



UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE WALL

a TAYLOR GENOVESE film

FILM INFORMATION

FILM TITLE

Under the Shadow of the Wall

CONTACT INFO

Taylor Genovese - Director, Cinematographer, Editor, Writer

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taylorgenovese.com

TECHNICAL INFO

Running Time: 9 minutes

Exhibition Format: DCP 2K; Digital File (ProRes 422 HQ)

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Sound: Stereo

Frame rate: 24 fps

Shooting Format: Digital HD

Color, English

<https://www.kuznitsa.media/#shadow>



<https://letterboxd.com/film/under-the-shadow-of-the-wall/>



<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt18328740/>

SYNOPSIS

This video essay focuses on the landscapes of the Sonoran Desert—and the project of a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico—as a way of investigating the manner in which something as seemingly generic as a wall can take on particular political and affective forms. This short provocation explores the ways that violent and distasteful objects create, and subsequently come to characterize, malevolent spectacles.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My sub-compact car rattled and knocked as it bounced along a dirt road that snaked its way through the desert near Douglas, Arizona. Through my passenger-side window, I could start to see the recently installed, massive copper-colored border wall peeking out from the space between the hills of this rolling landscape dotted with ancient rock, small cacti, twiggy trees, and dry brush. As I got closer to the San Bernardino Wildlife Refuge, I pulled my car off the road and squeezed it into a small clearing between two spindly mesquite trees and stepped out into the mild but dry winter air.

About 100 yards ahead of me was a tightly packed series of vertical steel beams that reached twenty feet up toward the clear sky and stretched off horizontally in either direction. I could hear quails gently cooing in the creosote bushes next to me and in the distance, the gentle drone and slight glimmer of semi-trucks could be seen and heard as they slowly crawled across the *Carretera Federal 2* that wound its way along the border of Mexico and the United States. Other than that, it was quiet; dead quiet.

I began to cautiously walk towards the wall, continually checking over my shoulder for any sign of workers or Border Patrol agents. I felt like I was trespassing—which I probably was—but there were no posted signs or obstructions other than the massive wall itself. I glimpsed through the narrow bars at the Mexican side and the landscape looked the same—the same dirt, the same rocks, the same mountains, and, as the details retreated into smudgy infinity, the same gradient of dull browns and greens so indicative of the Sonoran Desert.

This was my first experience interacting with the border wall—a grotesque structure that continues to stand at our southern border. I had initially only wanted to put together a photo essay that would document this artifact at the tail-end of the Trump era, but after setting foot in the scrub brush of the Arizona borderlands, I immediately intuited that a film must accompany my photographs. There's something visceral, raw, and immediate about a film that I knew would be lacking in my accompanying photography.

In a way, this film exists as my bittersweet goodbye to the Sonoran Desert—a unique and naturally gorgeous environment that I have witnessed being slowly ground up and disemboweled by real estate developers, mining corporations, and energy executives over the course of my thirty-six years here. In the summer of 2022, my family and I will pack up our things and return to New York, leaving behind the place where I was born and grew up. In many inescapable ways, I will always be a desert rat, but this is not the same place I trekked through as a child. It isn't the same magnificent desolation that I explored as a teenager. It isn't the setting of raw vivacity I would, as an adult, frequently pitch a tent inside of and just stand in awe.

But it could be.

As my mentor David Graeber used to say: "The ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently."

STILLS



BIOS



TAYLOR GENOVESE – DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHER, EDITOR, WRITER

Taylor Genovese is an anthropologist and artist who works in film, video, photography, and sound. Genovese is currently completing his Ph.D. at Arizona State University, where he is part of the Center for Philosophical Technologies and the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict. He lives in the Hudson Valley, New York.



DICK POWIS – ORIGINAL SCORE

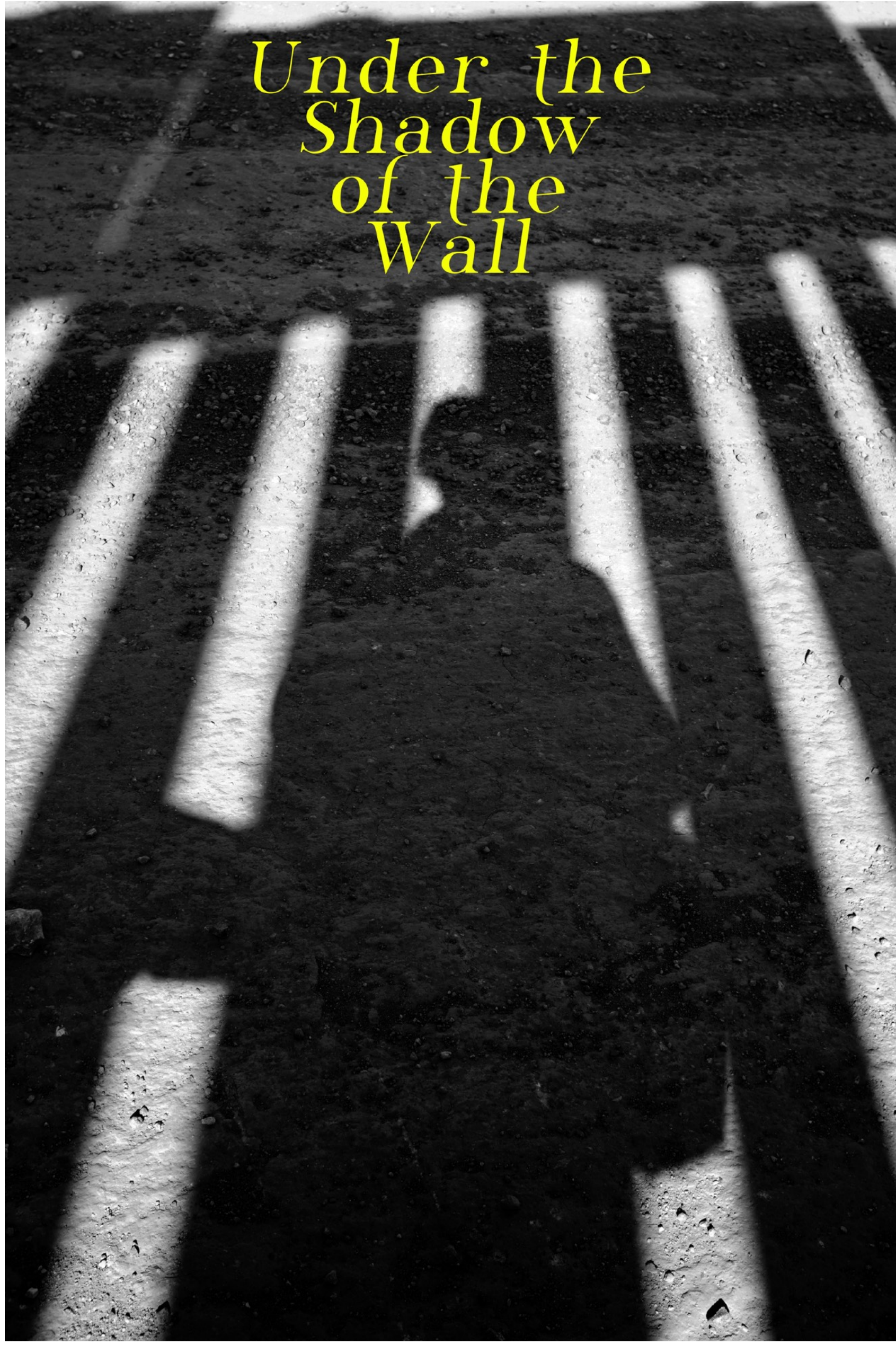
Dick Powis is a medical anthropologist and ethnographic photographer who researches masculinity, kinship, and pregnancy in southern Florida (US) and Senegal (West Africa). His film score work is influenced by David Bowie, Nick Cave, Alessandro Cortini, Augustus Muller, Trent Reznor, and Tristan Shone. Powis is currently a public health research fellow at University of South Florida. He lives in Tampa, Florida.



LAIKEN JORDAHL – HIMSELF

Laiken Jordahl is a Borderlands Campaigner who works to protect wildlife, ecosystems, and communities throughout the U.S.–Mexico borderlands and draws attention to the costs of border wall construction and border militarization. Before joining the Center for Biological Diversity, Jordahl worked with the National Park Service throughout the Rocky Mountain West, including Big Bend National Park and Organ Pipe National Monument. He has also worked as a bike mechanic, a clam farmer, and a legislative fellow in the U.S. House of Representatives.

POSTER



High resolution image available at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Uh_AaWNlwKT-q3F5eXYlrQWo_ofj8sMsQ?usp=sharing

SCREENINGS AND AWARDS



AWARDS

Winner for Best Short Documentary – ProToPost Film Festival

Nominated for Best Documentary – Grand OFF World Independent Film Awards

Finalist for the 2022 Small Axe Radical Short Film Awards – Tolpuddle Radical Film Festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Golden State Film Festival – TCL Chinese Theatre, Hollywood, CA – March 1, 2022

Arizona International Film Festival – Hotel Congress Plaza, Tucson, AZ – April 27, 2022

FLICKFAIR Film Festival – Screened online – May 2–31, 2022

Cannes Independent Film Festival – Screened online – May 17–28, 2022

Ischia Global Film Festival – Screened online – July 16, 2022

Tolpuddle Radical Film Festival – Vintage Mobile Cinema, Tolpuddle, Dorset, UK – July 16, 2022

Hudson Valley Film Festival – Warwick Drive-In Theatre, Warwick, NY – August 16, 2022

Festival Internacional de Cinema Socioambiental – Usina Cultural Energisa, Nova Friburgo, Brazil – October 14, 2022

Grand OFF Festival – Ursynowskie Centrum Kultury „Alternatywy”, Warsaw, Poland – December 2, 2022

ProToPost Film Festival – Screened online – February 22–26, 2023

Ethnografilm – Club de l'Etoile Cinéma – Paris, France – April 6, 2023

PRESS

"Genovese shoots the incredible landscapes of the Sonoran desert in magnificent style."

–Review by Cole Diment, Small Axe Radical Short Film Reviews

Interview with Taylor Genovese about Under the Shadow of the Wall

–Tolpuddle Radical Film Festival



Audiences watching the film at the TCL Chinese Theatre for the 2022 Golden State Film Festival



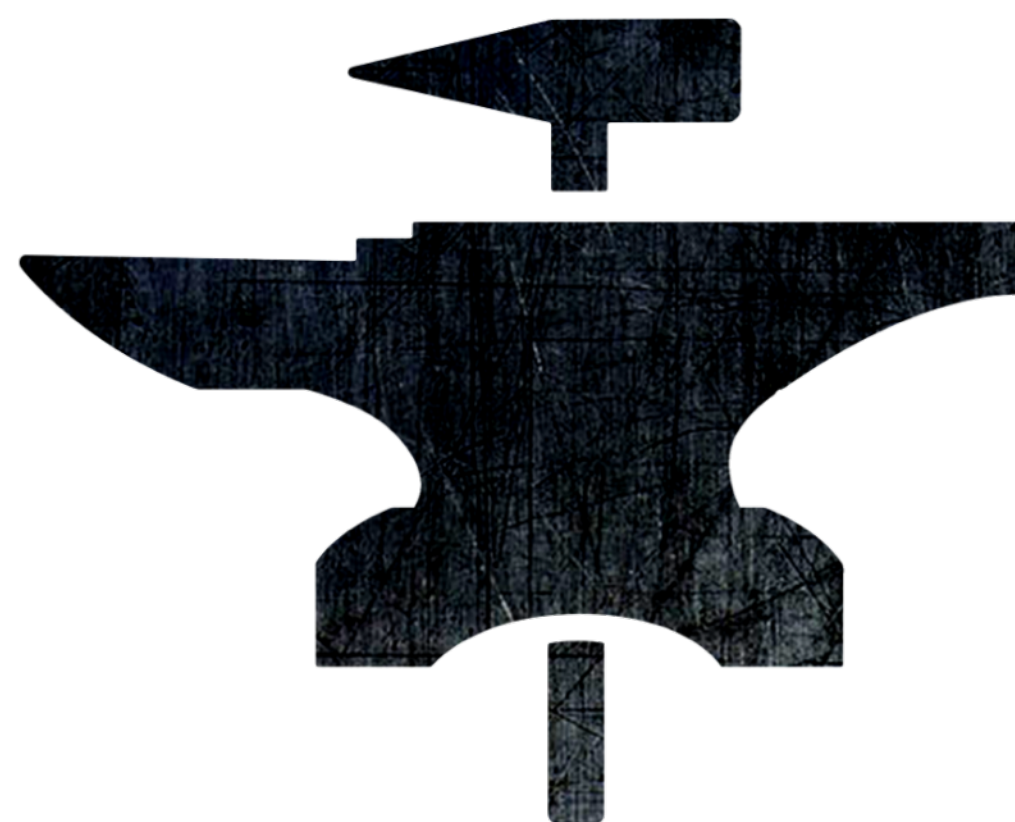
Audiences watching the film at Club Congress for the 2022 Arizona International Film Festival

TRAILER

Under the Shadow of the Wall

<https://vimeo.com/668835406>

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