

LEWIS BALTZ

by ANDREW WITT



TRUE CRIME

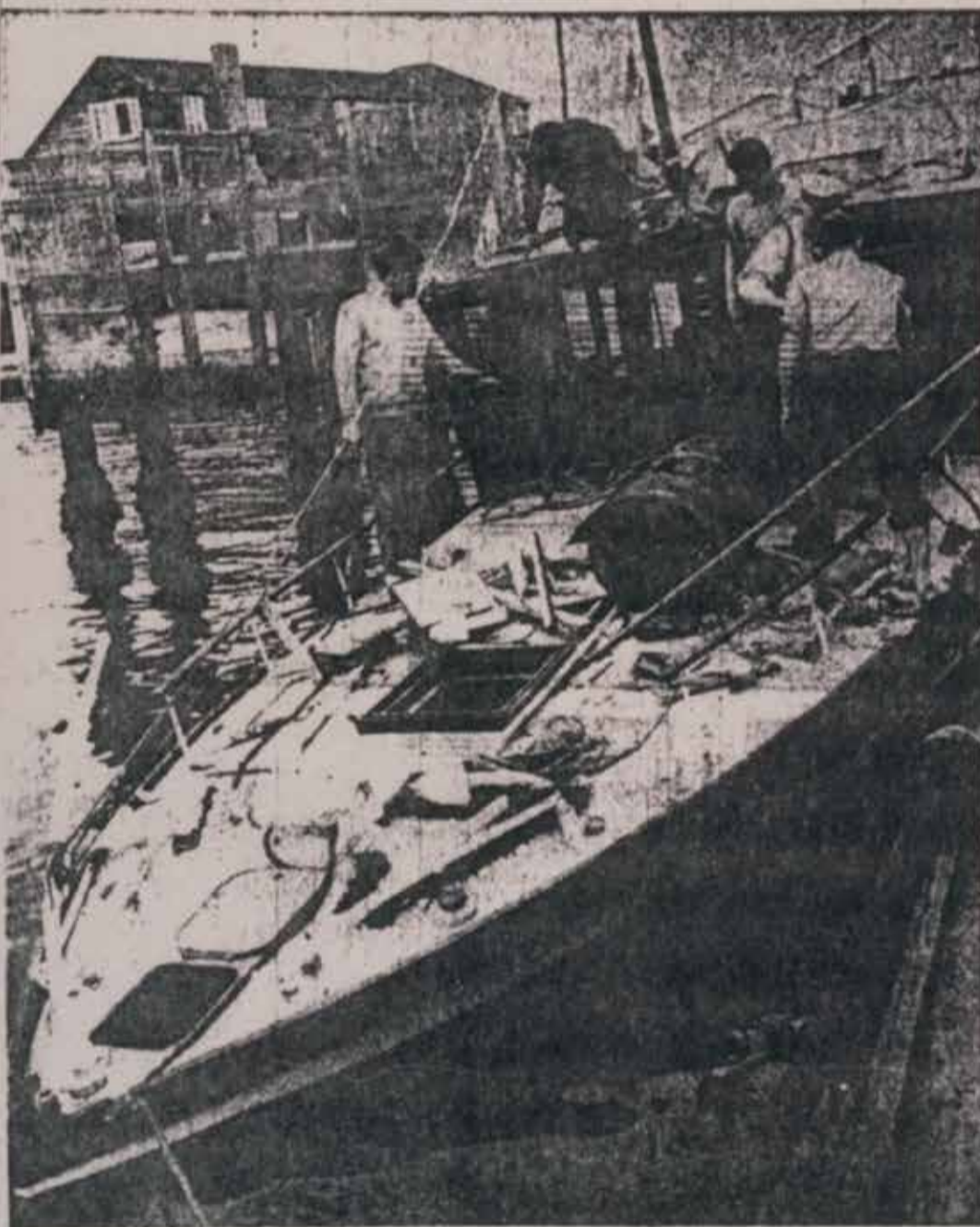
I.

LEWIS BALTZ'S THE DEATHS IN NEWPORT (1989 - 1995) IS A STRANGE OUTLIER IN THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S CAREER.

Los Angeles Times
PART I—GENERAL NEWS
DAILY, FIVE CENTS

MORNING, MARCH 17, 1947

'No' 3 rley Pleasure Cruiser Blows Up; Financier and Wife Killed



Daughter So Tragedy in Newport Bo

Walter E. Overell, 62, retired furniture executive and owner of the Washington Co., and his prominent wife Beulah were killed instantly before midnight Saturday in an explosion which shattered their 47-foot cabin Mary E in Newport Harbor.

Missing death by their 17-year-old daughter, Beulah Louise, and a friend, Callum of 2301 Carmont had rowed ashore on an just prior to the blast an horror-stricken on the while the Mary E should settled by the bow, said.

SHATTERED—Newport Beach firemen and Coast Guardsmen examine 47-foot cruiser Mary E after explosion which killed Walter E. Overell, retired furniture executive and financier, and his wife Beulah Saturday night in Newport Harbor.

Quake Shakes Illinois Section
MERCURY DIPS 13 DEGREES TO NICE COOL 70
Surging Wave Engulfs Seven

THE DEATHS
IN NEWPORT
LEWIS BALTZ

PARADOX INTERACTIVE CD-ROM [MAC & WINDOWS]

The project bears little resemblance to the images of blank façades, tract houses, warehouses, new industrial parks, half-built suburban developments, dumping grounds, or wastelands Baltz photographed across a series of California projects between 1967 and 1989. Structured as a photo-essay and propelled with the pacing of a first-person account, *The Deaths in Newport* revolved around his father's central role as a local mortician in a Newport murder trial, and on Baltz's own relation to that case. The photographic material was drawn largely from found press photographs, archival records, and newspaper accounts that circulated at the time. His approach to the material is more personal and openly autobiographical than anything he published before or after. The project reads as a controlled act of retrieval, as if Baltz had caught a loose thread in his own past and pulled at it to see what might come undone.

The case itself, the Overell murders of 1947, was a major Southern California scandal. Two young lovers, 17-year-old Beulah Louise

Overell and her 21-year-old fiancé, George “Bud” Gollum, were accused of using dynamite to blow up a family boat in Newport Harbor, killing Beulah’s parents. The evidence suggested a clear motive, and early reports framed the incident as an open-and-shut case. Local police alleged to have witnessed the couple walking away from the harbor just after the explosion. Not all of the dynamite had detonated, the boat had not fully sunk, and the crime scene was left largely intact. A later investigation determined that the Overells had been killed with a ball-peen hammer, and the young couple would have inherited roughly \$400,000 — or \$7 million in Baltz’s calculation — after the deaths.

The story unfolded in the local newspapers in the high-contrast cadence of noir: a young couple, a wealthy family, sex, explosives, and an alibi that defied the laws of probability — it was said that the couple were to get late-night cheeseburgers. Coverage was unrelenting. The press behaved as if hungrily circling something half-rotten, lingering over every lurid detail, even going so far as to publish the love letters sent between the couple from their jail cells.

Seen from the present, this media frenzy feels strangely familiar. The title of this essay, *Lewis Baltz: True Crime*, gestures toward the insatiable American obsession with murder, betrayal, and criminal violence. In our own moment, this fascination has intensified to a fever pitch, propelled by podcasts like *Serial* (and an increasing litany of less well-researched true crime podcasts, to put it mildly) and by the rise of serialized documentary formats on the major streaming services. Streaming platforms have perfected this voyeuristic mode, wherein real-life tragedies transform into slickly produced investigations that unfold like prestige television, complete with cliffhangers, narrative arcs, and the illusion of moral inquiry. Podcasts, meanwhile, cultivate a different immediacy: a voice in one’s ear, guiding the listener with small inflections and personal nuance, moving step by step through forensic detail and the incremental thrill of revelation.

Beneath it all is an underlying question about our appetite for narrative structure and the need to see events arranged into a neat story with a beginning, middle, and end. True crime offers a controlled encounter with the intractable chaos of the world. These stories give listeners and viewers the sense, however illusory, that hidden motives can be uncovered, justice or injustice mapped, and



the world’s darkest impulses contained within a frame. And because so many of these narratives orbit around power and wealth (revealing that even in death, one’s literal value is determinative), they function as a pressure valve for class resentment: a socially sanctioned arena in which the downfall of the rich becomes a spectacle one is invited to scrutinize and consume on a nightly basis. This is perhaps the most charitable reading. Just as often, the genre trades in a more mindless voyeurism, animated by little more than curiosity and schadenfreude. Baltz’s project turns this fascination back in on itself, examining how these narratives unravel.

From the very first paragraph of his essay, Baltz’s tone asserts itself with unflinching clarity. The essay proceeds with an almost surgical bitterness, its principal note jaded, undercut with shades of the morose and resentful. He describes Los Angeles in words that hover between distaste and outright misery, and casts Newport Beach as an outpost of the crypto-fascist right. Readers familiar with James Ellroy or Raymond Chandler will recognize the voice of the hardboiled noir detective: a world-weary observer who views the city as a cesspool of corruption and greed, but who knows, with a kind of grudging acceptance, that he moves within the same compromised world he describes.

It should be said that this voice is not entirely performative, nor is it some ironic literary posture or parody. Baltz’s tone has the blunt, unadorned quality of someone who has grown distrustful of the world. When read alongside Baltz’s interviews and statements from the same period, *The Deaths in Newport* reads as a characteristic extension of the author’s state of mind, rather than





a stylistic gimmick. It aligns too closely with the punishingly clear-eyed posture he adopted when speaking about his life and work, a posture tempered by cold disillusionment: the kind that arises when a person has looked too long and hard at the evidentiary record of his own experience.

The Deaths in Newport emerged during a period of personal dissatisfaction for Baltz. We are told of his circumstances at the outset. Baltz had grown wary of his life in Europe. His third marriage was falling apart. Milan no longer held his interest. Paris did not appeal. He had first moved to Paris after meeting his third wife, a photographer with an established career working for European architectural magazines whose assignments regularly took her across Europe and the United States. Through this work, she had developed close ties to the emerging contemporary architectural scene in Los Angeles. However, Los Angeles, the city in which Baltz grew up and cut his teeth as a photographer, was equally uninviting. After Paris, the couple relocated to Milan, returning to his

wife's home and to an apartment in a local church rectory. It was there that Baltz began producing a series of nocturnal color photographs of Milan's piazzas. Although he found Milan a comfortable place to live, the move did not resolve the growing tensions between the couple, and they soon relocated again.

His eventual return to California was driven more by necessity than by desire, pulled back by the city's grim, geographical magnetism. In this context, returning feels like a concession to the gravitational pull of Los Angeles, a force that accumulates its own kind of evidence file. This file is built from scraps of memory and faint impressions that never quite rise to the level of proof – perhaps a set of circumstantial evidence that collectively functions as its own kind of truth. The project acts as a way to sift through that file, an attempt to stabilize a narrative that had begun to slip through the cracks of memory.

While in Los Angeles, Baltz accepted a visiting artist position at a local university. At the same time, a new museum in Newport

Beach was being proposed, with a design by Renzo Piano. In those years, there was a custom within the profession: photographers were regularly commissioned to document the opening of new museums. Baltz was the kind of photographer one might naturally approach to produce the official document. He entertained the idea, then let it go. An institutional commission held no appeal. He felt like he had “nothing more to say about buildings in construction or churned-up crawler tracks or anything.” Instead, Baltz allowed his attention to drift “to the history of the town,” as if the thought had only just surfaced in his mind. He began working on the Overell case.

The rejection of a more conventional gig is telling. In refusing the museum commission — or more precisely, in not being selected, as the project itself unraveled, with the proposed Renzo Piano building rejected and the institution entering a period of instability — Baltz effectively walked away from a future image in place of a past one, substituting architectural monumentality for a dusty box

of old press clippings and scenes of violence. For Baltz, the press images from the trial were distant relics from the psychic terrain of his childhood — newspaper photographs that circulated in the world he grew up in, images that passed through his living room and father's office as a mortician. The sensational press photographs of the late 1940s were designed to deliver a narrative of guilt and catharsis. By the time Baltz engages with them, he is short-circuiting their familiar pathways and forcing the viewer into a colder, more critically distanced encounter.

The structure of *The Deaths in Newport* reads more like a deposition than a typical photographic series. Its most consequential form may have been its translation into an interactive CD-ROM photo-essay, a format that allowed Baltz to combine text, archival images, and commentary in a manner closer to a Dateline investigation. In the original CD-ROM format presented at Paradox (Amsterdam) in 1995, the viewer could choose from 56 photographs. Any image could be called up full-screen, with or without the accompanying audio



passage. Alternatively, the project could be played from beginning to end as an audio-visual presentation, without user interaction. In this format, the photo-essay lasts 30 minutes.

In *The Deaths in Newport*, the work reads like a return to the scene, marked by the characteristic scramble to hazard an explanation. The real subject is the forensic machinery that forms around an event: the rush to assign motive, establish a timeline, and decide what counts as evidence. At this point, the central treachery of the photographic medium becomes impossible to ignore. We tend to believe that a photograph “tells a story,” yet in *The Deaths in Newport*, Baltz throws a wrench into that expectation. He moves through this apparatus with the wary attention of someone who has seen how stories harden and how photographs are conscripted into those stories. What remains is a record of the case’s afterlife.

In working with the press images, Baltz noticed an uncanny resonance in photographs of the star witnesses, his father, and some of the accused, posed in front of a microphone. For Baltz, these became an echo of the McCarthy hearings of 1954, their shared arrangement of figure and microphone bringing two unrelated events into a single visual memory. The echo was internal, a recognition formed through his own experience. That repetition of form and pose turned these ordinary press photographs of the Newport case into strangely recursive images, a reminder of the media’s choreography and its lasting imprint on the social psyche.

II.

IT WAS ALLAN SEKULA who argued that Baltz’s method in *The Deaths in Newport* oscillates between two photographic modes: the forensic and the cosmetic. The forensic mode, rooted in *forensis*, the forum, belongs to the realm where evidence is publicly presented, discussed and contested. Whereas the cosmetic register is tied to the logic of surfaces, what the French call *photogénie*, the quality that gives an image heightened presence or visual allure. In the cosmetic mode, images are engineered and circulated for the seductions of newsprint and commercial iconicity.

This emphasis on surfaces runs throughout Baltz’s work. His early photographs of building façades fixated on surface appearance. They offered very few clues about the life inside. They even obscured their own function. As Walter Hopps famously remarked of the photographs in *New Industrial Parks*, we don’t know whether these buildings “manufacture pantyhose or megadeath.” The point was their blankness, their refusal to disclose anything beyond their cold and nondescript exterior. *The Deaths in Newport* extends that inquiry from buildings to the bodies of the accused. The press photographs Baltz appropriates were designed to perform a cosmetic function, their poses and lighting calibrated to satisfy mid-century scandal’s appetite for true crime spectacle. Baltz even notes how the press staged this cosmetic allure during the trial: a secretary on vacation, heading to the beach in her bathing suit, was denied entry to the trial, and photographers immediately turned the moment into a minor spectacle which, in both composition and narrative, Baltz likens to an expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

Photographic evidence in the forensic setting carries a double charge: it can spark an investigation, yet it also widens the aperture through which a narrative begins to unspool in the courtroom of public opinion. *The Deaths in Newport* belongs almost wholly to the latter category. The project assumes that there is no clean line between “evidence” and its staging, no neutral or self-sufficient factual base from which interpretation might proceed. “Just the facts,” in this light, becomes a hollow refrain. As Sekula long maintained, the courtroom is “the battleground of fiction,” a place where images perform political and narrative labor under the guise of objectivity.

In this climate of suspicion, Baltz understood that photographic evidence tends to enter the world already implicated: it arrives with claims attached, already projecting the terms of an unambiguous story. The photograph is treated as an impartial witness, though everyone involved knows it requires coaching. Its meaning is rehearsed long before it appears in court. Baltz is alert to this charge. In the Newport material, he finds images that have been handled too many times, pressed into service by newspapers, police, lawyers, and neighbors. Each party attempted to seamlessly fold the photographs into a narrative sturdy enough to hold public attention, or at least withstand scrutiny. The Newport case itself is a reminder of how fragile the category of “fact” can be.

At this juncture, I should offer up a spoiler: despite the apparent clarity and certainty the press and prosecution manufactured around motive and opportunity in the Overell case, the jury eventually found both accused not guilty. Part of the collapse of the prosecution’s argument owed to Baltz’s father. Because he was a mortician rather than a trained coroner or doctor, the defense cast doubt on his conclusions, widening a procedural fissure until the prosecution’s entire narrative gave way.



III.

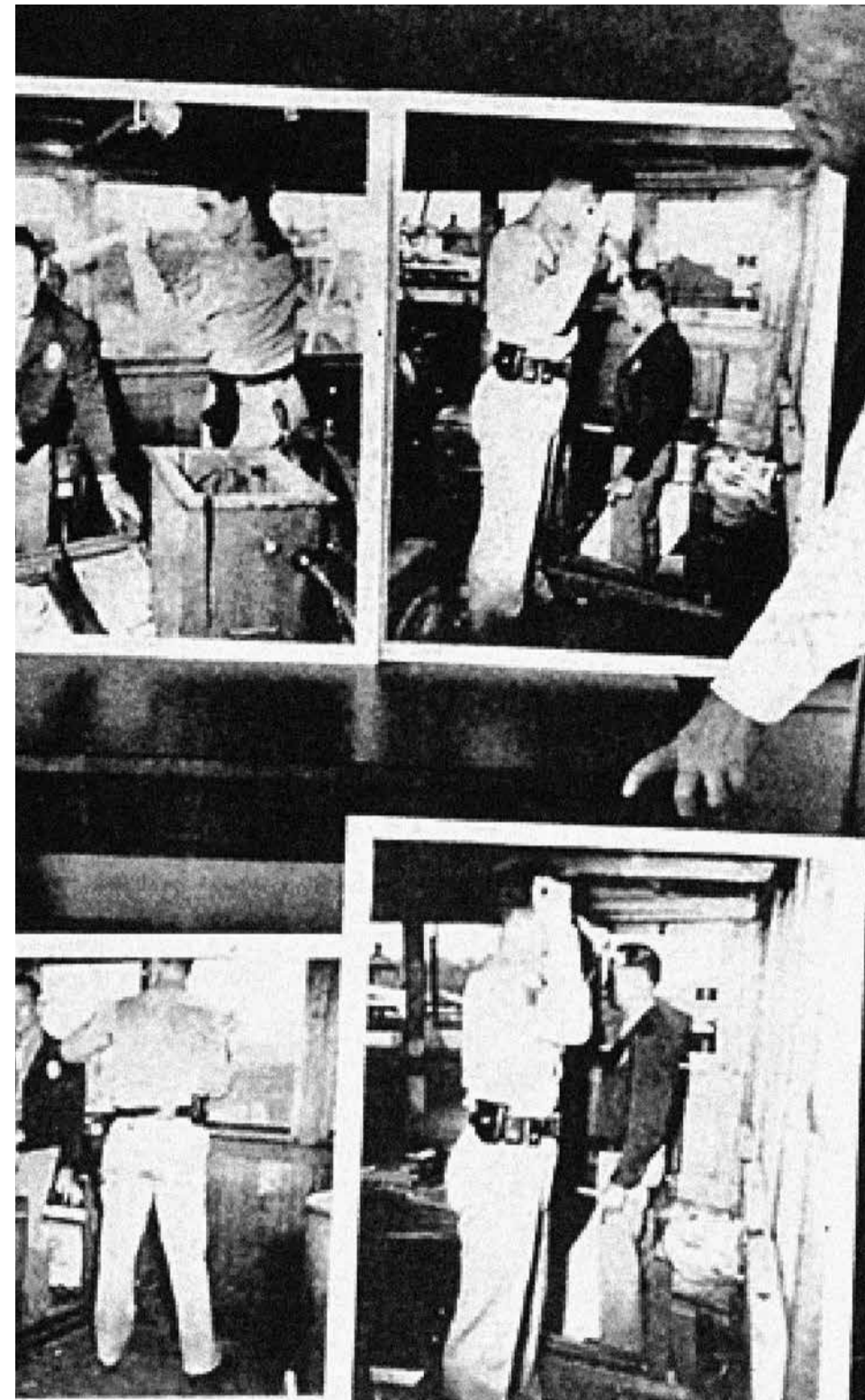
PERHAPS NEWPORT BEACH is the place where we can further complicate and expand how Baltz works in a forensic mode. It is worth noting that he originally wanted to call his first-ever photographic project, *Protoinvestigations* (a title he later softened to *Prototypes*). Across his work, there is a persistent sense that he is, to put it bluntly, detailing the scene of a crime — sometimes not a literal one, but the kind whose traces are absorbed into the built environment. What does this mean in practice?

In a 2009 interview with Matthew Witkowsky for the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Art Oral History Project, Baltz described his early images of new suburban and industrial development in Southern California — a landscape he was never hesitant to say he “loathed.” He explained that the most effective way to register his critique was not to rage against it overtly, but to “lay out, bit by bit, piece by piece, the evidence, like in a legal brief.”

Consider Baltz’s description of going out into the landscape of Park City, Nevada, which he likened to an apocalyptic wasteland. Baltz described the experience of surveying the damage inflicted on the site, noting what still clung to the edges of the city. The language is that of someone trying to catalogue what remains after the essential facts have already been lost to the violence imposed upon it, but also inherent to it. Baltz writes:

“OTHER THAN IN PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILMS OF NATURAL CATASTROPHES OR MAN-MADE DISASTERS, I HAD NEVER BEFORE SEEN A LANDSCAPE THAT WAS AS BLEAK, AND, AT LEAST SUPERFICIALLY, SO CHAOTIC. MUCH OF THE LAND LOOKED DEVASTATED AND EXPOSED: POKED, CHURNED, LITTERED WITH FRAGMENTS OF METAL, WOOD, GLASS AND WIRE, IT SUPPORTED ONLY MEAGRE, STUNTED VEGETATION. THIS APPEARANCE OF “MATTER OUT OF PLACE” WAS ONLY PARTIALLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE USUAL DISLOCATIONS OF CONSTRUCTION; EVEN THE LAND WHICH HAD ESCAPED DEVELOPMENT LOOKED PRETERNATURALLY SILENT AND LIFELESS. THE PLACE LOOKED LIKE THE AFTERMATH OF PURPOSELESS VIOLENCE...”





Mechanic Who Visited Yacht Says Overell Was Irrational Before Blast

State's Witness Used by Defense to Show Actions

BY GENE SHERMAN
Times Staff Representative

SANTA ANA, Sept. 4.—Through testimony of a previous prosecution witness the defense late today attempted to show the jury trying Beulah Louise Overell, 18, and George (Bud) Gollum, 21, for the murder of her parents, that Walter E. Overell was irrationally upset two hours and 45 minutes before dynamite shattered his yacht in Newport Harbor March 15.

This startling development came as Z. B. West, attorney for Gollum, questioned Ted Junkermeier, one of the two mechanics who worked on the ill-fated Mary E the night of the tragedy.

Demeanor Recounted

In Superior Judge Kenneth E. Morrison's courtroom, West led the mechanic through a description of the blasted cruiser and Overell's demeanor in the last few minutes they were together.

Junkermeier said he, a fellow mechanic and Overell left the



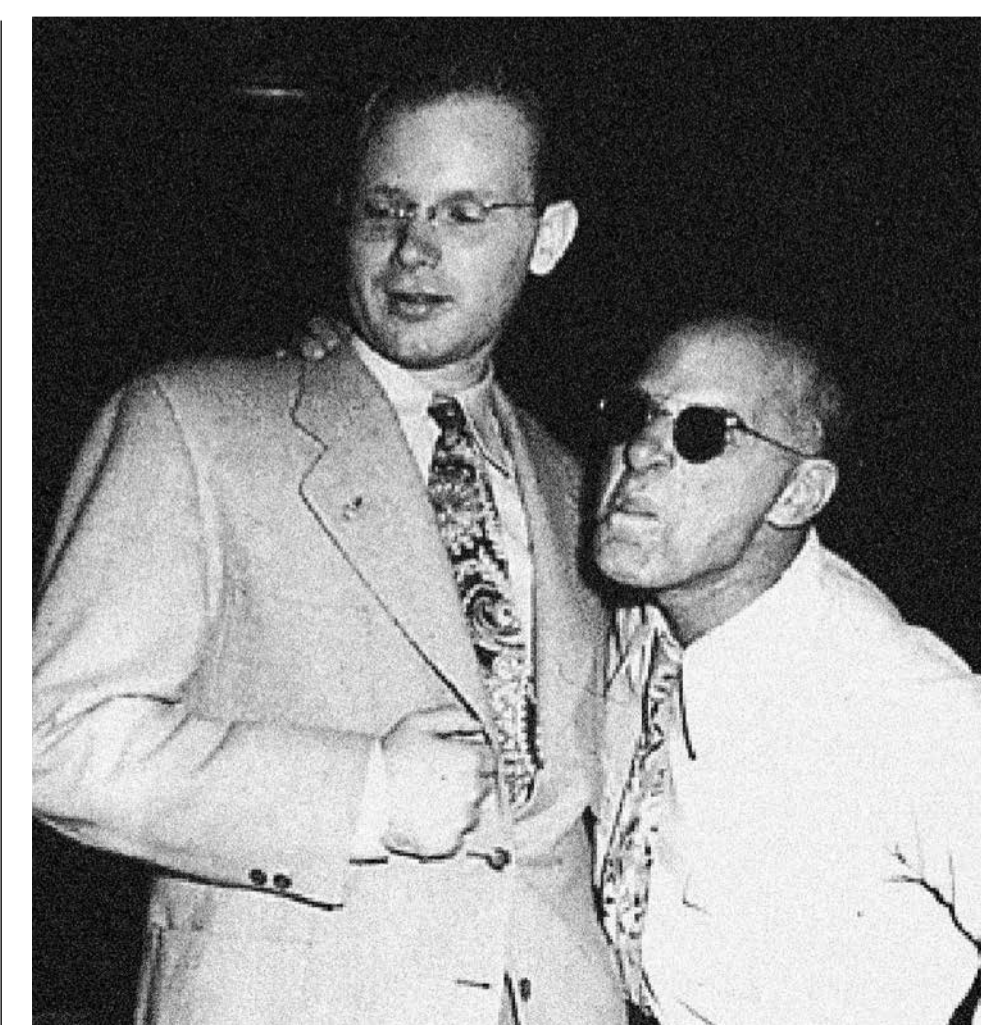
More recently, art historian Tyler Green, writing on the Modern Art Notes Podcast site, notes how, since the Trump presidency, the US federal government has acquired vast industrial warehouses for use as ICE detention centers. Anyone who has driven past these buildings knows the mute, terrifying monumentality of their blank façades, structures that many of us now perhaps recognize almost instinctively because Baltz photographed them half a century ago. Green turns to Baltz because *The New Industrial Parks near Irvine, Calif.* (1974), pictured these kinds of structures as cheap, anonymous boxes thrown up at the edges of cities designed to conceal whatever takes place inside. As Green notes, Baltz understood them as products of a civic nihilism: buildings so stripped of meaning that you “don’t know,” channeling Walter Hopps’s remark that they might be, “manufacturing panty hose or megadeath.” Green suggests that Baltz’s photographs, with their forensic calm, anticipate the infrastructures of the authoritarian systems we now inhabit, whether embedded in a liberal order or aligned with the far-right.

To complicate this account: if the present moment has taught us anything, it is that fascism has no essential architectural form. It can appear as a neo-classical arch or gold-gilded ballroom in Washington just as easily as in the nondescript buildings that line the edges of cities.

The meticulous, forensic approach of *The Deaths in Newport* recalls a familiar, often-cited, and sometimes overquoted observation by Walter Benjamin in *A Little History of Photography*. Benjamin, reflecting on Atget’s deserted Paris streets, wrote that they look “as if they had been the scene of a crime.” In such images, every corner of the city and every passerby present themselves as potential evidence. The photographer becomes a kind of examiner, a reader of traces, not unlike the augurs and haruspices Benjamin invokes. It is this dispassionate attentiveness that lends Baltz’s work its strange authority. Baltz takes Benjamin’s idea seriously and works through its implications, directing this evidentiary gaze toward a regional scandal and toward the personal archive that

shaped his own life. And similar to Benjamin’s Paris, Baltz’s Southern California is a place where the crime scene seems to regenerate itself endlessly. Baltz’s method remains consistent: assemble the fragments, examine what is there, hold your hand out and point to the scene of the crime, even when the crime, strictly speaking, has already gone cold.

In *The Deaths in Newport*, one cannot entirely escape the sense of an observer’s implied presence. By observer, I mean Baltz, yes, but also ourselves, because the photographs draw whoever looks at them into the conversation they open up. That sense only intensifies when we remember that Baltz first presented this material in lecture form, reciting the story aloud before translating it into an intermedia photo-essay CD-ROM, then handing over the images to the design firm Vier5 to convert them into a book. The work retains that atmosphere of address: a mode of looking shaped by narration, by someone speaking through images to an audience, inviting them to follow the thread of what he once recounted.



IV.

IT IS WORTH NOTING that archival footage was not the only imagery Baltz included in his essay. He opens with four photographs of his own, made shortly before and during his engagement with the archival material. These are a photograph of bougainvillea flowers; a nighttime image of a Milan intersection, titled *Rules without Exception*; the photograph, *11777 Foothill Blvd., Los Angeles, CA* (1991), showing the site where Rodney King was beaten by members of the Los Angeles Police Department; and lastly, a nondescript building where he was staying when he returned to Los Angeles in 1989. Within the text, the photograph of the bougainvillea appears as the title image, accompanied by a Dostoyevsky quote on the criminal. The nighttime image is paired with Baltz's reflection on his weariness with life in Europe. The two Los Angeles photographs appear alongside his account of returning to the city, a return he clearly loathed. At no point does he address these four images directly in the narration, which stands in marked contrast to the way he engages with the archival material that follows.

11777 Foothill Blvd., Los Angeles, CA (1991) was commissioned for Baltz's retrospective *Rule Without Exception* (March 26 – May 31, 1992) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). It was the first photograph viewers encountered upon entering the exhibition. The photograph was massive, printed 48 x 96 inches. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Baltz explained that the work emerged from his search for “completely generic locations” in Los Angeles, stating that:



“I SUPPOSE THERE’S A KIND OF NOSTALGIA IN THAT, BECAUSE LOS ANGELES IS REALLY BECOMING LESS GENERIC. AS IT BECOMES MORE OF A BUILT CITY, IT IS TAKING ON SOME SORT OF A FLAVOR RATHER THAN JUST OF BEING SORT OF THE ID OF THE MIDWEST.

(BUT) THERE ARE STILL VAST VAST TRACTS OF FEATURELESS STUFF IN LOS ANGELES. I WANTED TO MAKE UP A PHOTOGRAPH THAT LOOKED EASY AND TYPICAL. ANYBODY CAN SEE THAT. IT’S SOMETHING THAT’S COMPLETELY UNEXTRAORDINARY... IT LOOKS LIKE A SKIN GRAFT FROM 50 OTHER LOCATIONS AROUND HERE.”

This is one of those moments when what an artist says should be taken with a grain of salt. Yes, Baltz's photograph is unremarkable by design, depicting a washed-out suburban intersection, a nondescript apartment block, a gas station, a tangle of telephone poles under a smog-softened sky. Yes, it is generic. Yes, it looks like a place where nothing has happened and nothing ever will. And yet that is not the whole story, and Baltz knows it. His omission from the reporter is intentional.

The reality is that this was the site of a historic rupture. It is the place where Rodney King was brutally beaten by members of the Los Angeles Police Department. The museum knew this too. During the lead-up to the opening of Baltz's show, LACMA staff were reportedly anxious about exhibiting the photograph, concerned that it might provoke backlash. Baltz himself employed a banal title and never

addressed it directly in his *L.A. Times* interview, avoiding any explicit indication of what the image actually depicts — all of which compounds the feeling of an impenetrable facade. The neutrality of the caption functions as a discreet nod to its location for those in the know, while refusing to name it outright, keeping the violence just beneath the surface.

It should be added, too, that earlier in the interview, he is unequivocal about his disdain for Southern California — he says as much in his very first response. And when these remarks are placed alongside his reflections on his earlier work, a fuller picture comes into view:



“I WAS TRYING TO FIND A VOCABULARY TO MEDIATE MY SENSE OF UNSPEAKABLE HORROR AT BEING BORN WHEN AND WHERE I WAS. COMING FROM ORANGE COUNTY, I WATCHED THE GHASTLY TRANSFORMATION OF THIS PLACE — THE FIRST WAVE OF BULIMIC CAPITALISM SWEEPING ACROSS THE LAND, NEXT DOOR TO ME. I SENSED THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING HORRIBLY AMISS AND AWRY ABOUT MY OWN PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT.”



Lewis Baltz, *The New Industrial Parks near Irvine, California, Element #12 (South Corner, Riccar America, 3184 Pullman, Costa Mesa)*, 1974

© Successors of Lewis Baltz, The Lewis Baltz Archive, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California

In this sense, the blankness of the scene is also what allows the image to operate precisely as it does. The photograph is not made of the exact spot where King was beaten but *from* it, looking outward. Baltz offers nothing beyond the scene's own aggressive ordinariness. The image shows how mundane a location can appear even when it sits at the center of a historical rupture. At the moment of its depiction, the past announces itself not through presence but through its vacancy, graspable only at the moment when we encounter nothing, the blankness of a place that has been emptied of its actors, the air settling back into the shape of what once disturbed it.

In this sense, the photograph becomes a record of what is no longer visible. It registers the city's scars by refusing to show them. Los Angeles emerges as a landscape marked by trauma precisely because its most consequential sites look indistinguishable from all the others. Their histories survive only in the faintest pressure left in the air. Although the meanings of Baltz's images may be obscured, these histories can be made graspable through narration. The nondescript quality of the place, with its refusal to yield or spell out its own past, invites the viewer to do the work rather than offering an illustration. The task of the historian is to coax the outline of the past from its apparent nothingness, to show how a place that looks like nothing simultaneously holds everything that happened there, waiting for someone to draw its contours back into view.

BIOGRAPHIES

LEWIS BALTZ (1945–2014) was a pivotal figure in postwar American photography whose work redefined the conventions of landscape representation. Emerging in the context of the landmark 1975 exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape*, Baltz developed a rigorous, conceptually driven practice that rejected the romanticism of traditional landscape photography in favor of a cool, forensic examination of the built environment.

Working primarily in serial form, Baltz produced austere black-and-white photographs of industrial parks, suburban tracts, and marginal spaces shaped by late-capitalist expansion. Projects such as *The Tract Houses* (1971) and *The New Industrial Parks near Irvine, California* (1974) exemplify his precise visual language—marked by stark tonal control, repetition, and an exacting attention to surface—through which architecture becomes a proxy for broader systems of power, control, and anonymity. His images are notable for their restraint and clarity, offering neither overt critique nor sentiment, yet revealing the psychological and environmental consequences embedded within these seemingly neutral spaces.

In later decades, Baltz expanded his practice to include color, video, and large-scale installations, often working in Europe and engaging more directly with the intersections of technology, surveillance, and global capital. Across his career, he remained deeply attuned to the ways in which contemporary landscapes are constructed, mediated, and experienced. Baltz's work is held in major public collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Tate, London.

ANDREW WITT is an art historian and critic who writes on contemporary art. He is currently the 2025–2026 PERICULUM Foundation for Contemporary Art Discourse Fellow. His book *Lost Days, Endless Nights: Photography and Film from Los Angeles* was published in 2025 by the MIT Press. His writing has appeared in the Los Angeles Review of Books, Camera Austria, History of Photography, Momus, Oxford Art Journal and Philosophy of Photography. He completed his PhD at University College London in 2017 and his MA at UCL in 2010. From 2018 to 2022 he was Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Institut für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin.

PARADOX is a nonprofit organization founded in 1993. It develops projects on contemporary issues with documentary authors: photographers, filmmakers, visual artists, writers, and researchers.

Founded with the aim of stimulating the development of documentary photography, Paradox has initiated more than 60 unique productions that have travelled to some 120 venues worldwide.



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