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Audio Description script for The Photographer's Gallery 2020, Sat 16th May

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Mohamed Bourouissa, Photograph from *Shoplifters* series

The first photograph I am going to describe is part of a series called Shoplifters.. It was taken between 2014 and 2015. This particular photograph isn't currently on display at The Photographers' Gallery but others from the series are.

It measures 12cm in width by 14.5cm in height ... which is a few centimetres' wider than an A6 piece of paper... or a postcard style flyer.

It's a colour photograph ... framed with a thin dark walnut coloured frame. The frame itself is much larger than the photograph, measuring 53cm in width by 73cm in height. A thick cream coloured border runs all around the edge ... filling the space between the photograph and the frame.

In the centre of the image, a man stands facing the photographer. As **we** face the photograph, his body is turned to our left side of the image. He isn't fully turned at a right angle ... but as if he is about to walk around the left side of the photographer. His head is turned to face the camera. We see the majority of his torso, and only a glimpse of the dark coloured fabric he wears on his bottom half.

The man looks to be in his fifties. He has brown skin and is lit either by a strong flash or bright daylight from a window behind the photographer.

He wears a loose fitting white t-shirt ... and a black or navy blue New York Yankees baseball cap ... with the recognisable white NY logo at the centre of his forehead. The cap is pushed back, so that actually ... we can only see the top of the logo. The rest of it is obscured by the slope of the cap's peak.

Given the grainy quality of the image ... it is difficult to make out if he has hair under his cap, or if what we are looking at is shadow. He has a neatly trimmed short beard and moustache surrounding his open lips. The hairs on his face fade from dark around his upper lip ... to patchy grey across his chin.

He has small eyes - they are wide open ... looking directly into the camera lens. He doesn't seem to have eyelashes or eyebrows, just dark pupils.

His facial expression is one of slight amusement. With strongly held eye contact and an open mouth ... it almost seems as if he said "Hey" to the photographer as the shot was being taken.

His elbows are bent, with his fists clutched at his stomach. In each of his clasped hands he holds the handle of a Tide bottle. These American laundry detergent plastic bottles are famously bright orange in colour. In this photo ... the two bottles are washed out in colour, again ... bleached by a bright light. The colour looks more like the colour of faded orange felt tip pen. The whites of the labels and caps of the two bottles are faded too ... the Tide logo is almost completely gone from the bottle closest to us.

The man is standing in the aisle of a convenience store or small supermarket. The aisle stretches on behind him into our left side of the composition. The murky greeny-grey floor behind him leads our sight to the back of the store, where piles of boxes and shelves of products are sort of visible at the end of the aisle.. again, the graininess of the photograph makes it hard to tell. A bright strip light runs the length of the ceiling from above the man's head, to the end of the aisle.

Deep, high shelves stand tall along the aisle. This seems to be a household aisle. We cannot see everything on the shelves to our left ... due to the angle that this photograph has been taken at. I see toilet rolls and pan scourers on the shelves, along with various other unrecognisable objects hanging from plastic clips attached to the metal structure of the shelves.

On our right side of the shelves... behind the man's back, is a whole display of different Tide products ... all in their trademark orange bottles ... alongside other cleaning products. The top shelf is packed with white packages ... they could be toilet roll packets, or kitchen roll. On the floor below the Tide bottles, there are cardboard boxes filled with large blue plastic packages of sanitary pads. The cardboard box closet to us reads 'always ... 12-18's'.

Bourouissa's Shoplifters series is made up of appropriated photographs of polaroids found in a grocery store in New York. Each photograph depicts an individual caught stealing food or everyday items from the store. ... The store owner explained to Bourouissa that when he catches someone stealing, he allows them to take the products free of charge, provided they pose for a photograph. For Bourouissa, these images were hugely representative of the mechanisms of power within photography.