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# The Moment It Clicks: Photography Secrets From One Of The World's Top Shooters



## Synopsis

THE FIRST BOOK WITH ONE FOOT ON THE COFFEE TABLE, AND ONE FOOT IN THE CLASSROOM

Joe McNally, one of the world's top pro digital photographers, whose celebrated work has graced the pages of Sports Illustrated, Time, and National Geographic (to name a few), breaks new ground by doing something no photography book has ever done—blending the rich, stunning images and elegant layout of a coffee-table book with the invaluable training, no-nonsense insights, and photography secrets usually found only in those rare, best-of-breed educational books. When Joe's not on assignment for the biggest-name magazines and Fortune 500 clients, he's in the classroom teaching location lighting, environmental portraiture, and how to *get the shot* • at workshops around the world. These on-location workshops are usually reserved for a handful of photographers each year, but now you can learn the same techniques that Joe shares in his seminars and lectures in a book that brings Joe's sessions to life. What makes the book so unique is the *triangle of learning* • where (1) Joe distills the concept down to one brief sentence. It usually starts with something like, *An editor at National Geographic once told me* | • and then he shares one of those hard-earned tricks of the trade that you only get from spending a lifetime behind the lens. Then, (2) on the facing page is one of Joe's brilliant images that perfectly illustrates the technique (you'll recognize many of his photos from magazine covers). And (3) you get the inside story of how that shot was taken, including which equipment he used (lens, f/stop, lighting, accessories, etc.), along with the challenges that type of project brings, and how to set up a shot like that of your own. This book also gives you something more. It inspires. It challenges. It informs. But perhaps most importantly, it will help you understand photography and the art of making great photos at a level you never thought possible. This book is packed with those *Ah ha!* moments—those clever insights that make it all come together for you. It brings you that wonderful moment when it suddenly all makes sense—*that moment it clicks.* •

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Picture this. You meet one of the world's great photographers in a bar. He has a stack of pictures with him from his portfolio. As you go through the pictures, he talks about them, about the people in the photographs, and how he made each of them. About a third of the way through you realize that when he talks about the technical details he talks mostly about the lighting, and you are sorry you didn't pick up on that right from the beginning, but now you listen avidly to try to learn his lighting techniques. Then, about two-thirds of the way through, he stops talking about the lighting, and starts meandering about the photo editors he knew, and how he may have sacrificed some of his family life to be a photographer, and how he came up through the ranks, and that's interesting too. When Joe McNally talks about lighting a picture of James Brown, or Sophia Loren, or Larry Tisch, the techniques he uses seem to be ones you could use. But when he talks about getting a bunch of masks from the Smithsonian to shoot Michelle Pfeiffer, or five full length mirrors set up on the field for a picture of shortstop Ozzie Smith, or using 10 or 15 2400 watt lights to light fielder Eric Davis, you may hope that you can at least get inspiration because you are never going to have that kind of equipment, or if you are, then to quote McNally, "you don't need my advice". And don't take a peek at McNally's equipment until you come to that page in normal reading or you may decide the book is not for you. If you are looking for instruction, it's here amongst the stories, even if it's delivered in a non-structured sort of way. I haven't invested in a dozen Speedotrons, but after reading this book, I did decide to upgrade my umbrella to a couple of softboxes. On the other hand if you are interested in looking at a portfolio of great pictures, McNally has them. And if you like to listen to photographers tell stories about photography, often at their own expense, you'll probably love this book. Other than the lighting there is little of a technical nature here. There's nothing about exposure, or depth of field or Photoshop. I am certain that the people that talked the author into writing this book loved the stories and the way they were told and how they related back occasionally to transforming a vision into an image by using equipment. McNally's personality comes through. Whether this is the way for

you to learn some lighting tricks will depend on what you feel about winnowing them out of the stories and pictures. On the other hand, Joe McNally is a great guy to have a drink with.

I am writing this review from the perspective of someone who is known as the "Eternal Optimist". I got the book for the purpose of gaining a serious insight into "how he did it" - kind of like Scott Kelby's How-to books - which by the way, are all very good. When Joe McNally's photos are seen, one can only wonder, "how did he do that?", so naturally, we are all inclined to want to get our hands on his book, so we can reproduce his shots, and ultimately learn by doing. Sadly, this book just doesn't come close to providing that end! Half the entire book is simply a full page of his glorious shots. The other half of the book is "supposed to be showing you how he did it". Each photo is supposed to represent a single element that he wants to stress as the critical component necessary for that particular shot. But seriously, those glorious shots consist of a constellation of critical factors that can NOT be explained on the basis of one "hint" only. Most of us are buying the book so that we can fully reproduce his shots, but this will never be accomplished by his book alone. Truly, he is providing only a "minuscule hint" as to the thought processes behind each shot. Some of the hints are useful, but the majority of the book simply represents the interesting story behind the shot, without providing much useful information as to how we can accomplish the same scenario. After reading the book, one has to ask, Does Joe, himself not know how he got the shot? Or is he intentionally just trying to keep us all in the dark, hoping that we'll buy more of his books so that one day we'll come a little closer to a better understanding? Is he afraid that if he tells us too much we may all become his competitors? If you want a pretty "picture book" then this is it! But if you're desiring a critical guide to reproducing his shots, you'll finish this book very disappointed, wondering what his motive was for writing the book? Was it simply to make a buck? Or did he really think we were going to get much out of it? While there is something important that can be learned from all photography books, I tend to believe that this book falls into the category of other similar books, which is to say - If you finish most books and come away with 2-3 seriously important points, that change your philosophy and actions, then your money has been well spent. If your goals and intent for reading this book are appropriate, then you won't be disappointed. However, if you think that you'll be reproducing Joe's shots after reading this book, you'll likely come away angry or even feel betrayed - sad to say. This book underscores the fact that there is no simple solution to creating great, world-class photographs. The more you read, the more you'll know. This book is simply one small step on the road to a lifetime of perpetual self-education. Do I recommend this book? I will reservedly say yes, but understand that realistically, you'll come away with more questions than you

had before you started, and you'll still be asking yourself the eternal question, "I wish I knew just how did he did it".Addendum - 3-14-10I would like to emphasize, that I have no negativity towards Joe or his books / DVDs. There is no question that he is an exceptionally talented photographer, but that in this book, he doesn't do a very good job at explaining his workflow.For those of you who are interested in other works that Joe has authored, I would strongly recommend you consider his DVD published by Nikon, "Nikon School presents A Hands-on Guide to Creative Lighting".The information presented within this DVD, is extraordinary and prodigious! He clearly is able to present all of the techniques and rationale behind the photographs, and does a very good job with explaining his various thought processes.For all inquiring minds, Joe has done a first rate job with this DVD, and I highly recommend it to all students of photography!

This book is written in such a way that photographers of every experience, style and age will gain huge value.This is now my favorite book to date on photography.My one line summary:It will teach you "how to have a single photo tell a real story", with emotion and from different perspectives. In my opinion it is a must for amateurs through pros.Pros:The book is written simply with no unexplained jargon. If the author mentions an industry word (e.g. Ripping Film), he goes on to explain what it means. You learn some of the industry street terms and get a feel for the authors experience shooting.Every turn of the page has a compelling photo which is the subject of the lesson. Some lessons are technical such as how-to on lighting, while others are lessons on approach, demeanor or attitude.The book is emotionally engaging. You want to put the book down and immediately try some of the approaches.The author isn't demonstrating ego - this book is NOT about him! It's about the world around him. You turn each page and learn how he captured an amazing picture of someone like James Brown, or how he found the real story in Augusta.It will give you ideas on how to have a single photo tell a real story.Cons:The only real complaint: This is a soft cover and shipped it in an envelope instead of a box. The edges of the cover got crimped a bit.Feedback for the author:I'd love for more - just simply put - I want the second volume. I'd love to figure out how to get this signed :)This is a real gem and I would have loved it in perfect condition for my office desktop.Great job to the author.

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