

GOOD ADVICE FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

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JANUARY 2002 ESQUIRE.COM

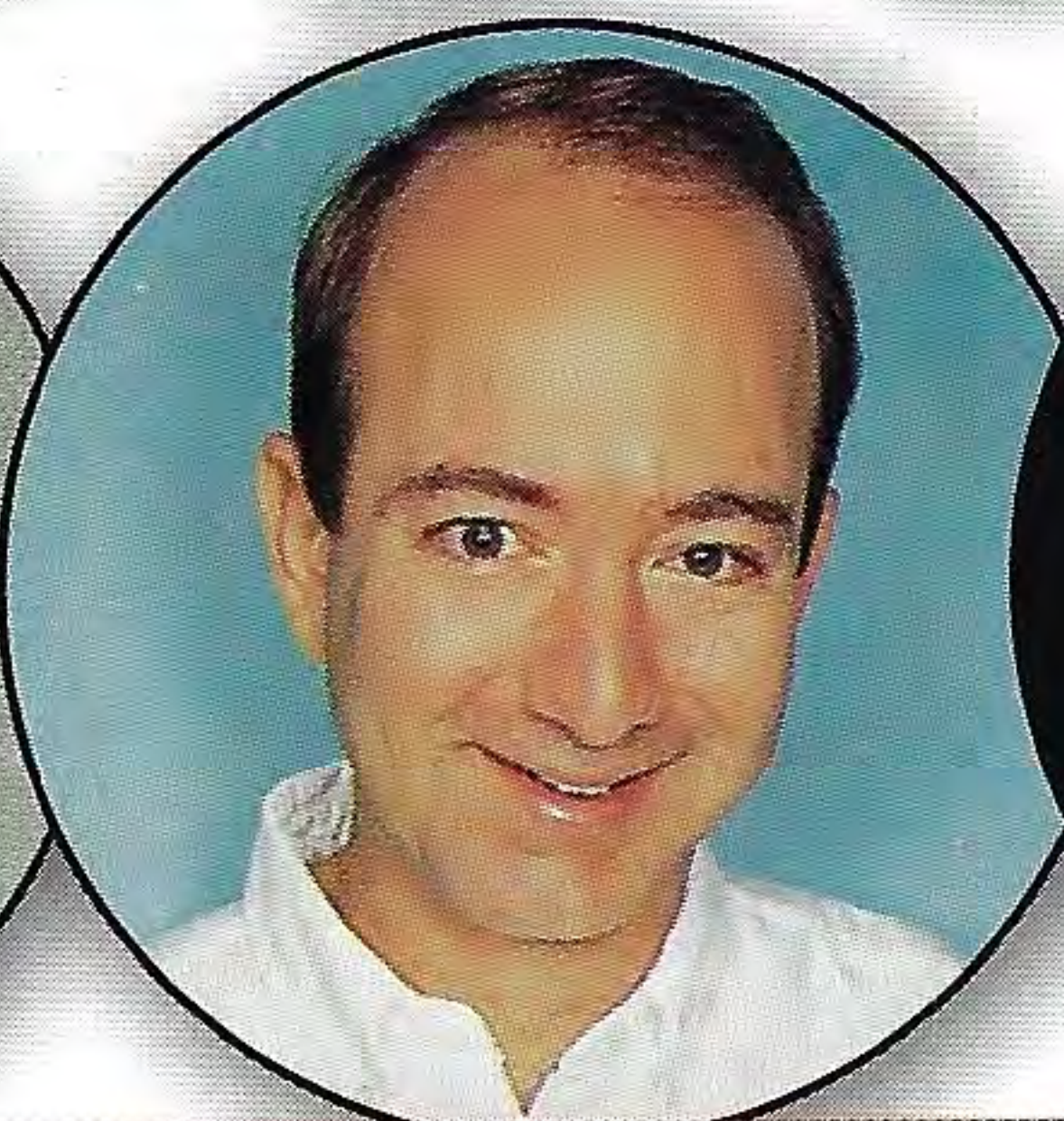
MAN AT HIS BEST

56 Pages of Wisdom
from Heroes, Billionaires,
Geniuses, Screwups,
Visionaries, and Legends

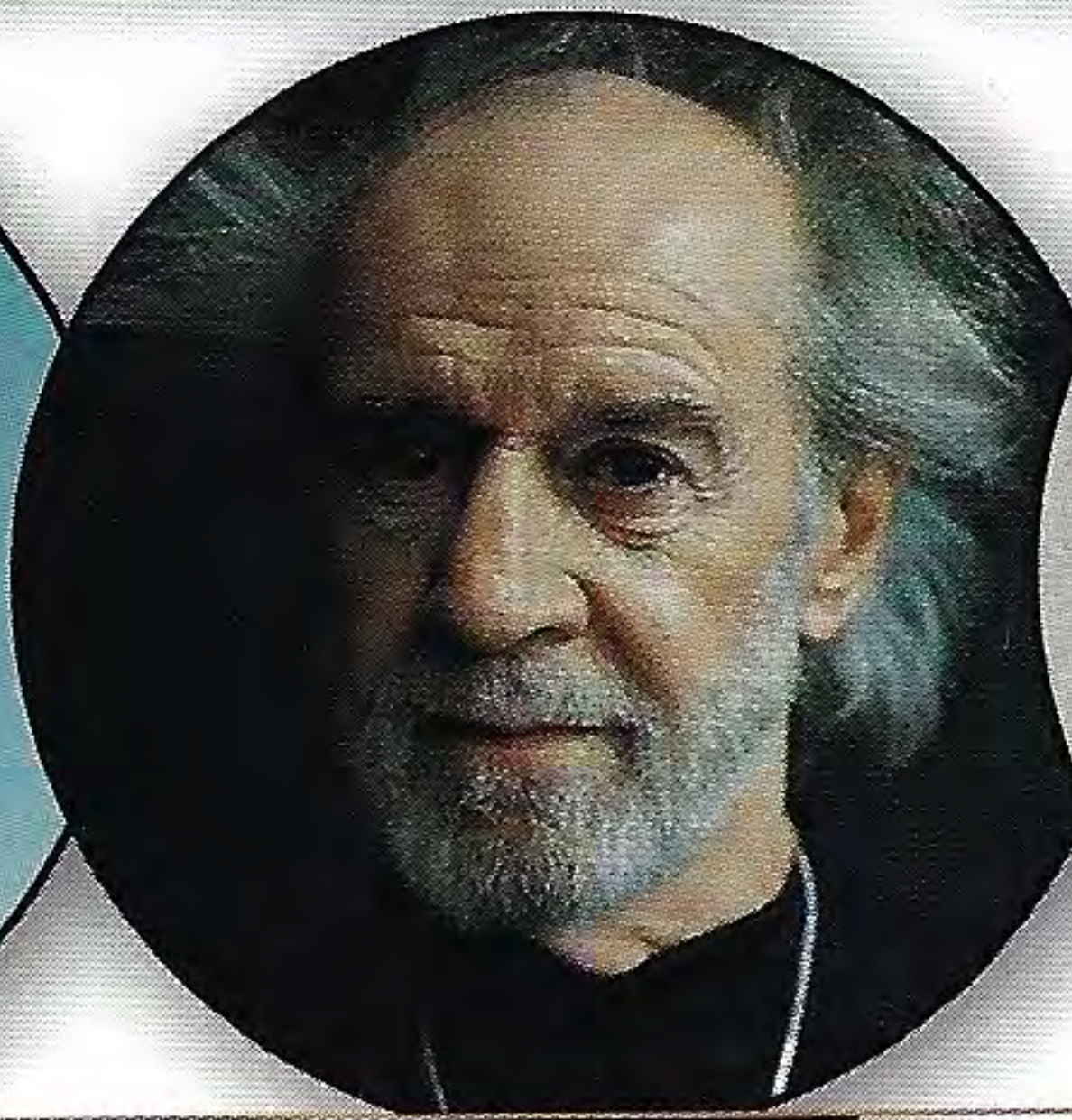
The Meaning of LIFE



KING



BEZOS



CARLIN



THE BOSS



SIMPSON

PLUS The Man Who Climbed Up from
Under the World Trade Center: A Chilling
Tale of Survival AND Eight Years of Chasing
Osama bin Laden. By Charles M. Sennott

\$3.00





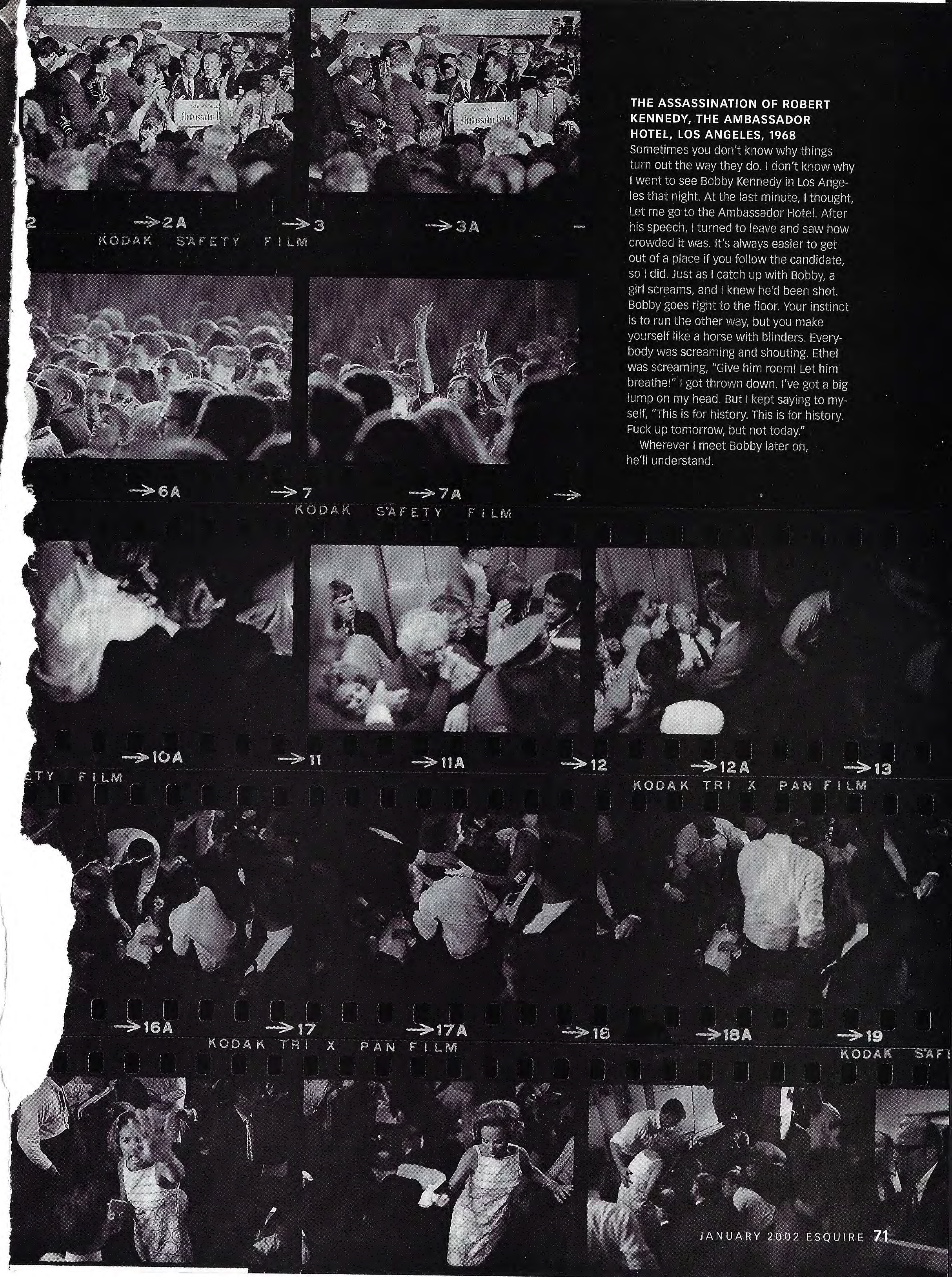
I Witness

In his fifty-plus years as a professional photographer, Harry Benson has seen a lot. He's managed to learn a few things along the way, too.

They put me out of school when I was thirteen, came to the house and told my parents there was no point in me being there because I was just holding everybody back. I got a stupid job delivering X-ray film on a cart. As the years passed, I kept trying to get on as a photographer at a big paper in Glasgow. Once I went to a picture editor, who knew my father was the curator of the Glasgow zoo, and showed him my work. He said, "You know, laddie, you should be feeding animals at your father's zoo." Wonder what that bastard would say now.

INTERVIEWED BY CAL FUSSMAN

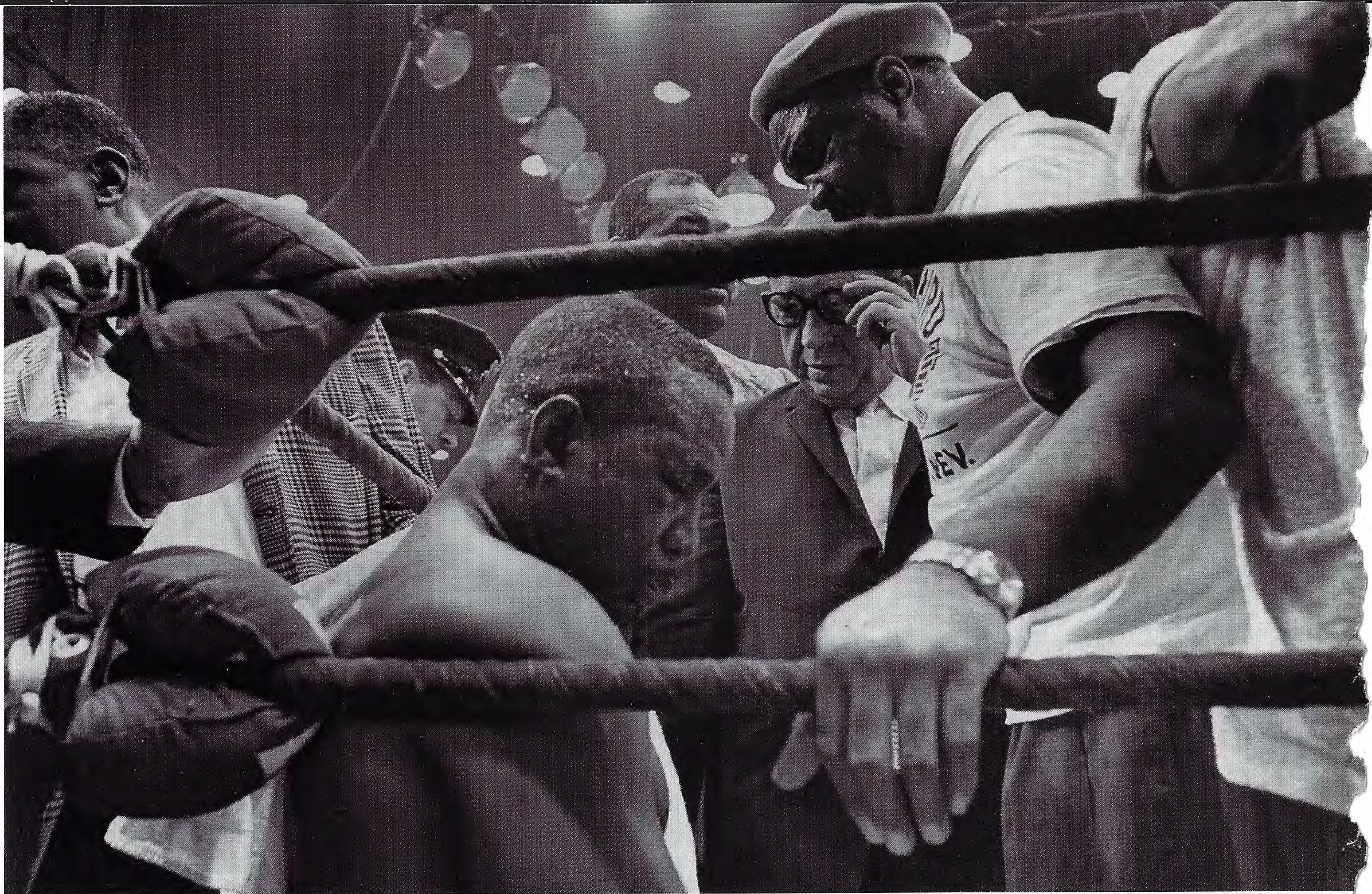
These and other photos appear in the photographer's new book, *Harry Benson: Fifty Years in Pictures*, published by Harry N. Abrams.



THE ASSASSINATION OF ROBERT KENNEDY, THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, 1968

Sometimes you don't know why things turn out the way they do. I don't know why I went to see Bobby Kennedy in Los Angeles that night. At the last minute, I thought, Let me go to the Ambassador Hotel. After his speech, I turned to leave and saw how crowded it was. It's always easier to get out of a place if you follow the candidate, so I did. Just as I catch up with Bobby, a girl screams, and I knew he'd been shot. Bobby goes right to the floor. Your instinct is to run the other way, but you make yourself like a horse with blinders. Everybody was screaming and shouting. Ethel was screaming, "Give him room! Let him breathe!" I got thrown down. I've got a big lump on my head. But I kept saying to myself, "This is for history. This is for history. Fuck up tomorrow, but not today."

Wherever I meet Bobby later on, he'll understand.



1)

1) **CLAY-LISTON, MIAMI BEACH, 1964**

When you're just starting out as a photographer, you're not thinking about doing a book forty years later. You're thinking about being on the payroll at the end of the week. And if you want to stay on the payroll, you learn to get to the center as quick as you can, and you learn how to stay there. I was on the flight with the Beatles when they first came to America, and at ringside when Cassius Clay upset Sonny Liston in 1964. I've photographed Winston Churchill, Bobby Fischer, Greta Garbo, the shah of Iran. I covered the civil-rights movement, and I got teargassed in Canton, Mississippi. (One thing I noticed about tear gas is that afterward, people always come back angry. *Always.*) I was in Martin Luther King's hotel room hours after he was killed. I've photographed the last nine families in the White House. Forty years later, you realize you've photographed the Berlin Wall going up and you've photographed it going down. When it comes to my book, I'm a little worried. I've always been a bit of a bigmouth with the boys in the bar—you know, "If only I was there, let me tell you what I would have done!" Well, I was there.

2) **THE BEATLES, PARIS, 1964**

I had the Beatles at the beginning. One of the reasons for their success at first was they'd be in a suite at the Plaza, and right next to it would be another suite packed with journalists who'd be called in for ten minutes each. So somebody from Boise, Idaho, could go home and write, "I was the fifth Beatle." It's not like now, where they give the story to two fancy magazines and then they're off to the Caribbean.

There were a few of us in their hotel room in Paris one time, and the Beatles were gabbing away when one of them said, "That was some pillow fight the other night." I kept my mouth shut in front of a competing photographer and waited until a couple of nights later, when I was the only one there taking pictures.

The Beatles were in a good mood; they'd just gotten the telegram saying that they'd reached number one in America with "I Want to Hold Your Hand." I said, "How about having a pillow fight?" Paul replied, "That's childish and juvenile. We'd never do that." Lennon joins in, very seriously, "Absolutely not!" I thought, Well, that's that. And then John comes right behind Paul, who is drinking brandy, and hits him in the back of the head with a pillow. That started it.

2)



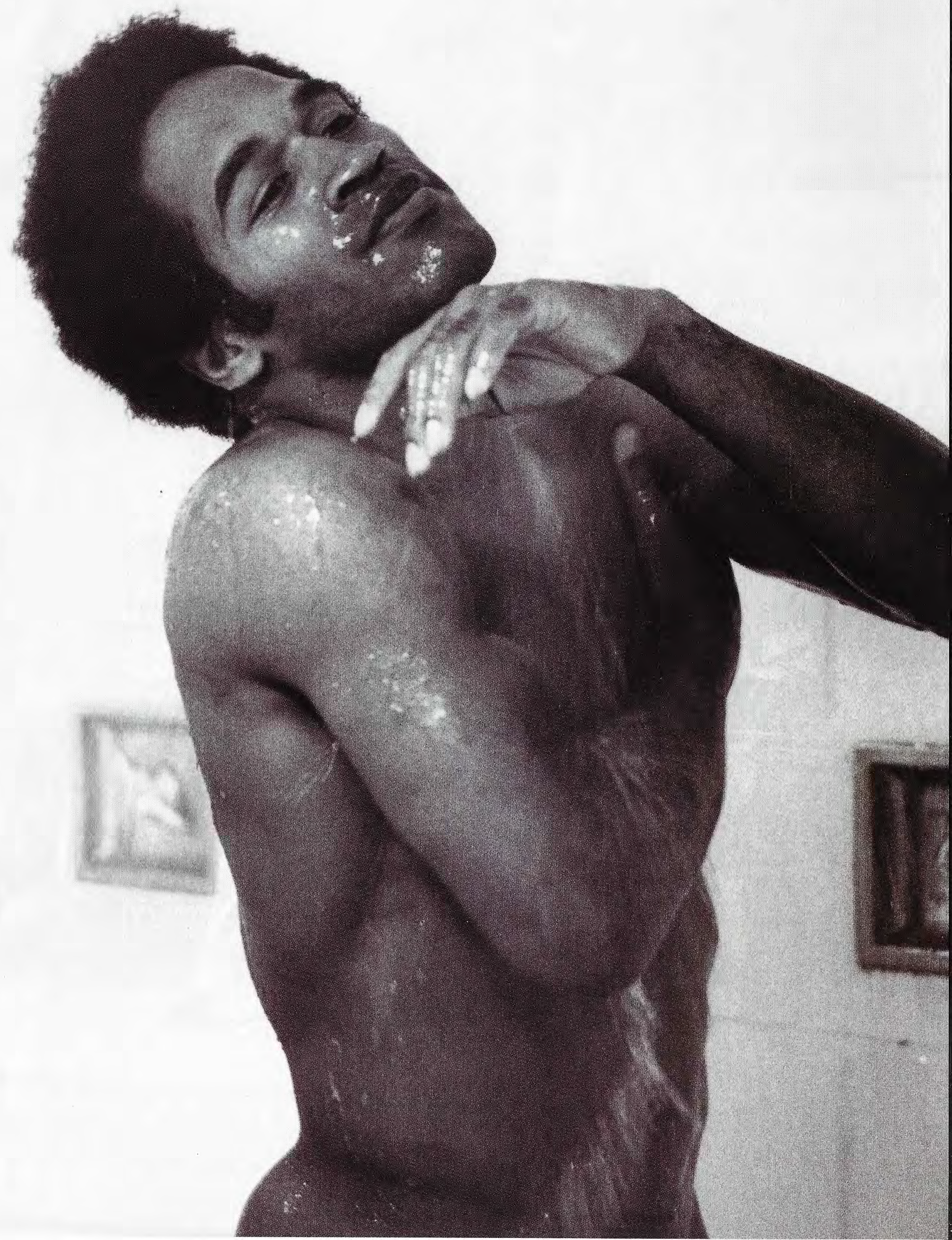


1) **PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON, LAREDO, TEXAS, 1972**
It's very hard to dislike somebody who treats you with respect. I liked Nixon. One of the things I noticed about him was that he never had a conversation unless it was meaningful. I was the only photographer he allowed into San Clemente after he resigned. I spent three days with him. It was obviously the worst time in his life. After it was over, I said, "I want to thank you, Mr. President. I know it hasn't been the greatest time." He said, "You know, Harry, you've got to allow professional people to do their job." One thing I've learned: There's always got to be a friend in the enemy camp. Why not me?

2) **MARK DAVID CHAPMAN, ATTICA PRISON, ATTICA, NEW YORK, 1987**
It was him against me to get this picture. You do what you have to do. We were setting up in a room in Attica when Chapman came over, sat down beside me, touched my hand, and said, "I want to apologize to you for killing your friend John." I said something I should not have said, but it's probably true. I said, "I think John went the way he would have liked to go." And I honestly believe it. An assassination. That's a dramatic way to go, and John was a pretty dramatic guy. After that, Chapman was at complete ease.

3) **TRUMAN CAPOTE, WAINSCOTT, NEW YORK, 1984**
I like pictures with movement in them. When you're dealing with politicians, you've got to keep them moving. You don't get into idiotic conversations. There are photographers who'll talk about their families or where they're going on holiday. The president will be polite and listen, but it's twenty minutes and they're out the door. The president doesn't want to be your friend. I approach it like this: If I can get them to move twenty yards one way, that's twenty yards they've got to come back again. They're not standing frozen. That's the enemy: rigor mortis. Now, Capote, here, was no politician. He was very comfortable in front of the camera. I could have done a whole book on him. If you ever had a drink with him, you'd know he wasn't a little fairy.

4) **O. J. SIMPSON, SHEA STADIUM, 1973**
Always be the first one in and the last one out. And never go with the pack. O. J. had just run for a record 2,003 yards in a single season in New York. Because he'd been interviewed for so long by all the press, he was the last one into the showers. The rest of the team was on the bus waiting to go, and there was nobody else from the media around. I've always felt embarrassed photographing nude people, but I followed him into the shower and asked if it would be okay. It wasn't surprising that he consented. Here's an egotist with a beautiful body on the greatest day of his life. I've got the uncensored version at home.





1) **MERV GRIFFIN, PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, 1998**

I hate the word *art*. When I hear photographers use the word *art*, I go for my revolver. I'm quoting Dr. Goebbels here, but I *mean* that. I'd been doing pictures of Merv Griffin at his place in Palm Springs. They were just ordinary photos. I was just about to leave when he offered to show me around his house. In his wardrobe, I see this caftan. "Do you wear it?" I asked. He said he put it on occasionally at night. I asked him to try it on. So he put on this huge caftan and purple slippers. It may seem a little outlandish, but there's something very basic about the photo: I was just trying to take a picture that people would want to look at.

2) **CAROLINE KENNEDY, HYANNIS PORT, MASSACHUSETTS, 1986**

When I photographed John and Caroline Kennedy for the cover of *Life* in 1984, they said, "You're going to have to tell us what to do. We don't know how to be photographed." You see, they'd only ever been photographed by paparazzi. Not long after that shoot, the phone goes. There's a very sexy voice: "Harry Benson, this is Jacqueline Onassis." I thought it was someone having fun with me. "Are you *sure* you're Jacqueline Onassis?" She says, "Positive." I said, "All right, where did you have lunch yesterday?" I happened to have seen her at Mortimer's the day before. She said, "Mortimer's, second table from the window." I said, "Well, how are you, Mrs. Onassis?" She asked if I would photograph Caroline's wedding. She was protecting Caroline. That's what she did. This was her favorite picture from the wedding.

3) **ELIZABETH TAYLOR, CEDARS-SINAI HOSPITAL, LOS ANGELES, 1997**

I'd photographed Liz through the years. When I heard she had a brain tumor, I phoned her up. I spoke to her publicist. I said, "I'd like to photograph Liz before and after her operation." Her publicist had a fit: "How could you even *suggest* such a thing?" After listening to her yammer away, I said, "I'll get the message to Elizabeth one way or another. So ask her. Because I know Elizabeth marches to her own drummer." Within five minutes, the publicist calls back and says not only can I photograph Liz before and after, but I could photograph her *during* the operation. That I didn't do. **■**