

GTX

Galveston/TX
and the Gulf Coast

Jörg Rubbert

GTX

Galveston/TX
and the Gulf Coast

Road Trips 1987—2024

Jörg Rubbert



For anyone who lives inland, there's an indescribable feeling of relaxation and freedom at the first sight of water as he or she approaches the coast. It's the smell of the sea and the salt air, the feel of the Gulf breeze, perhaps the barrenness ... the sight of a few houses on stilts ... a lone fisherman on the shore."

A. Pat Daniels¹



¹ From the foreword of the travel guide "Bolivar! - Gulf Coast Peninsula", published 1985 by Peninsula Press of Texas, Crystal Beach, TX 77650

By 1975 the Texas Coastal Management Program had redefined the Texas Coastal Zone as "southwest along the coast from the Sabine Lake to the Rio Grande, seaward into the Gulf of Mexico for a distance of 10.35 miles, and inland to include 36 counties."²

This zone is composed of eight geographic areas extending from the inner continental shelf to about forty miles inland. It includes all estuaries and tidally influenced streams and bounding wetlands. From north to south the areas are Beaumont-Port Arthur, Galveston-Houston, Bay City-Freeport, Port Lavaca, Corpus Christi, Kingsville, and Brownsville-Harlingen.

2 Definition acc. to the "Coastal Public Lands Management Act of 1973"
(<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/coastal-zone>)

3 Map on the right: <https://www.glo.texas.gov/coast/coastal-management/forms/files/CoastalBoundaryMap.pdf>

The Texas Coastal Zone³



Table of Contents

Introduction	8
The Upper Coast: From Sabine Pass to Bolivar Peninsula	16
Galveston and Galveston Island	50
The Middle Coast: Matagorda Bay and Port Lavaca	122
Corpus Christi, Mustang Island and Port Aransas	164
The Lower Coast: Padre Island and Brownsville	232
Excursus: The Rio Grande Valley	294
Photographer's Note	328
How did I develop the idea for the book?	328
Why did I photograph the book in black and white?	329
A few words about the technology used	329
Appendix: Road Trips 1987—2024	334
About the Photographer	340
Exhibitions and Publications	342
Gazetteer	346
Index of Persons	348
Acknowledgements	350
Imprint	352

Introduction

The Atlantic East Coast and the Pacific West Coast of the USA are well known. However, the United States has a third and less well-known coast that runs along the Gulf of Mexico and 370 miles of that coast belongs to Texas. The coast of southeastern Texas extends from the Louisiana state border all the way down to the Mexican border, close to the city of Brownsville. The area to the south of Galveston is also known as the Texas Riviera.

What most people don't know is that the Texas coast is the only one in the United States with a road that offers an almost continuous view of the water, which fascinated me the most on my first trip there in 1987. In typical American fashion, you can cruise along the coast in your car and experience endless beaches, typical small coastal towns and a few of the larger port cities. From Sabine Lake, at the eastern state border with Louisiana, you take State Highway 87 over 50 miles from Orange, via Port Arthur to Port Bolivar on the Bolivar Peninsula, almost always within sight of the Gulf. After a short interlude on the free Galveston Island Ferry across Galveston Bay, you get to FM⁴ 3005, which takes you directly to the Gulf along the famous Seawall Boulevard. The FM 3005 merges into CR⁵ 257 (also called the "Bluewater Highway"), which leads, via a toll booth, to Surfside.

In Freeport, with its many refineries, State Highway 36 takes you inland for a few miles before joining State Highway 35 near the coast in West Columbia. This takes you via Bay City, Palacios and Port Lavaca to Aransas Pass. From there the coastal road, State Road 361 (also called the "Red Fish-Bay Causeway"), runs to the free ferry that goes to Port Aransas and beyond, via Mustang Island to North Padre Island.

If you're so inclined, you can continue even farther along Park Road 22 (also called "Padre Island Drive") to the Malaquite Visitor Center. Park Road 22 extends a few more miles to the Port Mansfield Channel, which separates North Padre Island from South Padre Island.

⁴ FM stands for Farm-to-Market

⁵ CR stands for Country Road

However, that's where it ends, because there's no connection (bridge or ferry) between the northern and southern parts of Padre Island. The main reason is the Padre Island National Seashore⁶, which is a protected (and therefore car-free) nature reserve stretching over 67 miles. The only way to get farther south, from North Padre Island, and to the Mexican border is via US Highway 77, which runs inland. Farther south, on South Padre Island, the road isn't paved until you reach State Park Road 100 (called "Padre Boulevard"), which begins at the South Padre Island Adventure Park and takes you to Port Isabel on State Road 48, which leads to the Mexican border in Brownsville. Alternatively, you could also take the US 77⁷, from Corpus Christi, which runs parallel to the Gulf Coast and continues to the Mexican border.

The Texas coast has always been of interest to the colonial powers. For almost three centuries, South Texas was part of New Spain's 'buffer zone' between the established Spanish provinces in present-day Mexico to the south-west and French Louisiana to the east.

At first, both colonial powers didn't really know what to do with the territory. The Spanish maintained several Catholic missions in the Trinity River area and founded the first significant settlement, Atascosito Springs, in 1750. In 1803, the newly formed United States purchased the Louisiana portion of Texas from France and gave it to Mexico. In the years that followed, the Spanish repeatedly resisted US efforts to move the border to the Rio Grande River and in 1818 reached an agreement to use the Sabine River as the border.

After Mexico's independence from Spain⁸ in 1821, American settlers were issued colonization grants to settle in designated areas in what is now Texas, which made it the southwestern outpost of English-oriented America.

⁶ Padre Island National Seashore is under public and partly private management

⁷ The last part of US 77 becomes Interstate 69E

⁸ This refers to the Viceroyalty of New Spain (1535–1821), which was headed by a viceroy and which administered the area of Spain in large parts of southwestern North America in the 17th and 18th centuries, including today's US states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, Colorado, Utah and southwestern Wyoming.

During this time the lower Rio Grande Valley region kept its commercial ties to the south despite growing colonies north of the Nueces River. In 1827, US President John Quincy Adams officially offered Mexico \$1 million to purchase Texas, which Mexico rejected. Two years later, in 1829, President Andrew Jackson tried again with an offer of \$5 million, which Mexico once again rejected. In the same year, Spain attempted to retake its former colony, but was defeated by Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna⁹.

The Texas Revolution¹⁰ led to the liberation of Texas from Mexico in 1836, the same year that the Texas Declaration of Independence was written. The US signed treaties with the newly formed Republic of Texas and officially recognized the Republic as an independent country in 1837. Sam Houston¹¹, who led the Texans in the "Battle of San Jacinto"¹², became the first president of the Republic of Texas, which was eventually admitted to the United States as a new state in 1845.

Even after Texas had established its independence, Texas and Mexico continued to dispute the ownership of the land between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. While Mexico claimed that the boundary was the Nueces River, Texas claimed territory that stretched over 124 miles beyond that to the Rio Grande. After Texas joined the United States in 1845, the US simply adopted the Texas claim.

Since Mexico could not approve the annexation of Texas by the USA and the unilateral designation of the Rio Grande as the southern border, the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) broke out shortly afterwards, at the end of which the Texas question was finally settled in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In the treaty, Mexico accepted the Rio Grande as the border with Texas and also sold a 525,099 mi² area to the USA for a sum of \$15 million,

⁹ Antonio López de Santa Anna (1794–1876) was a Mexican colonel and later politician. Trained as an officer in Spain, he switched sides in 1821 and joined the rebel leader and later Mexican king Agustín de Iturbide as colonel of a regiment. After the victorious battle for the port city of Veracruz, Iturbide promoted him to general. Source: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonio_L%C3%B3pez_de_Santa_Anna

¹⁰ The Texas War of Independence lasted from October 2, 1835 to April 21, 1836; the conflict ended with the separation of Texas from the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas (to which Texas had belonged since 1824) - manifested in the Treaty of Velasco.

¹¹ The city of Houston was named after him in his honor.

¹² The Battle of San Jacinto was fought on April 21, 1836 in Harrisburg (in present-day Harris County) and was the decisive military conflict between Texans and Mexicans during the Texas Revolution. According to legend, the victorious battle between the Texas army commanded by General Sam Houston over the Mexican troops under General Antonio López de Santa Anna lasted only eighteen minutes.

which includes the current states of Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah as well as parts of New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming.¹³

Abraham Lincoln's victory in the presidential election in November 1860 led to Texas' temporary withdrawal from the Union in February 1861 and its entry into the Confederate States of America because of the ban on slave ownership¹⁴. After the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the defeat of the Confederacy, US President Andrew Johnson installed the Unionist Andrew Jackson Hamilton as provisional governor of Texas. On March 30, 1870, Texas was readmitted to the United States.

Due to its exposed geographical location on the Gulf of Mexico, the Texas coastal zone has suffered from multiple devastating natural and man-made catastrophes in recent years. On April 20th, 2010 a gas leak on the oil platform "Deepwater Horizon" off the coast of Louisiana led to a huge explosion. The platform caught fire and sank two days later. Eleven workers lost their lives. Oil poured unchecked from the well, which resulted in a giant oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and one of the worst environmental disasters of its kind. The tourism and fishing industries have still not recovered from the damage caused by the oil spill.

Hurricanes "Ike" (2008) and "Katrina" (2005) were natural catastrophes that have also hit the Gulf coast: on September 11, Ike reached category 2 by the time it hit the Texas coast. Due to its immense size of 870 miles in diameter, the hurricane pushed a tidal wave several feet high in front of it. Ike made landfall between Corpus Christi and Houston in the early morning hours of September 13th. In Galveston, which had already been devastated by a hurricane in 1900¹⁵ that killed 6,000 people, authorities issued mandatory evacuation

¹³ Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican-American_War

¹⁴ Texas was the seventh and last southern state to leave the Union and join the Confederacy shortly before the start of the Civil War (1861 – 1865).

¹⁵ During the 'Galveston Hurricane' in 1900, much of the city was destroyed and more than 6,000 residents died within a few hours. In response, the average height of the island was increased by 47 inches through embankment and a 16 feet high pier ('Seawall') was built to break the oncoming waves.

orders and asked a million people to leave coastal areas. Ike caused immense devastation from the Louisiana coastline all the way to Kenedy County and the Corpus Christi region. Large parts of Galveston were also flooded: the storm surge washed over the 17 feet high Galveston Seawall, which separates the lower-lying urban area from the Gulf of Mexico. In the flooded areas, helpers were on their way to assist the 140,000 people who had ignored the evacuation order. The rescue operation is considered the largest in Texas history.¹⁶ As a consequence, the price of gas increased because of damage to some of the numerous oil refineries along the South Texas coast.¹⁷

In 2005 hurricane "Katrina" left a trail of devastation when it swept through New Orleans and the entire Gulf Coast. All weather forecasts failed; the resulting danger of massive flooding was identified much too late and consequently evacuation warnings were delayed. Large areas of the region became temporarily uninhabitable and the resulting damage ran into the billions. The consequences of the disaster are still felt today.

At 268,820 mi², Texas is the second largest state in the United States after Alaska and larger than France. From north to south, Texas stretches a total of approximately 807 miles and from east to west the state extends to around 745 miles. Due to its sheer size, the "Lone Star State" has always been a bit special compared to other US states; here are three examples:

First of all, Texas is the only US state with its own power grid. Embracing the go-it-alone spirit of the Lone Star flag, Texas power companies chose to keep their operations within the state's borders largely to avoid federal regulation. Texas was able to create its own power island because of its size and abundance of resources. The infrastructure owned by these companies linked up to form the Texas power grid, which is operated by a nonprofit corporation called

¹⁶ Tagesanzeiger from September 14, 2008
(<https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/hurrikan-ike-tausende-gerettet-525669824235>)

¹⁷ CNN Money: Article from Sept. 17th, 2008, retrieved Sept. 12th, 2008.

the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT).¹⁸ The ERCOT is one of three main grid systems in the US besides the Western Interconnection for the area west of the Rocky Mountains and the Eastern Interconnection for the area east of the Rockies. The ERCOT grid covers 75% of the land area of Texas and serves about 90% of the Texas electricity. Supporters of the state's status as a 'power island' say its unique power market has been a lure to businesses, including the massive buildout of wind power.¹⁹

Secondly, residents of Texas, in addition to eight other US states don't pay any income tax and they're off the hook for state level personal income taxes. The Texas Constitution simply forbids personal income taxes. Instead of collecting income taxes, Texas relies on high sales and use taxes. When paired with local taxes, total sales taxes in some jurisdictions are as high as 8.25%. Together with higher property tax rates, is how the State of Texas seeks to compensate for not collecting personal taxes.²⁰

Thirdly, Texas is known for its strong emphasis on state history, but states like California, Florida, and New York also include significant components of state history in their educational standards. Texas high school students are required to pass a test regarding the history and constitution of Texas in order to graduate, according to the Texas Administration Code. The students examine the full scope of Texas history; they use primary and secondary sources to examine the rich and diverse cultural background of Texas as they identify the different racial and ethnic groups that settled in Texas to build a republic and then a state. Furthermore, they analyze the impact of scientific discoveries and technological innovations on the development of Texas in various industries such as agriculture, energy, medicine, computer, and aerospace.

¹⁸ ERCOT is overseen by the Public Utility Commission of Texas, the state's utility regulator, and the Texas legislature.

¹⁹ Article by Claire Hao, published in the Houston Chronicle on March 3rd, 2024

²⁰ Source: <https://smartasset.com/taxes/states-with-no-income-tax>

On the other hand, there are many parallels between the history of Texas and the history of the USA: Texas had to fight for its freedom in a war of independence against Mexico, just as the United States had to fight for its independence from the British as a colonial power in the American War of Independence (1775–1783).

In addition, the development of the state of Texas would not have been possible without its immigrants (especially from Mexico), just as the USA would not have developed so rapidly without the ambitious immigrants from Europe (especially the Germans, Irish, Jewish and Polish). Due to continuous migration from Mexico²¹, Texas is now one of the most populous states in the USA as well as an economic and (with its current 40 electoral votes) a political heavyweight.

Texas encompasses all facets of American life, regardless of whether it's the issue of migration, the situations in the agricultural²² and oil industries or the promises of the high-tech and space industries²³, or just life in general in either in the few large cities or in the seemingly endless countryside. All of the country's problems are revealed, as if under a magnifying glass.

On my photo trips (see chapter "Road Trips 1987–2024") I followed the Texas coast from east to west and structured the book accordingly, into geographical sections based on my travels. The six chapters follow the coast from the Louisiana border at Sabine Lake in the east to the southwestern terminus of South Padre Island and Brownsville, the border town with Mexico. I have dedicated a special chapter to the border with Mexico along the Rio Grande River and the topic of migration. In order to place the images in a socio-cultural context and thus do justice to their documentary character, each chapter is prefaced with a short introduction about the regional history, economic situation and geographical location.

21 For more information on migration, see the chapter "The Rio Grande Valley"

22 Texas is still the no. 1 cotton producer within the United States

23 i.e. Elon Musk's new SpaceX-Center in Boca Chica at the southernmost tip of Texas and NASA's Houston Space Center

With this photo book, I hope that I have brought the Texas coast a little closer and consequently made it better known. With its open-hearted, down-to-earth and proud residents who preserve their individuality, for me, Texas is a typical piece of America. Its coast, especially the Texas Riviera, is one of the most fascinating regions in the USA.

Jörg Rubbert

Berlin, December 2024

The Upper Coast: From Sabine Pass to Bolivar Peninsula

Sabine Pass, at the state border with Louisiana, was the eastern starting point of my travels along the Texas coast. Sabine Pass—originally named Sabine City—was laid out in 1836 by Sam Houston²⁴ at the mouth of Sabine Lake. In the Civil War battle of Sabine Pass in 1863, Union General William Franklin intended to land at Sabine and capture Texas with 20 gunboats and 5,000 troops. However, Sabine Lake was defended by Confederate Lieutenant Richard W. Dowling, an Irish bartender from Houston, who, along with 41 fellow Irishmen, defended the makeshift Fort Sabine. With the help of 6 cannons, they not only withstood the attack by Union troops, but drove them out.

On its way to becoming a resort spot, a series of hurricanes in 1886, 1900 and in 1915 almost wiped out the entire community and ruined those plans. Again, in September 2005, Port Arthur and Sabine Pass suffered severe damage from Hurricane Rita. Today, Sabine Pass is a popular fishing spot, especially for crab. According to Texas law, a license is required to catch fish, but not to catch crab.

Port Arthur is the largest city in this area (approx. 60,000 inhabitants²⁵), located in Jefferson County which is right on the border with Louisiana. Port Arthur is connected to the Gulf of Mexico via Sabine Lake. The town is located on State Highway 87 on the lower west bank of Sabine Lake, 5 miles east of the Neches River Rainbow Bridge and 17 miles southeast of Beaumont.²⁶ Nearby Interstate 10 to Beaumont cuts across the northern part of Jefferson County.

The early settlement of Port Arthur, originally known as Aurora, was founded in the 1840s. In the 1890s railroad entrepreneur Arthur E. Stilwell was looking for a port to link his Kansas City Southern Railroad to the Gulf of Mexico. In his original plans, the Gulf Coast terminus was supposed to be Sabine Pass. But Stilwell changed his mind, evidently because he could not reach an acceptable agreement with Luther and Herman Kountze²⁷, New York bankers

24 Sam Houston, first president of the Republic of Texas, led the Texans at the Battle of San Jacinto. The city of Houston was named after him in his honor.

25 The US Census Bureau reported a population of 56,039 in the 2020 census.

26 <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/port-arthur-tx>; [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Arthur_\(Texas\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Port_Arthur_(Texas))

27 The town of Kountze in Hardin County, TX is named after the two New York bankers.

who owned most of the land around Sabine Pass. By December 1895 Arthur Stilwell and his backers had acquired land on the western shore of Sabine Lake and began planning a city, which he named after himself. Stilwell envisioned Port Arthur as an important seaport. In June 1896 the Port Arthur Channel and Dock Company was established, and in April 1897 it began cutting a canal along the western edge of the lake to deep water at Sabine Pass. Legal hurdles delayed the project, but Port Arthur finally became a port in March 1899. Port Arthur became an official port of entry in 1906, and by 1908 the Sabine-Neches canal had been deepened and extended up the Neches River to Beaumont and Orange.

Port Arthur's importance skyrocketed in 1901 with the discovery of the first oil deposits, especially the eruption of Spindletop on January 10, 1901.²⁸ Major oil companies, such as Gulf Oil, Magnolia, Humble, and Texaco, emerged from the Spindletop oilfield boom. Soon Gulf Oil and Texaco built major refineries at Port Arthur. Pipelines tied the city to Spindletop, and petroleum products were soon shipped through the canal. By 1909 Port Arthur had become the twelfth largest port in the United States in regards to the value of its exports, and by 1914 it was the second largest location of oil refineries in the nation. To this day, Petroleum remains the principal industry in the Beaumont—Port Arthur—Orange area and benefits from the growing offshore oil operations in the Gulf.

In 1970, the newly built Gulfgate Bridge²⁹ spanned the Sabine-Neches ship canal and connected Port Arthur with Pleasure Island. It linked the Sabine Lake Causeway and lead to the Texas-Louisiana border and Louisiana Highway 82. Another important and famous bridge, the Neches River Rainbow Bridge, was completed in 1938.³⁰ It is one of the tallest bridges in the South (230 feet with a vertical clearance of 176 feet), and crosses the Neches River on State Highway 87 between Port Arthur and neighboring Orange.

28 It was Padillo Higgins, oil exploration promoter at the Gladys City Oil, Gas and Manufacturing Company who had the right nose to discover oil in the salt dome at Spindletop; Source: "The eyes of Texas"—Travel Guide (Gulf Coast Edition), printed in 1977 by Cordovan Corporation©, Publishers, Houston, TX

29 It was later renamed to Martin Luther King Bridge

30 The bridge was completed on September 8, 1938. The nearby town of Prairie View changed its name to Bridge City because of the bridge. The bridge was initially called the Port Arthur-Orange Bridge. It got its current name in 1957. Source: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_Bridge_\(Texas\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_Bridge_(Texas))

“Bolivar Peninsula is a world apart, a world of glinting sunlight on sand and water and occasional fogs that wrap the beach communities in a blanket of comfortable intimacy.”³¹

Bolivar Peninsula forms a very narrow strip of land on the Texas Gulf Coast, heading in a northeastern direction. It stretches along the Gulf of Mexico for 27 miles. It is the easternmost part of Galveston County, separating the eastern part of Galveston Bay from the Gulf of Mexico. At its northern edge, Bolivar Peninsula is bordered by the man-made Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, an important marine traffic and transportation facility. Bolivar Peninsula contains five communities: Crystal Beach (the incorporated city), Port Bolivar, Caplen, Gilchrist and High Island.

The peninsula itself is only three miles away from Galveston Island, separated by the channel of Bolivar Roads, the entrance from the Gulf of Mexico to Galveston Bay. Its widest point measures 3¼ miles—between Crystal Beach and Caplen, while its narrowest point is a quarter of a mile (near the community of Gilchrist) in the Rollover Pass area.

The peninsula was named in 1816 after Simón Bolívar³², the famed Venezuelan political leader involved in the independence movements of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and other Latin American nations. Back in the early 1800s Bolivar Peninsula—as part of Mexico’s Texas and the infant United States—was a rendezvous point of many Indigenous Americans, pirates and freebooters, explorers and settlers. At that time, Galveston served as a pirate hideout: the first permanent settlement of Europeans was built around 1816 by pirate captain Louis Michel Aury as a base of operations to support the Mexican War of Independence against Spain. From 1817 on, the pirate Jean Laffite used the Bolivar Peninsula as part of the pirate kingdom³³ established around the Galveston Bay. The peninsula was part of an overland slave route between Louisiana and Galveston.

31 Citation from Mrs. Gwendolyn Wingate, from an article in the Beaumont Enterprise-Journal

32 Simón Bolívar (born in Caracas, Venezuela on July 24th, 1783, died in Santa Marta, Colombia on December 17th, 1836) was a Venezuelan statesman and military officer and leader of the fight to free South and Central America from the grasp of the Spanish Empire. He was the first president of Bolivia, which became independent of Spain in 1824, and gave the country its name. He is known colloquially as El Libertador, or the Liberator of America (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sim%C3%B3n_Bol%C3%ADvar)

33 When the pirate captain Louis Michel Aury made an unsuccessful raid against the Spanish in 1817, the pirate Jean Laffite took the opportunity to occupy Galveston, establish the “pirate kingdom” of Campeche (English: Campeachy) there and proclaim himself as its head of government.

In 1821, the US Navy demanded that the pirates leave the island or be destroyed. Lafitte burned down his settlement and disappeared. "But before he escaped, he gave the island a four-day orgy of whiskey and women. When you walk along the misty beaches in the morning and the air is saturated with salt and mold, you get the impression that the place is still nursing the hangover from that drinking."³⁴ According to legend, his treasure is still buried on the island, the Bolivar Peninsula or on High Island.

Around 1836 during the Texas Revolution, Bolivar Peninsula became a retreat and refuge area, as many people from Galveston fled eastward from Mexican General Santa Anna. Until 1880, Port Bolivar on the Bolivar Peninsula was the second most important port in the Gulf region after the Port of Galveston. Soon after, infrastructure projects led to economic development and growth: in 1896 the Gulf and Interstate Railway³⁵ started operating between Port Bolivar and Beaumont. And in 1933 a regular ferry service started between Port Bolivar and Galveston, undertaken by the Texas Highway Department.³⁶ The ride takes about 20 minutes, enough time to leave the car and take a tour of the ferry deck. The crossing is carried out by a fleet of six diesel-powered, double-ended ferries called Robert C. Lanier, Gibb Gilchrist, Dewitt C. Greer, Ray Stoker Jr., John W. Johnson and Robert H. Dedman. All, except the Gilchrist, are named after members of the Texas Transportation Commission.

State Highway 87 stretches along the coast of Bolivar Peninsula from Port Bolivar to High Island. The 30-mile section between High Island and the community of Sabine Pass was closed in 1980 after severe damage caused by tropical storms that year. On September 13, 2008, the Bolivar Peninsula suffered heavy damage from Hurricane Ike that made landfall on the Texas coast.

³⁴ from the novel "Galveston" by Nic Pizzolatto, 2nd edition 2014, page 70, published by Metrolit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin

³⁵ Refurbished after the severe hurricane in 1915, the railroad finally closed operation in the 1940s.

³⁶ Travel guide "Bolivar! - Gulf Coast Peninsula", page 23, published 1985 by Peninsula Press of Texas, Crystal Beach, TX 77650

One noteworthy aspect of the long Bolivar Peninsula coastline: since 1959 the Texas Open Beaches Act guarantees the public free access to the entire coast. It states that private property which ends up seaward of the natural vegetation zone becomes public property and that there is no compensation for property owners faced with either flooding and/or associated storm surge damages, e.g., the retreat of dunes or sand erosion.³⁷

Nevertheless, many Bolivar Peninsula lovers, besides myself, like the rough, wild, blustery, sometimes foggy and dark atmosphere of the Bolivar coast, which "leads to flights of the imagination."³⁸

37 Travel guide "Bolivar! - Gulf Coast Peninsula", page 76, published 1985 by Peninsula Press of Texas, Crystal Beach, TX 77650

38 From the travel guide "Bolivar! - Gulf Coast Peninsula", page 1, published 1985 by Peninsula Press of Texas, Crystal Beach, TX 77650



Texas state border to Louisiana on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (TX 82) near Sabine Lake, Nov. 2023



Junction TX 87 & TX 82 (with Martin Luther King Bridge on the left), Port Arthur, Nov. 2023



Lakeview Cleaner, Stadium Road, Port Arthur, Nov. 2023



Pickup truck carrying Longhorn bull, Interstate 10 near Winnie, Nov. 2022



Entrance to Barrow Ranch, Anahuac, Nov. 2023



"Barbie Sells Dream Homes", TX 146 near Texas City, Nov. 2022



"Identify as non-Bidenary", junction of FM 562 & FM 1985, near Hankamer, Nov. 2023



"Keep off Dunes", Bolivar Peninsula, Nov. 2023



"Advantage Housing", SH 87 near High Island, Bolivar Peninsula, Nov. 2022

When I got out of my car to take a picture of a lonely wooden house on stilts near Rollover Pass a swarm of mosquitoes attacked me and forced me to flee back into the car immediately after taking the photo. Unfortunately, my car was now full of mosquitoes. So, I set the air conditioning to "ice cold", turned it all the way up and drove with the windows open to High Island. It was there that the last mosquito had finally left my car and I only ended up with a few bites ...



Beachfront house on stilts, SH 87 near High Island, Bolivar Peninsula, Nov. 2022



On Texas Highway 87 near High Island, Nov. 2023







Dead wolfhound, TX 87 near High Island, Bolivar Peninsula, Oct. 2015

On my numerous tours, I often took the Galveston—Port Bolivar ferry and got out of my car during the 30-minute crossing. Especially at night, the ferry has a strange atmosphere that I tried to reflect in the following sequence. It reminded me of the night trains from Hamburg to Copenhagen and on to Stockholm, where the wagons were transferred by ferry from Puttgarden (Germany) to Røedby (Denmark), while I used the time to have a coffee with the truck drivers.

ATTENTION
USE CAUTION WHEN OPENING
DOOR AS STRONG WINDS
MAY CLOSE IT RAPIDLY

CAUTION
WATCH YOUR STEP
HIGH THRESHOLD


Look Down!



Ferry Port Bolivar – Galveston at night #02, Nov. 2023



Ferry Port Bolivar – Galveston at night #03, Nov. 2023



Ferry Port Bolivar – Galveston at night #04, Nov. 2023



Staff-member of the Galveston – Port Bolivar Ferry, Nov. 2015



Lady in her SUV, Galveston – Port Bolivar Ferry, Nov. 2022

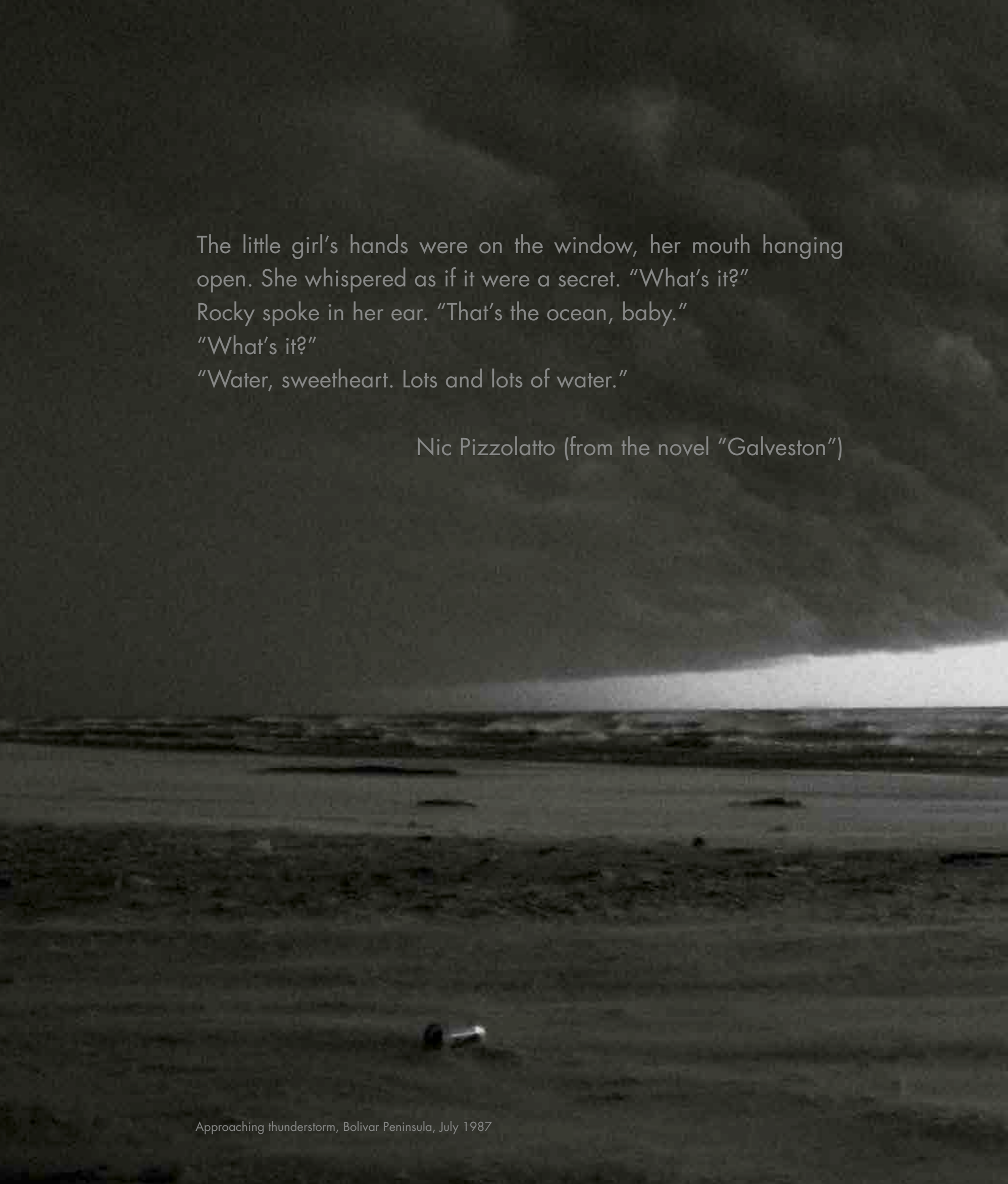




First Texas Bank, Crystal Beach, Bolivar Peninsula, Nov. 2022
(opened in 1985 as the first full-service bank on the Peninsula)



"Trading Post", State Highway 87 & Selwyn Road, Bolivar Peninsula, Nov. 2014



The little girl's hands were on the window, her mouth hanging open. She whispered as if it were a secret. "What's it?" Rocky spoke in her ear. "That's the ocean, baby." "What's it?" "Water, sweetheart. Lots and lots of water."

Nic Pizzolatto (from the novel "Galveston")





Surfers return before the approaching thunderstorm #01, Bolivar Peninsula, July 1987



Surfers return before the approaching thunderstorm #02, Bolivar Peninsula, July 1987

Galveston and Galveston Island

As the title of the book suggests, the photographic focus of the book is on Galveston and the surrounding area. Galveston—named after Bernardo de Gálvez y Madrid³⁹—is located about 50 miles southeast of Houston on the Gulf of Mexico on a long, narrow barrier island called Galveston Island. Galveston Bay separates the island to the north from the Texas mainland and to the east from the neighboring island of Bolivar Peninsula, which is accessible via a ferry from Galveston. The ferry ride, via State Highway 87, is by far the most picturesque way to reach Galveston and Galveston Island.

Several hundred people were living in the Galveston area in 1836 when the Republic of Texas was founded. Galveston became a city in 1839⁴⁰ when M. B. Menard⁴¹ bought parts of Galveston Island from the Republic and laid out the townsite. Galveston County was split from Brazoria County and the city of Galveston became the county seat.

Today, Galveston has almost 60,000 residents and is the most important economic and cultural center on the Texas Gulf Coast. The Port of Galveston is home to shipyards and ship repair shops⁴² as well as passenger and cargo terminals served by large cruise ships, such as the Carnival Cruises Line⁴³. From here, cruise ships depart for destinations in the Caribbean (including the Bahamas, Bermuda), Mexico (Cozumel, Costa Maya) and Honduras (including the Island of Roatán). The Royal Caribbean Group⁴⁴ opened their new Terminal III at Pier 10, at the beginning of November 2022, which is designed to accommodate up to 630,000 passengers per year and is also the first of its kind to draw 100% of its energy from solar panels⁴⁵. Tourism is very important to the local economy: in addition to the over 800 new jobs for the region, the terminal also means a revival of the local hotel and restaurant industry, as well as the numerous souvenir shops on Strand Street ("The Strand") or Market Street.

39 Bernardo de Gálvez y Madrid (1746–1786) was appointed governor of the Spanish part of Louisiana in 1777 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20091128112127/http://maryannsternberg.com/files/Galvestown.pdf>)

40 Galveston was officially granted a city charter by the Congress of the Republic of Texas in 1839

41 Michel Branamour Menard (1805–1856) was a Canadian-born merchant, first active on the upper Mississippi River and later in Texas. He founded Galveston and represented Galveston County in the Congress of the Republic of Texas.

42 During my stay in November 2022, the Battleship USS Texas was being repaired in the dry dock of the Gulf Copper shipyard (<https://www.gulfcopper.com>) in order to then hand it over to the local museum harbor

43 i.e. Carnival Breeze, Carnival Dream und Carnival Vista

44 i.e. Oasis of the Seas, Harmony of the Seas und Adventure of the Seas

45 <https://cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/2022/11/royal-caribbean-opens-new-cruise-terminal-in-galveston/>

Also economically important are its three educational institutions: Galveston College, Texas A&M University of Galveston⁴⁶ and the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB)⁴⁷, which operates a large university hospital at the corner of Harborside Drive and 6th Street. The university hospital is the city's largest employer with over 15,000 jobs.⁴⁸ Galveston is now a real boom town.

However, that wasn't always the case: On September 8, 1900, the city was hit by a devastating hurricane that claimed almost 6,000 lives and was responsible for enormous economic and cultural setbacks. The "Great Galveston Storm" was the largest natural disaster to hit North America to date.⁴⁹ The storm surge, with tidal waves up to 26 feet high flooded most of the island along with the city of Galveston, which until then was also the third largest city in the state of Texas, due to its importance as a port city.⁵⁰ Galveston was the third largest deep-sea port in the USA around 1900, with 45 steamship lines using it as a port of call. At the end of the 19th century, the city was still considered the New York of the Gulf Coast. "The Strand", a commercial street with numerous insurance companies and banks was considered the "Wall Street of the Southwest".⁵¹

To provide future protection against hurricanes, it was decided in 1904 to build a protective sea wall. The entire offshore island was initially raised by more than 16 feet and the 17 feet high and 7.5-mile-long Galveston Seawall was built. At the same time, a storm and flood-strengthened bridge to the mainland was also built. The Seawall was completed just in time, because on 17th/18th of August 1915, another severe hurricane hit the Galveston area. At least 275 people were killed, but due to the construction of the seawall there were fewer casualties than in 1900.

46 <https://www.tamug.edu/>

47 <https://www.utmb.edu/>

48 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galveston,_Texas

49 Article "Galveston in Texas – Der schlimmste Hurrican der US-Geschichte" by Jasmin Lörchner, Spiegel-online from September 7, 2016

50 Galveston had a population of almost 38,000 in 1900 and was the third largest city in Texas after San Antonio and Dallas (<https://www.texasalmanac.com/drupal-backup/images/CityPopHist%20web.pdf>)

51 Article "Galveston in Texas – Der schlimmste Hurrican der US-Geschichte" by Jasmin Lörchner, Spiegel-online from September 7, 2016

With the devastation caused by the hurricane of 1900, Galveston's glory days were over. While Galveston was still struggling with the damage and economic impact of the hurricane, cities like Houston, Beaumont and Port Arthur were already benefiting from the emerging oil boom in the Gulf during the early 1920s. The first refineries were built around Texas City. In addition, a new ship canal to Houston was opened in 1914, which led to significant economic losses from maritime traffic in Galveston. The city had lost its outstanding importance as a trade and transportation hub for Texas. The former provincial town of Houston became the new boomtown in southern Texas.

From the 1920s through the 1950s, Galveston was known as a gambling paradise and was also referred to as the "Sin City of the Gulf".⁵² At the time, the gambling business in Galveston was controlled by the Maceo clan crime syndicate. In 1957, the gambling empire was finally dismantled by Attorney General Will Wilson with the support of the Texas Rangers, illegal nightclubs and the legendary "Balinese Room" casino⁵³ were closed. As a result of this cleanup, Galveston lost its attractiveness and was somewhat forgotten. Other cities surpassed Galveston: In 1980, the city was only 29th in Texas in terms of population.⁵⁴

Today the city lives primarily from tourism. The warm Gulf of Mexico, the almost 30-mile-long Galveston Beach, the "Pleasure Pier" rebuilt based on historical models, amusement parks such as the "Moody Gardens", as well as the historic landmarks "The Strand" or "Fisherman's Wharf" attract countless visitors to the city. At the same time, the city is an important recreational destination for residents in the greater Houston area. Many wealthy Houstonians own vacation homes in Galveston and on Galveston Island.

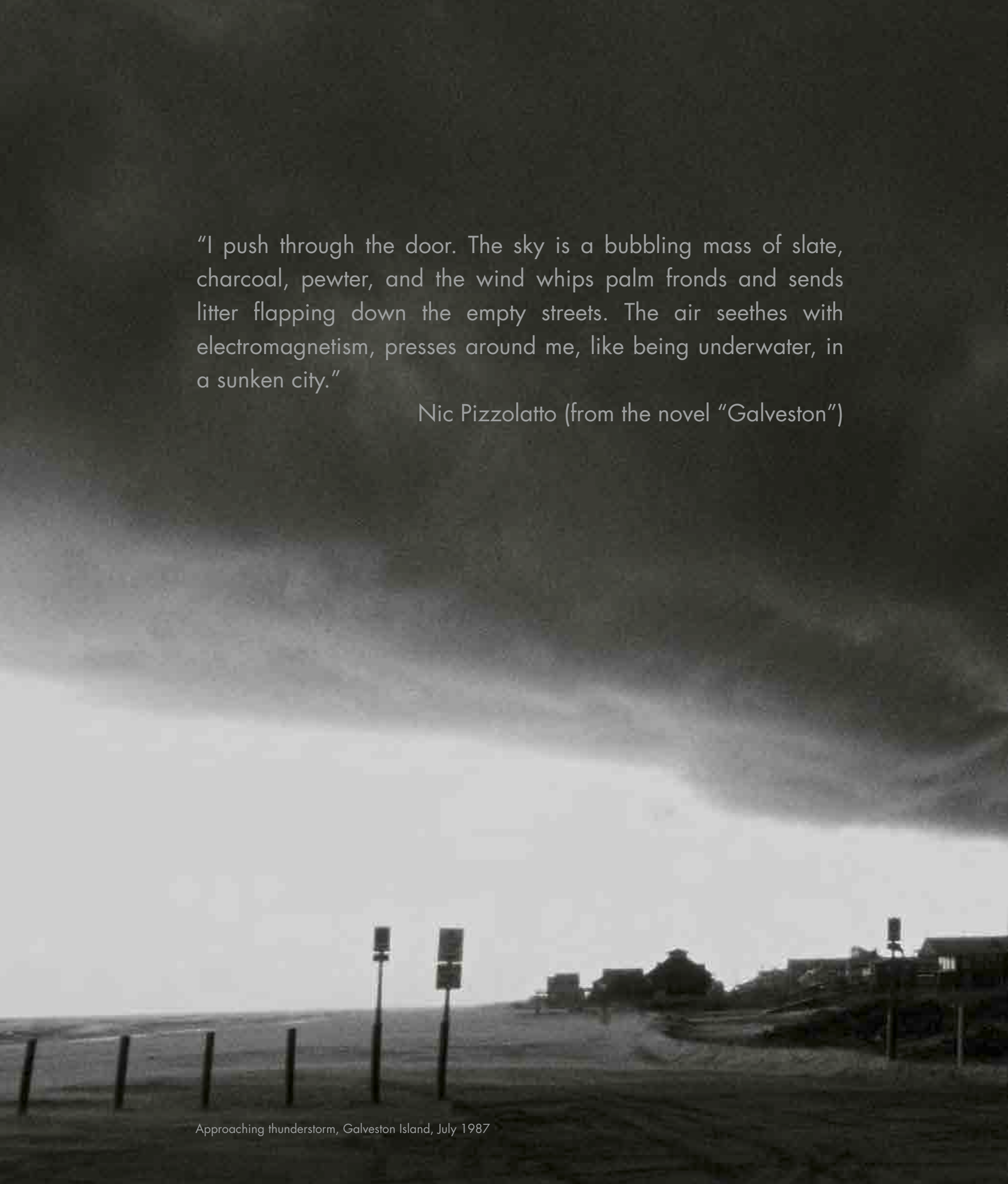
⁵² <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/galveston-tx>

⁵³ The "Balinese Room" was destroyed by Hurricane Ike on September 13, 2008

⁵⁴ In 1980, Galveston had 61,902 residents (source: <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/galveston-tx>)

Galveston Island has a maximum elevation of 19.5 feet and is about 26 feet long and 3 miles wide at its widest point. It has an area of 63 mi² and runs from southwest to northeast. The open Gulf of Mexico lies to the south and east, West Bay lies to the west and Galveston Bay adjoins it to the north. The main access to the island is Interstate 45, which crosses West Bay. The far north of the island is separated from the Bolivar Peninsula by Galveston Harbor. This passage is the entrance to Galveston Bay and the Houston Ship Channel.

There is a ferry connection between Galveston Island and Port Bolivar. The southern end is separated from the mainland by the San Luis Pass. This strait is crossed by a toll bridge. There is a road connection from the island to Surfside Beach in neighboring Brazoria County via State Highway 257, the so-called "Blue Water Highway."



"I push through the door. The sky is a bubbling mass of slate, charcoal, pewter, and the wind whips palm fronds and sends litter flapping down the empty streets. The air seethes with electromagnetism, presses around me, like being underwater, in a sunken city."

Nic Pizzolatto (from the novel "Galveston")





San Luis Pass-Vacek Toll Bridge on a rainy day, Galveston Island, Nov. 2015



Seawall – view from the rearview mirror of my car, Galveston, Nov. 2015



Drivin' on Postoffice Street, Galveston Harborside, Nov. 2023



"R.I.P. LUPE", Postoffice Street & Avenue E, Galveston Harborside, Nov. 2023



Old Cadillac, Postoffice Street & 44th Street, Galveston Harborside, Nov. 2023





Frontyard, Postoffice Street, Galveston Harborside, Nov. 2023



Frontyard with demolished cars, near Oceanfront, Galveston, Nov. 2014



Frontyard with demolished Cadillac, Harborside area, Galveston, Nov. 2022



"LOT FOR SALE", near Oceanfront, Galveston, Nov. 2014



Property near Oceanfront, Galveston, Nov. 2014



Ball Food Store, Avenue H & 37th Street, Galveston, Nov. 2022

I met Sidney several times in his old “Molley House” in downtown Galveston. His ancestors emigrated from Germany and that’s why he favors German dogs. The refurbishment of the old house is a very costly and long-term project, but due to the excellent location (‘The Strand’ is only three blocks away) it’s worth it ...



Sidney Steffen with his Weimaraner dog Erie
26th Street & Post Office Street, Galveston, Nov. 2023



Texas Star Bakery, Broadway Avenue J, Galveston, Nov. 2023



Sandy's Country Store Lounge, The Strand, Galveston, Nov. 2023



"Kitchen Chick" (now closed), Market Street, Galveston, Nov. 2023



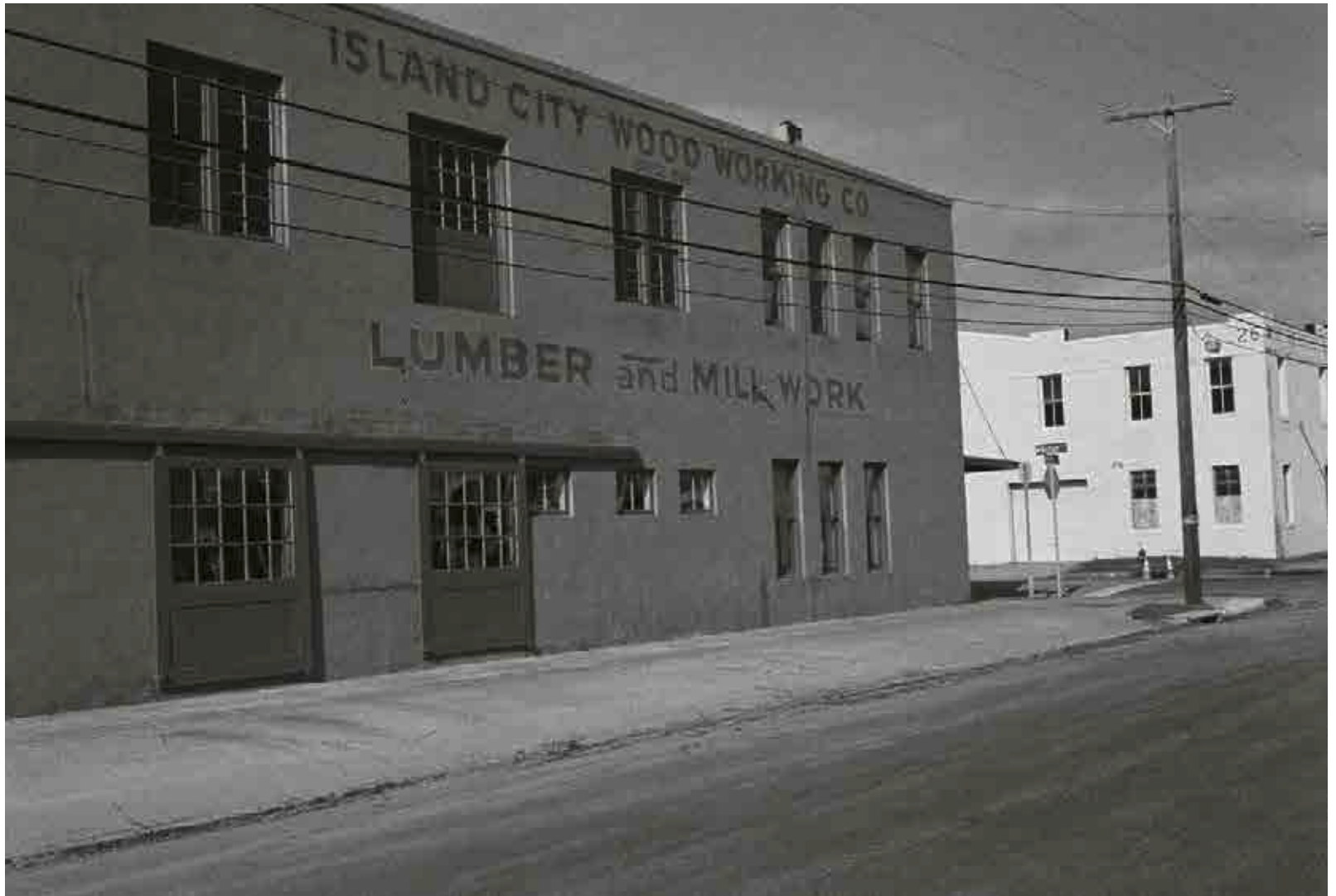
Martini movie theatre on Moody Ave., Galveston, Nov. 2022



E. Schulte Building, Market Street, Galveston, Nov. 2023



Abandoned building, Moody Ave. & Mechanic Street, Galveston, Nov. 2015



Island City Wood Working Co. building, 18th & Mechanic Street, Galveston, Nov. 2022



Peanut Butter Warehouse, Harborside Drive & 20th Street, Galveston, Nov. 2023



Backyard, Downtown Galveston, Avenue B, Nov. 2022



Parking garage of Frost Bank, Market Street & Kempner Street, Downtown Galveston, Nov. 2022



Beneath Murdoch's Gift Shop, Galveston Beach, Nov. 2023



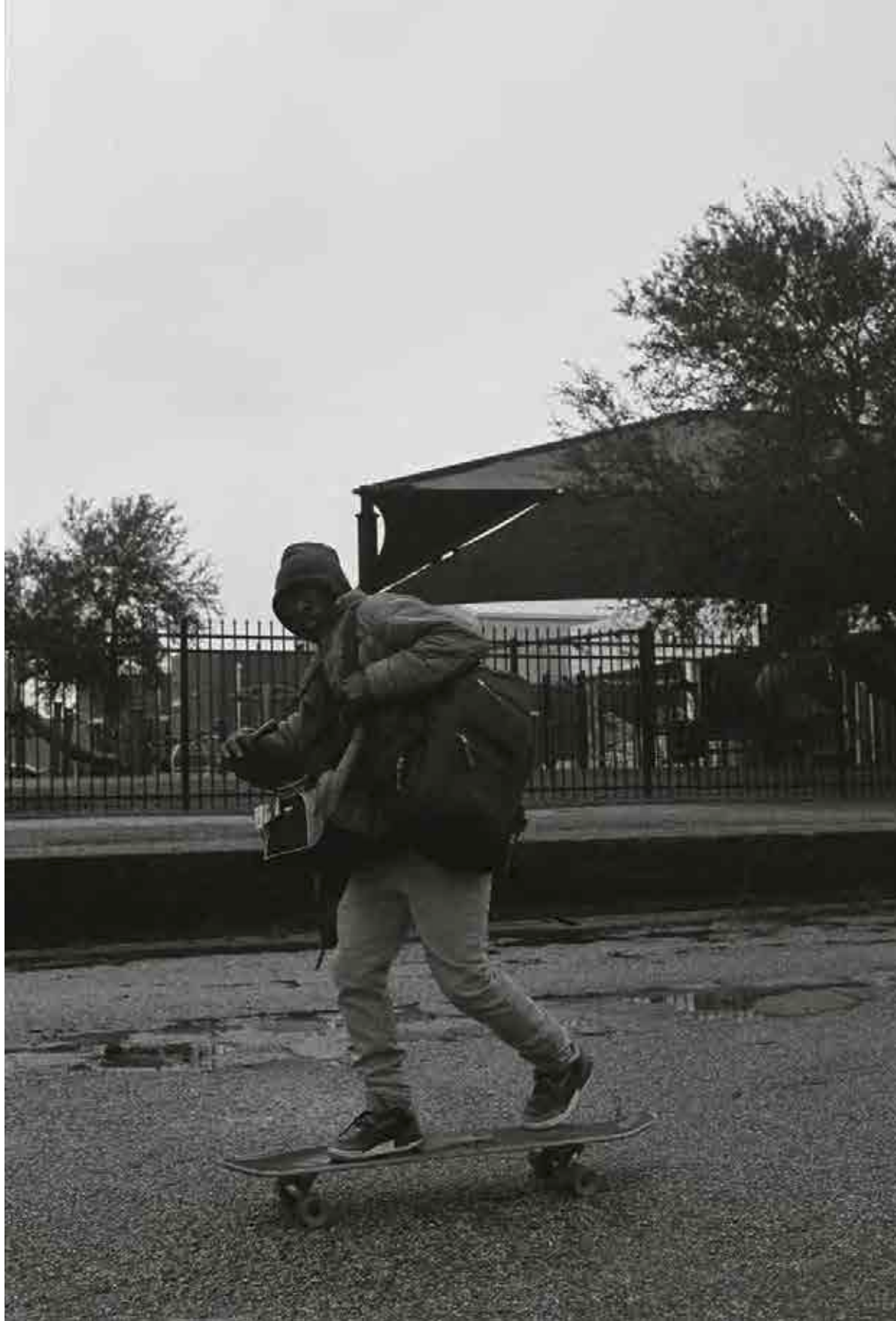
Shoulder the cross #01, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2014



Shoulder the cross #02, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2014



Skateboarder, Seawall Blvd. & 63rd Street, Galveston, Nov. 2015



Skateboarder on 35th Street, Galveston Harborside, Nov. 2022



Smoke break, Wendy's restaurant, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2015



Scene at Denny's restaurant (now closed), Seawall Bld., Galveston, Nov. 2015



"Now Hiring", Popeye's Diner, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2022



Birds on a wire, at the Waffle House, 61st Street, Galveston, Nov. 2022



Outside the Waffle House, 61st Street, Galveston, Nov. 2023



Inside the Waffle House, 61st Street, Galveston, Nov. 2023



Bulletin board of the Waffle House, 61st Street, Galveston, Nov. 2023



"What Did I Catch?", 61st Street Fishing Pier, Galveston, Nov. 2022



Fisherman's Gallery, 61st Street Fishing Pier, Galveston, Nov. 2022



Moonlight over "Pelican & the Shark" bar, 61st Street Pier, Galveston, Nov. 2022

During my first trips to Galveston, I often went to “Mi Abuelitas”, a family-run Mexican restaurant on 45th Street, which has since closed after a car crashed into their place. I always ordered ‘Huevos Rancheros’ with black beans and a strong Mexican coffee. I will miss this hospitable Mexican diner very much!

Small side note: Every morning around 7:30 the local sheriff came in for breakfast. Sometimes it’s a good tip to eat where the police have breakfast ...



Inside Mi Abuelita's Mexican diner, 45th Street, Galveston, Nov. 2022



"Texas Open Carry Handgun Law", Mi Abuelita's Mexican diner, 45th Street, Galveston, Nov. 2022



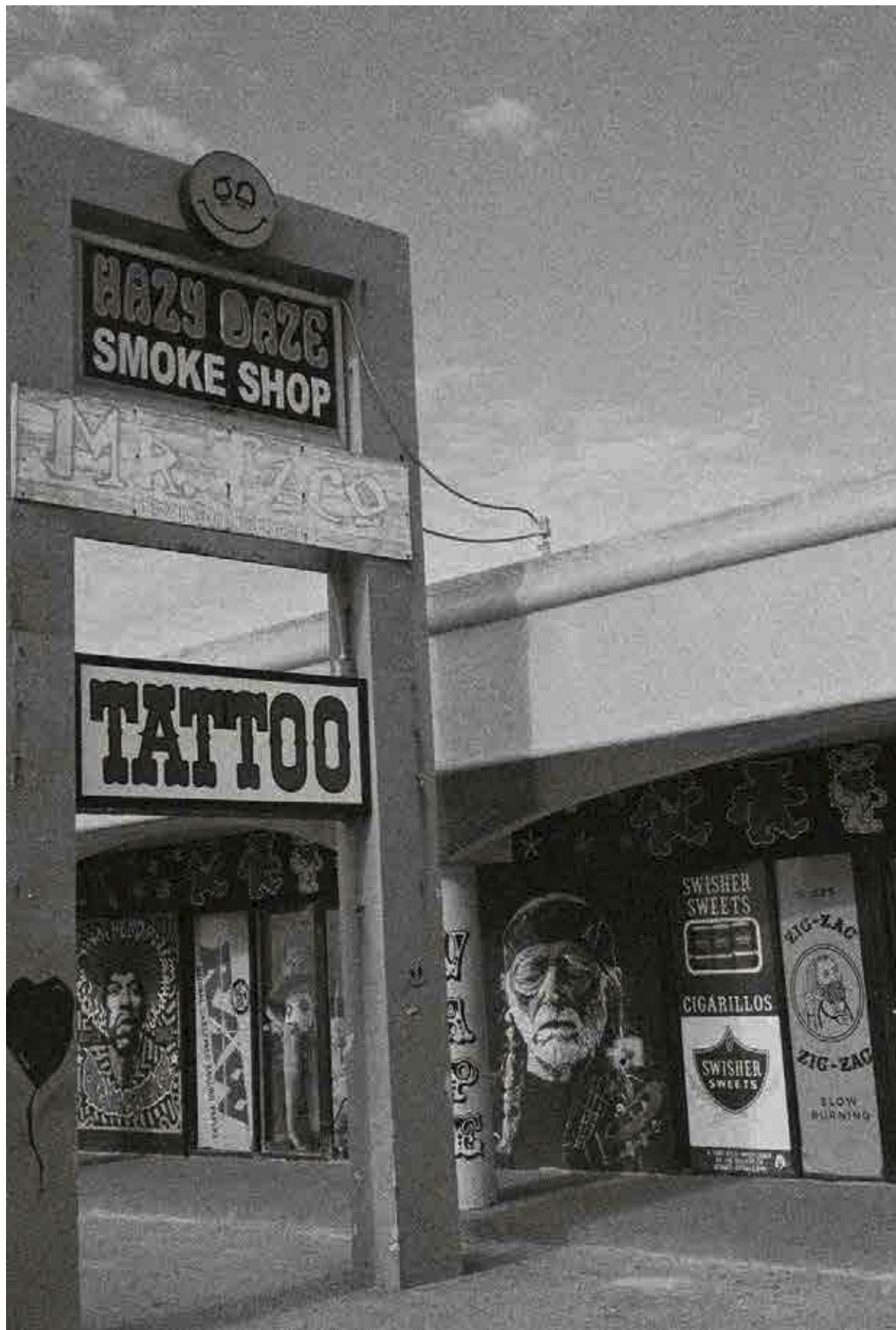
Inside Mi Abuelita's Mexican diner #02, 45th Street, Galveston, Nov. 2022



Scene at Mi Abuelita's Mexican diner, 45th Street, Galveston, Nov. 2015



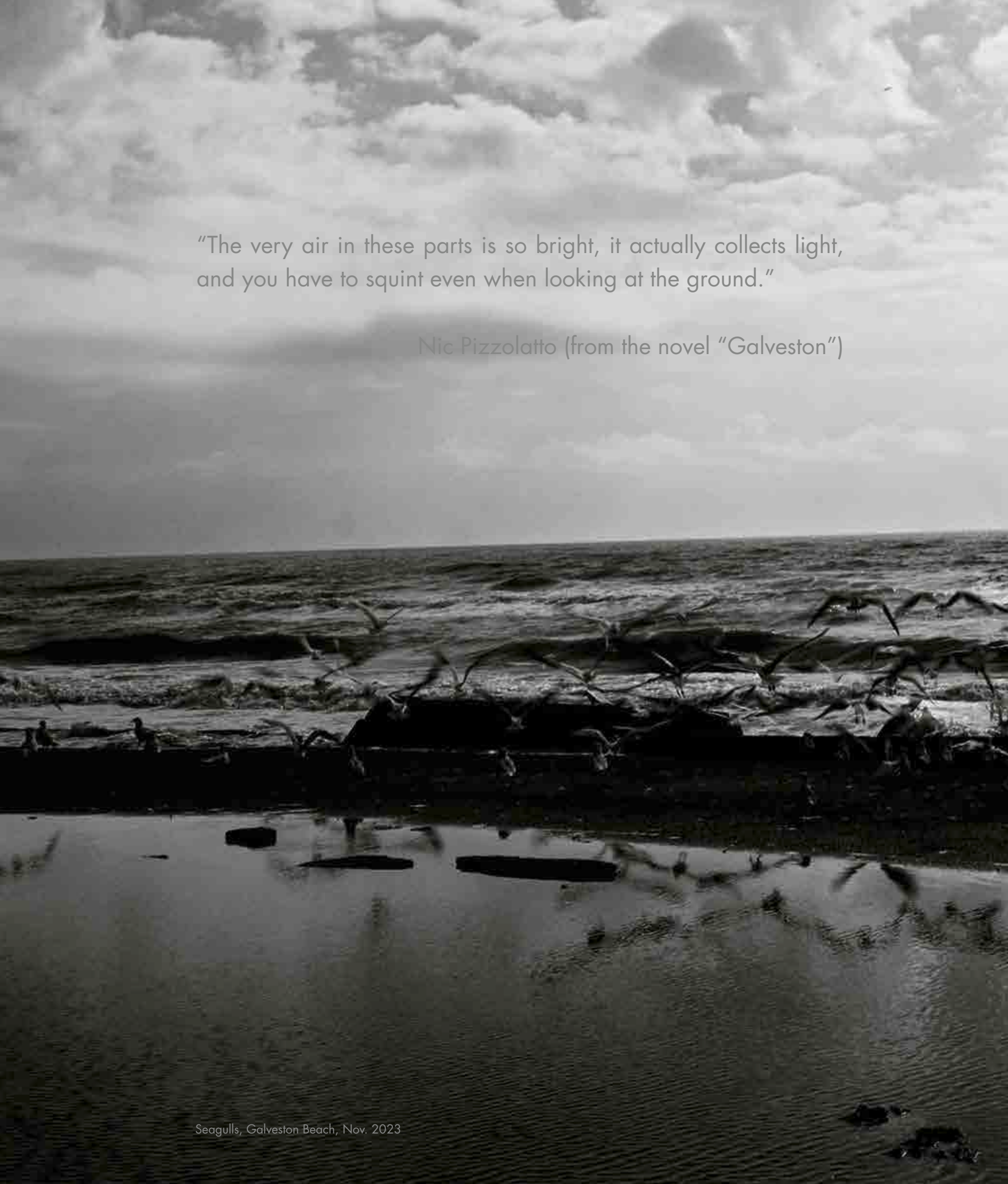
Inside the diner "Lupita" (with Robert de Niro's film "Raging Bull" on TV), 45th Street, Galveston, Nov. 2023



Hazy Daze smoke shop, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2022



"Ronnie Maceo forever in our hearts", Gumbo Diner, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2022



"The very air in these parts is so bright, it actually collects light,
and you have to squint even when looking at the ground."

Nic Pizzolatto (from the novel "Galveston")





Feeding seagulls, in front of the Galveston Island Convention Center, Galveston Beach, Nov. 2022



Young man standing on the Seawall, Galveston, Nov. 2022



Cyclist making a phone call, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2022



Police car on patrol on Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2022



Meeting of the Houston low rider's car club #01, East Beach, Galveston, Nov. 2023



Meeting of the Houston low rider's car club #02, East Beach, Galveston, Nov. 2023



View out of my motel room, The Mariner Inn, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2015



Kids dressed for Halloween, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Oct. 31st, 2015





"OUTFRONT", billboard on Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2015



Thunderstorm over Pleasure Pier, Galveston, Nov. 2015



Seawall Blvd. in the early morning hours, Galveston, Nov. 2015



Empty Seawall Blvd. after thunderstorm, Galveston, Nov. 2015



Family photo after dinner at the Saltgrass Steakhouse, Seawall Blvd., Galveston, Nov. 2015

"The sun in the evening or the sun in the morning charged the sky with hysterical colors, green and purple and hot reds and oranges, unreal, the clouds of the old MGM Westerns."

Nic Pizzolatto (from the novel "Galveston")



Evening mood over Galveston Beach, July 1987



The Middle Coast: Matagorda Bay and Port Lavaca

Matagorda Bay is centrally located on the Gulf Coast of Texas, is more than 25 miles long and extends about 25 miles inland and is protected by the offshore Matagorda Peninsula. Matagorda Bay is part of the Intracoastal Waterway, which stretches from Port Arthur south to the Mexican border. Matagorda Bay is famous for fishing, water sports and its nature parks ('National Wildlife Refuge').

The French explorer Robert Cavelier de La Salle⁵⁵ founded the first settlement in Matagorda Bay in 1685. The name Matagorda comes from the Spanish words for bush, "mata" and big or thick, "gordo" and means thick bush, which refers to the original vegetation found there.⁵⁶ The town of Matagorda, established at the mouth of the Colorado River, already existed when the Republic of Texas became an independent state. It was the original seat of Matagorda County. The county government moved to Bay City, after a severe storm devastated Matagorda in 1894.

The Matagorda Bay is one of twelve estuaries along the Texas Gulf Coast.⁵⁷ Estuaries are coastal bodies of water in which freshwater from rivers mixes with saltwater from the sea. These bodies of water include some of the largest and most ecologically productive coastal estuaries in the United States and contribute significantly to the ecological and economic resources of Texas. Most of the estuaries are bounded by the Texas barrier islands. The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway runs through each of the major estuaries—as it cuts along the edge of the Matagorda coast—linking Texas ports with others along the Gulf Coast.⁵⁸

55 La Salle (1643—1687) is considered one of the most important pioneers of the French colonization of North America; he was murdered on March 19, 1687 by members of his expedition on the Texas coast.
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9-Robert_Cavelier,_Sieur_de_La_Salle)

56 https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matagorda_Bay

57 Listed from southwest to northeast, these estuaries are: Rio Grande, Laguna Madre, Nueces, Aransas, Guadalupe, Lavaca (Matagorda Bay), East Matagorda Bay, San Bernard River, the Brazos River, Christmas Bay, San Jacinto (Galveston Bay) and the Sabine Lake

58 https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Estuaries_of_Texas&wprov=rarw1

Located on a bluff on the west side of Lavaca Bay, Port Lavaca is a small coastal city with a population of around 12,000. Crossing Lavaca Bay via the Causeway (State Highway 35) from Port Lavaca to Point Comfort is always an experience that feels like it goes on forever. The construction of the Lavaca Bay Causeway Bridge dates back to the early 1950s opening up new opportunities for growth and the city's development.⁵⁹ Port Lavaca was first mentioned by this name in 1841. "La vaca" means cow in Spanish and probably refers to a type of bison that once lived in this area.

I have a very special memory of Port Lavaca because of an incident during my last trip to Texas in 2024. Harbingers of the fateful election for America held on November 5th, 2024, were visible more or less everywhere, but what I saw in Port Lavaca bordered on religious adoration: for example, Trump supporters covered an entire house with an oversized Trump portrait (see p. 154/155). People stopped their cars and blocked the intersection just to take a picture. Although it was obvious for me, that the rural parts of Texas traditionally vote Republican, this strong cult of personality surprised me.

Otherwise, I found Port Lavaca to be more of a quiet, beautifully situated, but somewhat run-down transit town on State Highway 35. However, for many locals it's simply a hidden gem on the Texas coast ...

⁵⁹ <https://www.seamagazine.com/locations/bridge-lavaca-bay-causeway-bridge-port-lavaca-texas-11505#more>



Intracoastal Waterway bridge on TX 332 (northbound view), Freeport, July 1987





Broken toll bridge sign, Surfside, Nov. 2022



Beach hut, Surfside, Nov. 2022







Amish take a clothed dip in the Gulf, Matagorda Beach, Nov. 2015



Guys drinking beer in front of their pickup trucks, Matagorda Beach, Nov. 2015

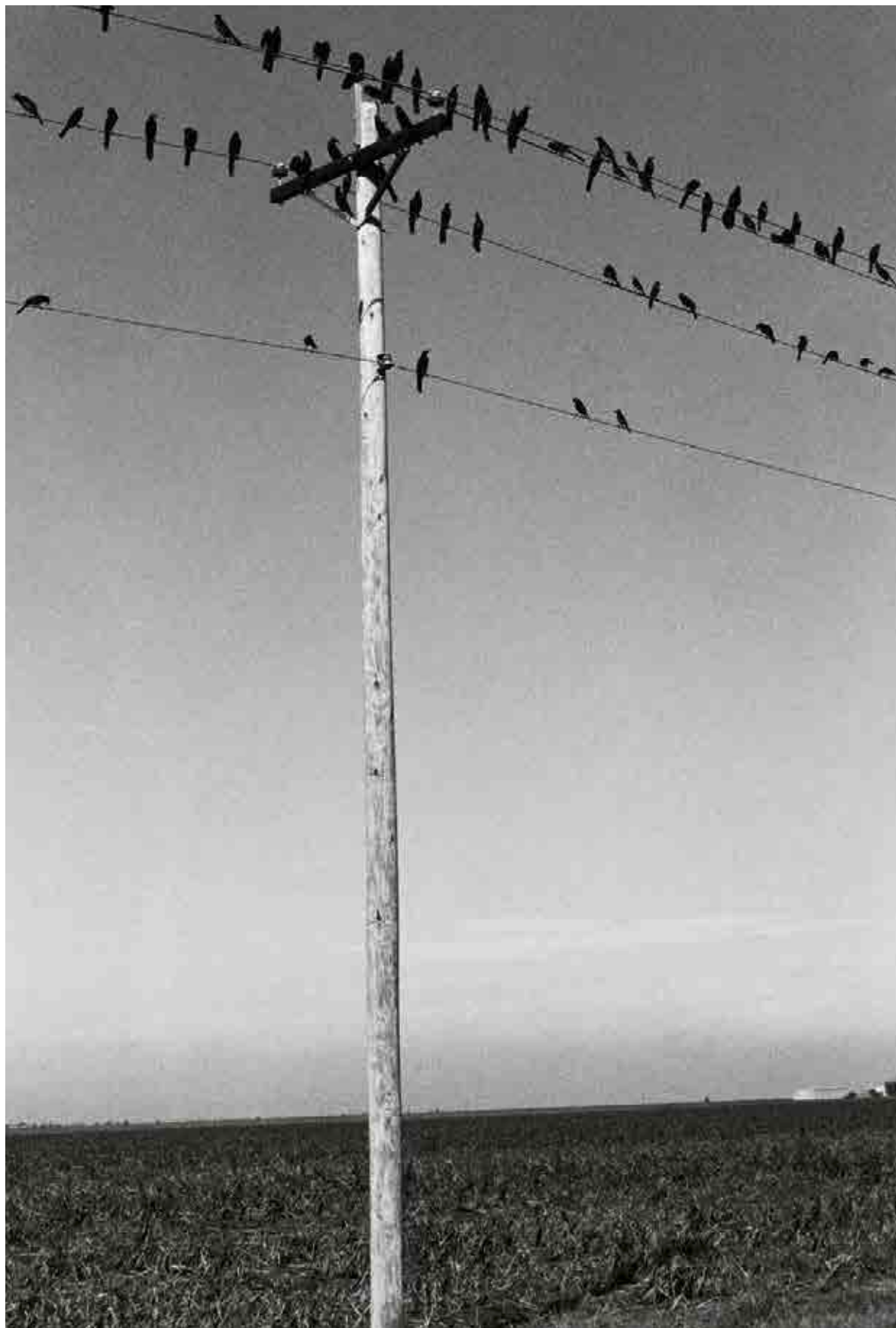


View over Aransas Bay, Rockport, Nov. 2023





San Antonio Bay near Hopper's Landing, on FM 2040, Nov. 2023



Birds on the power line, TX 35 between Fulton & Tivoli, Nov. 2023



Jesus I Trust In You

**OUR LADY OF
THE GULF
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Welcomes You!

15 W. Austin St.
Port Lavaca, TX 77961



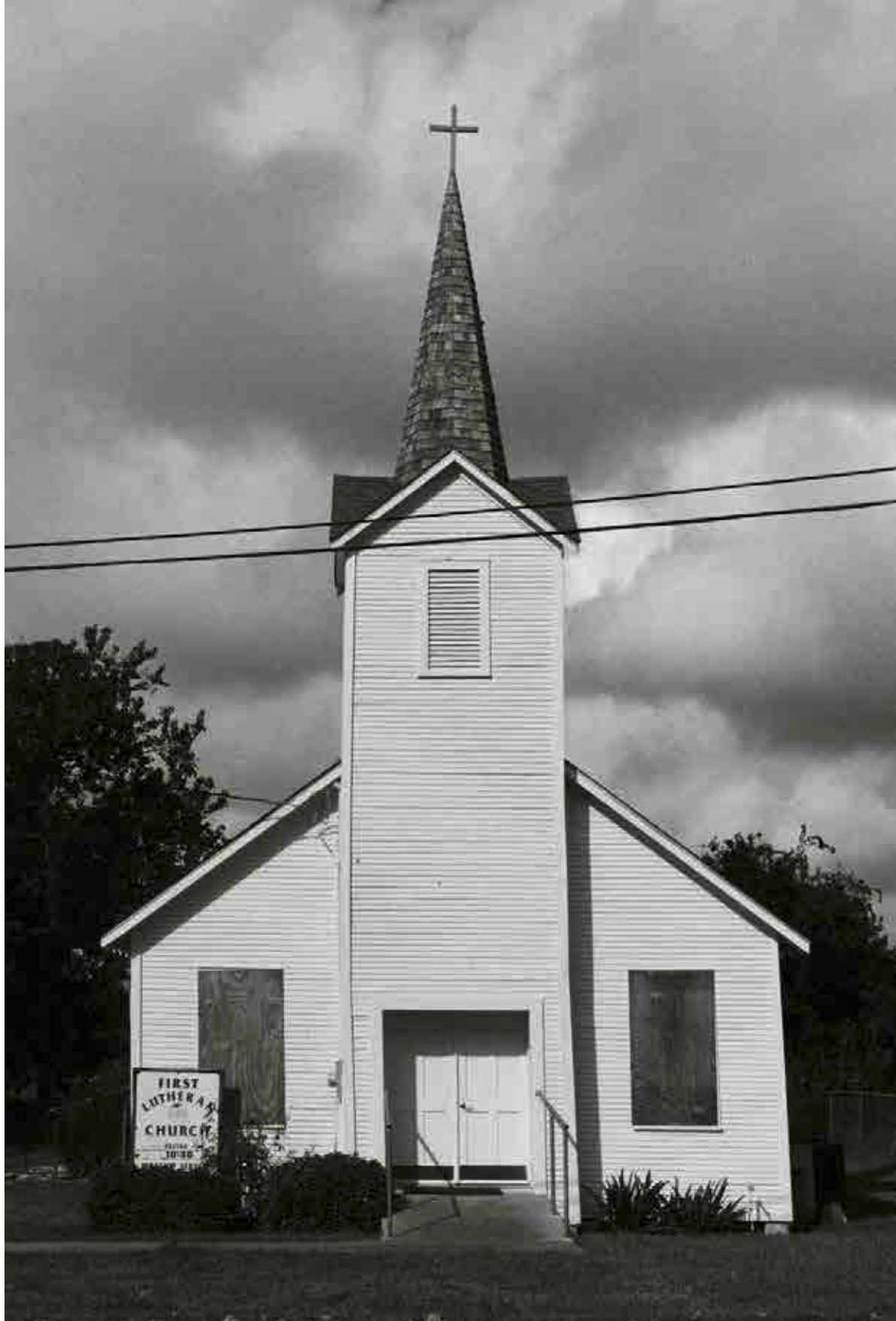
"Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church", on TX 35 near Weedhaven, Nov. 2024



Wooden crosses on TX 35 near Liverpool, Nov. 2023



"Have Land? Need Home?", SH 35 & FM 2917 near Liverpool, Nov. 2023



Closed First Lutheran Church, on TX 35, Tivoli, Nov. 2024



RIPs Thrift Store on Brooks Street, FM 521, Brazoria, Nov. 2023



"Happy B-Day Kirby", Greek Bros. Bar & Grill, SH 71 & South Mechanic, El Campo, Nov. 2023



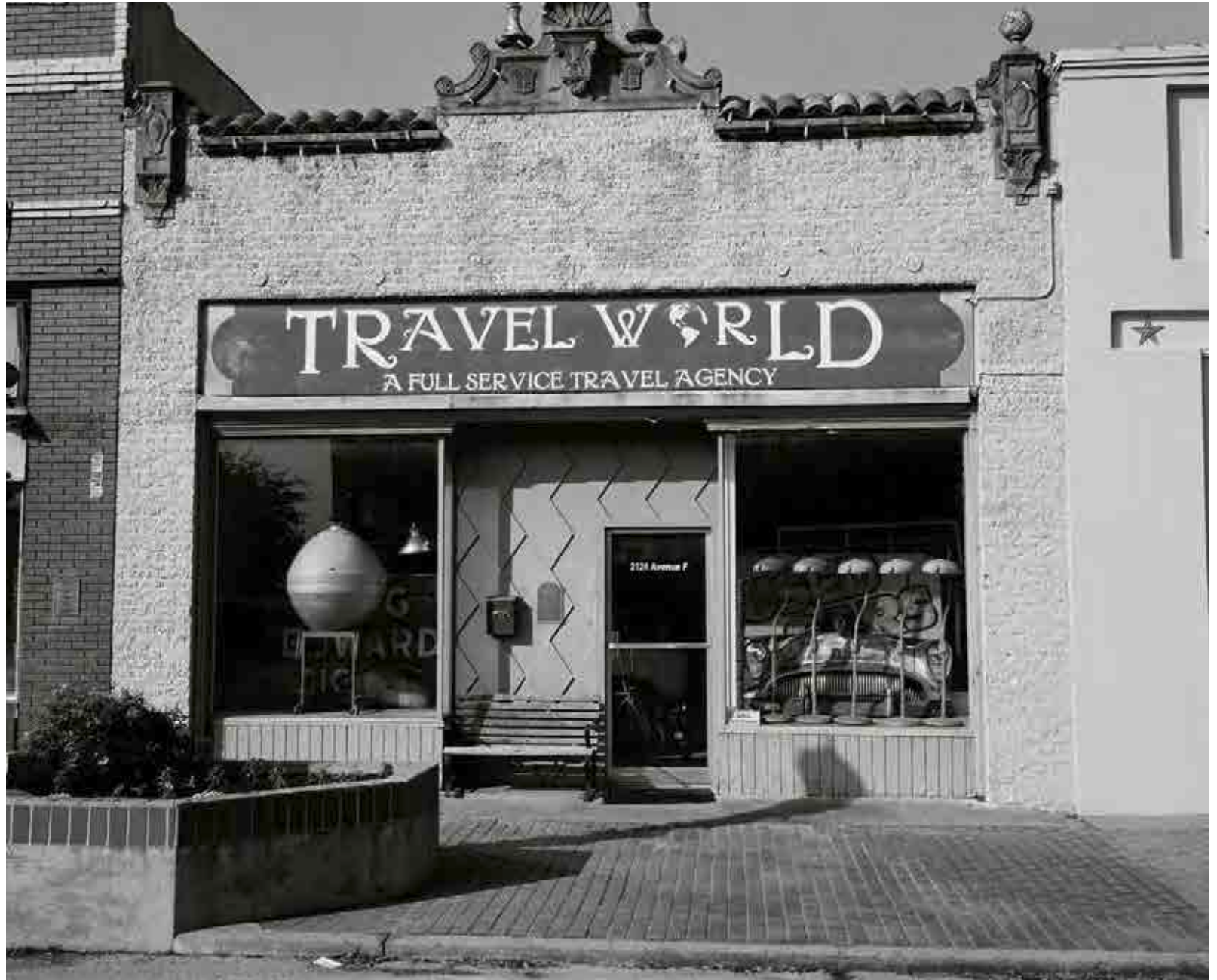
East Railroad Street, El Campo, Oct. 2024



Posters commemorating fallen US soldiers, Main Street, Beeville, Nov. 2023



Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Washington Street, Highway 181, Beeville, Nov. 2023



Travel World Agency, 2124 Avenue F, Bay City, Nov. 2023



BLIZZARD OF THE
MONTH
HOTOREO COCOA

FAMILY
DOLLAR

Peach

2021



"Black Cat Fight never dies", wall paint on 7th Street, Bay City, Nov. 2022



State Farm promotion truck, Angleton, Nov. 2022



"LOVE yourself", backyard scene, Angleton, Nov. 2022



Longhorn wall painting, East Main Street & Houston Ave., League City, Nov. 2023



"10-Minute Oil Change", on TX 35, Fulton, Nov. 2024



Cherokee Rose Trading Post on FM 521, Rosharon, Nov. 2023





Mansion with oversized Trump poster, US 87 & Commerce Street, Port Lavaca, Nov. 2024



Heavy rain on TX 35 South, Port Lavaca, Nov. 2023





Lone Star, East Main Street & Guadalupe Street, Port Lavaca, Oct. 2015



Johnstone Building, E. Main Street, Port Lavaca, Oct. 2015



Gulf Coast Rehabilitation Center, 128 N Commerce Street, Port Lavaca, Nov. 2024



Bible Baptist Fellowship Church, 451 Commerce Street, Palacios, Nov. 2023



Weathered mansion, Palacios, Oct. 2015



Red brownstone warehouse, Commerce Street, Palacios, Oct. 2015

Corpus Christi, Mustang Island and Port Aransas

Corpus Christi owes its name to the Spanish explorer Alvarez Alonzo de Pineda, who discovered this strategically located bay in 1519, on Corpus Christi Day. That city was therefore named in honor of the feast day on which the “Body of Christ” is celebrated.⁶⁰

Corpus Christi has been a major military base throughout its history, beginning in 1845—after Texas joined the United States—when General Zachary Taylor⁶¹ built a tent city for his troops near Corpus Christi⁶², from where he could attack the Mexican Army after the declaration of war on May 11, 1846. Today, the U.S. Navy maintains a large Naval Air Station (NAS) on the south side of Corpus Christi Bay; the area is also home to the large Advanced Navy jet training base in Kingsville.

Corpus Christi—or simply “Corpus” as the locals say—is the eighth largest city in Texas with around 320,000 inhabitants⁶³ and the largest on the Texas Gulf Coast. Along with Brownsville-Harlingen, McAllen-Edinburg-Mission and Laredo, it is one of four Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in South Texas. The Corpus Christi Metropolitan Area includes the counties of Aransas, Nueces and San Patricio.

The Port of Corpus Christ has direct deep-water access to the Gulf of Mexico. This is directly connected to the freight rail network via the Railroad Terminal and is used by the three national companies Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, Union Pacific Railroad and the Texas Mexican Railway.⁶⁴

The new Harbor Bridge is currently being built over the Corpus Christi Ship Channel (see p. 172/173). It was necessary to ensure access to the harbor for larger Panamax class ships. The new bridge is connected to State Highway 286 (Crosstown Expressway) in the south and to US 181 and State Highway 35 in the north. Originally planned to be completed in 2020, construction has been significantly delayed due to technical problems and is now scheduled to be completed in 2025.

⁶⁰ <https://news.cctexas.com/resources/facts/city-of-corpus-christi-history>

⁶¹ General Zachary Taylor (1784–1850) was elected the 12th President of the United States in 1849 because of his military services in the Mexican-American War; he died after only 16 months in office on July 9, 1850. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zachary_Taylor#Mexican-American_War)

⁶² As early as April 1844, before Texas was admitted to the Union, Taylor received an order from Washington to set up an “Army of Observation” to protect the western border of Texas and against possible Mexican intervention.

⁶³ In 2020, Corpus Christi had 317,863 residents (Source: US Census Bureau: State & County Quick Facts of Corpus Christi/TX, as of May, 2012)

⁶⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corpus_Christi,_Texas

In Corpus Christi there are many other amazing attractions including the Texas State Aquarium, USS Lexington Museum Ship (see p.174/175), the Art Museum of South Texas (one of the most striking buildings) and the Museum of Science and Industry with artifacts from an old Spanish shipwreck that occurred on Padre Island.

What I particularly like about Corpus is the long, wide Corpus Christi Bay, which is lined with many well-kept green spaces that invite you to linger. You only have to drive along Ocean Drive and North Shoreline Blvd. and you have a magnificent (and mostly unobstructed) view of the bay the entire way. In addition, the center and nightlife district of the city around Chaparral Street and Water Street are easy to explore on foot and have an almost small-town character (in a positive sense): you quickly feel welcome and like you belong.

Mustang Island is an offshore barrier island between Corpus Christi Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. It stretches 18 miles from Corpus Christi in the southwest to Port Aransas in the northeast. The southern end of the island is connected to the northern part of Padre Island via the Packery Channel and State Highway TX 361. Port Aransas is located on the northern part of the island, from where you can take a ferry across the Aransas Channel to Aransas Pass. The ferry ride takes less than 10 minutes to cross the ship channel. The ferry service is carried out by six diesel-powered, double-ended ferries named Arnold M. Oliver, William G. Burnett, R. E. Stotzer Jr., Charles W. Heald, Amadeo Saenz Jr. and Joseph F. Weber.

The barrier island is the recreational area of choice for the residents of Corpus Christi. The island was initially called "Wild Horse", then became "Mustang Island"⁶⁵, it was named for the wild horses that were introduced and bred by Spanish settlers in the 18th century.

⁶⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustang_Island

In terms of tourism Mustang Island has developed significantly in recent years and is popular today with Northerners and Canadians (so called "snowbirds") who spend their winter time at the Gulf Coast as well as for "spring breakers" who just seek to have some fun under the sun.

Port Aransas and its predecessor, Aransas City (which was near present-day Rockport) were important ports on the western Texas coast before Corpus Christi was established.

I have often chosen Port Aransas as the starting point for my tours to the southern coastal area. The place is popular with tourists and has a fast ferry connection to Aransas Pass and thus to the northeastern coastal areas.



Starr Street, Downtown Corpus Christi, Nov. 2024



Starr Street, Downtown Corpus Christi #02, Nov. 2024



"Country Showplace", North Water Street, Downtown Corpus Christi, Nov. 2023



"Be kind", Lawrence Street, Downtown Corpus, Nov. 2024



Bus stop, Corpus Christi, Nov. 2023





New Harbor Bridge on US 181 under construction, Corpus Christi, Nov. 2024





USS Lexington (view from Harbor Bridge on US 181), Corpus Christi, Nov. 2023



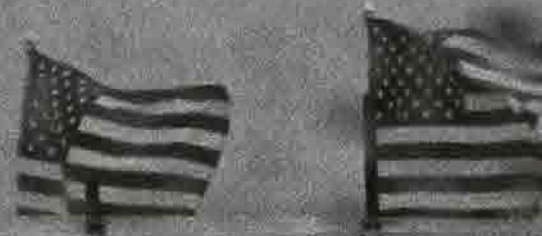
On the boardwalk (USS Lexington in the back), Corpus Christi, Nov. 2023



South Texas Aviator Memorial, Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, Nov. 2023



"Flags for Heroes", Fundraising organized by the Rotary Club, Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, Nov. 2023



Flags for Heroes

Rotary 
Club of Corpus Christi

Presenting Sponsor:

Sta

oes

\$2,500

AEP Texas
Baseload Power
Gulf Coast Growth Ventures
Hose of South Texas

\$1,000

A Wavell Flagpo
COL Ralph Hag
First Communi
Harrison's Lan
Kiewit Offshore
KRIS Communi
Port of Corpus
Steel Dynam



Porsche 914-6 in front of Shook Automotive Enterprises, North Chaparral Street, Corpus Christi, Nov. 2023



Onboard the ferry Joseph F. Weber, Port Aransas, Nov. 2023



Precision Kutz barber shop, US 181 & US 77 Business, Sinton, Nov. 2023



Gold 'N' Things Pawn, 102 E Sinton Street, Sinton, Nov. 2023



Gwen's Antiques, 223 E Sinton Street, Sinton, Nov. 2024



Betty's Flower & Tea Garden, 119 E Sinton Street, Sinton, Nov. 2024



Herschap's drive thru liquor store on TX 359, Orange Grove, Nov. 2024



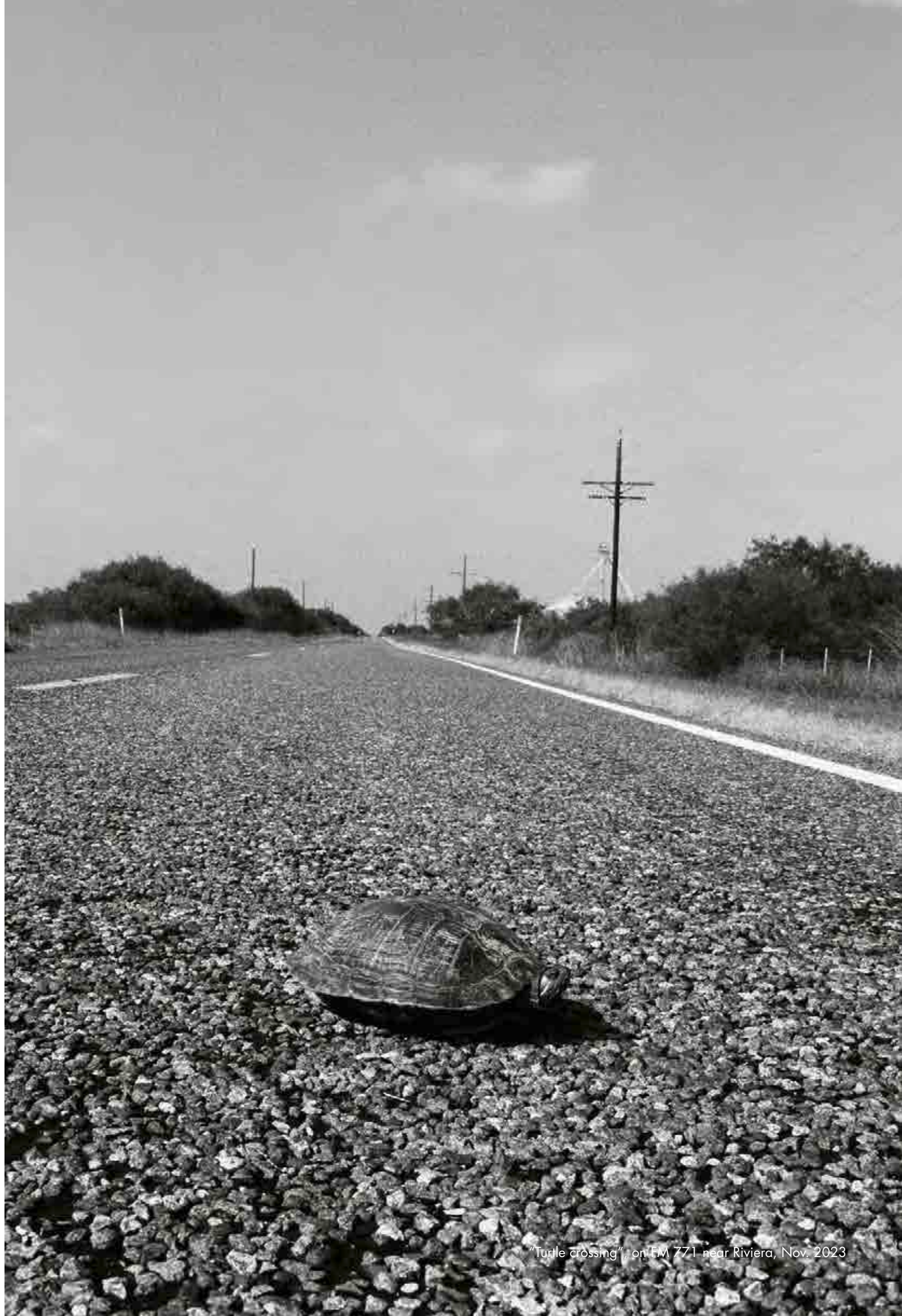
"Bagged Ice", State Highway 136 & junction US 188, Nov. 2023

You can see a lot of wind turbines near the Gulf Coast of Texas. Although oil extraction and fracking are still dominant, numerous new facilities have been built in a very short time: there are many wind turbines on TX 188 West near Sinton and on SH 70 near Chapman Ranch. Additional ones are located along SH 186 towards Port Mansfield and along FM 510 near Laguna Vista. The Texans seem to be completely free of ideology on the matter—the main thing is that the business has to pay off ...



Wind turbines on TX 188, Nov. 2023

Driving on FM 771 from Baffin Bay back to Riviera toward US 77, I almost hit a group of turtles; I only managed to prevent this by slamming on the brakes. I immediately got out of the car to safely escort the turtles to the other side of the street. Fortunately for the turtles, cars are rare on this remote country road. At my signal, an oncoming pickup truck stopped and helped me. True to the motto: Do a good deed every day!



"Turtle crossing", on FM 771 near Riviera, Nov. 2023



Sunray Stores, junction State Highway 136 & US 188, Nov. 2023



Blackland Museum, Green Avenue, Taft, Nov. 2023



Abandoned Hotel Brendle, Robstown, Nov. 2023



Paint and Body Custom Pro Shop on US 77 Business, Robstown, Nov. 2023





Old Co-Op gas station on TX 234 near Edroy, Nov. 2023

The picture of the Armstrong Postal Office on the ranch of the same name was taken purely by chance: Somewhere along the 80-mile distance from Raymondville to Riviera without a gas and service station, I had filled my tank accordingly, but had not planned a "pit stop" for myself, which took its toll ... When I made a stop in front of this wooden house, I saw that it was the Armstrong Post Office and became curious: it turns out that the ranch owners are Tobin and Anne Armstrong - the latter was U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain in London during the presidency of Gerald Ford. The world is so small ...



Post office of Armstrong Ranch, Highway 77 near Sarita, Oct. 2024



Texas Longhorns on flooded ranchland, Kleberg County, Nov. 2023



Old billboard for Elco Auctions, Odem, Nov. 2023



Roberson's Funeral Home, West Main Street, Alice, Nov. 2023



Rainy day on East Main Street, Alice, Nov. 2023



Texas Theatre (built in 1950), Kleberg Ave., Kingsville, Nov. 2023



Stray dog, Kleberg Ave., Kingsville, Nov. 2023





Abandoned building, East Main Street, Bishop, Nov. 2023



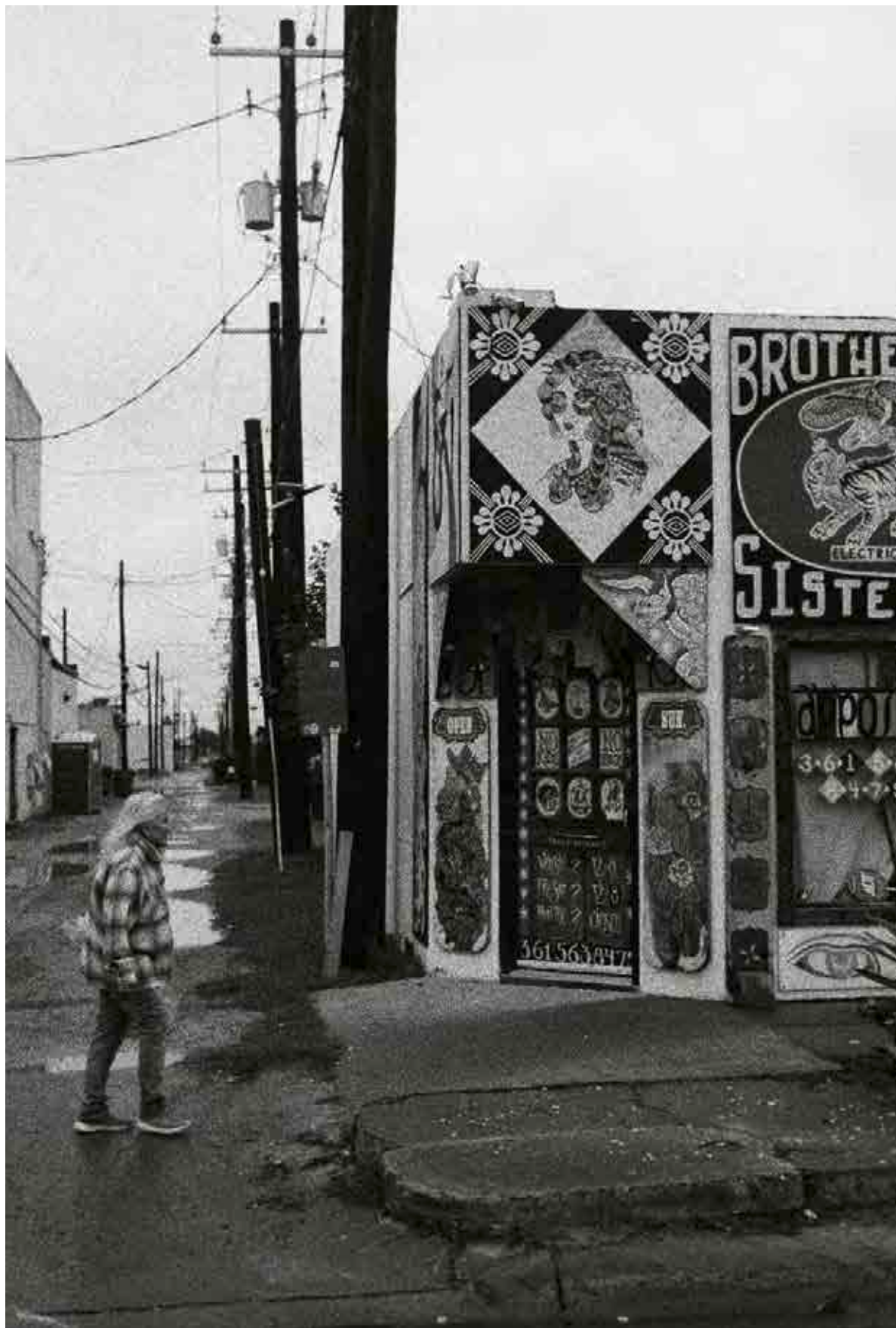
"WE ARE PROUD OF YOU", abandoned building on East Main Street, Bishop, Nov. 2023



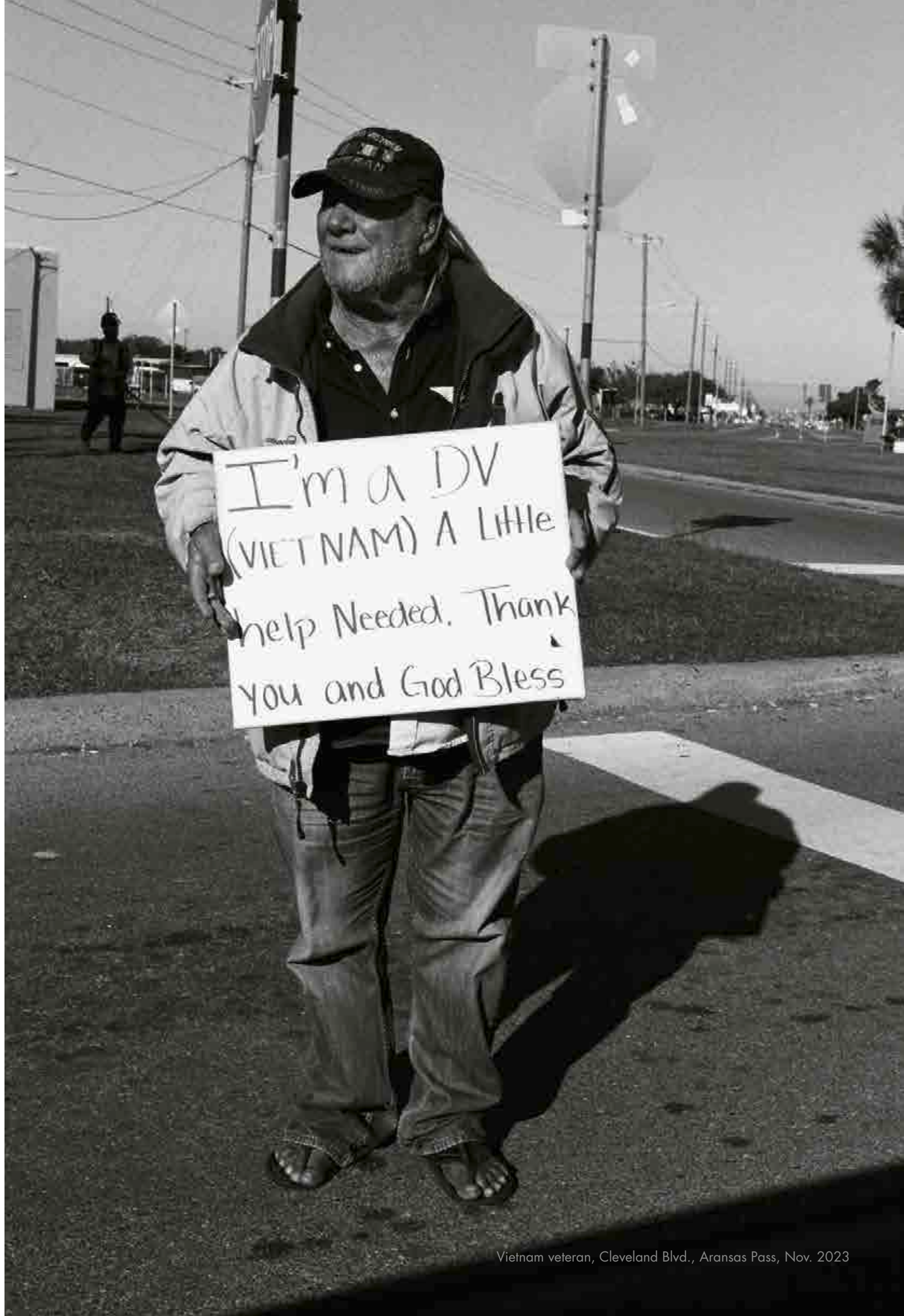
Old truck on US 181, Gregory, Nov. 2023



Old Chevy pickup with pumpkins, Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023

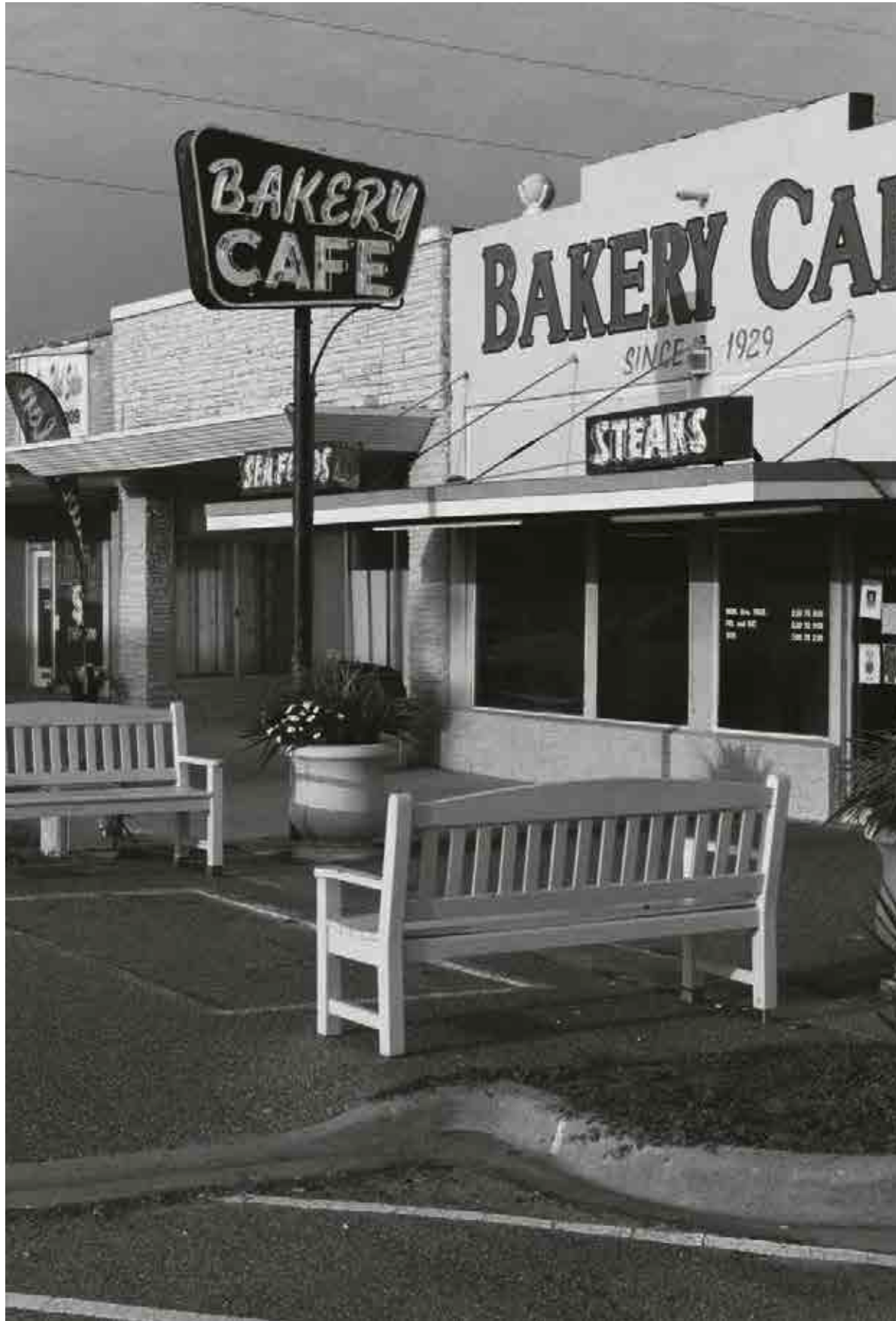


Brother Wolf & Sister Moon tattoo studio, Goodnight Ave., Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023



Vietnam veteran, Cleveland Blvd., Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023

During my stay in Port Aransas, I often took an early ferry and drove the TX 361 to Aransas Pass to take my breakfast in the Bakery Café. I love these classic, slightly outdated American diners; the Bakery Café in Aransas Pass is my favorite one, there is also a branch in Rockport, TX. Such diners exude a particularly familial atmosphere and primarily live from their regular customers. You quickly feel like you belong: as I was always assigned the same table, I decided to take some photos from my place to capture the unique atmosphere. The results can be seen on the following pages ...



Outside the Bakery Café, Commercial Street, Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023



Scene from the Bakery Café #01, Commercial Street, Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023





Scene from the Bakery Café #02, Commercial Street, Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023



Scene from the Bakery Café #03, Commercial Street, Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023



Scene from the Bakery Café #04, Commercial Street, Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023



Scene from the Bakery Café #05, Commercial Street, Aransas Pass, Nov. 2023

On my trip last year in 2024, I spent a few more days in Port Aransas before starting my journey home. When I arrived there, on the evening of October 31st, I found myself in the middle of the local Halloween celebrations. Every year on Halloween, several streets in a residential area around Channel Vista Drive are closed to traffic in the evening—a big stage for the residents and especially the children to stroll, meet up in costumes and go from door-to-door trick or treating and collecting all kinds of sweets. So, I postponed my dinner and instead took a few photos of the hustle and bustle on the streets ...



"Scream", scene from Halloween, Port Aransas, Oct. 2024



Scene on Halloween, Channel Vista Drive, Port Aransas, Oct. 2024



Young girls, scene from Halloween, Port Aransas, Oct. 2024



"Darling, a Woman's place ..."
Frontyard, Lydia Ann Channel, Port Aransas, Oct. 2024



"HARRIS"
Channel Vista Drive, Port Aransas, Oct. 2024

I took a picture of Terry and Victor, two retired US-Army veterans at their afternoon hangout on Port Aransas Beach during my stay in November 2023. They are from New York State and come to the Texas coast every November to escape the cold New York winter. We discussed America's role in the world and its importance as a global regulatory power and leading advocate of democracy. Both, as became clear during the conversation, are supporters of Donald Trump.



Terry & Victor, two retired US Army veterans, Port Aransas Beach, Nov. 2023





Under the boardwalk, Horace Caldwell Pier, Port Aransas Beach, Nov. 2023

The Lower Coast: Padre Island and Brownsville

Padre Island took its name from Father “Padre” Nicolas Balli, who got the island as a grant from the King of Spain in 1800.⁶⁶ Padre Island is the world’s largest undeveloped barrier island. It offers over 200 miles of seemingly endless, mostly drivable sandy beach. The barrier island separates the Gulf of Mexico from Laguna Madre, one of just a few hypersaline lagoons in the world. This long and narrow island consists of two small islands separated by a small inlet.

North Padre Island can be reached from Corpus Christi via Highway 358 and Park Road 22, which leads directly to Padre Island Park. After about 10 miles, the road ends and flows into the state-protected Padre Island National Seashore, which extends for 67 miles. The barrier island, which is separated from the mainland by Laguna Madre and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, is not continuous and is separated from South Padre Island at the Port Mansfield Channel near the town of the same name.

The best way to reach South Padre Island is to drive inland from Corpus Christi on Highway 77 via Kingsville, Raymondville and Harlingen, then take the US 100 via Port Isabel to the southern part of the island. On Highway 77, south of Kingsville, you pass the King Ranch of the same name, one of the largest ranches in the USA, covering an area the size of the US state of Rhode Island. Neighboring Kenedy County is almost entirely private ranch land. But be careful: there are no gas and service stations for about 60 miles between the towns of Riviera and Raymondville, so always drive through this area with enough gas in the tank! A visitor’s center near Armstrong provides information about the ranch and the coastal area. In the opposite direction (i.e. coming from the south towards Corpus Christi), a mobile Border Patrol checkpoint awaits you just before the town of Sarita, keeping an eye out for any migrants heading north.

⁶⁶ “The eyes of Texas” — Travel Guide (Gulf Coast Edition), printed in 1977 by Cordovan Corporation©, Publishers, Houston, TX

On South Padre Island you can camp right by the beach and have the Gulf coast to yourself. Campers usually park their vans directly on the beach (usually parallel to the dune) so as not to be an obstacle for other vehicles. There is probably nowhere else closer to the sea. Entrance fees to Padre Island National Park are \$10 per vehicle for day pass and \$25 for overnight stays of up to 7 days. Camping, driving, swimming and showering are permitted throughout the national park area. South Padre Island is also a hot spot for anglers: simply attach the deep-sea fishing rod to the back of the pickup truck and park the vehicle backwards towards the sea. The anglers then sit on camping chairs or on the landing area of their pickup truck. But if you park too close to the Gulf of Mexico and lose track of time because of the wonderful nature, you can experience something unexpected: due to the strong current that prevails here, man and machine dig themselves in after a short time—even off-road vehicles can then no longer free themselves and have to be pulled out. Towing is very expensive and time consuming, so don't get stuck! However, with 200 miles of beach, many dead spots and no real roads along the route, it can take a little longer for help to arrive ..."⁶⁷

Brownsville was founded in 1849 by the trader Charles Stillman. It is the county seat of Cameron County with approx. 200,000 inhabitants. Once a military base at the time of the Republic of Texas⁶⁸ Brownsville was named after Major Jacob Brown, one of the first men killed in fighting with the Mexicans. About 12 miles east, at the site of Palmito Hill, the last battle of the Civil War was fought in 1865, when the war was actually over.⁶⁹ Fort Brownsville was put out of service in 1945 and some parts of it now belong to the campus of Texas Southmost College. Today, the industrial development along the channel to the Port of Brownsville is increasing. Via the Brownsville & Matamoros toll bridge (opened on December 8th, 1911) the border city is connected with the Mexican city of Matamoros.

⁶⁷ "Padre Island—Where the Beach is a Highway" from the blog 'The Way of Gonzo', published April 21st, 2014

⁶⁸ In 1846 General Zachary Taylor established a fort within reach of the Rio Grande River

⁶⁹ The Battle of Palmito Hills on May 13th, 1865, was the last battle of the Civil War - General Lee had already surrendered at Appomattox/Virginia one month earlier

Driving farther south, following State Highway 4 to Boca Chica, I noticed another high-tech facility. As I came closer, what I first thought were silos turned out to be something totally different. It was Elon Musk's SpaceX launch site and the factory where the rockets for the SpaceX-program are built. The focus is to build-up the Starship production. The series production of the spacecraft was set up in several large tents and vertical hangars. Finally, in July 2024, Elon Musk announced that he would move the SpaceX headquarters from Hawthorne, CA, to the launch- and factory site in Boca Chica, Texas.⁷⁰ (see p. 264-267)

It's an incredible view, because this vast terrain is located on a headland (similar to Wernher von Braun's rocket test site in Peenemünde during the 1940's). The employees are brought to the campus in shuttle buses. I've seen many young students and IT-specialists from all countries (predominantly from India). On the way there you pass a US Border Patrol that randomly checks outgoing vehicles, because Boca Chica has an open maritime border with Mexico.

⁷⁰ Beck Andrew Salgado: Elon Musk announces SpaceX HQ is moving to Texas In: eu.statesman.com. as of July 16th, 2024



Advertising pylon, Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, Oct. 2024





View over South Bay (Queen Isabella Causeway in the background), S.P.I., Oct. 2024



"Taking a picture", Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, Oct. 2024

A black and white photograph of a man, Russell, sitting and playing an acoustic guitar. He is wearing a cap and a tank top. Behind him is a large banner for a tattoo studio. The banner has the word 'TATTOOS' in large, bold letters. Below it, there are three items listed: 'Tattooing', 'Henna', and 'E-Cigs', each separated by a star symbol. To the right of the banner, there is a smaller sign with text about towing and parking. The scene is lit by a single overhead light, creating a strong shadow of the man on the wall behind him.

TATTOOS

Tattooing ★ Henna ★ E-Cigs

TOWING AND
AT ALL TIMES
DECOR'S TATTOO
RECYCLED PLASTIC
PARKING OR
VEHICLE CL
SPINNING

FM stands for Farm-to-Market



Beach souvenir store at night, Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, Oct. 2024

SWIM

TRUNKS

\$6.99

PALACE

HERMIE CRABS
DRESSES \$9.99
ENNA TATTOO



Fallow land on Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, Oct. 2024



Margarete and her dog, Gulf Blvd., South Padre Island, Oct. 2024

I met Annette Koschmieder and Wolfgang Mayer by chance on South Padre Island during my trip in 2024. They are friends from Berlin: she runs a gallery of the same name and he is a well-known photographer. We spent five days together on the Island.



Annette & Wolfgang at the Beach Café, 3616 Padre Blvd., S.P.I., Oct. 2024



Frontyard, South Padre Island, Oct. 2024



Trump supporters at the Lobo del Mar, South Padre Island, Oct. 2024

My last trip to Texas coincided with the heated phase of the US election campaign, which was being fought out on almost all channels. Back in my hotel room, I took a TV-picture of Vice President Kamala Harris giving her closing speech of the Democrat's election campaign on Oct. 29th, 2024.



Vice President Kamala Harris on CNN, giving her closing speech of the US election campaign, Oct. 29th, 2024, Sunchase Inn, S.P.I.



Man walks his two dogs, Port Isabel City Hall, Oct. 2024



Election posters, Port Isabel, Oct. 2024

When I stayed on South Padre Island in Oct. 2024, I often went to the White Sands Diner in nearby Port Isabel for breakfast. I love these typical American diners, where you can expect an honest and reliable service for reasonable prices. The White Sands is veteran-owned (as you can see from the interior). On my last day I took a picture of Lisa, the owner's mother and waitress at the White Sands ...



Lisa, waitress at the White Sands diner, Port Isabel, Oct. 2024

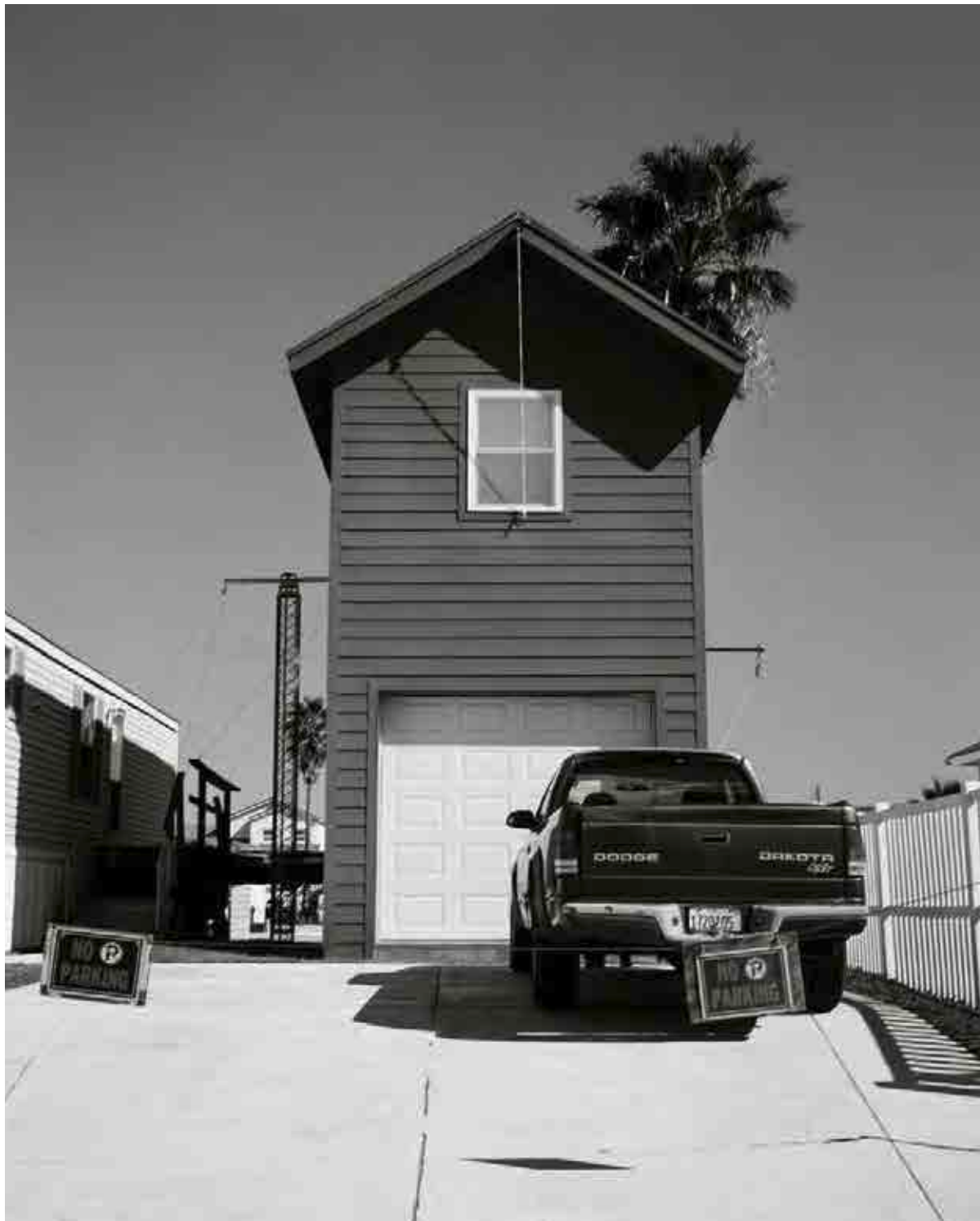


Pirates Landing, Port Isabel, Oct. 2024



S LANDING
ANT AND PIER

956-761-6655



Tiny house, Modern Venice, Port Isabel, Oct. 2024



Abandoned apartment block, Laguna Heights, Oct. 2024



Barn, SH 100 near Los Fresnos, Oct. 2024





Barn with inscription in memory of Marco Antonio Ramirez (1976-2018), La Villa, Oct. 2024



"Rocket", State Highway 4, near Boca Chica Village, Oct. 2024



"OCCUPY MARS", on State Highway 4 near Boca Chica, Oct. 2024



"WE LOVE ELON", Rio Grande Delta near the SpaceX rocket factory, Boca Chica, Oct. 2024



View of the SpaceX rocket factory, Boca Chica, Oct. 2024



Asphalt work in front of the SpaceX rocket factory, Boca Chica, Oct. 2024



Elon Musk's SpaceX rocket factory #01, Boca Chica, Oct. 2024



Elon Musk's SpaceX rocket factory #02, Boca Chica, Oct. 2024



"PAY LESS", Warehouses on FM 100 near Los Fresnos, Oct. 2024



Access Road to Port Brownsville, Oct. 2024



"Welcome to Brownsville", East 13th Street, Brownsville, Oct. 2024



Old Majestic Theatre (closed in the 1970s), Elizabeth Street, Brownsville, Oct. 2024



"Spare any Change", Elizabeth Street, Brownsville, Oct. 2024



Street scene, Elizabeth Street, Brownsville, Oct. 2024



Oklahoma gas station (torn down in the mid-90s), 5800 Frontage Road, Brownsville, July 1987



**Pena's GAS
& GROCERIES**

ONE WAY →

STOP

EXCESS TRAFFIC
DOES NOT STOP

FOR SALE
Call 800-544-2200
www.8005442200.com

MOORE'S REMODELING REPAIRS
210.737.4444
www.moore remodeling.com

EXIT 100B
Ramp to Interstate 67
Exit 100B

EXIT 100B
Ramp to Interstate 67
Exit 100B



EMPIEZA TU DIA
CON TACOS

LAREDO
TACO
stripes

FOR SALE

Janie
Lopez

GONZALEZ

LaMantia



Mike Lucio's Auto Service, Commerce Street, Harlingen, Oct. 2024



Old Taco-LoCo gas station, Harlingen, Oct. 2024



"Rudy's Furniture", Commerce Street, Downtown Harlingen, Oct. 2024



Army Surplus Supply Co. (est. 1946), Jackson Ave., Downtown Harlingen, Oct. 2024

I met Steve, a Leica enthusiast from McAllen, at the Classic Car Festival in Harlingen. We spent a lovely afternoon talking shop about analogue cameras and films.



Steve, whom I met at the local Classic Car Festival, Harlingen, Oct. 2024



Chris, proud owner of a 1962 Studebaker Skyhawk, at the Classic Car Festival, Harlingen, Oct. 2024



Frontyard with cat & Chevy Styleline, Arroyo City, Oct. 2024



"Dead End", Park Road 100 ends on South Padre Island, Oct. 2024



Couple on South Padre Island Seashore, Oct. 2024

I met Michael on the beach of Isla Blanca Park, S.P.I., and had a conversation with him about world politics while he flew his drone. He is a retiree from Wisconsin, who recently moved to nearby Port Isabel. With his rather liberal views, he was critical of the upcoming US election in Nov. 2024 and wanted to emigrate to Canada if the Republicans won.



Michael, retiree from Wisconsin, Isla Blanca Park, S.P.I., Oct. 2024





Independence Day beach scene #01, Padre Island, July 4th 1987



Independence Day beach scene #02, Padre Island, July 4th 1987



Independence Day beach scene #03, Padre Island, July 4th 1987

Excursus: The Rio Grande Valley

The Rio Grande River Valley—often simply called “The Valley” or “El Valle”—extends approximately 100 miles inland from the Gulf Coast. It stretches along the Mexican border from El Paso in the northwest down to the southernmost tip of Texas. The border river flows into the Gulf of Mexico east of the cities of Brownsville, TX and Matamoros, Mexico.

Historically, “The Valley” belonged to the part of the South Texas territory that became part of the USA after the Mexican-American War in 1846. Culturally it is strongly influenced by the Hispanic majority of the population, politically and socially by the close border with Mexico. The Rio Grande Valley (R.G.V.) is one of the fastest growing regions in the United States: From 1970 to 2014 the population quadrupled from 325,000 to 1,300,000 inhabitants. The Hispanic population is around 90%.

However, from a regional Texas perspective, only the parts of the lower valley belong to the Rio Grande Valley area. Especially the larger cities—Harlingen, Brownsville, McAllen, Edinburg and Mission—are concentrated in this lower valley area, predominantly in Cameron County and Hidalgo County.

McAllen, in particular, is one of the fastest-growing cities in America due to its proximity to Mexico. Its population has increased by over 30 percent to 143,000 in the past two decades. Retail sales in Hidalgo County have doubled, auto sales have quadrupled, and hotel revenues have increased by over 20 percent. The border region has merged to form the McAllen-Reynosa Economic Area. Since then, the unemployment rate (due to new industrial and logistics locations) has fallen from over 20 percent in the early 1990s to 4.5 percent in December 2018.⁷¹

⁷¹ Ines Zöttl, from a Spiegel article from February 25, 2019

The total length of the US border with Mexico is almost exactly 1,988 miles, of which approximately 702 miles are protected by border security. The longest secured border installations are located between El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, and San Diego, California, and Tijuana. Along the Texas border, where the Rio Grande forms a natural barrier, a nearly 13-foot-high border fence was built during the Trump administration to keep people and vehicles out.

This border fence with Mexico runs parallel to the Rio Grande, just under a mile from the actual (geographical) state border on American soil. To straighten the border fence and save on construction materials, the government purchased overhanging parcels from landowners and compensated them poorly. Consequently, the border fence runs partially through the properties and gardens of the people living there, whose political leanings should therefore come as no surprise.

Many newly built single-family homes in the border region are already up for sale, again. Who wants to stare at the 13-foot-high border fence in their front yard every day and worry about unwelcome nighttime visits from migrants? Many property owners have therefore erected additional fences and acquired guard dogs.

However, the migration problem is by no means just a phenomenon of our time: During the 1910s and 1920s Mexican migration increased, fueled by the need for workers, particularly in the agricultural business. By end of the 1920s the demand for their labor dropped sharply with the onset of the Great Depression.

Under the presidency of Herbert Clark Hoover (1929–1933)⁷², the economic situation worsened and the president was under enormous pressure to offer a solution against increasing unemployment, and to devise an emergency plan for the strained social safety net.

So, the US government launched several campaigns to detain Mexicans, including many US-born citizens, and expel them from the country and send them back to Mexico. These deportations affected up to 2 million Mexicans and Mexican Americans, approximately 1.2 million of whom had been born in the United States. Along with that, families were forced to abandon their property, which was often sold by local authorities as “payment” for the transportation expenses incurred in their removal from the United States to Mexico.⁷³

Migration today has global causes, which is also evident at the southern border of the USA: approximately 90% of migrants come from Latin America and at least 10% from other, more distant countries, such as Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey, Russia or Ukraine. Immigrants who were caught by the border patrol were brought by busses to immigration centers and then either sent back according to Title 8⁷⁴ of the US Migration Law or spread across the country wherever they have relatives. During the pandemic, deportations were primarily carried out under Title 42. Originally a US health authority designed to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases, the law became an unbureaucratic tool for restricting migration under Donald Trump’s first term. From March 2020 to March 2023, the US Border Patrol carried out 6.6 million deportations, 97 percent of which were at the southwest border with Mexico.⁷⁵ Under the Biden administration, this practice continued until its expiration in May 2023, with the exception of unaccompanied minors. A new regulation reminiscent of the European Union’s migration policy was planned for the long term: under this new regulation,

72 Herbert Clark Hoover (1874–1964) was the 31st president of the United States; due to the Great Depression and its consequences (e.g. mass impoverishment) he lost in the 1932 election against Franklin D. Roosevelt. Hoover left office as one of the most unpopular presidents in American history.

73 Source: California State Apology Act for the 1930s ‘Mexican Repatriation Program’.

74 If a person is deported under Title 8 of the U.S. Immigration Act, the penalties increase (from \$50 to \$250 to two years in prison) if a person is apprehended multiple times.

75 Source: Jan D. Walter—Online article from the Deutsche Welle from May 11, 2023

people would first have to apply for asylum in the countries they pass through on their way to the United States. To set a precedent, President Donald Trump issued an executive order suspending American citizenship by birth on the first day of his second term, even though this is clearly unconstitutional.

Since I didn't want to travel through the border region without at least setting foot on Mexican soil, I decided on short notice to visit the Mexican border town of Reynosa. It's important to note that Reynosa—infamous for the Reynosa Cartel that rules it—is a Mexican city with approximately 600,000 inhabitants, classified by the US State Department as one of the most dangerous cities in Mexico—just as dangerous as Iraq or Afghanistan. Hundreds of migrants are waiting for entry papers in the camp there called "Senda de Vida." Due to rampant crime, and especially kidnappings, the government in Washington is advising its citizens: "Do not travel."⁷⁶

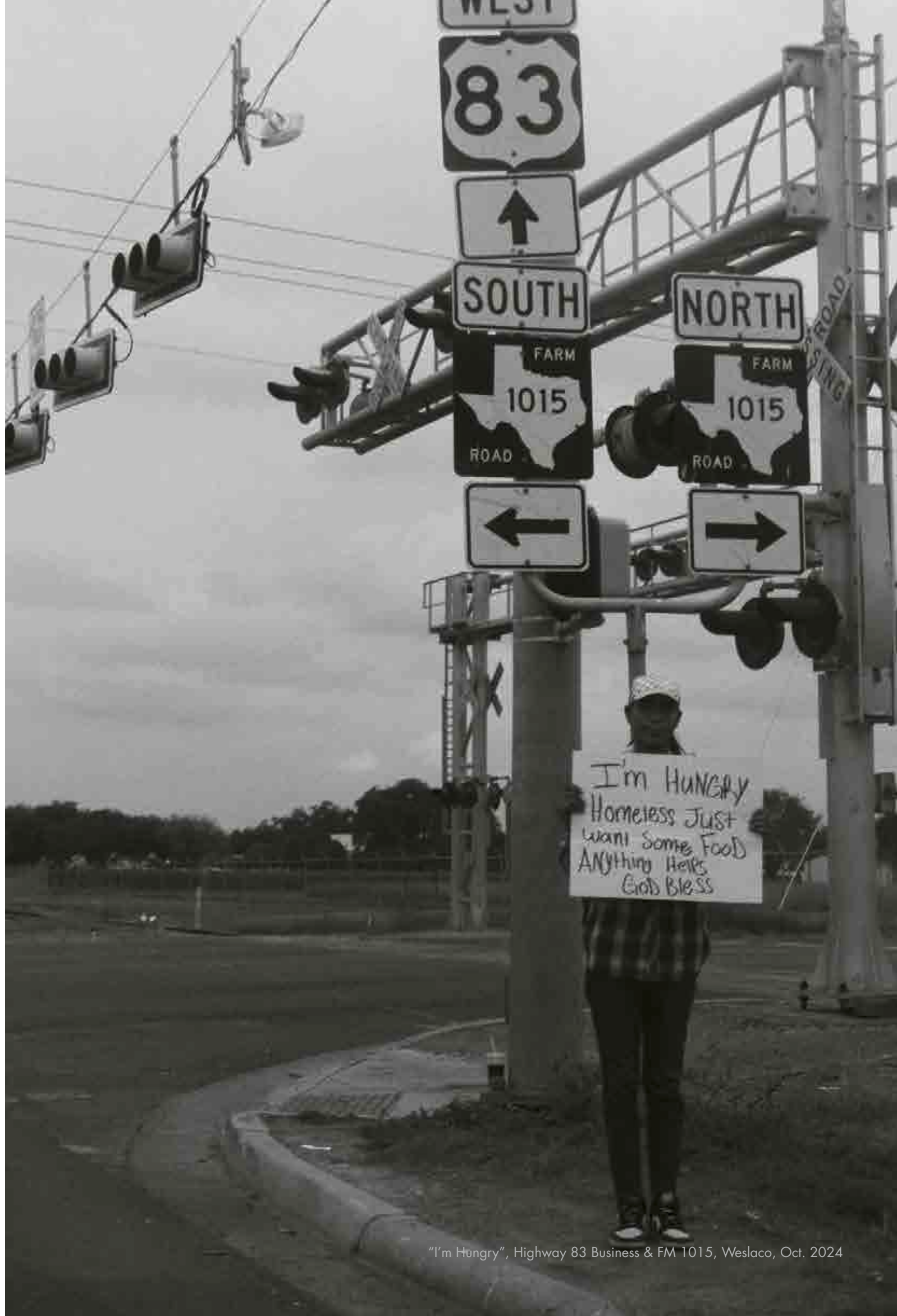
I parked my rental car at a Whataburger restaurant near the border in the town of Hidalgo and crossed the Rio Grande on foot over the Reynosa-Hidalgo International Bridge. Beforehand, I had taken my camera, passport, and driver's license with me for identification. Crossing the bridge costs \$1 on the US side. In Reynosa, I had a coffee and took a few photos, before heading back to Texas. I joined the immigration queue and paid the equivalent of \$1 again. When it was my turn, the US immigration officer asked me for my visa, and I showed him my EU passport, which apparently wasn't enough. It turned out that I needed to present a valid ESTA form, which I had left at the hotel.

The whole thing escalated to the point where the border guards researched my current address (Sunchase Inn, South Padre) and the date of my entry at Houston Airport (October 18th), and compared my flight number (Air France AF 636) and seat number (44 J) with the

⁷⁶ From the article "Wenn du kein Geld hast, bezahlst du mit deinem Leben" by Christian Weisflog from the Neuen Zürcher Zeitung (NZZ) from March, 24, 2022

passenger list for my flight. I was then subjected to a police registration, body measurements, and a mug shot of me was taken. After the complete data entry, it finally turned out that my last name had previously been recorded in the database with only one “b” and not with a “double b,” even though I always use the mnemonic “like a rubber with a ‘t’ at the end.” In the end, the whole process took me a full three hours to clear up the misunderstanding, which the border guard commented on with the smug remark, “I hope you liked the show.”

The impressions I gained from driving along Military Highway (Highway 281) and farther along the Rio Grande on Highway 83 as well as the people I met there are presented in the following chapter. The images and statements, of course, do not allow for any general statement on the issue of migration, but rather shed light on the associated consequences, which, in my opinion, everyone there—regardless of political persuasion—would rather have resolved sooner than later.



"I'm Hungry", Highway 83 Business & FM 1015, Weslaco, Oct. 2024



OFFICE
73-9430





J.A. Garcia Post 172, Mercedes, Oct. 2024



Driving on Ohio Ave., Mercedes, Oct. 2024



Vela's Repair Shop, 216W 11th Street, Mission, Oct. 2024



Old advertising signs, Highway 83 near Rio Grande City, Oct. 2024



"For Sale by Owner", property on Highway 83 near Rio Grande City, Oct. 2024



FOR SALE

BY OWNER

956 573 7163



"Vote Ivan Escobar", Escobares, Oct. 2024



Abandoned building, Roma, Oct. 2024



North Grand Street, Roma, Oct. 2024





Frontyard near the Mexican Border, Tortuga Trail, San Pedro, Oct. 2024



Family home for sale, Gastin Drive, San Pedro, Oct. 2024

Travelling along the Mexican border I met Chris Bauer, a farmer with German roots through whose land the border fence runs. His farm is located near El Ranchito on the Rio Grande River. In our conversation, he expressed his incomprehension about the fact that \$7,000 is paid for each immigrant, but there is no budget left for the completion of the border fence. The Federal Government has already paid \$40 billion for migration services instead of having completed the border fence which would cost only additional \$8 billion. He would therefore vote for Trump in the upcoming elections.



Chris Bauer on his farm, between El Ranchito & La Paloma, Oct. 2024

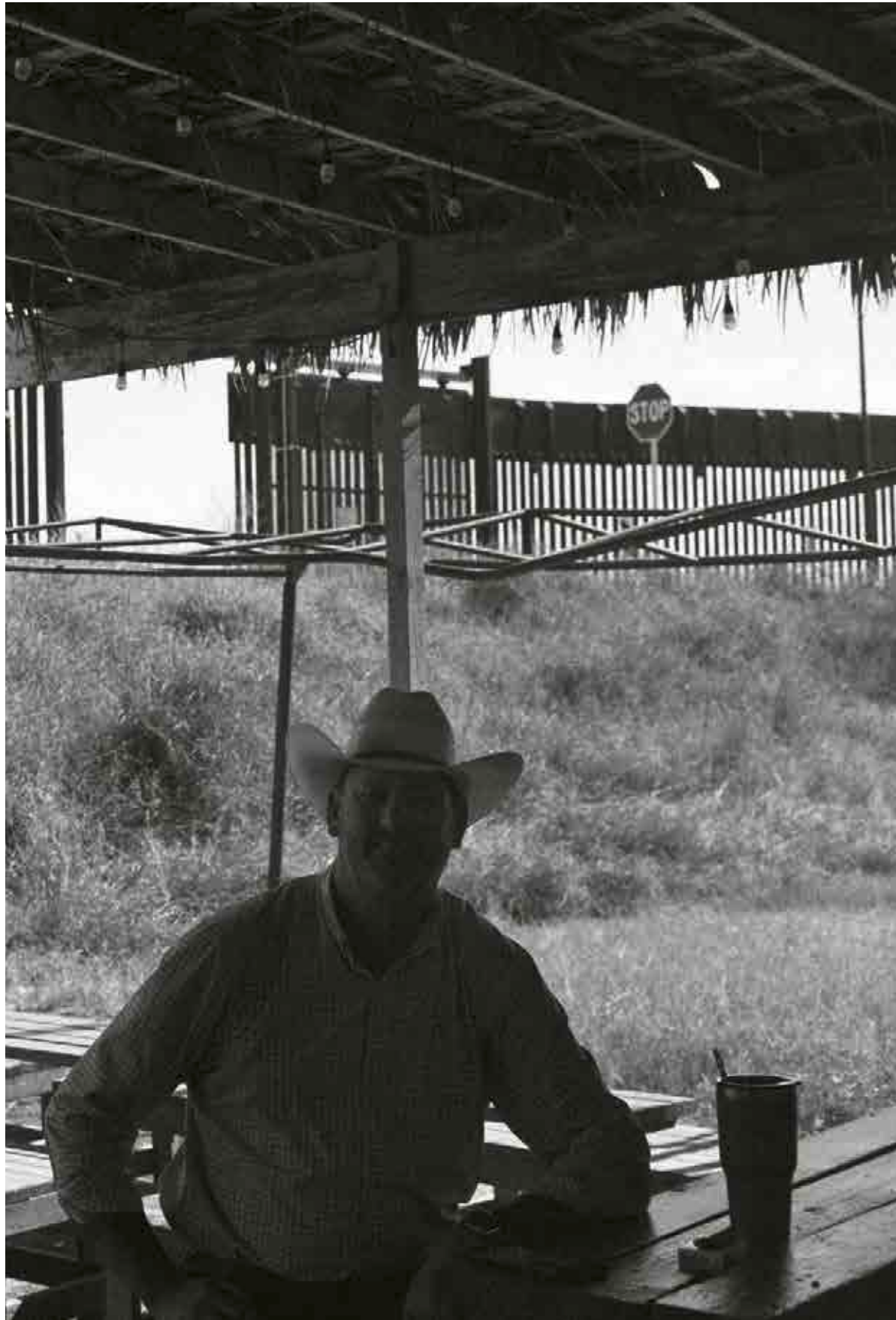


Man praying in front of his house, Granjeno, Oct. 2024



Junk Yard Bar, Granjeno, Oct. 2024

I met Josip, a country-musician at the Junk Bar in Granjeno, which has been in operation for about 40 years. He told me an unbelievable story: one evening, during a break in a performance, he was just on his way to the toilet when he spotted a young migrant giving birth to her child. He immediately called an ambulance which brought the mother and her new-born to the next hospital. Of course, the migrant mother and her child could now legally apply for the US-citizenship. Just another one of many migrant stories that take place every day along the Mexican border ...



Josip, country musician, at the Junk Yard Bar, Granjeno, Oct. 2024



The border fence runs directly through company premises, near Los Indios, Oct. 2024



Border fence #01, near Rancho, Oct. 2024





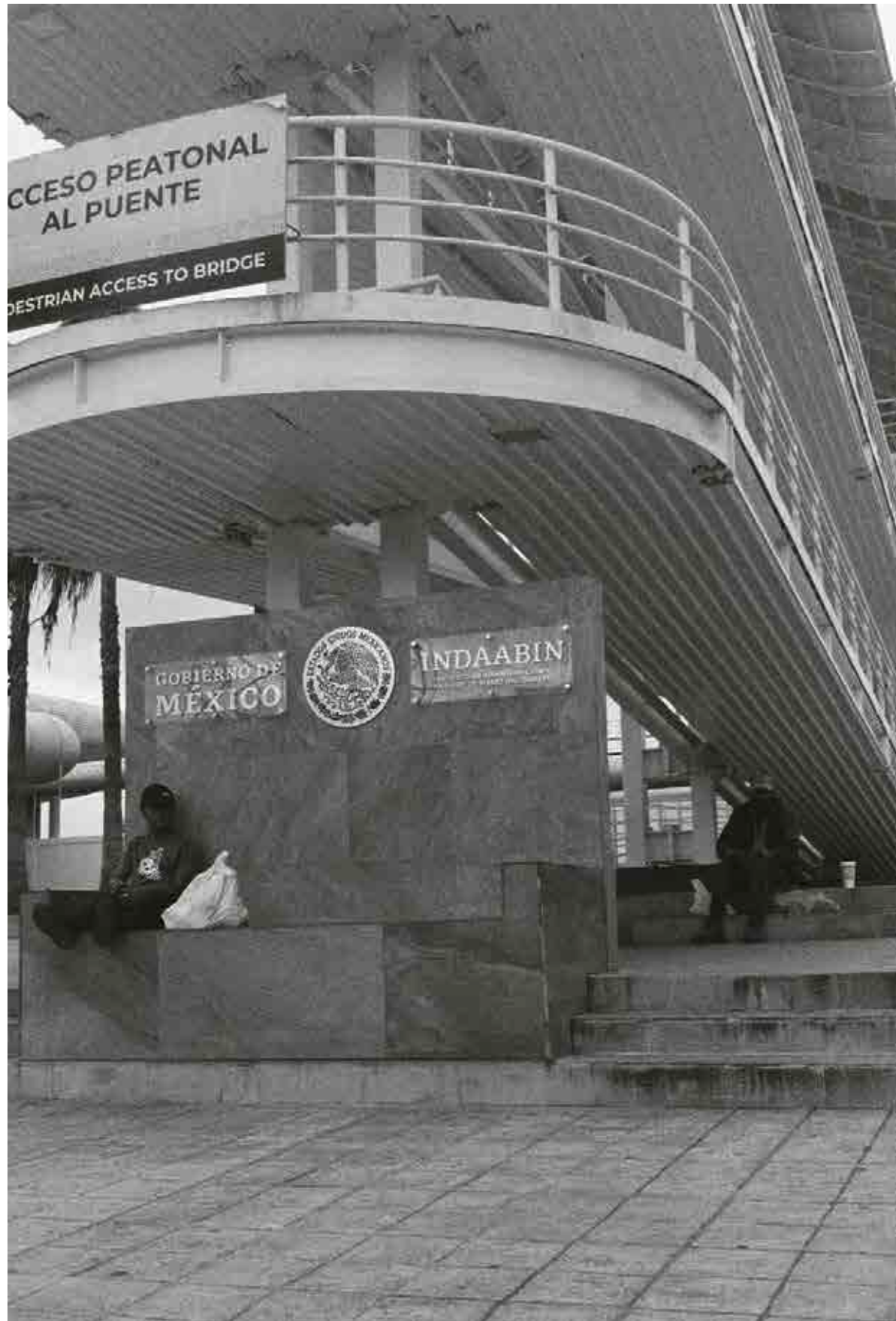
Border fence #02, near Rancho, Oct. 2024



Reynosa-Hidalgo International Bridge, Reynosa, Mexico, Oct. 2024



Migrant queue, Reynosa-Hidalgo International Bridge, Reynosa, Mexico, Oct. 2024



Reynosa-Hidalgo International Bridge #02, Reynosa, Mexico, Oct. 2024



"Welcome to Texas", South Int'l Blvd., Hidalgo, Oct. 2024

Photographer's Note

How did I come up with the topic of the book?

The photographs in this book were taken over a long period of time, from the late 1980s to the present day. According to my philosophy, a photographer can only create meaningful images over a longer period of observation. I mostly travel alone to explore my photographic subjects. It is also always a journey into myself—for me, photography is a life experience that broadens my perspective on the world and helps me decipher life's complexity.

With this book, I unconsciously 'approached' the subject more and more: while the earlier photographs from 1987 were taken as part of a tour across the USA ("Cannonball Run"), the images from the subsequent trips in 2014 and 2015 already result from a specific interest in the American South: Besides Georgia and 'Sweet Home' Alabama the coastline of the "Lone Star State" has always been my preferred photo destination in the American South. So, I spent the last three stays in 2022, 2023 and 2024 exclusively on the Texas coast, i.e. in Galveston, Port Aransas and the surrounding area.

For this illustrated book about the Texas Gulf Coast, the car was my preferred means of transportation—after all, cruising is quintessentially American. I shot some photos directly from the moving car, but the majority of the images were taken on countless trips in and around Galveston and the coastal region.

Why did I photograph the book in black and white?

The fact is that I made all my trips to the Texas Riviera (except for the first one) from late October to late November, a time of year when hurricanes repeatedly hit the area. This was initially pure coincidence—the second visit followed a scheduled business trip⁷⁷, which increasingly developed into a design component: I discovered that my choice of motifs wasn't so much about summer beach impressions, but rather about that certain morbidity, the melancholy, and the sadness that surrounds the coastal region in the late season, when the tourists have left, the Gulf beaches are deserted, and are once again taken over by the locals (especially anglers and dog walkers). A dreary and melancholic mood, as if the paint had already begun to peel off—the atmosphere is somewhat comparable to the slightly run-down seaside resorts on England's west coast. Galveston, too, has run-down corners, souvenir shops on the promenade, a large pier (the "Pleasure Pier," newly inaugurated in 2012), and several amusement parks, which, deserted and boarded up in the off-season, evoke a depressing feeling in me. A mood like something out of a noir film ...

A road story with a strong noir sensibility

What exactly constitutes a noir film is difficult to define, since some film theorists believe the genre does not even exist.⁷⁸ Perhaps characteristic is the rejection of a whitewashed style, any sentimentality, the depiction of an unfiltered reality, the breaking down of moral rules and customs, and the general tendency towards a pessimistic worldview, towards the morbid and the profound, and not least, the failure of the protagonists. "Accordingly, the noir films

⁷⁷ It was the annual sales summit of the American sales organization of my then employer Siemens in Peachtree, Georgia

⁷⁸ "The film noir is not a genre, as the Western and gangster film, and takes us into the realm of classification by motif and tone." Source: Raymond Durnat: "Paint It Black: The Family Tree of the Film Noir"; in: Magazine Cinema 6/7 (UK), August 1970

of the classic era are usually characterized by a visual design dominated by strong light-dark contrasts, alienated or embittered protagonists, and urban settings."⁷⁹ What distinguished film noir from previous film genres, however, was its camerawork and the way the films were photographed. Film noir relied heavily on expressionist stylistic devices: in addition to the aforementioned contrasts of light and dark, it primarily employed blurred and sometimes distorted camera angles, as well as new camera perspectives the "unchained camera"⁸⁰, thus creating a completely new film aesthetic.

Another coincidence brought me to the author Nic Pizzolatto⁸¹ and his novel "Galveston."⁸² My friend Bernd Dullenbacher had recommended the novel to me (and, as is his way, brought me a copy right away). He knew about my fondness for the Texas Gulf Coast and my idea of creating a photo book about it. "Galveston" by Nic Pizzolatto is one of the few books I've read more than once—and not just because the setting corresponds to that of my photo book. The book is so compelling, and the melancholic, even sad ending in particular captures the mood of this region so well that it's almost painful. The film and literary critic Gunter Blank wrote in his afterword to the novel "Galveston": "For us, the Seawall with its Poop Deck, the Boardwalk and the Tex-Mex restaurants was the epitome of that battered American dream whose dark side authors like Jim Thompson and singers like George Jones never tired of conjuring up."⁸³

After reading the book, it became clear to me that my impression of the area from previous visits perfectly matched the gloomy atmosphere in the novel. A mood that is reflected precisely in my black-and-white photographs, preferably taken in the fall. If any further argument is needed, it was clear to me from that point on: I wanted to capture precisely that

79 Orson Welles' "Touch of Evil" (1958) and Jean-Pierre Melville's (neo-)noir classics "The Second Wind" (1966) and "The Cruel Intention" (1967) belong to this genre; see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_noir

80 In contrast to the previous static (vertical or horizontal) camera movements, the "unchained camera" added new spatial perspectives, for example through a hand-held camera or through technical devices such as cranes or swings.

81 Nic Pizzolatto is an American author and screenwriter. In addition to his debut novel "Galveston," he is best known for the HBO series "True Detective," which he created.

82 The original edition of the novel "Galveston" by Nic Pizzolatto was published in 2010 by Scribner, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

83 Gunter Blank: "Galveston and a Brief History of Noir," from the afterword to the novel "Galveston" by Nic Pizzolatto, 2nd edition 2014, published by Metrolit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin

film noir atmosphere, and black-and-white film is predestined for this. In addition, my photos became increasingly “imperfect”⁸⁴ over the years, meaning they were characterized by a certain blurriness.

The fact that I still photograph “unplugged” (i.e., analog and without any technical refinements) and rely on the available lighting conditions creates a high atmospheric density and authenticity in the images, which, combined with this dark (sometimes slightly underexposed) black-and-white mood, particularly captures the film noir character in my opinion. Exactly as described in Nic Pizzolatto’s novel ...

A few words about the technology used

The photographs in this book belong to the genre of classic street photography. The special atmosphere of the coastal region and the situation of its inhabitants and their legacy form the central motif. They depict the people living there in relation to their environment, their social context, and their connection to their homeland. These are unstaged images in which the people depicted are portrayed in a positive light. The images are not intended to condemn or even judge, but rather to realistically depict the scenery as it appeared to me at that moment.

The images were shot exclusively using analogue film and without any technical refinements, essentially ‘unplugged’. I always rely on the available lighting conditions and choose only standard lenses for my shots to make the image detail appear as realistic as possible. The shooting conditions also determine the style of the images, which sometimes exhibits characteristics of a ‘failed photograph’: The images are naturally

⁸⁴ Pia Neumann coined the stylistic term ‘failed photography’ in contrast to the criteria of successful or ‘good’ photography, when, for example, intentional distortions of spatiality, frames tilted from the horizontal, motifs pushed to the edges, cropped, coarse grain, and blurriness are used—see Pia Neumann: “Metaphors of Failure: American Documentary Photography of the 1960s and 1970s Between Conceptual Art and Social Criticism,” Frankfurt/Main, 1996

imperfect, i.e., blurry and sometimes even grainy, which in turn makes them authentic and creates a rich atmosphere. The photographic style is documentary: I shoot in full-frame format, meaning there are virtually no cropping or subsequent alterations to the original image. Thus, the printed photographs are not razor-sharp views, but rather light-graphic atmospheric images, painterly and rich in contrast.

One principle of my work with the camera, however, applies to all locations: For me, black-and-white photography is the ideal way to capture the lives and legacies of its inhabitants. In my opinion, color photography changes essential elements, adding new creative layers that can, in turn, “dilute” the expressiveness of an image.

A final note on the technology used: all of the images in this series were shot exclusively with analog 35mm and medium format cameras, thus providing the viewer with an unedited, realistic depiction of what was seen. The photos were taken exclusively with standard focal lengths to make the angle of view appear as authentic as possible. For example, on my 1987 trip, I used a Nikon F2 SLR camera with a Micro-Nikkor 55mm f/3.5 and a Nikkor 43-86mm f/3.5 lenses. On my two trips in 2014 and 2015, I also used a Plaubel Makina 670 medium format camera with 120-frame roll film; on the later trips in 2012 and 2013, I also used a Minolta CLE with the standard Rokkor 40mm f/2.0 lens for portability. I photographed both on T-MAX film at 400 ASA and, in the fastest version, at 3200 ASA. All images were taken without any special technical refinements, i.e., without filters or flash. The negatives were developed by Aperture Film Lab in Berlin and subsequently scanned in the appropriate output format (at 300 dpi resolution) for printing.

Jörg Rubbert
Berlin, December 2024

Appendix: Road Trips 1987—2024

The first visit:

“Cannonball-Run” (June 10—August 15, 1987)

My first trip to the Texas coast took place during the summer semester break of 1987—I was studying economics at the University of Kiel, Northern Germany, at the time. I had been planning a longer trip to the USA for quite a while. For this, I got some maps from the local ‘Amerika-Haus’ (America House)⁸⁵ in Kiel: there was a stand with flyers from every US state.

On my first trip to the USA, I was particularly interested in the coasts of America: the East Coast down to Florida, the Pacific coast of California, and the South Coast along the Gulf of Mexico. The latter caught my attention primarily due to the interesting cartographic location of this stretch of coast: The elongated, offshore, lagoon-like “barrier islands” of Bolivar Peninsula, Galveston Island, and Padre Island were at the top of my list from the start.

At the student travel agency on the university campus, I got a stand-by air-pass from Northwest Orient Airlines, which no longer exists.⁸⁶ Along with the stand-by air pass, I received a small coupon booklet with exactly 15 tickets. I simply had to enter my departure and destination airports, and off I went. The only limiting factor was that, as a stand-by passenger, I wasn’t entitled to a seat, but was dependent on the availability of second-class seats.

June 1987: New York—New Jersey—Florida—Gulf of Mexico

On June 10, I started my “Cannonball Run” in New York with an unbeatably inexpensive transatlantic flight with Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) from Frankfurt am Main to New York, including a short detour to Atlantic City. From New York, I flew

⁸⁵ Since the 1950s, American Houses were branches of the United States Information Agency and served to introduce Germans to the history and traditions of the USA.

⁸⁶ Northwest Orient Airlines began operating under a new logo as NWA in 2003; in 2008, NWA merged with Delta Airlines and was fully acquired by Delta in 2010.

to Tampa—Saint Petersburg, and then continued by rental car to Key West and back to Miami. From there, I flew to New Orleans, from where I cruised along the Gulf Coast of Louisiana and Alabama.

End of June until mid-July 1987: Texas Gulf Coast—Mexican Border

I reached the Texas coast for the first time at the end of June 1987. I followed the Texas coastline south from the Bolivar Peninsula, Galveston, and Galveston Island, via Matagorda Peninsula to Corpus Christi and Padre Island, where I arrived just in time for Independence Day on July 4th to spend the holiday at the beach and take photos (see p. 290-293). I then continued south to the Mexican border at Brownsville and across the border into Matamoros, Mexico.

From mid-July to mid-August 1987, I made short trips to Alaska, the Rocky Mountains, and a two-week detour to Playa de Maya in Mexico. I then flew back to New York at the beginning of August, where I spent a few more days in the Big Apple. On August 15, I finally flew from New York (JFK) via Frankfurt (FRA) back to Hamburg. The 1987 trip to the USA marked my first encounter with the Texas Gulf Coast. Further trips would follow several years later ...

The second visit: Southern states trip (November 14–23, 2014)

When I visited the southern states for the second time in November 2014, I was responsible for the due diligence of an IT project at the VW automobile plants in Chattanooga and Mercedes-Benz in Tuscaloosa. So, a detour south to the coast of Alabama, Louisiana and Texas was obvious.

As a kind of travel reading, my friend Bernd Dullenbacher gave me the German edition of a novel by Nic Pizzolatto with the same title "Galveston".⁸⁷ This noir novel was the pure inspiration for my photo series and, not least, the final trigger for me to create this photo book.

Back home, I raved about the novel to Bernd and told him about my plans. At our next meeting, Bernd brought me the original English edition⁸⁸ of the novel so I could better realize my idea of incorporating the novel's noir atmosphere into my photo series. No sooner said than done. From then on, I was captivated by the Texas coast on the Gulf of Mexico, and I was already planning another photo trip to Galveston for the following year.

⁸⁷ The German edition of the novel "Galveston" by Nic Pizzolatto was published in 2014 by Metrolit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin

⁸⁸ The English edition of the novel "Galveston" by Nic Pizzolatto was published in 2010 by Scribner, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

The third visit: Texas trip (October 23—November 3, 2015)

This trip—like most of my visits to the Southern states—took place in late October and November, a time of year I greatly appreciate for its special light and its dark, stormy atmosphere. November, in particular, is considered hurricane season in the Gulf, as evidenced by the statistics of major hurricanes, such as “Ike” (2008) and “Katrina” (2005). At this time, the Gulf still has water temperatures of up to 75°F, and the rising warm air mixes with cold fronts from the Pacific Northwest or the Great Plains to create this annually recurring, dangerous weather phenomenon. Hurricanes have such an impact on people that many buildings in Galveston have markers marking the high tides from Hurricane Ike, and some places even speak of a pre- and post-Hurricane Ike era.

This third trip took me (almost) exclusively to the Gulf Coast of Texas—apart from a multi-day detour to West Texas and the Mexican border near Presidio midway through my stay. I chose “The Mariner Inn” motel in Galveston as my base camp for my photo excursions, which took me to Palacios, Port Lavaca, Matagorda, the Bolivar Peninsula, and High Island, among other places, before boarding my return flight from Houston International Airport (IAH) via London Heathrow (LHR) to Berlin-Tegel (TXL) on November 2nd.

The fourth visit: Texas trip (November 17—December 4, 2022)

My fourth photo trip to the coast of Texas was from November 17 to December 4, 2022. Unlike previous trips, this time I stayed at a permanent location: the Beachcomber Inn Hotel.⁸⁹ Right next door is a Waffle House, where I've been a frequent guest (see p. 88-92). From the Beachcomber Inn, I made short trips to the surrounding area, including Bolivar Peninsula, High Island, Surfside, Angleton, and Texas City. On December 3, I flew from Houston (IAH) via London Heathrow back to Berlin. This time, I landed for the first time at the new Berlin Brandenburg Airport (BER).

The fifth visit: Texas trip (November 9—26, 2023)

My penultimate photo trip to Texas took place from November 9th to 26th, 2023. Based on my positive experience with a "base camp," I again booked a permanent accommodation for my excursions. This time, however, I booked two motels at two different locations, because, in addition to Galveston, I primarily wanted to explore the southern coastal region around Corpus Christi. For the longer part of the trip, I booked accommodations in Port Aransas, namely at The Place Hotel, which I reached on November 10th, with an overnight stay in Wharton. For the second part, I found a beachfront hotel in Galveston. From there, I departed for Houston on the morning of November 26th. The subsequent return flight took me from Houston (IAH) via Paris (CDG) to Berlin (BER), where I arrived on the morning of November 27th.

⁸⁹ The hotel is located on 61st Street, not far from the Seawall and the 61st Street Pier.

The sixth visit: Texas trip (October 18—November 03, 2024)

For my last photo trip to Texas, I chose the south coast, which I had only briefly visited on my 1987 trip. I again opted for two base camps with a stopover in El Campo. The first base camp was on South Padre Island, and the second was in Port Aransas, so I wouldn't have to endure such a long return trip to the airport in Houston. The base camp in South Padre⁹⁰ was a bit worn, but perfectly suited for my purposes, thanks to its convenient location, right next to the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge (see p. 236/237).

From there, I made daily excursions to places including Brownsville, Harlingen, Boca Chica, and the Mexican border (Hidalgo/Reynosa) along the Rio Grande River. In South Padre, I also met Annette and Wolfgang, a Berlin-based artist and gallery owner couple who were stopping here on their tour of the western and southern United States (see p. 244/245).

The second accommodation in Port Aransas⁹¹, which I chose for the last few days, was also conveniently located, not far from the ferry terminal to Aransas Pass and not far from the town center. From Port Aransas, I made trips to downtown Corpus, Port Lavaca, Refugio, and Tivoli, to name a few ...

On November 3rd, I left Port Aransas early in the morning after a final American breakfast at the Bakery Café (this time at the Rockport branch, since my regular shop in Aransas Pass wasn't open on Sundays). Like last time, I flew from Houston (IAH) via Paris (CDG) to Berlin (BER), where I arrived on November 4th—exactly one day before Donald Trump was elected the 47th President of the United States.

⁹⁰ Sunchase Inn Hotel, 1004 Padre Blvd., South Padre Island, TX-78597

⁹¹ Ocean's Edge Hotel, 300 West Avenue G, Port Aransas, TX-78373

About the Photographer

For Jörg Rubbert, born 1963 in the small town of Bad Segeberg, Northern Germany, urban living and the city as a stage and space for the people living there are one of his main photographic topics. Rubbert remains a representative of the humanistic approach in photography: People always take center stage in his work—individuals in relation to their social environment, within their social context, and in connection to their neighborhood.

He captures spontaneous, unposed street impressions where the photographed individuals are depicted in a positive and non-compromising manner. The images do not judge or condemn but simply document in the scenery realistically as it appeared to the photographer the moment the pictures were taken. The emphasis lies on the more subtle moments of everyday life. Rubbert shows legacies of the residents, unknown faces, street portraits of passersby he encounters during his meanders off the beaten path. The resulting photographs demonstrate a deep empathy for the concerns of people, taking us on a journey into the 'human condition'. Situational observations that emphasize that the street remains the true 'stage of life'.

His photographs—with a focus on Paris, New York and the American South—have been exhibited at photo festivals and exhibitions both nationally and internationally and have been published in numerous (print) media, including CNN, ZEIT, FAZ, WELT, Tagesspiegel, Television of Slovakia (RTVS), and photo magazines, such as PHOTO International, PHOTO Weekly, Photo Klassik, fotoMagazin, LFI-Magazine, FotoForum, Fotocult, and PHOTOGRAPHIE. He lives and works as a freelance photographer in Berlin.

Following the publications of "Paris—New York—Berlin" (2015), "Days gone by" (2017), "Beach Lovers" (2020), "Paris au cours du temps" (2021), "Livin' in the hood" (2023) and "ITALY—Street Photographs 1978—1986" (2024), "GTX—Galveston and the Texas Gulf Coast" is now his seventh book release.

Exhibitions and Publications

Photo Festivals⁹²

- 2025

PISPA^{IV} Anniversary Exposition '200 Years of Photography' as part of PARIS PHOTO 2025
Joseph Gallery, Paris (France)

Analog Sparks^I – WINNER of the Silver Medal in the category 'Life Style / Travel'
for the series "Dreary Texas Coast - Seen from My Car"

International Photography Awards (IPA)^{II} Gala 'Best of Show'
Benaki Museum, Pireos/Athens (Greece)

International Photography Awards (IPA)^{II}
"ITALY on Kodachrome 1978-1986" wins 2nd place in the category 'Photo Book / People'

International Photography Awards (IPA)^{II}
'Best of Show' Collection,
House of Lucie, Budapest (Hungary)
- 2024

Analog Sparks^I "Best of Show 2024"
Series 'Ticker Tape Parade' wins **GOLD** in the 'Photojournalism/ Demonstrations' category and **2nd place** in the overall ranking
House of Lucie Gallery, Athens (Greece)

International Photography Award (IPA)^{II} "Best of Show 2024"
'Livin' in the hood' wins **3rd place** in the Photo Book category
House of Lucie Gallery in Athens (Greece)

Xposure International Photography & Film Festival^{III}
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- 2023

'Paris au cours du temps' wins **2nd place** in the 'Black & White' category of the **Paris International Street Photo Award 2023^{IV}**
- 2022

'Manhattan Transfer'
SCHÖNEBERGER FESTIVAL OF ARTS 2022^V
Gallery JKD, Berlin (Germany)

'Paris au cours du temps'
Photo book-presentation at the **PHOTOPIA Hamburg^{VI}**
Messe & Congress, Hamburg (Germany)
- 2019

'RUNNING LEGS' – A Tribute to Lisette Model
Exhibition at the **VIE-PHOTO Festival in Vienna^{VII}**
LIK-Gallery, Vienna (Austria)
- 2018

'Sideways'
Exhibition at the **8th European Month of Photography^{VIII}**
Gallery Koschmieder, Berlin (Germany)

- 2016

'The Colors of the Sea'
SCHÖNEBERGER FESTIVAL OF ARTS 2016^V
Gallery JKD, Berlin (Germany)
- 2012

'Georgia on my mind'
Exhibition at the **5th European Month of Photography^{VIII}**
Photo Gallery Friedrichshain, Berlin (Germany)

Berlin Fashion Week 2012: 'Street meets Fashion'^{IX}
Gallery JKD, Berlin (Germany)
- 2010

'New York – Livin' in the Hood'
Exhibition at the **4th European Month of Photography^{VIII}**
Gallery AFF, Berlin (Germany)

International Exhibitions

- 2025

'Livin' in the hood' – New York Street Life 1990 & 2013/14
American Center of the US-Embassy, Prague (Czech Republic)
- 2023

'Lost Paris' – Photos from the Streets of Paris 1988 - 2019
Central European House of Photography, Bratislava (Slovakia)
- 2020

'Frozen Time' – Roadside Photographs of the American South
Central European House of Photography, Bratislava (Slovakia)
- 2019

'Intimate Strangers' (Vol. 2)
RAW Street photo Gallery, Rotterdam (Netherlands)
- 2017

'NIGHTSHIFT – Photography after Dark'
Central European House of Photography, Bratislava (Slovakia)
- 2016

International Group Exhibition 'We love People'
Atelier Alen, Munich (Germany)

'Our Cities Surrounded' – International Online-Exhibition
<http://www.newhive.com/peertospace/ourcitiessurrounded>
- 2015

International Anniversary Exhibition
'30 Years of Fotogalerie Friedrichshain 1985 – 2015'
Fotogalerie Friedrichshain, Berlin (Germany)
- 2010

International Anniversary Exhibition
'25 Years of Photography – A cross-section'
Fotogalerie Friedrichshain, Berlin (Germany)



National Exhibitions

2025	'Italian Serenity' Gallery JKD, Berlin
2023	'Streets of New York' Gallery Art Stalker, Berlin
2021	'#We love the seaside' Gallery JKD, Berlin
2020	'Beach Lovers' Palm Art Press-Gallery, Berlin
2019	'Intimate Strangers' (Vol. 3) Gallery Atelierhaus23, Hamburg
2018	'Intimate Strangers' German American Institute (d.a.i.), Tübingen
2016	'People at the Seaside' BWB-Gallery (Berlin water supply company), Berlin
2015	Group Exhibition 'Berlin Photography' Contemporary City- & Street Photography in Berlin Carpentier Gallery, Berlin
2014	'When I was young: Italy 1978 – 1986' Gallery JKD, Berlin
2013	'RUNNING LEGS' – A Tribute to Lisette Model Photo Lab Pixel Grain, Berlin
2012	'Kids in the Backyard' Carpentier Gallery, Berlin
2011	'BERLIN – Pictures of a disrupted City' AFF-Gallery, Berlin
2010	'On the Sidewalk' AFF-Gallery, Berlin
2009	'LIFE is a BEACH' Photo Gallery Friedrichshain, Berlin
2007	'NEW YORK - Kaleidoscope' Photo Gallery Friedrichshain, Berlin
2004	'PARIS 1987 – 1991' Photo Gallery Friedrichshain, Berlin

International Publications

2025	Photo magazine Photoscala (Sept. 3rd, 2025) Article about the exhibition "Italian Serenity" by Sarah Alexandra Fechner
	Leica Fotografie Magazin (Edition 06/2025) Photo Story "New York Street Life" by Kartin Ullmann
	Photo magazine Profi Foto (Edition 03/2025) "Book of the Month" for the photo-book "ITALY 1978 – 1986"
	Photo magazine Photo Klassik (Edition 04/2025) Portfolio and multi-page article "The Colors of Serenity" by Dragana Mimic
	Photo magazine 'fotoforum' (Edition 02/2025) Portfolio: "ITALY on Kodachrome" (series of 14 pictures) by Martin Breutmann
2024	Photo magazine PHOTO Weekly (Edition 04/2024) Presentation of the photo-book "Livin' in the hood"
	FotoMagazin (Edition 02/2024) Section: "Books of the Month" Review of the photo-book "Livin' in the hood"
	Photo magazine 'fotoforum' (Edition 01/2024) Review article of the photo-book "Livin' in the hood"
2022	Photo magazine Profi Foto (Edition 1-2/2022) Book review of the photo-book "Paris au cours du temps"
2021	Photo magazine Photo Klassik (Edition 03/2021) Photo-essay about the exhibition "#We love the seaside"
2019	Photo magazine FOTOCULT (Online-Edition) Announcement of the exhibition "RUNNING LEGS" VIE-PHOTO Festival Vienna
	Photo magazine Photo Klassik (Edition 01/2019) Photo-essay about the exhibition "Intimate Strangers"
2018	Edition to the 8th European Month of Photography (EMoP) Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH (Ed.), published 09/2018
	PHOTO International (Edition 05/2018) Editorial: "Frozen Time" – A road trip through the American South
	Photo magazine Photo Klassik (Edition 01/2018) Photo essay "Southern Belles"
2017	Le Figaro (Online-edition, Nov. 16th, 2017) Review of the photo book "Days Gone by"

2017	CNN Online (Sept. 22nd, 2017) Photo essay by Oscar Holland: "Capturing the forgotten towns of America's Deep South"	2019	Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 03/2019) Article about the exhibition "RUNNING LEGS" VIE-PHOTO Festival Vienna
	Photo magazine FOTOCULT (Edition 01/2017) Portfolio "Nightshift – Photography after Dark"	2018	Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 04/2018) Article about the exhibition "Intimate Strangers"
2013	Photo magazine Photoscala (Edition 10/2013) Article about the exhibition "Men at Work"		Print magazine BERLINER (by Marco Polo), Edition 10/2018 Article about the exhibition "Sideways" Gallery Koschmieder, Berlin
	Savvy Design Mag (Edition 06/2013) Article about the exhibition "New York City Limits"		Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 03/2018) Article about the exhibition "Sideways"
	Photo magazine Photoscala (June 9th, 2013) Article about the exhibition "New York City Limits"	2017	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Edition, Nov. 23rd, 2017) "Gone with the Wind" – Book review by Freddy Langer
2012	Edition to the 5th European Month of Photography (EMoP) Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH (Ed.), published 10/2012		Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 04/2017) Book announcement of "Days Gone by"
	Le Journal de la Photographie (Dec. 2nd, 2012) Article about the exhibition "Georgia on my mind"	2016	Photo magazine 'fotoforum' (Edition 03/2016) Article about the exhibition "People at the seaside"
	VIVRE à BERLIN Article about the exhibition "Georgia on my mind" as part of the photo festival 'Mois Européen de la Photographie'		CHASED-Magazine (Edition 04/2016) Article about the exhibition "People at the seaside"
2010	Edition to the 4th European Month of Photography (EMoP) Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH (Ed.), published 10/2010		Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 04/2016) Article about the exhibition "The Colors of the Sea"
1986	Photo magazine PHOTOGRAPHIE (Edition 11/1986) Publication of the Portfolio "People in the Street"		ZEIT Online magazine (Jan. 9th, 2016) Photo essay "Merkel – KanzlerInnentown, Texas"
		2015	DER TAGESSPIEGEL (Aug. 12th, 2015) Retrospective "30 Years of Fotogalerie Friedrichshain 1985 – 2015"

National Publications

2023	FOTO PORTAL (Oct. 31st, 2023) Review article of the photo-book "Livin' in the hood"		Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 04/2023) Review of the photo-book "Livin' in the hood"
2021	Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 03/2021) Article about the exhibition "#We love the seaside"	2014	MONOPOL magazine (Online-edition 07/2014) Article about the exhibition "When I was young: Italy 1978 – 1986"
2020	Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 02/2020) Review of the photo-book "Beach Lovers"		Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 03/2014) Article about the exhibition "When I was young: Italy 1978 – 1986"
2019	Hamburger Abendblatt (Print-Edition, Aug. 13th, 2019) Article about the exhibition "Intimate Strangers" Atelierhaus23, Hamburg	2013	Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 02/2013) Article about the exhibition "New York City Limits"
	DIE WELT (Print-Edition, Aug. 10th, 2019) Article about the exhibition "Intimate Strangers" Atelierhaus23, Hamburg	2012	Online magazine Stadtaspekte (Nov. 13th, 2012) Article "In remembrance of a lifeworld long ago"

- 2012** **Magazine PHOTO PRESSE (Edition Oct./Nov. 2012)**
Article about the exhibition "Georgia on my mind"
- 2011** **Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 04/2011)**
Article of the exhibition "BERLIN – Pictures of a disrupted City"
- 2010** **Magazine FOTO HITS (Oct. 14th, 2010)**
Article about the exhibition "NEW YORK: Livin' in the Hood"
- 2009** **DER TAGESSPIEGEL (Aug. 19th, 2009)**
Article about the exhibition "LIFE is a Beach"
- Berliner Zeitung (Aug. 6th, 2009)**
Article about the exhibition "LIFE is a BEACH"
- 2007** **Photo magazine BRENNPUNKT (Edition 02/2007)**
Article about the exhibition "New York – Kaleidoscope"
- 2004** **Berliner Zeitung (April 22nd, 2004)**
Article about the exhibition "PARIS 1987 – 1991"
- DER TAGESSPIEGEL (April 22nd, 2004)**
'Paris Snapshots': Article about the exhibition
"PARIS 1987 – 1991"

Interviews & Broadcasts

- 2023** **Television of Slovakia (broadcasted May 3rd, 2023 at 11:15 p.m.)**
TV report about the exhibition 'Lost Paris' ('Strateny Pariz') at the Central House of Photography, Bratislava (Slovakia)
<https://www.rtv.sk/televizia/archiv/14142/403154#25>
- 2019** **RAW Streetphoto Gallery, Rotterdam (Netherlands) (published April 20th)**
Interview by Curator and Gallerist Alexey Shifman about the exhibition "Intimate Strangers"
<https://www.chrysalid.art/single-post/2019/05/02/interview-with-street-photographer-jörg-rubbert>
- 2017** **CNN Online (published September 22nd)**
Interview by Editor Oscar Holland about the photo book "Days Gone By"
Title: 'Capturing the forgotten towns of America's Deep South'
<https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/america-deep-south-jrg-rubbert/index.html>
- 2009** **Rundfunk Berlin Brandenburg - rbbKultur (broadcasted August 6th)**
Interview by Editor Andrea Heinze about the exhibition "LIFE is a Beach"

Bibliography

- 2024** **"ITALY on Kodachrome – Street Photographs 1978 – 1986"**
Published by Palm Art Press, Berlin, Germany
(ISBN: 978-3-96258-192-3)
- 2023** **"Livin' in the hood" – New York Street Life 1990 & 2013/14**
Published by Kettler, Dortmund, Germany
(ISBN: 978-3-98741-073-4)
- 2021** **"Paris au cours du temps"**
Published by Kettler, Dortmund, Germany
(ISBN: 978-3-86206-932-3)
- 2020** **"Beach Lovers"**
Published by Palm Art Press, Berlin, Germany
(ISBN: 978-3-96258-046-9)
- 2017** **"DAYS GONE BY – Roadside Photographs of the American South"**
Published by Benteli (Braun Publishing AG), Switzerland
(ISBN: 978-3-7165-1841-0)
- 2015** **"Paris – New York – Berlin. Street Photography 1978 - 2010"**
Published by Palm Art Press, Berlin, Germany
(ISBN: 978-3-941524-58-3)
- 2010** **Edition Photo Gallery Friedrichshain 1985-1990-2000-2010**
Kulturring in Berlin e.V. (Ed.), Germany
(ISBN: 978-3-9812995-7-1)
- 1986** **Edition "PHOTOGRAPHIE – PORTFOLIO" (Vol. No. 8)**
124 photographs from 33 contemporary photographers
(ISBN: 978-3-7231-7400-0)

Gazetteer⁹³

A lice	P: 202-203	G alveston	T: 4, 7-8, 11-12, 18-19, 36, 46, 50-52, 68, 96, 328-330, 335-338
Anahuac	P: 25		P: 37-43, 57-67, 69-79, 81-95, 97-103, 107-119
Angleton	T: 338	Galveston Bay	T: 8, 18, 50, 53
	P: 149-150	Galveston Beach	P: 80, 104-106, 120-121
Appomattox, VA	T: 234	Galveston Island	T: 7-8, 18, 50, 52-53, 334-335
Aransas (Pass)	T: 8, 122, 164-166, 214		P: 54-56
	P: 210-211, 213, 215-221	Gilchrist	T: 18
Aransas Bay	P: 132-133	Granjeno	T: 318
Armstrong	T: 198, 232		P: 316-317, 319
	P: 199	Gregory	P: 209
Arroyo City	P: 285	Guadalupe	T: 122
Atascosito Springs	T: 9	Gulf Intracoastal	
		Waterway	T: 18, 122, 232
B affin Bay	T: 190		P: 124-125
Bay City	T: 4, 8, 122	Gulf of Mexico	T: 4, 12, 16, 18, 50, 52-53, 164-165, 232-233, 294, 334
	P: 146-148		
Beaumont	T: 4, 16-17, 19, 52	H ankamer	P: 27
Beeville	P: 144-145	Harlingen	T: 4, 164, 232, 282, 294, 339
Bishop	P: 206-208		P: 278-281, 283-284
Boca Chica	T: 14, 234, 339	Hawthorne, CA	T: 234
	P: 261-267	Hidalgo (County)	T: 294, 297, 339
Bolivar Peninsula	T: 7-8, 16, 18-20, 50, 53, 334-335, 337-338		P: 327
	P: 28, 29, 31, 34-35, 44-49	High Island	T: 18-19, 30, 337-338
Brazoria (County)	T: 50, 53		P: 29, 31, 32-33, 34-35
	P: 141	Hopper's Landing	P: 134
Brazos River	T: 122	Houston	T: 4, 11, 16, 50, 52, 297, 338
Bridge City	T: 17		
Brownsville	T: 4, 7-9, 14, 164, 232-233, 294, 335, 339	I sla Blanca Park (S.P.I.)	T: 288
	P: 269-275		
C ameron County	T: 233, 294	J efferson County	T: 16
Caplen	T: 18		
Chapman Ranch	T: 188	K enedy County	T: 12, 232
Chattanooga, TN	T: 336	King Ranch	T: 232
Christmas Bay	T: 122	Kingsville	T: 4, 164, 232
Ciudad Juárez (Mex.)	T: 295		P: 204-205
Colorado River	T: 122	Kleberg County	P: 200
Corpus Christi	T: 4, 7, 9, 11-12, 164-165, 232, 335, 338-339	Kountze	T: 16
	P: 167-180		
Crystal Beach	T: 3, 18-20	L aguna Heights	P: 257
	P: 44	Laguna Madre	T: 122, 232
E dinburg	T: 164, 294	Laguna Visa	T: 188
Edroy	P: 196-197	La Paloma	P: 315
El Campo	T: 339	Laredo	T: 164
	P: 142-143	Lavaca Bay	T: 123
El Paso	T: 294-295	La Villa	P: 260
El Ranchito	T: 314	League City	P: 151
	P: 315	Liverpool	P: 138-139
Escobares	P: 308	Los Fresnos	P: 258-259, 268
		Los Indios	P: 320
F ort Sabine	T: 16	M atagorda Bay	T: 7, 122
Freeport	T: 4, 8	Matagorda Beach	P: 130-131
	P: 124-125	Matagorda Peninsula	T: 122, 335
Fulton	P: 135, 152	Matamoros (Mexico)	T: 233, 294, 335
		Mc Allen	T: 164, 282, 294

93 T = Text | P= Picture

Mercedes	P: 302-303	Sabine City	T: 16
Mission	T: 164, 294	Sabine Lake	T: 4, 8, 14, 16-17, 122
	P: 304		P: 21
Mustang Island	T: 7-8, 164-166	Sabine Pass	T: 7, 16-17, 19
Neches River	T: 16-17	Sabine River	T: 9
New Orleans, LA	T: 12, 335	San Antonio Bay	P: 134
New York, NY	T: 228, 334-335	San Benito	P: 276-277
North Padre Island	T: 8-9, 232	San Bernard River	T: 122
Nueces (River)	T: 10, 122, 164	San Diego, CA	T: 295
		San Jacinto	T: 10, 16, 122
Odem	P: 201	San Luis Pass	T: 53
Orange	T: 8, 17		P: 56
Orange Groove	P: 186	San Patricio	T: 164
		San Pedro	P: 312-313
Padre Island	T: 7, 9, 165, 232, 334-335	Sarita	T: 232
	P: 290-293		P: 199
Padre Island		Sinton	T: 188
Nat'l Seashore	T: 9, 232-233		P: 182-185
Palacios	T: 8, 337	South Padre Island	T: 8-9, 14, 232-233, 244, 252, 297, 339
	P: 161-163		P: 235-243, 245-247, 249, 286-287, 289
Palmito Hill	T: 233	Surfside	T: 8, 53, 338
Peachtree, GA	T: 329		P: 126-129
Playa de Maya (Mex.)	T: 335	Taft	P: 193
Pleasure Island	T: 17	Texas City	T: 52, 338
Point Comfort	T: 123		P: 26
Port Aransas	T: 7-8, 164-166, 214, 222, 328, 338-339	Tijuana (Mexico)	T: 295
	P: 181, 223-227	Tivoli	T: 339
Port Aransas Beach	T: 228		P: 135, 140
	P: 229-231	Trinity River	T: 9
Port Arthur	T: 4, 8, 16-17, 52, 122	Tuscaloosa, AL	T: 336
	P: 22-23	Velasco	T: 10
Port Bolivar	T: 8, 18-19, 36, 53	Veracruz (Mexico)	T: 10
	P: 37-43		
Port Isabel	T: 9, 232, 252, 288	Weedhaven	P: 136-137
	P: 250-251, 253-256	Weslaco	P: 299-301
Port Lavaca	T: 4, 7-8, 122-123, 337, 339	West Columbia	T: 8
	P: 154-160	Wharton	T: 338
Port Mansfield	T: 8, 188, 232	Winnie	P: 24
Presidio	T: 337		
Rancho	P: 321-323		
Raymondville	T: 198, 232		
Refugio	T: 339		
Reynosa (Mexico)	T: 294, 297, 339		
	P: 324-326		
Rio Grande City	P: 305-307		
Rio Grande (River)	T: 4, 9, 10, 14, 122, 233, 294-295, 297-298, 314, 339		
Rio Grande Valley	T: 7, 10, 294		
Riviera	T: 190, 198, 232		
	P: 191		
Robstown	P: 194-195		
Rockport	T: 165, 214, 339		
	P: 132-133		
Rollover Pass	T: 18, 30		
Roma	P: 309-311		
Rosharon	P: 153		

Index of Persons⁹⁴

Adams , John Quincy	10	Neumann , Pia	331
Aury, Louis Michel	18	Oliver , Arnold M.	165
Balli , Padre Nicolas	232	Pizzolatto , Nic	19, 330, 336 P: 46, 54, 104, 120
Bauer, Chris	314	Ramirez , Marco Antonio	P: 260
Biden, Joseph R.	296	Roosevelt, Franklin D.	296
Blank, Gunter	330	Saenz Jr. , Amadeo	165
Bolívar, Simón	18	Steffen, Sidney	69
Brown, Jacob	233	Stillman, Charles	233
Burnett, William G.	165	Stilwell, Arthur E.	16-17
Caldwell , Horace	P: 230-231	Stoker Jr., Ray	19
Daniels , A. Pat	3	Stotzer Jr., R. E.	165
Dedman, Robert H.	19	Taylor , Zachary	164, 233
de Gálvez y Madrid, Bernardo	50	Thompson, Jim	330
de Iturbide, Agustín	10	Trump, Donald J.	123, 228, 295-297, 314, 339 P: 154-155
de La Salle, Robert Cavelier	122	von Braun , Wernher	234
de Niro, Robert	P: 101	Weber , Joseph F.	165
de Pineda, Alvarez Alonzo	164	Welles, Orson	P: 181
de Santa Anna, Antonio López	10, 19	Wilson, Will	330
Dowling, Richard William	16		52
Dullenbacher, Bernd	330, 336		
Franklin , William	16		
Gilchrist , Gibb	19		
Greer, Dewitt C.	19		
Hamilton , Andrew Jackson	11		
Harris, Kamala	248		
	P: 249		
Heald, Charles W.	165		
Higgins, Padillo	17		
Hoover, Herbert Clark	296		
Houston, Sam	10, 16		
Johnson , Andrew	11		
Johnson, John W.	19		
Jones, George	330		
Koschmieder , Annette	244		
	P: 245		
Kountze, Herman	16		
Kountze, Luther	16		
Laffite , Jean	18		
Lanier, Robert C.	19		
Lee, Robert Edward	233		
Lincoln, Abraham	11		
Maceo , Ronnie	P: 103		
Mayer, Wolfgang	244		
	P: 245		
Melville, Jean-Pierre	330		
Menard, Michel Branamour	50		
Musk, Elon	234		
	P: 266-267		

94 P= Picture

Acknowledgements

In memory of Norbert Bunge, photographer and owner of the Berlin-based gallery “Argus Fotokunst”, who died unexpectedly on April 14th, 2024 at the age of 82. He was a good mentor and advisor for me and wrote the foreword to my first photo book.

First of all, I would like to thank the many lovely people I met and spoke to during my Texas road trips. I have taken the liberty of mentioning or depicting some of them in the book.

Especially, I would like to say thank you to the following persons, who were deeply involved in the realization of this photo book:

Mr. Nic Pizzolatto, whose novel “Galveston” I owe for giving the illustrated book its certain ‘film noir appeal’.

Fabrizio Dal Vera on behalf of the entire Aperture team for the professional scanning of my negatives.

Yunus Şems Pleger for the again very intense cooperation in terms of photo-book layout and the overall look & feel.

Heather Schmaedeke for the accurate translation of the text and the very responsive support and commitment regarding the FOIA request.

Bernd Dullenbacher for the copies of Nic Pizzolatto’s novel “Galveston,” which gave me the idea to create this book.

Gunnar Kettler (CEO) and **Matthias Koddenberg** (Managing Editor) from the Kettler publishing house for the trust placed in me and for giving me again the opportunity to publish this book.

Last, but not least my family (my wife **Karola**, my daughter **Phattha** and our family-dog **Brandon**) for their patience if the creation of the book once again took too much time.



Sleeping couple, Air France flight AF 636 from Paris CDG to Houston IEH on Nov. 17th, 2022

Imprint

The German National Library lists this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at <http://www.dnb.de>

First Edition: 2026

ISBN: 978-3-98741-224-0

Published by: Verlag Kettler, Robert-Bosch-Str.14, D-59199 Bönen

Total Production: Druckerei Kettler, Bönen

www.verlag-kettler.de / info@verlag-kettler.de / ©Verlag Kettler

All rights reserved: ©Jörg Rubbert

Layout: Yunus Şems G. Pleger

English Translation: Heather Schmaedeke

All footnotes (full and short notes) as well as book and article citations are formatted in Chicago style.

The book is printed on Gardamatt Eleven coated paper. This paper has the FSC® C018175 certification—The mark of responsible forestry, FSCTM-A000531, www.fsc.org

With the kind support of Aperture Film Lab Berlin

aperture
film lab

Printed in Germany