



ABOVE Women leaving the village church on their way to celebrate the baptism of a baby boy. Wajerat, Ethiopia
OPPOSITE, LEFT At dawn a dead body is brought to the bottom of the cliff to be buried on the flat summit. Burials at Debre Damo are extremely rare and only men are allowed up to the summit and to be buried there. Debre Damo, Tigray, Ethiopia



NICK - IN BRIEF

Age 51
Time as pro 23 years
Where based Monaco, France
Specialities Documentary, photojournalism, 'how people live'
Studio or home Home and picture agency
Digital or film B&W negative, colour slide and digital (colour only)
Website nickdanziger.com

10 Questions Nick Danziger

A modern-day Tintin, Nick Danziger's thirst for travel, adventure and social documentary has placed him firmly on the map as one of the world's leading photojournalists. Nick Smith hears his story

Nick Danziger started off as a painter and has also been a successful author and filmmaker. But if you ask him what he does today, he'll tell you he's a photographer. In fact, he says: 'I don't do anything else. I have a huge family with six children, and so with the family and the photography, there's little room for anything else.'

Born in London, but brought up in Monaco and Switzerland, Danziger developed a taste for adventure and travel from a young age and – inspired by the comic strip Belgian reporter Tintin – took off on his first solo trip, to Paris, aged just 13. His travels led to best-selling books such as *Danziger's Travels* and *Danziger's Adventures*.

His photographic book, *The British*, was awarded Best Monochrome Illustrated Book by The British Book Design & Production Awards in 2002, and was selected by the *Sunday Times* as one of its Photography Books of The Year.

1 When did you realise you were going to become a photographer?

I started as a painter and evolved. I always had a camera on my travels and it was a way of recording what I was seeing. But I really didn't ever know that I was going to end up as a professional photographer.

2 What was your first camera?

Before I went to art school my uncle gave me a Pentax Spotmatic, which I loved. It was easy to use and I had several lenses for it; I was extremely fond of it.

3 What formal training do you have?

None. I went to art school, but when I first studied painting I was left completely on my own. However, I eventually went on to teach painting.

IN NICK'S CAMERA BAG

CAMERAS Huge range of Olympus cameras: film – OM-3, 3Ti and 4Ti, digital – E-3, E-30, and a new E-P1 PEN

LENSES Only wideangle primes, including 21mm, 24mm, 28mm and 35mm

4 How important is it to specialise?

Sadly, to survive financially or make it in the profession you have to be polyvalent – you need to be able to do multiple types of photography, as well as having the ability to write and record. I've gone the opposite direction. I used to do everything and now I've come down to something that's very specialised. If you want to be at the top of what you are doing, you've got to specialise.

5 What is the best assignment you've been on?

Every assignment. I love what I do, so I don't need to go 8,000 miles to have a great assignment. It could be on my doorstep. If it involves people, it's as interesting to be photographing a Buddhist monk in Tibet, as it is to be photographing,

somebody closer to home, such as a miner in Wales.

6 What's the worst thing about being a professional photographer?

Negotiating access. It takes up a huge amount of my time. I go to sensitive locations, where there are often people with a lot to lose.

7 Film or digital? Why?

There's a different feel to the final quality of what you produce, so it's horses for courses. Definition is a redundant argument now, both are good.

8 What's the most important thing that you've learned from another photographer?

Yes, I've learned from photographers. But, I think I've

learnt just as much from an extraordinary photo editor called Robert Pledge, a founder of Contact Press Images. Equally, I've learned an incredible amount from designers and painters, for example, Caravaggio's use of light and framing.

9 What does photography mean to you?

I feel incredibly privileged, because people fascinate me, and through what I do I get amazing access to people and their lives. I see an incredible variety of the ways people live.

10 What makes a great travel photograph?

Good photography can very much change people lives. It can be a negative image but elicit a positive response. ■