

# Project 52 PRO edition

Week Three:

## **A Little Something To Help Us Plan.**

We are going to start our business planning, but not in the dry “business school” sort of way. We aren’t in business school – we are photographers.

Planning our business means that we have to also think about what we do as photographers. What do we shoot? Where do we shoot? What kind of subjects really get us excited about shooting?

We will be doing a little of this and a little of that as we move through to the middle of the project. But for now we have to get our plans together and knowing what we want to do will be a big part of it.

Knowing what we don’t want to do is also very important. And knowing what we CAN do is even more important as we decide our first moves.

Make notes and work on your plan for overcoming the challenges and begin to see yourself as an entity that is totally capable of making this happen. It is all about the choices we make and the ferocity in which we make them.

## **The Tearsheet Project: First Pass.**

Tearsheets are pages literally torn from magazines or periodicals or brochures. They are instrumental in helping us understand what we want to do, how we want to do it, and what our capabilities for doing it actually are.

For this first pass at the tearsheet project, I want you to keep your recent worksheets in mind. You know the challenges you have in the areas where you have them... and we all have challenges in some areas. (NOTE: If you had no challenges there really isn’t any reason for you to simply go to NY or London and open a studio... right? Of course... we all have challenges that we must meet and overcome in the ways that only we can.)

**The Tearsheet Project** helps us define what we want to do. The worksheets remind of us of where we are. Yes, we will not be there forever, but we are NOW in the spot where we find ourselves today.

## Assignment (Part A):

Pull 8 tearsheets from recent publications. Make sure that they are image you would have loved to photograph. Your ideal 8 image portfolio.

1. they are current images
2. they are be something that you could photograph
3. they are within your equipment capabilities
4. they are within your current budget to produce
5. they are realistic as far as subject / location

### Current Images:

Images taken within the last 5 years or so; Not historical or iconic, just solid images used for editorial or advertising.

### Something You Could Photograph

Space walking, underwater shooting near the Titanic, or from the inside of a tank in Afghanistan would be examples of things that are not gonna happen. When I say “could” I mean that you would have (conceivably) access to the subject.

### Within Your Equipment Capabilities

If you are a natural light shooter, showing celebrity shots with 20 strobes is a time waster, right? If you have minimal equipment, for now, you have to choose subjects for which your minimal equipment can be used. If you have more gear, or are experienced in rental or using a buddies gear, then fine. Just be realistic for yourself and your own capability.

### Within Your Current Budget

Again... travel shots in Bangladesh may be a cool thing, but a mom or dad with a full time gig, and other obligations makes this a short term challenge that only goes to slow us down. If you wanted to do the shot you have torn out, you could reasonably do it within your financial situation.

### Realistic as Far As Subject and Location

If you live in rural Tennessee, putting shots of Lady GaGa on a cruise ship should probably be put into the second round of this exercise. For now a country singer in a meadow with a cool prop could be a more realistic example.

Lay them down in two rows: 4 on top and 4 on the bottom.

There is your first inkling of a portfolio right in front of you.

Remember what we said about how not having a roadmap means we don't know where we are going, and wouldn't recognize it when we arrived?

Here is the beginning of that roadmap photographically. Here is the first look at what you want your book to look like. (NOTE "Book" is the term I use when describing our portfolio whether printed or online... It is a habit that I am not interested in breaking.)

Looking at these 8 pictures should give you a real sense of what needs to be done.

And stop thinking it is 'copying' or 'stealing' or any of that crap. We can't steal these shots, we can't even get the same subjects, locations or crew to 'copy' the image.

And copying is NOT what we are doing here... we are seeking visual inspiration. A visual document of what we will look like when we get to our destination – albeit a first step.

These images will help us stay attuned to creating the kind of images we want to make. From this set of images we can start to see what interests us, and what our own vision may aspire to be.

Make no mistake – this is a very difficult assignment. I am asking a lot from you. But that is the nature of art – it asks a lot of us.

An example: You are loving outdoor photography and are really excited about adventure as a genre. Cool.

Outdoor Photographer  
Outside Magazine  
Outdoor Life  
Backpacker Magazine  
American Hiking  
Climbing Magazine  
Rock and Ice Magazine

Yes. You can do this online if you can find the magazines themselves. I do not want individual images from photographer's portfolios. I want you to cut or copy/paste the images that are being USED by the magazine or website.

Caveat: sure, you may not want to buy some magazines and cut them up, but if you love this stuff anyway, why not splurge and get a couple issues.

Caveat Two: you can shoot the pages with your smart phone and get them into photoshop for the collage. I don't care about that.

Now for the details:

1. If it is an editorial image, note the publication and the photographers name.
2. If it is an advertisement, note the product that was being advertised as well as the publication it is in

I want you to take all 8 images and scan or photograph them as a unit. Two rows of four images. This is the image that you will post for this assignment. A single collage of all eight images.

Please note in the description the information on the pub/shooter/product by row and image.

*(Cautionary note: This is not a quick and dirty challenge here. It takes a while to really find those images that mean something to you... and that you really love – so do not wait for the last minute on this... get on it immediately. You may only find one shot every other day – and that is with looking.)*

### **Assignment Part B:**

Shoot something using one of these images as the inspiration. Do not try to copy it, do not try to fake it, do not try to simulate it.

Use the image for inspiration and make an image that is similar.

Write a paragraph or two, no more, on what inspiration you got from the image you worked from, and how the image you produced was different.

This is your opportunity to make an image that is very close to your style, and capabilities, and – hopefully – vision.

Now, you may say that you want to do the kind of work that you cannot do. “I want to shoot big product shots, but all I have is a camera and a couple of lenses and I use available light.”

Then you chose the wrong tearsheets. Choose from the position of knowledge. A camera and a lens or two is all you need for a lot of photography, and that is what you must concentrate on NOW.

NOW.

You can always earn your way to bigger sets, more gear, big crews if that is what you want.

But for now, picking the wrong stuff – the stuff you simply cannot do – is a cop out. It is a dodge game.

I've seen it far too often.

“I want to do a shot for my book... been seeing it in my head for a while now. Red Ferrari, tall lanky model, a Lion on a leash, and all of it overlooking the Hollywood sign...”

Yeah – cool.

Except you don't have access to a Ferrari, or a tall model, or a Lion and you live in Athens, GA.

So it becomes all too convenient to blame and whine about the circumstances putting the kibosh on our creativity.

It isn't circumstances – it's us.

So to sum up:

For this assignment there is two parts:

Part A: the tearsheet assignment.

Part B: the shot from one of them.