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AUSTRALIAN MOST ENTERTAINING LUXURY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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# BRIAN ach

It's a CUT-THROAT, ritualistic BUSINESS, with just SECONDS to GRAB the PERFECT SHOT in LESS than PERFECT conditions.

NEW YORK CELEBRITY PHOTOGRAPHER BRIAN ACH ALWAYS LOOKS FOR THE ART IN A SHOT FIRST, AND THAT'S WHAT PUTS HIM AT THE VERY TOP OF THE ELITE PACK THAT WORK THE WORLD'S RED CARPETS.

"Being a celebrity; it just intensifies what you already are. So if you are a nice guy, like George Clooney - he's just a nice celebrity. He's just more of what he was. And then people who are not very friendly; it just makes them more of that..." says Brian Ach, and this man knows the world of celebrities inside and out. He's on first-name terms with most of the people he photographs - he has to be; that's how he gets the job done.

When there's a major film premiere in New York, Ach is one of the elite photographers on the edge of the red carpet producing the images that will

- be published in magazines and newspapers around the globe
- the following morning. It's a cut-throat, ritualistic business,
- with just seconds to grab the perfect shot in less than perfect conditions. "It sounds easy, but

A PHOTOGRAPHER BRIAN ACH POSES FOR A PORTRAIT IN NEW YORK CITY © BRIAN ACH PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.

WORDS Rich Webb PHOTOGRAPHY Courtesy Brian Ach / Getty Images

> ROCK SUPERGROUP U2 POSES FOR A PORTRAIT IN FRONT OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL MOMENTS BEFORE WALKING ON STAGE FOR "WE ARE ONE - THE CONCERT FOR OBAMA" ON 18 JANUARY 2009 IN WASHINGTON, D.C. © 2009 BRIAN ACH/GETTY IMAGES



## In the entertainment WORLD, if it happens in NEW YORK, ACH is THERE.

when you are shooting with 60 other people and there's 10 publicists on the carpet and they are pulling you every different way, and they've got the lighting all wrong, it actually becomes kind of an art to get a good shot, never mind a great one."

Ach gets the great ones. From soccer giant David Beckham to iconic images of Tom Cruise; as the sole official photographer to this year's New York Spring Fashion Week; as one of the two official photographers to the Obama Inauguration Concert in January 2009; at rock and roll shows from The Police to Liz Phair; or celebrities on the town such as the first comeback shots of Axl Rose. In the entertainment world, if it happens in New York, Ach is there.

It takes a brilliant photographer to even just make the edge of the red carpet - yet you need something else to not only get there but to then produce the images that people remember. What sets Ach apart is the way he approaches his work. "A lot of entertainment photography needs a full-length shot of the girl and the headshot of the guy with eye contact - looking straight at your camera. That's basically what they want. You have to deliver that, but early on I decided that for me that's not enough, that I would have to shoot for myself at every event."

He's always on the lookout for "the better shot" - such as U2 in front of the Lincoln Memorial at the Obama Inauguration Concert. This, he says, needs quick thinking, impeccable technical knowledge, then patience and perseverance. Most importantly, it also needs an ability to get on with people. Ach gets to know the people he shoots. If he hadn't known Bono, the band would never have agreed to the picture. "When I started, I decided, I'm going to be the nice guy. I always ask for a picture, and if they say 'can you take it next time' or whatever, I'll go along with that - my goal was always to get them into my studio."





He's ALWAYS on the  
LOOKOUT for 'THE  
BETTER SHOT'



^ MUSICIAN JOHN LEGEND POSES IN THE COCKPIT OF THE 'GRAMMY PLANE' IN 2008. LEGEND DEPARTED JFK, PERFORMED AN IN-AIR CONCERT FOR FORTY LUCKY FANS, AND LANDED AT LAX AHEAD OF THE GRAMMY AWARDS © 2008 BRIAN ACH PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.



^ ACTRESS ZOE SALDANA POSES FOR A PORTRAIT DURING A PUBLICITY SHOOT ON 19 DECEMBER 2009 FOR THE OPENING DAY OF 'AVATAR' IN NEW YORK CITY © 2009 BRIAN ACH /GETTY IMAGES FOR AVON



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It's his friendly, light-hearted approach - "Hey, let me get one more shot for my Mom!" - that sees him giving camera lessons to James Gandolfini of *The Sopranos* fame, or sitting on a bed in a hotel room selecting shots with Demi Moore. It's also why when fellow New York celebrity photographer Paul Hawthorne became ill, Ach leapt at the opportunity to produce 'The Photographer Project' book to raise money for Hawthorne's medical bills.

So who in the celebrity world does it for him? "I have to say, Tom Cruise is the best to take pictures of because he's the consummate pro." He also gives a good rap to Drew Barrymore, George Clooney and Demi Moore. But Nicole Kidman, while perfectly friendly, is not the easiest to photograph apparently. "She always looks great but I think she's uncomfortable on the red carpet, and it's hard to get a really great shot of her because she doesn't focus - she finds it frazzling I think."

Ach loves what he does. "It's too hard to do this job if you don't love it. There are so many obstacles to getting that photo - it might only happen five or 10 times a year - such as the U2 shot - but when you get it, it will carry you for a couple of months. That's how it's always been with me. It's more about the picture - I want to be proud of it."

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□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Ach graduated as an actor and appeared in eight US television commercials before finding his calling in photography

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ He inherited the Canon AE1 that was always around his grandfather's neck, but didn't start using it until 18 years later, taking street shots in New York

□ □ □ □ □ □ Ach has been obsessed with cars since he was a kid in Beaver Creek, Ohio, so "combining cars and photography is just like Zen," he says. He loves travel too

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ Ach's pick of the best Hollywood stars to shoot is Penelope Cruz. "Of course she's attractive, but even when you think 'I didn't get a good shot,' you look at it and think, 'well, that's just great!'"