

Bone's Diner
White Sulphur Springs, WV
1991

I took this photograph in 1991 in the small town of White Sulphur Springs, located in southeastern West Virginia. White Sulphur Springs is famous for the five-star Greenbrier Hotel. In 1991, I was teaching a 22-week photography class for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). During the final week of class, my wife Linda and I took a student and her husband on a photographic field trip.

While driving through White Sulphur Springs late in the evening, I saw this scene and realized I had to photograph it. The outside light level and the diner's interior lights were almost balanced. I parked my car about a block away and began getting my equipment ready. I knew that I had to take the photograph without the diner's patrons seeing me and spoiling the scene. I had my 4x5 view camera and Hasselblad medium format camera system in the car, but I chose the 35mm Nikon-F with a 50mm F/1.4 lens, a yellow filter, and T-Max 100 B&W film to take this photograph. I used my Luna-Pro light meter to take an incident light reading to set the exposure.

After getting my camera ready, we casually walked down the street to a concrete bench directly across from the diner. I had everyone else sit while I crouched behind and rested the camera on the bench. I watched the scene for several minutes before the people in the photograph all interacted ("The Decisive Moment") and I clicked the shutter. I took about five other frames of this scene, but none came close to that first exposure.

Shortly after this photograph was taken the owner passed away and the diner was sold. The new owner changed the name to Bev's Diner and placed several plastic tables and chairs in front of the diner ruining the photogenic quality of the scene.

In the year 2005 the diner was sold again and is now called Vicky's Diner.

Bruce Burgin
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