

STEPPING OFF THE EDGE

travels of a reluctant retiree

MAY 10, 2021 BY MIKE T

Gangsters, Hot Springs, and a Fabulous Loft...

When we last met our intrepid vagabonds were stranded in Shreveport Louisiana, AKA the Stockton of the South. After four days of watching and praying for the still untouched snow covered roads to melt off, we felt we could chance the usually two and a half hour drive to Hot Springs Arkansas. We did take a test ride to the edge of town the day before to see what the roads were like and it seemed hopeful. There was in fact some melting going on, but far from clear. Think of a paved road strewn with slabs of six inch thick ice flows that you could chance to hit head on or swerve to miss. FYI, either option proved treacherous. So packed up and seated in the now familiar Kia, we waiting till high noon to take off after a mediocre breakfast at the casino next door to the hotel. No I did not gamble ... oh Jesus wept, I did not gamble. This is getting serious friends, a year since I set foot into a proper casino and I am ready to call my GA sponsor.

It is high noon is “beautiful” Bossier City Louisiana and we hit the road. The city streets that had been traveled on for the last few days were somewhat clear and slushy. BUT as we crossed over the city limits it was back to six inches of hard pack snow, which by now had become the regional skating rink. Back to ten miles per hour and just so you know the interstates were still closed in the entire state! Three hours later after several near misses and passing many cars stranded in ditches, we crossed the state line into Arkansas. Arkansas, you know, the state everyone likes to make fun of? Not a lot of teeth, cousin marriages, banjoes... yes, that state. The roads were perfectly clear and the interstate open. As I navigated the first on ramp and looked in my rear view mirror I saw the entire story stretched out behind. The interstate from the border south was closed and covered with snow. Not even a set of tracks made by some fool hardy trucker. Just amazing. So the rest of the ride, about another two hours, was at the speed limit, which felt like flying.

We arrived beaten, discouraged and not in the best spirits to our AirBnb in Hot Springs,

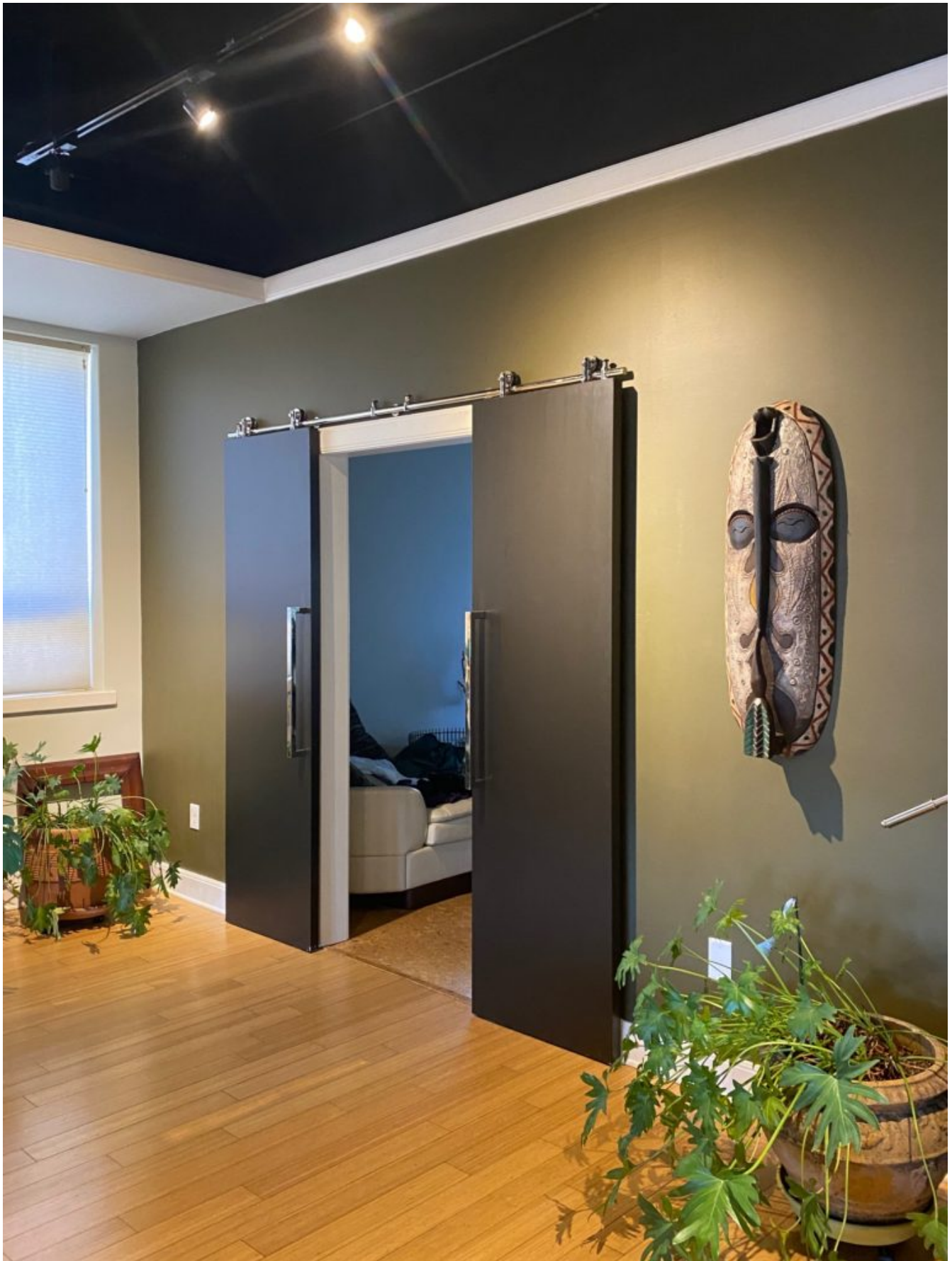
home town of none other than President Bill Clinton. The couple we visited entertained us with high school stories about old Bill, but that is an entirely different blog. Now as you have read, the AirBnb can be anywhere from so-so to fabulous, and we had just left one that was far below so-so (see last blog for details).

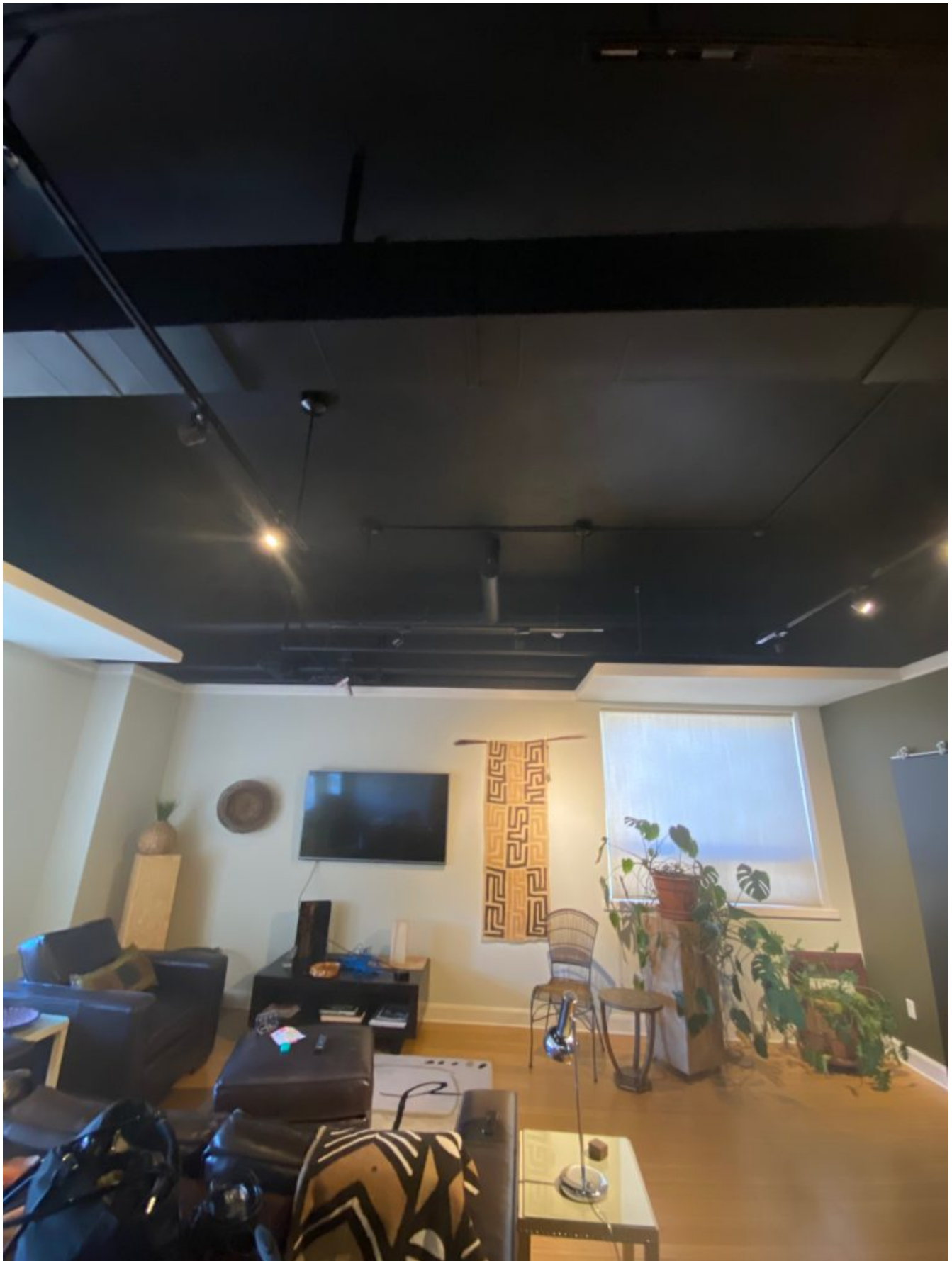
THE DUPLEX: By Glenn McCoy



and this is our mental state

We girded our loins (don't you just love that semi dirty term?) and entered our loft apartment. Loft apartment was the headline in the AirBnb advert. Let me tell you, it was fabulous. And yet we were sad, remember we both secretly wanted to leave Shreveport a week earlier? The thought of another week here instead of the refugee hotel and no power and water "cozy" cottage... well you can imagine the waves of regret.







Obviously just built, it was a joy. And the town itself? Take yourself there if you can. Steeped in history. Playground for gangsters and baseball players in the 30's and 40's, the gambling, speakeasies and houses of ill repute, it was finally shut down by the rising tide of Baptist politicians taking power. This removed the allure and the town fell into disrepair. After being made a national monument it has started to come back as a tourist destination.









While there are only a few of the original 24 bathhouses open and functioning, I can tell you they are a treat. Mrs. T and I spent the better part of a day soaking and being tended

to.

There are even hot springs bubbling up in the center of town. some with fountains spewing the healthy stuff for anyone to come and collect. The locals can be seen all day filling jugs of mineral water, which we found to be especially suited to making coffee.



one of the many places in town where the mineral springs are apparent

Now for a quick change up, news from home. It seems the Vagabonds, after 13 months, have lost their lovely renter of the Capitola homestead and so, our trip is coming to an end. We will spend the week in Hot Springs shopping for our vaccine appointment in our home town and preparing ourselves mentally for going back to the life we left. Next... the journey home...

 **UNCATEGORIZED**