

# Photojournalist Herman Verwey on his Pistorius trial coverage

 By Leigh Andrews

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Following the Oscar Pistorius trial as an SA citizen wasn't easy. Imagine how much harder it was for Herman Verwey, one of the photojournalists present during the actual court proceedings. Obviously he got it right, as he took home the Mohamed Amin Photographic Award at the recent CNN Multichoice African Journalist Awards...



Herman Verwey

It's been a good year for South African journalists, with all four of our local [CNN Multichoice African Journalist Awards](#) nominees winning their categories.

One of the most interesting of these wins was that of *Beeld* photojournalist Herman Verwey, who took home the Mohamed Amin Photographic Award for his photos of the murder trial of Oscar Pistorius.

He was extremely proud to be nominated and found the award ceremony "extremely professional and an enormous celebration of journalism in Africa."

Here, he tells us about this and other career highlights, as well as how he got onto photography in the first place and shares some tips on cracking it into the photojournalism industry.

## ■ 1. Give us the highlight package of your career so far.

**Verwey:** Winning the CNN award is definitely one of the highlights of my career thus far. Getting a third place at the Sony World photo awards earlier this year was also amazing, as well as two POYI ( Pictures of the year International awards) in 2012. But looking back, my proudest moment was getting a permanent job in 2008 as photographer. I also look back at certain key moments such as covering my first violent protest, first Springbok test, first front page, first international assignment and first personal project.

## ■ 2. What initially sparked your interest in photography?

**Verwey:** I always went to my friend's band practise during high school and sat around doing nothing. One day on the way there I picked up an old film camera in a storm drain. It was still working and I loaded it with film, so I started taking pictures

of their gigs and practises. That was my first interaction with a photo camera. After school I went to film school, where I eventually started taking more pictures than video. I fell in love with the power of the still frame over the longer form of video.

### ■ 3. Tell us more about your coverage of the Oscar Pistorius trial.

**Verwey:** The thing that stands out for me is the fact that we were allowed to shoot during the actual court proceedings, because usually you can only shoot before or after proceedings. This gave us so much more time to get key moments and reactions. It was obviously massive in terms of coverage. I have never seen so many international journalists working in South Africa. The whole experience was a huge eye-opener.

### ■ 4. What does this win mean - both personally and for your company?

**Verwey:** For me personally it is an enormous honour. I still can't believe that my name is actually on that trophy. Some of the past winners are people that I admire and I only hope that I can be on their level one day. I have received so many messages of support from people inside the company, it has been overwhelming. It means a lot that my colleagues are also proud of the award.

### ■ 5. Share some advice for aspiring photojournalists.

**Verwey:** It is very tough out there and the industry is changing at a rapid pace. Photojournalism has to be in your blood and you have to be incredibly motivated to make it a success. Speak to people who are currently working and find out what it is like before thinking it's the job for you. Equip yourself with more than one skill, such as writing or video.

Congratulate Verwey on his win [on Twitter](#) and [click here](#) to view examples of his work on his blog.

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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