

Celebrity Candids From The '70s

by Lynne Eodice



Jimi Hendrix

Gottlieb-Walker shot concerts and interviews while studying Motion Picture Production at UCLA. She made this image of a relaxed Jimi Hendrix while her teacher Bill Kerb conducted the interview.

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A CONVERSATION WITH PHOTOGRAPHER Kim Gottlieb-Walker will take you back in time to the heyday of artists like Bob Marley & the Wailers and Jimi Hendrix. She's captured stills on the set of Halloween and numerous films by director John Carpenter. Her photos of Jimi Hendrix are included in an art book entitled Classic Hendrix (published by Genesis Press in England).

This book is limited to 1750 copies, and is "a must for Hendrix collectors," asserts Gottlieb-Walker. (She was even "immortalized as a babe" on the pages where her photos appear.)

"I consider myself the opposite of a paparazzi," she states. "Rather than 'taking' photos, the process is one of giving. The subjects entrust themselves to me and, in return, I respect their privacy and their sensibilities and do my best to capture them at their most beautiful and expressive.

"On the set, I see myself as a 'recording angel' who's there to document what happens for posterity—an historian more than an artist—capturing moments worth preserving."

The Lowdown

Gottlieb-Walker was initially influenced by her mother, who was a photographer's assistant in the 1940s. "She taught me a lot about light and gave me my first 35mm (fixed lens) camera, which I took with me to

Berkeley when I started college; just in time to photograph the free-speech movement." Her father documented important events with an old Speed Graphic, resulting in "a family of amateur—but talented—photographers."

After studying psychology at UC Berkeley for more than a year, she discovered the school's only class dealing with motion pictures and loved it. She then transferred to UCLA to study Motion Picture Production, where she received her degree. "It was during my time at UCLA that I first started covering concerts and interviews with my teacher Bill Kerb," she points out. Kerb was the one who conducted the interview while she photographed Hendrix in 1967.

Gottlieb-Walker found that she was great at shooting stills. "I traveled abroad, worked for underground papers, and put together a portfolio that was finally seen by a small independent producer who hired me to

shoot a movie called The Goodtime Band. Although that film was never released, the script supervisor Debra Hill went on to produce Halloween. Hill remembered the young photographer and her work, and hired her to shoot the stills for the film—which led to her association with John Carpenter.

"After joining the Cinematographers Guild in 1980 I got on the union's 'available' list, which led to my nine-year job on Cheers and my five-year job on Family Ties at Paramount. Every job led to another."

Shooting Candidly

How does she become unobtrusive so that her subject won't be too aware of the camera? "My ideal circumstance is when the subject is being interviewed and becomes enthused about the discussion," she responds. "As long as I've had the chance to set up where everyone is seated so the subject is opposite a nice natural

NATURAL LIGHT OR FLASH?

"I prefer soft, natural light, generally from a window or open door. The rare occasions where I might use fill-flash include event coverage, or when my subject has a lot of wrinkles or bags under his/her eyes and wants flattering photos!"

Her first 35mm SLR was a Pentax, which she used to shoot the Jimi Hendrix interview. After it was stolen she invested in a Nikon F2 Photomic: "That Nikon is considered an antique now, but I used it for all my film and television shoots. I still have my Nikon F2s, but today I also have a Canon EOS 20D digital SLR that I'm enjoying using very much although I still like to choose my own exposure and do the focusing myself."



Jamie Lee Curtis

A FEW ANECDOTES

When she photographed Jamie Lee Curtis on the set of Halloween, the actress initially avoided her. She decided to leave her portfolio in Curtis' trailer. "Once she saw my pictures of Hendrix and other stars of the '60s, her whole attitude changed. These images were lovingly shot, and she recognized that."

This trust is apparent in photos like her black and white portrait of a 19-year-old Curtis. She loved working with John Carpenter on various movies.

In 1975, Gottlieb-Walker went to Jamaica to shoot the reggae performers on the Island Records' roster. She and her husband returned in 1975 and were threatened by "two huge Jamaican guys" while they looked at a billboard featuring her photos. Her husband explained who she was and they immediately backed off. "We avoided an ass-kicking in Kingston," she laughs.

Bob Marley's half-brother Bunny Wailer was thought to be an Obeah Man (one with special powers).



Bob Marley

When another photographer asked to photograph Wailer, he replied "I don't let dead men take my picture." Oddly enough, this photographer died shortly thereafter. Wailer did permit Gottlieb-Walker to photograph him, so "I figured I'd be around a while longer," she says.

FILM CHOICES

"I almost always used Kodak Tri-X black and white film because it was so flexible and forgiving. When I began shooting production stills for movies, the studios insisted on Kodak Ektachrome 160 transparency film for the color work, which worried me at first. The exposure must be exact and a reflective reading won't do the job. I learned to use incident readings for transparencies and reflective readings for negative films to get accurate exposures."

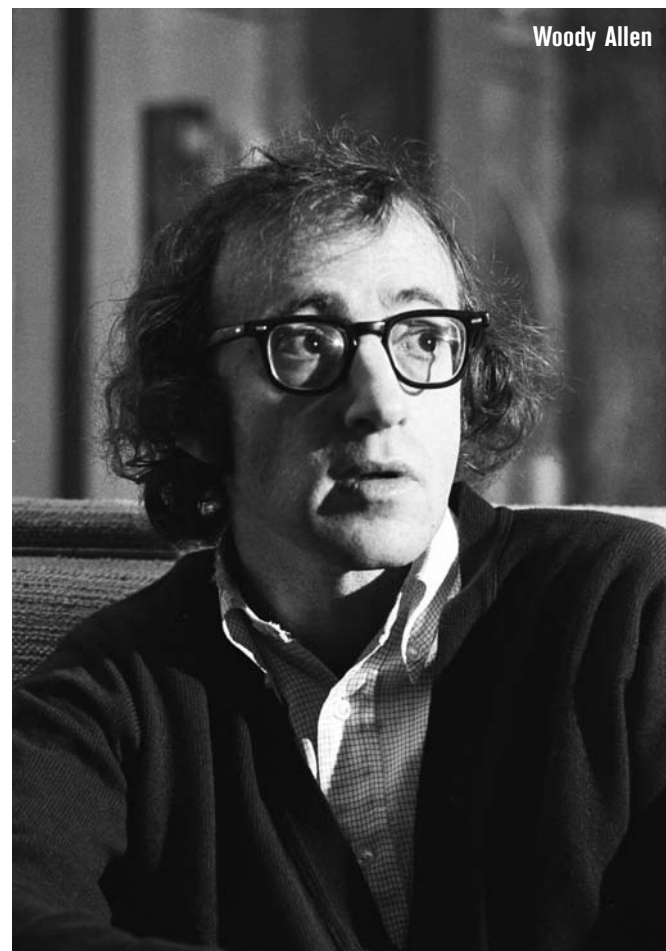
On the set of *Christine*, Gottlieb-Walker used ISO 1000 color-negative film for the first time, and she says she loved the results under the extremely low-light levels that were the norm.

"Shooting transparencies at the low-light levels on most sets is difficult and requires very fast lenses, shooting wide-open and at slow speeds (Ektachrome 160 pushed to EV 320 was the best we could do with tungsten light). But Tri-X could be pushed to ISO 1200 and beyond with decent results."

More Online

To see more of Kim Gottlieb-Walker's work visit her online at:

www.lenswoman.com



Woody Allen

light source, I can just shoot at will without drawing attention to myself. Otherwise, it's up to me to establish a comfortable rapport, to make conversation and ask questions or give some direction.

Her career has spanned the full gamut of subjects, she says. "In the '60s and '70s I shot concerts and interviews for music magazines, and photographed political figures and writers for 'underground papers' like *The Free Press*, *The Staff*, and the original *L.A. Weekly*.

"I also shot a lot of publicity and album photos for Island Records, and production stills for movies and television."

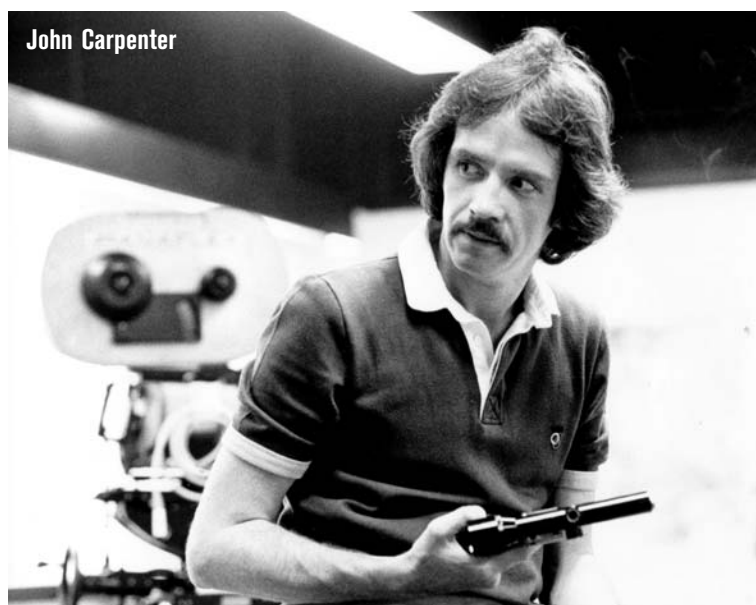
The Future

"Now it's time to publish books about all the subjects I've photographed over the years," she states. "My first will be about the films I worked on with John Carpenter, followed by one covering the late '60s and early '70s—rock n' roll, reggae, and politics. There's a lot of material."

The last feature film she shot was *Dean Quixote*, written and directed by her son Orion Walker. "Although it doesn't yet have a distributor, it's a wonderful film and was a great pleasure to work on—it probably has the best art that an under-\$250,000 movie ever had!"

Gottlieb-Walker also created a website with a gallery of her work (www.lenswoman.com), and plans to make her rock 'n roll and reggae photographs available to the public via a "gift shop" on the site. Over the past few years, she's devoted herself to helping photographers in the Cinematographers Guild by arranging for seminars in new digital technologies and "trying to

find ways to fight the proliferation of cameras on the set that violate security and challenge the patience of the actors." ■



John Carpenter

ALL PHOTOS BY KIM GOTTLIEB-WALKER