

SOME

TACO

TRUCKS

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TRON MARTÍNEZ

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#tacotrucksoneverycorner

In the Fall of 2016, a seemingly innocuous statement by a Trump supporter became an instant political meme.

The co-founder of Latinos for Trump, Marco Gutierrez explained, “My culture is a very dominant culture. It is imposing and causing problems. If you don’t do something about it, you’re going to have taco trucks [on] every corner.”

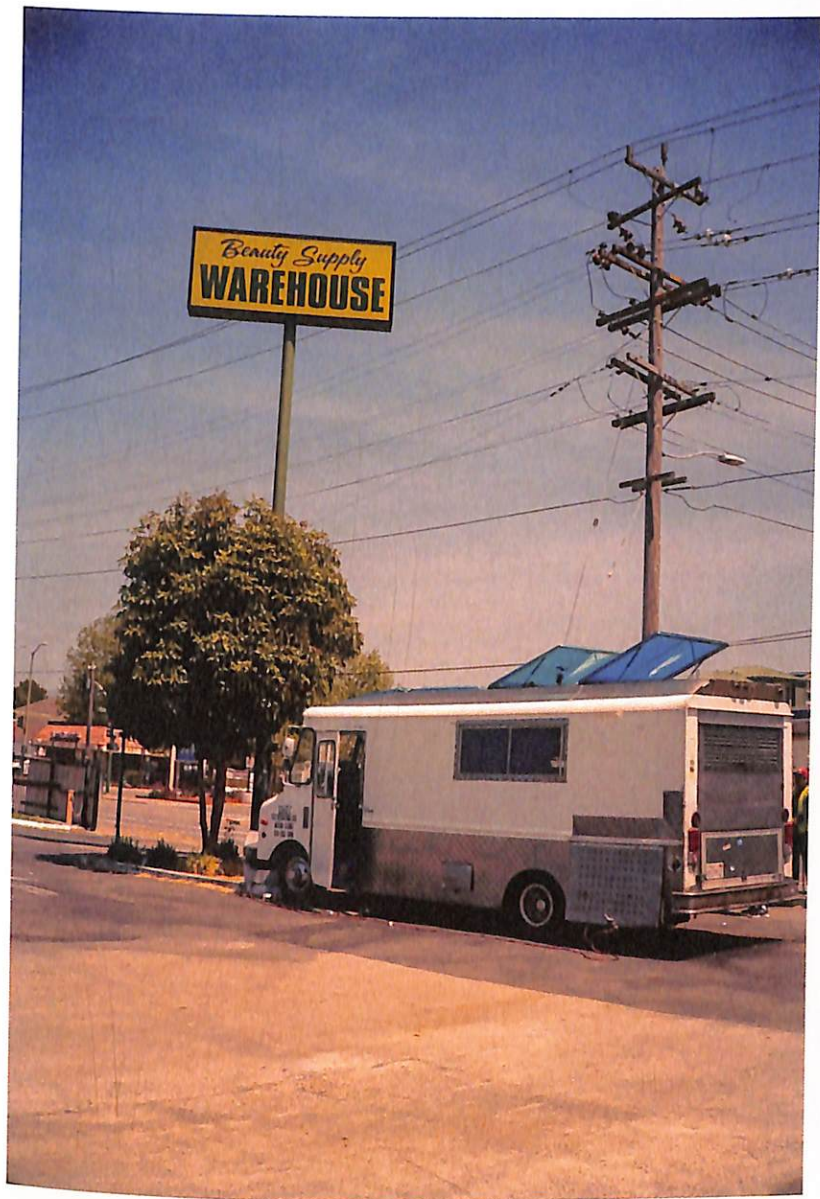
His dog-whistle rhetoric aside, this latent racism is not new. In 2005, Latinx workers flocked to New Orleans for reconstruction work after Hurricane Katrina. Unsurprisingly, taco trucks began operating to feed those workers. In response, Jefferson Parish passed legislation effectively banning taco trucks to discourage the influx of Latinx workers.

Originally, taco trucks served predominantly working-class Latinx communities, setting up in parking lots, near factories and soccer fields. Recently, taco trucks have become locations of culinary tourism for diners in search of ethnic exoticism. Gentrified taco trucks can now be seen in upscale neighborhoods and corporate centers.

The pursuit of authentic tacos and taco trucks contains its own cultural politics, a democratic acknowledgement of blue-collar food. However, even that space is in jeopardy with the rise of food delivery applications. Diners can now remain insulated at home without having to interact with the working-class people making their food. Now, customers merely tap their screens and later nod to an anonymous (usually BIPOC) delivery person.

Here, a series of Bay Area taco trucks as a reminder of the immigrant entrepreneurs and the communities they create, both culinary and physical.

* For an expansive discussion on white spaces of consumption, racial urban policy and the taco truck foodscape; see Robert Lemon’s elucidating geography *The Taco Truck: How Mexican Street Food is Transforming the American City* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2019).





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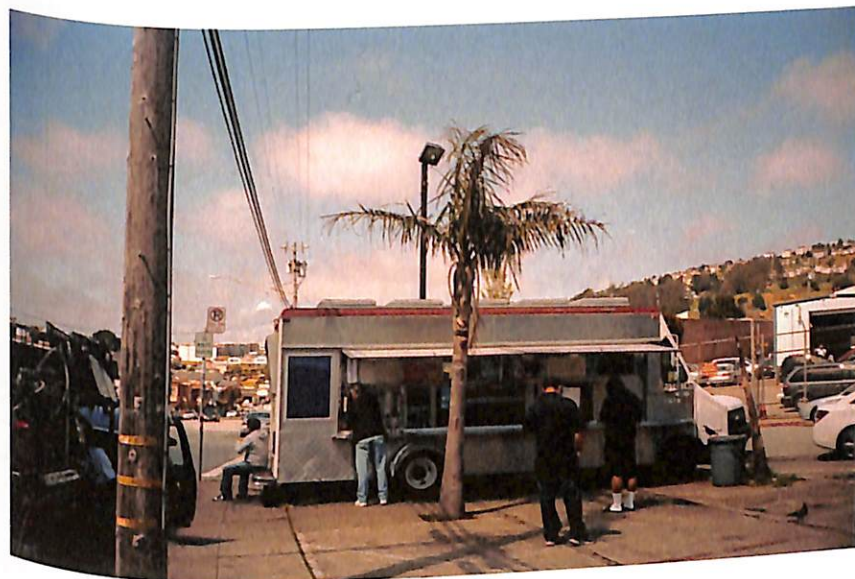
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