For God, our family & friends always, esp. my mom Rose, my son MAM, & my siblings (esp. Tom & Joy Marcou), providers-sponsors, counselors, subjects, readers, archivists, medics, publishers, sellers. Included in SA97 are (select-from) LaX pics: Mary Larson at table, co-owner Eco-Friendly Boutique; folk-fester Bob; Katie, farmer’s market vendor in neat hat & boots; Bill Miller, fin vendor in Eagle cap; photographer Pete Solberg approaching me at fin w/lady & little ones nearby; Tina, mom of twins & a co-op mgr on curb at break; & youth bike race.

"Action is character."--F. Scott Fitzgerald.

"To write it, it took three months; to conceive it three minutes; to collect the data in it all my life."--F. Scott Fitzgerald.

"If done well, I believe the photographic representation of the human subject has the potential to be more revealing than what is revealed by the eye alone, since the human glance is usually a momentary one."--Dawoud Bey, Documentary Photographer.

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SA97 is DvJM’s 182nd book & w/countless other writings & photos by him too, David Joseph Marcou is WI’s most prolific author.

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Photographer-Author Preface: Inquisitiveness, Naturalness, and Self-Control in Photography.--By DvJM.

The great American documentary photographer Dorothea Lange & the revered British photojournalist Bert Hardy set the standard for naturalness in photos; most of their photos, whether partly or fully posed or generally un-posed, suggest a natural relationship between photographer & photo-subjects, & a naturalness within both photographers & photo-subjects, too.

A reference of mine once wrote in a letter of recommendation for me at start of three consecutive sentences, “He is curious...” -- which was later explained to me by a keen journalist-teacher-referee as a recommendation not praising any awkward strangeness there might be in me, but rather my inquisitiveness, a quality treasured in journalists and photojournalists.

In street photography especially, a bit of inquisitiveness is called for, otherwise the everyday qualities of life that matter in photo-subjects -- intent of action, focus on results, abilities, weaknesses, & comings and goings that add up to qualities of character and action generally – will not be readily surmised by the photographer and/or his/her viewers.

Recently, I took a photo of two people chatting in a building’s inner entryway; I did so as discretely as I could. One of the people chatting was a former teacher of mine. I let him know a couple days’ later I hoped to publish my best photo from that situation in my Spirit of America book-series. Soon after, he let me know that the lady in the photo was the wife of a fellow choir member of his, who happened to be an attorney. The attorney told my former teacher he wanted no photos of his family published anywhere. My teacher said he personally, a photographer himself, knew I photographed him & the attorney’s wife at a public event, but that the attorney still requested a right of privacy for his wife in this case. I’m not publishing that photo without their consent.

The boundary between public and private spaces is generally thought to be somewhat vague. Say, 6-12 feet or less is a reasonable amount of space for a photographer to stay clear of a non-acquaintance subject physically on the street. I wouldn’t advise photographers, though, to stalk people except briefly for street photos; and I wouldn’t advise photographers to take lots of photos of the same people on the street, unless they’re covering an incident for the news. What of long-lensed photographers, who can take intimate photos of people from hundreds of feet away? Well, I don’t take many long-distance photos; and I prize my mildly wide-angle photos of people as we pass each other on the sidewalks & streets, if those people are behaving naturally and my own selection of discrete moments of shutter-snap are honest- & decent-enough.

My brother, an attorney and judge, once defined invasion of privacy in photography to occur when a photographer takes a photo from outside a private residence peering into that residence, without gaining permission for that photo from the property holder. It can be a metaphor for other situations too, but not necessarily. In any case,
if a photographer gains permission to take a posed photo of a human-subject and to use it for publication, reasonably good taste should aid the picture-taking and the publication of said photo.

The related issue that arises from candid and other photos that might involve personal spaces of photo-subjects is the use for publication of such photos. A vice president for Getty Images, the world’s largest picture library, whom I communicated with a quarter century, has allowed me to utilize GI photos in my publications as long as I don’t make a monetary profit on those publications. To me, making a profit on such publications would constitute a commercial use of those images. However, though I’ve authored and published more than 180 of my own books, I’ve never made a financial profit on my books; I’ve always lost personal monies on them. All my books have been self-published, as often as possible with aid from sponsors’ & sales’ monies. Sales, though, are very minimal on my books compared to most authors’.

Finally, a rule of thumb I use in photographing candidly especially, is to show events and people (whether famous or not famous) in everyday situations, so viewers gain a clearer idea of the characters of those events and people. And I never attempt to embarrass my photo-subjects, though some photographers feel the need to do that. If a bit of subject-embarrassment does show up in a photo by me occasionally, it’s generally inescapable, due to something relevant in the person or situation photographed. Better to be safe, though, and not demonstrate “criticism” of photo-subjects by the photographer any more than necessary. A good documentary art photographer or photojournalist knows when to ease up on his/her photo-taking and not feel they have to expose the fully damnable in a photo-subject any more than in their own family, meaning very, very seldom. It’s best for me to represent most people as fairly unique, somehow middle drama beings.--1st written by David Joseph Marcou on 6-30-18, & revised by DvJM in Spring 2019.

Int. BW Pics: 66 Pics (no comprehensive interior captions-credits list). All photos were taken by DvJM, except those credited to others, w/ the latter group incl. interior photo of Statue of Liberty from 2000 NYC by Jon Tarrant.
Chicago
New York City