

## David J Osborn Photographer

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Photographers visit other peoples environments, where as most people work in a constant work environment. It is important for a photographer to fit in and feel comfortable as soon as possible. The faster he does this the sooner he can begin taking pictures and be productive. The more diverse experience the photographer has, the higher the chance of achieving this sooner.

The following is therefore not written as a traditional resume for a job application. Photography involves a great deal more than just taking pictures, such as the practical issues of travel, budgets, deadlines. The ability to relate to people of all walks of life and having a very logical, practical and calm personality in order to solve problems efficiently when on your own.

Citizenship: British

Born 17th June 1961 - London

School; etc in London, England.

1977      Leave school. Totally bored at school. Main aim was to miss as much as possible. Could not wait to leave and start life. Decided to experience, achieve and do as much as possible in life, a rule I have always kept to.

1977 - 1979      Two-year course in painting, photography and design, at Ware College, Hertfordshire, England to fill in time before going to University at 18 years of age.

1979 - 1980      Foundation course in Art and Design at Hornsey College of Art, London. General introduction to field of art, painting, design, photography, etc. A requirement for entry to degree courses and more in depth introduction to categories of Art Studies, from which you choose an area to pursue as a degree course.

My main project and end of year show, was the study of old master painting techniques. Mainly those of Rubens, the study of drawing, underpainting and glazing techniques in oil paint. Rubens was an innovator of such techniques and turned the process into a factory production process.

1980 - 1983      Study at Camberwell School of Art, London, Graphic Design degree course. The college is one of London's oldest and leading colleges for Graphic Design and the making of handmade books and their restoration, running the only book restoration course for museums. Also, a very old and traditional fine art painting college.

I chose Graphic Design as a balance between following art and later earning a living, but my heart was not in it. Grew to love photography as it suited my personality more, not being suited to sitting at a desk all day working on one design. So after a year and a half of Graphic Design, I was allowed to study photography full time, setting my own projects and doing my own research with tutors help. In a rather unorthodox manner, it was make it up as you go.

Focused on Photo-Essays. Shooting stories on the RAF Air Seas Rescue service, Tyburn Convent, Wormwood Scrubs Prison & the Berbers of Morocco. Final degree exhibition work was Photo-Essay on Fear achieved by completing and photographing an Outward Bound Course and Royal Marine Parachuting Course. The work was exhibited as multiple magazine spreads with text.

As the course was officially Graphic design, I left with first class honors Bachelor of Arts Degree, BA (Hons) Camb, in Graphic Design. In reality my degree was judged as a photographic degree!

1983 - 1984      Freelanced in London, worked one day a week for Shell Oil in photography department and some magazines, anything I could find, but really wanted news work. Worked in banks, shops and factories to earn money to keep going as well.

1984 - 1987      Taken on with Reuter News Pictures in Fleet Street, London, as freelance at first though inexperienced, they liked my enthusiasm and dedication. Reuter News Agency bought out the US picture agency, United Press International (UPI), (world wide except the USA I believe), and is one of the world's three "wire agencies". Wire agency means all the work produced is supplied to national and foreign newspapers, being transmitted or "wired" over telephone lines around the world. All foreign images in newspapers are most often wire agency images.

Reuters has very high standards and expectations of its employees in terms of quality, reliability and accuracy. Within the picture service, there were no specialists; everyone shot everything. This would mean everything from Royalty, to disasters as covered later.

The second side of Reuter work was running the Picture desk, dealing with foreign requests via telex, arranging shoots and passes, processing and printing work, then captioning and transmitting the work abroad. The most important element drummed in to us was that deadlines are not broken or missed. Do not return without a picture, and that picture was expected to be better than the other wire agencies or a newspaper, competition was fierce. Being one of only six staff in London, this really was a jump into the deep end, but a fantastic education. With the volume of work every day, I learnt fast.

As mentioned previously, Reuters work was very diverse and required shooting anything that came up on the day. This included politics, where I photographed Presidents, Reagan, Gorbachev and Butto and the presidents of Turkey, Portugal, Germany and one ex-President, Carter. The Kings of Norway, Spain and King Hussein and one Ex-King, Constantine. Prime Minister Thatcher numerous times along with the Prime Ministers of Kuwait, Italy, Israel & Fiji. Heads of State conferences held in London, the Queen of England and the Royal Family over 50 times. Angolan peace talks, Tamil leaders, embassy events and State visits.

Events may range from features for foreign papers, weather features or the Muppets, to covering disasters like the Piper Alpha North Sea oil rig disaster and London's Kings Cross underground fire disaster. Funerals to Royal Weddings, (Prince Andrew to Sarah Ferguson). Brixton and Tottenham race riots and got injured, also demonstrations. Wapping newspaper riots, got injured again. Music events like the group Whams last concert, Michael Jackson in concert and Band-Aid. Fashion including London Fashion week twice to traditional British events such as the yearly Order of the Garter ceremony. Russian composers, Russian dissidents, Russian Ballet, Russian circus, Chinese Ballet, one Miss World competition, Archbishops, auctions, diamonds, Terry Waite, Oliver Tambo, Boesak and Benezire Bhutto in exile in London. Sport from Football, baseball, athletics, American Football, swimming, golf, boxing to Wimbledon Tennis. Also embassy assignments for Belgium and Portugal. For Portugal assigned as the Portuguese Presidents personal photographer for a week during a state visit. Covered IRA London and Christmas bombing campaigns including Harrods and Oxford Street bombings.

Also, working shifts after hours for all other national papers in Fleet Street, either shooting or running the picture desks. Papers include The Times of London, The Sunday Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Sunday Telegraph, The Independent, The Daily Mail, The Daily Express, The Guardian and The Independent. Every Fleet Street newspaper. Also work for Associated Press and Agence France Presse, AFP. The other two, "wire agencies". Assignments for many foreign papers include The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Los Angeles Post.

1987 - 1988      Used Fleet Street experience to work for nine months in Asia, Philippines, to broaden and further my experience, shooting color photo-essays for Gamma Picture Agency in Paris. The Philippines was chosen as it was just after the revolution and provided a vast array of subject matter, being my first time to visit Asia.

For nine months I was my own boss. It allowed me to work as a total journalist and test my self-reliance in a foreign culture. To push myself out side my comfort zone. Thinking up

stories, finding contacts, researching backgrounds, shooting images and supplying them to Paris with a 300-word text.

The main bulk of my time ended up covering MNLF Muslim rebels fight for independence of the southern islands. The idea was that as I did not have any deadlines to meet, I could invest more time and travel further in covering a story by 'going native', i.e. living exactly as the locals do. The process was to gain their trust which came only after investing time. I would then be accepted by them and offered opportunities that more time restrained photographers were not offered. The process worked.

As result I spent about four weeks at a time in various areas of remote jungle on Mindanao Island. Living, travelling and patrolling with the rebels. Documenting their daily life and family lives when they returned home. Rebel training camps and even an officer graduation ceremony at a remote jungle training camp. Rebel weapon supply shipments, a story cut short with me under 'house arrest' at gun point for 24 hours. They felt I had seen a little too much! Kidnap for ransom was a constant danger as a major industry in these areas to raise much needed funds. First experience of gun shot casualties and being close to shooting.

After covering the rebel side of the conflict, I would then cover the government side. With permits and disclaimers issued from the Department of Defence in Manila, I was allowed to use the same work technique with the military. Covering their lives in the conflict and living with them, going on patrols etc.

One story covered was the use of Helicopters to enforce government authority in remote areas. If reports came in to the military district commander that the rebels were 'pushing their luck' in an area, he would authorise a 'visit'. This visit would comprise of a flight of four fully armed and loaded, Huey Helicopters of Vietnam War fame, to fly un-announced to the area and restore the Governments authority. Led by the military district commander himself (with his German Shepard dog), these were treated as potential combat operations due to the break down of the situation. These were some of the tensest situations I found covering as you could feel the hostility and became very good at disembarking Helicopters quickly as it was very popular to take a pot shot at them as they landed.

Other government stories covered were how front line troops would live with their wives and kids, bringing their families with them to front line camp postings. One small camp the threat being so high that even I was issued with (but chose not to carry) my own assault rifle and slept with it under my bed at night. Their postings to these camps could last years not months or weeks. At one camp, the troops were so badly supplied they did not have enough ammunition to fight off an attack. Their ammunition was on a strict monthly quota system.

Other stories included Christian vigilantes and Tad Tad groups backed by the government in their fight against communist rebels. Tad Tad, meaning "Chop, Chop", as the individuals would patrol and fight with swords or "Bolos", wearing amulets around their necks containing oil and prayers for protection. Their goal was to chop off the heads of their opponents. Other vigilante groups were made up of only teenagers or child soldiers, they were considered braver and more reliable. The 'child soldier' patrols lived together like a family, headed up by an adult. Vigilante groups were cost effective for the government as they did not tie up troops from other areas and needed little funding. However, the freedom the vigilante groups were given gave rise to the weirdest of groups. Basically if you were anti communist, you were supported by the government and so the government turned a blind eye.

I loved the work and was really at home doing the work, but I knew it was a lonely existence to do for years as a living. Especially around forty years old, when you wanted a base, a home. Many Reuters and AP photographers in that situation told this drawback to me. Equally there was a realisation that while enjoyable to do, there were no longer the magazines to print such work having become a very celebrity orientated world. I felt that if I could not make a difference by shooting this type of work and taking the risks involved, my heart would not be in it to sustain me for years. The Philippine work was good enough though to be offered an immediate staff job with the American Black Star Agency based in Hong Kong, but I turned it down. I have no regrets.

- 1988 - 1989 Return to Reuters in London, begin looking at commercial work in my desire to produce images of higher technical quality, artificial (studio) lighting etc, which shooting news, I had no experience of using. Work for electronics companies, banks etc, Public Relations and advertising agencies, Ogilby & Mather and Vallin Pollin. Apply to emigrate to Australia, as London seemed tame after a year in Asia, and Australia is nearer for returning to Asia, and simply a good change; somewhere new.
- An important note, I wanted to change from Reuters not because I disliked the work, I loved it, but realized I could not see myself happy in the future being a company employee and thus turned down a full staff position. Commercial work would re-new my love of learning more. I felt I was too young to limit my area of work and experience. Commercial work allowed self-employment - more my character and the funds to shoot my own work in Asia or elsewhere. I had the news training, experience and knowledge; it would not be wasted.
- 1989 - 1990 On arrival in Australia (Sydney) and first time ever in the country, worked for The Sydney Morning Herald for few weeks and Reuters, then for Australian newspaper full time for a year. Part of the job was being the papers Picture Editor at weekends.
- 1990 - 1993 Joined a commercial studio and built up work as commercial and advertising photographer.
- 1990 Shoot World Rowing Championships in Tasmania on my own for Agence France Presse, the wire service. Setting up communications, shooting, editing, captioning and transmitting on my own from on site.
- 1990 Shoot Phillip Island Motor Cycle Grand Prix for AFP.
- 1991 Shoot World Swimming Championships in Perth for AFP.
- 1993 - 1998 Set up commercial studio, Graphica Photography, in heart of Sydney, (with another photographer), shooting annual reports, advertising, etc, for companies like Zurich Insurance, Telstra, ICI Chemicals, Nortel Communications, James Hardie and with Graphic Designers. Shoot about six to ten annual reports a year amongst other day to day work. Shoot architecture and begin research into digital imaging.
- 1994 Spent two weeks in Hanoi, Vietnam, testing viability of shooting 5x4 inch camera overseas, on "A Portrait of Hanoi", in black and white.
- 1995 Spent three weeks in New Zealand, shooting landscapes, again 5x4-inch B&W.
- 1996 - 1997 Spent a few weeks in United Kingdom shooting landscapes in Black & White. On return, heavy research into traditional printing and darkroom unsharp masking techniques. Teach my self Densitometry in order to improve print quality by plotting and graphing film and print tonal curves. Start making my own Pyrogallol film developer from raw materials to increase negative quality. Continue digital imaging research.
- 1997 - 1998 Continue commercial work and research black and white printing to achieve high printing standards consistently. Printed up US exhibition and contact other galleries. Shoot architecture projects on 5x4 format.
- 1998 - 1999 First one-man photographic exhibition in USA, Dallas, English Landscapes. Printed digitally. Continue commercial work, but decide to return to London. The reasons being a better photographic market, the industry died in Australia and I went almost bust. I was also homesick for the British countryside that would allow me to continue my personal landscape work.
- 1999 – 2000 February 2000, return to London and begin the search for clients. Begin regular work for Ove Arup engineers and complete two major architectural projects for BP on 5x4 format.
- 2000 – 2001 Begin regular work for Mediafine, shooting Ports and Airports. Complete four, one week shoots in Abu Dhabi, Stansted, Luton and Atlanta, USA. Also travel all over Britain from Lands End to the north of Scotland shooting landscapes.
- 2001 – 2002 Round the world shoot for BAA plc, travelling to Singapore, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, San Francisco, Dallas, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Washington.

Sell first images in Dallas and New York, USA of new panoramic landscape series. Exhibition in Dallas at the Afterimage Gallery. Create [www.BritishPanoramics.com](http://www.BritishPanoramics.com) to display the work.

Major architectural project completed for British Airports Authority.

Major architectural shoot for BP, shooting their new world wide headquarters in London. Work returned on CD after digital retouching by myself.

After long 9 month selection process in competition with many British photographers, win commission to shoot a book of English Landscapes for Canadian oil company Waterous and Co. The will book contain 45 B&W panoramic images of Britain, based on my personal work.

2002 – 2003 Shoot images and complete book project for Waterous & Co, Canada. The books are launched in December 2003 and attend the book signings in London, Houston, USA and Calgary, Canada.

Two landscape images in invitational group exhibition at Longview Museum of Art, Texas, USA. Come third out of forty-five entrants.

Sign Photographic contract with BP.

2003 – 2004 Gain contract and start work with BAA plc as one of two photographers to document the £4.2 billion construction of Heathrow Airports new Terminal 5. Terminal 5 is Europe's largest construction site the size of Hyde Park in London.

Continue landscape work and research into digital Pigment printing, the future direction of photography.

2004 – 2005 The Terminal 5 project grows to take up most of my time. This requires a total change over from film to digital medium for shooting.

My role is to shoot 75% of all T5 images and am solely responsible for photographing the construction of the main T5A Terminal Building, all airfields, aircraft stands, rail & tunnels, rail junction box, T5C satellite building and rail stations. I also cover in part the main car park, the satellite building T5B and the new Heathrow Airport Control Tower. The brief is NOT to shoot standard construction site 'progress shots', but annual report quality, striking photography.

The role requires that I project manage my work and time within budget. For 95% of the time, I am left to be my own boss. I have to find my own site contacts and keep in touch with them to create an on going personal construction diary and contacts list. This is so I understand and learn the techniques used to build the various areas of the project, so I can identify the key points in the processes to photograph. Also to identify the most visual times to photograph in the various areas of the projects. Therefore creating a balanced record of the project, but with a striking visual quality.

This has meant a steep learning curve in construction methods. I also have to arrange and attend site safety inductions and permits to allow access to all areas of the project as Health and Safety on site is the first priority.

2005 – 2006 Prepare for first one man show of British Panoramic landscape photographs in a major photographic gallery in Montreal, Canada. The show is planned for October / November this year.

Continue to market the landscape work and refine the quality even further.

Continue with the Terminal 5 project.