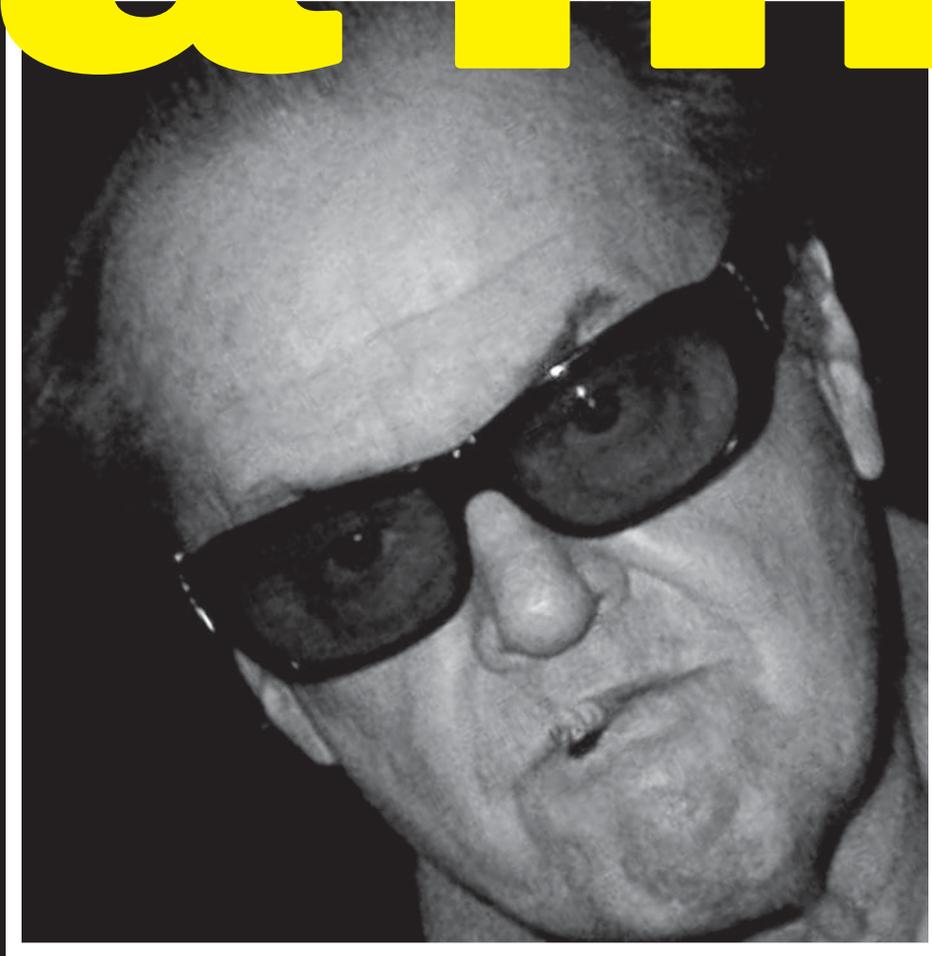


fRAME



**CHASING SUPERSTARS WITH
LONDON PAPARAZZO ALAN CHAPMAN**

Alan Chapman: The Polite Paparazzo

POLITE PAPARAZZO! The phrase jars the ear. The words don't belong together. Yet that is exactly how celebrity photographer Alan Chapman has been described by 'A-List' stars, who generally have angrier, more profane, words to describe their dealings with their photographer adversaries.

So, how did he earn that moniker? What makes Chapman stand out from the unruly mob that hounds the famous as they emerge, deer caught in the glare of 100 flashguns, from the swish restaurants and tawdry nightspots of the world's major cities?

"Simple," he says, "I'm not part of the mob. If they ask me not to take a picture, I don't. It earns a degree of respect"

Then he tells the story of an experience he had in Los Angeles a few years ago that earned him a role in a Hollywood movie.

"I was covering an opening night in Hollywood; actor Adrian Grenier, a star of the movie *The Devil Wears Prada* and the TV series *Entourage*, was chatting to someone, so I asked if I could take a couple of shots when he finished his conversation.

"He obliged, and asked why I hadn't just started shooting while he was talking. I said that would have been rude and I wouldn't have got the best shots of him. He gave me a long, hard look and asked if I'd be prepared to be interviewed for a film he was making, *Teenage Paparazzo*, the story of a fame-hungry 13-year-old working the streets of LA as a

celebrity photographer.

"Adrian and his crew came to my house in Hollywood and spent a day interviewing me about the paparazzo. A few days later, while I was covering a club opening in LA, a young lady came up to me and said, 'I've seen your interview. It's great.' I saw she was with members of the film production crew and joked that it was good to hear my contribution hadn't been consigned to the cutting room floor."

Chapman was later surprised to find that, far from being cut, he had played a major part in the film.

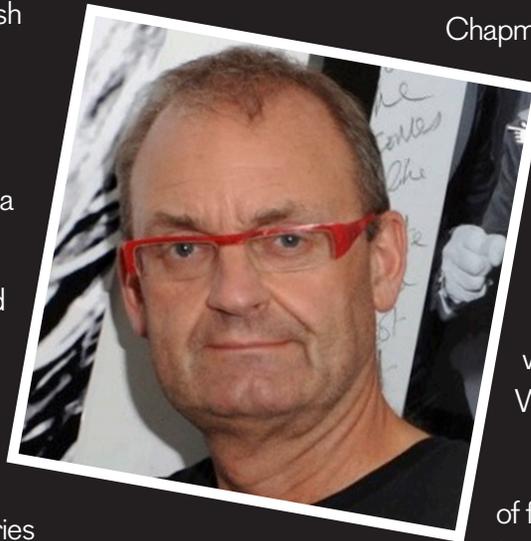
"Invited to the premier in Los Angeles, I was greeted at the after show party by several stars who congratulated me on my input. It was flattering, to say the least, and being well-known certainly did no harm to my future work"

That politeness also paid dividends in his relationship with other stars; his interaction with one – musician Robbie Williams, is included in his forthcoming book, *Frame*.

"Arriving at Matt Lucas's 30th birthday party with a couple of friends, Robbie refused to be photographed as he entered. As he left, I asked if it would be okay to photograph!

"'Just a couple', was the response from one of his entourage, so that's what I did, took a couple of frames and let them on their way.

"A few seconds later, I heard laughter and Robbie goes, 'Oi, mate, come 'ere, what you doing? Why did you only take a few shots? You lot normally run after me.' I pointed out that it was him who was messing around and I did what they wanted, a couple of shots.



“‘Do it properly then,’ Robbie said, and stood with his hands in his pockets. I suggested his pose was not a good frame and asked him to do something else.

“A lengthy chat followed. Robbie told me, ‘You’re a decent guy,’ something he remembered when we met in LA a year later at the Beckham Soccer Academy launch party when he came over to me, shook my hand, and said, ‘Hey. You’re the decent guy!’ ”

Of course being polite doesn’t always work. A few years ago Jay Kay, lead singer with Jamiroquai, became aggressive as he left a nightclub and attacked Chapman, although he had been chatting quite amicably with the photographer. Kay spent the night in London’s Savile Row Jail; and the story hit the headlines, getting a full page in all the UK’s national tabloids, two in some! At least the Daily Mirror had the courtesy to describe Chapman as “respected snapper Alan Chapman!”

CHAPMAN’S CAREER as a celebrity photographer followed an unconventional path. He began work in 1972 as a trainee in the production department of a weekly newspaper in Horncastle, a small market town near Lincoln in England. While there, he persuaded the chief reporter/photographer to allow him to take photographs for the paper.

His transformation from newspaper production to photography was painfully slow, he says, only taking off, when he moved to London in 1979 to work for *Women’s Own*, one of Britain’s top-selling magazines, where he soon found himself on major assignments covering celebrity events. His next step was to become a freelance, represented by major photo agencies, as a celebrity photographer.

His opinion of some of his colleagues is harsh. “The paparazzi have been looked upon very unfavourably by the public since the death of Princess Di.” he says. “The introduction of low-priced digital cameras has meant anyone can buy a camera and shoot. They roam the streets looking for the ‘money shot’ with the notion that poking a celebrity with the metaphorical sharp stick will yield the desired results. Keeping their finger on the button, shooting frame after frame, they know somewhere in the mass of images, there will be one usable frame.

“My grounding with film cameras gave me the eye to shoot the frames I knew would sell, without disrupting the lives of the celebrities any more than necessary. With film rolls only affording 36 shots, you were constantly evaluating how many frames were left before having to rewind and change rolls, hoping not to miss something important.”

Now after many years in the game, Chapman is turning his attention to exhibiting his work in London and LA, and producing a coffee table book of his favourite images. At his most recent exhibition in London, a collaboration of 7 photographers and artists, Chapman was the top seller with eight limited edition prints quickly snapped up. Currently he is working with London’s Getty agency, while also selling limited edition prints of his best shots through his web site, www.celebrity-pic.com with editions of between 50 and 100 signed prints. Chapman is now working on an exhibition to be held next year in conjunction with *RUNWAY* magazine in Los Angeles.

(The images on the following pages are taken from Frame, due to be published next year)

– **TONY SUTTON**, editor@coldtype.net





KATE MOSS

Donmar Warehouse Theatre, in London's Covent Garden. Word spreads, Kate and Pete Doherty are in the theatre and a large crowd quickly grows. Everyone wants to see the supermodel and her errant boyfriend.

Her car speeds off towards the back door and I have to leg it round on foot. As I get there, Kate is already in the car, but Pete is not and she has to sit there with the crowd around her car.

Suddenly someone opens the door allowing me to take a series of shots, Kate looking like a defenceless animal in her furry white coat.

Finally, Pete arrives and they head off into the night.

SOPHIA LOREN

Italian beauty and world superstar Sophia Loren stares straight into my camera, giving me a powerful portrait.

If Sophia arrived at an event wearing her glasses, she would not take them off to be photographed, knowing they leave lines across the bridge of her nose.

Fortunately, on this occasion she arrived without her glasses.

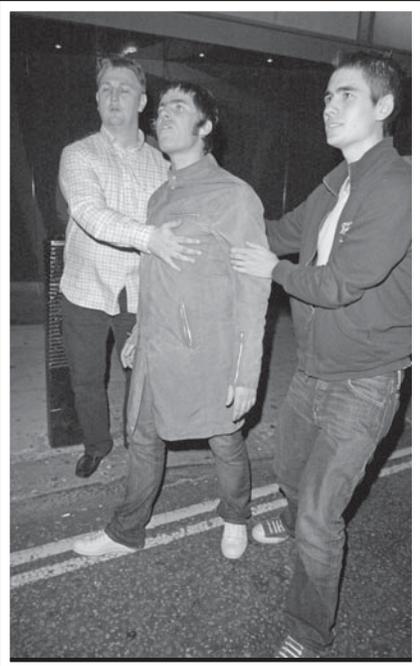




MICK JAGGER

Looking somewhat between Olympic sprinter and boxer, Mick Jagger literally sprints out of London's Ivy Restaurant, famous for its celebrity clientele. Although the distance between the restaurant door and his waiting car is only six feet, he has to get away quickly!

Being at the front of a group of photographers can have its disadvantages, but not on this occasion and, fortunately, Mick's fist was not clenched in anger.



LIAM GALLAGHER

As he leaves the Met Bar, just off London's Park Lane, Liam is obviously a bit stressed and storms up and down the street having a go at, well, no one in particular.

His driver and a passer-by attempt to calm him down, when he suddenly spots me and my camera. Nothing is said, but Liam adopts this great pose and, click, I have my shot.



LIZA MINNELLI

Liza Minnelli gives photographers a number from her show at the London Palladium in the early '80s.

Liza was simply terrific and received a standing ovation from the 20 or so of us assembled for the photocall.

The only bizarre thing about this job was us photographers, for some reason, being led sheep-like through a labyrinth of corridors instead of being taken straight to the stage. Some wag started bleating – baa baa – which had us all in fits of laughter.



ROBBIE WILLIAMS

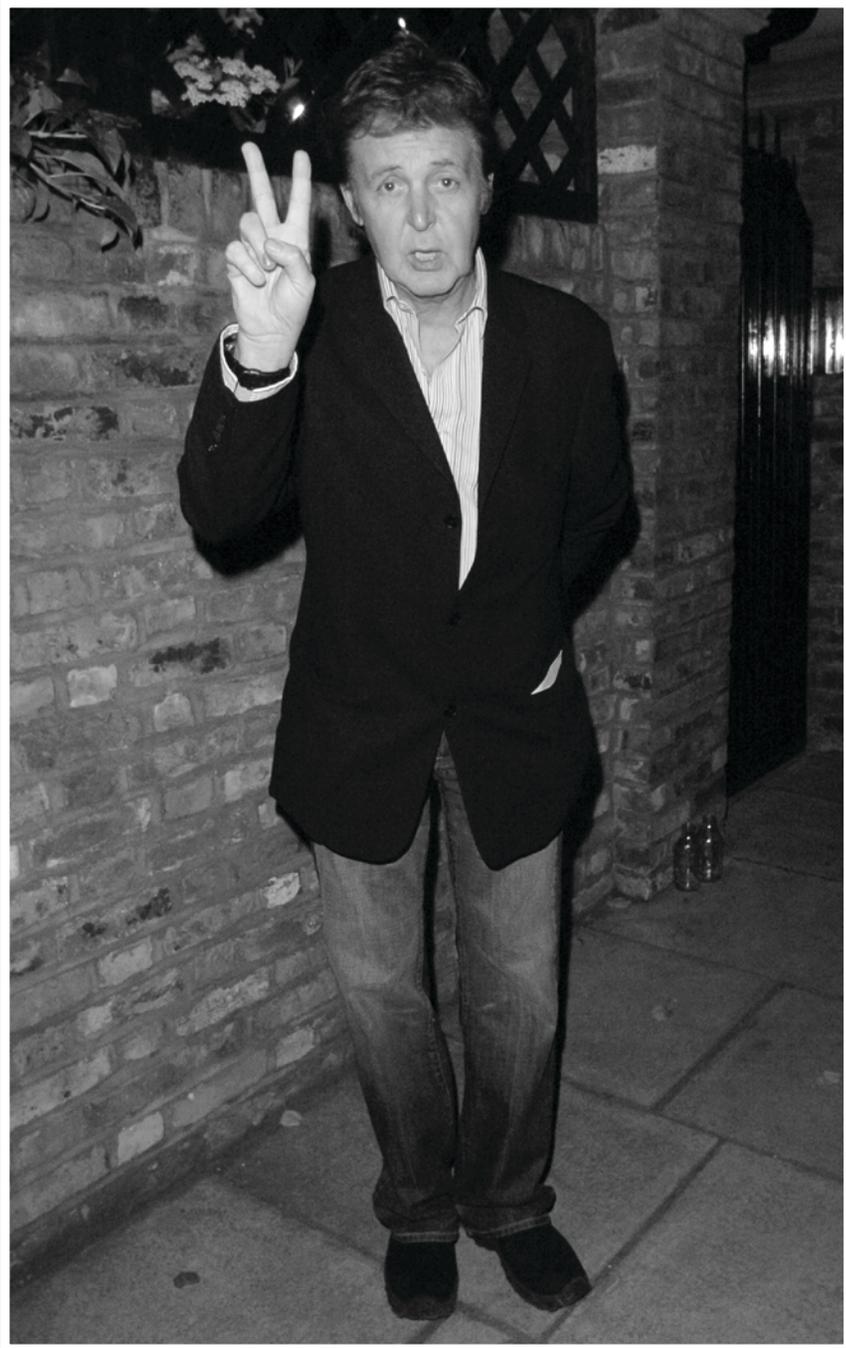
Arriving at Matt Lucas's 30th birthday party with a couple of friends, Robbie will not be photographed as he enters. As he leaves, I sarcastically ask if it would be okay to photograph now!

Just a couple, is the response from one of his entourage, so that's what I do, take a couple of frames and let them on their way.

A few seconds later, I hear laughter and Robbie goes, "Oi, mate, come 'ere, what you doing? Why did you only take a few shots? You lot normally run after me." I point out it's him that's messing around and I did what they wanted, a couple of shots.

"Do it properly then," Robbie says, and stands with his hands in his pockets. I suggest his pose is not a good frame and ask him to do something. This is the result.

A lengthy chat with Robbie followed. He tells me, "I'm a decent guy," something he remembers when we meet in LA a year later at the Beckham Soccer Academy launch party when he comes over to me and, shaking my hand, says, "Hey. You're the decent guy!"



PAUL McCARTNEY

At the beginning of his acrimonious break-up with Heather Mills, Sir Paul McCartney had taken to visiting his daughter Mary on certain nights of the week, travelling on foot.

Here he is outside his St John's Wood home as he returns after one of his visits and gives me his famous victory salute – either that or he's mistaken me for the milkman, asking for two pints, the empties are just behind him on the right.



MIKE TYSON

King of the Ring – Iron Man Mike Tyson caught clubbing in London's Soho.



AMY WINEHOUSE

The Dublin Castle pub, Camden Town, North London. Amy's gig at this small venue is over; it was electric and the crowd went wild screaming out requests, most of which she sang for them. I wait in the corridor long after everyone else has gone.

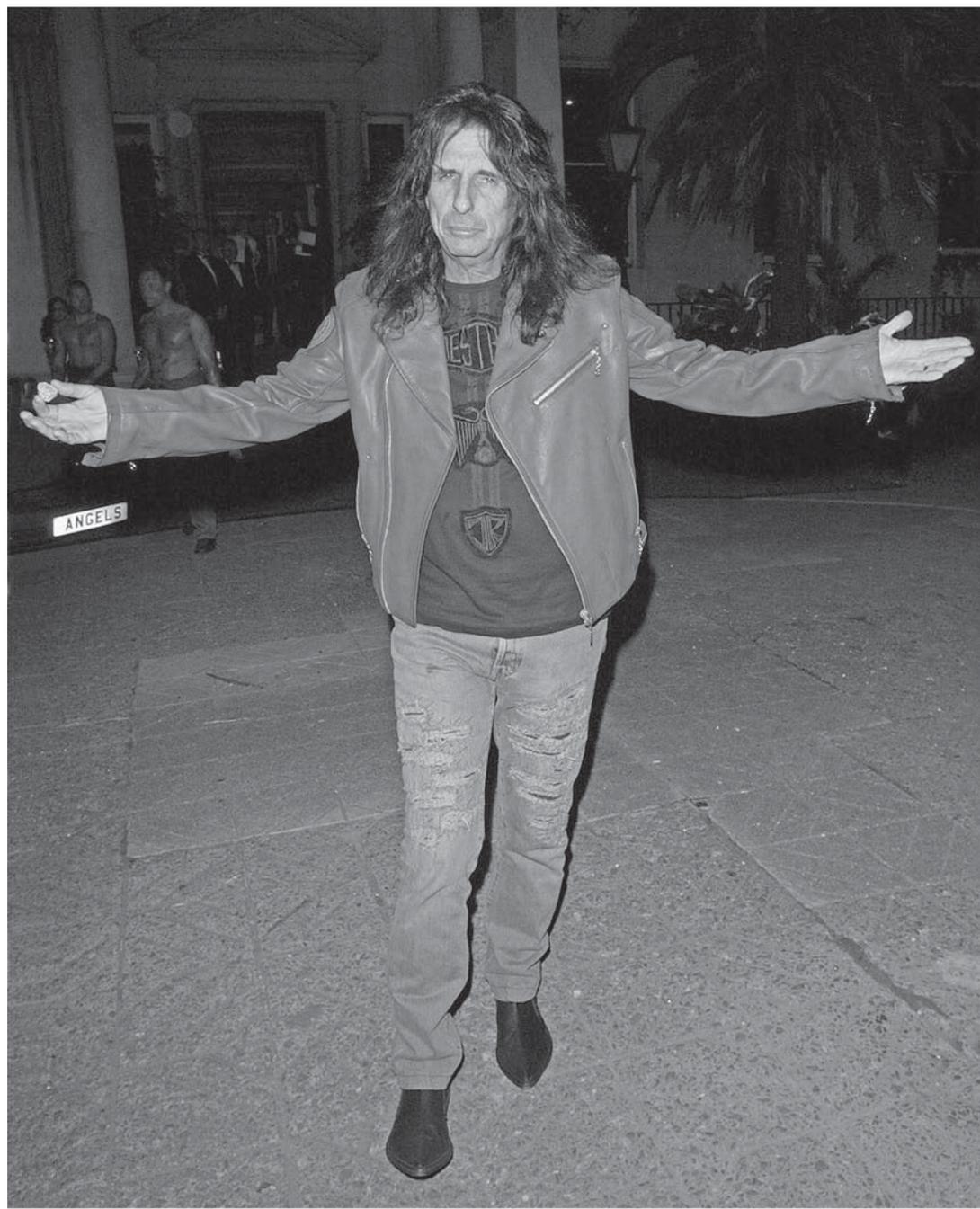
As she comes towards me, I ask for a couple of shots, but before she can reply, someone says, "NO!". Fortunately, Amy says, "It's okay, he's cool" and coming closer holds out her hand for me to shake and says, "Hi, I'm Amy,"

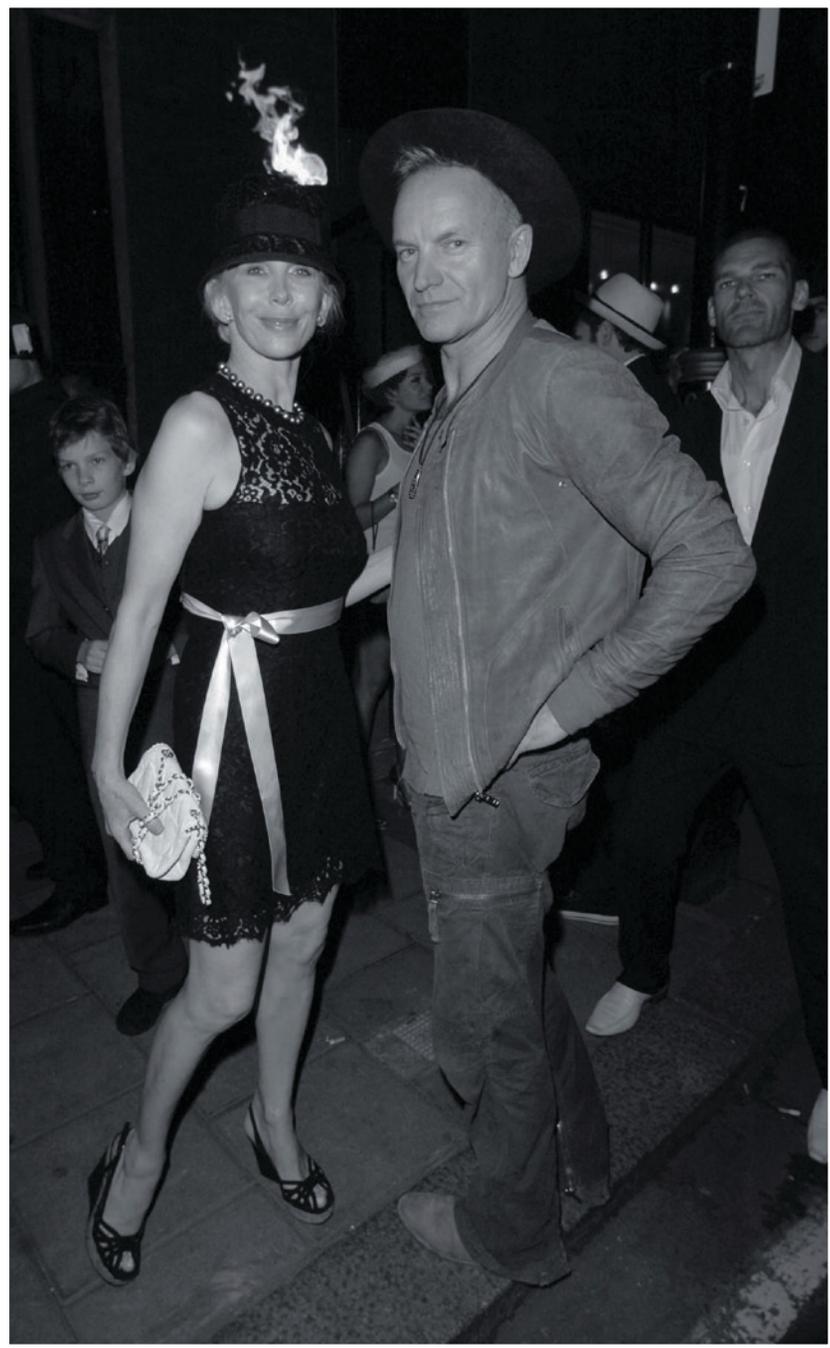
In all the frames bar two, she's looking straight at me, static and very posed, but here she's distracted by a guy speaking to her and looks away from the camera, making a more natural frame.

Although the gig is over, Amy is still very tense. Note her left hand, fist tightly clenched. Perhaps it's stress!

ALICE COOPER

As the man said, "School's out for summer."
Alice Cooper gives me one of those looks . . .





STING

Goodness, gracious – great balls of fire!

Sting and wife Trudie pose happily at their son's 21st birthday party at an exclusive Mayfair restaurant.

The atmosphere is electric. If only Trudie realised her hair was ablaze!

Hold on, it's just an optical illusion, cancel the call to the fire brigade.



JERRY LEWIS

Mapcap Hollywood Jerry Lewis turns the lens on the photographers in his dressing room at the London Palladium, 2002.

FRAME

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ALAN CHAPMAN

ColdType

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