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Star athletes are not unlike pop stars in how difficult it is to get them to commit to and then turn up for a photographic shoot. You can spend weeks in negotiation with their minders, their management, their sponsors, even their mums, only to have them suddenly disappear to Acapulco on a whim the day before the shoot.

More so than pop stars, sports stars are accustomed to seeing photographers at the small end of long telephoto lenses, on the sidelines and at a distance. The idea of coming face to face with one is not a natural one, and so the photographer who starts out to do more than make an extraordinary record of a moment of triumph is setting out for somewhere between a rock and a hard place.

That is something Andrew Douglas, formerly of real-life sibling duo **The Douglas Brothers**, fully acknowledges. The London-based brothers created a photographic way of seeing in the early 1980s that stood out for its emotional range and a look that was almost anti-style—faces looming out of the edge of darkness, barely in focus, eyes fixed on some deep-hidden inner turmoil.

The Douglas' photographs came as a shock to magazine editors in the United States where they first got their breaks, accustomed as they were to Annie Leibovitz's high style photographic group therapy sessions, but ensured them a legion of imitators and followers throughout that decade. Their sombre-toned monochrome became the standard manner of editorial portraiture for a while.

Adidas was the first to recognise the Brothers' talents in their home country, by way of creative hot shop advertising agency **The Leagas Delaney Partnership**. Still photograph commissions led to directing commercials "when the agency said, 'wouldn't it be great if some of your images were moving?'" Andrew relates.

However Douglas' efforts to get underneath athletes' skins as much as he had with other sitters was often hampered by the facts of their making. "In most cases they were still photographs shot on the back of TV commercials, and I just grabbed them," he admits ruefully. "I would really have liked to have had more time." The Brothers were always

being called in at short notice to jump on planes for some far off destination where an athlete happened to be training just before an event, lugging on board case upon case of cameras and little more pre-shoot briefing than the names of the athlete, their sport, and a city.

They came in this way to photograph, and film, such stars as Jamaican-Canadian sprinter **Donovan Bailey**, Cuban high jumper **Javier Sotomayor**, Ethiopian distance runner **Haile Gebrselassie** and Cuban boxer **Felix Savon**, on location in as many different countries and almost in as many different days. The Brothers' photographic style, fully-formed when it first appeared in their ground-breaking portrait of actor **Daniel Day Lewis**, was an intimate product of Britain's climate—lowering clouds and pearly light even in mid-summer. Shooting in the hot light of the Americas and Africa transformed their vision.

And it gave them new subject matter. They had made their reputation as the photographers to the chattering classes, first choice to shoot author's book jacket portraits and illustrate magazine articles on the more cerebral actors, and intellectuals. Now the focus became sport, and those countries where sport is the national obsession. Andrew came to love Cuba, and returns there as often as he can.

In their material impoverishment, the Cubans have come to cherish boxing, the path out of the ghetto for the western world's underclasses, and ballet, the ruling elites' athletic entertainment. "There is a pair of pictures I put together once—both were shot in Cuba on successive days, just on a walk-about. One was in a boxing gym and the other was in a ballet school, with boys," Andrew reflects. "In a sense both were about backstage, and they were so similar because they were about muscles and fatigue and stuff like that."

"If you get it right and you're invisible enough, there's something raw about it as well," he continues. "When somebody goes on stage they're already protected by the thing they're meant to be. Prince Naseem is already **Prince Naseem**. If you watch a boxer like him training you'll see something else about him—a more unprotected, poignant image of him. Maybe." -33-