

I Almost Quit Photography... Then I Changed Everything

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

I'm currently walking around Old City Philadelphia, and I've been thinking about a time when I wanted to quit photography.

So let me tell you a quick story.

When Photography Became Boring

In November of 2022, I was photographing in Hanoi, Vietnam.

And every day, I'd put the camera around my neck, go into these bustling markets, and try to make my next best photo.

But something strange started happening.

The process became **tedious, repetitive... and honestly, boring.**

I'd show up.

Find a strong composition.

Wait for something interesting.

Capture the chaos.

Repeat.

And even though I *could* make strong images... it just felt empty.

"If your goal is just to make great photos, eventually you will stagnate."

That realization hit hard.

The Problem With Chasing “Great Photos”

If you’re going out into the streets trying to make something visually impressive, something technically strong...

It’s only a matter of time before you start asking:

Why am I doing this?

I had traveled everywhere chasing images:

- Front lines of conflict
- Baptisms and funerals
- Villages
- The pipelines of Mumbai

And still...

That question came back: **why?**

If your goal is just output — yeah, you can make great photos.

But if your goal is:

- More curiosity
- More joy
- A sustainable creative life

Then you might need to rethink everything.

The Pivot

When I got back from that trip, I made a decision.

I sold my Fujifilm gear.

And I picked up the Ricoh GR again — the same camera that got me into street photography back in 2015.

I grabbed my old GR II from the closet.

Went to the skate park.

Started snapshotting.

Experimenting.

Trying something completely different.

That moment changed everything.

Removing the Identity of “Photographer”

Since November 2022... now it's April 2026.

Three and a half years deep.

And I've never photographed this much in my life.

Why?

Because I stopped being a “photographer.”

I removed:

- The camera decisions
- The lens choices
- Color vs black and white debates
- Composition overthinking
- Judging whether a photo is “good” or “bad”

And instead...

I just **surrendered to the act of photography.**

The Constraint That Set Me Free

I gave myself an extreme creative constraint:

- Ricoh GR
- JPEG only
- High contrast black and white
- No editing
- No post-processing

Everything is baked in.

From shutter click → to culling → to printing.

Complete.

“All I’m left with now is my pure instinct.”

No sliders.

No gray areas.

No hesitation.

Just:

- My eyes
- My legs
- My instinct

Frictionless Photography

Once you remove friction...

Photography becomes effortless.

And when it becomes effortless...

You enter **flow**.

Now I'm photographing:

- Details
- Buildings
- People
- Nature
- Landscapes

Not just chasing "strong compositions."

Not chasing "impact."

Just exploring.

Breaking Out of the Box

Before, I was stuck.

I had the ability to make strong images — but that became a trap.

I was pigeonholed into one way of seeing.

And that way of seeing became predictable.

Repetitive.

Dead.

So I pivoted.

And built an entirely new practice.

A New Way Forward

Now, I live by one idea:

“My next photograph is my best photograph.”

I’m not thinking about yesterday.

I’m not chasing tomorrow.

I just don’t want to stop.

Ever.

The System

This whole shift became a system.

A way of working.

A rhythm.

A visual diary.

And I built a program around it.

Because if you adopt this constraint for 30 days:

I guarantee you will make something.

Something that is:

- Authentically yours
- Personal
- Honest

And you'll turn it into a book.

Not just photos.

A body of work.

Final Thought

Photography isn't about making great images.

It's about building a life where you **never stop photographing**.

And the moment it becomes frictionless...

It becomes something you can actually sustain.

That's my story.

That's how I almost quit.

And why I never will again.

Thanks for watching.

Peace.