



TREY HILL PHOTOGRAPHS

**2010
ANNUAL**

VOLUME
01

On The Cover

While in Yerevan, Armenia in the fall of 2010, I heard a rumor about a decapitated statue of Vladimir Lenin kept under lock and key at the National Gallery, but getting access to it would be difficult and bringing a camera, nearly impossible.

Armenia hasn't exactly realized economic windfall in the twenty years since communism "ensured everyone a job," so the fallen likeness of the Father of the USSR, for those who remember the "good old days" of the Soviet system, has become a source of oddly placed and well guarded shame.

My guide, a sly Armenian woman, took me to the National Gallery and scored us a free tour of the incredible art. As the museum was closing, she took me around the side of the building and I watched quietly as she sweet talked her way past the guards in the courtyard where the statue was kept out of sight from the public. It seemed I would be getting my chance to see a piece of history few have seen and tell a story few have heard.

As I stood in awe of the massive figure – its feet longer than I am tall – she encouraged me to grab a photo. However, as I pulled out my camera, guards descended on us and we were escorted out of the courtyard. The image of the hulking bronze would have to remain a memory and the shame it represents, unseen.

The next morning, as we drove past the gallery, my guide recounted the story to her husband, an associate of the Prime Minister. He promptly stopped the van and told me to get out.

The confusion on my face must have sounded like a question.

"We are going to get your photo," he said matter-of-factly before briefing me on what would come next, "Ready your camera, if anyone tries to stop us, I will hold them back. Keep walking. Don't turn around. Be ready."

We walked with purpose past the guard house and, as he predicted, they yelled after us. I didn't stop or look back as he ran interference. I calmly rounded the corner at the end of the courtyard and pulled out my camera as I walked along the fallen icon and fired two frames – the first is on the cover and the second, a nearly identical frame, shows the guard who proceeded to confiscate my camera, entering frame right.

What came next was a thing of diplomatic beauty, but unimportant in this space. Suffice it to say, my camera was returned, unharmed, and I had an important image in a cultural photo essay (full essay on page 78).

In many ways, though, the photo on the cover is more than just an image in an essay; it represents the professional journey I took in 2010: nothing came easily, a million obstacles blocked the way in route to each job and, yet, I had to get the story in spite of it all. The line between this book in its current form and a handful of almosts is pretty thin, and for me, the underlying lesson is this: be tenacious when opportunity comes, keep walking, don't look back and stay ready.

I'm incredibly proud of the work in this book, but, more than that, I'm grateful that I was given the opportunity to tell these stories and for the people who helped me bring them home.

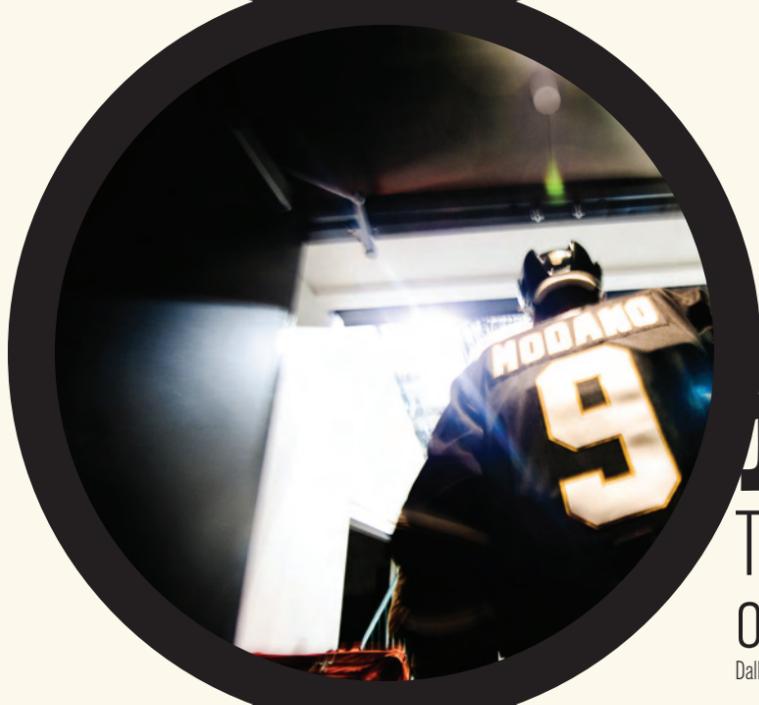




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FOR WORD

Trey Hill and I met under distressing conditions.

I had been working for online community and photography magazine *JPG* for about two months, and one of the founders had just been fired. The epicenter of outrage was a Flickr forum full of nastier language than I care to repeat. I'll forever be grateful to Trey for being the first voice of reason in that forum to speak up against the vitriol. He caused a ripple effect of rational, calm thought. And he did it not for personal advantage or attention, nor to jump into a fight, but just because it needed doing.

Internet trolls and online hate are niche problems. Trey's work since then, documenting everything from the way sports can bring a community together to a leper colony in India, is more important than the way he turned the tide of angry online villagers away from the *JPG* team. But his simple act for us showed me his character, calm, and magnetism – and I think that speaks to everything he does.

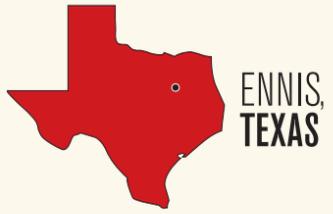
I've been lucky enough to have many opportunities to publish Trey's work over the last four years, both in *JPG* and my own subsequent venture, *Pictory*. He's got a knack for narrative, an excess of talent, and a signature minimalistic style. But what makes him stand out to me is his quiet brand of advocacy: doing the right thing for the right reasons. It's evident in everything he does.

Laura Brunow Miner

Founder/Editor/Designer, Pictory (pictormag.com)

“Your beliefs will be the light by which you see, but they will not be what you see and they will not be a substitute for seeing.”

Flannery O'Conner



ADDISON ROAD

**“Great guy.
Great experience.
Great pictures.”**

-Ryan Gregg, Addison Road





“Trey is a storyteller. He took the personality of the band and he told our story.”

-Ryan Simmons, Addison Road

“The farther you are from the play, the closer you are to it.”

Brett Hull

The Final Days of Mike Modano



DALLAS, TX & MINNEAPOLIS, MN



Before HBO pulled back the curtain on the NHL in the highly acclaimed *24/7 Penguins/Capitals: Road to the NHL Winter Classic*, the Dallas Stars were doing something remarkable for their fans – inviting them onto the bench, into the room and on the road through a series of images they commissioned me to make.

In my second season shooting these away-from-the-puck moments, I found myself on the team plane when Mike Modano climbed onboard with his wife, Mandy, and to my surprise, they sat just across the aisle from me. Before take-off, Mike was handed a stack of reading material on the previous night's game.

And what a game it was.

For weeks leading up to the puck dropping on what would ultimately be Mike Modano's final home game as a Dallas Star, the question was already being asked, "What would become of the face of hockey in Texas?" I have to admit, the fan in me was wondering the same thing. So, when the Dallas Stars called and asked me to document the final two games of the season, I knew I'd be witnessing – at incredibly close range – something very special.

And on April 8, with the team solidly out of the playoff picture for the second straight season, it seemed the fans were coming to grips with the reality that this might actually be the last time they saw Modano's black sweater billowing behind him as he skated gracefully through the neutral zone at American Airlines Center. For more than two minutes during a break in play late in the third period, the fans in Dallas showed Mike Modano how much he meant to them. And Mike Modano returned the favor.

With just 1:47 to go in regulation and the Stars down by a goal, Mike Modano did what Mike Modano had always done in Dallas – he gave the building something to cheer about. After tying the game late in regulation, Modano went on to score one of two shootout goals and lifted the Stars over the Ducks.

And there he was, right across the aisle from me as we flew to Minnesota—the place where Mike Modano's career began. Despite the fact that both the Stars and the Wild were well out of the playoffs (making this game, in effect, meaningless), the trip back to where it all started was front page news. The Xcel Energy Center was crawling with old friends, fans and teammates.

Nothing that happened on the ice that night could have lived up to the emotional high of April 8, but the poetry of Mike Modano wrapping up his Dallas Stars career in front of the same fans where it all started was incredibly compelling.





FOCUS, COMMITMENT, ATTENTION TO DETAIL



Modano tried addressing the team after the game, but the emotion of the evening overtook him.



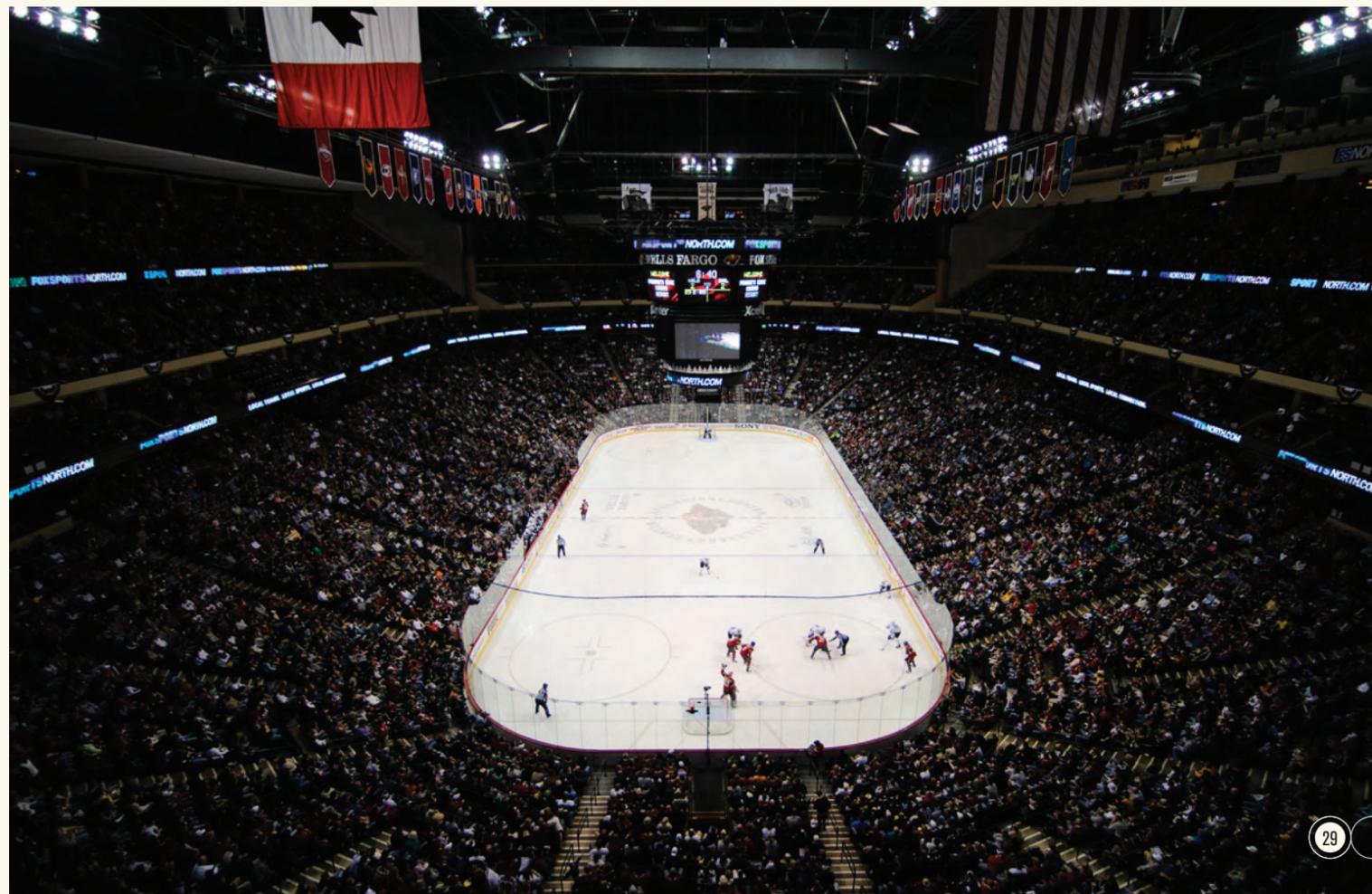
Modano arrives back in Minneapolis, where his career began as a Minnesota North Star.

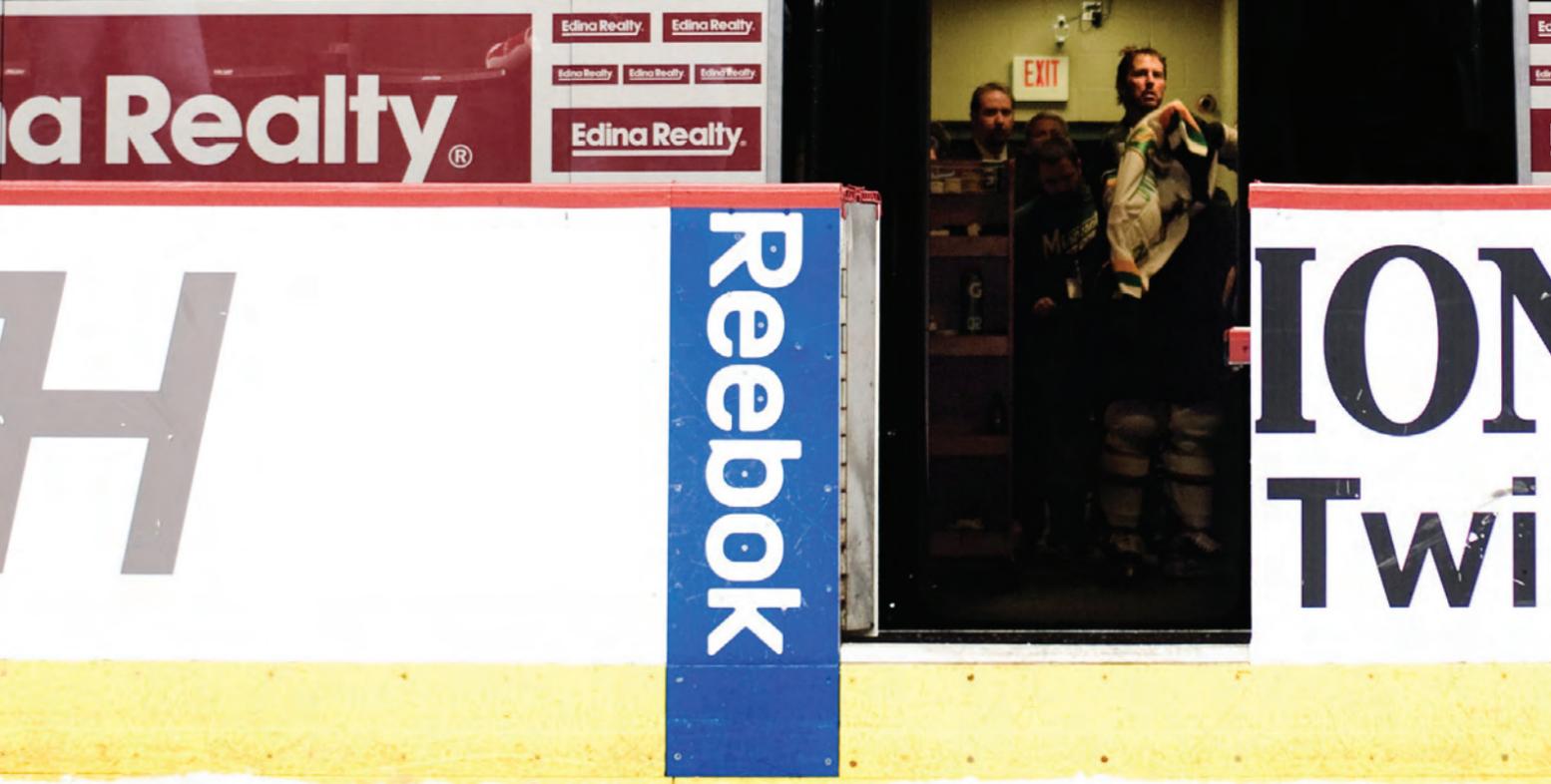


In Minnesota,
long-time fans,
old friends and
the media came
out in droves.



In the first period, during a break in play, the entire building rose to their feet to honor the greatest American-born hockey player.







“When I’m asked about my work, I try to explain that there is no mystery involved. It is work. But things happen all the time that are unexpected, uncontrolled, unexplainable, even magical. The work prepares you for that moment.”

Annie Leibovitz



▶ THE RIVER PEOPLE



My father first introduced me to India when I was in the third grade. He took a month long business trip and returned home with tales of densely packed cities rich in color and ripe with spice. I was hooked; India became a dream destination for me.

When my client and I touched down in Jorhat, in the Indian state of Assam, we had already been traveling for eight hours. Ahead of us was another twelve in a tightly packed four wheel drive. We followed a narrow little highway that traced the Brahmaputra river to the west through the Kargazinga National Park then doubled back on the other side of the river and traced the southern border of Arunachal Pradesh – the gateway to India's rugged and hotly disputed North East Frontier.

We settled for the night in the sleepy boarder town of Banderdewa. I woke before dawn and was greeted with a vast and vibrant beauty. The long-standing dispute between China and India over Arunachal, a name that translates "dawn-lit mountains," made sense, and, for a fleeting moment, the Hindu belief that nature itself deserves worship seemed logical because the Creator was reflected in everything.

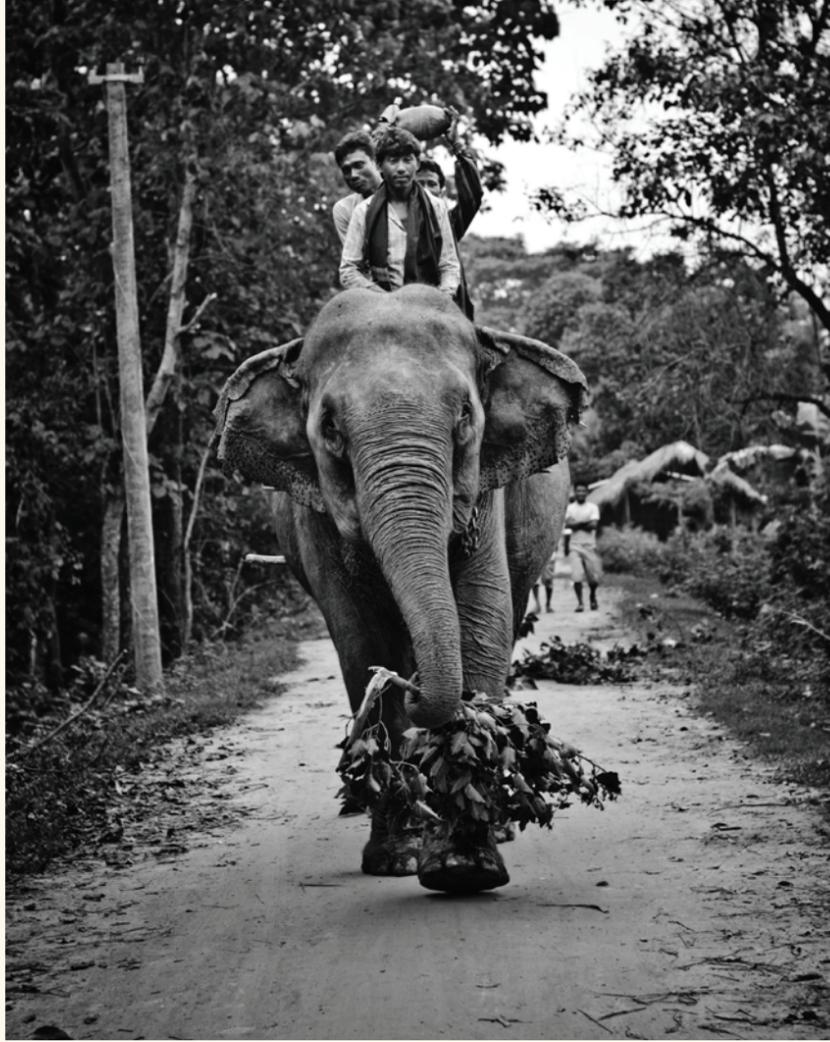
It was Sunday and, while the dawn was doing spectacular things in the mountains to our north, we would be going deeper into Mising territory to visit a local church, started by a Mising missionary – this one being the twelfth generation of churches planted by local missionaries.

The Mising, a riparian people who live in stilted, thatch roof homes, suffer relentless annual flooding. They are a rugged people who work the land and, for the most part, pray to Shiva – the Hindu destroyer – to not destroy them. Because of the high waters and a bridge in disrepair, the small village we visited was only accessible by a hand-carved canoe and when we arrived, the church service was already in full voice.

Their shrill melody, kept in time by a single tambourine, sang of grace and life. It was a strange sound, even for India. But as I sat there on the split bamboo floor, George Bernard Shaw's words rang true, "On the face of India are the tender expressions which carry the mark of the Creator's hand."

This was not the India of my childhood fantasies. This India, like the Mising, was lush and vast and real.











“Ring the bells that still can ring / Forget your perfect offering / There is a crack in everything / That’s how the light gets in.”

Leonard Cohen



Sunrise over La Habana Vieja reveals an almost post-apocalyptic city that was once the crown jewel of the Western Hemisphere.



▶ **HOPE AMIDST THE RUINS**

ON more than one occasion during my time in Cuba, the beautiful island nation just ninety miles south of Florida was described as a prison. Yet, the Cuban church, cut off from the global body because of the sea in every direction and the watchful eye of an oppressive regime, flourishes because of the bold faith of those who have been set free.

As my client and I worked through the details of the trip, I kept coming back to Isaiah 61, which seemed to beautifully contain the juxtaposition of hope in the midst of despair that I expected to find in Cuba.

Though this is the first time the images have been shown in the context of the Isaiah passage, this was my original intention for how the work should be displayed.





Drying laundry billows in the wind high above a Havana street.



A police officer checks a woman's purse to make sure she isn't illegally selling items to tourists.

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me ... to proclaim liberty to the captives ... that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified.

Isaiah 61:1 & 3

A mural bearing the flag of the old Soviet Union in the electrical room of a residential building.



They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

Isaiah 61:4

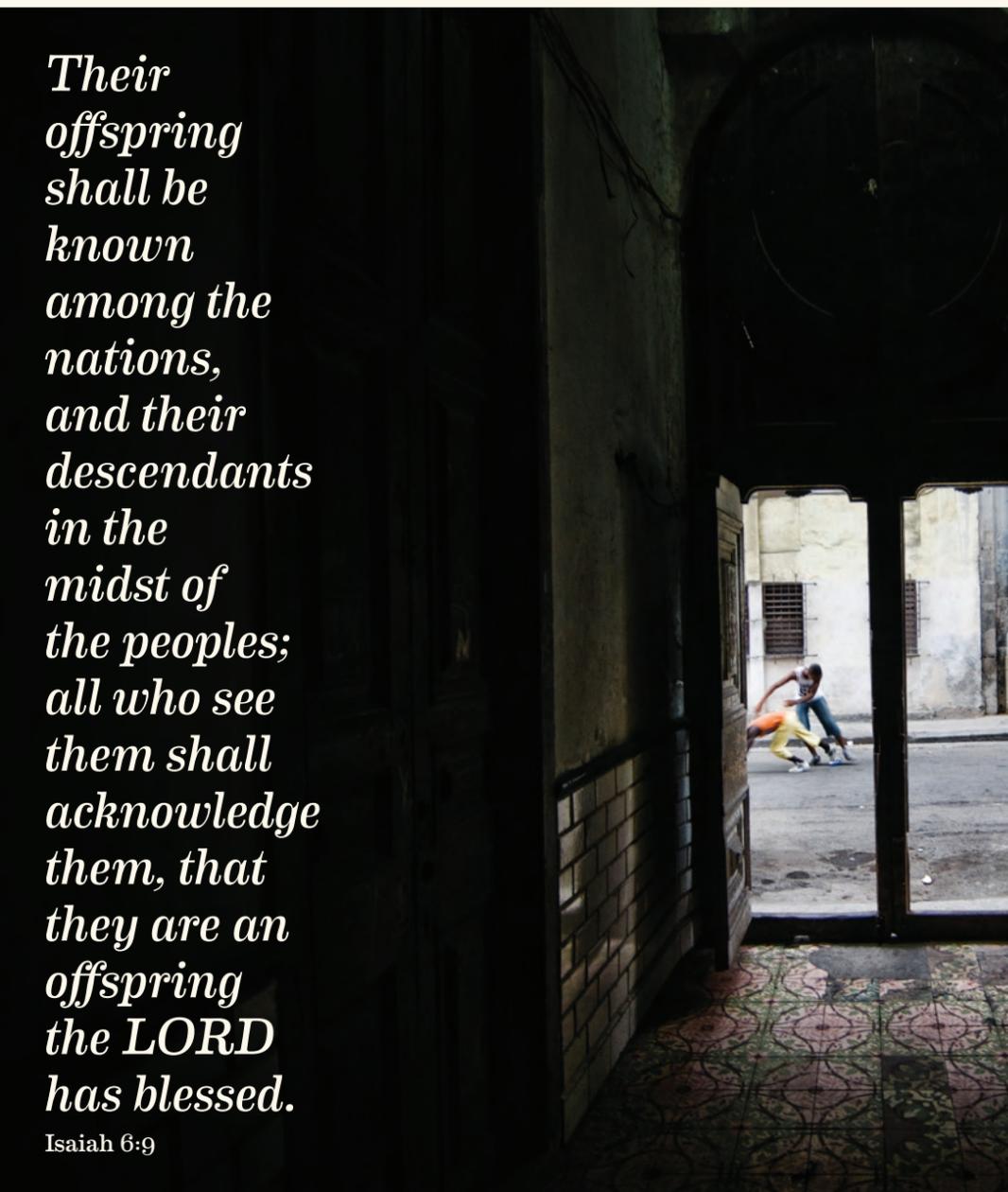
*For I the
LORD love
justice; I hate
robbery and
wrong; I will
faithfully give
them their
recompense,
and I will
make an
everlasting
covenant
with them.*

Isaiah 6:8



The tobacco farmer and his family have tended the same land for five generations, however, since Castro came to power more than 50 years ago, the family has subsisted below poverty level.





Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed.

Isaiah 6:9



*For as the earth
brings forth its
sprouts, and as
a garden causes
what is sown
in it to sprout
up, so the Lord
GOD will cause
righteousness
and praise to
sprout up before
all the nations.*

Isaiah 61:11

The sun sets over the Eden-esque beauty of Viñales National Park in Pinar del Rio on Cuba's west coast.

“ Why give your life to an idea that’s not worth your life? ”

Robert McKee



UN TOUCH ABLE



IN

a collection of makeshift tents on the outskirts of a town far from anywhere I'd ever heard of lives a community of people who understand, deeply and personally, what Cornelius Plantinga calls "the vandalism of shalom." The title of his book is my exact sentiment: this is *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*.

These beautiful people live with a horrible disease that most don't know still exists. But Leprosy, that ancient skin disease, is very real for Ravannah (pictured at right) and the thirty families that live in his community. I first heard about them during pre-production for a series of short films I shot in India for East-West Ministries. As I learned more about their community and what the disease had done to them both physically and socially, I couldn't ignore the rumbling in my soul. Nor could I turn a blind eye to the fact that this disease had robbed them of everything, including their humanity.

The camera is an incredible tool. It has the power to put a world-view in context, to articulate an entire belief system in a way that volumes of

text cannot. But asking it to heal wounds, restore stolen dignity and bridge the gap between untouchable and clean seemed like a tall order. But that's what I hoped it could do, if only for a moment.

I went with a simple plan – listen to the people's stories, earn their trust, set a light, carefully consider posture, point the camera and press the shutter. My hope was that the resulting images could, in some small measure, restore to them the dignity that is theirs as image-bearers of God.

Image-bearers of God – the very idea runs counter to everything these people experience in their daily lives, and yet, this identity is more true than anything they experience in their daily lives.

After spending an evening listening, lighting, posing and pressing the shutter, I went back to my hotel room, processed all the images and printed them out. The next morning we returned to the village, photographs in hand. To this day, I don't know if they will ever fully understand what I intended to communicate through the photographs, but I pray that when they see the pictures they will remember to hope in the day Shalom is restored and everything is put back to the way it is supposed to be, because, though they remain untouchable, this hope does not.



AKASH







“All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle.”

Flas Saint-François Assisi



YEREVAN,
ARMENIA

OUT OF DARK PLACES

a cultural essay from Armenia



Despite the ornate beauty and warm light raking through the windows of the ballroom on the top floor of the National Gallery, I sensed a quiet sadness in the room that seemed to mirror the dolor present in so many aspects of Armenian life.

I was there to direct a promotional film about a creative learning center called Tumo. Built by Sam & Sylva Simonian, two passionate Armenian diaspora currently living in The States, Tumo was designed to offer future hope for a people who have known mostly grief and persecution for centuries.

In the beginning of the fourth century, King Tiridates established Christianity as the sole religion of Armenia and in doing so created the world's first Christian state. However, Armenia was surrounded by peoples who persecuted them for their beliefs, so they fashioned sanctuaries in the sides of mountains.

Sixteen-hundred years later, the people of Armenia again found themselves under the heavy hand of persecution as the Ottoman Empire systematically tried to destroy the Armenian people. Again, the people were forced to flee, but this time it was to neighboring nations and far away countries – Russia, France, the United States, Lebanon.

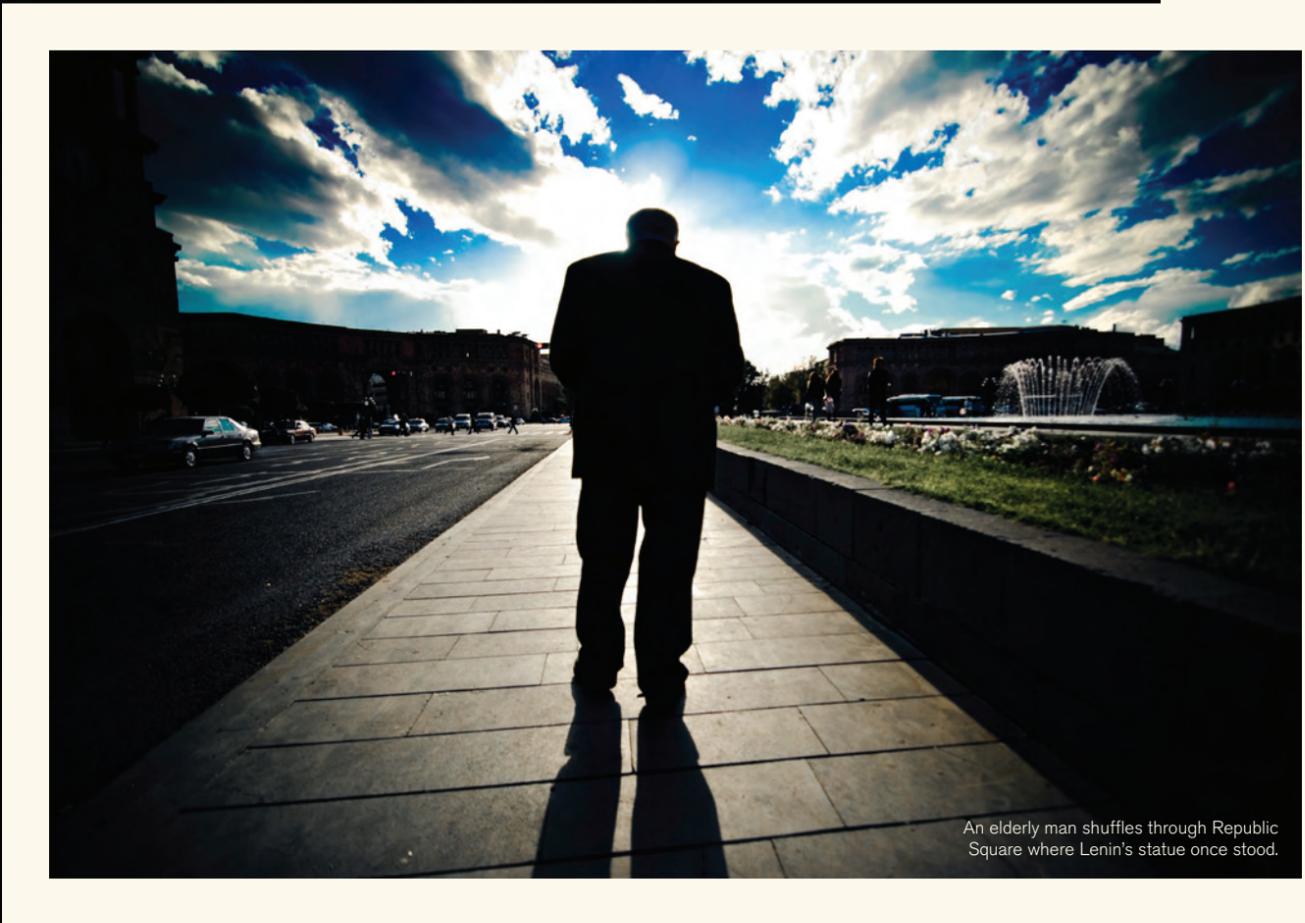
And their culture, like that grand ballroom, might continue to steep in sadness except for those long rays of afternoon sun, like Sam & Sylva, raking through the room.



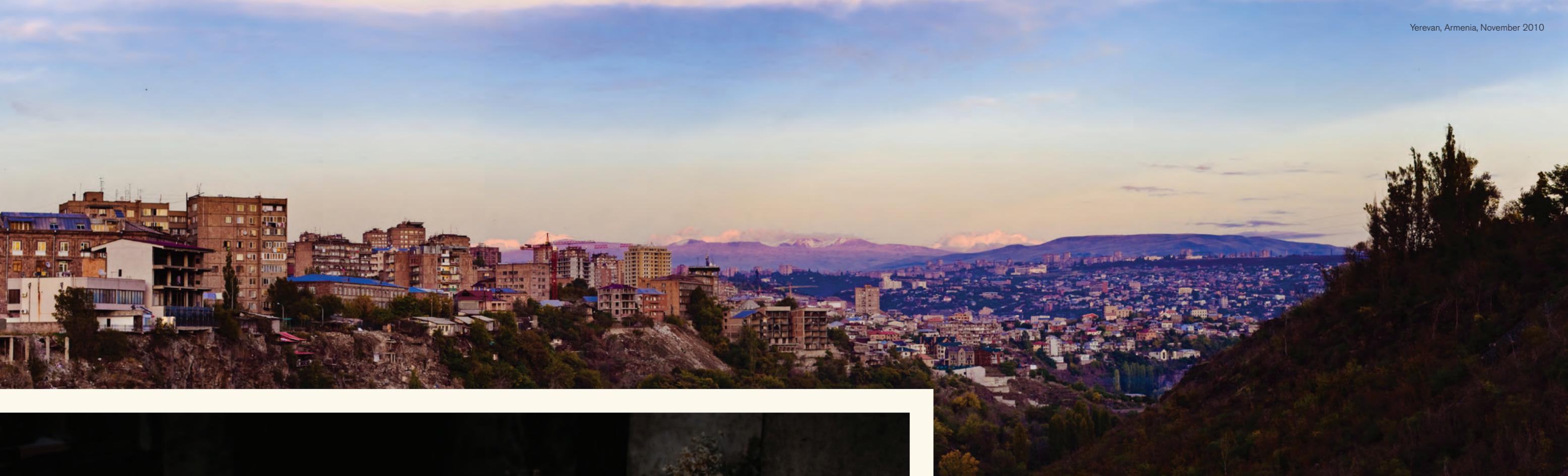
Main chapel of Gerhard Monastery, completed in 1215 as an addition to the 4th century monastery complex built in the caves along the Azat river.



The Armenian Genocide Memorial honors the nearly 1.5 million Armenians killed between 1915 and 1917.



An elderly man shuffles through Republic Square where Lenin's statue once stood.







A young couple at the Armenian Genocide Memorial.



Sam & Sylva, in the bleachers at Tumo.



“WHETHER IT IS A 3-D
DIGITAL HOLOGRAPH
OR AN IMAGE BURNED
ONTO A PIECE OF WOOD,
THE THING THAT MAKES
YOU WANT TO SEE THE
PICTURE IS THE STORY.
IN THE END, WHAT’S
NEXT IS WHAT ALWAYS
WAS ... **THE STORY.**”

Alec Soth

Follow **Trey's story** @squarerootof9

Special Thanks to Addison Road, Mike Modano, The Dallas Stars, East-West Ministries, Gary Sleeper, Sam & Sylva Simonian, Laura Brunow Miner, Colin Faulkner, Kurt Nelson, Barry Durman, Bob West, Kristen Schuler, Scott McClellan, Julie Rhodes, Marie Lou Papazian, Leduan Reina & Kiran Kumar.

Layout, design & general awesomeness by Josh Wiese

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