

TURNING WORLD

M A G A Z I N E



DOWNTOWN

Seeing Human Need in the
Heart of Port-au-Prince

Images by Brad Workman









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TURNING WORLD

M A G A Z I N E

A non-partisan publication to help document historic social and political change, reveal the causes and consequences of social and political distress, and stimulate related debate.

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DOWNTOWN:
Seeing Human Need in the
Heart of Port-au-Prince

Welcome .

IT WAS the morning of my first day working with a camera in gritty Port-au-Prince to collect the images for this new issue of *Turning World Magazine*. I was standing before my first photographic subject: the National Palace. The neoclassical structure had clearly been partly deconstructed after being severely damaged in the January 2010 earthquake. A man I had met on a prior trip to the city approached me, and we spoke. He told me that some Haitians claim the palace is the devil's house.

If you believe the devil dwells in a hell where there is not beauty then, believe me, you need not waste time seeking the supreme demon in Port-au-Prince. However, if you believe heaven is a home without misery and want then you also will not find your god living in what remains of Haiti's *Palais National*.

Is it the Church or the State (or neither or both) that we should hold responsible for uplifting each one of the alms seekers, the unbalanced, and the variously troubled

people I so easily found in the open air by moving on a motorbike through the streets around the once-massive, once-iconic white palace? I will not pretend to have no opinion, but it is not my aim to say here who is responsible. Rather, I wish partly to prompt you to take time to discover or rediscover your answer.

I hope you know that Haiti was also the focus of the magazine's last issue (*A Lingering Disease: Photographs on Cholera and Conditions in Haiti*). Particularly upon finishing that issue I felt it might best be thought of not as the end of a project on cholera but instead as the beginning, and my evaluation of this issue is the same. Mainly because I saw many other suitable human subjects downtown, which I define as roughly one kilometer maximum from the palace in any direction, whom I did not photograph during my three weeks in the capital. Some of those people I never approached. Some of them made it plain that they did not want to be photographed. I chose to walk away from some others. (It seems appropriate to note now that there were a few people I photographed who, for different reasons, do not appear within.)

I do not know if I will go next to Haiti. I could do new work on this project on the deprived or go to work on some variation of it. Though if you know me you likely know I

have worked in Haiti numerous times. I know more about the country's history, culture, geography, people, politics, and conditions than I know about any other foreign land, but I also need you to please know that Haiti is always teaching me. It does so not merely immediately via the new people I see

I photographed a wandering, nearly nude woman who I thought was in a strange place, psychologically.

and sometimes meet and photograph but also through the sometimes extended personal and professional self-reflection that working there provokes. I make mistakes of varying importance. The mistakes are not always immediately apparent but become instructive when recognized. And, new ethical questions can come with any new project.

For examples, let me introduce you to four situations I faced while working downtown for this issue: (1) I noticed during daylight a seemingly troubled man lying on a dirty sidewalk by a major public road. I was convinced that an image of him would make a strong contribution to this magazine. After I had approached him to greet him and seek consent, which he never gave, I decided he was sleeping. I had to decide if I should photograph him, anyway. (2) Before (and after) I photographed one

aware, awake but unwell young man as he sat on the sidewalk I had to decide if I should try to enter the nearby public hospital (and whether to try with or without him) to seek medical help for him. I believed he was at risk of infection because there was a substantial amount of skin missing on his leg, and the wound was raw and uncovered. He had been sitting on the same sidewalk outside the hospital two days earlier. (3) I photographed a wandering, nearly nude woman who I thought was in a strange place, psychologically. As I worked I sensed that she was at least aware of my presence, and if she ever objected it was not a message I received. On a later date I saw her in public again. She was on the ground in a disgusting pile of trash beside a large, public-use trash bin. I had to decide if I should photograph her anew. (4) On at least three days I approached a man I wanted to photograph, and on at least two days I spoke to him. After we first met I decided he was oddly communicative and that he likely suffered from drug addiction or psychological problems, or both. It seemed he always understood I wanted his consent to photograph him, but if he ever gave it then I did not understand. The last time I approached him to seek his permission he promptly asked me to give him \$20.00.

Forgive me if it is trite to write that I

believe that in downtown Port-au-Prince and in the whole nation many of the unmet human needs are unmet, at rock bottom, because of widespread and often extreme poverty. "The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere" is a phrase I have seen repeated in serious reports of varied origin. The U.N. Human Development Index, or HDI, is a combined measure of life expectancy, educational attainment, and income. Based on the modern statistic the international body, in its *Human Development Report 2011*, ranked Haiti **158** out of **187** countries and territories. I hope you will learn about the HDI on the Web at <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/>>. The U.N. reports are sophisticated and informative but do not change my thinking on Haiti: At rock bottom the problem to solve is widespread poverty.

Despite Haiti's poverty it is not true that everyone there has nothing or is provincial. I would be surprised to learn, for an intense instance, about any malnourished Catholic priest in the nation. Haiti's president, Michel Martelly, has taken multiple international trips since taking office in May 2011 – including a visit to America for medical care. New visitors to Haiti may be awakened by the dramatic impacts of poverty that can be so easily seen on capital streets. But, what may be equally eye-opening are the dramatic

differences between the good fortune of the fortunate and the often horrible misfortune of the masses.

To end, I am eager to receive your best questions and comments. And I am prepared for any controversy that might arise over this issue. Are you prepared, my gracious patron, to see some of what I saw downtown?

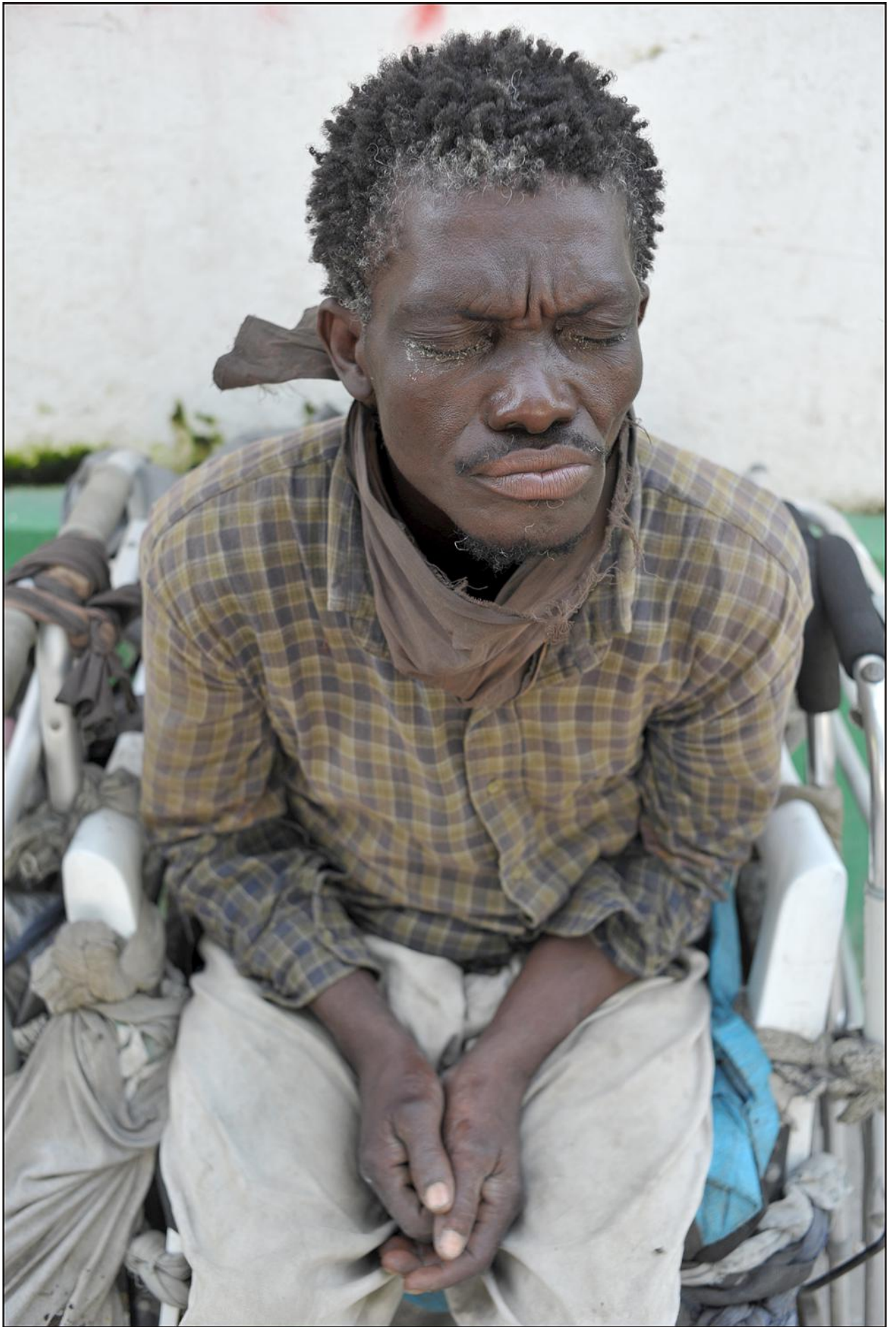
Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BW', enclosed within a large, loopy circular flourish.

Brad Workman
June 30, 2012

P.S. Before you recycle this magazine, put it on a shelf, or pass it along to a friend please do see the "Guide to Images" that starts on page 64. The guide is a critical component of this issue.







WARNING:

The next image is graphic and may be upsetting.















































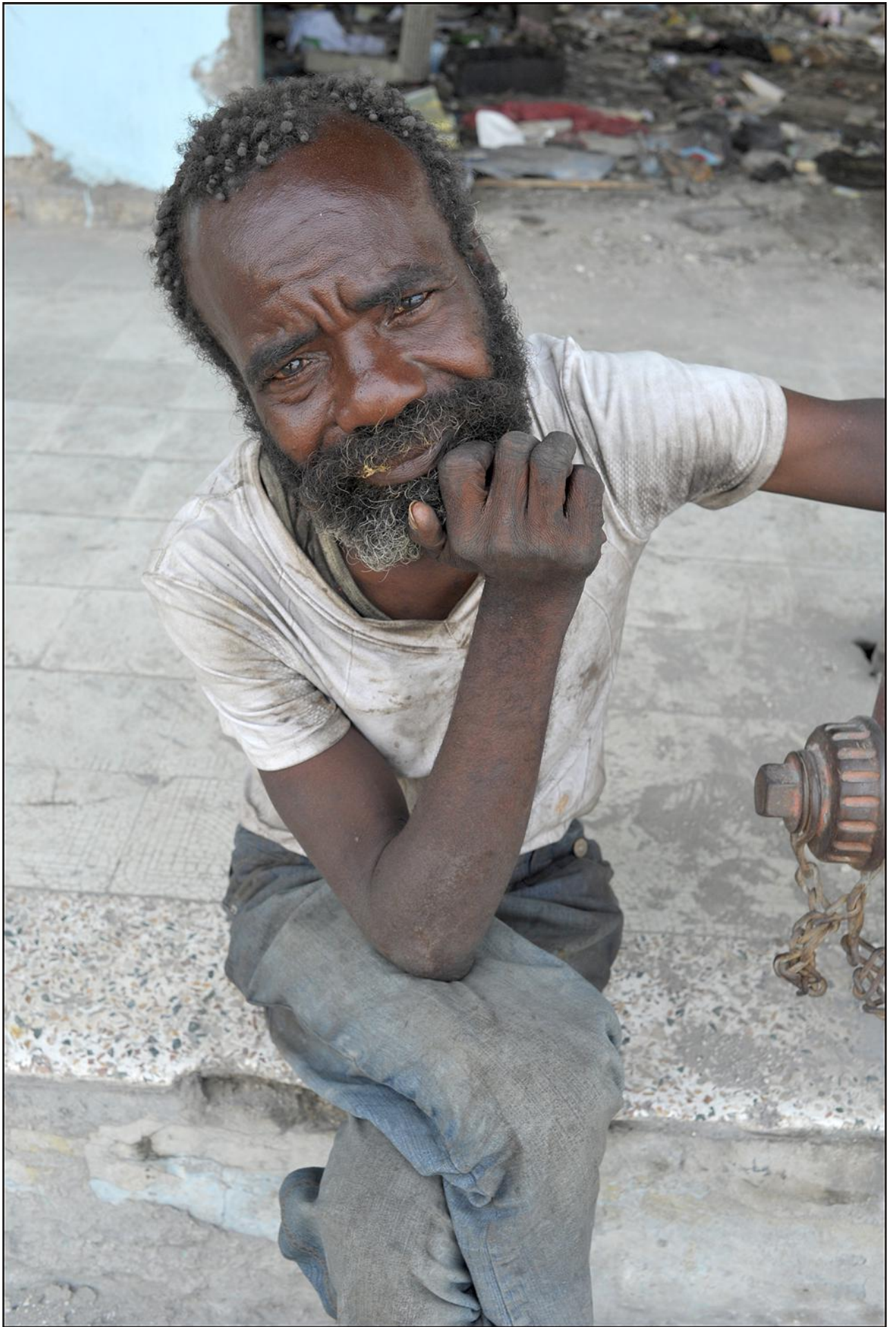






































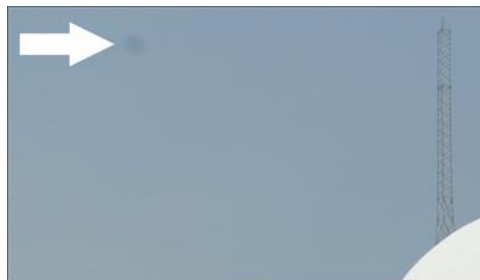






Guide to Images

NOTES: Brad Workman made the images in this issue and has transferred no copyrights to them, but he does not, upon publication, claim copyright to the image on page 28. All images were captured in Port-au-Prince within roughly one kilometer maximum from the National Palace in any direction. Also, two of the original image files have been digitally retouched (as further noted in three captions) to remove incongruent, spot-like shapes appearing in areas of relatively uniform color in the sky. The shapes were likely caused by dirt, moisture, or other foreign matter inside the camera or on the lens or an attached lens filter. The retouching was done in addition to any typical digital prepress practices like resizing and exposure, sharpness, color, and contrast adjustments. For example, an unretouched part of the image that appears (retouched and fully processed) on the magazine cover and elsewhere is shown below. Please note the odd, darker spot in the upper-left quadrant. All retouching was done with the intent to more accurately portray the original scene.



Above: Unretouched spot.

On the Cover, Inside Cover-1

May 13, 2012 – Haiti's National Palace, or *Palais National*, on a Sunday morning. The neoclassical structure had clearly been partly deconstructed after being severely damaged in the January 2010 earthquake. The sky in each of these images, which are based on the same original image file, has been retouched in two places (see "NOTES" text on page 64).

2-3

May 13, 2012 – Sunday-morning view of the remaining facade of Cathédrale Notre-Dame. The Roman Catholic church was severely damaged in the January 2010 earthquake. The sky has been retouched in two places (see "NOTES" text on page 64).

12-13

May 14, 2012 – Two views of one gentleman who was on the sidewalk in his chair outside the large, public hospital: the "General Hospital." He was able to open at least one of his eyes.

14

May 15, 2012 – This lady and child were at ground level and beside a low wall on the site of the former Palace of Justice, which came down during the January 2010 earthquake.

17

May 15, 2012 – This gentleman clearly needed medical aid. He was sitting on a sidewalk and not far from the entrance to the large, public hospital: the "General Hospital."

18

May 15, 2012 – This elderly gentleman was sitting on a sidewalk beside the road.

19

May 15, 2012 – This elderly lady was sitting at ground level and beside the road on the edge of a public plaza.

21

May 16, 2012 – A wandering lady. The white wall in the background is part of the National Palace complex.

22-23

May 16, 2012 – Three views of one gentleman who was sitting on a low wall beside the road. He had a catheter in his penis.

24

May 16, 2012 – This lady, with a bandaged arm and a soiled dressing on her hand, was sitting on a sidewalk beside the road.

25

May 16, 2012 – Lady with a bulbous protrusion, which can be seen just below her shoulder. She was sitting at ground level and beside the road on the edge of a public plaza.

26

May 17, 2012 – A view of one of the few remaining portions of Saint Anne Roman Catholic church, which was damaged first during the January 2010 earthquake.

27

May 17, 2012 – This lady was sitting on a sidewalk beside the road. Her back is against a wall that is part of the National Palace complex.

28-29

May 18, 2012 – This gentleman was sitting on a sidewalk beside the road. May 18 is Flag Day and University Day in Haiti.

31

May 18, 2012 – A lady sitting in partial shade. May 18 is Flag Day and University Day in Haiti.

32

May 20, 2012 – This lady was sitting on a sidewalk beside the road on a Sunday morning. Her back is against a wall that is part of the National Palace complex.

33

May 20, 2012 – This gentleman was in his wheelchair beside the road on a Sunday morning.

34

May 20, 2012 – This gentleman was having a Sunday meal as he sat, at ground level, beside the road. He was also taking some cover under part of a large, parked vehicle.

35

May 21, 2012 – This lady was sitting in the road. Clearly, she was not in the middle of the road, but motor traffic was passing. She was not in a safe place.

36-37

May 21, 2012 – This handicapped gentleman wrote his name as Icaris Celner and said the two children are his. He was living in a cramped, makeshift dwelling beside the road and across from Cathédrale Notre-Dame, a Roman Catholic church that was severely damaged in the January 2010 earthquake. The church is shown on pages 2-3. (Mr. Celner was photographed by his own request. He chose where to be photographed. The photographer did not pose either image.)

38

May 21, 2012 – This elderly lady was photographed inside her makeshift dwelling beside the road and across from Cathédrale Notre-Dame, a Roman Catholic church that was severely damaged in the January 2010 earthquake. The church is shown on pages 2-3. (She was photographed by her own request. She chose where to be photographed, and the photographer did not pose the image.)

39

May 22, 2012 – A lady sitting, alone.

40-41

May 22, 2012 – Two views of one handicapped elderly gentleman. He was on a sidewalk beside the road.

42-43

May 23, 2012 – Young ladies (and one baby). They were gathered together beside the road on a sidewalk bordering the National Palace complex.

44

May 23, 2012 – This gentleman was on the edge of the road and examining trash beside a large, public-use trash bin.

45

May 24, 2012 – This lady was sitting, alone, on a sidewalk beside the road.

46-47

May 24, 2012 – Two views of one gentleman who was sitting, alone, beside the road.

48

May 25, 2012 – This lady was sitting alone on a sidewalk beside the road.

49

May 25, 2012 – This lady was sitting with the child beside the road.

50

May 25, 2012 – This gentleman was eating as he sat beside the road. In his hand he held a corncob.

51

May 25, 2012 – This gentleman was sitting alone beside the road and next to the ruins of Cathédrale de la Sainte Trinité, an Episcopal church that was devastated by the January 2010 earthquake.

52-53

May 27, 2012 – Two views of one lady who was sitting on a Sunday on a sidewalk beside the road. She had a toy baby under her shirt beside her breast.

54-55

May 27, 2012 – Two views of one lady who was sitting on a Sunday at ground level beside the road.

56-57

May 27, 2012 – This gentleman was behaving in a way that suggests he was having some type of personal experience or episode. He was lying partly on a sidewalk and partly in the road outside the large, public hospital: the "General Hospital." It was a Sunday. (The images are a true photographic sequence.)

58

May 27, 2012 – This lady was sitting on a sidewalk beside the road outside the large, public hospital: the "General Hospital." It was a Sunday.

59

May 28, 2012 – This gentleman was sitting at ground level and alone beside the road.

60

May 29, 2012 – After approaching a small group that

included the photographer this lady with a baby sat on a sidewalk beside the road near Cathédrale Notre-Dame, a Roman Catholic church that was severely damaged in the January 2010 earthquake.

61

May 29, 2012 – Lady on a low wall close to the road and near Cathédrale Notre-Dame, a Roman Catholic church that was severely damaged in the January 2010 earthquake. Behind her rich smile there was a case of poor dental health.

62

May 29, 2012 – This young lady (with wrapped arm) was sitting on the sidewalk beside the road directly in front of the National Palace. There, like many others who sit on sidewalks downtown, she was seeking donations.

63

May 30, 2012 – This lady was sitting on a sidewalk beside the road.

74-Inside Back Cover

May 13, 2012 – Haiti's National Palace, or *Palais National*, on a Sunday morning. The neoclassical structure had clearly been partly deconstructed after being severely damaged in the January 2010 earthquake. The same image appears on the inside cover spread. The sky in this image

has been retouched in two places (see "NOTES" text on page 64) .

Back Cover

May 23, 2012 – A member of one of Haiti's special police units takes the arm of a downed man who was injured during a violent incident that included multiple gunshots and at least one other injured man. The incident occurred on a public street just across from the National Palace and beside a building Haitian police use. It happened at a spot where people exchange currency in the open air.







Man down after gunshots at money changers' area (May 23, 2012).

Haiti's "Human Development Index" Ranking

158/187

(Rank 158 out of 187 countries and territories, per the U.N. *Human Development Report* 2011.)

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