

European's First Impression of Texas
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGPwDxQzUeY>
Transcript: <https://dontveter.com/ec/texas.pdf>

Here we go. Texas may be just maybe the most misunderstood, fascinating stereotype state in the US.

As I cross the entire state south to north I meet fascinating people who give me all kinds of advice.

You've gotten this far, don't leave here without a gun.

And experience all American stereotypes, cliches and adventure 66.

So what exactly does a European think of Texas?

Well, to be completely honest, my very first impressions of the United States on this trip were, pretty miserable.

But things started looking up after I had been released from the United States border and customs agency and after that I just drove straight up north through Texas and I stopped at this campsite.

Actually it's called an RV park I guess in the United States, subtle difference, I don't know I'm a beginner to all this.

And over here I met some really nice Texans. Meet the Russells and their friends, an all Texan family.

Welcome to Texas. Yep, we may have very different views on many things but on a purely human level I'm amazed they still gave me a wonderful welcome to Texas.

They fed me, tried to make me feel safe, even showed me around their amazing RV.

Right, so the guys just invited me to come inside their beautiful, giant RV and take a look around.

Honestly this is completely new to me. I had never been inside an RV like this before in my entire life.

I've seen them driving around the US, I've seen pictures of them, but the inside is a whole other world, it's pretty incredible and super, super, luxurious, I mean compared to that little home on wheels that I live in.

All right, let's go inside.

Oh, wow, you got a customized mat.

This is the living room, I mean the kitchen, wow, and the living room are pretty close together.

And you've got two sofas that make into beds so you can sleep two more people.

It looks like an actual house, so it's, it's, an RV but I mean the fridge is like a full-size fridge, the kitchen is for me what would be like a full-size kitchen, and a fireplace, and a fireplace!

Okay, so Pam gave me the go-ahead to go and check out the bedroom and the bathroom which are pretty amazing.

So right here is the shower. These guys have a shower in their RV! And then here is the bedroom.

Wow, that is pure luxury, so how long have you guys been living like this? Just living in here this is 48 years.

No, we have we have our own house.

So what's this called? Bamboo ??? get up here all of you, come on let's go.

Ah, good stuff, take pictures of the bucket. I've never had a coke float before but let's try it.

I mean when in Texas ... It's pretty good, it's like, um, ice cream but sparkling.

So I've asked these guys what they think about my trip, whether I should do it, whether they think it's safe, or maybe whether I'm a little bit crazy for doing it.

So, I think you're a whole lot crazy for doing it.

Really? You're the same type of person that tried to fly that plane from one continent to the other and she crashed and burned and they never found her. Does not sound promising.

I'd be very apprehensive for my children to be doing it, right, so we have to worry about you now gotten this far.

Don't leave here without a gun.

That Texas guy, I admire you for doing it, yes, and I think that there that you're going to have the adventure of your life going to the United States and seeing what you're going to see, but I'm going to follow you, yes, and look at your blog and see how you're doing.

I think I got an important lesson from hanging out with these people.

In a world organized around systems, we really need to find ways to reconnect to our humanity.

In a world where our differences become our identities, we need to focus on finding common ground and that could be as simple as sharing a meal.

So, I've been at this campsite for two nights, um, hanging out with my neighbors, who have been so kind and so welcoming, and just trying to kind of recalibrate after my rough experience of the border a few days ago.

But today, this morning, I have to leave because I have to keep going up north, to northern Texas, so there's a lot to see along the way.

So it's going to be a really intense day.

By the way, Texas is huge, huge, the distances that you cross in Texas are unlike anything I've seen.

Once you leave the interstates and hop on the country roads you find yourself on a true adventure where the horizon stretches out into eternity.

Nobody, nobody, the last two hours, not a single car.

Once in a while you might see another car passing, or a lonely house miles away from its neighbor.

In a place as vast as this you start to feel like loneliness is something you can touch and you start to understand how people can grow, really, very tough living out here.

I'm from Poland, oh, wow, okay, so I'm traveling to Alaska, yeah, 26th of April.

Yeah, look, most gas stations in the US are not like this, they're all super modern, just as you'd expect.

But what's the fun in showing you something that you already know?

Oh, wow, check out this store! Oh my god Garvin, you've got so many amazing things in here, jalapeno honey mustard, oh cherry cobbler!

Everybody's really, really, nice so far, I mean, very welcoming and just genuinely curious as to what the heck I'm doing here, which is a fair enough question.

This is a drive-through shop, a drive-through shop!

I mean, I'm familiar with, like, drive-through restaurants and even drive through Starbucks, but this is a shop.

How do you know what you want to buy without looking around?

Can you just buy anything? Can I ask for, like, a mango? And how does this work?

Actually I'm not sure if Odyssey will even fit, here, it's pretty low.

Can I get, like, a large bottle of water? Can you get what I'm saying. Like a large bottle of water.

A large bottle of water, anything else for you?

Oh, do you have sparkling or only still.

What do you have, sparkling water, or just still water?

Oh, you have to come forward. Okay, um, I'll just have still water, just the water, nothing else, thank you.

I don't know if it's my accent or am I making unreasonable demands. I just wanted sparkling water.

Okay, now let's see, yes, just about. I'd like a slurpee, the smallest size you have, I'll have a pina colada, thank you.

It's literally like a fast food joint that you drive through but a shop. Why am I so excited? I don't know, thank you.

You know, I didn't actually need that water, but I just wanted to get it for the experience.

I know to most of you this might be like totally, like everyday boring stuff, but I've never seen a drive-through shop before and also this is going to be my first time ever drinking a slurpee or slushie.

I don't know what they're called but you know, super American thing. If the Simpsons taught me anything it's that you get brain freeze from these.

Where's my slurpee, come on, no brain freeze.

Well let's move on to my initial impressions of the US, I mean I don't know if the entire country is like this, but in Texas.

It's amazing how many things you can sort out without ever leaving your car.

I mean, there's drive through pharmacies, here there's drive up ATMs.

Here, in fact, I'm just about to use that one, it's amazing.

I mean, back home we have, like, drive-through fast food joints, but that's about it.

[Here you] literally never have to leave your car in this state, the drive-up ATM, here we go.

Let's get some money out, shall we?

Slurpie and really good.

So you know the saying, "everything is bigger in Texas", well it definitely rings true because back home Odyssey is one of the biggest cars on the road, one of the biggest cars that you'll see anywhere.

In fact, you would just not choose to drive this car into the city because you wouldn't be able to find a parking spot.

But in the United States, there's all the parking in the world, everywhere, and Odyssey is by no means the biggest car on the roads anymore.

It's kind of average because everybody owns one of these here.

Everybody owns a pickup truck, except they're not really hauling anything in the back I guess.

I mean, let's check that. That doesn't really classify as hauling to me, let's check some others, are they hauling anything?

Nope, not hauling anything.

All right, he's hauling some stuff, one last one over there, definitely not hauling.

Why does everybody own pickups in Texas and is it like this in the rest of the US?

Okay, okay, I know those were all total stereotypes and I hope that you can forgive me for indulging in them.

Just one more thing, I have never been to a Walmart in the USA, so it's time for a little exploring.

It may seem like basic groceries, but I really do believe that you can learn a lot about a country and its people from their buying and eating habits.

This is one of the funniest products I've ever seen in my entire life. Liquid eggs. Really. Liquid egg whites. Why not just use normal eggs? Are you kidding?

Oh, my god, an entire shelf just dedicated to cookie dough!

You have no idea how lucky you are to have cookie dough in this country, it is like one of the best things in the entire world.

Just a casual five pound pack of beans. I mean, it would seem like, just be normal baked beans, but it's the size of my head, 20 kilograms or something.

You know everything is just so huge and [there are] so many plant-based meat style options it's incredible.

Here's a funny story. So I grew up in the 90s in post-communist Poland, so you know we had cereals.

We didn't really eat cereals that much but we had like corn flakes and some local stuff and we had like Cheerios and things like that.

When I was growing up, one thing that I had, that you could get in America was this amazing super sweet, magical cereal called Fruit Loops.

This for me was like the ultimate American dream, was to one day have Fruit Loops.

I really feel like an obligation to my younger self to try these so I'm gonna get some Fruit Loops and then later on today you're gonna see me eat them because I'm really curious to see how they taste and whether the expectation that I had built up as a child actually matches to the reality.

If there's one thing that I think of when I think road tripping the United States it's motels.

Motels, diners, the Route 66, truckers, all that kind of stuff and I love it.

You know it's all the kind of stuff that you see in movies, that you read about in books, so tonight I'm staying in a motel which just so happens to be along Route 66.

Which I'm so excited about this. [It] is really part of the reason why I'm here, like I want to live that stereotypical American road trip experience. I am here for it.

Oh, it's so windy out here, but it doesn't matter because I want to show you something, it's official.

[I'm here] on Route 66 only for a few miles, but [it's] still [Route] 66. I see, this is so amazing, I know you don't understand you're just a car but it's amazing.

Well, I'm just gonna follow it for a while, oh, wow, you think you're special, oh, what you think is something else.

I'm okay, anyway, thanks Shania Twain for providing endless musical inspiration.

Back to Route 66, it is the symbol of the All-American road trip, but the reality is it's really not the most scenic road in the US, it's just that sometimes, you know, legend can be much more powerful than reality itself.

This is it, my motel, this is super cool, so it turns out that my motel is at the exact midpoint between Chicago and LA, which is the midpoint of the Route 66. Oh, cool.

So what kind of people do you get passing by here? Is it just tourists on Route 66? Probably every country in the world. So, not bad, 60 bucks.

There is one other thing that I have never, ever experienced before and that is eating at a roadside diner like one of those, like really classic, All-American diners.

Yeah, that's a first for me, so let's go inside and see what we find.

Hello. I need to put on my shoes. It's no fun.

This place is so cool. It's the kind of diner I've always wanted to visit, so classic, yes, thank you so much.

Okay, I'm gonna say something that's gonna make a lot of you laugh, but I mean it seriously.

I think this dinner, and my whole experience in Texas, especially this, is like, super, super, exotic.

Yes, exotic. If you watch my videos you'll probably see me go to a lot of really incredible remote, faraway places that some of you might be tempted to call exotic in a way.

It's a bit of a problematic word but we'll talk about that another time.

Anyway, to me, this all of this, this is new, this is different, this feels to me like being in a movie, honestly.

So, at the end of the day, I think, like, what you see as different or exotic really just depends on your perspective.

There is no single definition of those words, you know, and for me, Texas, rural Texas is as different, as remote, as interesting, as, god, pick your choice of place that I've been to over the last couple of years, and it's all amazing.

And this apple pie is so good.

So route 66 was the main street of USA when the roads first started in the, in America, so it used to be the only way that you could travel and then it kind of died because of the interstate coming through.

Right. So right now, this restaurant is the midpoint of route 66, it starts in Chicago and goes all the way to Sacramento, California, right, so but you don't get, like the original kind of traffic anymore, right? Like the truckers?

So, not really, honestly I would say 95 percent of customers are from overseas.

I promised you all a Fruit Loop tasting, and a Fruit Loop tasting is what you shall receive. This video is not sponsored by Fruit Loops.

I tell you [this is] the dream coming true. You know what it says on the packaging? Natural fruit flavors. That doesn't seem likely.

Okay, here we go. You know that feeling when as an adult you get to try something that your child's self always wanted and then either it's amazing or it's a total disappointment, let's see which one this is.

Fruit Loops. Let's do it.

Okay, if I tried these as a kid I would have loved them, but I feel like my taste in food has evolved over the last 25 years.

They taste exactly how they look, they taste of neon, they taste neon. I don't think I can finish them.

Well, kids, the lesson here is allow yourself to grow and move past some of the dreams that you harbored as a child, sometimes it's best to let them go.

You know, it feels completely surreal to be here in this motel room in the middle of Route 66, in the middle of Texas, it's amazing.

You know, before I set off on this Pan American trip, there were a lot of people offline and on the internet who tried to dissuade me from taking this trip.

People called me naive, they called me stupid, they called me reckless, irresponsible, they told me that I'm putting myself in danger and at risk, that I'll be unsafe, that I have no idea what I'm doing.

I've heard it all. I've heard it all but, you know, what I think? Part of living freely is learning to drown out the voices of the people who try to convince you that their way of living is the only way to live life.

Tuning into your heart, and learning how to listen to your heart, even when the noise around you gets so overwhelming that you don't even know whose voice it is that you're listening to.

And that's why I'm here, to see it all for myself, to learn from real people and real experiences, and so far just in Texas I've learned so much.

Yeah, some stereotypes hold true, as they can do everywhere, but the more I travel the more I learn to look past the divides and the differences, the more I travel the more gray, I see and the less black and white.

And in a world dominated by click bait, attention grabbing, and noise I really feel that seeing new ones is our most underrated superpower.