Go Behind TIME’s Mark Zuckerberg Cover With Photographer Ian Allen

HALF THE WORLD
IS NOT ENOUGH
MARK ZUCKERBERG’S
PLAN TO GET EVERY
HUMAN ONLINE

by
Lev Grossman
When a photo shoot doesn’t go according to plan, the “only thing you can do is to rely on what you’ve done in the past,” says Ian Allen. The San Francisco-based photographer had to do just that when TIME assigned him to shoot this week’s magazine cover story, which features Facebook’s founder Mark Zuckerberg.

In early October, Zuckerberg was in India as an ambassador for Internet.org, a global partnership “dedicated to making affordable internet access available to the two thirds of the world not yet connected,” according to Facebook.

“Initially I was supposed to shoot him giving this talk in New Delhi at a conference for Facebook, and then we were going to go to Chandauli, a village in northern India, where it was going to be just him and I, and we would get around one hour to take photos as he wandered around this computer lab.”

But when local police tipped the press off to his imminent arrival, reporters and photographers swarmed the young CEO, and Allen’s hour with Zuckerberg became 45 minutes, then 30 minutes, and then just five minutes. “In this kind of situation, you have to prioritize the things you think will work best and you try to pre-light as much as you can.”
In this particular case, Allen was able to set up his gear in a small concrete room within the local school. “His people shuttle him in that little room and that’s where the cover shot was taken,” he says.

In another portrait of Zuckerberg, this time with kids, Allen also had to deal with local photographers and people who had been tipped of his presence. “Around 250 people showed up. It was a bit chaotic, but the whole time I was just hoping my images were in focus.”

They were.

_Ian Allen_ is a San Francisco-based photographer.

_Olivier Laurent_ is the editor of TIME LightBox. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram @olivierclaurent

CONTACT US AT LETTERS@TIME.COM.