

HOW A PHOTO BECOMES A WALL STREET JOURNAL HEDCUT

The Wall Street Journal runs dot drawings of personalities, rather than photos. Photos are used as references to create these illustrations. 'Hedcuts', as they are called are dot drawings composed of tiny ink dots and lines illustrated by artists using pen and ink, not computers.

Kevin Sprouls, the first artist at The Journal, introduced these distinctive illustrations to The Wall Street Journal in 1979. Today, there are 5 full time artist and a number of free-lance illustrators.

Step 1 Reference photos are obtained from variety of sources: photo agencies, the subject's place of employment and various publications. Photos require resizing before work can begin.



Original



resized

Step 2 The photograph is cropped to head and shoulder and is enlarged or reduced to 3 inches wide and 5 inches deep. The artist then lightens or darkens the image in preparation for tracing.



Adjusted levels

Step 3 The image is first covered with translucent material and the artist makes a pencil tracing of the face. The face is essentially mapped out, outlining the facial features. It is then mounted on a piece of white illustration board. The artist begins rendering or making a copy of the face's major features using pen and ink.



Tracing



step 3

Step 4 The Journal's graphic style calls for a gray, evenly developed drawing, so the illustrator darkens shadowy areas with a combination of parallel counter lines, cross-hatching and dotting technique.



step 4



step 4

Step 5 The entire process takes from 3 to 5 hours. Great attention is paid to shadows and highlights.



step 5



step 5

Step 6 Once the drawing is completed, it is reduced 35% for reproduction.



finished drawing