MAGNUM PHOTOS FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

USA. Colorado. 1948. Dr Ceriani looking at a 7 year old boy's injured hand. © W. Eugene Smith/Magnum Photos

The Country Doctor photo essay was an intimate portrait of life and death in the a small rural town of Kremmling, Colorado. Ernest Ceriani was the doctor that Smith shadowed for 23 days, capturing the drama in everyday events in the small town. Smith achieved this extra- ordinary intimacy by, in his own words, "Fading into the wallpaper" W. Eugene Smith photographed this 1948 photographic essay for Life magazine. The article begins: "The town of Kremmling Colorado, 115 miles west of Denver, contains 1,000 people. The surrounding area of some 400 square miles, filled with ranches which extend high into the Rocky Mountains, contains 1,000 more. These 2,000 souls are constantly falling ill, recovering or dying, having children, being kicked by horses and cutting themselves on broken bottles. A single country doctor, known in the profession as a "g.p.", or general practitioner, takes care of them all. His name is Ernest Guy Ceriani."

The assignment was not without it's problems, as Smith ignored

W. Eugene Smith

"Photo is a small voice, at best, but sometimes - just sometimes - one photograph or a group of them can lure our senses into awareness. Much depends upon the viewer; in some, photographs can summon enough emotion to be a catalyst to thought."

William Eugene Smith took his first photographs at the age of 15 for two local newspapers. In 1936 Smith entered Notre Dame University, where a special photographic scholarship was created for him. A year later he left the university and went to New York City, in 1937 he began working for News-Week (later Newsweek). He was fired for refusing to use medium-format cameras.

Smith worked as a war correspondent for Flying magazine (1943-44), and a year later for Life. He followed the American offensive against Japan and suffered severe injuries which required him to undergo surgery for the next two years.

Smith worked for Life again between 1947 and 1955, before resigning in order to join Magnum as an associate. In

Life Magazine's proposed images and strict deadlines, but the published essay became a benchmark for picture essays and photojournalism in the 1940's and 50's.

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1957 he became a full member of Magnum. Smith was fanatically dedicated to his mission as a photographer. Because of this dedication, he was often regarded by editors as 'troublesome'.

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