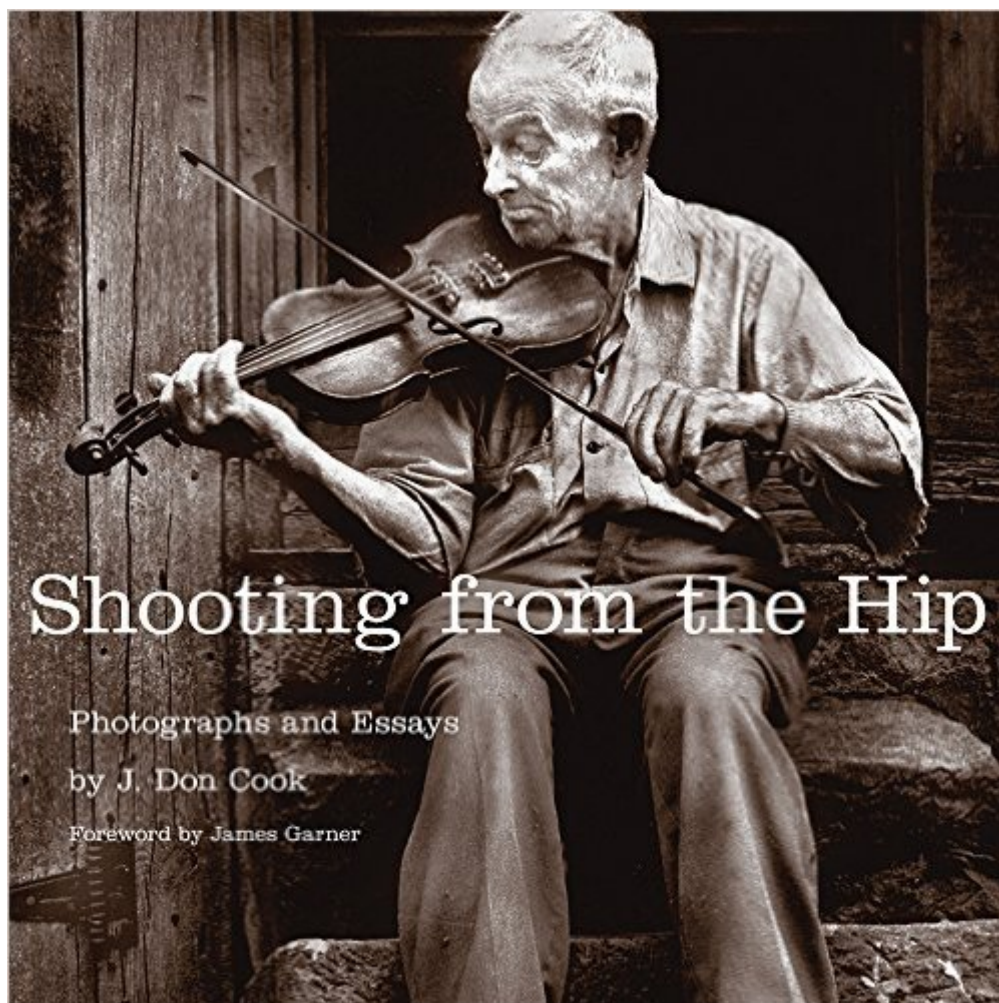


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# Shooting From The Hip: Photographs And Essays



## Synopsis

In this heartfelt tribute to the spirit and people of Oklahoma, one of the state's most distinguished photojournalists shows that he is equally talented as a photographer and writer. Showcasing black-and-white photographs and fifty short essays, *Shooting from the Hip* portrays Oklahoma's people, animals, lifestyles, landscapes, and weather in all their diversity. Cowboys, kids, tornados, trucks, rattlesnakes, fiddlers—J. Don Cook has seen them all, and through his poignant essays, he allows us not only to see them but to understand them as he does. After a hardscrabble boyhood, Cook became a photographer at the age of twenty when he took a job with the *Ada Evening News* in southern Oklahoma. His first assignment was to photograph six abandoned puppies at the city dump—an apt foreshadowing of his career, for he has always been drawn to the poor, the disenfranchised, and the downtrodden. In addition to the brief essays that accompany his photographs, Cook shares some of his own life experiences in a moving introduction and epilogue. His unsparing account of some of the worst moments of his difficult youth and his meditations on how he used these hardships to become an artist can only be called inspirational. "At seven I didn't know any better," he writes, "and believed I had few choices. But I quickly learned to cope—to feint, to dodge, to hide, to read, to run, to survive, to make art—and I did it all, shooting from the hip." J. Don Cook, a resident of Oklahoma City, is an award-winning photojournalist, artist, poet, and business entrepreneur. Nominated three times for a Pulitzer Prize and named News Photographer of the Year seven times by the Oklahoma Press Association, his photographs have appeared in such magazines as *National Geographic* and *Time*. James Garner, the acclaimed film and television actor, is best known for his leading roles in the television series *Maverick* and *The Rockford Files*. He is a native of Norman, Oklahoma.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

While Don is my cousin and my review may come off as biased.....I must say, this is a fantastic collection of photographs. He has done so much beautiful work in many mediums and is so extremely talented that we are truly blessed that he shares his talents with us. He is an awesome example of a role model.

This is a magnificent collection of photographs in the great tradition of American documentary photography. These instant images of life in Oklahoma over the past thirty or forty years grip the observer with their intensity and pathos. J Don Cook's Preface is autobiographical writing of the highest order: clear, vivid, and gripping. His essays on the photographs reveal the story frozen in the photograph as well as the photographer's esthetic vision. Diane Arbus, Alfred Eisenstaedt, Dorothea Lange and other great photographers would applaud.

It's very hard to create great images. Nor is it easy to produce great writing. Successfully combining the two talents is a formidable task, but the images and words of photographer-essayist J. Don Cook leave the reader wanting more, more, MORE; I found myself wondering: "When will SHOOTING FROM THE HIP, Volume 2 be released?" Though Mr. Cook is a native Oklahoman and the images in the book were shot in that state, it would be a mistake to think of SHOOTING FROM THE HIP as merely a book about Oklahoma or its people---though certainly it is that, too. For me the book is more about WHAT a master photographer sees, HOW he sees things differently from other people, and WHEN, exactly, to push the shutter release---and when everything in the photographer's hard-earned experience comes together perfectly, a wonderful collection of photos like this is possible. It's a process indistinguishable from magic, really. The photos by themselves are worth the price of the book, but Mr. Cook's accompanying essays offer insights into the nature of the photos, the conditions under which they were created, and---maybe most importantly---the hum and buzz and vibration of the act of being human. Like the photos, the essays could stand alone as jewels. Combining them as Mr. Cook does inspires me in my own pursuits---if you're an aspiring photographer and/or writer, as I am, I'd suggest you get a copy of SHOOTING FROM THE HIP and study it closely. Not only will you enjoy the experience, you'll come away inspired.

Purchased because we remember Don Cooks' many photographs taken for the Ada Evening News. We enjoyed seeing more of his photographs, and particularly enjoyed his personal remembrances during his career.

Great photography and essays by J. Don Cook. I grew up in the town where he worked as a photojournalist and was acquainted with him. He has always been a fantastically talented photographer. A must buy for photographers and anybody who loves great photography....

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