

HOW WE LIVE NOW

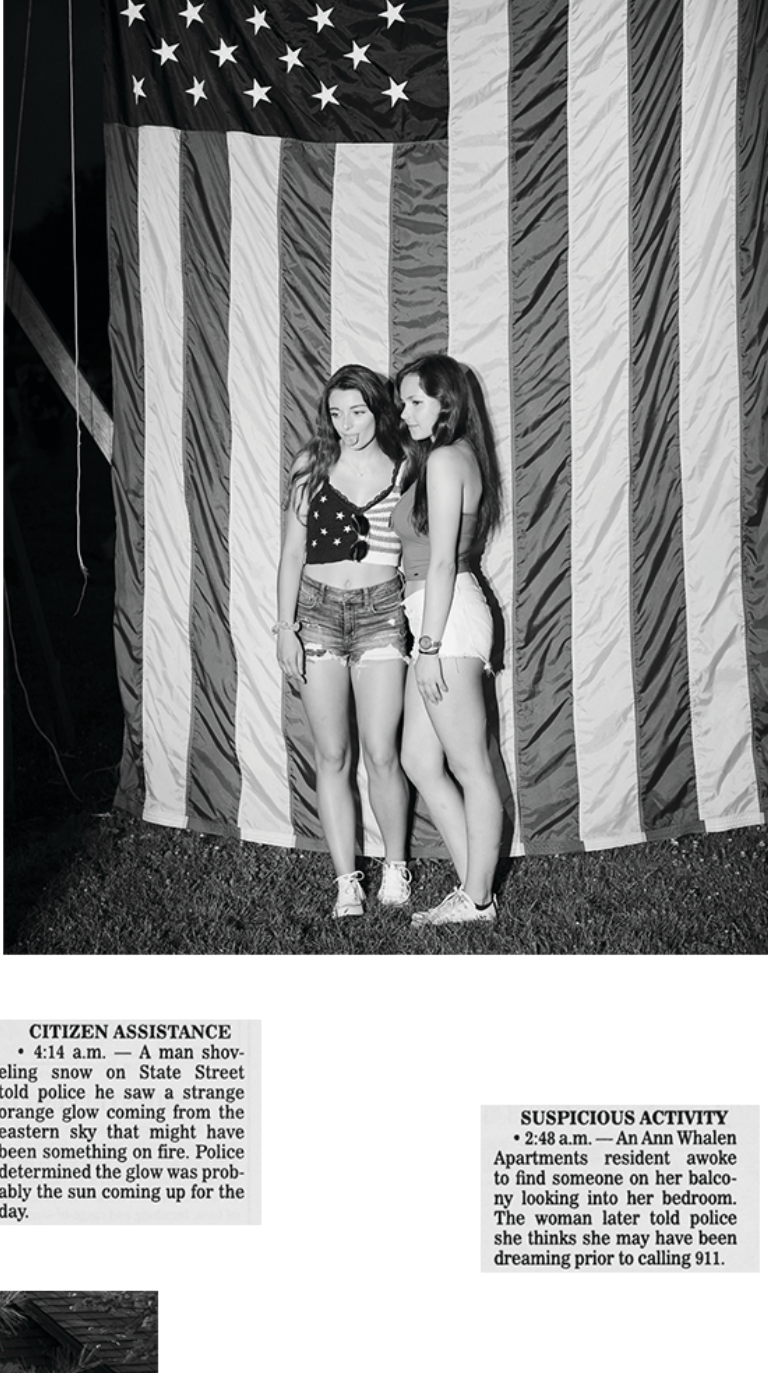
HWLN #1

Aaron Schuman, SLANT (Election, Fall 2020)

Online: 3rd November - 6th December 2020

"Tell all the truth
but tell it slant —
Success in Circuit
lies
Too bright for our
infirm Delight
The Truth's superb
surprise
As Lightning to
the Children eased
With explanation kind
The Truth must
dazzle gradually
Or every man
be blind —"

- Emily Dickinson



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

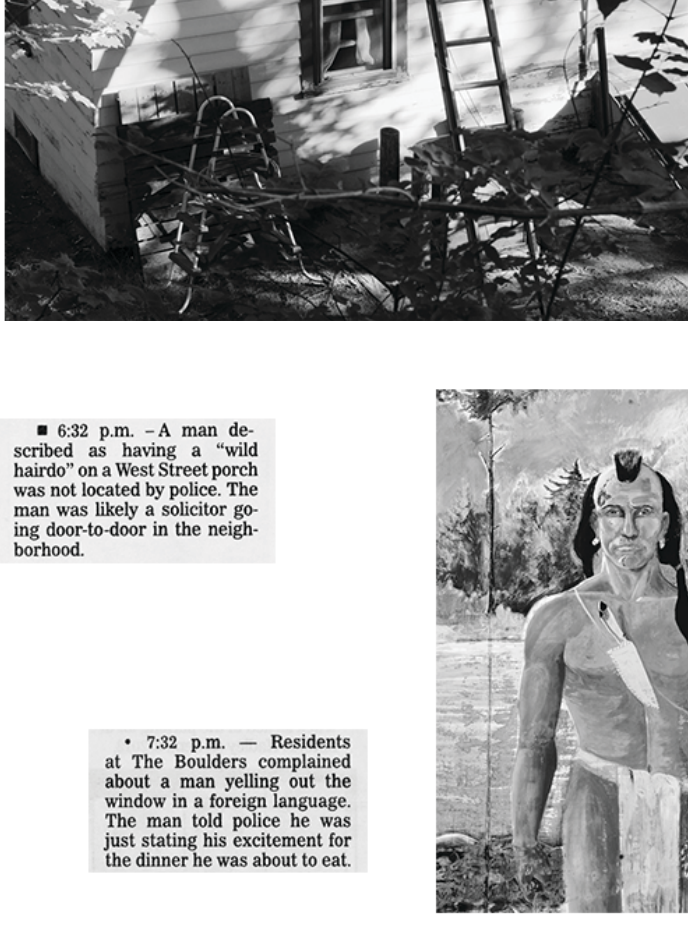
■ 1:15 p.m. — A man reported he was uncomfortable with a protester standing at the intersection of Amity and South Pleasant streets with a sign stating "kill feminism."

CITIZEN ASSISTANCE

• 4:14 a.m. — A man shoveling snow on State Street told police he saw a strange orange glow coming from the eastern sky that might have been something on fire. Police determined the glow was probably the sun coming up for the day.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

• 2:48 a.m. — An Ann Whalen Apartments resident awoke to find someone on her balcony looking into her bedroom. The woman later told police she thinks she may have been dreaming prior to calling 911.



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

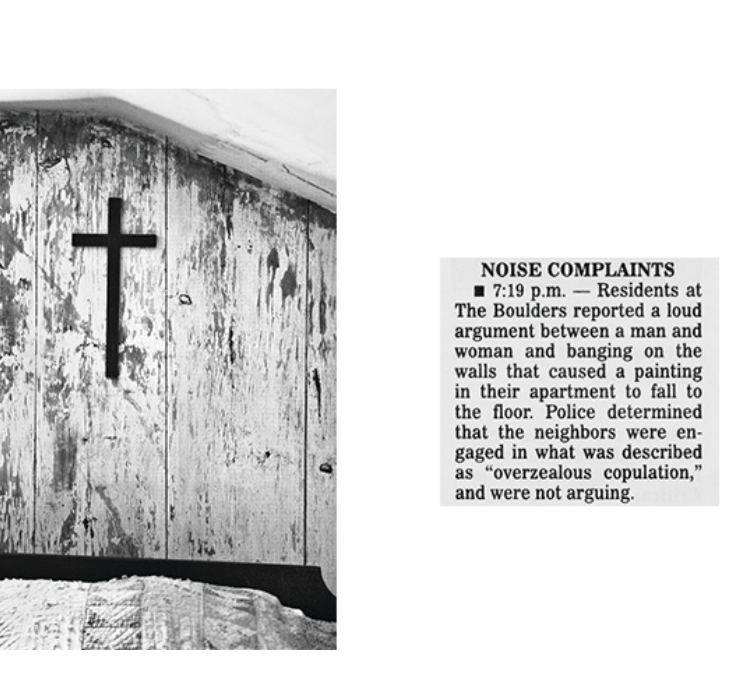
• 11:03 a.m. — An Amherst woman told police a neighbor who has behaved in odd ways is using a camera to photograph her home.



CITIZEN ASSISTANCE

• 6:20 p.m. — A woman called police to express concern about an incident that occurred within the last decade in which she believes aliens peered into her windows while she was getting dressed. The woman was offered mental health assistance, which she declined.

■ 7:32 p.m. — Residents at The Boulders complained about a man yelling out the window in a foreign language. The man told police he was just stating his excitement for the dinner he was about to eat.



• 9:40 p.m. — A South Amherst resident told police he got a phone call from a person claiming to be an Afghan soldier who had him "in his cross hairs" due to his involvement in local civil rights issues. The resident called the police again the following day to report additional prank calls from the same person, who spoke with a Middle Eastern accent.



NOISE COMPLAINTS

■ 7:19 p.m. — Residents at The Boulders reported a loud argument between a man and woman and banging on the walls that caused a painting in their apartment to fall to the floor. Police determined that the neighbors were engaged in what was described as "overzealous copulation," and were not arguing.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 3:06 a.m. — Police located four men near a home under construction at the intersection of Mill and State streets, with one of the men holding a wooden stake. The men told police "they were trying to find adventure." They were sent on their way.



• 11:22 p.m. — Two people sitting on a pile of dirt near the Olympia Place construction site were sent on their way by police. They told police they were just discussing their relationship.



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 1:37 a.m. — A concerned parent called police about her 18-year-old daughter having an inappropriate relationship with a former teacher.



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 7:07 a.m. — A Heatherstone Road resident reported being awoken to the song "Endless Love" and told police an intruder may have entered the home. The residence was secure, according to police, and the source of the music was not identified.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 8:30 p.m. — A man wearing only a bathrobe running in the middle of West Street near the Atkins Corner roundabouts was located by Amherst Police. The man told police he was out on a "punishing run" after breaking up with his boyfriend at Hampshire College. College officers transported the man back to the nearby campus.



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 12:32 a.m. — College-age women waiting at a bus stop near Puffton Village told police they were approached by a suspicious man who asked if they were "ready to have sex tonight." The man was not located.



DISTURBANCES

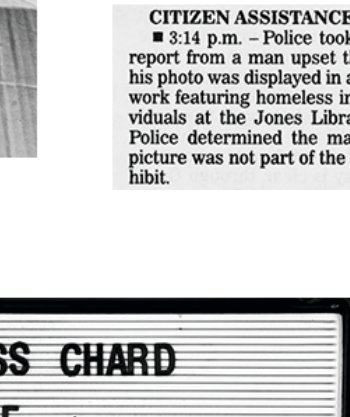
■ 12:27 a.m. — An out-of-control teenage girl at a South Amherst home was calmed down by police. She was just frustrated with her parents.

NOISE COMPLAINTS

• 6:36 a.m. — Strange sounds coming from the woods near Mill Valley Estates were determined to be trees creaking due to the cold temperatures.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

• 4:44 a.m. — Strange sounds coming from a Harkness Road building were determined to be acorns falling against a metal roof.



LARCENY

■ 10:27 p.m. — A large portrait of Jesus made from fruit was stolen from the cafeteria at the Newman Center.

CITIZEN ASSISTANCE

■ 3:14 p.m. — Police took a report from a man upset that his photo was displayed in artwork featuring homeless individuals at the Jones Library. Police determined the man's picture was not part of the exhibit.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 8:57 p.m. — Police checked the area of the First Baptist Church for a man standing outside it for a long time. He was not located.



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 10:15 p.m. — A boy peeping into a window at The Boulders fled before police got there. The woman who lives at the apartment was given advice on how to pull down her shades so no one could look into her home.



FIGHTS

■ 12:55 a.m. — People cursing at each other from opposite sides of Main Street near the Emily Dickinson Museum fled before police got there. There was no evidence that the argument became physical.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 11:15 a.m. — Police were notified about a man who threw a temper tantrum while at a downtown office. The man who was wearing a jacket with photos of deceased people stapled to its inside, was not located.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 9:51 p.m. — A woman called police to respond to her North Amherst home after her son placed his urine on a hot plate in the shed as part of an experiment in alchemy. The actions of her son are allegedly a violation of a court agreement.



SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

■ 12:06 a.m. — People inside a vehicle at the high school who told police they were observing stars were warned about their behavior and sent on their way.



SLANT (Election, Fall 2020)

Aaron Schuman

HOW WE
LIVE NOW

November 3rd - December 6th 2020

On the day that former US President Barack Obama called “the most important election of our lifetimes”, Foreground launched our online programme How We Live Now with SLANT (Election, Fall 2020) by acclaimed American-born, Somerset-based photographer Aaron Schuman.

SLANT (Election, Fall 2020) uses police reports and photographs from Amherst, Massachusetts, to reflect on the disquieting rise of division and intolerance within the climate of post-truth politics in contemporary America.

If you opened the local newspaper in the small New England town of Amherst, you might find a section entitled “Police Reports” – succinct and extraordinarily anticlimactic accounts of crimes, suspicious activities, events and non-events reported in the area during the previous week. In SLANT, Schuman interweaves a selection of these clippings with quietly wry photographs he made within a thirty-mile radius of the town, in response to their unintentionally deadpan descriptions. What began as a genuinely affectionate take on the small towns where Schuman spent his childhood steadily came to reflect the disquieting rise of fake news and paranoia in America following the 2016 election of Donald Trump.

SLANT (Election, Fall 2020) was a unique edit of Schuman’s material, created especially for How We Live Now, released as Americans went to the polls in what was anticipated to be the largest voter turn-out in over a century. The huge electoral turn out was pre-figured by the Covid-19 pandemic ravaging the US, while its seriousness was denied by the White House; violent clashes between right-wing militias and civil rights protestors, including politically-motivated killings; attacks on public officials by the president; suggestions of a resistance to a peaceful transition of power; and perhaps the greatest division between

Americans on issues of democracy, racial justice, immigration, abortion, gun law and policing since the 1970’s.

In SLANT (Election, Fall 2020), Schuman’s subtly offbeat combination of images and words seen in previous edits of the work were combined to increasingly emphasise the foreboding sense of unease that has grown to dominate the American psyche as something dissonant and increasingly sinister stirred beneath the surface of contemporary American society.

Schuman’s online project was a sombre meditation on what was, at the very least, a complex landmark in the history of American democracy.

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