

HARRY BENSON

Seeing all of Harry Benson's photographs in one place—his new book, the plainly titled *People* (Chronicle Books, \$35)—makes you realize just how consistently he has penetrated the public personas of the famous. That talent has been ascribed to a keen sense of timing, and timing is certainly part of the secret to Benson's success. He's able to capitalize on the telling gesture like no other photographer—the spontaneous and stylish kick of Nancy Reagan's leg, for example, when Benson asked the first lady to dance with her husband for his portrait. "I love it when things like that happen—things that are beyond my control," says the photographer. But such things happen so often in his pictures that it's clear they're somehow *within* his control. Something about Harry disarms his subjects. Something about his powerful, controlling personality makes his subjects relax enough to reveal themselves, instead of simply offering up the image their public expects.

—RUSSELL HART



HARRY BENSON/CHRONICLE BOOKS

Princess Caroline of Monaco. Monte Carlo, 1986





Boxer, Tyson, Naomí Campbell, and the King, Atlantic City, 1990



Louis Armstrong, Queens, New York, 1971