

Aug 26, 2018 · 3 min read

A morning with Omar Z. Robles

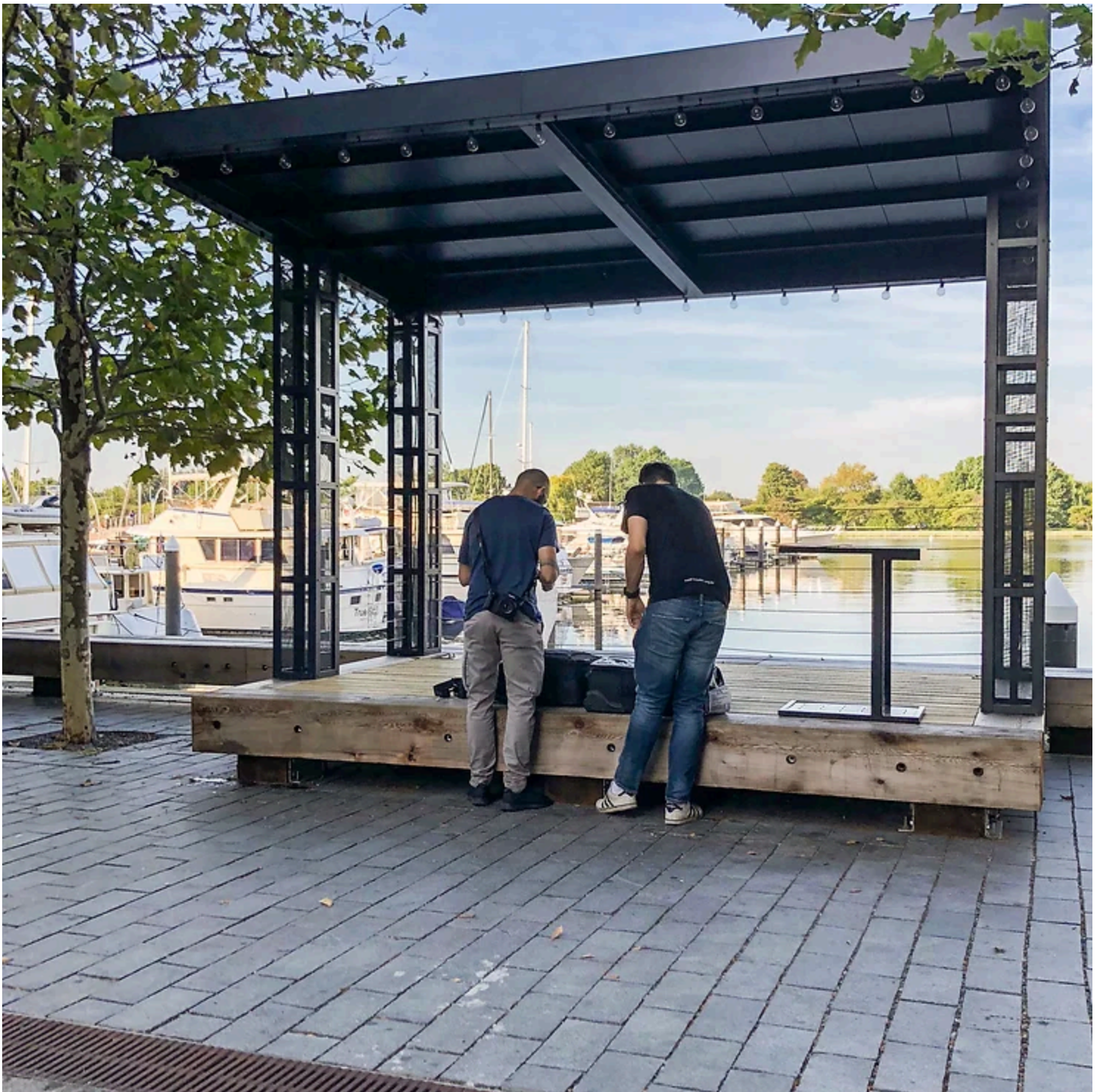
Updated: Mar 17, 2020

Many of us follow well-known photographers via Instagram, Twitter, or keeping tabs on their website, but more often than not, we don't get too many opportunities to meet them. I was lucky enough to get a chance to meet, and hang out with Omar Z. Robles, a Fuji X-Photographer whose wildly popular photo storytelling of dancers set against urban and city backgrounds has gone viral throughout the interwebs.

The opportunity came from a Fujifilm Photo walk event that Omar was heading up in conjunction with Fujifilm, and District Camera in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, August 25, 2018. There was a cap of 30 attendees, and I was fortunate enough to sign up before all available spaces were filled. A bonus was the model coming to this photo walk was also a dancer. The lovely, and talented Kimberly Thompson.

Now living in the Petersburg/Dinwiddie area, Washington, D.C. is about a 2.5 hour drive. The photo walk started at 9am, so I left the house at 5:30AM and began my trek to D.C. I wasn't sure how horrible traffic would be on a Saturday morning. Turns out, it wasn't that bad heading up. I got to the Wharf district just after 8AM.

After a short walk to the meeting area on Pearl Street, I saw Omar there with one of the District Camera reps. I stood off to the side as not to bother them as they were going through bags of Fuji gear that was going to get loaned out to participants that wanted to try Fuji's various offerings of camera equipment.



Part of me wanted to try the GFX50s. I mean come on, who doesn't want to test out a medium format camera for a few hours for free? However, not having any experience with that particular camera model, I didn't want to mess up this chance to photograph a dancer in this type of setting, so I stuck with my own camera gear.



Omar develops an amazing repertoire with the dancers. He always has their safety as his number one concern, and does not want them to perform any dance moves they are not comfortable with, or that can possibly injure them.

Shortly after 9AM we had pretty much everyone that was going to show up. We didn't have the entire 22 out of 30 people that signed up, but that's OK. As I soon found out, having that many photographers in the same spot, trying to take the same photos, at the same angle got a little crowded. :)



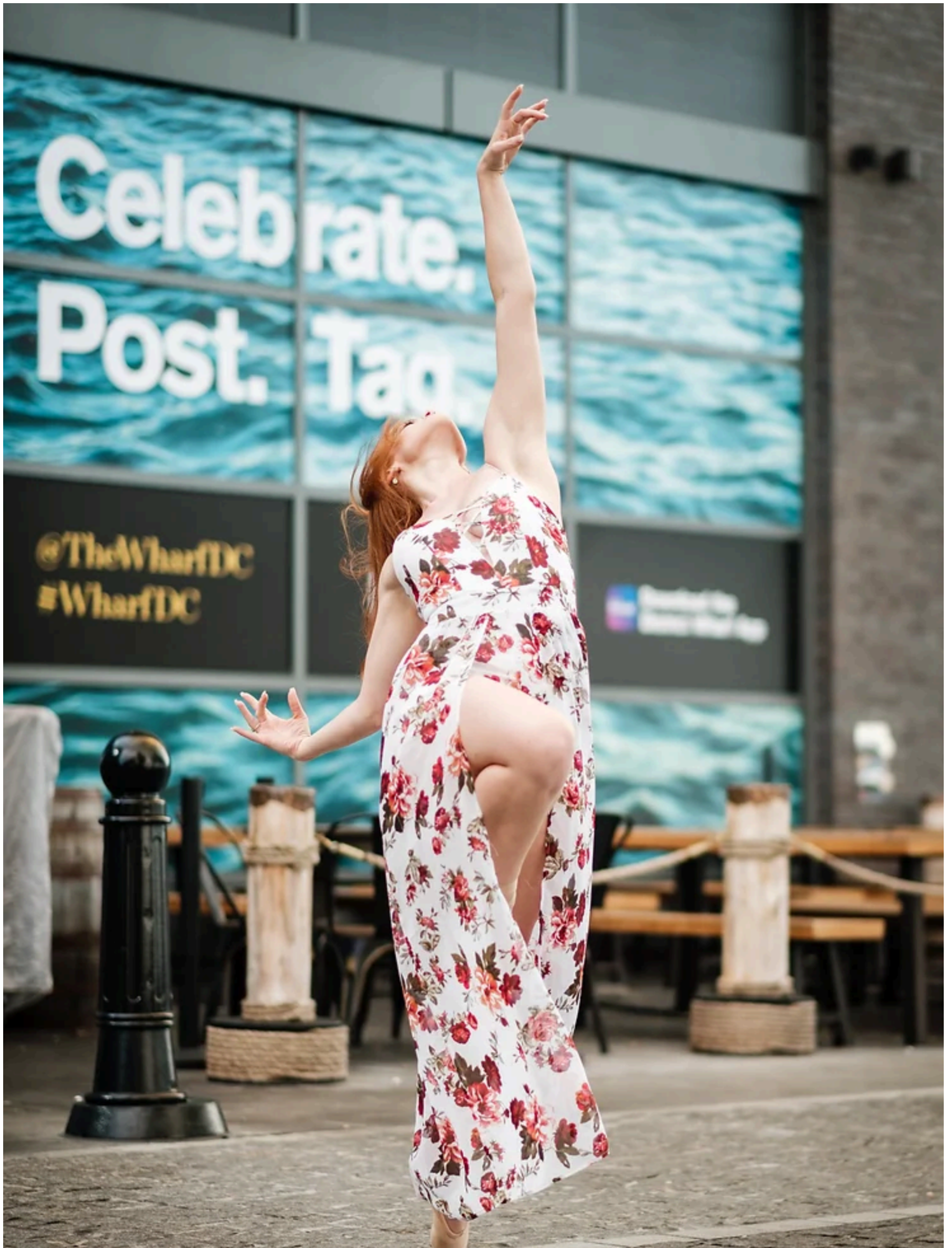
All of my photos taken were typically off to the side. I had a wide berth of space so to speak. Other points of view that were not dead center were uncrowded and empty. Sure I may not have gotten a front row seat, but I also didn't get the same photos a lot of the other photographers were getting, and overall I am happy with the resulting shots. I also tried to be patient and make sure I didn't get any of the other photographers in the shot, and limit the number of bystanders that were hanging around in the background to see what was going on.



Omar was great in explaining his mindset, and how he works with dancers. His piece of advice was to always put their safety first, and to get to know the lingo of the dance world, including the various dance moves and their corresponding names. Kimberly was amazing and patient. She would have to perform various moves repeatedly so that everyone had a chance to photograph her. I had a great time. I hope Fujifilm offers more photo walks in the future (preferably closer to home, but I would still suffer the drive to Washington, D.C. again).

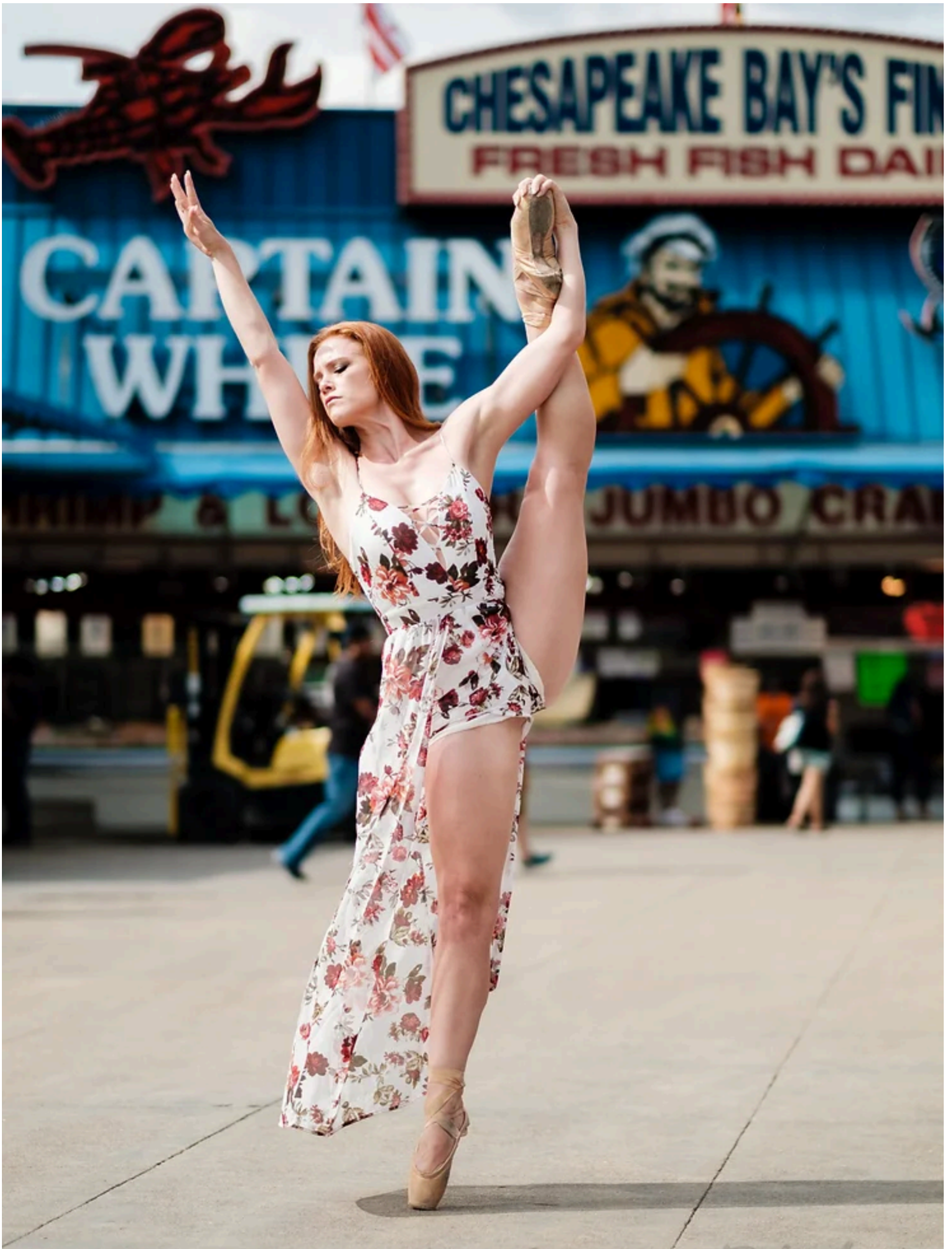
I like to control light, (as best I can anyway), and will augment natural light with strobes to tone down the ambient when necessary. Unfortunately this was sort of a run-and-gun shoot. It was in a semi-crowded public space and we were constantly moving. Granted early in the morning we were shaded by the tall buildings surrounding us, but shortly after the harsh sun was peaking over the building and blaring down on us as well as Kimberly. I still managed to retain some detail in the beautiful blue sky, but I do wish some of those shadows were a little less harsh. Overall I am still happy with the way they turned out.

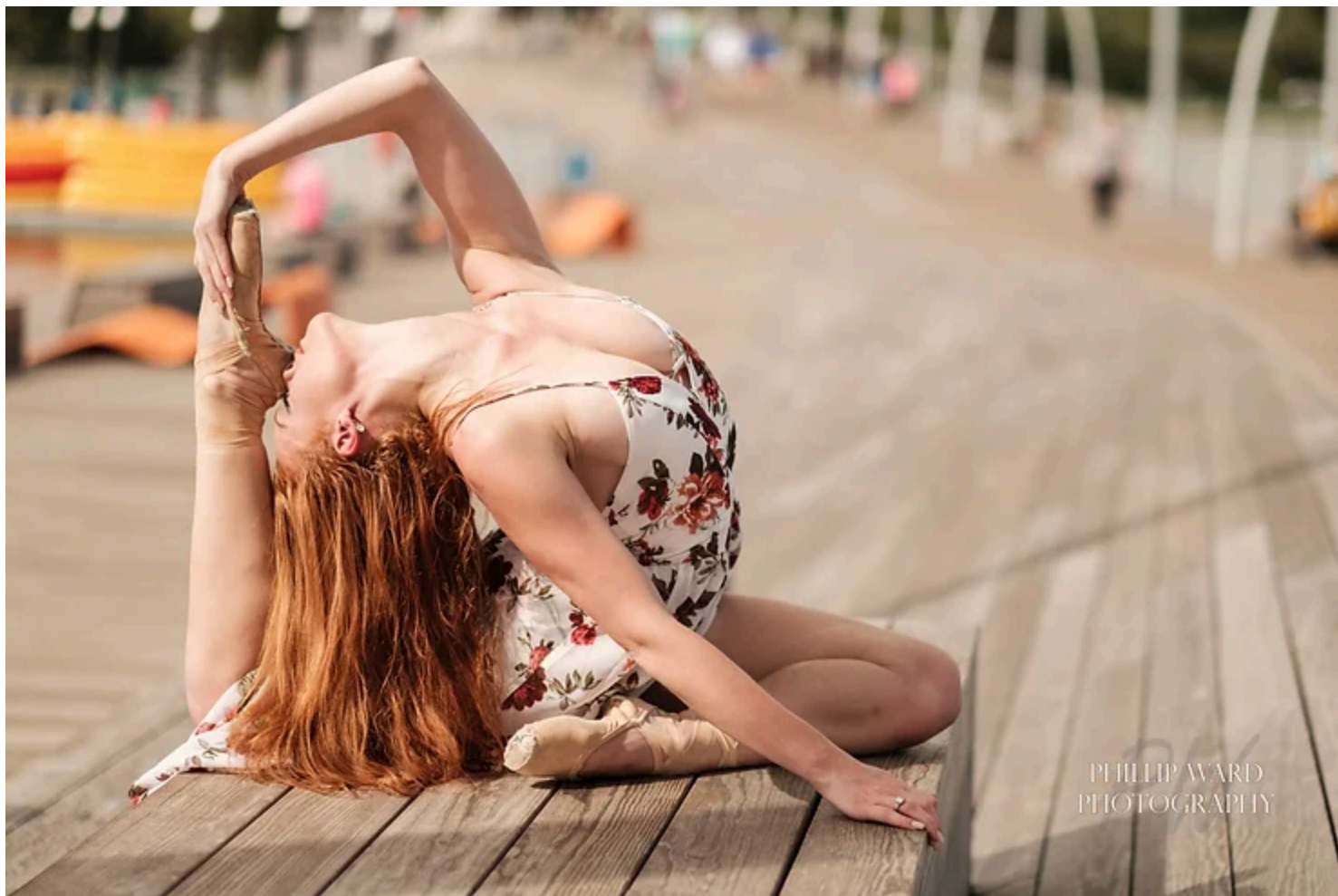












I love black and white, so of course I need to throw a couple of those into the mix as well. :)















Had to get picture with THE MAN.



We rock the same haircut