

Breaking Down My Black and White Street Photography

What's poppin', people? It's Dante.

Today we're diving into some **black and white street photography breakdowns**, looking at photographs I've been making over the past two and a half years using the **Ricoh GR III** and **high contrast black and white**. These are all **straight-out-of-camera JPEGs**—no post-processing, just pure seeing.

I'm really having fun with this process and I'm eager to share some of the results with you.

1. Boy in Logan Square

This was the *first photograph* I made during the **2022 Thanksgiving Day Parade** with my current setup.

At parades, I like to photograph the **peripherals**—what's happening *around* the action rather than the action itself.

This scene unfolded with children playing on this beautiful sculpture, and I felt the *potential* immediately:

- The **playful energy**
- The **clean background**
- The **sculptural stage** to work with

Key Element: *Gesture.*

"Look for gestures when you're on the streets. If hands are moving, I'm intrigued, and I'm going to make a photograph."

In this frame, the boy gazes at his hand while the Native American sculpture extends his arms outward.

A spiral of gestures naturally forms across the frame — something you could never plan, but your *intuition* catches it.

2. Blanket on JFK Boulevard

Walking near **Love Park** in Philly, I noticed a man with a blanket over his back.

At first, the moment seemed *unremarkable*... but I trusted my instinct and photographed anyway.

As he crossed the street, I noticed the **relationship** between:

- The **blanket's ghost-like shape**
- The **lines of the crosswalk**

Key Technique:

I raised the camera a little above eye level with the LCD, allowing the **separation** between subject and background.

"The art of street photography composition comes down to eliminating distractions."

By positioning myself and angling the Ricoh just right, I kept the background clean and let the **abstract shape** shine.

3. Woman in Queens

While walking around Queens, NYC, I made this photograph very quickly using what I call the:

T-Rex Technique – (check out my YouTube for the full breakdown)

Basically, it's stealth shooting from the hip, using the corner of your eye to frame via the LCD.

- The woman gestures left in the foreground
- Two girls on either side — one entering, one outside smoking
- Gritty textures, garage doors, raw environment

Key Point: *Speed and Courage.*

"Hesitation leads to stagnation. If you feel fear, that's a good sign. Move forward with courage."

When you feel fear on the street, it's actually your signal: **make the picture.**

4. Nuns in Rome

Walking around **The Vatican** during golden hour, I noticed two nuns crossing the street.

The textures of their clothing, the sublime light—it was beautiful. But it was missing something...

So I waited. Patiently.

Suddenly, a passerby reached back to scratch her shoulder — *gesture.*

I quickly switched from snap focus to single-point autofocus using the **FN button** on my Ricoh GR IIIx and nailed the shot.

Key Ingredients for this frame:

- **Subject** (nuns)
- **Light** (golden hour)
- **Gesture** (the hand reaching back)

"Sometimes you're just waiting for that third element to elevate the mundane into something transcendent."

Also, *highlight-weighted metering* is crucial — exposing for highlights and crushing shadows to create that **deep chiaroscuro**.

5. Pigeons at City Hall

This shot was *not* luck.

I spent *weeks* returning to the same spot at City Hall, Philadelphia, studying:

- The **patterns of pigeons**
- The **light beams at sunrise**
- The **interactions between the sculptures and birds**

"Force your luck through repetition, discipline, and vision."

My goal was to capture a pigeon interacting with the **William Penn sculpture**—a spontaneous but *predictable* moment if you observe long enough.

Finally, through *patience* and *consistent study of the location*, I caught the bird aligned perfectly with William Penn against a beautiful flare of sunrise light.

Lesson:

You *make* your luck on the streets through:

- **Consistency**
 - **Discipline**
 - **Studying light and behavior patterns**
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✨ **Final Thoughts**

Hopefully, you learned something today about black and white street photography, gesture, light, intuition, and *flow*.

If you'd like to see more, check out:

-  [My Blog](#)
-  [Street Photography Lectures Playlist on YouTube](#)

"Follow the light, trust your intuition, and always say yes to the street."

See you in the next one.

Peace.
