

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

November 6, 2006

Advice for freelancers

Filed under: [editorial photo](#) — alecsothblog @ 5:52 pm

John Loomis [vents](#) and offers up some good advice for freelancers on [his blog](#). It took me awhile to learn this lesson:

My usual MO now with the *NYT* and other clients who have given me problems in the past is to never say “yes” first. The first question is always “are you free?” and I answer, “maybe, what’s the story.” If I don’t like the story, or think its going to be too much hassle for the money, I politely say that I can’t do it.

3 Comments

1. You should help out John here by not linking to his ranting post...he may be shooting himself in the foot (photo editors read photo blogs...and a few more read yours than his). The main problem here is that everyone needs to stop working for such horrible rates, signing horrible contracts, and start hunting down illegal use of their images. The entire devaluation of photography industry relies heavily on this magical thing called the internet, which threw regionalism out the door, and created syndication to the point where the entire country gets the same product. If you make a good, unique, product you will get a good price for it...simple economics.

Comment by [David LaSpina](#) — November 6, 2006 @ [9:33 pm](#)

2. Ha ha. There was just a times photo editor at my apt (by total chance, she was apt searching), and we read part of the Loomis "vent" together. She didn't care, just kind of laughed saying, "what is it this time..."

She didn't give a shit.

Comment by [GM](#) — November 8, 2006 @ [7:32 pm](#)

3. It took me a while to learn that one. I'm freelance director of photography (television shows) and always say a slightly more innocent thing (though a bit of a lie): "Well... I'm on hold for a shoot. What have you got?" That way, it doesn't insult them if you just don't want to do the assignment. You are booked. If you like it... you call them right back and say the other shoot wouldn't commit/solidify. A bit of a white lie... but no clients are insulted with "I just don't feel like your shoot is worth my time".

Comment by [George](#) — November 12, 2006 @ [3:54 am](#)