

Shadow Town
Jason Tannen

"In the silence time passed. It passed in the dry whirr of the electric clock on the mantel, in the far-off toot of an auto horn on Aster Drive, in the hornet drone of a plane over the foothills across the canyon, in the sudden lurch and growl of the electric refrigerator in the kitchen.

"A hand and glove appeared on the slope of the white metal railing, at the edge of the archway, where the stairs went down. It appeared and stopped."

The Lady in the Lake
Raymond Chandler
1943

Suspense...mystery...archetype. My work explores these elements as portrayed in cinema and popular culture. The black and white photographs depict archetypal characters in stylized urban landscapes. Their mask-like expressions and vague gestures evoke some of life's more anxious moments of uneasiness, suspicion and urban isolation. Viewed individually, these scenes are fragmentary - moments seemingly without context. Observed as a narrative, however, they tell their dark tales.

Shadow Town brings these dark elements into space and time. The police squad room offers a dispassionate look at desperate people in dire situations. Colors fade as the viewer passes into a black and gray hotel room on a rainy night. The soothing sounds of city traffic and a passing thunderstorm are disturbed by more ominous sounds. The T.V. radiates a surveillance view of the city at night, along with other less benign slices of life. Continuously-changing images of mean streets, viewed through a peep-hole in the wall, speak to the Norman Bates in us all.