

What the Camera Did Not See No 1

Lockdown is giving me the time to catch up on many outstanding jobs, some of which I had put to the back of my mind. One such job has been the sorting and labelling of the digital photographs on my laptop.

I am an avid photographer, who takes his camera on every outing, trip and holiday. I enjoy taking numerous photographs wherever I am, however, this does not make me a good photographer. My main aim is to have a visual record of events and places visited.

Sorting through many hundreds of images, I have been reminded, that looking at life through a lens has on occasions almost got me into serious trouble.

In 2013 I was in Washington DC enjoying camera meltdown visiting all the sites, monuments and memorials of this great city. I stopped at "The Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism during World War II" and was taking my compulsory photo or two. I was in my element, I was happy and relaxed. These feelings were not to last very long.

As I lowered my camera and turned to walk away I was faced by a youngish man about 6'4" inches in height, who started screaming in my face. I could not understand a word he was saying, he looked like a rough sleeper.

My first reaction was "where did he come from"of course I had not seen his advance as I was looking through the camera lens, which had narrowed my field of vision. I quickly concluded that I had accidentally invaded his territory and he was less than pleased. In fact he was furious and looked very threatening. A quick mental risk assessment told me to keep talking, and get away as quickly as possible without running. I have no idea what I was saying, but I do remember thinking that if this got physical there would only be one winner....and that would be him.

Sooner rather than later was the time to retreat, before the situation overheated. I probably said something stupid in my best BBC English, such as "this is not helping either of us". I have no idea what I meant by that, but turned my back and walked away slowly. I then felt a thud on my back, but continued walking. After a while I stopped and was reassured that I was now alone. I took off my jacket to find the mark of a large footprint on the back. The thud had been a karate kick, which had hit me squarely in the back.

I have learnt a valuable lesson, that life is all around and not just what is seen through a camera lens.

The second and ironic lesson is that I really need to finish sorting all those digital images on my laptop as I can't find the photograph of "The Japanese American Memorial", which I wanted to attach.

Oh, wait a minute I've just remembered another interesting photograph from my trip to Cuba. Thinking back that was potentially a serious incident and another good story.

Now where did I file that picture?