

#38 March 2018 Cameraderie
Weegee (1899-1968)
AKA Arthur (Usher) Fellig



Let's look this month at a man famous as an ambulance and crime scene chaser. This is, like last month, also gritty, but a different sort of grit.

Born Ascher Fellig, and renamed Arthur Fellig upon immigration to the USA, he adopted the public name Weegee (a phonetic rendering of Ouija) because of his frequent, seemingly prescient arrivals at scenes of action only minutes after dramatic events unfolded. But Weegee never quite managed to shoot an actual crime in progress, no matter how quickly he got to a scene.

Here is the Wikipedia article on Weegee: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weegee>

I drew the untitled and undated sample shots below from a Weegee web site. Their subject matters are obvious, and typical of Weegee's work.

Arrested individuals avoiding the camera

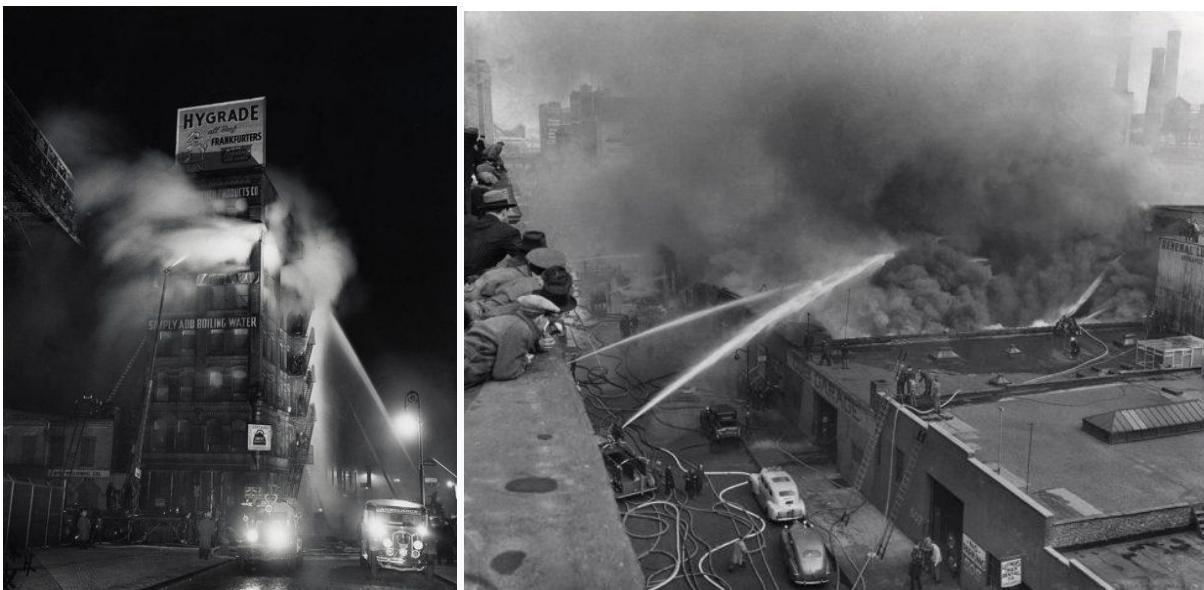


This image appeared on the cover of Weegee's first book, *Naked City*. Here is the advertising text from the Amazon website selling this book:

For *Naked City*, his first collection, Weegee cruised the teeming streets of 1940s New York in the wee hours in search of the sensational. His photographs were lewd, louche, and licentious but always brimming with life (except when they were brimming with death).

Weegee's profound influence on other photographers over the last half-century derives not only from his sensational subject matter and his use of the blinding, close-up flash, but also from his eagerness to photograph the city at all hours, at all levels. Snapping lovers on the beach at 3:00 in the morning, transgender prostitutes in police buggies, bejeweled society ladies at balls, the desperately poor--no one knew New York like Weegee did. *Naked City* showcases his talent, his love of the city, and his taste for the absurd and the unbelievable, in a book that will always stand as a classic introduction to the secret life of New York.

Two shots of fire disasters



An unusual commentary on big shots



Characters of the city



Life in poor neighborhoods

