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## MARK STEINMETZ

*Atlanta, USA, 2007*

Fuji 6 x 9 with 90 mm./Tri-x PAN film

While I was making the photographs that would later go in my book *Greater Atlanta*, I would sometimes photograph the deserted streets of downtown Atlanta on Sunday mornings. Mostly this was an opportunity for me to photograph among the various buildings without interference from people but on occasion I would come across someone interesting to photograph. This man at first struck me because he was all in white. I know very little about him. I spoke to him briefly in order to get permission to take some photos and he told me he was working in a kitchen in a nearby restaurant and was out on a break. He was standing in an empty parking lot and was simply talking to a friend who was up above at a second story window. I've always been fascinated by how images can be extracted from events - the new picture (the extracted fragment) has a life of its own, and now becomes available to new meanings and interpretations that no longer depend on the larger circumstances of anything that might have actually taken place. Photographs never explain; they only suggest. The white shirt and pants, the barbed wire, the hand to the heart, the upturned face - what might they mean?

The first four frames in the contact sheet strike me as rather aimless. There's a tiny helicopter in the sky of the fourth frame (which is hard to notice in the contact) so perhaps that one is not totally without a point. Sometimes I take photographs just to get things started and rolling, to prime the pump (though hopefully I don't take too many of those ones.) Sometimes I'll take a picture because I am not sure whether or not it will seem good to me later - so I'll take the picture just in case. For the most part I feel that there is more at risk (at least for me) in photographing people than in photographing landscapes or scenes. Other people after all can talk back. (In the absence of that feeling of risk - in whichever form it takes - can passion exist?)

