

Elliott Erwit

It can be said that most human beings can not have endings such as in the movie, "Blazing Saddles," but in his own way, that is what Elliott Erwit accomplished with the lighter side as well as the necessary dark side of his work. His photos were well aimed dealing with the truth of life. He captured the humor and the spirit as well as the sadness and the ongoing movement within the totality of life. Elliott was and is a major infusion of the best kind of fortune being a major influence coming out of the golden door of Magnum Photos. His work was a call to arms to those fortunate enough to know and appreciate him within Magnum as well as those outside of it. His work touched us all in extremely important ways.

Perhaps that is what we can see here and now in Elliott Erwit's work that captures an answer to what can be called the beat and the rhythm of ongoing life. He captured it all without apologizing. It can be said that each time he walked out of a door in whatever form of the door's existence, he may just have unconsciously been searching for the meaning of life in its ongoing existence.

He saw within his skills of observation the honesty of life in front and all around him. That honesty, along with his sense of humor, enabled and allowed his vision to engage the beauty of life toward an upfront and personal capturing of the good, the bad, and the always interesting. He did this in a time honored way. Let the captured image speak quietly within the larger matter of truth, joy and all the rest of it. Yet, there is sometimes the need to loudly speak truth in an engaging way. That is not a bad way of speaking loudly in a whisper during certain moments in the reality of time.

His son, Misha Erwit, and I were walking on the streets of New York City one day, having an ongoing conversation about the classic question regarding what is a good photograph. Misha had an accurate and simple answer to the question on that particular day, perhaps coming from being a thoughtful human being as well as a good son to an amazing father. To quote,

"A good photograph is a photograph that you can not get out of your mind!" Elliott had that same kind of touch on the world of photography that we reside in.

A good delivery from Father to Son and a reflective passage to the members to the surviving family!

Eli Reed