**Robert Capa Speech**

Of my many memories with Robert Capa, the one that will never leave me was on D-Day, the largest sea invasion in history. It was deafening, the roar of the landing craft motor, the fire of artillery and the rapid-fire machine-guns. The sky was engulfed by dark grey clouds as if the Earth solemnly knew the extent of damage this day would deal. Capa was the only civilian photojournalist to photograph Omaha beach, and I was his weapon of choice, a camera. Though we landed on a weaker section of beach, later into the fight, I could sense the fear within him. Capa and I had photographed many conflicts before this, but Normandy was somehow different. The fearless Robert Capa was scared. We ended up leaving after ten minutes. Capa had only taken 11 photographs.

Long before I met Robert Capa, he was a happy child, named Endre Friedman, born in 1913 to an upper-middle-class Jewish family in modern-day Budapest, Hungary. Capa’s time in Hungary was cut short though, as he was forced into exile at the age of 18 for his socialist political views. This didn’t stop Capa, as he persevered through this hardship, relocating to Berlin. Sadly, Capa hadn’t escaped persecution, as the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933. This forced the Jewish Robert Capa to flee again, this time to Paris. While in Paris, Capa met Gerda Taro, who become his professional partner and helped create the name “Robert Capa” to help sell their photographs to American companies. I first met Robert Capa around this time as well.

In 1936, Capa, Taro, and I travelled to Spain to photograph the Spanish Civil war; fought between the left-wing Republicans and the fascist Nationalists. In Spain, Capa started gaining notability, with his powerful images showcasing the war, and his “heat of the action” techniques. Of Capa’s many photos during the Spanish War, his most famous one showed a Republican soldier falling lifelessly after being hit with machine-gun fire. Robert Capa, who was in a trench, held me above his head to take the photo. He never saw it through my viewfinder. The photo is described as one of the best war photographs of all time due to the heavy feeling of sorrow it carries.

The Spanish Civil ended with Capa devastated, as Gerda Taro died tragically after being run over by a tank. Not long after, a bigger, more global conflict arose. The Second World War spiraled Capa and I back into action. During this time, life was a blur. We travelled from Northern Africa, to all over Europe, always near death and always close to the fight. In 1945, the war violently came to an end, with one of Capa’s last photos of the war highlighting the death of an American Soldier in Leipzig, Germany. A couple years later, Capa co-founded Magnum Photos. Magnum photos has since morphed into a worldwide Photo-Coop, which houses some of the most influential photographers today.

Fast forward to 1954, and it was a warm day in May. Robert Capa and I walked along the seemingly tranquil field near the border of Laos, in Vietnam. The First Indochina War was coming to an end, and Robert Capa was in a good mood, so naturally, I was too. Capa was on a Life magazine assignment to photograph the first Indochina War, fought between the French and the Viet Minh. In front of us was a large group of French soldiers advancing. Capa, wanting to capture the advancement, climbed a nearby hill. He was warned by the soldiers, but he dismissed it, eager to take his photograph. Along with him, I went, as we were a team; a team about to end. The last moments I spent with him felt like slow motion. He was smiling and his eyes were filled with joy. BANG! The floor erupted, sending shrapnel ripping through his body, shredding him to pieces, and scratching my casings and sending me to the floor. Capa died instantly, and I was doomed to be never used again. This is where his story ends. Robert Capa, “the greatest war photographer,” dead in the time of a single camera shutter.

Robert Capa was one of the bravest war-photographers, always in the heat of the battle, and capturing the reality of war. He wanted to show the world the true horrors of war, as he 1felt it was his way of stopping it. He was driven, hardworking, and he persevered through hardship and struggle. Robert Capa set standards for future photojournalists with his usage of small, and versatile 35mm film cameras such as me, and through his personal motto of always being close to the fight, creating intimacy in his work, which I always admired. He is truly one of the greatest war-photographers.