

1/21/2014

To the Judges:

Josh Haner's assignment was straightforward: spend several weeks or months with one of the victims of the Boston Marathon bombings, and make our readers feel like they are there with him during the recovery.

By the end of Day 1, the assignment was doomed. The mother of Jeff Bauman, a spectator who had become a symbol of the marathon carnage, kicked Haner out of her son's hospital room and explained that he was not welcome there.

Yet three months later, having earned the trust of the entire Bauman family and overcome countless other hurdles, Haner delivered a portfolio to match the enormity of the story. His photographs were arresting and haunting, intimate and soulful, honest and absolutely unforgettable. They far exceeded the original mission, coming as close as photographically possible to putting the reader through rehabilitation with the subject.

Great photographers have an eye. Better photographers have an eye and a willingness to report deeply. This is what elevated Haner's work in "Beyond the Finish Line:" the hours spent interviewing Jeff Bauman, his girlfriend, medical officials, the rehabilitation staff, Bauman's friends and everyone else who could provide insight into what Bauman was experiencing.

The photographs are infused with such reporting -- Bauman's daunted, wide eyes as he sizes up a stairway; his hand gently holding what remains of his right leg; his mother poring over yet another stack of insurance documents as they ride the elevator to yet another medical appointment.

These are hard-won images. The family, at first, and then hospital officials were leery of granting access to a patient with massive physical and psychological trauma. The nature of the Boston attacks made the issue even more fraught. Our readers would not know this. They see only a collection of visceral photography that might well stand as the lasting emblem of the impact of the bombings.

For his photographs and supplementary video that transported readers from a familiar news event to the wrenching and mundane life it created for one suffering man, I am proud to support the nomination of Josh Haner for the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography.



Tim Rohan
Reporter, The New York Times
Author of "Beyond the Finish Line"