

## Cliff Mautner: EYE DO




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Cliff Mautner's goal with every wedding is to create a stunning portrait of the bride just after she has dressed in her gown; he wants this shot to be the best photograph anyone has ever made of her. However, as many of his weddings take place in Center City Philadelphia hotels, therein lies his challenge. Many hotel rooms do not offer much in the way of a photographic background, and when weather is inclement, Cliff's work becomes even harder. Therefore, he often calls upon selective focus, a technique he believes can significantly enhance the dramatic nature of nearly any situation. With the use of fast prime [non-zoom] lenses, Cliff is able to isolate his subject and eliminate distracting backgrounds by "blowing them out of focus with extremely shallow depth of field."

Cliff created "Eye Do" with a Nikon D200 and an 85mm f/1.4 lens. "The bride had beautiful eyes and her lashes really stood out. After photographing some straightforward images of her looking at the camera, I had her look down. The D200 has 11 focus points in the viewfinder; when photographing wide open, it is important to choose the focus point in the specific region on which you are focusing, rather than center-focusing and then recomposing. Otherwise, moving the plane of the focus point will knock the specified area out of focus, as a result of the shallow depth of field, Cliff says. In this instance, Cliff chose the upper-left focus point and concentrated on

the bride's eyelashes, exposing several frames at  $\frac{1}{200}$  at f/1.4.

The only light present in this image is window light. Cliff asked his subject to squat down, like a baseball catcher, while he stood on the windowsill. Photographing downward is more flattering to the subject, and in this case, adds a steep angle to the photograph as the focal falloff becomes more severe; thus the eyelashes are in focus and the rest of her is not.

To eliminate the distracting pattern of the hotel carpet, Cliff used the bedspread as a makeshift seamless. With limited resources, he created a studio atmosphere by controlling the environment with window light and his lens. Cliff converted the image to black and white and then used Photoshop's Diffuse Glow to get the eyelashes to stand out. "Using selective focus with fast glass, a little window light, a bedspread and a little elevation, I created one of my favorite images for that day before we even left the hotel room." 

## Ingredients

- **Camera:** Nikon D200
- **Lens:** 85mm f/1.4D AF Nikkor
- **Exposure:** 1/200 at f/1.4
- **Lighting:** Window light