

“Take Down That Wall: Enough is Enough”



Photograph by Jorge Duenes / Reuters; Tijuana, Mexico; April 10, 2016

(20190519 by Andeé Sea Cae Jak) As a Canadian, driving through the United States of America (“USA”) has been an amazing experience: each state has such a different personality and they are NOT shy to express it. Michigan radio stations, thankfully, really like “alternative rock” music (my personal favourite) and Michigan’s Interstate 94S (“I94s”) provides ample opportunity to access and exit—a feature that quickly became very important to me. (Note that in the USA, one pays for the gas *before* they fill up their tank. I, on the other hand, am used to filling up the tank, paying for the gas and then driving away. In other words, I donated hundreds of dollars to gas stations along the I94S and remained grateful for all of exits until I finally put a post-it note on my dashboard: “do not drive away *without* the gas”.

I made a big mistake in Kentucky—I thought I was too busy to go to the Kentucky Derby ... and it never forgave me. My “scoot through to Arkansas” became a scenic tour. It was beautiful; however, I was in a hurry to get to Mexico and I did not appreciate the landscape that it forced me to travel through. (I’ll have to return ... and make sure that I don’t miss that Derby!)

Attempting to avoid Tennessee was interesting: all I was trying to do was drive west and all of the highways seemed to go east.

Eventually, I arrived in Arkansas. It did not get the attention it deserved; neither did Oklahoma. I briefly met Amarillo after scooting across the three, hilariously-named exits at the top of Texas: it just wanted to say “Hi! Stay here! We’re super fun!”

Albuquerque’s highway infrastructure at its core is incredible, in my view. Plus, I survived it and did not get lost. (Constantly “directionally-challenged” as I am usually absorbed and distracted by my surroundings, this was a joyous occasion for me.)

I crossed the border at El Paso, Texas and stayed in a lovely motel just five minutes from “That Wall”. I enjoyed a glass of wine and a great sampler plate at Applebee’s.

Then, I drove along the Mexican border for about an hour. I was physically nauseous as school children smiled and waved at me from school yards and homes which had “That Wall” as part of their back yard. I would like to start a petition:

“Remove the construct that has been erected on the U.S.-Mexican border and support Mexico’s participation in the new world economy.”

As a Canadian, I am not sure if I will be able to find a way to do this. I may have to marry an American.