

NORTH OF CHICAGO, 1975

Documentary Photographs by Bill Lanphier

At 24, Bill Lanphier's response to a world he found challenging was to buy a good camera, face the world head-on, and shoot it. Armed with an open mind, irreverence, an appreciation of the absurd, a deep sensitivity to his surroundings, and an unassuming, 35mm Canon FTb, Lanphier focused on where he grew up, the north suburbs of Chicago and rural areas beyond, documenting, just for fun, whatever happened to catch his attention.

By his late 20s, Bill had become a professional musician and put photography on hold to play bass with Madonna, The Chicago Symphony, Linda Ronstadt, The Rippingtons, and Rickie Lee Jones, among others.

But, by the late 1980s, Bill, living in Los Angeles, became disenchanted with the music scene there and turned to writing and, again, photography. To date, Lanphier has contributed to dozens of powersports, music, and mainstream publications here and abroad, including Bass Player, playboy.com, ATV Sport, Consumer's Digest, World Book Encyclopedia, and National Lampoon. Published images number in the tens of thousands.

Still, among Lanphier's extensive and eclectic photographic pursuits, his early documentary images are among his most powerful.

"Early on," Lanphier says, "I had no idea I was pursuing a legitimate style of photography with a name. Only after I'd been shooting for a year did I discover the amazing work of Walker Evans, Joel Meyerowitz, Stephen Shore, and Joel Sternfeld. My singular goal was to capture the world as it is. My darkroom technique was as unobtrusive as possible, and negatives were often printed without cropping. For me, the creative process for each documentary photograph culminates with the click of the shutter."

Chicago and environs have changed dramatically in the 34 years since these Lanphier photos were taken. Once sleepy, seemingly timeless bedroom communities and quiet rural areas are now home to big corporations and strip malls. Time marches on. Fortunately, documentary photographers like Bill Lanphier are drawn to record representative slices of it.

Bill Lanphier
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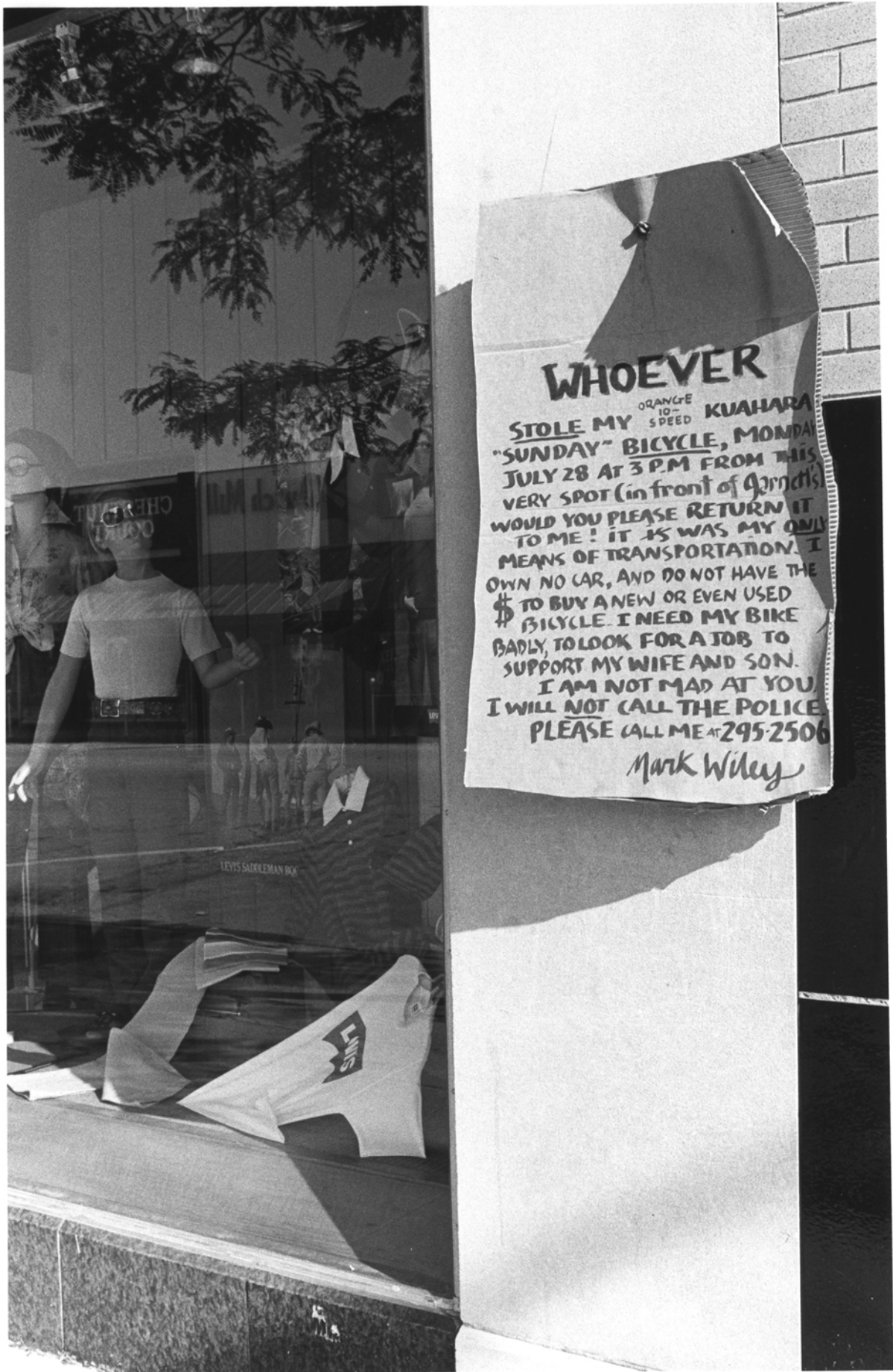




Milwaukee Road Train Station
Deerfield, June 13, 1975



Wheeling, May, 1975



Highland Park, August 8, 1975



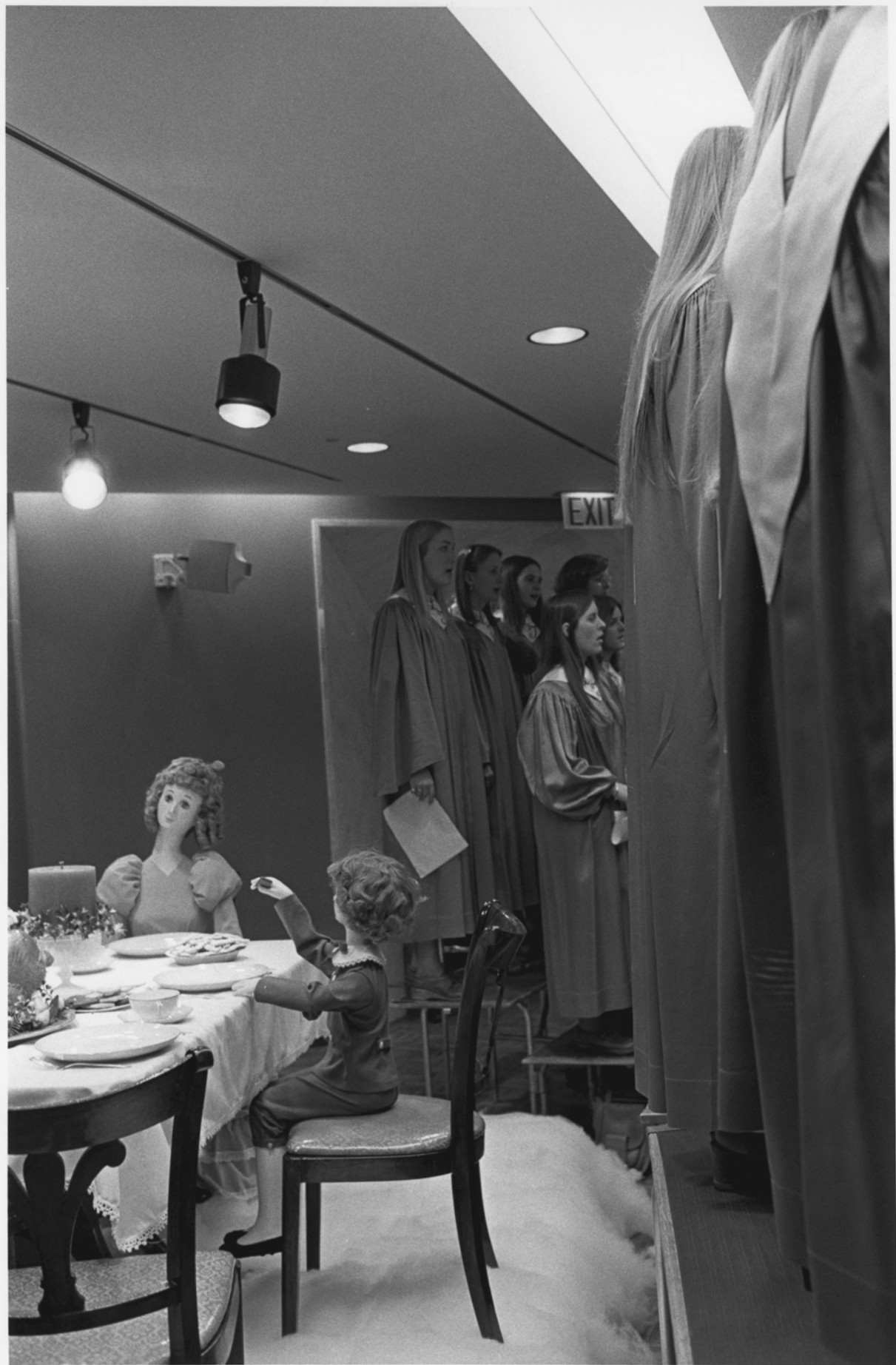
Long Lake
November 3, 1975



Gas station, East of Fox Lake
December 4, 1975



Deerfield Garden Apartments
Deerfield, June, 1975



Bank lobby, Chicago Loop, December 4, 1975



Deerfield Garden Apartments
Deerfield Road west of Waukegan Road



Music store sign
Near Lake Zurich, September, 1975



Isobel
Deerfield, October, 1975



Watching a House Fire, Deerfield, 1975



Deerfield Garden Apartments
Deerfield, June, 1975



Garden center, Glenview
May, 1975



Wilmette beach
May, 1975



Bill Lanphier and Girl, 1975
Northeast corner, Deerfield and Waukegan Road
Photo by Mark Zupan