



44th_Street_New_York_1974

TEXT

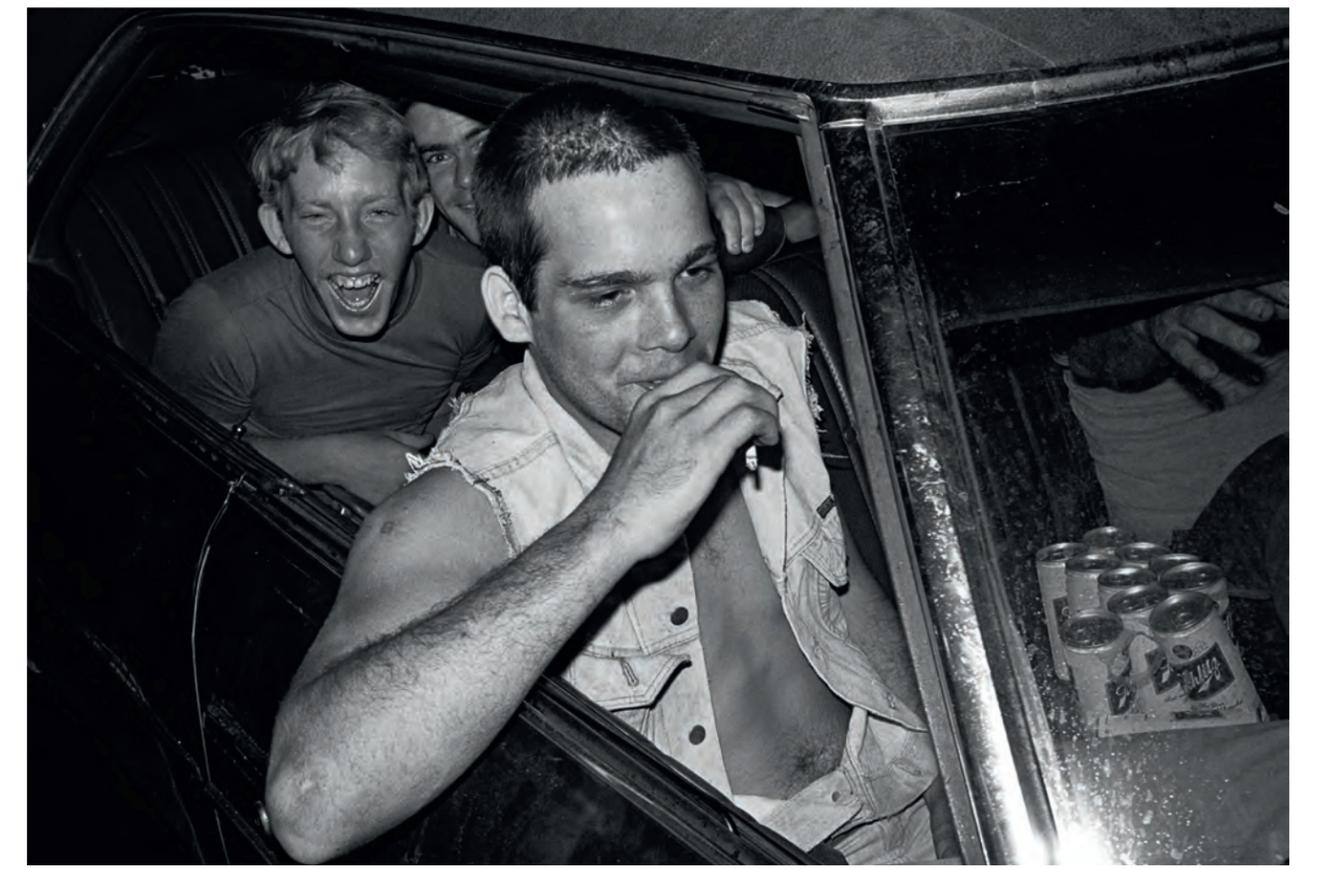
IMAGES

ALEX SCHUCHMANN
JOHN GOODMAN

Selection: Early Work

He was my age, 27, when he took those pictures, when "Boston was exploding". It was a time before computers were ubiquitous and phones were only for calling people. Most of life happened outside. People were on the streets and so was John Goodman.

Triggered by the energy he felt, he was out there every day with a camera around his neck. In the 1970s, John's studio was in the Combat Zone, a red-light district in downtown Boston. People knew the young kid with the camera and it was OK that he ran around and took pictures of them. He wanted to find out if he could photograph what he was seeing. The contrast between light and shadow was appealing to him. He wanted to make pictures that would endure. "And I guess I have because you found them," he said to me in a Zoom call two days before Christmas Eve. And yes, I did find them, like I found John, more than 45 years after he permanently fixed the images on his film. The popularity of street photography continues with still so many young photographers out there using their cameras to capture everyday life, things that spark our interest, or stuff we think is funny. Even I go out and shoot from time to time. I usually go out when I feel inspired, when I am somewhere new, somewhere with different light, or end up in places that feel raw and unseen. But it's hard, as I tell John. Most of the frames in my viewfinder feel like someone photographed it already, so you really have to investigate to find a fresh angle. He nods and responds. "Being a photographer, you practice every day, it's like being a musician, you practice, you work really hard. Nothing happens. Nothing happens. Nothing happens. And then you go out and all of a sudden you connect, and it makes all that time practicing worthwhile. And maybe if you didn't practice, you would never even get there. You got to work. These things are gifts, but they're not gifts. I mean, they just appear and then you have to be ready for them and recognize them." I guess I am still practicing. Shortly after being gifted a camera for college graduation, he found his mentor, who became one of the most influential people in his life. Minor White (1908 - 1976) taught at the MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts and was an abstract expressionist with a camera. White merged his curiosity about how people perceive photographs with a profound and personal perspective led by a diverse set of both spiritual and intellectual philosophies.



The_Schlitz_Boys_Boston_July_1978



MOVIES

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Shine_LaGrange_Street_May_1975

EARLY WORK



No_One_Combat_Zone_Boston_1975

Like many other of his students, John learned how to be aware of the environment, to stand still, and to experience life how it is, without distraction. "He said things like "the photograph waits for the photographer it has chosen," says John quoting Minor White. "I was really lucky to find him, and he was the right guy for me. He just gave me an understanding that I'm not sure I would have had without him. And that understanding has affected everything that I've done as a photographer in my career."

What followed after, is an enormous body of work ranging from images you will find on the following pages, along with other passion projects like his series about the "Times Square Gym" to portraits and commercial work for major publications worldwide. John tells me that he considered his paid projects as "work"; he doesn't become another person just because someone is hiring him. Trying to make real and good pictures has helped him to have a successful and authentic career as a photographer. I often ask myself what a good photograph is, and since engaging with that question there has not been that one universal answer yet. Even if you follow the golden rule we've all heard about, it doesn't guarantee you a great shot. They rather serve as a guideline. You have to bring in your own perspective, your experiences, and your thoughts without imitating someone else. Having a background both in cinematography and photography, I recognized the images of his early works were talking to me. They created a feeling in me, a sense of freedom and a desire to time travel. Like in a good movie, I dive into the scenes, I want to live in the world of the protagonist and see life through his or her eyes. I rarely find myself in the perspective of a cinematographer but rather as an objective person watching. This quality can be found as a narrative in John's early works too. Closeness and the invisibility of the observer make them feel even more real than reality. And while reflecting a bit on that, that's what makes John's images so good. "I don't inhibit the flow of life. I see it, I connect with it, I make the picture. I disappear."

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Onxy_Bradford_Hotel_April_1976

EARLY WORK



Tremont_Street_#4_Boston_June_1978



LaGrange_Street_Combat_Zone_Boston_1975



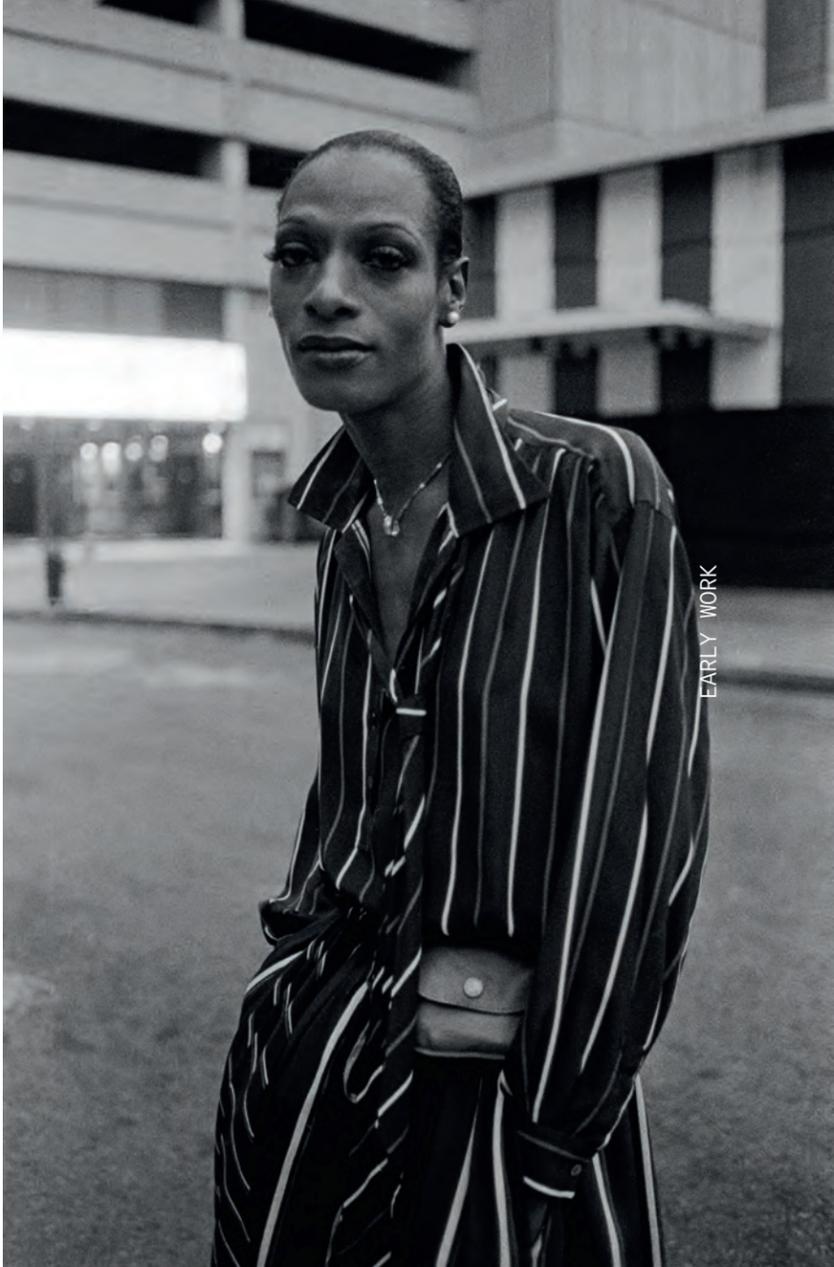
The_Other_Side_Bay_Village_1978



5th_Avenue_New_York_Sept_1978

EARLY WORK



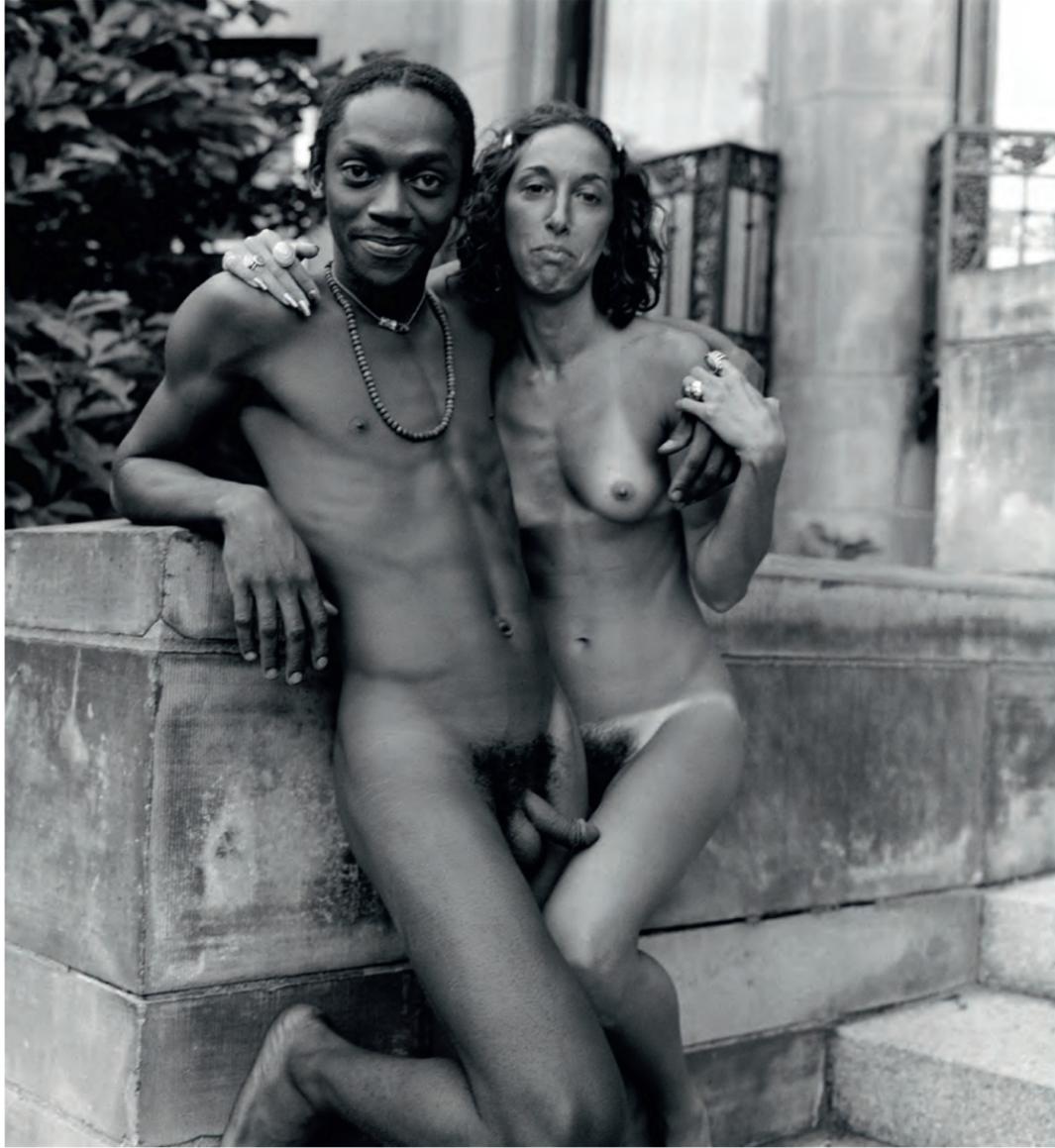


Marcella_Bay_Village_1975



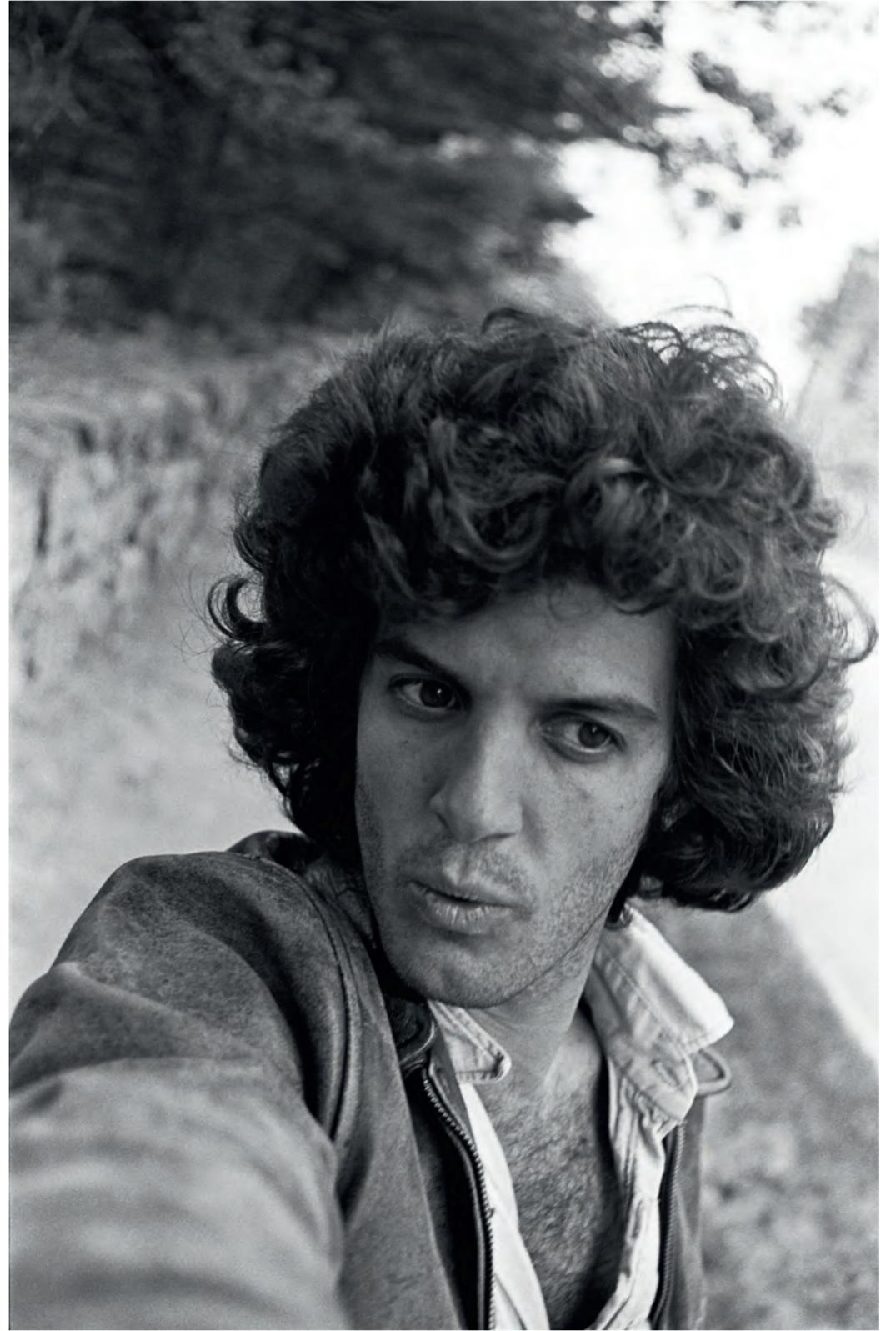
Sweet_Polly_Washington_Street_May_1976



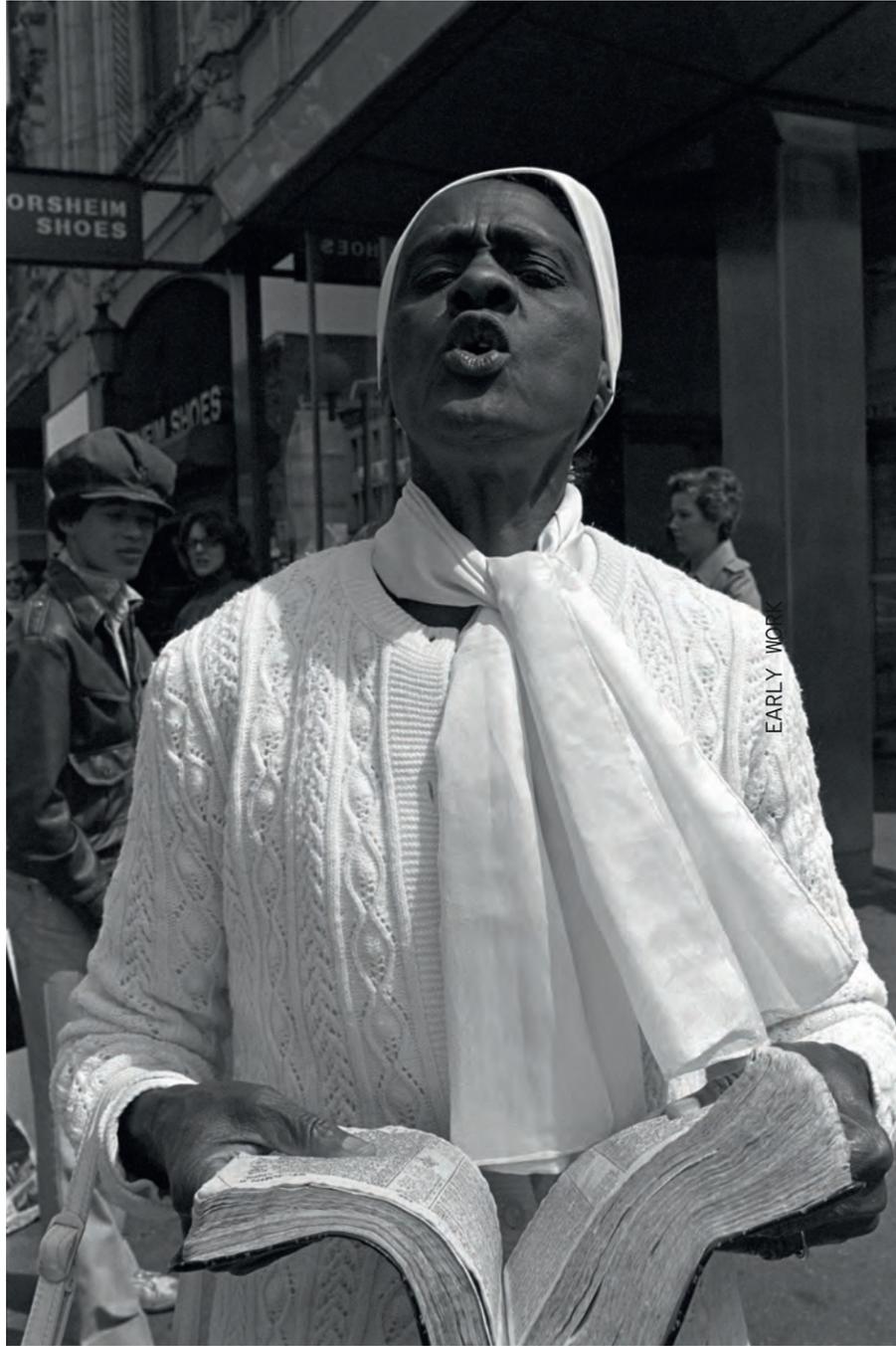


Couple_Commonwealth_Ave_Boston_June_1976

EARLY WORK



Self_May_24_1975



Preacher_Boylston+Arlington_Streets_April_1976



The_Stork_Lounge_Chicago_Sept_1970
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