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on the required
subject,



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

You cannot turn back time to recapture a missed movement; and the occasions on which the press photographer can pose his subject are rare. Of course not all moments are captured, and there is an element of luck in the best news photography. Too often the great photographs are associated with war and with death. Abilities of News Photographer: The news photographer will be trained in the techniques of his craft.

He must know how the camera works, how the exposure metre works, how filters will exaggerate definition and produce cloud effects. Definition is particularly important in news photography since the process of reproducing pictures in halftone by screening, and then printing on crude newsprint, blurs the black and white. There is no room for subtle shading and lighting in news photography. Light effects, must be strong, features well outlined. The photographer must do his work as thoroughly as the reporter. He must have some idea what his picture is going to be; but as the reporter is always on the lookout for new angles and developments of a story so the photographer will have one eye on the unusual picture.

He will be briefed as fully as possible on the required subject, and perhaps told that the most useful picture shape would be ' portrait' or ' landscape' this may be dictated by certain predetermined elements on the page particularly for advertisements. It is up to the photographer to do what research he can. Like the reporter, photographer may sometimes check with cuttings or reference books before going out on an assignment. If he is to photograph someone who is not familiar to him, he may check with the picture library beforehand and look at previous pictures of the subject so

that he will not miss him. The news photographer does not simply point his camera at a scene and hope for the best.

He composes a picture, as an artist does. He will look for strong vertical and horizontal lines, for a balanced picture. To this end he will try to get to the assignment as early as possible and examine the setting. He then picks a vantage point. There is not often time to pose the subject (particularly in photographing hard news) so if the picture is of someone emerging from a doorway, the photographer will focus his camera in advance on some point on the step. If he allows himself some depth of field, the subject will be in focus from the doorway to the edge of the step.

All too often the setting changes. A policeman moves the photographers back a split second before the door opens and the subject emerges. Or even worse, the policeman stands immediately in front of the camera. Then the photographer must move, and fast.

He learns to manipulate the controls of his camera with little more than a glance. He must be able to play the camera as a pianist plays a keyboard, without looking at his hands. Most press photographers now use a single lens reflex camera which takes telephoto, wide-angle and standard lenses, considerably simplifies the controls and with fast film avoids the time-wasting tedium of the old plate cameras with magnesium flash. At present there is often competition with television cameramen, who may have lights that can radically affect the press pictures. If the TV people switch on their lights as subject emerges the press photographers must adjust their

cameras to the changed lighting. They may, of course, be using flash (the electronic flash attachments linked to the camera).

The best press pictures are seldom 'set up' but are the result of a photographer snatching the precise moment or action. A good series of photographs, for a photographic feature, should lead up to a climax and will illustrate how the man behind the camera has anticipated a developing theme, and built up its development. But this is where the elements of luck comes in, and this is why many newspapers print 'readers pictures' from time to time—the reader happens to have been at the right place at the right time to capture a pictorial incident. A vital skill for news photographers is caption writing. Most newspapers have a standard caption-label that is attached to each print. The photographers have to be sure that he has clearly identified each principal figure in his pictures with his full name.

He must also give a brief and factual description of the action and the setting, if possible adding any other relevant details. It is the editorial caption writer's job to put this information into suitable form for the paper, but to do his job properly he must be given basic facts. Many photographers belong to the Institute of Incorporated Photographers, the official body which maintains a Register of Incorporated Photographers—photographers working in all fields who have satisfied the exacting standard of membership.