

*Grant's View***Through *the* lens**

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Karsh, people know. Photographer. Portraitist. Shot Hemingway, Einstein and a scowling Winston Churchill in black and white. Famous enough to be known by his surname.

Ted Grant, no one knows. He, too, is a photographer and a good one. Yet he labours behind his camera in anonymity.

Grant is a thin, wiry man with a photographer's discerning stare. While his left eye locks on a subject, his right eye perpetually looks up and to the left. The eye has limited vision.

A weak nerve has left him cockeyed, making more amazing the life-time achievement award he got from his peers earlier this year. He shared the honour with Yousuf Karsh, Canada's most celebrated photographer.

"I'm in pretty good company," Grant said.

The National Archives of Canada, which has a Ted Grant Photo Collection, says he has "the eye of an artist, the concentration of a surgeon, and the reflexes of a cat."

While Karsh works in a studio where he can control all elements, Grant has made his name in the operating theatre with surgeons, on the open range with cowboys, and in sporting arenas with athletes, where a split-second's hesitation means a missed photo.

**ASSIGNMENTS TO THE SUMMER AND WINTER** Olympics made Grant a globetrotter -- Sapporo, Japan, Munich, Germany, Montreal, Lake Placid, N.Y., Seoul, Calgary, Albertville, France; and Barcelona, Spain.

After moving to Victoria from Ottawa 12 years ago, Grant adopted his own unique training regimen for the Olympics. He would stand on the shoulder of the Pat Bay Highway while shooting the license plates of speeding cars. When he captured the number, in focus, he knew he was ready.



DEBRA BRASH/TIMES COLONIST

### **Sport has been a big part of TED Grant's Career in Photography.**

Grant can remember when Canada's weakness in sport made covering the Olympics an easy job.

"I only had to watch for the red and white maple leaf," he recalls. "As we got better, we (photographers) had to work our asses off."

The walls of the basement den of the modest Gordon Head home that he shares with his wife Irene are graced by Grant's photos. Here's one he took of John Travolta on the set of *Urban Cowboy*. Here's Ted with Prince Charles. Here's Mark Tewksbury doing the backstroke at the Barcelona Olympics on his way to a gold medal. Over the fireplace rests the photograph that could have made Grant as famous as Karsh.

The 100-metre dash at the Seoul Olympics - pitting Canada's Ben Johnson against Carl Lewis of the United States and Linford Christie of Britain - was expected to be the highlight of the 1988 Games.

Grant scouted the track during the trial races, picked a prime spot a few metres past the finish

line, and arrived six hours before the race to claim his place.

He remembers the starter's gun firing and trying to focus on the runners as they sped down the track. A late-arriving photographer tried to slip in beside Grant. "Bang, bang, somebody's bumping my arm. I didn't look to see who it was - didn't have time- and I just drilled him with my elbow." Just then, the runners, led by Johnson, flashed past in a record time of 9.79 seconds.

Grant developed his film and was shocked by one of his frames. Johnson, in triumph, points his right arm and index finger skyward as he looks back at a stricken Lewis.

"I thought, 'This is incredible. How lucky can I get?' I'm so excited I drag over this poor Korean cleaning woman and make her look at my photograph."

Johnson, of course, tested positive for steroids, lost his gold medal and brought shame to his adopted land. And Grant saw a certain award-winner reduced to a historical curiosity. "I coulda killed him," Grant says.

**HIS NEWS ASSIGNMENTS** have taken him to Vietnam for a jungle war, to Ukraine in the aftermath of Chernobyl, to the Middle East for the Six-Day War of 1967. "If you're going to war," he said, "go with the Israelis. It starts on a Monday and you're heading home on Saturday."

He has chronicled the final days of Sue Rodriguez, the Victoria woman with Lou Gehrig's disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis). He has also chronicled the lives of Progressive Conservative leaders Robert Stanfield, Joe Clark, Brian Mulroney and Kim Campbell, as well as Premiers Bill Davis, Gary Filmer, Grant Devine and Brian Peckford.

Grant was the official campaign photographer for the Tories in 1974, '79, '80, '84, '88 and '93. Those photos of Mulroney on campaign posters in 1984 and 1988? Pullout the darts and take a good look at Ted Grant's work.

"When I was born," he said, "my father branded me on the butt PC."

Ted was born in Toronto in 1929, a few months before the stock-market crash. His father drove a beer truck and money wasn't available for such

luxuries as a camera. Young Ted saved his money to buy a second-hand bicycle so that he could get a job as a grocery delivery boy.

He married Irene (nee Irons) in 1949 and on his 21st birthday she presented him with the present he had always wanted - a camera. The Argus A2 cost a princely \$30. He still has it.

Grant knew so little about photography at the time that he used his wife's baking tins in the jerry-rigged darkroom. Of course, the chemicals corroded the tins and he had to buy her a new set.

"That's how it started and it never stopped. Photography, to me, isn't work; moving concrete blocks is work. Photography is a romance, an affair of the heart."

**HIS FIRST PUBLISHED SHOT** was of a tire popping off a race car at a speedway in suburban Kanata, Ont. He sold it to the Ottawa Citizen. "Photo by Ted Grant" ran the credit and he was hooked.

Early in his career, Grant was working the sidelines of an Ottawa Rough Riders game. He was looking through his camera at Ronnie Stewart as he came racing around the far end of the line of scrimmage. Stewart was running right at him. What Grant failed to see were two charging defenders who ran Stewart out of bounds into the photographer.

"I was knocked flying. I was on the bottom of a pile with Ron Stewart and these two big defensive guys on top of me. They get up and return to their huddles and I'm just laying there. My first reaction was, 'Oh my god, how's my camera?'"

Grant's career has made him a Zelig-like figure on the sporting scene. He is at a bullfight in Spain in 1962; at Edinburgh for the Commonwealth Games in 1970; at Munich when terrorists murder Israeli athletes in 1972; at the Montreal Olympics in 1976; at Victoria as photographic co-ordinator for the Commonwealth Games in 1994 ...

Advancing years have hardly slowed him down. In the past 13 months, he has been an advisor and coordinator at both the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur and the Pan-American Games in Winnipeg.

Grant, who likes to use Leica cameras, shoots in black and white using existing light.

"Black and white is intellectual," he said. "It allows people to use their imagination. It creates an entirely different mood. When you photograph people in colour, you photograph their clothes. But when you photograph people in black and white, you capture their souls."

He is currently at work on his sixth book, a collection of his work which has a working title of "Real Photographers Shoot Black and White Sometimes Colour!"

This summer, Grant and Karsh were presented with lifetime achievement awards by the Canadian Association of Photographers and Illustrators in Communications.

**PART OF THE CHARM OF HIS LIFE** has been in crafting art from adversity. In 1980, Grant underwent 5 1/2 hours of neurosurgery in Ottawa to repair nerve damage that was affecting vision in his good eye. He couldn't read or watch television, and in his despair and self-pity convinced himself that his career was over. "I may as well get a tin cup and pencils," he remembers moaning to his wife, "and go sit on Sparks Street."

Angry, Irene went shopping. She returned with a gift for Ted. With blurred vision, he reached out to touch a tin cup with pencils. She was right. If he didn't quit, his career was far from over.