

A Photoalbum by Florentin Smarandache

# BAHAMASACCHARIFIED





Music credits:

**"Bahamas" - song** by Scandinavianz

<http://www.soundcloud.com/scandinavianz>

<https://www.instagram.com/thescandinavianz>

<https://www.facebook.com/scandinavianz>

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**bahamasaccharified**

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## EXPLANATION

This is a photoalbum inspired by a trip in which I ventured almost twenty years ago (2004) in Bahamas, and on which I related at large in my travelog "Frate cu meridiānele și paralelele" (Brother of meridians and parallels), tome II, Rm. Valcea, Romania, 2005 (in Romanian).

In addition to images, this album contains short notations on the history of Bahamas or its current real-life, or intents to impart instant perceptions had on the spot, placed retrospectively under the general feeling that Bahamas has the power to penetrate one's heart, and saccharify it (i.e. literally "to make into sugar"). Consequently, I coined the word Bahama-saccharification to describe that unique word-lacking feeling that I still have twenty years later when images from there come under my eyes or in my mind.



According to archeological research, in the year 600AD, Lucayans moved to the Bahamas from South America. When Columbus arrived in 1492, the islanders happily welcomed him.

Lucayans were a sub-branch of the Arawak Taíno, from Hispaniola (in modern day Haiti and Dominican Republic) and Cuba.

Columbus then navigated towards Florida. In 1500, the Spanish came back to the Bahamas, enslaving some, killing others.



The Lucayan villages were set up near beaches, with the chief (cacique) having a bigger house.

After the return of the Spanish, the Lucayans disappear from the islands in 1520 – decimated by white diseases, killed, or taken as slaves.

The islands remained uninhabited until 1648, when the eleutherians\* adventurers arrived, seeking religious freedom. Afterwards, for fifty years, pirates created paradise here.

\*“Eleutheria” comes from Greek. It means “the country of liberties”.



The British own the Bahamas by 1717.

In 1695, the English built a fort in Charlestown, renamed to Nassau – from William of Orange, of the Orange-Nassau house. Blacks were also enrolled in the army.

The Treaty of Versailles of 1783 ended the American War of Independence, ceding Florida to Spain. The Americans who remained loyal to the British Crown moved to the Bahamas, where they received land from the government.



This is how colonization was done. The poor and the middle class were offered imperial positions and material advantages in the colonies.

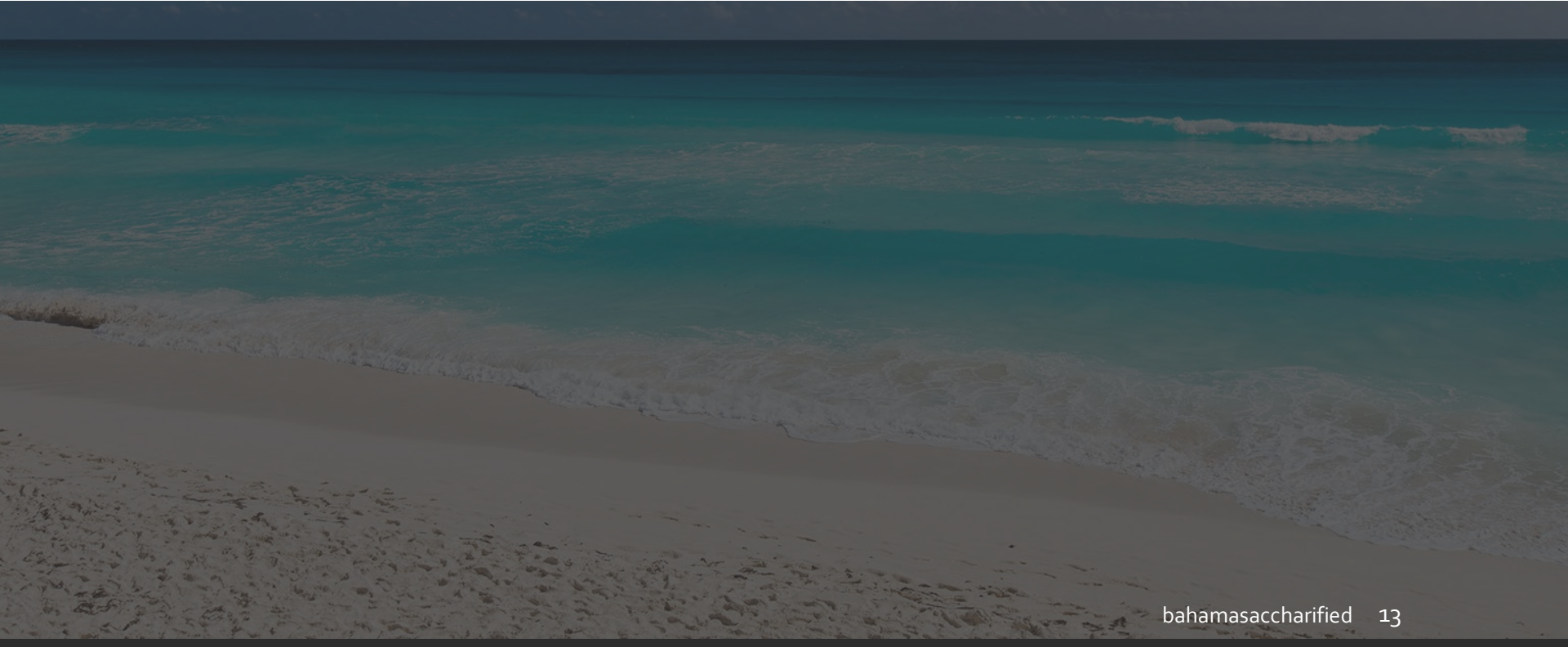
To arrive in Bahamas, I flew over the famous Bermuda Triangle, whose surface of a million square miles stole over a thousand ships; 30 airplanes disappear there per year.



The weather changes extremely quickly, taking everything and everyone by surprise.

The ocean floor is very abrupt. The natural gases below put pressure on it, awaiting their escape.

Mysterious phenomena take place. Abnormalities, according to physics.



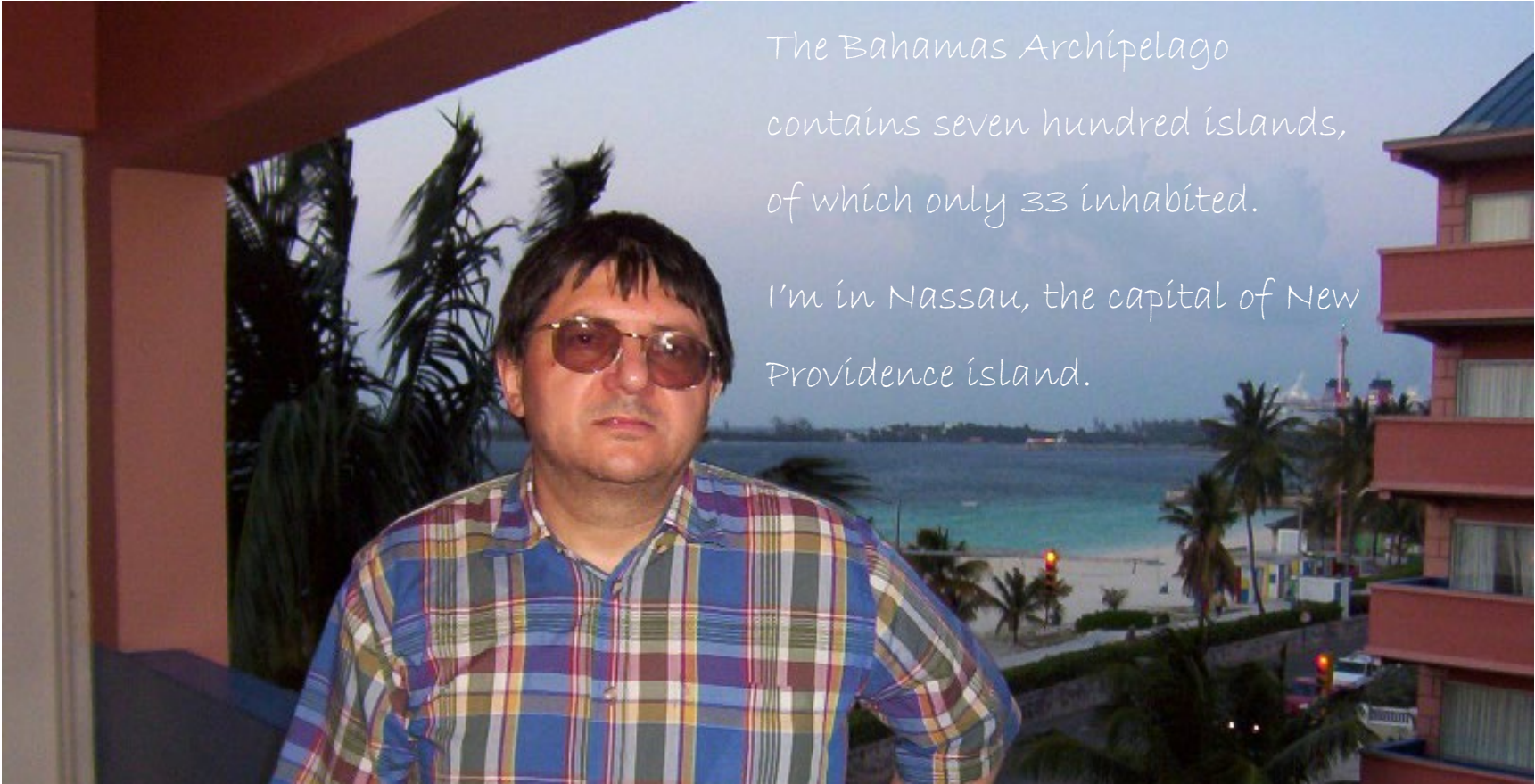
Recent research shows that natural gases burst through the ocean floor and swiftly produce a lesser density of the water, leading to ships sinking. Same goes for planes; the air mixed with methane gas has lower density.



Archimedes' principle\*\* states that the upward buoyant force that is exerted on a body immersed in a fluid, whether fully or partially, is equal to the weight of the fluid that the body displaces. The water, impregnated with methane gas bubbles, has a lower weight, and thus, a lower force of keeping the ship afloat.

\*\*A legend circulating around Archimedes is as follows: once he had this revelation, out of pure joy, went on the streets fully naked yelling "Eureka, eureka!" (I discovered, I discovered!) at the top of his lungs.



A man with dark hair and sunglasses, wearing a multi-colored plaid button-down shirt, stands on a balcony. Behind him is a view of Nassau, Bahamas, featuring a turquoise ocean, a sandy beach, palm trees, and a multi-story hotel building with balconies. The sky is overcast.

The Bahamas Archipelago  
contains seven hundred islands,  
of which only 33 inhabited.

I'm in Nassau, the capital of New  
Providence island.





Ex-British colony, Bahamas  
gained its independence in  
1973, but it's still part of the  
Commonwealth of Nations.



I'm not sure what sort of  
"independence" Bahamas  
has, since it's not a republic  
nor a monarchy, and thus,  
has no president, nor king,  
but a governor... like any  
colony.






Hard to lose weight with so many  
inviting foods. A huge glass of  
ice cream, chocolate and whipped  
cream on the table.




A small magazine with... islands for sale! Some smaller ones, of one to two acres, which cost \$375.000; others, up to seven hundred acres, costing as much as \$11.000.000! An acre is roughly enough for self-sufficiency. To buy your own island and live there like Robinson Crusoe!



The catch? Some islands appear and disappear. You'll wake up one day with your investment gone.

A man with dark hair and sunglasses stands in a bazaar. He is wearing a white long-sleeved button-down shirt and bright green shorts. He is leaning against a dark wooden railing. In the background, there are various items for sale, including what looks like leather goods and metalwork. The lighting is warm and indoor.

On the main street of West Bay, in the capital, there is a bazaar with black art (carved wood, stone, coconuts, leather, iron), t-shirts, caps, masks. Lots of tourists in this bazaar.

A man with dark hair, wearing a white button-down shirt, stands in the foreground of a nighttime street scene. He is looking towards the camera. In the background, a building is brightly lit with warm yellow and orange lights, and a car is visible on the street behind him. The scene is dark, with the primary light sources being the streetlights and the building's lights.

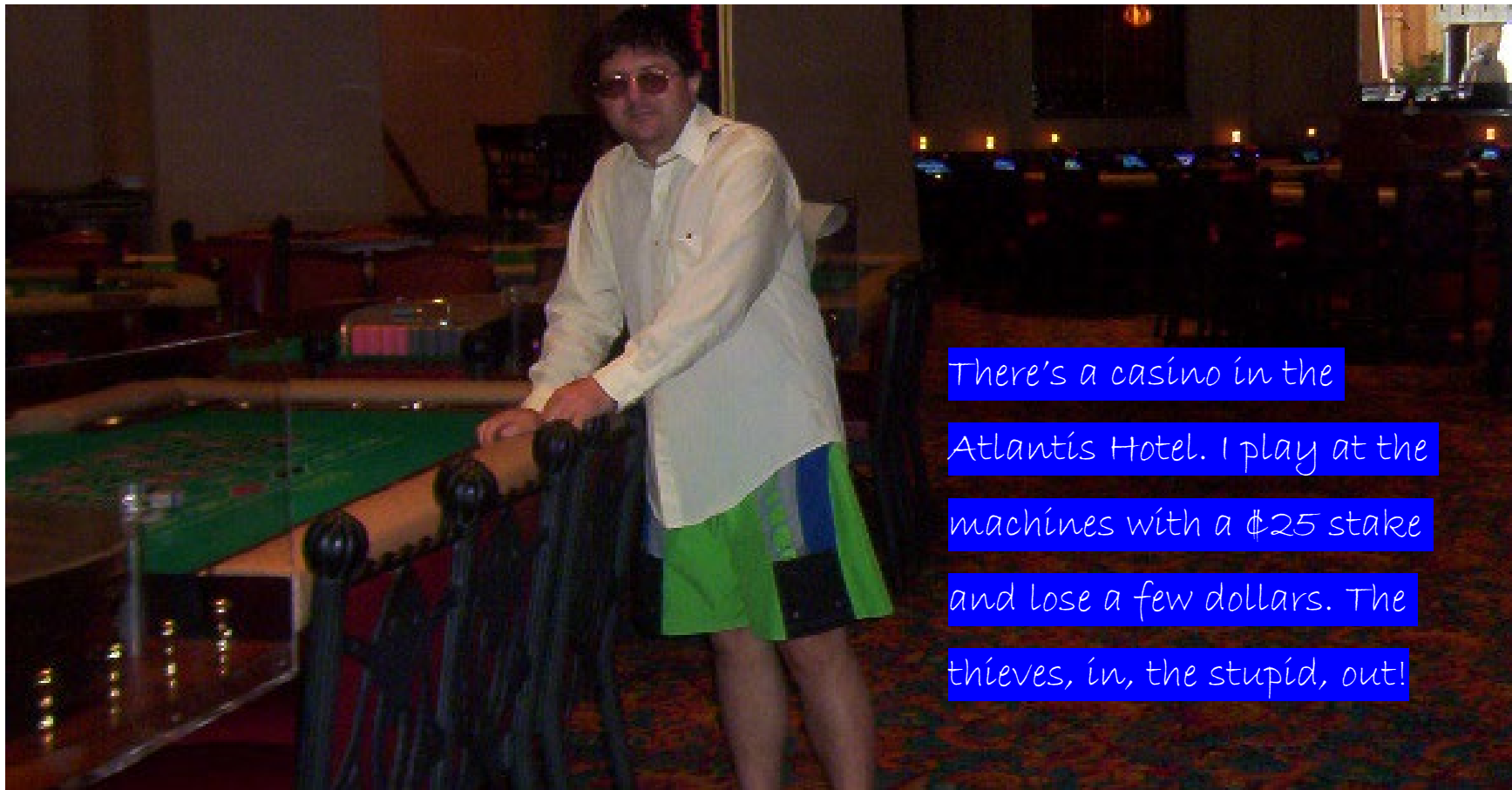
The cabbie asked me if I don't wish to buy  
an island, as they're for sale.

-How much does one cost? I ask.

-A few million.

-Ohoo! I exclaim.

-Cinema stars buy them, the cabbie adds.

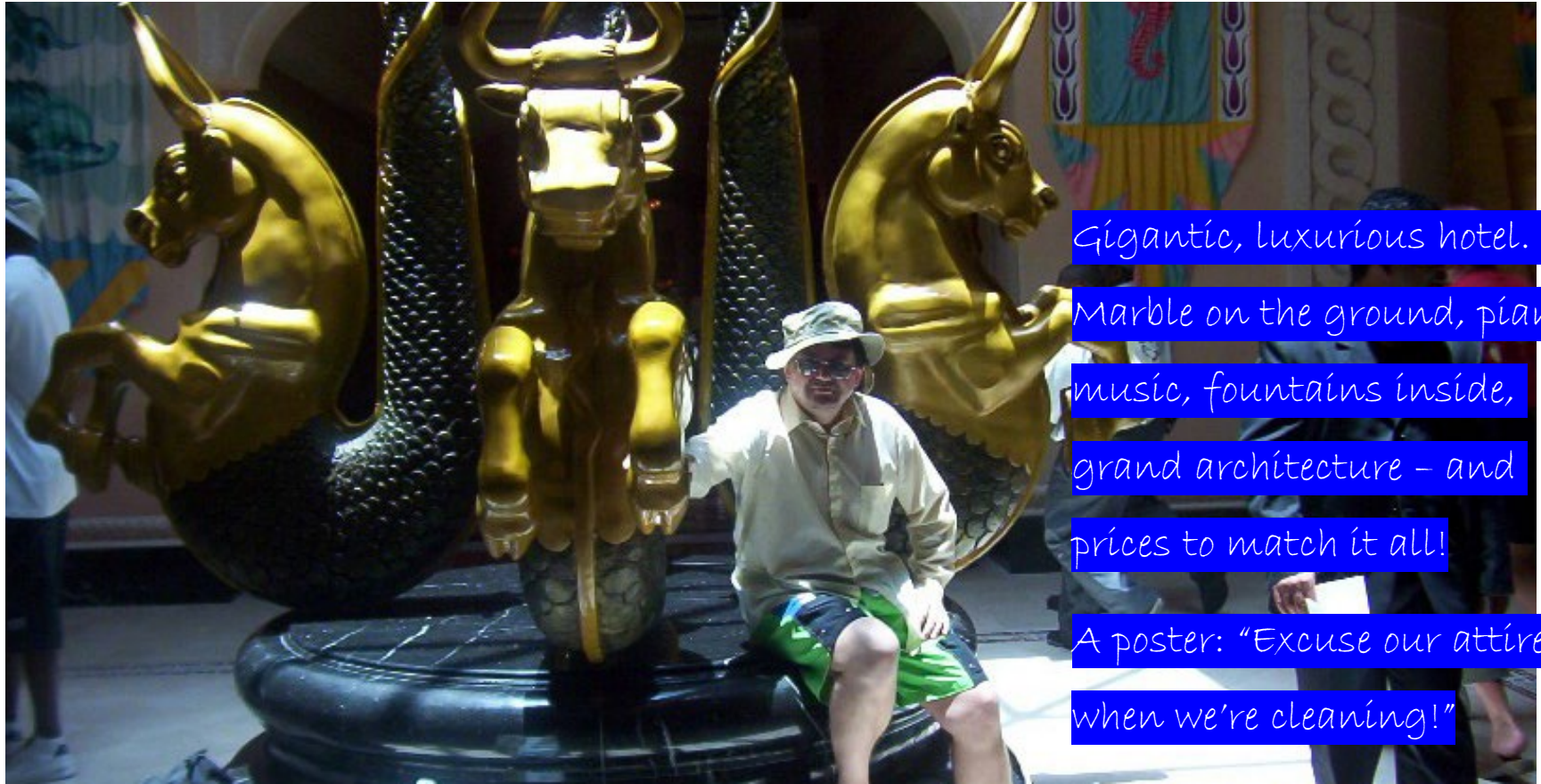


There's a casino in the  
Atlantis Hotel. I play at the  
machines with a \$25 stake  
and lose a few dollars. The  
thieves, in, the stupid, out!



Some are ruining themselves and losing fortunes.

I met a few cases of people playing at the casino, losing everything they accumulated in a lifetime, over a moment of pleasure, or for their boundless greed to get even richer overnight.



Gigantic, luxurious hotel.

Marble on the ground, piano

music, fountains inside,

grand architecture – and

prices to match it all!

A poster: “Excuse our attire

when we’re cleaning!”



Two local painters: Ward Minis and Jace McKinney.

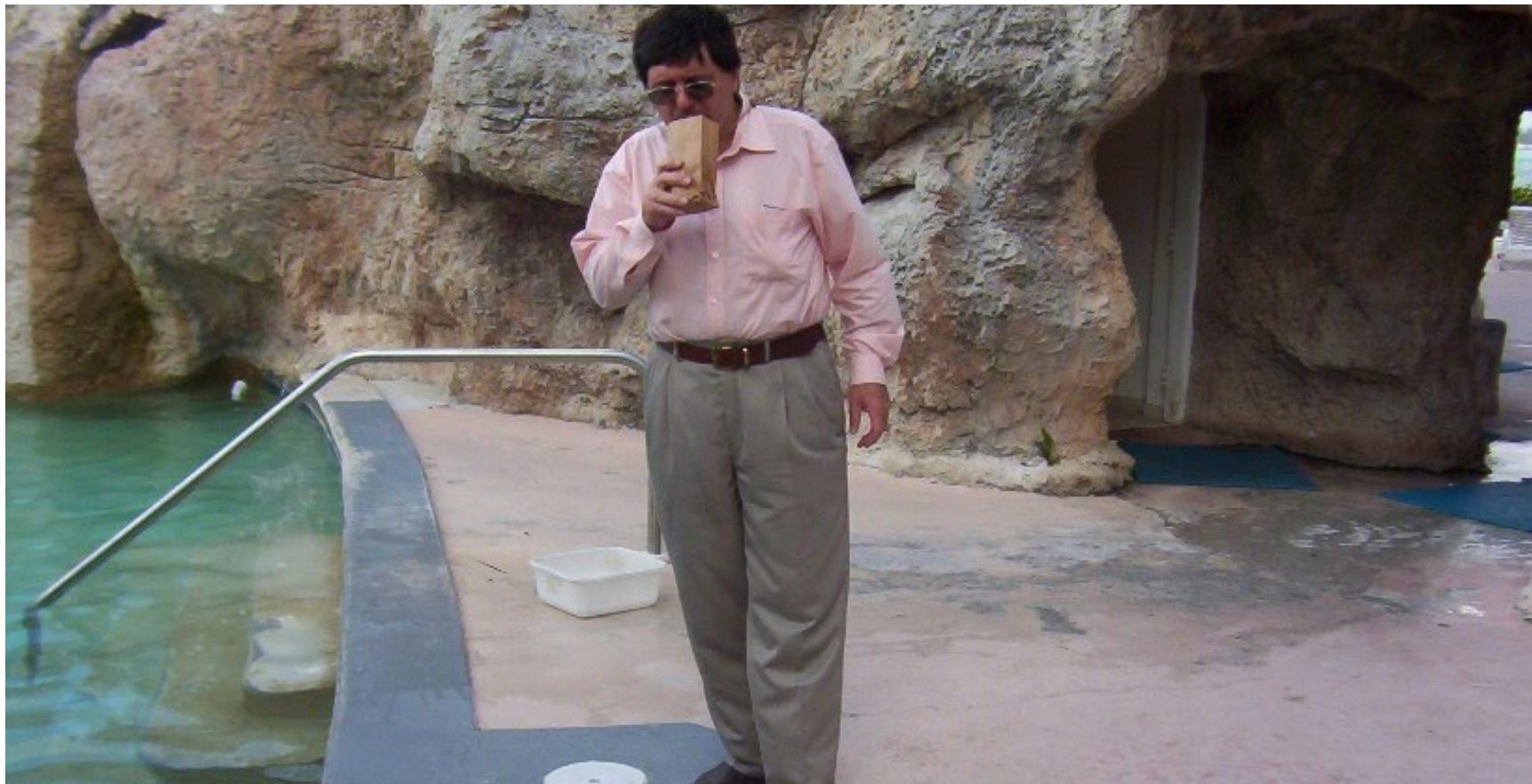


Black portraits, in an impressionist style, but also postmodern art (glued newspapers/media), and definitions from dictionaries, taking part of the exposition and reminding of concrete art (which sends more information than feelings to the watcher).



Century old streets in  
Nassau have a charm of  
their own. It's incredible to  
walk on them.





A cabbie told me there are  
only two speeds in the  
Bahamas: slow and very  
slow! The people seem calm,  
kind and slow.



Most tourists are American. There are some Europeans here and there as well. I saw Italian, French and Filipino restaurants.

Life on an island is calm. I always dreamed of something like this. Flowers, exotic plants, water, sun.

After 6pm, shops close. Only restaurants are still open.

The wind is always blowing, helping dissipate the heat. Humidity.

I no longer have my nostrils dry like in the desert.

At the zoo and the Ardastra Gardens.

It looks like a jungle!

Birds chirping like in the wild.

A parrot welcomes us with

"Hello!" and keeps repeating it!

Those red parrots are very  
friendly. One of them ate a  
piece an apple in my hand.



There are forty seven types of exhibits: seashells, corals, termites (which eat wood and live in colonies), yellow-blue or red parrots, living freely in small, enclosed areas, flamingos, wild ducks, lynxes, owls, squirrels, non-venomous snakes (pythons and boas), solitary vultures, turtles, crocodiles, a peahen with her young, iguanas, crabs, small monkeys, dwarf goats and... children's poetry about animals, written by Ogden Nash.



The Jamaican botanist Hedley Edwards brought flamingoes in 1950, in the southernmost island, Inagua, which were trained to walk on command in 1957.

There are about fifty-five thousand flamingoes in the Bahamas, Yucatan (Mexico), Cuba, South America. They are shy but sociable birds.

Because of excessive hunting in the 1940-1950 decade and habitat loss, they are endangered. There are six known species.

When resting, they stand on one foot. They lay a single egg per year, so a single baby, of which both the male and the female take care of.

Crooked beak, snake-like neck, legs as if made out of wire, are all extremely long.

I'm sunbathing... in the shade, so  
the tropical sun doesn't burn me.  
I tan even through my shirt!



At a wholesale store in Nassau, a memory with a local.



## The Pirate Museum

"The pirate has a short but beautiful life!", as Bartholomew Roberts, one of their captains, said.

An old ship, lit streetlights, darkness. The pirates of the West Indies used light ships to move quickly. A dangerous, unpredictable life; gambling, alcohol, women.

In 1716, piracy was flourishing. Sailors were paid poorly on commercial ships although they worked tirelessly. Youngsters were attracted by the adventure and the riches, as well as the ideas of liberty, propagated by the French Revolution, which reached the four corners of the world. They decided to fight against the system this way.

The crew reached up to 70 men, with about twenty to thirty cannons, plus personal weapons (guns, pistols, swords). They'd take animals on board: cows and goats for food, parrots for pleasure.



Because they didn't have fruits on the ship, many suffered of scurvy (lack of vitamin C in the organism). Malaria took many lives. The image of the pirate with an eyepatch and a wooden leg from movies is real. Wounded in battle, they'd have their arm or leg amputated, to avoid necrosis, with a saw!

The captains were chosen democratically by the crew. There was a set of laws of piracy.

For example, Captain's John Phillips (1723): the captain takes a part and a half; lower down the hierarchy (the commandant, gunner, carpenter) took a part and a quarter; those who didn't follow the rules, or broke the trust of their superiors, were abandoned on a deserted island, being given solely a bottle of water, a gun and gunpowder.

Other unruly men were subject to the law of Moses: forty strikes

on the back. In the Caribbean Sea, most pirates were black.



They didn't bury their treasures, as I used to read in children's books; they spent it on alcohol, women and gambling. Only Captain Kidd buried his.

The most fierce pirate, now a legend, was Captain Blackbeard (Edward Teach) in the Caribbean and in America.

Around 1720, the flag of the pirates was the well-known skull with two swords on a black background. However, some crews made their own flags.

Upon being captured, pirates were hanged publicly and sprayed with tar, so their bodies remained intact. They would stay there for weeks to bring fear into the people, and to determine them to not become pirates.



I think there is some sort of a drug market. Sitting at the beach, under the shade of a palm tree, two individuals approached me, asking if I want to buy weed.









The population of the Bahamas Islands is around 300.000 inhabitants, of which the majority live in the island of New Providence; mostly in Nassau.

There are eighteen big islands. Of the seven hundred islands, some are simply rocks the size of a building piercing through the water, others less than a square mile (called "cay").





The aquarium looks  
like an ancient  
sunken city.

Stingrays, banks of  
yellow-brown fish.







This is a photoalbum inspired by a trip in which I ventured almost twenty years ago (2004) in Bahamas. In addition to images, this album contains short notations on the history of Bahamas or its current real-life, or intents to impart instant perceptions had on the spot, placed retrospectively under the general feeling that Bahamas has the power to penetrate one's heart, and saccharify it. Consequently, I coined the word Bahama-saccharification to describe that unique word-lacking feeling that I still have twenty years later when images from there come under my eyes or in my mind.

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