



Frozen Stones

*An autobiographical account of meeting and photographing the Rolling Stones,
and the lying, scheming, deceiving and dreaming that made it possible.*

**By
Roger Barone**

Since January of 1975, when I purchased my first camera and began taking candid backstage shots and concert photos at the Spectrum, I could never enjoy a show without photographing it.

Instead of passively watching from a distant audience seat and coping with distractions like: vomiting drunks; kids on valiums, 'ludes and LSD spilling beer on me; junkies bumming change; fireworks threatening my sight and middle-aged ushers hitting on young chicks, I roved the arena with my camera and lenses as fluid as Norton navigating the sewers and underground tunnels of New York City.

Starting at the steepened base of the dingy delivery tunnel for limousine arrivals, I zipped through back hallways, secured stairwells, secret tunnels and inaccessible storage areas, searching for shots—section by section. Assisted by security and ushering personnel that I had befriended over the years—bartering access for sticks, pucks, and food. I was invited to shoot from the photo pit, players' tunnels, and vomitories: and warned when to hide my camera. Stagehands, serendipitous backstage passes and my familiarity with the infrastructure also facilitated my journey.

Following a fluorescent-lit, cinder-block path up to the dressing rooms; exiting a secret, secured stairwell below section C's restroom, slipping into the crowd. Gliding to G, descending the steps for a free press-room Pepsi; past the Prism offices and out the visiting teams' chute for a wide-angle stage shot; reversing my steps, down the cinder-block hallway; up the employees' elevator to the concourse, for a rear-stage shot from section M; circling the sticky concourse, turn at 20, huff and puff to the nosebleeds, angle toward 70, climb the ladder for a Goodyear shot from the catwalk. Consider taking a leak, but not a break.

I was aggressive and my observations were intense. Colors were more vibrant. I found significance in subtle shadows, glaring lights and listing heads. Details detained me. Fractions of a second were frozen and tangible—like a grain of sand stuck in the waistline of an hourglass. As a photographer, I discovered, acquiring a great image was

better than seeing an entire production, but it required discipline, concentration and patience.

For five years, I utilized almost unrestricted access at the Spectrum to capture rare and priceless images of rock and roll stars. Candid, once-in-a-lifetime moments that the public never sees—a body of work celebrating the legacy of cultural icons at their peak—taken some 20 years ago. My only regret? Not starting one month sooner when I met George Harrison lounging around between shows in December of '74.

In addition to my backstage Beatle encounters (I also met his father, Harry Harrison, George's silver haired twin with the heavy Irish accent), I watched the concerts from the photo pit, a secured and barricaded area between the stage and seating area. Standing on a chair, my hands perilously gripped the edge of the stage a crushing footstep away from Harrison's feet.

"My Sweet Lord...My Sweet Lord," chanted Harrison. *"If I only had a camera ... If I only had a camera..."* I cried to myself. Frustrated, and getting more depressed with every refrain, I agonized over the paradox of having the best view in the house and not being able to enjoy it. *Never again,* I vowed.

Although the image of Harrison playing his colorfully painted *Magical Mystery Tour* guitar will always be imbedded in my mind, I'd prefer a materialistic 11x14 print — matted, framed and hanging from my wall, instead of an upside-down Beatle on my retina. Three weeks later, I bought a used Pentax 35mm single-lens reflex camera from a friend of mine.

One night while loading trucks during a move-out, a roadie informed me that the "Stones were going out this summer." I was ecstatic to learn that Mick Jagger would be at the Spectrum for two nights in June. Fortunately, I would have four months to prepare for the Stones after shooting my first event (Led Zeppelin: February 8, 1975) on my first roll of film, excluding a test roll shot immediately after my purchase.

Eventually, I met and photographed Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Bill Wyman,

Charlie Watts and Ronnie Wood on the 29th and 30th, clueless to the smorgasbord of dollars editors were feeding photographers for exclusive Stones' shots. Six years later, in '81, I had a better understanding of the value of my photos, when I managed to obtain exclusive pictures of a Stones' rehearsal in JFK Stadium. They were featured on the cover of the *Philadelphia Daily News* and transmitted around the world.

Nowadays, every time the Stones go on tour and schedule a show in Philadelphia, my life becomes chaotic, filled with anxiety and twisted in turmoil. I am compelled, driven by compulsion and challenge—like a championship sports team that must prove itself by winning a second consecutive title—to meet them, photograph them and to have my 8-point *Photo by Roger Barone* byline accompany the Rolling Stones into photographic posterity via the next morning's newspaper and, years later, through Philadelphia's archival research centers. I become manic, thinking about meeting them; I become depressive, wondering how. Although, I'm overjoyed to see them, I'm even happier when they're gone—and my life reverts back to peace, tranquility *and* truth. In 1989, the Stones were touring again.

Obtaining press credentials for major rock shows was always a pain, but, for this, the Stones first tour in eight years, the hassle would be as disturbing as the amplified sound that painfully pounds the ears of those closest to the stage at a stadium show.

Apparently, publicists for superstar rock and roll bands are unfamiliar with the popular South Philadelphia newspaper that my friend, Fred Trombetta's family, has published on a weekly basis since August 5, 1937. For the past 59 years, nearly 12,000 neighborhood residents have been held captive by the 12-page paper's in-depth coverage of Saint Agnes Hospital's press releases, Dr. John DiSantis' half-page chiropractor ads and the timely tips from Philadelphia Gas Works on weatherproofing windows and obtaining LIHEAP grants.

No, it's not the *New York Times*, but it's the newspaper where my first published photographs appeared, and the "affiliate organization" where my inaugural City of Philadelphia press credentials arrived, and, I might add, where my "special invitation" to the

Rolling Stones' Steel Wheels Tour Press Conference,

Date: Tuesday, July 11, 1989, Time: 11:30 a.m.

Location: New York's Grand Central Station Terminal

Tracks 38 & 40.....did not arrive.

After two weeks of dealing with Rogers and Cowans, the "we'll-get-back-to-you" Stones' publicists who repeatedly ignored my requests for credentials, I hung up the hook, and took up the crook—whirling my wily mind in search of an ignominious inroad into the land of the Stones.

"Stagehand, security guard, janitor, carpenter, police officer, newsphotographer, reporter, television crew, caterer, electrician, laborer, intern, station master, engineer...." I pondered the possibilities. My skeleton key to the conference was in these jobs. But which one?

Newsphotographer? It could work if I arrived early and found a sympathetic publicist. Stagehand? No way, the Big Apple is Big Union, everybody knows each other. Janitor, Station Master, Policeman? Forget it, no uniforms; Intern? Nah, someone might put me to work; Caterer? Maybe, no one refuses free food! Can't afford it; Security guard? Well, I have uniforms *and* employment experience from SpectaGuard, the Spectacore-owned events' security firm, but how would I conceal my cameras.

As the ideas churned, a bizarre plan finally emerged. If it worked, I'd have a hilarious story, if not, I'd still have a hilarious a story; either way, an adventure was about to unfold, but, first, I'd need a ride.

If you try something, something can happen...

If you try nothing, nothing will happen....

So, I called a friend.

Alex Lloyd Green [name changed], a news photographer whose accident and fire photos frequently appear on the front pages of the *Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News*, sleeps with his scanners (Radio Shack: Pro 2021; Pro 38; and a Patrolman 54). His brain, subconsciously tuned into the nightly cacophony of emergency radio transmissions, is always on red alert—translating frantic voices and broken sentences into “goes” (spot-news sales) or “no-goes” (worthless runs). Where there is red, Alex sees green. Where there is blood and emergency lights, Alex sees dollars and cents. Alex has sped to enough pre-dawn disasters along the interstate highway system from Woodhaven to South Philly that he calls it “My 95.” I think he’s nuts, but he’s perfect for this mission.

Alex’s level of laughter indicated he was receptive to my idea, so we hastily arranged a meeting at his Bensalem apartment for 10:30 p.m. In the meantime, I called another friend whom I worked with at SpectaGuard.

Cedd Specious [name changed] liked working events’ security. He enjoyed the variety of sporting events, Eagles games, concerts, golf tournaments, and, especially, the midnight to 8 a.m. overnight shifts at trade shows, where supervisors disappeared and left him alone. At the midnight hour, unbeknownst to his trusted supervisors, “Sid the Rip,” would appear, like Lon Chaney’s werewolf, seeking sustenance in vendors’ merchandise. Specious didn’t earn the moniker “Sid the Rip” for nothing. T-shirts, food, sodas, golf balls, rare baseball cards, long-distance telephone service, visors...anything that fancied him, Sid ripped. Including SpectaGuard uniforms and stationery, which formed the foundation of my scheme.

I asked Cedd to wear his SpectaGuard uniform, rather than the yellow golf T-shirt and black pants required from May till September. The full military outfit with dark-blue polyester pants and stripes along the legs that matched a powder-blue shirt. A glistening

tin badge pinned to the left breast pocket, gleaming spit-shined shoes and a commander's cap completed the uniform.

I anticipated arriving at New York's Grand Central Terminal about the same time work crews started erecting the stage, sound and lighting equipment. Past experiences with stage setups indicated that we should be there at least six hours before show time, when security is lax, if present at all, and the workers are too busy to ask questions.

"When we arrive at the station," I told Cedd, "Alex and I will disappear for awhile." Cedd's visibility was just as important as our invisibility. So, he needed a convenient post near the stage where he could easily strike up conversations with the people in charge. They, in turn, assuming that Cedd belonged, would leave him alone. A few hours later, according to our plans, and just before the Stones' 11:30 arrival, Officer Specious would escort Alex and me into the secured area. Once inside, we would mix among the "invited" journalists. Cedd was hysterical, but curious about the stationery.

A fictitious but authentic looking document on SpectaGuard stationery was essential, I explained, in case an authority questioned Cedd's presence. The typed memo would substantiate Cedd's assignment and duties. We replaced the phone number on the bottom of the SpectaGuard stationery with our own. Anyone inquiring about Officer Specious would hear a message on Alex's answering machine:

"Thank you, for calling the operations department...we are out of the office at the moment, but will gladly return your call immediately...." [We avoided using the SpectaGuard name in our message, figuring, it was improper to misrepresent ourselves].

At 10:30 p.m., Alex, with his angular nose, flowing hair and obscene demeanor, resembles a miniature version of Howard Stern, invited Cedd and me into his apartment.

As we entered, Cedd passed me the SpectaGuard stationery. Alex prepared the typewriter. It was old and beaten, a "Smith Corroded," with no correction ribbon. All mistakes would have to be "whited out." Keys got stuck, peculiar designs from overlapping characters appeared. If there was any professionalism in our presentation, it

certainly wasn't visible on the memo. But we couldn't worry about it now. In hindsight, the letter's appearance was an appropriate reflection of our insane selves.

I dictated, Alex typed. The contents of the letter — in all its stages — from first draft to final version, were preserved on an audio cassette recording that I had made to document the evening's antics. There is uncontrollable laughter throughout the 40-minute tape:

Version #1. **To: SpectaGuard Officer Cedd Speizer**
From: Ron Stoner, Security Operations Manager
Subject: Grand Central Terminal Posting

.....

Please report promptly to Tracks 38 & 40, at 7 a.m., on July 11, 1989, in full military uniform, with cap, to Grand Central Station Terminal in New York City. Responsibilities will include patrolling assigned area, monitoring scheduled arrival of sound equipment and checking credentials. Please, remain at post until authorized to leave, or event is completed and equipment is removed, as discussed in our meeting on July 9, 1989 with Fred Walsh, Logistics Director.

We imagined a figure of authority reading the memo.

“Fucken guys wouldn't know what to think. ‘Why in the world would someone from Philadelphia be sent to New York to watch equipment. Who's Ron Stoner?’”

Laughter explodes on the tape whenever Stoner is mentioned.

Ron “Stoner” Freed [name changed] was another friend of ours from SpectaGuard. He liked “stoning out” on pot before work, not exactly supervisory material, but, nonetheless, “Stoner” made the grade, got a raise and found his niche with our fictitious company.

When the memo bearing the treasured SpectaGuard Logo, an embossed red globe enclosed by a red circle, was completed, Alex and I packed our cameras. Cedd folded his uniform, and at 2:42 a.m. on the day that Lawrence Olivier would die, we headed to

Trenton, New Jersey for a Transit Line train that would take us to New York. On the way to the station, we memorized our duties like the military misfits about to parachute behind enemy lines in the *Dirty Dozen*. Apparently, we knew our duties much better than the Transit schedule because we missed our train by 20 minutes. We piled back into Alex's brown Pontiac Firebird and headed north.

I knew Alex was an aggressive driver, but I didn't realize he was a stupid driver.. At least, not until he mistakenly turned onto an exit ramp and got lost. Without any red ruby slippers to click three times for a safe return to familiar roads, Alex, instead, relied on Evil Knievel-like antics that threatened our lives.

Suddenly, I screamed, "Alex, are you nuts, you're gonna get us killed...!"

"Shut the fuck up," Alex yelled back, eyes glued to his rear-view mirror, as he shifted into reverse and covered 100 yards of mistaken interstate, as if rewinding a video of his wrong turn in high speed. Staring over my shoulder at an expanding radius of illumination from two distant halogen headlights, I thought to myself, "For the Stones."

We arrived in New York about 5:30 a.m. as a bluish-gray cast covered the humid city. Unable to find street parking, we headed into a garage. Cedd and I laughed at the puzzled expression on Alex's face after handing his car keys to a complete stranger in New York City. Grand Central Station was only a couple of blocks away. Phase one was completed.

It didn't take long to find our destination. As we entered the station we saw a couple of policemen and a few workers carrying plywood. From this point on, Alex, Cedd and I—by design—could no longer be friends, and must avoid each other. I overheard a policeman tell Alex that the Stones' press conference would begin at 11:30. We suppressed our excitement.

I cavorted in and out of the terminal with two dangling Nikons. Was my appearance deceptive enough? Only God, my hairdresser and Rogers and Cowens would

know for sure. But, to the 20 men assembling and adjusting three tiers of wooden risers, stacked in two-foot increments, I was legit.

The risers, positioned along the side and rear walls of the terminal, would form a layered quadrangle when the final piece of the puzzle—the Stones' stage—was installed. The rear section, parallel to the stage, offered photographers an unobstructed head-on shot of the band from about 100 feet away. The central area, within the quad, was left open and was reserved for standing reporters. I watched as a large metallic-gray banner bearing the Stones' Steel Wheels logo was raised above the stage.

Alex and Cedd headed to the restroom. I met them later, and we discussed our progress for the first time since our arrival.

The bathroom reminded me of Calcutta movie clips. Street people, hobos, junkies. Pungent odors clinging to unshaved, unkempt people reeking with alcohol and urine. Everywhere. Not an inch to spare. Sleeping on floors, leaning against walls, their belongings strewn before them. Cedd quickly changed. Occasionally, holding his nose, but always holding his wallet. Finished changing, he headed for his post.

I followed about twenty paces behind. Cedd took a position in front of the stage. A lighting truss was being raised over the stage. Suddenly, people started yelling, “watch out, get out....” As the workers scampered, the steel truss, which took about 12 men to hoist, came crashing to the ground. The Stones, I knew, would never hear about this. As time passed, more and more people started arriving. Once the risers were in position, another team of workers installed metal railings along the backs and then stapled black drapes to them. The rails and drapes, in addition to preventing off-balance photographers from falling, would block the view of any fans trying to steal a glimpse at the Stones.

It was getting very hot. Microphones and sound equipment were set up. Lights were adjusted, focused and dimmed. More police arrived, more workers, a small crowd was gathering behind the yellow police barricades that separated the public area from the,

now, restricted Stones' conference site within terminals 38 and 40. Curious commuters with a few spare minutes approached.

"What's going on?"

"The Stones."

"Cool."

They hustled on.

From my position in the back of the hall, I watched Cedd maneuvering. He was espionage's finest hour, standing at his front-stage post, conversing with people. No one passed without a greeting from Cedd. Suddenly, I noticed something unsettling. Cedd wasn't wearing his shiny security shoes; he had dirty old sneakers on. A dead giveaway. I didn't have time to be angry

The Stones press representatives arrived and began distributing credentials to the pre-approved invited guests. I walked over to their table and identified myself, presenting my Philadelphia Press credentials hoping to gain last-minute access, but the woman said, "You're not on the list." I was escorted out. Seconds later, Alex was removed. It was hopeless. These people were unrelenting, not even offering a no-show spot. The New York City Police Department handled security, and they weren't listening to anything. "You're not on the list, there's nothing I can do for you. Move away."

I noticed Cedd talking with the captain of police and another fellow. I became flustered, suspecting our endeavor was about to end. It was almost 10:30, the Stones were expected sometime soon.

They started walking toward the side of the stage, Cedd was being escorted by the two men, Cedd turned in my direction and relayed a silent message through a distorted face that reminded me of the classic comic Joe E. Brown. His lips were easy to decipher.

"I am being re-posted."

Cedd later explained that the production manager questioned him, and told him, "You're at the wrong spot, I'll show you where we need you."

I had to leave the area, I was laughing so hard. I found Alex, relayed the news about Cedd, and he fell over, too. We couldn't stop. Our faces were hurting from the stretches of laughter. This singular moment made the whole trip worthwhile, we agreed. If anything, at least, Cedd was going to see the Stones, and from the best vantage point in the station—next to Mick Jagger. Another unexpected problem soon followed.

The conference was being broadcast around the world, and Cedd would, most certainly, wind up in video news clips. If SpectaGuard officials saw him, we'd all get fired. Later that evening, Cedd laughed about the negative impact his fifteen minutes of fame would have on his security career. But, he needn't worry. Cedd's brush with celebrity was about to be denied.

In the meantime, Alex and I had gone to the station's maintenance department looking for something to stand on, milk crates, cinder blocks, anything to elevate us above the crowd, on a level with the other photographers. Once everyone was in position, all ground-level sight lines would be blocked. There was no hope for the 300 or so fans that had gathered behind us. The number would grow to approximately 3,000 by noon.

A janitor provided two metal milk crates that elevated Alex and me another 16 inches--enough to see beyond the "invited" photographers perched on the risers, if they moved a couple of inches left or right.

Back at the stage, Cedd was in conference again. This time with three people. In addition to the police captain, Cedd, recalled later, the others included the head of production, the guy who earlier re-posted Cedd and a woman who was distributing press credentials.

All three were standing behind him. The woman turned to the captain and asked, "Who is he?" Cedd turned toward them. Of course, no one knew him. He took out the memo, unfolding it carefully.

“The woman checked her list,” Cedd recalled, “compared it to his memo and said, ‘I don’t know anything about this memo.’” The production manager said he didn’t know Cedd either, and advised him to leave.

“I should have quit when he re-posted me,” Cedd joked on the ride home. “Who did he think he was, my boss.”

The no-nonsense police captain read the memo and became confused. He must have suspected something was going on, as he told Cedd, “You might as well leave, you’ll get paid for it anyway....”

Cedd replied, “I can’t just leave my post, I don’t want to risk getting fired.” The captain was getting as impatient as he was confused; it was very hot and the crowd was growing. It was nearing 11:00, a 100 degrees and the Stones were on the way.

“You better just leave, why don’t you find one of the girls around the corner [a prostitute] and spend the day with her,” the Captain told Cedd, adding, “Why would a security guard from Philadelphia be sent here.” As predicted.

On the perimeter of the quadrant, just behind the cordoned off risers, Alex and I had a front-row spot about 120 feet from the stage. With our moderate telephotos lenses we’d get photos, that is, if the press photographers cooperated with us.

I had a 200mm lens and didn’t need a tripod or any special support. I didn’t expect any great shots, but, at least, I’d have a record of the day. The photographers were in position, and in our faces.

Ken Reagan, a famous photographer for *People*, and the Stones' personal image maker for many years was directly in front of me—obstructing my view. I called him several times. In the spirit of Rogers and Cowans, he ignored me, too.

The Stones were late. About a couple of thousand people had gathered behind Alex and me. It was scorching hot, our clothes were soaked and the crowd was angry.

“Let the fans see...Let the fans see,” they yelled.

“We buy the tickets, We buy the tickets...” (Comments directed at the media who receive free passes to shows and press conference credentials, but don't have the decency or respect to move a few feet for the fans.)

“We want the Stones, We want the Stones...” They screamed, louder and louder.

I twisted and turned for better shooting angles. My movement restricted by the milk-crate. I waited for Reagan to move: a raised arm, a shifted leg or an extended stretch, would provide an opening for me to shoot through.

I held my camera horizontally for better control. I was being knocked around, searching for an unobstructed shot of the Stones. I wouldn't have time to cock my shutter. It was one shot, and a bump. Refocus and wait. A repetition synchronized to the irritated fans screaming in unison, “We buy the tickets...”

. Fortunately, I took a light-meter reading while the stage was being constructed, and didn't have to fumble with settings.

Chance favors those who are prepared, I heeded the advice of Louis Pasteur. F/4 @ 250th, I was shooting TrX black and white, 400, pushed two stops to 1600.

According to wire service reports, “The Stones arrived at Grand Central Terminal 45 minutes late on a diesel train adorned with the “Steel Wheels” logo. It originated at Harlem's 125th Street Station.”

The fans were pressing forward against the yellow barricades, while New York City cops escorted MTV and Entertainment Tonight television crews through them for live shots. The fans mugged, and joyously celebrated the Stones for the video crews' cameras. They screamed angrily at photographers and the handful of additional security personnel, wearing gray Rolling Stones Steel Wheels T-shirts, who also obstructed our view. I yelled too.

Ron Wood, the guitarist who joined the band in '75, was the first Stone that I could see, and for awhile, the only Stone. I kept shooting, even though I never considered

Wood a real Stone. To me, he was always one of Rod Stewart's Faces. But, now, his was the only face I was shooting at this conference.

Occasionally, I caught a quick glimpse of Jagger. He was wearing a green jacket, sunglasses and holding a boombox, but I could not hear him above the din of my cohorts.

Two inches. Only two inches either way, I needed for one of the photographic Rocks of Gibraltar to shift, and I'd have a great horizontal group shot. Reagan ignored me, and security wouldn't call him. Nevertheless, I managed to get a couple of Jagger shots through an opening between two photographers—standing elbow to elbow. Jagger is pictured in the distance between two looming, symmetrical silhouettes as if being spied upon through a keyhole.

Three thousand fans crammed into the terminal area and, approximately, 300 members of the press covered it. The *New York Post* reported.

The agitated and overheated crowd unscrewed tungsten lightbulbs in the ceiling to reduce the heat. Afterward, the ignorant photographers were pelted with broken bulbs, batteries, trash and whatever else could be found to attract their attention and persuade them to "Let The Fans See...Let The Fans See...."

Between shots, I continued to get knocked around. Alex didn't even get a shot off. Cedd, after changing into his civilian clothes, suddenly reappeared out of nowhere, wearing short pants and a tank top.

The police captain, who had earlier asked Cedd to leave, spotted the former security guard and current Clark Kent civilian in the crowd, and laughed. Seeing was not believing.

Shaking his head from side to side, the grinning captain, with the heavy New York City accent, acknowledged a noteworthy moment in his police career, "I've seen everything now."

A New York City police captain, telling Cedd he's seen everything, is to be believed!

Cedd's shirt was soaked in perspiration, his ruddy complexion dripping with water. I managed to shoot fifteen frames altogether, nothing outstanding, but usable in an artistic way sometime later.

It was an appropriate record of an insane event. The Stones appeared on stage for 15 minutes, announced their tour would begin in Buffalo, and a Philadelphia date was scheduled for September 21 at JFK Stadium. But that would soon change when, as the *Philadelphia Daily News* reported, "Mayor Wilson B. Goode would abruptly close JFK Stadium for 'safety reasons.'" Rumors circulated that the Stones would open their tour in Philadelphia.

Our last worry was laid to rest, when Alex paid the parking fee and his car was delivered to him.

NOTE: Three names have been changed to protect the privacy of those mentioned in my story.

###