

I Remember a White Cat in Tangier

Max Reeves

get into the house...he disappeared."

William S. Burroughs

from The Cat Inside

"I remember a white cat in Tangier at 4 calle Larachi, first cat to

TANGIER

"Since Tangier has always been perceived as a territory at least on the edge of, if not beyond, the mundane world, it has been the victim of myths, the fantasies, the dreams and ardent desires imposed upon it by its colonists. The result, of course, has been an irreparable fragmentation of the city's character." (Finlayson)

We passed through Tangier, Samanta and I, over eight days in the late Summer/early Autumn of 2019 and I took some photos.

I had been there before, three decades before, a very different city. Paranoid, suspicious, hostile. I drank at Dean's Bar, I travelled to the Rif Mountains and stayed with Berbers in their Kif farm, where my bed was sacks of 00 grade hash (I didn't smoke). We were chased by gunmen on 50cc motorbikes. We were shadowed by a Berber magic man intent on psychically destroying Aziz. Or so he said. We went to the magic shop for protection. I still have a feather of a Hoodhood bird. I was harassed for being a Jew because my hat had six sides. My hat hid my Dreadlocks. I was not a Jew. I met an old man at an art opening and we chatted. The next day I was told it was Paul Bowles. I was there because William Burroughs and Brion Gysin had been there. Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. Crucial figures in my crucial years whilst trying to forge a world view and identity on which to base a creative practice (photography). Because *Naked Lunch* had been made there. Because for me it was a place of Myth and Legend. Tangier.

Always liminal, a Crossroads. Between East and West, North and South. Tangier is an Edge City. It was made and International Zone from 1923 until late October 1956 and had a reputation for tolerance, espionage, financial laxness, multiculturalism, vice, opportunism, magic and Bohemianism. "The insistent image is of a never-never land of international intrigue, shady financial dealings and esoteric sex for sale or rent. Seedy, salacious, decadent, degenerate – Tangier is inevitably identified with 'Interzone', William Burroughs' fevered, fictional, drug-inspired evocation of the boomtown years of Sodom-on-Sea." (Finlayson)

That Tangier is long gone. By 1992 the place was in a state of anxiety I thought. Viewed with suspicion and embarrassment by the new centre of power Rabat. Thirty years later it has been transformed again as money and development have returned to push it into the Twenty First Century and out of the Twentieth. Almost all traces of its Beatnik past seem lost. As the French street names have been replaced with Arabic ones it is hard to find the old locations. No-one seems to know either. Tangier has moved on.

This book is meant as a homage to the influence of Burroughs, Gysin and the others. By no means is it meant to be a definitive anything. We traced some of the old sites as a matter of pilgrimage, and added themes to try to fill in a mood. It is also a personal revisit. It is a study of a lost world of dream that is gone. A tribute to Interzone.

Max Reeves Spring 2020 For my Daughter Django Tangier Chan-Reeves





















