

A PHOTOJOURNALIST ON ASSIGNMENT

by

PETE SOUZA

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A REPORT

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Robert Meeds

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Abstract

This report is based on an exhibition of 37 photographs at the Kemper Gallery in the Student Union of Kansas State University. All photographs presented here and in the exhibit were created during the past 28 years of my career. Hence the exhibit is a mid-career retrospective.

My photojournalism experience is very unique in that I am the only photojournalist in the world who has worked as a presidential photographer, published photo essays in National Geographic Magazine as a freelancer, and been on the staff of a large metro newspaper. The photographs chosen for the exhibit were highlighted by, but not limited to, assignments from those three experiences.

This report mirrors the exhibit except for a few additional photographs that, because of space limitations, didn't make it into the final edit for the exhibit. There are three sections: Moments from Kansas to Papua New Guinea, The Presidency, and After 9/11. The "moments" section presents a wide variety of photographs from a wide variety of assignments. The "presidency" section focuses on my tenure as Official White House Photographer for President Reagan, and also includes photographs of the Reagan funeral, other presidents, and a possible future president. "After 9/11" begins at the Pentagon on 9/12, and then follows the course of events in Afghanistan during the following weeks.

Extensive captions accompany most of the photographs. The captions are written in the third person which is customary for gallery exhibitions. More than the who, what, where and when, they provide some additional context and are intended to inform both the journalism student and the layperson.

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CHAPTER 1 – Moments: From Kansas to Papua New Guinea



Fun in the mud

Chanute, Kan., 1981

The Chanute Tribune

They might not look very happy, but Pete Souza reports that moments before this picture was taken these two kids had been thoroughly enjoying themselves during a mud fight at a local festival. At the beginning of his professional career, Souza worked at two Kansas newspapers in Hutchinson and Chanute. “I encourage every young photojournalist to begin their career at a small newspaper,” Souza says. “The experience gained is invaluable.”

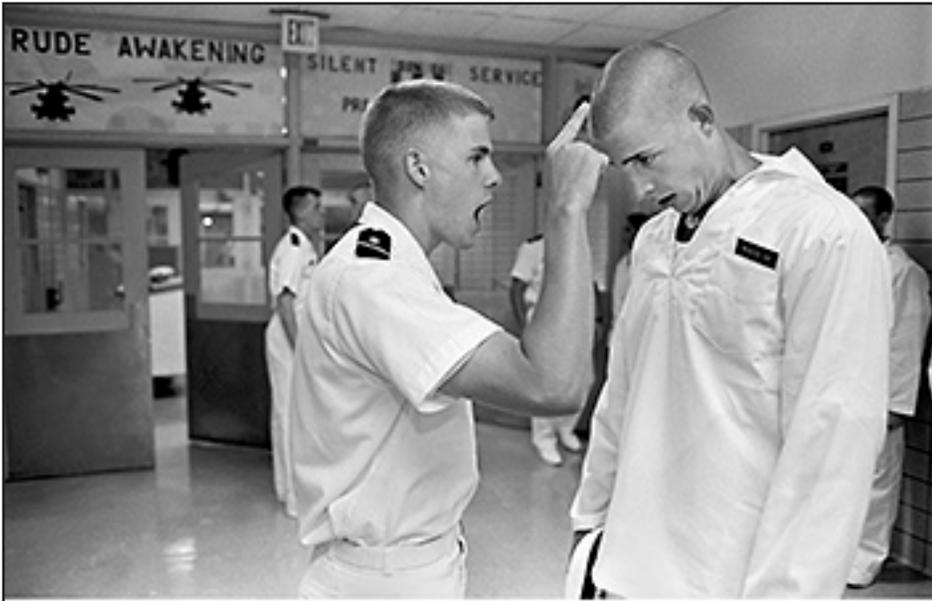


Punched in the face

Chanute, Kan., 1981

The Chanute Tribune (Not published.)

Souza says one of the perils of being a newspaper photographer in a small community is that sometimes people don't want their picture taken. Billowing smoke could be seen for miles from a huge fire at a plant in Chanute, a small town in southeast Kansas where Souza worked in 1981. The owner of the plant didn't want Souza on his property taking pictures of the fire, and punched the photographer in the face when he wouldn't leave. Souza captured the punch on film (that's his fist at right), and a police officer standing nearby immediately arrested the owner.



Plebe Summer at the U.S. Naval Academy

Annapolis, Md., 1995

Freelance (First published in *Washingtonian*.)

The Naval Academy allowed Souza unprecedented access to follow one company throughout Plebe Summer, the six-week indoctrination period for incoming freshmen, or plebes. He was there almost every day to capture intimate moments and scene setters. Clockwise from top left: a squad leader yells at a Plebe about the funny dent in his head; Plebes do morning exercises en masse; a Plebe celebrates after his squad won a raft race; and Plebes watch as a squad leader throws an article of clothing during a room inspection.

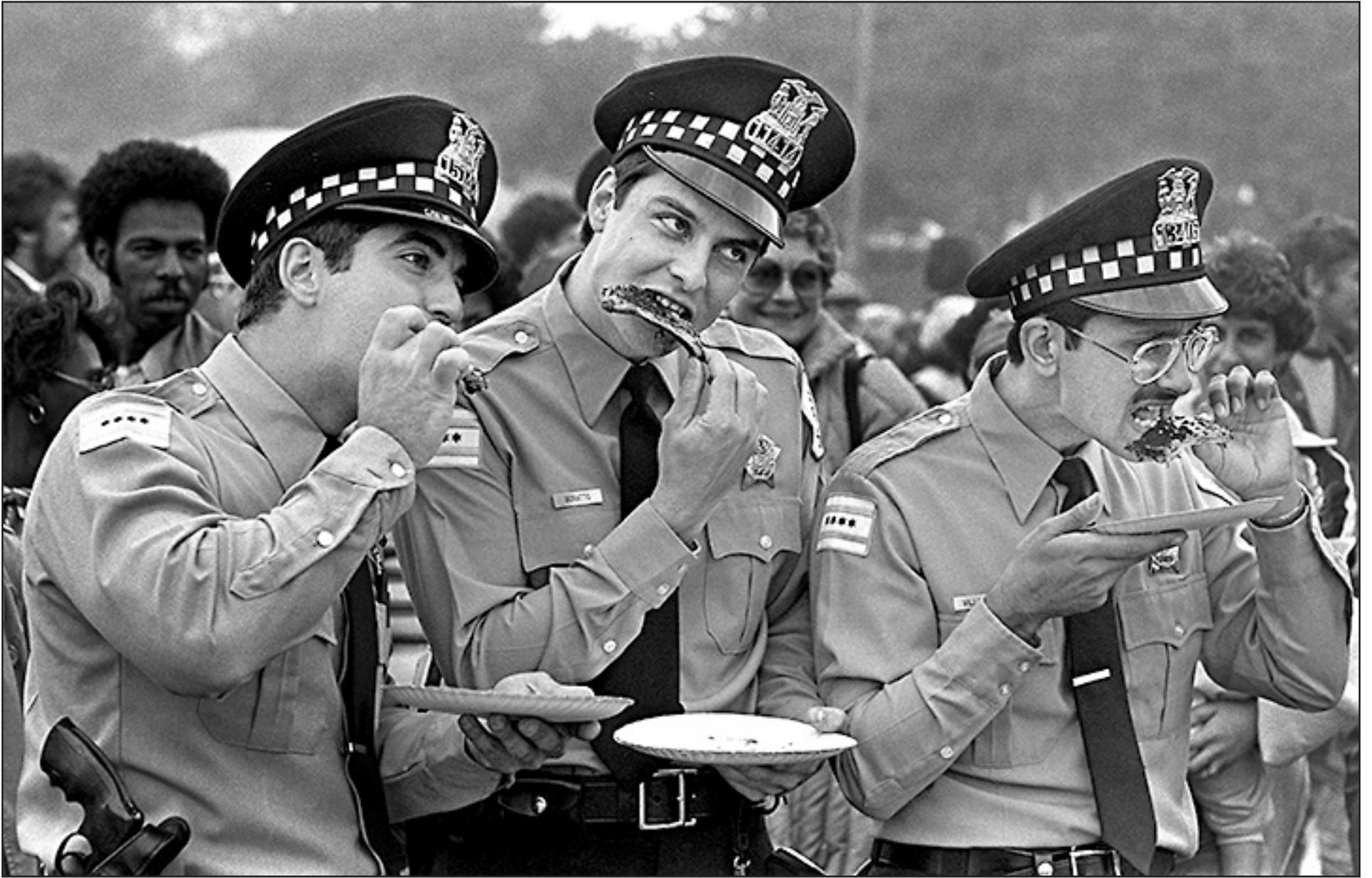


Homeless

Chicago, 1983

Chicago Sun-Times

While working on a story about homelessness for the Sun-Times, Souza and reporter Dirk Johnson happened upon Jimmy Korf, a 21-year-old homeless man who had been literally living on the streets of Chicago for a year. Their stories and pictures of Jimmy and other subjects shed light on the seriousness of homelessness in the city, and helped make it become a big issue in the mayor's election. When this photo was published, Jimmy's father in Wisconsin recognized his long lost son; they were reunited and Jimmy was taken off the streets.



Chicago's finest

Chicago, 1982

Chicago Sun-Times

Three Chicago police officers bite into ribs at the first annual Mike Royko Ribfest in Chicago's Grant Park. Royko was the legendary Chicago newspaper columnist who became the everyman Chicagoan who took on the city's politicians.



Boys will be boys

Manhattan, Kan., 1978

Kansas State Collegian

Two young boys fight at the Stonehouse day-care center while they were momentarily away from a teacher's view. Souza said he spent weeks at the day-care center which was literally across the street from the apartment where he lived. "It was really the first picture story I ever produced," Souza says. "The most important lesson I learned was that if you hang around long enough, good situations for one-of-a-kind photographs will likely occur."



Princess Diana and John Travolta

Washington, D.C., 1985

The White House (First published in *LIFE* Magazine.)

During a White House dinner for Prince Charles and Princess Diana, the U.S. Marine band struck up a medley from actor John Travolta's hit movie, *Saturday Night Fever*. Souza reports that Travolta then asked Diana to dance and twirled her around the floor as guests watched. "Later," Souza remembers, "I learned this had all been a ploy by Mrs. Reagan to please Diana who was a big fan of Travolta."



Piedmont basketball

Charlotte, N.C., 1993

National Geographic (Published in March 1995 issue.)

This picture was the opening spread for an article in *National Geographic* that Souza photographed on the Piedmont region of North Carolina. “On an assignment for *Geographic*,” Souza says, “the photographer must do his/her own research and decide who, what, where, and when to photograph.” Photographs for an article are expected to contain a “moment,” have good quality light, and a sense of place. Taken together, photographic coverage is expected to incorporate all the broad themes of the region, and have a visual thread that links the pictures together in a cohesive narrative.

Kayaker

Big South Fork River, Tenn., 1992

National Geographic

(Published in August 1993 issue.)

Barry Crowder dry launches his kayak off a boulder along the Big South Fork River. This picture was taken for one of two extended assignments Souza has had published in *National Geographic*. The Big South Fork River had recently become part of the National Park System when Souza was assigned to provide photographic coverage for the magazine.





Cleaning Lincoln

Washington, D.C., 1994

Freelance (First published in *Washingtonian* Magazine.)

A National Park service employee uses what looks like a giant Q-tip to clean the ear of Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial. This was part of a self-assigned photo essay on “Cleaning Washington” that Souza produced for the monthly magazine *Washingtonian*.



Wrigley Field

Chicago, 2001

Chicago Tribune (Not published.)

In the summer of 2001, the *Chicago Tribune* asked Souza – by then a Washington-based staff photographer for the newspaper – to contribute to a book they were planning to publish on Wrigley Field. Souza shot thousands of pictures over the course of two months. (He finished his coverage September 10th; he was scheduled to fly home to Washington on the afternoon of September 11th.) Because the newspaper's resources were spent elsewhere covering the aftermath of 9/11, the book was subsequently scrapped for publication.



Angel of AIDS

Qudeni, South Africa, 2006

Chicago Tribune

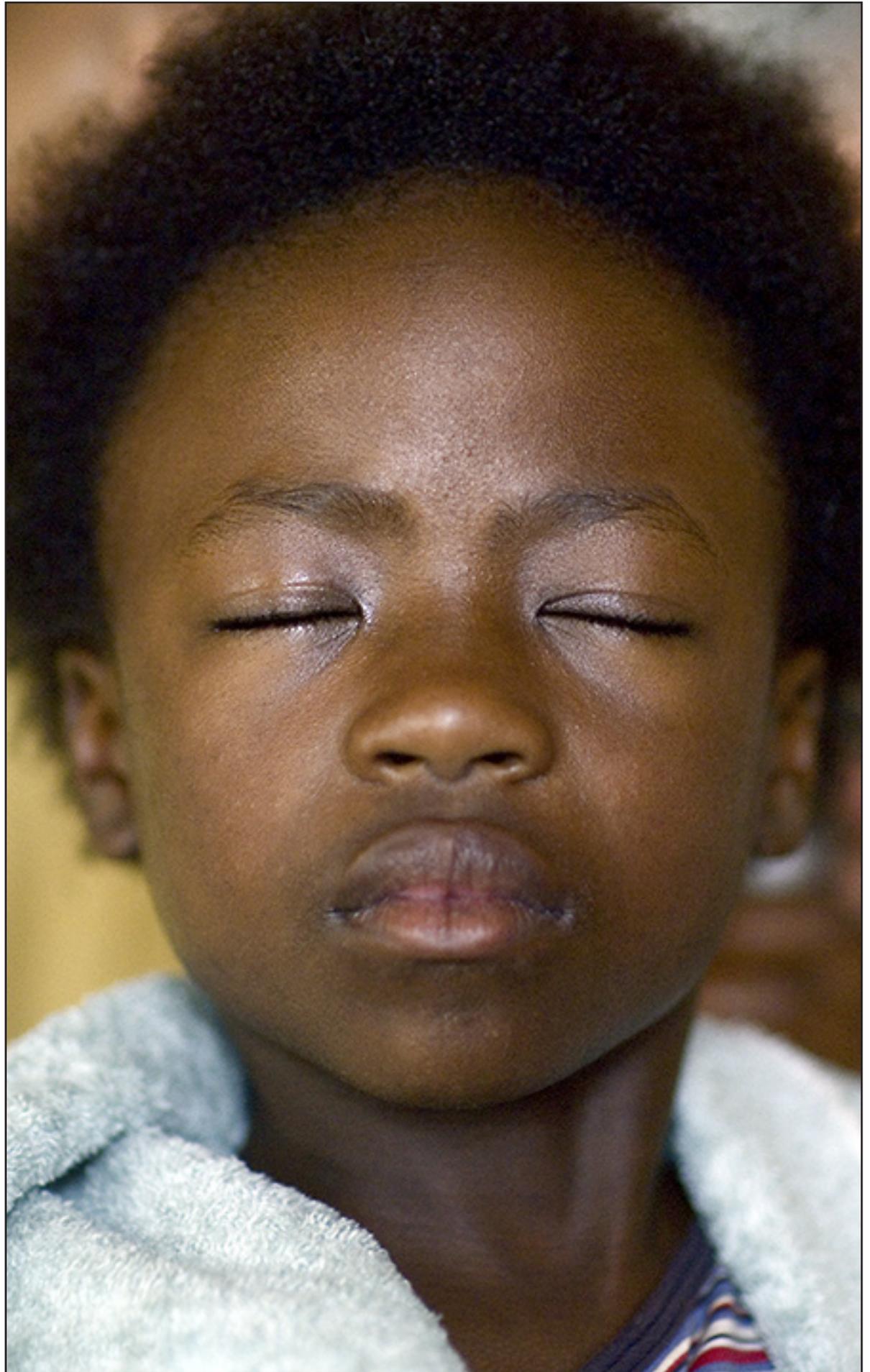
Hlengiwe Leocardia Mchunu bathes an AIDS orphan. In a little over six years, “Leo” has lost six of eight brothers and sisters and almost 20 relatives to HIV/AIDS. In Qudeni, the remote village where she grew up, nearly all of the families have endured such losses and are struggling to cope. But Leo is taking on South Africa’s culture of denial about the disease, and is doing her part to fight back.

AIDS orphan

Johannesburg, South Africa, 2006

Chicago Tribune (Not published.)

Katiwe, 11, relaxes while having her hair washed by her aunt with whom she lives. Both of Katiwe's parents died of AIDS, and she herself is HIV positive and infected with tuberculosis. An estimated 5.5 million people in South Africa carry the virus that causes AIDS.





Preparing for sing-sing

Munge Busega, Papua New Guinea, 2006

Chicago Tribune (Not published.)

Villagers prepare for a *sing-sing*, a traditional music and dance performed on special occasions in one of the most remote countries in the world.



Logging a rain forest

Vanim Forest Concession, Papua New Guinea, 2006

Chicago Tribune

A worker cuts a pencil cedar tree moments after it was cut down. The demand for cheap Chinese-processed hardwood floors is driving destructive logging around the world. In Papua New Guinea, locals are just now bringing lawsuits against timber companies who allegedly are practicing illegal logging on their land.



Kosovo refugee exodus

Blace, Macedonia, 1999

Chicago Tribune

After atrocities by Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic, NATO forces began bombing Kosovo, a province of the former Yugoslavia, in March of 1999. The Serbs further retaliated by forcing thousands of ethnic Albanians to leave the province. At the main border crossing in Macedonia where the refugees were temporarily being held en masse, Souza captured this moment of a refugee arguing with police officers. The refugee was frustrated because the police officers were arbitrarily deciding who could board buses that were transporting people to a more civilized United Nations-run refugee camp.



Reburial

Bela Crkva, Kosovo, 1999

Chicago Tribune

Ethnic Albanians bury family members in a small Kosovo village where Serbs had massacred more than 50 people. Upon returning to their village, the Albanians retrieved the bodies of their loved ones and reburied them in a new cemetery. “The smell of death was pervasive,” Souza recalls, “and it took days to get that smell out of my system.”



Man vs. nature

Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, 2003

Chicago Tribune

In 2003 Souza embarked on a self-assigned, yearlong project for the Tribune: depicting the national environmental battlegrounds that were being debated in Congress or argued upon in federal and state courtrooms. At the height of winter, Souza traveled to Yellowstone National Park where the Bush administration had reversed a Clinton-era rule to ban snowmobiles from the park.



Million Man March

Washington, D.C., 1995

Freelance (First published in *TIME* Magazine.)

Souza has covered more than 50 protests and demonstrations on the National Mall in Washington during the past 20 years. “But none came close to the Million Man March,” he says, “in the sheer numbers of people in attendance and the purpose of their cause.” This picture was made at the end of the all-day event as the golden setting sun was reflecting off the dome of the U.S. Capitol.

CHAPTER 2 – The Presidency

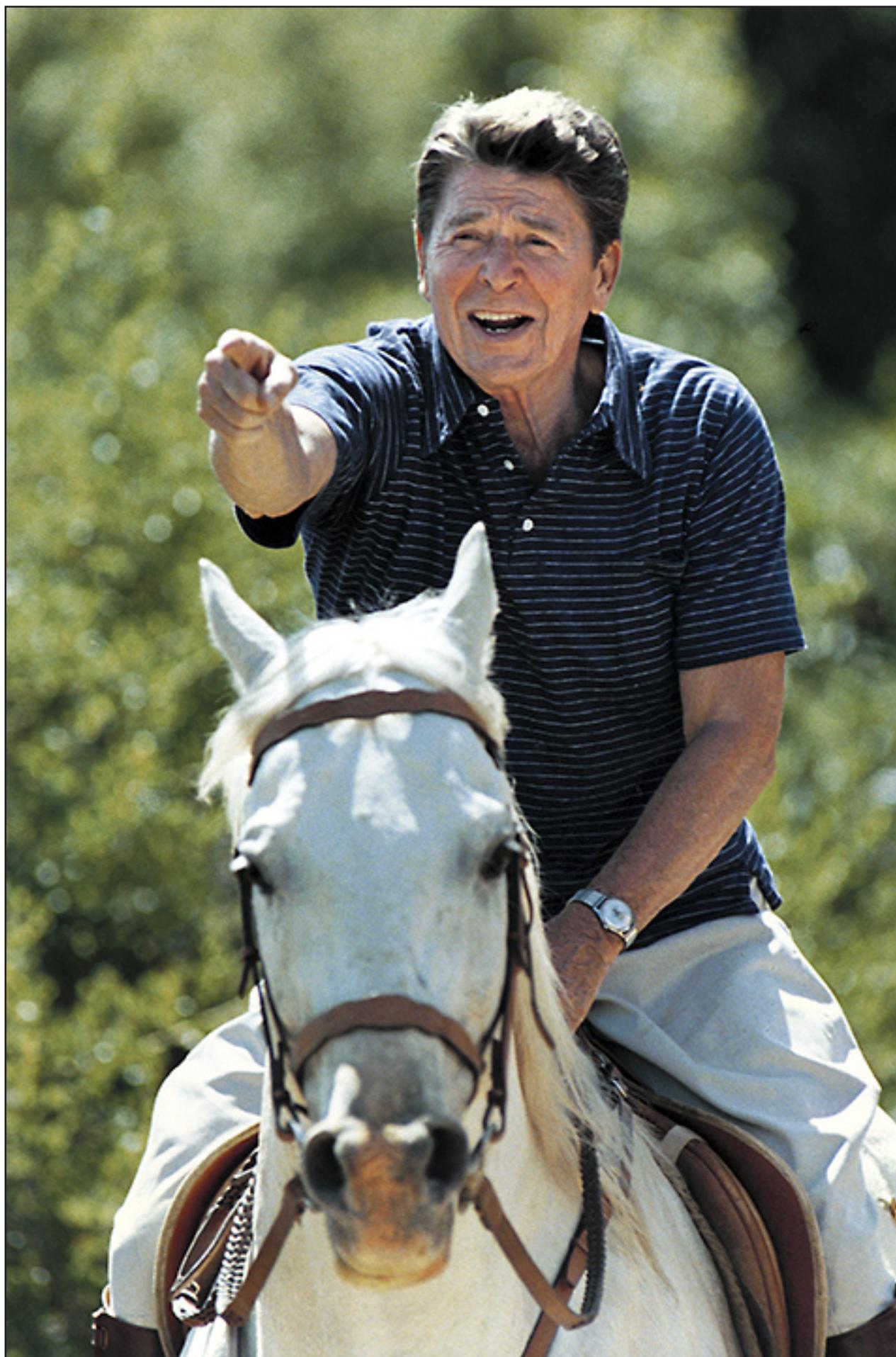
Charge!

Rancho del Cielo, Calif., 1983

The White House

(First published in *U.S. News & World Report*, 1989.)

This picture was taken at President Reagan's ranch only a couple of months after Pete Souza joined the White House staff as an official White House photographer. For the next 5 1/2 years, he documented the behind-the-scenes life of the president. "I had the a front-row seat to observing history," Souza says. The experience also gave him an unprecedented look at how the presidency functions in good times and bad. At his California ranch, Souza says, "Reagan was like the bird that had been let out of the cage." He was cooped up inside the bubble of the White House, but at the ranch he had 631 acres to roam.





Alone in the Oval

Washington, D.C., 1987

The White House

(First published in *LIFE* Magazine, 1996.)

President Reagan works alone at his desk in the Oval Office. Souza mounted a remote camera above the window, behind Reagan's desk, and triggered the camera while looking through a peephole in the door from outside the room.



Cabinet meeting

Washington, D.C., 1986

The White House (First published in *Images of Greatness*, 2004.)

Souza snapped this close-up of Reagan wearing reading glasses during a meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House.



Breakup at Reykjavik

Reykjavik, Iceland, 1986

The White House

The second summit meeting with Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev ended bitterly when President Reagan walked out on Gorbachev in a disagreement over the Strategic Defense Initiative. Souza says it was the angriest he ever observed President Reagan. Top row: the two leaders are all smiles at their initial meeting; Gorbachev walks Reagan to his limousine after the break-up of the meeting. Bottom row: Reagan delivers his final words at the limo door; and then Reagan and his aides backstage frantically rewrite his airport departure speech minutes before delivering it.



Bombs away

Los Angeles, 1986

The White House (First published in *U.S. News & World Report*, 1989.)

Souza had just walked into President Reagan's hotel suite with a presidential speechwriter before a scheduled meeting. Much to their amusement, the president was folding a piece of White House stationery into a paper airplane. Souza said Reagan looked up when they entered the room and said, "I'll be right with you, fellas." Reagan then proceeded to the hotel balcony and flicked the paper airplane into the afternoon sky. The two then joined the president, hanging over the balcony, trying to track the craft's flight. It landed on another balcony, some 30 floors below. "It showed to me," Souza says, "that there's a little bit of a kid in everyone of us, even the President of the United States."



Jokester

Aboard Air Force One, 1985

The White House

(First published in *LIFE* Magazine, 1989)

This is the way Souza says he wants to remember President Reagan: laughing at the punch line to his own joke. Souza says Reagan liked to come back to the guest section on Air Force One and try out his latest joke on anyone who would listen.



Death of a President

Aboard Special Air Mission 27000, 2004

Freelance (Not published.)

When President Reagan died, Souza was asked, at the request of former First Lady Nancy Reagan, to be the official photographer for the funeral. He was given all access in California, Washington, D.C., and aboard Special Air Mission 28000. “It was an incredible week of documenting history,” Souza says, “but also trying to keep my emotional composure.” Here, crew members drape an American flag over the casket of President Reagan as it is secured for the flight from Washington to California. The plane that carried the casket was actually Air Force One but because the sitting president was not aboard, it was instead for this occasion called Special Air Mission 27000.



Hometown view

Aboard Special Air Mission 27000, 2004

Freelance (First published in *TIME* Magazine.)

Ron Reagan and his wife, Doria, join Nancy Reagan in looking out the window as the pilot dipped the plane's wings while flying over President Reagan's hometown in Illinois.



RR's riding boots

Aboard Special Air Mission 27000, 2004

Freelance (First published in *LIFE* Magazine.)

A passenger walks past President Reagan's riding boots aboard the plane.



Touching dad

Aboard Special Air Mission 27000, 2004

Freelance (First published in *TIME* Magazine.)

Ron Reagan touches his father's casket after the family had paid a visit mid-flight en route to the funeral service in California.



A hero's welcome

Simi Valley, Calif., 2004

Freelance (Not published.)

The hearse carrying President Reagan's casket makes its way to the Reagan Library from the military airport at Pt. Mugu.



Final good-bye

Simi Valley, Calif., 2004

Freelance (Not published.)

Nancy Reagan weeps as she is comforted by her son, Ron Reagan, and daughter, Patti Davis, while Michael Reagan, President Reagan's adopted son with his first wife, pauses in the background.



Transfer of power

Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 1993

Freelance (Not published.)

While the 1993 presidential inauguration was taking place at the U.S. Capitol, Souza photographed workers at the White House as they rearrange furniture in the Oval Office. The desk of the 41st president, George H.W. Bush, at right, is on the way out, as the desk of the 42nd president, Bill Clinton, at left, waits to be moved into its place. After Clinton's desk and chair were in their final position, Souza was invited to be the first person to sit in President Clinton's chair.



The Clintons

Washington, D.C., 1998

Chicago Tribune (Not published.)

In the midst of the impeachment scandal, President Clinton looks towards his wife, Hillary, at an event on the South Lawn of the White House. This was after Clinton admitted he had an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky but before he was impeached by the House of Representatives.



The Bushes

Philadelphia, 2000

Chicago Tribune

Following his speech at the Republican National Convention, then Gov. George W. Bush hugs his wife Laura. A small group of photographers was permitted to be on the side of the stage and Souza says, “I was extremely lucky that the hug took place right in front of where I happened to be positioned.”



Inaugural protest

Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2001

Chicago Tribune

Protesters shout as newly-inaugurated President George W. Bush passes by in his motorcade en route from the U.S. Capitol to the White House. Many were upset that the Supreme Court had ruled Bush the winner in the contested Presidential election over Al Gore who received the most number of popular votes.



A rising star

Moscow, Russia, 2005

Chicago Tribune

U.S. Senator Barack Obama views the Kremlin as he walks through Red Square in Moscow. On this trip to the former Soviet Union, Obama was under the tutelage of Republican Senator Richard Lugar, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as they toured and monitored the dismantling of Cold War munitions. Obama, the junior senator from Illinois elected in 2004, is being cited as a possible presidential candidate despite his youth and inexperience.



Obama in Africa

Nairobi, Kenya, 2006

Chicago Tribune (Not published.)

On a visit to the country where his father was born, Senator Obama addresses a large crowd in the Kibera section of Nairobi. Obama himself was born in Hawaii. Souza accompanied Obama on this 2006 trip to South Africa, Kenya, Chad and Ethiopia.

CHAPTER 3 –After 9/11



The Pentagon

Arlington, Va., 9/12/01

Chicago Tribune

On September 11th Souza was in Chicago, scheduled to fly home to Washington that afternoon. Instead, after all flights were canceled, he rented a car and drove home. The Pentagon fire was still smoldering when he arrived at 2AM on the 12th; he went home for a couple of hours and returned just before sunrise to make this picture.



9/11 Funeral

New York, N.Y., 9/15/01

Chicago Tribune

This was the first funeral for a victim from the World Trade Center terrorist attack. A priest, Father Mychal Judge, had died while giving last rites to firemen at the scene. Souza says the teary-eyed face of firefighter Joe Papillo saluting as Judge's casket passed by expressed what much of the nation was feeling.



Fleeing the Taliban

Northern Afghanistan, 10/20/01

Chicago Tribune

A few weeks after 9/11, Souza crossed the Tajikistan border into northern Afghanistan that was still under control of the Northern Alliance. The soldiers, with help from U.S. warplanes, were fighting the Taliban who controlled most of the country and had harbored terrorists from al-Qaeda including Osama bin Laden. This picture was made on Souza's first day in Afghanistan and shows refugees who had walked all night to flee their Taliban-controlled village.



Food give-away

Khawajabahawaudin, Afghanistan, 10/22/01

Chicago Tribune

A young Afghan girl prepares to “sign” a ledger with her thumbprint as she received her family’s allotment of wheat during a humanitarian food give-away program. After this picture appeared on the front page of the Tribune, Souza said he received many emails from readers complimenting him on the photograph. “It was strange,” Souza says. “I was in a part of the country that had no electricity, no plumbing, and little food, yet I could power my laptop with a car battery, and then connect the computer to a satellite phone so I could check my email.”



“Fishing” for dinner

Northern Afghanistan, 11/08/01

Chicago Tribune

As he was heading into the Hindu Kush mountains, Souza came across an Afghan man “fishing”— wacking a fish unconscious for his dinner. “It was a bright, sunny afternoon,” Souza recalls, “and this man proudly held up for me the fish he had just killed for his dinner.”



Hindu Kush

Northern Afghanistan, 11/08/01

Chicago Tribune

Souza (his shadow seen in the lower right) and his colleague, Paul Salopek (upper left), cross the 15,000-foot Anjuman Pass by horseback. This was the only route into the Panjsher Valley where the battle for control of Kabul was likely to take place. The sun went down as they proceeded over the mountain pass and temperatures quickly dropped below zero. “I thought we were going to freeze to death,” Souza remembers. On the backside of the mountain pass, the two happened upon a small hut with a wood-burning stove where they were welcomed by the Northern Alliance soldiers to spend the night. “That little stove probably saved our lives,” Souza says. The next day they were able to hitch a ride on a truck into the valley.



Anti-Taliban fighters

Rabat, Afghanistan, 11/12/01

Chicago Tribune

Soldiers of the so-called Northern Alliance head to the front lines as they make their final push, with support from American bombers, against the Taliban for ultimate control of Kabul. Souza said he could hear sniper bullets whizzing by overhead as they headed down this road. “Not long after this picture was taken,” Souza recalls, “a RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) exploded about 50 feet from where I was standing, near the Northern Alliance tank.” He said he learned a valuable lesson, “Don’t stay too close to the tanks because that’s the first thing the Taliban tried to take out.”



B-52 bomb drop

Rabat, Afghanistan, 11/12/01

Chicago Tribune

A Northern Alliance soldier watches an American B-52 plane bomb the front lines of the Taliban. Souza says at the time of the bomb drop he thought two things, “One, thank God the bomb drop was accurate; two, I was hoping they nailed those Taliban fighters that were firing the RPG’s and sniper bullets in my direction.”



Wounded soldier

Rabat, Afghanistan, 11/12/01

Chicago Tribune (Not published.)

As rocket fire dissipated, Northern Alliance soldiers were yelling to Souza in Farsi, pointing at the ground as he walked. Though he couldn't speak the language, Souza says he understood what they meant: 'watch out for landmines.' A few minutes later, he photographed a soldier being carried toward him. "One of his feet had been blown off from a landmine," Souza says, "and as they got closer, I could see he was near death." Later, returning from the front lines, Souza learned that these same soldiers had commandeered their vehicle and driver to take the wounded soldier to a hospital. When the vehicle returned, Souza says, "the back seat was covered in the wounded soldier's blood."

Dead Taliban

On the road to Kabul, 11/13/01

Chicago Tribune (Not published.)

The next day, Souza came across these Taliban fighters along the road from Rabat to Kabul. He said it looked like they had been shot and killed at close range but there were no witnesses to verify what had happened. Passersby couldn't help but gawk at the dead bodies. Tribune editors decided not to publish this photo, though Souza felt that it showed an important part of war—death.





Victory parade

Kabul, Afghanistan, 11/13/01

Chicago Tribune (Not published.)

Northern Alliance soldiers triumphantly enter Kabul. For some it was a muted celebration; not everyone in this war-torn city knew what the Northern Alliance being in power meant for them and their future.



Celebration

Kabul, Afghanistan, 11/13/01

Chicago Tribune

Under the Taliban regime, Afghans were not allowed to listen to music. A shopkeeper celebrates their demise by blasting a cassette tape to the joy of a group of mostly young boys (who were also reacting to the sight of an American man taking pictures from the roof of the shop).



Dusty exit

Kabul, Afghanistan, 11/16/01

Chicago Tribune

Afghans leave a soccer stadium after watching a game for the first time in six years; the Taliban forbid soccer to be played. Instead, the Taliban had used this stadium for public executions.



Shakila

Kabul, Afghanistan, 11/20/01

Chicago Tribune

Souza spent a couple of days photographing patients at the Kabul Children's Hospital. They had no electricity, and were in dire need of basic medical equipment. Shakila was a young girl with a variety of ailments that couldn't be treated; dried blood was caked on her mouth. She needed warmth but the only heat that could be provided was from the sun streaming through the window behind her. "Those eyes," Souza remembers, "haunted me for a long time."