

AMERICAN

NOVEMBER 2008

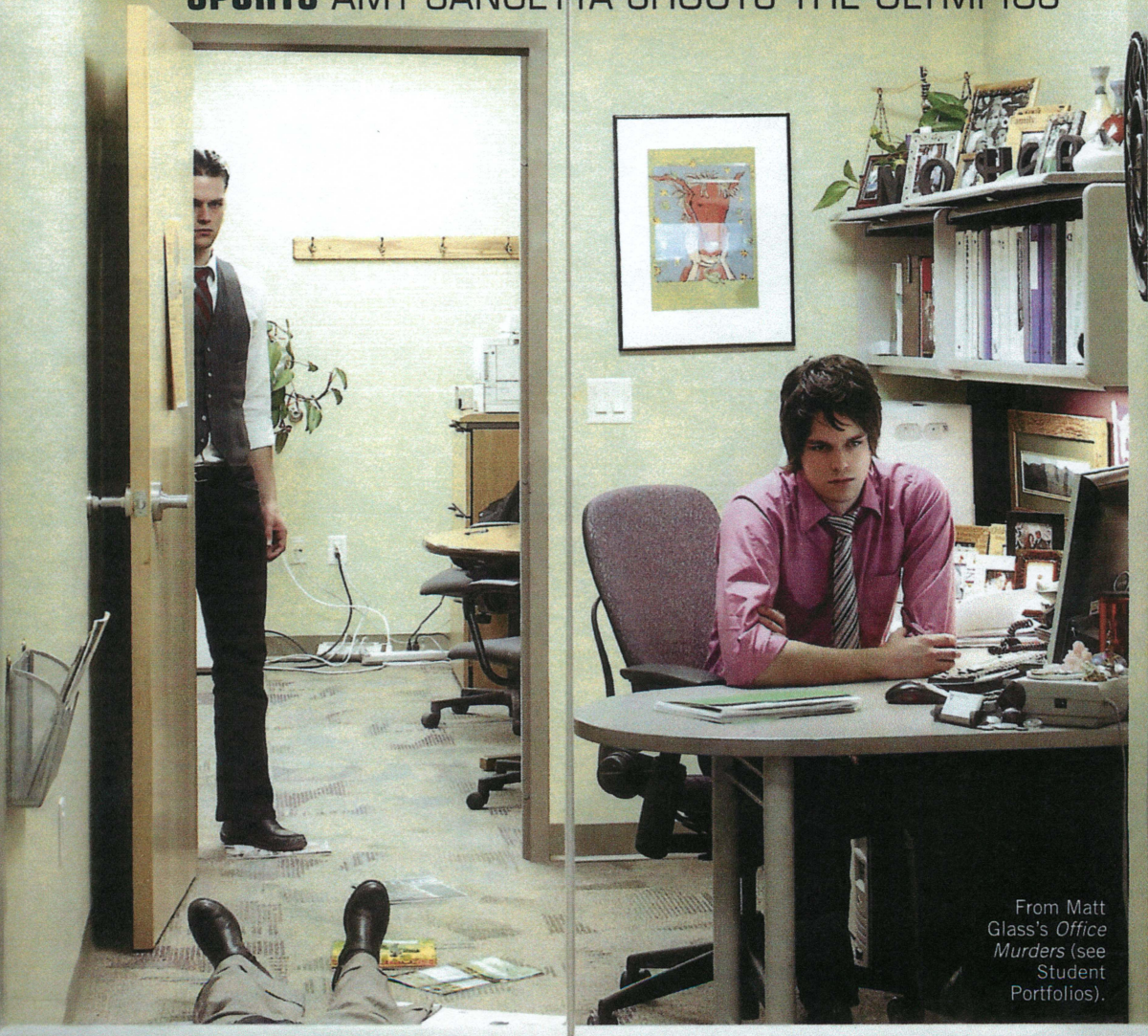
PHOTO ON CAMPUS

MASTERS IN PHOTOGRAPHY

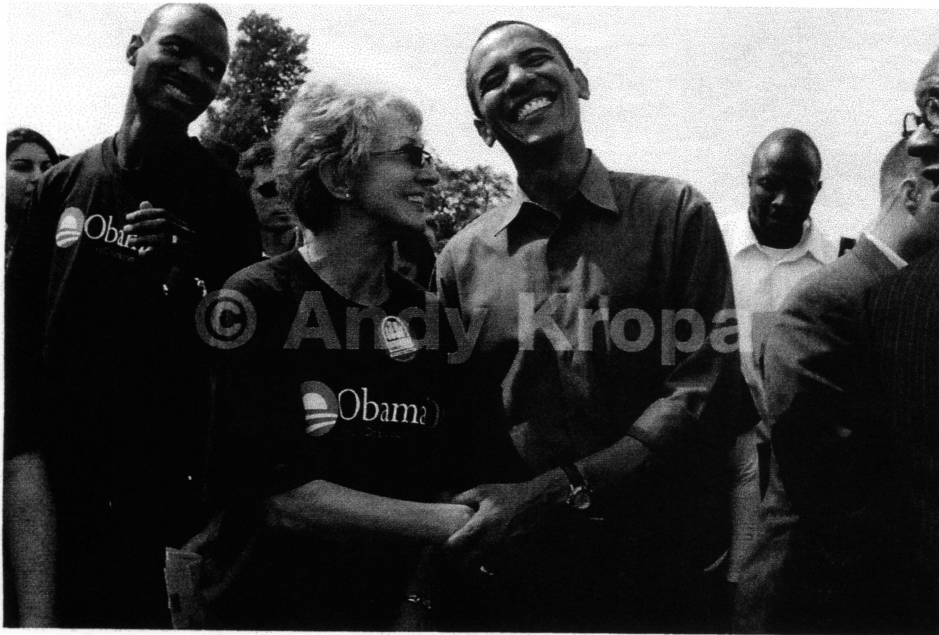
NATURE DARRELL GULIN'S WILD KINGDOM

FASHION LILLIAN BASSMAN REDISCOVERED

SPORTS AMY SANCETTA SHOOTS THE OLYMPICS



From Matt
Glass's *Office
Murders* (see
Student
Portfolios).



Don't leave home without putting copyright notice into your digital image metadata. By Michelle Bogre

PROTECT YOUR ASSETS

If you already know how to add watermarks and copyright information to your digital images, you probably also know that it's easy to remove or change that information with software. Law-makers know this too, believe it or not, which is one of the reasons why they enacted the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) a decade ago. The DMCA makes it illegal for someone to remove your watermark or copyright metadata and/or distribute photographs knowing the metadata has been removed. The idea was to promote a robust use of the Internet for electronic commerce by providing serious legal protection against piracy.

The DMCA calls metadata *copyright management information*, or CMI. Section 1202 of the DMCA defines CMI as the "name of, and other identifying information about, the author of a work.... [T]he name of, and other identifying information about, the copyright owner of the work, including the information set forth in a notice of copyright." Fines for removing CMI without permission from the copyright owner depend on usage and intent, but range from a civil penalty and fines starting at

\$2,500 to a criminal penalty punishable by a \$500,000 fine and a five-year jail sentence. A criminal penalty applies if the removal was "willful," done for commercial advantage or financial gain. The DMCA can be a powerful tool for photographers—but only if you enter your copyright notice into the metadata, which is basically a group of information fields invisibly attached to a digital image file that can be read by many "asset

management" programs.

Every time you take a picture with your digital SLR, the camera records many of the settings used to make it, including shutter speed, lens aperture, ISO setting, and even whether or not the flash fired. This information is saved in the image's metadata fields. When you download that image to your computer, the program you use to manage your photos allows you to add other kinds of information (or to fill in other

settings that the camera didn't record) in the fields of a palette-like metadata display panel.

Your teachers may have encouraged you to use the metadata panel to enter keywords, which will help you locate specific kinds of images in the future. You should also add your copyright notice and author information, though, so *you* can be located if someone wants to use your image. The proper copyright notation is © (year) (your name). In my case, for an image produced this year, this would read © 2008 Michelle Bogre. Some photographers add the phrase "All Rights Reserved" after their names.

Entering this information is quick and easy. Programs such as Photoshop may even let you create a metadata template with copyright and author information so you don't have to retype it for each image.

For extra protection, you should also consider embedding your images with a visible watermark (such as the copyright symbol and your name, as shown above). A watermark won't stop a committed pirate, but it may be enough of a nuisance to deter a casual thief! ■

