

What Makes A Good Photo?

Really. Is it the camera? The lens? People tell me all the time... “boy you must have a good camera!” I know they mean well, and I do have one. But is that all it takes?

One Dozen Words

While there have been entire books written on this subject, and some of us had to sit through semesters of this stuff, these dozen words come close to categorizing “what is a good photo.”

•INTIMACY

- Robert Capra once said “if your pictures are not good enough, you are not close enough” he died not long after saying this, stepping on a landmine in VietNam. Finally, close enough.





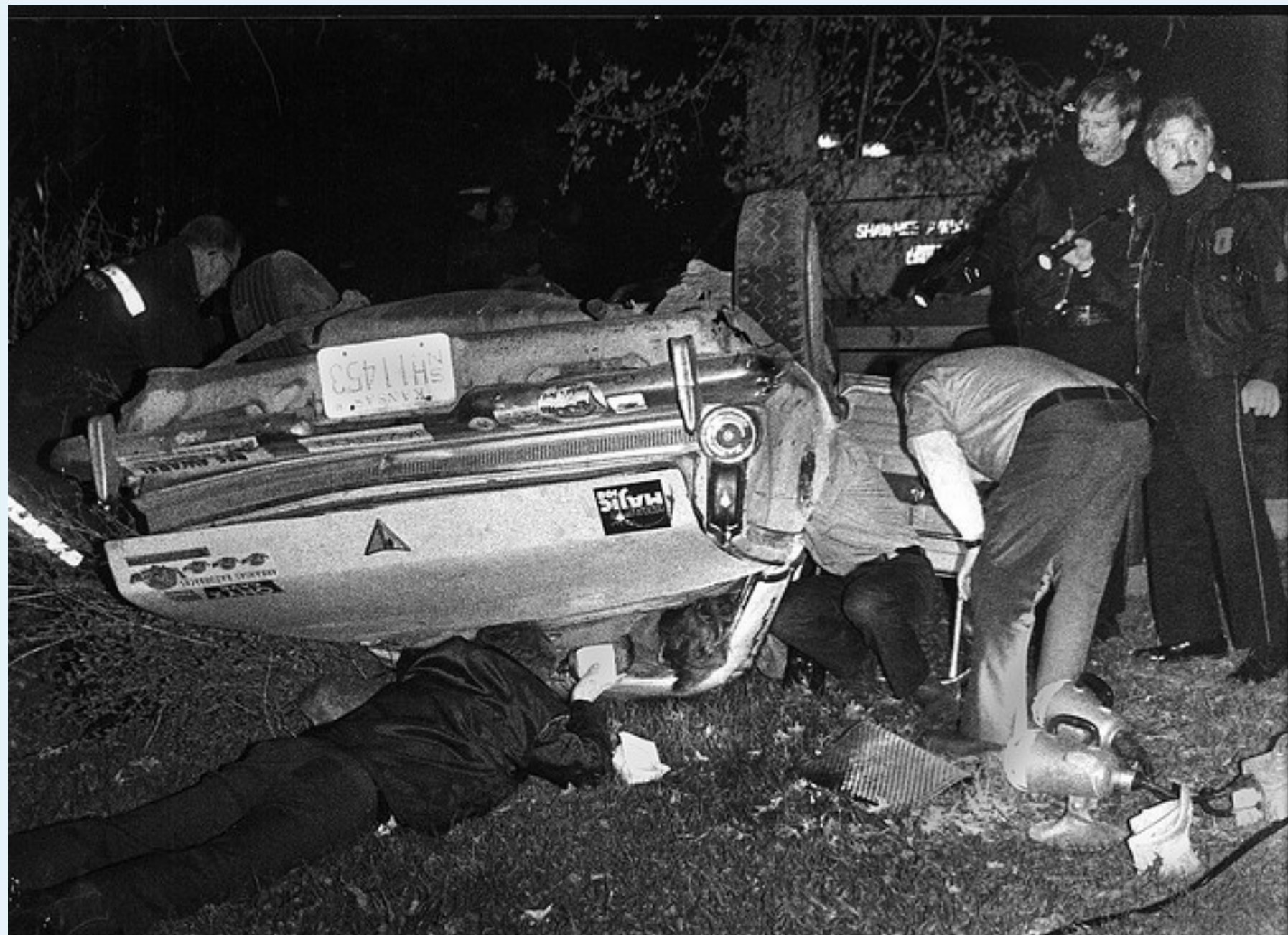


Human Interest

- If the subject interests you, as a human observer, it has human interest. But is it interesting to humans at large?







CAMERA ANGLE

As a photographer, in any medium, you have the responsibility to show the viewer something they cannot otherwise see for themselves.

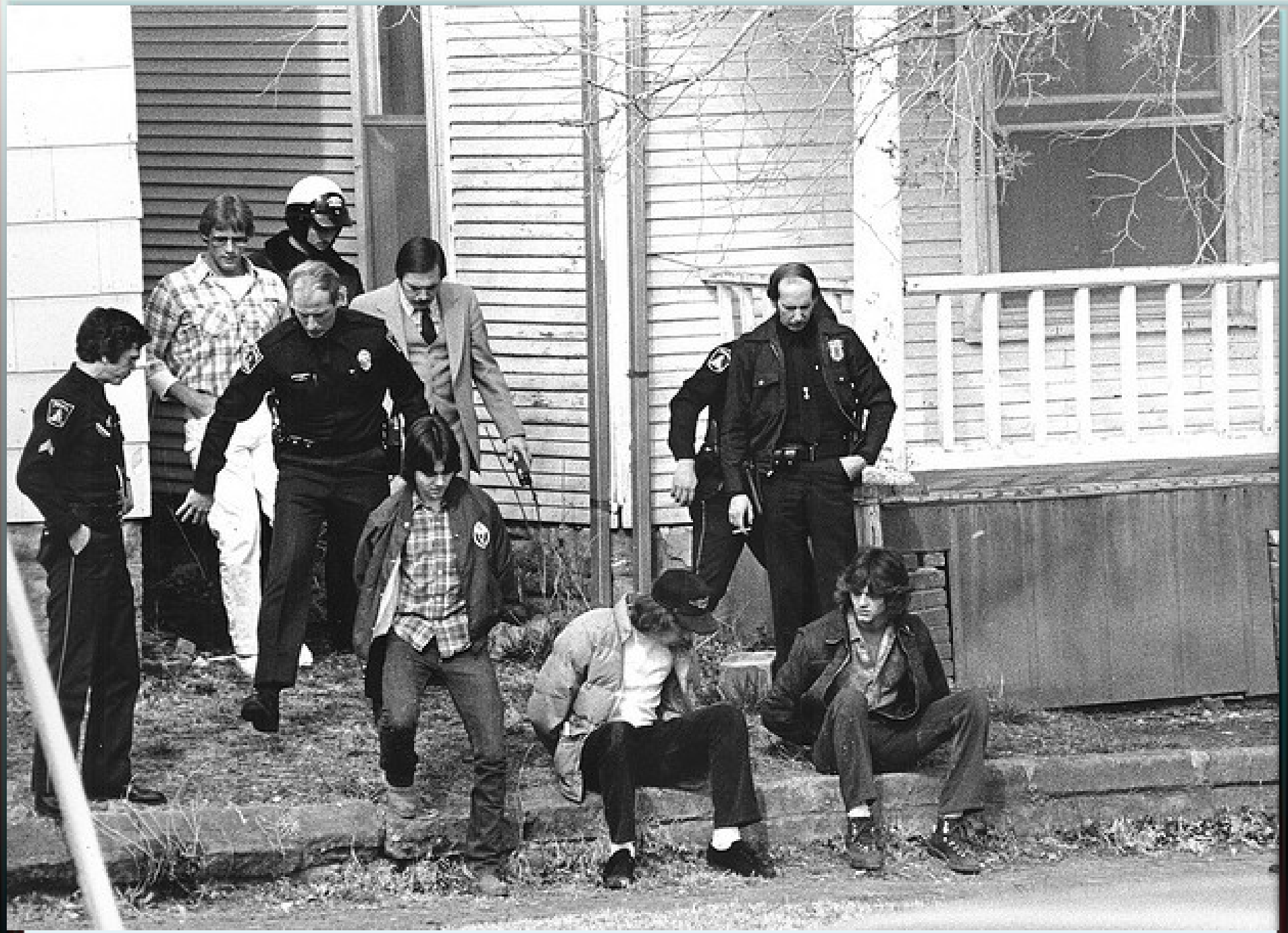






DRAMA

Every photo should tell a story. If it does not, don't use it, find another one. If the story flows, run with it.







CONTRAST

Speaking photographically, contrast can mean a lot of things. Tones, color, subject matter, location of dissimilar objects, curves, film speed, paper speed, ink flow. Here I mean subject matter.







INNOVATION

How can you get a camera in a place to show a common thing in a different way. Again, remember if you are not showing people new things, you are not doing your job.







REALISM

Does your photo show how people really live?
Or are they posing? Fake? Arranged?

St. Vincent
The Wall of Hope and Remembrance







SPONTANEITY

This one is hard. To do justice to this, you have to have a camera in your hand all the time. Grab shots, lucky shots, whatever you want to call them. Sometimes you get them.







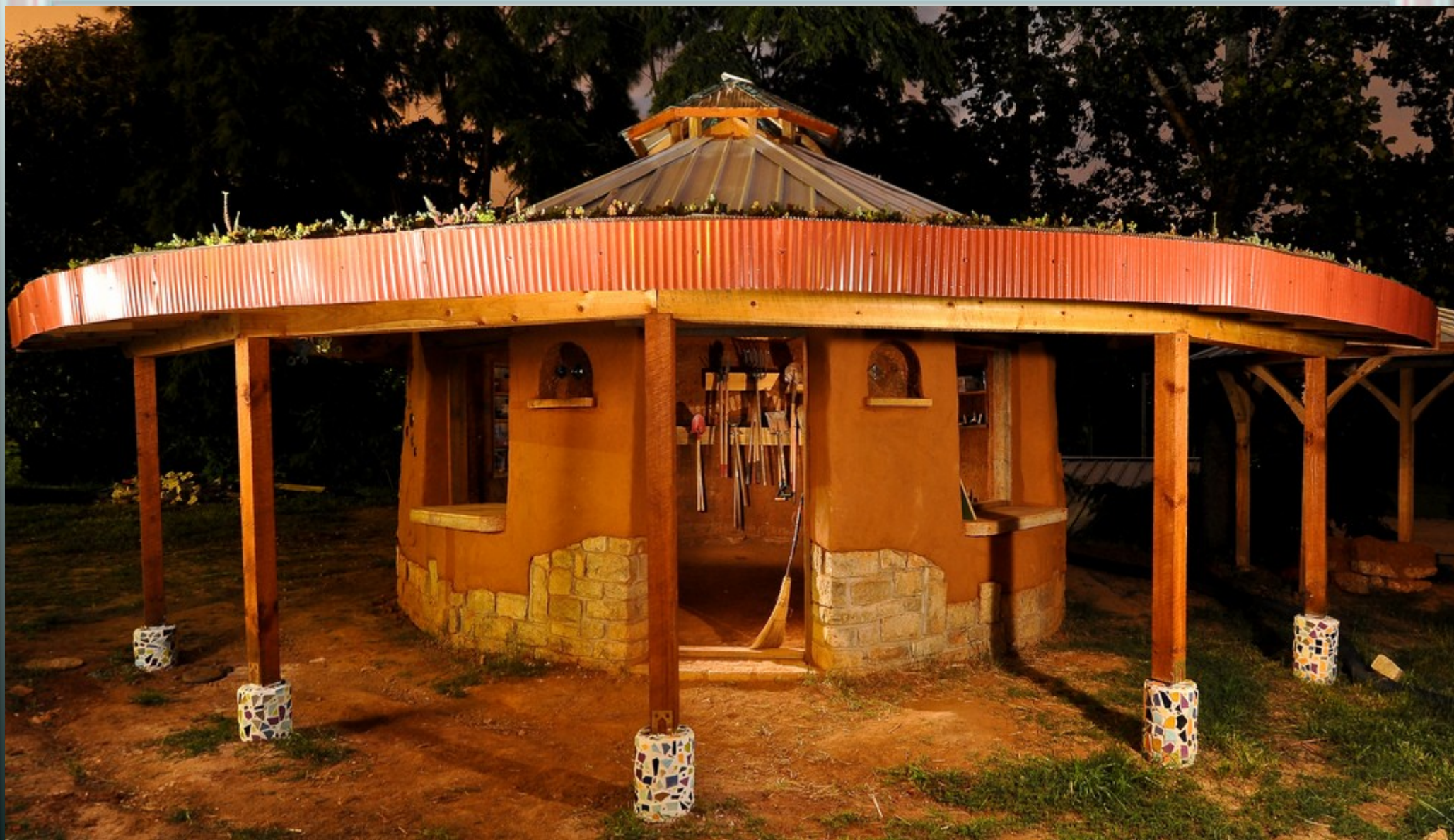
LUMINOSITY

Obviously, we have to have light to have photographs. You choose to have good light or poor light, and you can choose light selectively. This is the barest brief on light. Light is the essence of what we do.









MOOD

What does the photo tell you? Does it convey an overall mood to help tell its story?







LIGHT AND SHADOW

Does the image have a balance of light and shadow? Should it? Can you juggle the levels and create a different image?







CREATIVITY

Along the lines of camera angle, how can you use what you have to make unique pictures?

Don't worry, he is almost done talking!





