | Nude study N° 1 | 1970*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 51

*Andrea Lawrence | Nude study N°2 & N°3 | 1970*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 52

*Kevin Barry Models | Poster N° 1 | 1970 | "Before"*



1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 53

*Kevin Barry Models | Poster N° 1 | 1970 | "After"*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 54  
*Kevin Barry Models | Poster N° 2 | 1970 | "Before & After"*





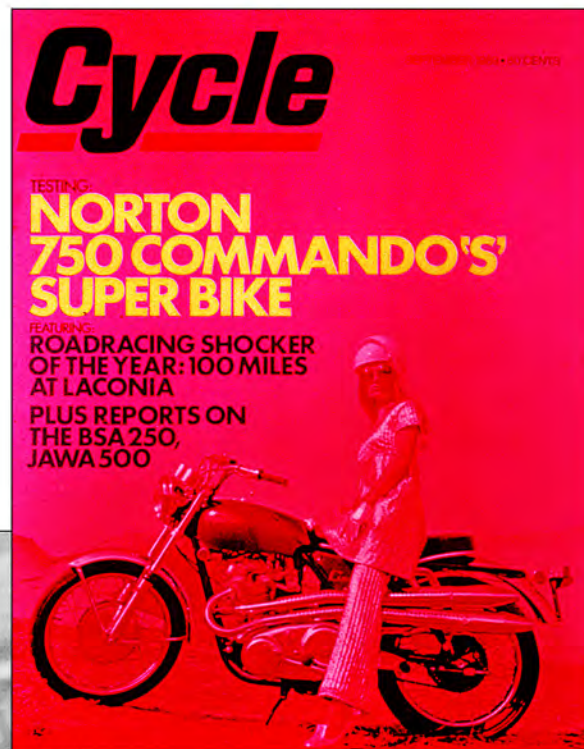
1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 55  
*"Impaired Vision" | Block Island, Rhode Island | 1960 | Illustration, 1971*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 56

*Leslie Shirk Mesney | Test shot in "moon suit" she made by hand (hat is a plastic lamp shade) | 1969*



1960S | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 57

*Above: Cycle magazine cover inspired by test shot of Leslie in Moon suit | Below: "selfie" | 1969*





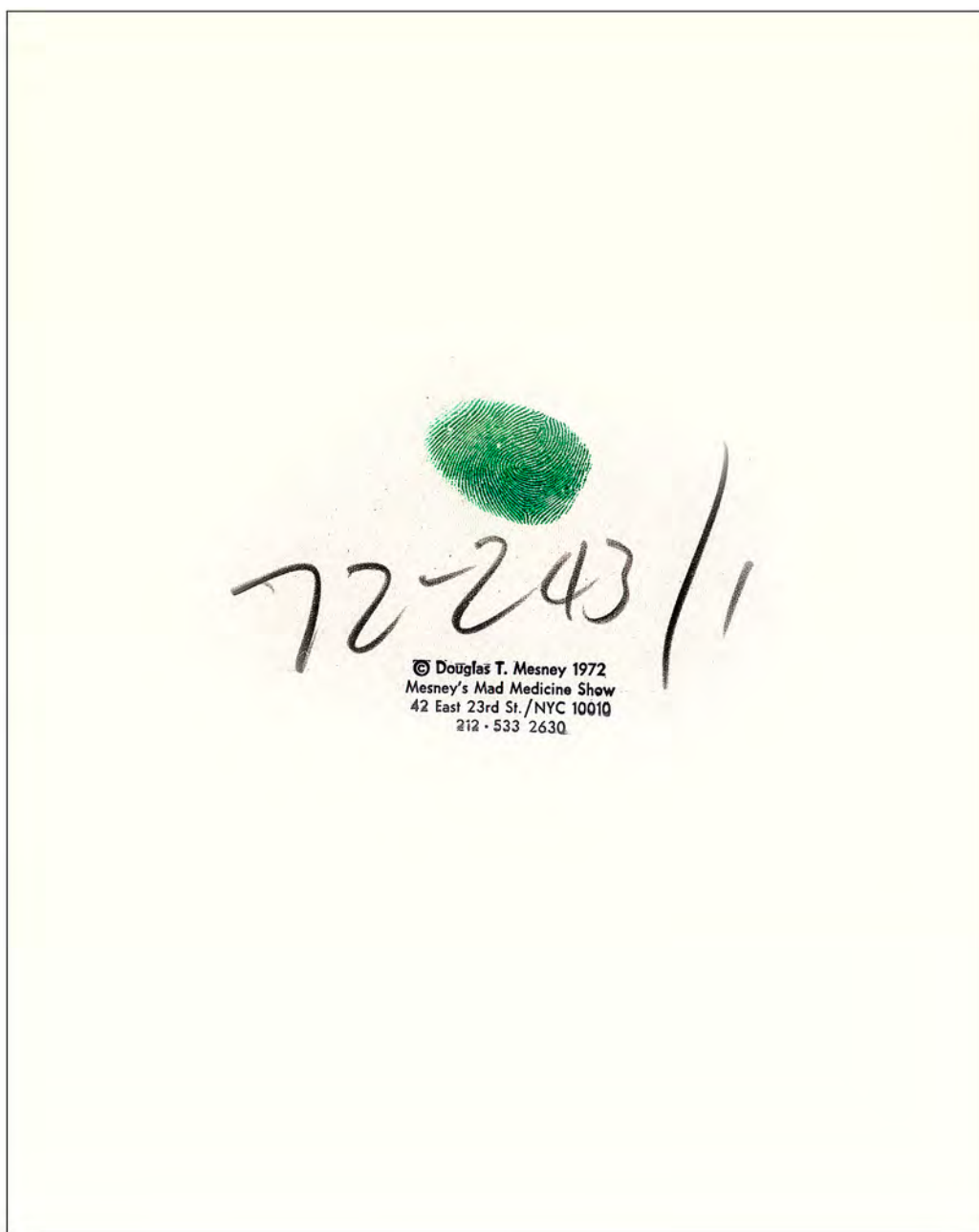
1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 58  
*Douglas Mesney } Photos by Leslie Shirk Mesney | 1969*





1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 59  
*Douglas Mesney } Photos by Andrea Lawrence (3rd row, left) | 1971*







1960s | PORTFOLIO | PART TWO | PLATE N° 61  
*Corvette on Fire Island Bridge | Robert Moses State Causeway | 1967*



## 1969 – Mad Ball – Sagacious Enterprise



Feeling flush with success and wanting to create some additional buzz, I threw a grand party—*Mesney's Mad Ball*—for 100 guests.

Just about everyone I knew was invited, including friends, clients and prospects. Each received a mysterious, lumpy, 6 X 8-inch envelope [15.24 X 20.32 cm] marked, *Caution: Contents Dangerous to The Mind*. Inside they found an aluminum, screw-top, 35 mm film can containing an 18-inch [45.72 cm] strip of color film. The 16 pictures on the filmstrip provided invitation details. That invitation was a lot of work and expense, but paid off in spades; I got a lot of calls about my *most memorable* invitation. More than 100 guests showed up; many brought friends. Some hard-to-get prospects turned up, too, including Jim Head, a managing editor at *Penthouse* magazine, and his boyfriend, Michael Parish, an art director at *GQ* [*Gentlemen's Quarterly*]; even Wilhelmina showed up with a bevy of her beauties. The place was packed and rocking; I had a slide show of my best pictures playing on a big screen; the images were enhanced by a mirror ball's slowly-spinning orbs and ultraviolet lights [UV] filled the room with an ethereal shimmer.

Was I one of the first photographers to use a slide projector to show my portfolio? I remember that prospects always seemed impressed when an electric screen descended from the ceiling and the lights dimmed. Slide shows command people's full attention because they are presented in darkened rooms, distractions are minimized; the size of projected images is more impressive than even the biggest print portfolio. There is nothing like a BIG picture; even classical painters and sculptors realized that size matters.

For the party, the darkroom was converted into a wine bar; three of the 2.5-gallon [9.46 liter] stainless steel film-processing tanks were filled with wine sangrias: white, red and rose; guests helped themselves with ladles. The party lived up to its *Mad Ball* name. The last thing I remember seeing was a packed dance floor and standing room only everywhere else. The next thing I remember was waking up under my desk in a fetal position the morning after; the record player was still skipping, ka-tick, ka-tick, ka-tick and the studio was a disaster zone. At least the last guest shut the door on the way out. Ha!

The party was well worth what it cost (and the hangover)—business doubled within a month. (So, did the number of girls I was screwing.) Following-up on the Mad meme, I adopted one of Herman Hesse's adages: "Not for everyone."

One of my new assignments was to document a General Electric awards presentation and photograph the winners; the ceremony was produced by Carmine Sant'Andrea [older brother of Jim Sant'Andrea]. When I walked into the ballroom my mind was blown by what I saw: the huge space was lit with deep blue UV light punctuated by the orange flames of fifty candelabras (500 candles!) on as many ten-top rounds [circular tables seating 10 people]. Even more impressive were two dozen big balloons, each 4-feet in diameter [1.22 meters], floating above the audience. The white balloons were spot-lit with ultra-violet light to make them glow; that was a good effect in and of itself; but then, when the awards ceremony began, pictures were projected onto the balloons. Wow!

Those balloons changed everything for me; I saw the true power of projected pictures. What Sant'Andrea did was ground breaking—at least in New York, the center of the Universe. Maybe the Detroit car shows incorporated such innovative projection techniques; but I never saw any of those shows, I only heard about them, much later.

In 1969, slide shows were a nascent media phenomenon whose time was about to come. Before slides, people used flip charts, overhead projectors and strip films to make presentations. When more impact was needed, they used 16 mm motion pictures (if they could afford them). With the introduction of the Carousel projector, slides became an easy way to make an impressive presentation that was affordable. Slides combined the best of flip charts and movies; slides made it possible to project large pictures, like movies, as well as texts and graphics, like flip charts. Better yet, slides were way less expensive than movies. Bigger and cheaper? *Voila!* A new communications technique was born: the slide show.

Slide shows had much more impact than flip-charts while also being easier and less expensive to produce than movies. People could make slide shows by themselves; just buy a projector and have some slides made. You can get a sense of where things were at in the early-to-mid '60s by watching *Mad Men*; the protagonist, creative director Don Draper, uses a Kodak Ektagraphic slide projector for important presentations.

Being an affordable presentation technique with high impact, slides took off. Kodak's coffers were stuffed with the profits generated by burgeoning projector and slide-supply sales. To drive more sales, Kodak came out with accessories that could cross-fade between two projectors, called slide dissolvers, aka dissolve units.<sup>59</sup>

Kodak's marketing mantra became, *two are better than one*. It was an appealing proposition; most people like to believe that if one is good, two is better; but there were more advantages for using two projectors, some functional and others more aesthetic. Using one projector, every slide change involves a short blackout—a “wink”—while the projector advances to the next slide. With two projectors, there was always a picture on the screen. (While the one projected a picture on the screen, the other advanced to the next slide.) The dissolve effect added elegance to slide shows and doubled the slide-tray capacity from 80 slides to 160—making longer, more detailed presentations possible.

While adding a second projector was a significant improvement, the tempo of slide shows was still limited by the time required for a projector to advance (or reverse) from one slide to the next—that was 0.9 seconds for an American-made Kodak Carousel model, and 1.1 seconds for their European model, the German-made S-AV projector. That speed limitation was cut in half by adding a third projector, which also increased slide-tray capacity by 33%, to 240 slides—not insignificant if you were changing slides at a faster tempo. Thus, the three-projector, MK VII dissolve was an instant success when introduced by Audio Visual Laboratories [AVL] in 1974, by which time slide shows had caught on among professional presenters.

Well, you know how it goes—when everyone was using three projectors, innovative producers started using four, then five, and so on. In 1969 I had one slide projector; five years later, in 1974, I had more than thirty; and sixteen years after that (1990), eighty projectors—that's when the bottom dropped out of the slide show market.

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<sup>59</sup> Using a dissolver, while one slide faded down, another faded up; the first pictures appeared to “melt” into the second.



## **An Incredible Epic**

Continues in Volume Two