

## The Ultimate Street Photography Secret

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

In this video, we're talking about the ultimate street photography secret that's allowed me to create more impactful photographs throughout my journey.

And the secret is very simple.

### **Don't take yourself too seriously.**

This idea of *being the photographer*—putting the camera on your neck, wiping your lens, putting on your hat, and heading out to tell some deep visual stories—is actually one of the biggest problems photographers face. That seriousness can make or break the frames you make.

If you're out there thinking everything you're doing has some deep meaning, if you're rigid with your approach and your shooting style, that's going to inhibit your ability to make photographs.

## The Spirit of Play

The spirit of play improves your ability to engage with humanity—which is ultimately what photography is all about.

Photography isn't about gear.

It's not about composition, lighting, or timing.

Those things come naturally. They live in your intuition. Let's be real—**photography is easy**. The hard part is putting yourself on the front lines of life.

I treat photography like being a kid on the playground. Every day I wake up, grab my camera, and just play. I'm a big kid exploring, looking at everything with curiosity and interest.

*The less serious you are, the better your photos become.*

## **Where It All Started: Baltimore**

My journey began in Baltimore, photographing in Sandtown-Winchester—an area filled with heavy drug crime, violence, and chaos.

These were neighborhoods where it was unlikely I'd find anything to photograph. Places where photographers weren't exactly welcome. I had to learn my own game.

And the game was **play**.

I made a photograph of kids playing on the sidewalk while their mother waited to bathe them. After asking permission and making the images, I handed the camera to the kids—and they started taking pictures of me.

That's me at 18 or 19 years old. A decade ago. I didn't take myself seriously.

## **Human First, Photographer Second**

Street photographers get trapped by the idea of the *candid frame*—thinking they're only allowed to photograph without interacting.

I have no rules.

In Baltimore, I learned quickly that I had to engage with humanity. I had to be human first and photographer second. Once that access was there, the candid frames arose naturally.

## **Playing Across the World**

I've played all over the world.

In Jericho, on the front lines of conflict, I made photographs by building trust—by being playful, open, and curious. Once people realized I wasn't a threat, I came home with far more impactful images.

You don't need fixers.

You don't need lists.

You don't need to force anything.

You show up. You play.

### **Access Through Play**

In East Jerusalem, in the Shuafat refugee camp, I made photographs near the wall separating Israel and Palestine. I was arm wrestling teenagers, slapboxing, laughing, being human.

Through that play, I got access.

In another moment, I photographed a man with a watermelon on his head—not because I forced it, but because my playful energy invited it.

***He almost gave me the photograph.***

### **Presence Over Performance**

You go through metal detectors. Soldiers with machine guns. Barbed wire. A massive wall. It's intimidating.

And then you arrive at the first scene—and play opens everything.

In Africa. In Mumbai. Everywhere I've photographed, play has been my first tool.

In Bandra, Mumbai, I was gifted tea simply because of my openness and body language. I sat down. I became part of the scene. I wasn't asking for permission in some rigid way—I was present.

### **Body Language Is Everything**

Your body language matters more than your words.

Your posture.

Your smile.

Your openness.

Confidence and courage let you do anything on the street.

I dance. I explore. I'm not afraid to be human.

### **Living First, Photographing Second**

In Napoli, I wasn't hunting for photographs. I was swimming in the sea, being fed fish off the rocks, reconnecting with my roots.

I was living.

In Jericho's Wadi Qelt range, I danced, drank tea, explored mountains, sang with people. And *after* all of that, the photographs came.

Composition is secondary.

Moments are secondary.

Being present is primary.

## The Real Secret

The way you engage with humanity reflects your soul in the photographs you make.

If you're open, curious, courageous—your photos will show it.

If you're shy, bashful, closed off—it will show too.

So go play.

Snapshot your way through life. Stop taking photography—and life—so seriously.

***Photography has nothing to do with photography.***

***It has everything to do with how you engage with humanity.***

Thank you for watching. I'll see you in the next one.

Peace.