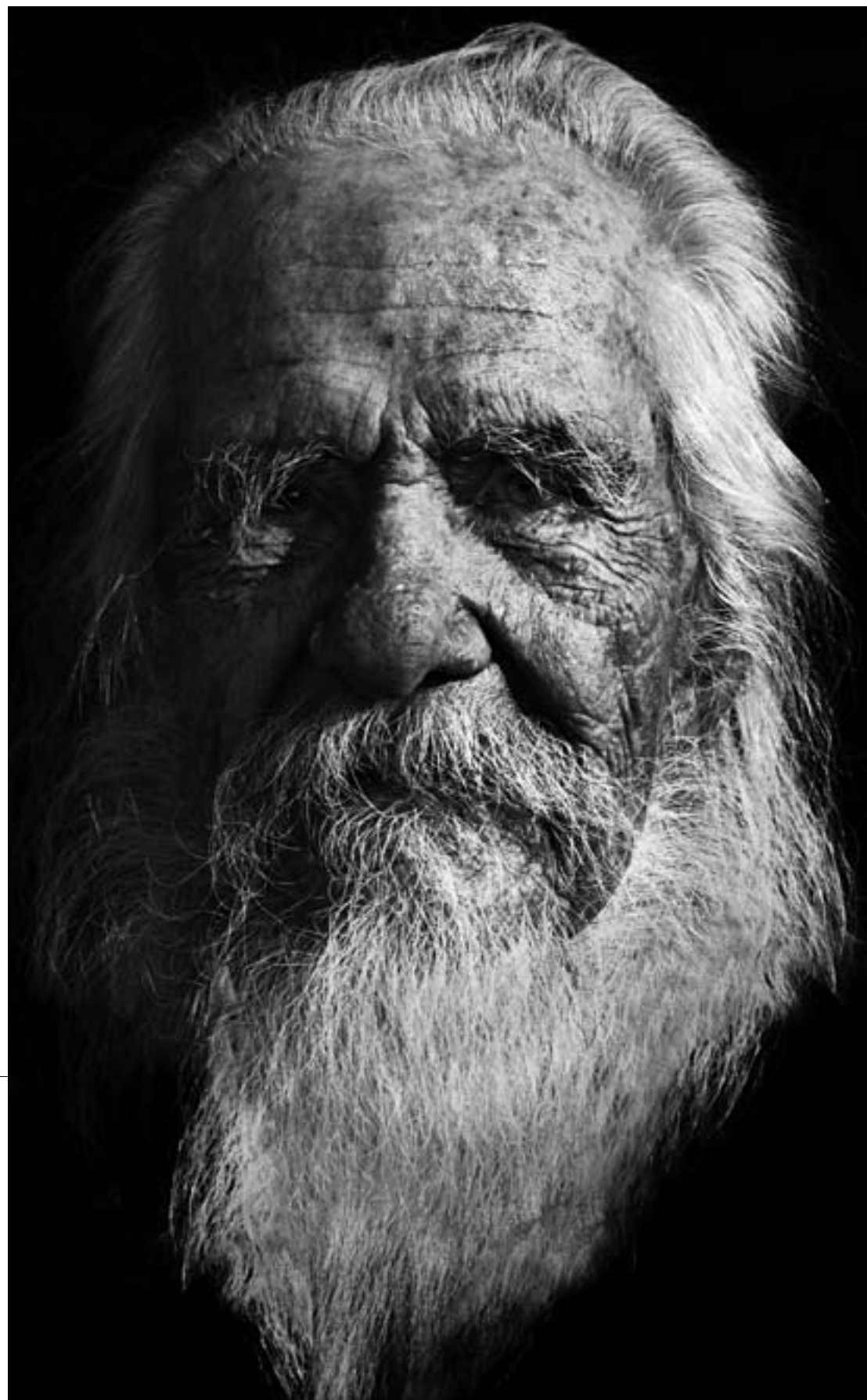




Mark Story has been a film director for more than 25 years and has directed over 2000 commercials. His black and white photographic work spans more than two decades.



➤ Several of this man's grandparents lived past 100 and he himself is 110 years and 115 days old. He is of German and Irish descent and served in both the World Wars. He works at a tanning salon/espresso café, walks three miles a day and has excellent eyesight. He said, "I still chase good-looking women around. I just cannot catch up with them—my legs do not work fast enough."

Living in Three Centuries

Mark Story's series on people who lived in three centuries sums up age more as an attitude than a measurement.

The search for interesting faces started in 1987 after going through thousands of casting sessions for commercial films. I used to come across several young, gorgeous actors who seemed uninteresting. But, the old ones were unpretentious, fresh and naturally comedic.

➤ One of the last living members of Mao's Red Army, this 96-year-old Chinese man fought in World War II. He fought in snow with rags wrapped around his feet because his boots had worn out.

Initially, I was drawn to people who appeared worn beyond their years. But I gradually began photographing centenarians and supercentenarians (people aged over 110). Ordinarily, I would walk up to anyone who seemed interesting,

ask them about their lives and take their permission to shoot them. However, to connect with the supercentenarians, I took the help of an organisation called the Gerontology Research Group.

The intense intimacy of the portraits and the simple stories, revealed the depth of a lifetime to me. The conversations I had with these people were as meaningful as their photographs. While photographing such record-holders of human age, I found that it is not about how many days you lived; it is about how you lived those days.

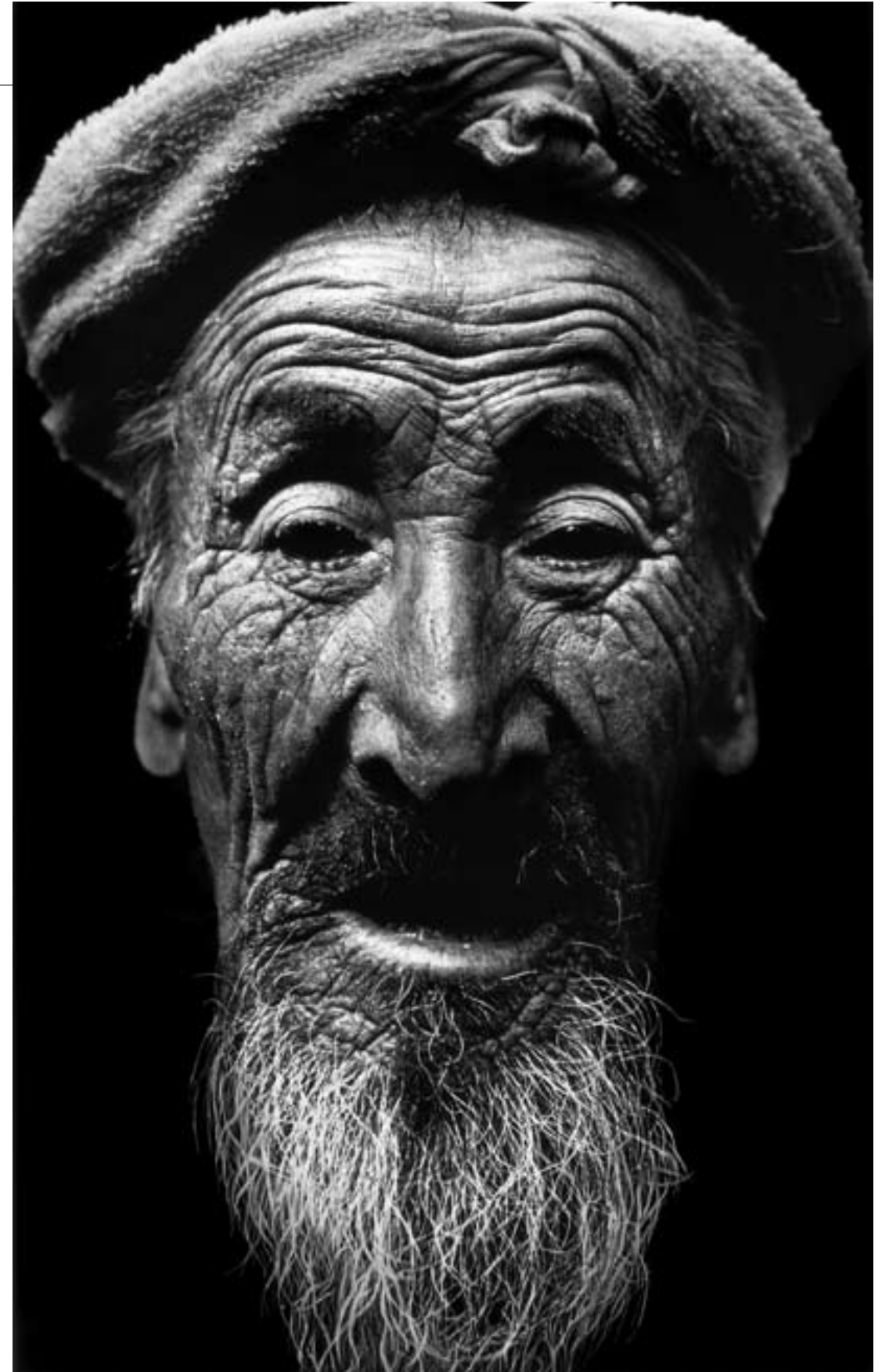
➤ This Chinese man has made bamboo bird cages for 92 years. He is 102 years old and proudly imitates the calls of twenty different birds.





➤ She is the third oldest living person in the world and the second oldest living woman in the USA. Aged 114 years and 226 days, this African American woman's parents were slaves. She never watched her diet, did not smoke or drink, was not heavy and was 100 years old when she first saw a doctor. She was married to her second husband for 72 years and has 3 children, 5 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren, 95 great-great-grandchildren and 38 great-great-great-grandchildren.

➤ This is a portrait of a 102-year-old Chinese farmer who had huge hands on a frail body. He started working when he was four and said, "I would never stop working."



Shooting Portraits that Tell a Story

- Simply walk up to anyone who seems interesting to you, ask them about their lives and take their permission to shoot them. You will be amazed at the stories and thoughts that you come across.
- To emphasise every hair, pore and scar of your subject, shoot extremely close portraits of only the face in strong overhead or sidelighting that produces sharp shadows.
- Ask a lot of questions as you shoot your subjects to help you draw out stories. Take the help of an interpreter if you do not understand the language, but do not compromise on the conversation.

➤ This 109-year-old man's mother died at age 45 and his father at 50. He is of Swedish descent and worked as a railroad clerk for fifty years. He drank alcohol and smoked cigars but gave them up in 1984 because they were too expensive. He still walks a mile every day, claims to have never taken medicine and does not feel any different than he did ten years ago.

