The Sword of Focus

If there's one truth I discovered after a decade of practicing street photography, it is that you have to be 100% focused on photography in order to become the best you can be at it. I can only really speak for myself because this is my reality. I spent the past 10 years 100% focused, photographing every single day, hardly ever missing a day off from shooting. I've always had laser focus and discipline with my practice, like an athlete. Heightened focus keeps my sword sharp!

Focus Sharpens My View of the World

As a photographer, what we include in the frame is just as important as what we **exclude** from the frame. I believe that through focusing on the details that you're interested in, simply photographing more, making pictures rapidly every day with laser-sharp focus, ultimately sharpens your view of the world. I believe that through photography, we can enhance the way that we view the world generally— not just in a visual way, but in a deeper, emotional, or even spiritual way.

Strike with Precision

I wield my camera as a sword, strike through the heart of chaos, and reflect the soul of the street in the photos I make. It's important to stay laser-focused when you're on the street, recognizing the patterns in both nature and human behavior. Whether it's the gestures as people move or the way the light falls on certain surfaces at a particular time of day, you must pay attention and strike with precision with your camera. Observe the world with clairvoyance.

Pay Attention

When you're on the street, you should be looking 10 steps ahead of you. When I'm walking at a very slow pace, I can scan my surroundings and have a clear understanding of what's coming around each corner. This, to me, is what is required as a street photographer: your presence and your attention. All of the compositional elements that you can throw together in a frame, your timing, and how you make pictures technically will come second nature over time. What you really need to hone in on, however, is your ability to perceive with your intuition and respond quickly by paying attention.

Fuck Expectations

What are you paying attention to?

Maybe our attention is the ultimate currency in the universe. How you "spend" your time is the real currency, not the numbers and zeros in your bank account or how many followers and likes you get on social media.

I say, fuck the expectations. Who cares what people think about you, your photography, and your life decisions? You know what's best for you, so do you. If you want to photograph a particular way, a certain subject, or switch things up, do it because you know it's the right decision for you. Don't worry about the expectations or outcome.

Energy Vampires

Some people just love to complain, don't they?

You ever start your day, and the first interaction you have is someone complaining, whether it's about the weather, the poor sleep they got last night, or something that's bothering them in their social life? Some people are energy vampires, but I don't think that they consciously know that they are. I think misery is something that dwells within people, and it's something that just seeps out naturally.

My unorthodox approach to dealing with people who complain is to just let them complain to me. I almost find it amusing in a sick way, where it actually fuels me as I recognize how trivial these matters are. We are currently standing on a gigantic rock, orbiting around a ball of fire, a small speck in the grand scheme of things when you consider the vacuum of space and the billions of galaxies in the universe. So whenever I hear somebody complaining to me, I simply absorb it and transmute the energy, zooming out from my ego, looking down upon the interaction from a third perspective point of view—amused. Transmuting the energy to fuel me, kind of like I'm going Super Saiyan. Recognizing how trivial everything is empowers me.

Only Speak When Spoken To

As much as I like to yap and make YouTube videos, I'm basically silent for the entirety of my days. I generally only speak when I'm spoken to. I'd rather spend the day in silence, deep in thought, or simply meditating upon whatever I'm doing physically. I don't really like chatter, if I'm being honest, especially if it's not meaningful. I'd rather speak when I'm spoken to and keep my mouth shut. I'd rather just speak to my GoPro.

Break the Matrix

The system is broken. Is there a glitch in the system? Did you ever play that game *Skyrim*?

I remember in *Skyrim*, when the game first came out, I could not get myself to stop playing all evening. I was addicted. It's probably one of the best video games of all time. When I found out about the best armor in the game—dragon armor—I wanted to get it so badly. I actually think I remember playing the game for like 24 hours straight and wound up getting this armor in the fastest way humanly possible. In the game, you have a variety of skills that you need to level up to level 99 in order to invest within the gameplay. I find that this idea of leveling up your different skills is a metaphor for real life.

Anyways, when you enter Whiterun, one of the first towns in the game, I remember finding an exploit, or a glitch, that allowed me to increase my smithing skill rapidly, which was required to get the best armor in the game. I would make daggers using simple materials like iron, bring them to the blacksmith, craft daggers, and then sell them back to him or a shop for a profit. Because the materials I was gathering basically required no effort on my end, I could sit there all day making these daggers and increasing my smithing skill in the fastest way possible.

I remember finding a glitch where I could climb on the wall of Whiterun, jumping under the matrix of the map—you know, that grid pattern that is sometimes left behind from game development—and make my way underneath certain shops, where I could steal from the chests of merchants while their houses were locked. I was hidden underneath the map, looting everything they had. I spent a good couple of hours just stealing all the items from all the shops and selling all of their items back to them the next day. This exploit was insane and increased my gold faster than any other glitch I found in the game.

I feel like Bitcoin is this glitch in the system, and it's honestly getting amusing at this point. Fiat currency feels like those shitty iron daggers that I would make with the blacksmith. It's as if I was taking fiat currency from the chests of those shop owners—like they are the central bank—and then putting it into your own armory, your own vault, your own personal bank, that gets you the best armor in the game at the fastest rate possible. There's obviously some risk involved when it comes to glitching out of the map and going under the matrix pattern, as you can fall to your death very easily, but that risk involved—the danger—is what gets you the dragon armor.

Bitcoin as a Response to a Broken System

So SEPTA, Philadelphia public transportation workers, just recently threatened to go on strike and demanded to have their wages increased. Their demands were met, wages have been increased, but now bus fare is also more expensive. The fare went from $2 to $2.50. This may seem like a small amount, but every dollar adds up. To me, this is a telltale sign that the system is broken. Wages should never have to be increased; bus fare should not be touched or tampered with. It's just another telltale sign and reminder on the local level that the economic health of the United

States is weakening every single day. This is why I love Bitcoin—because it's a response to this broken system. If I want to store my money in a place that will appreciate in value over time, it seems that there is literally only one option. If I store my money in fiat terms, the value of these dollars is simply going to depreciate year after year.

What is so frustrating about the economy to me is that it is merely a means to an end. The system is so broken that you see a lack of procreation and families formed, as individuals hardly make enough to pay for their own rent, food, etc. The point of life isn't to get rich or see lots of zeros appear; it's to form communities, families, to produce, and create—to procreate. This is obviously happening at scale, and I think it is the root of all problems right now in the world in general. All of the world's problems are directly tied to money. If you solve the money problem, I feel like you can solve 99% of the problems in the world. With the current state of the economy, it's like we are just a bunch of pigs with a carrot on a stick dangling in front of us that we will never reach. An endless hamster wheel to nowhere until we fall into the grave.

It's time to sharpen our swords with laser focus. Let's go from iron daggers to dragon armor. Let's break this fucking matrix and reach level 99 on all fronts. I'm not just increasing my photography skill anymore; I'm increasing my gold, my strength, defense, intelligence, creativity, and going over 9000 on every level in 2025.