

INTRODUCTION ENGLAND, 1992–2002

In his short career Tim Hetherington helped shape a change in our understanding of conflict reporting. Working with an expanded vision that stretched far beyond describing the drama of action, he invited his audience to place themselves in a world that is continuously connected from viewer to protagonist. The inventory of Tim Hetherington's work and awards tells the story of an intrepid journalist and filmmaker who covered conflict and human rights issues at the highest levels; he was recognized as a committed human rights activist and a visionary for the issues he covered and an innovator in the media he used to describe what he saw. But like the proverbial iceberg, everything that we saw above the waterline was defined by something greater, a ballast of intelligence and curiosity that drove him to explore new territories and more importantly to revisit subjects that were seemingly familiar yet poorly understood. Often described as a conflict photographer, Hetherington's mission was never so simple. "Trying to understand my own fascination with conflict and war has become something that's started to focus on what it means to be a man. What is it about war that really draws men?" Never selfishly obsessed but always acutely self aware, Hetherington was intensely focused on understanding the issues underlying the subjects he investigated and with sharing his insights with the wider world. "My work is all about building bridges between me and the audience" he said shortly before his death in 2011.

The awards and recognition that came to him as he approached 40 might have indicated to some that he had arrived, but for Hetherington this was just the beginning. In the fifteen years after graduating from Cardiff University he had found his voice and with the world paying attention he was ready to start his journey in earnest.

His family talks about a child that was playful yet intense, perpetually

curious and seeking new experiences, pushing the proper boundaries of an English adolescence, characteristics that later served him well as a journalist. His education was an eclectic mix of state and private Catholic schooling followed by three years at Oxford University studying classics and English and two years traveling India, China and Tibet. On returning to UK in 1992 he spent several years teaching himself photography before matriculating to Cardiff University, graduating in 1997 with a degree in photojournalism. It was here that he first explored the possibilities of mixing photography with video and audio, which became a tantalizing and frustrating obsession in a world that wasn't yet ready for multimedia. Hetherington was undeterred by the lack of distribution and he persistently rehearsed his pioneering approach in privately circulated multimedia pieces and even an innovative photography book dummy that was printed in brail, and ultimately blossomed into the film work that culminated in his Academy nomination for *Restrepo* in 2010.

Even as he walked the red carpet he was working on the next innovation and later in 2010 he self-published *Diary*, an extraordinary manifesto of documentary narrative in a new form that broke the conventions of linear story-telling, mixing time and geography between West Africa and West London in a stream of dreams and brutal reality. The promise offered by this groundbreaking work was for a new form of factual narrative in an almost fictional form that could describe the subconscious drivers behind visible actions, seamlessly weaving the ordinary with the extraordinary and bringing distant events very close to home.

Meanwhile the early years were spent working in London for The Big Issue magazine and The Independent newspaper when he was also accepted as a member of the prestigious Network photo agency. With his career taking shape as a photojournalist he continued to experiment with

alternative forms of storytelling as a means to expand the limits of the traditional news agenda. The factual format of “who, what, where and when” had to embrace the extra element “why” and over the years Hetherington’s output grew to include photography, film, audio, writing, exhibitions in many formats, books, mobile apps and other means to harness the media to his message.

In 1999 he took his first assignment in Sierra Leone and spent most of the next eight years living in West Africa, working with students at the Milton Margai school for the blind in Sierra Leone and aspiring sports students, not only documenting their lives but facilitating their development. It was never enough to simply witness events, he had to experience the lives of his subjects. This is how he came to live through the second Liberian civil war that ended in 2003 with extraordinary access to the rebel forces and unprecedented understanding of their culture and motives, which interested him as much as the facts of their actions. It was this insight and passion that subsequently qualified him to work with the United Nations Security Council as an investigator for the Liberia Sanctions Committee.

In 2007 he accepted an assignment from Vanity Fair to work with writer Sebastian Junger to document the American campaign in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan. Typically the assignment became a way of life as Hetherington shared every aspect of the battalion’s experience including injury and a two-day march on a broken ankle to evacuate the country. He later returned and the assignment extended into a two-year study that resulted in an astonishing array of work that included traditional coverage of “kinetic warfare” and a profound study of fighting men in the multi-screen multimedia project *Sleeping Soldiers*, a fly-poster exhibition, the book “Infidel” and the feature documentary “Restrepo”. Always

frustrated by the limitations of conventional reportage he was developing a creative strategy to document the Afghan conflict using the visual tropes of science fiction as a means to engage his audience in a deeper narrative about the nature of war.

Speaking about his fascination with conflict Hetherington said, “The truth is that the war machine is the software, as much as the hardware. The software runs it and the software is young men and that’s really what my work is about. In some ways part of the software; I was a young man once, I’m not so young any more but I get it, I get the operating system. I am the operating system.”

Tim Hetherington’s war was peculiarly personal. It was a process of self-discovery, an inner journey by a man of great intelligence whose self-aware adventures reflected bigger truths. While he appreciated the success that brought him an audience he was equally frustrated by the limitations that came with it. “People want you to play the role. There’s very little room for nuance and it’s easy just to agree and to accept the stereotype. I find myself pushed into the role of being this heroic figure.” And yet he was a hero, not only in the conventional sense of bravery in the field but in his courage to face himself. “I don’t know many other straight men discussing masculinity, yet defining your masculinity is part of the process of war. The actual action of going is as important as what comes out.” And so he went, one last time.

Hetherington died in 2011, aged 40, while covering the Libyan civil war.

STEPHEN MAYES

TOO HARD TO TALK LIBERIA, 2003–2007

It crosses the city like an ancient lay line: Centre Street. Run your eye down from the Ministry of Justice, past Jandee's and the old time drinkers, and across the way you'll see the congregation from the settlers' Baptist church flowing out onto Broad Street. Monrovia is busy again -diamond merchants sit beside new shops that have sprung up where the burnt out cinema used to be, and further down on the right, Raja — the big Lebanese guy in Diana's — still makes the best chicken shwarma in town, while outside the security guards keep an eye on parking spots to earn a few dollars for their plate of soup.

The street continues, down past the hustlers who hang out on the corner of Carey Street, and past the petty traders selling second-hand baseball caps and creased trousers. Further on you'll see AB's phone recharge stall and the steps that lead up to the apartment where Zubin and I used to live in the damp and the mold. There's no breeze on Centre Street — down there you're trapped in the heat and congestion. If you want to get out you have to keep going, past the gas station on the junction with Benson Street and the industrious welding stalls to your right, and head for the sea. At some stage you'll run a gauntlet of aggressive ex-fighters and disenfranchised youth -unless you're in a car -in which case you'll just bob up and down with the holes in the road. Don't come down here after dark — the road bisects the cemetery and they've constructed high walls on either side to keep those who used to live there out. But they're still around. So keep following the road — past the grave of the thirteen ministers who were executed on the beach by Doe's men — to the bottom where it hits the junction with UN Drive and peters out before it reaches the Central Prison and the sea. But maybe you're not meant to go that far. Above a clock in the dry cleaners on Benson Street hangs a small framed picture

of President Tubman. Upstairs there used to be a place called the Lighthouse. That's where I met Jacqueline. As is the case with conversations in Liberia, we meandered, searching to get the measure of each other. I told her that I'd been coming and going to Liberia for several years and pointed through the window to my apartment. She asked me if I had been here during the 2003 war, to which I replied — somewhat cautiously — that I'd been on the “other” side “with the rebels. “We were trying to kill your ass!” she said with a smile.

She looked up and checked my face, “You really don't know who I am, do you?”

I looked at her blankly. I hadn't a clue.

“I'm Jacqueline Toe. General Jacqueline Toe. I was Taylor's aide-de-camp from 1997 to 2002. I was in the NPFL from the start.”

The National Patriotic Front for Liberia was warlord Charles Taylor's insurgent army. Its brutal reckoning had swept through Liberia in the nineties and turned this quiet West African nation upside down. I wondered how it all began, and so asked her how she came to join.

“I was in Harper when the war first entered. We had nowhere to go and I had two young kids. I was thinking that if I couldn't defend myself and my children; that they'd be taken from me or something worse. So I joined the NPFL. I remember I used to go to the frontlines in a car. Ha! And I'd put the children on the backseat. I'd tell them that they had to stay put while Mama went to fight, but that I'd be back for them. And I told the other fighters that if anyone laid one finger on them, I'd kill them. I was a pretty good fighter too. After a while Taylor heard about me, and so I joined his security detail and eventually settled for a bit in Gbarnga. After that I became his aide-de-camp.” She became excited by the memory like a person who has been through combat or seen strange things and had their moral compass turned

so much so that the springs inside have become a little twisted.

By now we were walking down the stairs. I had another appointment and she was heading home. James stood outside, keys in hand, balancing his soles on the curb and leaning back against his grey Toyota. He saw me coming out and straightened up. I planned to give Jacqueline a lift home — she lived not far from White Flower, Taylor’s old residence that we’d pass on our way to Red Light junction. I introduced them to each other and told James we would be giving her a ride to Congo Town. James nodded. He was a quiet man, old school Pelle, and probably one of the last generations that believed in some kind of order. It wasn’t that he’d make a habit of judging others, he’d just been brought up to be polite to strangers and to go to church each Sunday. A gentle man, he would call me “brother Tim” except when he got flustered on the telephone when he’d just call me plain “Tim.” James was one of the only people I trusted in the entire country. I could give him a hundred dollars to keep safe and then ask him for it back a year later and he’d hand me the same exact bill. Untouched.

I sat in the front seat With James driving and Jacqueline in the back. We talked more on the way to Congo Town and I decided to ask her how White Flower got its name. As Taylor’s residence and the de facto center of power during his rule, White Flower was shrouded in secrecy and rumor.

She laughed, “There’s a lot of people who been asking that same question.”

“Well, you were his aide-de-camp. If anyone knows, you might.”

“I don’t know. But what I do know is that we travelled around all over the place him during the war. We were in Bong, Gbarnga, Totota and all. And wherever he stayed, I mean whichever town or place that we were in, well, the actual house where he would put up, we called that Whiteflower. It was a call sign that we gave his residence. For the radio. We’d say over the radio, ‘Oh. He’s at White Flower,’ meaning that he was at his residence. So

it was natural that when he came to Monrovia, we called where he stayed, his compound, White Flower.”

“But why the words White Flower?”

“Well, I can’t be sure. But I do know that Taylor was a great man. He was a God-fearing man. White was his favourite color. It symbolized purity, and he was drawn to all things white. You know how he used to wear fine white suits. I think there’s something in that.”

We were driving through Congo Town by now, passing the larger houses and compounds of those who had been loyal to Taylor and had chosen to live close to him. Jacqueline motioned for us to stop and pointed to a rough driveway that led away from the road and down through swaying grass towards the beach.

“You can let me out here. I’m just up there.”

We said our goodbyes and arranged to meet up later on my way back from Firestone. James checked the road, indicated and set off again without saying a word. His face was tense and serious. I could tell that there was something inside him that he was barely keeping control of. His hands tightened around the steering wheel and then he started shaking his head.

“That woman! That woman! Huh,” he finally shouted. “Pur-pur-purity? Huh. White Flower! Huh. God fearing! Huh. Taylor! No good! NPFL! No good! Jacqueline Toe! No good! You know the N-N-N-NPFL, they came to our house, and we gave them everything. They asked us for food, and we gave them everything we had, everything. And then they beat my father to death, they beat him to death. They beat him so bad he died. For nothing. Nothing!” After he finished, he took a deep breath and composed himself.

We climbed the slight incline in silence and passed the large grey

walls of the White Flower compound on our left. Its small dark windows seemed like peepholes into the past. Dangling above it, inoperable now, were fairy lights spelling out the words “Season Greetings.”

TIM HETHERINGTON

INTRODUCTION, *LONG STORY BIT BY BIT*

BACK AND BACK AFGHANISTAN, 2007

Their name for us was ‘infidel’. We were in the Korengal Valley, in eastern Afghanistan, and the US military could listen in on enemy radio communications in the area. “The infidel are climbing the hill,” enemy fighters would report to each other. “The infidel are at their base.” Sometimes they called us much worse things, but ‘infidel’ was their favourite, and after a while the men began to tattoo the word in huge letters across their chests. A certain amount of warfare is posturing, but in the Korengal the fighting happened at several hundred metres, so for the most part this posturing was lost on the enemy. It was mainly meant to be appreciated by the other men in the unit. Along with ‘Infidel’, the soldiers also tattooed bullets and bombs and eagle wings and names of their dead on their arms. Then on quiet days they lifted weights so that these tattoos were stretched across masses of muscle that Achilles would not have balked at.

Even separated by a quarter mile or more, the Taliban and the American soldiers managed a rough form of communication. When the Americans arrived in the valley by helicopter they got mortared—a kind of hello to the new unit—and on their way out fourteen months later they got mortared as well. They had fought well and I think the farewell mortar was considered a gesture of respect more than anything else. Once, we were rumbling along the valley road in Humvees and a bomb went off behind one of the vehicles, though it didn’t do any damage. The soldiers got out and found the wires that detonated the bomb and found the place where the bomber had been hiding and found a ‘sight rock’ that indicated when he should touch the detonation wires together. It was a chunk of quartz on a boulder that lined up with the position of the bomb in the road. Sergeant Al wrote, ‘You can’t kill us motherfucker’ on a piece of paper, along with a pentagram, and put it under the rock for them to find later.

And so it went, men shooting at each other and communicating in their own crude ways that displayed loathing and trace amounts of respect. One of the ironies of combat is that only enemies can truly appreciate how much courage is required—by both sides—to continue doing what they're doing. The soldiers would watch air strikes and gun runs against enemy positions across the valley and shake their heads in disbelief. "Imagine going through that and getting up tomorrow morning and fighting us some more"—or something to that effect—they would say. The enemy had no air power or artillery but still the fear they generated could go right off the scale. I was profoundly scared twice: once when we were hit unexpectedly and a bullet thumped into a sandbag next to my head; another time coming down a hillside with a squad of Scouts. It was a hot day, and quiet, and we were only a few hundred yards outside the wire when suddenly the air was filled with the snapping sound of bullets coming in. A moment later we heard the staccato knocking of gunfire on the other side of the valley. Tim and I threw ourselves to the ground but the enemy gunner was firing down on us—'plunging fire'—and it was extremely hard to take cover from. I remember leaves getting clipped by bullets and floating down on to Tim. I remember looking back and seeing bullets raise evil little puffs in the dirt around my feet. We lay there until the American mortar tubes got going, and then we jumped up and ran. I noticed a soldier—who, had watched all this from the safety of a bunker laughing hysterically. There's almost nothing you can't learn to laugh at, I guess.

At times there was a lot of combat and at times there was almost none. The problem with the quiet stretches was that the men never got to release the tension that built up from maintaining a constant state of readiness, and they prayed for contact like farmers pray for rain. There was nothing at the outpost—no running water, no hot food, no communication with the

civilian world, no alcohol or drugs or girls or entertainment of any kind—and so if the enemy didn't shoot at you, it was pretty much a wasted day in your life. Tim and I were out there for a total of five months each (sometimes together, sometimes apart) and it was very easy to fall into the trap of thinking that without combat there was no story to tell. I remember one stifling June day in the middle of a real combat drought—nothing for two weeks straight—and almost every soldier at the outpost was asleep. They were sprawled on their bunks in the fly-infested hooches or slumped against sandbags wherever they could find some shade and I remember sitting there thinking that this was pretty much hell on earth: twenty guys trapped on a hilltop with the heat and the dust and the tarantulas and the flies and nothing to do but wait for someone to try to kill them.

It seemed to be the definition of a moment where there's no story to tell, and yet that wasn't quite true. Creeping through the outpost came Tim, camera in hand, grabbing photographs of the soldiers as they slept. "You never see them like this," he said to me later. "They always look so tough, but when they're asleep they look like little boys. They look the way their mothers probably remember them."

He was absolutely right. I opened my notebook and wrote a description of what it was like to be at one of the most exposed outposts in the entire American sector with virtually every man asleep. The truth was that Tim saw things very differently from the way I did; he wasn't looking for dynamism so much as for beauty or strangeness or even ugliness. There were a lot of pin-up girls in the hooches, for example, and there were also a lot of fly-strips and a lot of ammunition. Sometimes those three things converged on a bedpost in ways that were easy to overlook until you noticed Tim staring at them intently while adjusting the aperture on his camera. I'd watch this and realize that what he was capturing on film was utterly essential to the

experience out there. There was the most potent thing you were deprived of—sex—there was the ugliness and discomfort of the place itself—millions of flies—and then there was the one thing that made it feel important and, yes, worthwhile: the ammunition. The guns. The combat. It felt vaguely wrong and embarrassing to assign so much psychic weight to the weapons; at first you'd walk around pretending not to notice. But after a while you'd realize that the soldiers were just as fascinated by the machinery of war as you were, just as much in its thrall. It was, after all, the cutting edge of a nation's foreign policy; the actual tools that implemented what millions of people back home were arguing about. To feign disinterest was to reject the entire connection between guns and history. However tragic that connection may be, it was massive and it was real.

Tim somehow navigated this world of boredom and killing in a way that extracted the maximum meaning out of both. "I got an amazing picture of the latrine," he told me one day. "I'm just worried the guys will think it's weird that I was taking photos of it." Another time he decided to do a self-portrait on a bunk that was strung with Christmas lights. Going right to the heart of the matter, he borrowed an M-4 and posed it next to him like some ghastly metallic girlfriend. That takes nerve, I remember thinking. That takes a certain intellectual boldness. We're supposed to be pretending that the weapons don't even exist, and he turns one into the centerpiece of some kind of twisted Christmas card.

The casualties were heavy and the emotional price paid by the men was high. Two platoons from Chosen Company; a couple of valleys to the north, accumulated a casualty rate of eighty per cent before the tour was over. One day they sent out a 28-man patrol that got ambushed, and within minutes, every man had a bullet in him. For a while almost a fifth of the combat in all of Afghanistan was taking place in the Korengal Valley. Once

when we were there, the outpost was in four firefights in one day. The record was thirteen. Every man out there was nearly killed and every man out there had lost a friend. It's deeply unnatural for the young to have to make accommodations for their own death and these men did that every day for over a year. It took a toll. No one went crazy but in some ways it seemed like they should have. I don't know how—at age twenty—you begin incorporating an experience like that into your inner world. I don't know how you make sense of that and then proceed to make sense of life back home.

One of the most curious things about war is how often men miss it. They return to the 'world,' as they often refer to it, and find something lacking. Not adrenaline, exactly, but purpose. Significance. A sense of being necessary to others. A platoon of combat infantry is a brotherhood and that bond is expressed in ways that aren't acknowledged or really even permitted back home. That—not war is the true topic of [*Infidel*]. It's an aspect of war that few photographers have even noticed, much less captured with their lens.

SEBASTIAN JUNGER
INTRODUCTION, *INFIDEL*

TRIPOLI STREET LIBYA, 2011

On the day that Hetherington departed for Libya the second time, Tim and [journalist Chris] Anderson talked about fear, a subject that they had discussed many times before. “Working the numbers,” Anderson said, it was inevitable that at some point a war photographer would have survive more than his share of dangerous episodes; the law of averages dictate that he wasn’t going to survive many more, at which point it would be logical for him to get out of the business, to move on to something else. “It was just the natural mature realization that ... I am going to have to do something that’s very dangerous, and the likely outcomes that of that are not good, and having already pushed my luck enough times, is this the time that it’s ... my number is up?” Anderson said. Libya was particularly dangerous because there was so much ordnance falling and the photographers were so frequently exposed, running around with fighters who didn’t know what they were doing. But he assured Anderson that, because his approach to photographing the war would be different the second time around, he would not have to put himself right up on the front line. Anderson warned him not the get sucked in, “and he was like, yeah, you know, you’re right, and don’t worry, I’m going to stay back on this one.” Hetherington, Anderson said, was “genuinely scared to go back, not because he had any premonition but because he was experienced enough to know he was going to do something that was really dangerous, and the outcomes were potentially not good at all.”

Still, Hetherington seemed to have a strange fascination with his own fear, Anderson said, “and maybe we all do, in that sense. Maybe, as photographers who cover those situations, we do have a little bit of a screw loose in that sense of being like moths to a flame, being drawn to experiencing that fear. It’s a powerful magnet that pulls you in, of wanting to

know what that's like, and wanting to experience that fear, kind of wanting to see how deep that fear can run. Seeing how close to the flame you can stand without getting burned. Problem with that is, you stand a good chance of getting burned at some point."

Moments of profound fear have a kind of beautiful purity, Anderson said. All of the gray areas of life disappear, and there is only the matter of living or dying. "And the simplicity of that, the crystal clarity of that, is so powerful, so beautiful and it's-it's hard to put that into words, but calling it adrenaline, or chalking it up to being an adrenaline junkie, that's not it at all, that totally misses the point." As they discussed these things, Hetherington encouraged Anderson to accompany him on the second Benghazi trip, but Anderson opted out because he didn't have the necessary funds to go. Hetherington returned to Benghazi in April to document what [Peter] Bouckaert later described as "the interplay" between the fictional fighters—the soldiers they had seen on TV and in movies—and the fighters they were trying to become. He would do it with slightly eccentric equipment. As he explained, merely framing an image involves a certain artifice, and there is a natural tension between the need for honesty and the need for impact. While an honest photo need not be a beautiful photo, the most memorable ones are both, which is why a photographer inevitably resorts to certain contrivances to magnify the power of his subjects. The rebels were merely embracing this dynamic. So he did too.

ALAN HUFFMAN

EXCERPT, *HERE I AM: THE STORY OF TIM HETHERINGTON*

EPILOGUE

In a 2010 interview Hetherington had said, “I can count on a single hand the times where I’m in a situation where I think I’m gonna be killed, and gone much further—not just killed, like, ‘Aw, I could’ve been shot; but really a situation where you think, like, ‘This is it. I’ve gone too far now. My family’s going to be so angry with me, they’re going to be so upset. What have I done?’”

[Journalist Chris] Anderson told Junger he imagined Hetherington riding to the Misrata front that day “being thrilled, full of excitement, not just for the danger, but this feeling that you’re getting to witness what no one else is getting to witness. You’re going to lay your eyes on something that no one else is getting to see, or just a handful of people are getting to witness.” Such feelings are seductive-and, obviously, very dangerous, Anderson said, because they can override the natural instinct to avoid danger. Hetherington did not need to go to the front line on Tripoli Street to explore the lives of people under duress but “he got sucked in,” Anderson said. After the blast, he said, he imagined Hetherington thinking, “That this is it. I’ve made the final mistake; you know? And all of those questions that you should have been asking yourself beforehand, all of a sudden you’re asking yourself now, like, ‘Why did I do this? Why am I here right now? Why did I have to come here? I shouldn’t have been here. If I could just take—if I could just rewind ten minutes. One day. I wouldn’t be here ... “Knowing that that moment was coming, and this was going to be the end, in some shitty little patch of dirt in a place that’s not your home. And feeling so incredibly alone.” Rewinding was a familiar action for Hetherington as a filmmaker, but he also saw the symbolism in doing so. In his short film *Diary*, cars occasionally travel backward, and as Junger observed the short film is in some ways an homage to Kurt

Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*, in which he describes war as a movie that could be reversed: "American planes, full of holes and wounded men and corpses, took off backwards from an airfield in England. Over France, a few German fighter planes flew at them backwards, sucked bullets and shell fragments from some of the planes and crewmen. They did the same for wrecked American bombers on the ground, and those planes flew up backwards to join the formation." The bombers in turn sucked the flames from burning German cities; afterward the bombs were shipped back to the United States, where factory workers dismantled them and the components were buried in remote locations, "so they would never hurt anybody ever again." In the end, "The American fliers turned in their uniforms, became high school kids. And Hitler turned into a baby ... "

It was an attractive idea, and Hetherington had considered filming a war movie in reverse. But the only moments of his life and death that could be rewound were in his video footage and films. The closest he would come to going back was aboard the boat, and then on a succession of planes, which transported his body back to where his life had begun.

Magali Charrier, who edited *Diary*, later remembered, "Somehow the work resonated very differently when I heard Tim had been killed. It's almost like how I felt we'd made a ... a tribute to him, in advance to his death. It was almost like he'd paid tribute to his career and to his work before this happened to him."

At one point in *Diary*, we see his reflection in a hotel room window. Then we see him lying in bed, talking on the phone. There are scenes of conflict and violence juxtaposed with moments in a London tea shop that, through his lens, are as disorienting as the makeshift rebel hospital in Monrovia. Hetherington's longtime friend Stephen Mayes said *Diary* was

essentially a manifesto for his future work—his first attempt to “reshape journalism, through a mix of the objective and the personal, narrative with stream-of-consciousness. In a way, *Diary* showed where he was going, but part of the tragedy is that he didn’t know where he was going. The work he produced was not what he wanted to be remembered by ... In terms of his legacy, all we have is an idea. He was exploring, trying to work it all out.”

Hetherington’s defining characteristic, Mayes said, was curiosity. “Everybody felt touched by him because he was curious about them. It was never about Tim.” It was about opening minds, and exploration, more than the images themselves, he said. “It was about this perpetual dialogue. It was a process. *Diary* points the way.”

Near the end of *Diary*, as Hetherington lies twisted in white sheets in a hotel room, talking to an interviewer on the phone, he tries to explain his work, but finds it difficult. “I ... there is a bit of a situation in a war, or catastrophe, and I go there to make pictures, to try to understand what is happening there, for myself I don’t really, um, you know ...” he begins, then falters. How can he explain what it all means, particularly to an interviewer who, it seems, has suggested that his images portray the hopelessness of the world? “If there’s no, if you think about in the pictures that there is no hope, then I’m ... I’m, you know ...” His voice trails off.

From there, the film segues to a group of young women pleading with rebels on a roadside in Liberia. There is no audio. They plead in silence. Hetherington zooms in on the girls’ faces; they’re pretty, searching, focused, scared. At first the rebels—one is Black Diamond—listen impatiently, but eventually their faces reveal what looks like empathy. They say something we cannot hear, then send the young women down the road. The girls glance back at us, at Hetherington’s lens, as if looking for something, then continue on.

The film then returns to the ceiling fan from the opening scene, which slowly oscillates above the bed with white sheets, in a room where Hetherington once stayed. The fan gently stirs the gauzy mosquito netting overhead, clicking quietly. Hetherington's camera remains fixed on the fan and the gently billowing fabric. It's beautiful, soothing, abstract. The scene fades to black.

ALAN HUFFMAN

EXCERPT, *HERE I AM: THE STORY OF TIM HETHERINGTON*