

Big Picture

SCOTT PELLEY'S PASSION FOR PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE GLOBAL STORIES BEHIND SOME OF HIS FAVORITE IMAGES • BY JILL JOHNSON

It is familiar and safe, yet authoritative, too. It releases words in a measured cadence, like notes from a bass clarinet. It is Scott Pelley's voice—the one America has heard for decades on *CBS Evening News* and *60 Minutes*. Now add the visual: the probing azure eyes to match the blue suit and tie, the distinguished gray hair, the guy-next-door approachability of a Texan turned East-Coaster. That's quite a package, and yet there's more.

Scott Pelley—Darien husband and dad, and esteemed journalist—has an eye. We know him best as a news anchor and managing editor, but he's also an artist with a love of photography that dates back to his teens. "I had an uncle who was a wedding and portrait photographer in Dallas, a notable one," says Pelley, who hails from Lubbock, Texas. "When I was thirteen, much to my surprise, he gave me a 35-mm SLR camera. It was the most elegant and expensive thing I'd seen. I fell hard for photography. This was back when we used chemicals to develop film. I got books on the subject and spent every waking moment taking and printing pictures. I even turned a closet into a darkroom."

Photography led Pelley to a journalism class in high school, where he became the photographer for the school newspaper and yearbook. At fifteen, he was hired as a copyboy at the *Lubbock Avalanche Journal*, working the 3 p.m. to midnight shift. "I lied about my age to get that job. I asked my mom to drop me

a couple of blocks from the paper, so no one could see I wasn't driving." His ambition was to go from copyboy to staff photographer, but fate—or the executive editor of the paper—intervened. "He came into the wire room one night totally unexpected, and asked me [brusquely], 'Do you want to be a reporter?' I replied, 'Sure, I guess.' He literally stood me up, walked me out of the wire room and sat me down at a typewriter, which I had no idea how to work." By the time Pelley was a senior, he had articles on the front page. He went on to major in journalism at Texas Tech University and steadily moved up the chain as a broadcast journalist at TV stations in Lubbock, then Fort Worth, then Dallas. In 1989, he landed at CBS in New York.

"I became avid about photography again when I joined CBS," says Pelley. "I was always, always shooting. On every assignment, I had a camera with me. CBS was sending me around the world; it was a wonderful opportunity to do the kind of photography I really enjoy."

His crew is used to Pelley showing up with one suitcase of clothes and another for camera equipment. "Typically I'll bring a couple of digital camera bodies and three or four lenses," he says. "One of my motivations in the work I do is to show the world the people who are less fortunate than the rest of us, the ones who need our help, and to give voice to the voiceless." We asked Pelley to share with us some of his favorite photos and the stories behind them.



SCOTT PELLEY: KATE KERBSTAT/CBS



Machu Picchu
PERU

"A good photo is always about the lighting. This was my first time in Machu Picchu, and I was there at a very fortunate moment, when the sun broke through the clouds and illuminated just the main plaza through the ancient city, leaving most of the rest of it in shadow. This is one of the most photographed places in the world, yet this photo is slightly different than what you've seen before. Therein lies the artistry. An artist has to present a familiar object in an unfamiliar way."





International Rescue Committee Clinic

KENYA

"We anchored the evening news in Somalia during a famine and refugee crisis. With all of the recent debate about refugees, I thought it would be helpful for people to see who we are talking about. Eighty-five percent are women and children, because the men are either fighting or have been killed. These people were walking out of Somalia to free themselves from Islamic extremists there. They were walking for days and weeks, and mothers were telling me about burying their children on the road as they went. This mother and child were in the caring hands of doctors and nurses from the International Rescue Committee, a Manhattan-based NGO. Here, the mothers come into the clinic with their children and don't leave. They lie there with them 24-7. The look on this woman's face said everything to me. You can see the worry. You can't imagine how grateful these Somalis were to experience the life-saving kindness of the American people. The principal victims of radical Islamic terrorism are peaceful Muslims who only ask for the opportunity to see their children survive. They look to America with hope."





United Nations Emergency Feeding Station

SOMALIA

"This beautiful child was inside Somalia, at a station that was set up and guarded by a friendly militia to prevent people from starving on the road to Kenya. Her family was trying to get some sustenance so they could go back out on the road and continue walking. Those people coming out of Somalia would starve to death in obscurity unless journalists went and visited them and expressed their plight to the rest of the world."

Gold Mine

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

"This mine is excavated by hand; there's no equipment. They fill a metal dish with earth and pass it up to the top, from one guy to the next. Congo's Civil War is the deadliest war on Earth since World War II. One of the reasons:

The militias fight over the gold mines. As long as there are gold mines, there will be weapons.

Volcanoes and jungles make Congo among the most beautiful places on Earth. Its mineral wealth could make it among the richest. The people are literally sitting on a gold mine. If only they could find a way to reconciliation and peace."





United Nations World Food Programme

SOUTH SUDAN

"I was in South Sudan recently, where there is an emerging famine among four million people. All the villages are unreachable by any kind of land vehicle. The World Food Programme is flying bombers over these villages and dropping food out of the sky. They have ground people who keep the crowds back from the drop zone, because these are 110-pound bags of grain falling from 3,000 feet and they hit the ground like bombs. One of the ways they help the economy in these villages is by hiring young men to move the bags from the drop zone to where the people are. In the rainy season, everything is mud. They are grabbing these bags and heaving them over their heads. There's an intensity to what they are doing."



Leopard in a Tree

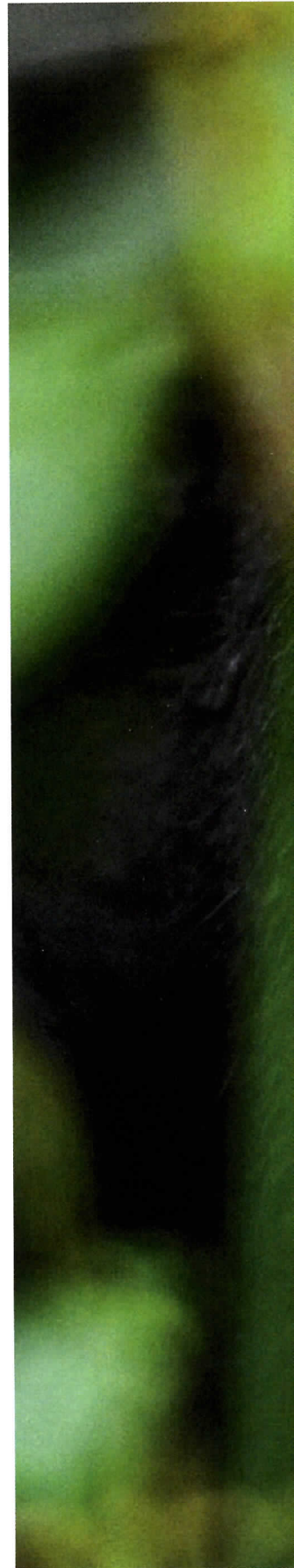
BOTSWANA

"I really enjoy wildlife photography. To get it right is a real joy. I have shot 100 pictures of wildlife for every one that is just right, because the animals don't want to be photographed. Of all the African cats, leopards are particularly shy. They live up in the trees and are nocturnal, so they're hard to spot. To find this leopard around sunset was really exciting. I was about 10 yards away. It's the lighting that makes the photo; it always is. You can see the sun in his eyes. The resolution in this photo is incredibly sharp and beautiful."

Mountain Gorilla


UGANDA

"I was with my wife and daughter, trekking into the jungle in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest—and boy is it well named! We hiked and hiked and hiked, up and down hills and across rivers, and we found a family of gorillas. They are a critically endangered species. There are about 880 mountain gorillas left on Earth."







A sunset over Ha Long Bay, Vietnam. The sky is filled with vibrant orange and yellow clouds, transitioning to a darker blue at the top. In the foreground, the water is dark with shimmering reflections of the sunset. A large, dark limestone island dominates the center background, with other smaller islands visible to the left and right. A small boat is visible on the water in the lower left foreground.

Ha Long Bay

VIETNAM

"This is a remarkable UNESCO World Heritage Site that we visited as a family about four years ago. The seascape has evolved over 500 million years. The water has eroded away the limestone and left 1,600 limestone islands. Ha Long translates as 'Descending Dragon.'"

Are you always trying to capture that perfect shot? See **Scott Pelley's photography tips** on our website: newcanaandarienmag.com.