BREAK THE RULES

I've recently been reviewing my old POV footage from my travels and my journey in practicing street photography. While going through my footage of the Chinese New Year, I remembered a moment when a lady in charge was yelling at me to get out of the way, to not be so close, preventing me from making a photograph of the dragon dance. At that moment, I just grinned and got even closer. This moment felt like a walk in the park for me, especially considering my experience on the front lines photographing conflicts between Israel and Palestine at one point.

How did I gain access to photographing these places throughout my journey?

By breaking the rules.

Take the Road Less Traveled

I took the road from Jerusalem to Jericho in 2017. Upon arrival, my friend and I encountered a checkpoint, greeted by flames and rising smoke at the border. There were cars backed up, a traffic jam, and nobody was permitted to enter Jericho. We hopped into a stranger's car, who then drove us to an area by the border, far away from anybody. Standing atop a hill, looking out towards the clashes occurring, we checked if the coast was clear. Slipping through the barbed wire fence, we hopped the border from Israel to Palestine and began running downhill, entering the nearby refugee camp as quickly as possible. We strapped on our reflective construction vests—our pretend photojournalist clothes—as we marched through the alleys. When we arrived at the front lines, we were in the heat of the action. I remember hiding behind a small dirt hill, ducking as we were being shot at, making photos as young men used slingshots and threw rocks at the Israeli soldiers. Eventually, I mustered up the courage to get closer and closer, finding myself at the front lines, hiding behind a concrete barrier. It was then that I made one of my greatest photographs of all time, capturing a masked man gazing towards me, with the fiery scene in the background.

How did I make this photograph?

While the composition, moment, color, layers, and story are strong, these elements have nothing to do with how I made the photograph. I made this photograph through courage, audacity, and being bold. I believe that anybody can make a photograph, but not everybody can become courageous. The best photographs are a reflection of your courage and your lust for battle, by positioning yourself on the front lines of life.

Be Bold

The best photographs result from being bold, by taking a risk. So, when I was in Chinatown photographing the New Year celebration, I knew I had to be bold, to simply not listen, to take a risk, and to break the rules. When I first started practicing street photography, around 17 or 18 years old in high school, I would run around Philadelphia with a disposable camera, photographing only with flash, not asking for permission. When I first started shooting, I was immediately inspired to be as audacious and courageous as possible with a camera because I knew that overcoming the fear of photographing strangers was the most critical hurdle to overcome in order to get better at street photography. I spent a lot of time photographing this way, embracing confrontation, photographing aggressively, and frankly being a nuisance on the streets. I'm glad I got that bug out of me early on because it taught me to let go, to be bold, reckless, and to break the rules of social norms.

Become a Creative Barbarian

When we photograph, we aren't just creating, we're conquering with each press of the shutter. By always carrying the camera with me, I am in a perpetual state of production and creativity, photographing endlessly throughout the day. I am always in a flow state, recognizing the world as my canvas, which keeps me in this Dionysian frenzy, conquering the day. I thrive in the chaos, the unknown, the unpredictable nature of the streets.

> *Treat the street as your arena, the battlefield, and conquer the world through photography.*

Harness the Power of Nutrition

Some simple thoughts on nutrition, health, diet, fitness, etc. Firstly—stop counting calories and weighing yourself.

- Person A: eats 2000 cal of Oreos
- Person B: eats 2000 cal of red meat

Which person is going to have better health?

Obviously person B, who is eating red meat. However, maybe this isn't so obvious, especially for previous generations, who have been taught that saturated fat is bad for you. We are now learning that these fats are very good for us and are necessary to store energy in our body. The most essential nutrients to consume are both fats and protein.

There is no such thing as essential carbohydrates, and you would not develop a deficiency disease from not consuming carbohydrates. So, you do not need to eat carbs at all, as your body will naturally produce sugar. Sugar is addictive, and something to avoid.

Increasing your intake of meat products, such as beef, lamb, and even eggs or butter, will increase your vitality, energy, and satiate you more than following a standard American diet, which warns you of cholesterol and eating red meat sparingly.

60% of adults' calories and 70% of children's calorie intake today are from ultra-processed foods, which have become a staple of the standard American diet and lead to metabolic disease.

Around the same time that we learned that saturated fats were "bad" for us, cigarette companies started to produce these ultra-processed foods from companies such as Kraft Foods, General Foods, and Nabisco. Many of these companies are responsible for producing breakfast foods that we were programmed to eat since we were kids, constantly being preached that you must eat three square meals a day, and that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. For breakfast, in the United States, many people consume ultra-processed

food. When this is the first meal of your day, you're essentially telling your body to be addicted, to be a consumer, to become dependent on eating more food. You will actually become hungry later in the day if you eat this way. So much of our food has become poison, similar to tobacco and cigarettes. Avoid the poison, and consume more natural, animal-based protein.

Stretch Your Legs

Every morning, find a nice patch of sunlight on the grass and practice some simple yoga to stretch your legs. The simplest stretch of all, by reaching for my feet, by touching my toes, I am stretching my legs and strengthening the most important part of my body. I believe our legs are the most critical, as they move us through the world. My goal in life is to basically be standing and walking all day. Why? Very simple. I am a photographer, and a photographer must be able to move throughout the entirety of the day in order to make photographs. Because of this, I focus on stretching my legs by touching my toes, reaching for my heels, stretching my calves, doing the pigeon pose, downward dog, and pistol squats. Also, by wearing my weighted vest in the morning and walking, I'm increasing the strength of my posture, my legs, and my feet, with barefoot shoes on.

Think about it, our legs and posture are critical to focus on. My favorite lift in the gym is simply picking up two heavy dumbbells, 80 pounds on both sides, and walking with them, with my chest open, shoulders back, and head upright. When I walk in the morning with my 40-pound weighted vest, this is what I focus on for one hour, as soon as I wake up—simply walking with intention, strengthening my core, and focusing on my posture and legs. I want to have the ability to walk with a strong gait throughout the entirety of the day, with vigor and vitality. By waking up, stretching my legs, and strengthening my posture, I am focusing on these very simple fitness goals.

Uncage Yourself

"Society tames the wolf into a dog. And man is the most domesticated animal of all." – Friedrich Nietzsche

We're currently living in a zoo utopia, where we prefer the air conditioning, the four corners of a room, cubicles, and the comfortable cushion of a chair. Let's go beyond these cages, and be a free, undomesticated wolf. Man has become domesticated like a dog, docile, and weak, eliminating our will to power. Anything that stems from weakness, that causes a decrease in vitality, is something that we must avoid at all costs.

What is the quickest way to decrease your vitality?

Sitting down. Anytime I spend on my butt, I feel my body start to shut down; I start to yawn, and become tired or weak. This is not a great feeling, and something I must avoid, and you should too. If you are in an office, we must be more critical about these spaces. These are the spaces that domesticate us, that tame us, making us weak. These spaces are atomizing us, like animals in a zoo. If you're in one of these positions, stand at your desk, and don't sit down. I work from home, I invested in a standing desk, and made a home gym, because I recognized how much this mode of working zapped away all of my physiological energy.

Why does this matter so much?

If we desire to become creative barbarians, to break the rules, to be bold, fueled with courage, we must increase our vitality and avoid weakness at all costs. **He who has the most strength in his legs shall conquer the streets.**