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Stop Sign: Defining a Photojournalist's Role

Featuring NIKON AMBASSADOR LYNSEY ADDARIO



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The story *Veiled Rebellion*, with Lynsey Addario's photographs, appeared in the December, 2010, issue of *National Geographic* magazine. D700, AF-S Zoom-NIKKOR 17-35mm f/2.8D IF-ED, 1/1250 second, f/5.6, ISO 125, manual exposure, Matrix metering.

By definition the job of the photojournalist is to tell a story. But what happens when a photojournalist's actions change the story?

"I was shooting for a *National Geographic* story on women in Afghanistan," says Lynsey Addario, "and one major part of the story was about maternal mortality. Afghanistan had one of the highest rates of women dying in childbirth in the world at that time."

For about two weeks Lynsey covered remote areas in the province of Badakhshan. "The limited network of roads was one of the reasons women die in

childbirth," she says. "When a woman goes into labor she has to get on a donkey and ride for hours to get to a medical center."

On the way back to the province capital of Fayzabad, Lynsey and her translator, Dr. Zeba, saw two women on the side of the road. "They were unaccompanied, which in Afghanistan is very rare because all women have to be accompanied by men. We stopped the car, and it turned out the woman on the right, Noor Nisa, was in labor; the other woman was her mother."

Lynsey and Dr. Zeba learned that Noor Nisa's husband's first wife had died in childbirth, and he was so determined to not lose Noor Nisa that he'd borrowed a car and was trying to get her to the hospital. But the car had broken down, and he'd gone to try to find another one. "I wanted to take them to the hospital," Lynsey says, "but they couldn't get in my car because they needed permission from her husband. So I asked Dr. Zeba to take the car and find him. There was only one road going through the province; it wouldn't be hard."

When Dr. Zeba found him and brought him back, Lynsey took the family to the hospital, where Noor Nisa delivered her baby.

At the hospital Lynsey photographed other women, including one who was giving birth, but she made no pictures of Noor Nisa. "The only reason she made it to the hospital was because I took her, and I felt I changed the story with my presence."

The photograph taken at the side of the road was all that was needed, and by Lynsey's standards, all that was proper, to tell this story.

A freelance photojournalist and a Nikon Ambassador, Lynsey was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting as part of *The New York Times* coverage of the war in Afghanistan. Warner Bros. has secured the film rights to her acclaimed memoir, *It's What I Do: A Photographer's Life of Love and War*. Her website, lynseyaddario.com, features an extensive collection of her photographs.



Featuring

LYNSEY ADDARIO



NIKON AMBASSADOR
UNITED STATES

Lynsey Addario is a prize-winning international photojournalist who photographs for *The New York Times*, *National Geographic* magazine and *Time*. In January, 2015, *American Photo* magazine named her one of the top five photographers of the last 25 years to influence the way we see the world. She is the author of the acclaimed memoir, *It's What I Do: A Photographer's Life of Love and War*. Visit her website www.lynseyaddario.com and [ambassador page](#).

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