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At this writing, my address is 2136 C at the Milford Plaza on 45th and 8th Avenue in Manhattan. The "C" stands for cubicle. New York hotel rooms rent by the square inch. Closets come extra and inset doorknobs are a necessity. Rates are posted on the door to meet state laws. An amendment states roll-away beds cost \$10.00 extra per night. Before leaving, I am going to put up 10 bucks just to see where an extra bed fits. We may be overlooking deck room on the trucks at shipping time.

Downstairs teems with tour groups. The Milford Plaza is handy to the theaters and a reasonable distance to Lincoln Center and the art museums. Times Square is a few blocks away. The only inconvenience is ordering food to the room. The cheapest way to eat in New York City is to book takeouts through American Air Freight from Atlanta or Memphis. The weather had been bad down South. Skipping breakfast saves \$20.00, but going without lunch makes you too weak to elbow your way through the subway crowds.

The new mayor of New York City, I've read, looks at crime differently than previous administrations. His honor proposes to start on petty criminals and restore stability to a neighborhood. Fare jumpers on the trains, for example, are being fined for the first time in years, and artistically inclined hombres scribbling graffiti all over the depot walls are being escorted to the station houses.

What the mayor considers peaceful falls short of a poet's conception of an elegy to an English churchyard; however, any worthy courageous enough to have a program against crime, versus an oral stand, needs our respect.

The first landing in the lobby shocks me worse than the streets. Grown people dressed in madras sport coats wearing yellow jogging shoes laced up in peppermint-colored strings lounge on the rails waiting for rooms. Teenagers shorn to the scalp on top and ringed in dyed locks mingle to the side.

About any language is spoken on the elevators. I missed six rides before I realized stepping back for hooded Moslems and skull-capped Israelis to ascend meant, at the best, an elbow to the ribs and a smashed instep. I overheard two ladies riding down one afternoon discussing how frightened they were of being out on the streets. From the looks of their matching avocado green sweatsuits and shiny hair curlers poking out of chartreuse scarves, the only threat I could see to befall either of the two was a loose brick falling from a skyscraper and bouncing off their hairdo or the manager of a wrestling team kidnapping them for a featured attraction at intermission.

Cabs cover the streets. Some of the drivers speak English; however, Nigerian pidgin and Puerto Rican patois dominates the scene. The best test before embarking is to ask for a popular destination, like the Museum of Natural

History. If this draws a blank look, good sense says to bolt before the cab takes off.

A booth on Times Square offers half-price theater tickets to Broadway shows. Choices, however, diminish during the holiday seasons. Brokers also book seats over the telephone. Far removed from the theater floor, these smooth-tongued ladies and gents assure the seats are like sitting on the edge of the stage.

The biggest waste is to ask if you can see well from the seats. Quick and unwarranted, the reply is always, "Oh, yes." But what are you going to see well? Perhaps the big expanse in a concert hall in front of the balcony and overlooking part of the orchestra section is of interest, or maybe the folds in the lining of the curtains covering the stage fit your fancy.

For a symphony at Carnegie Hall, my seat was so far away from the stage the coat check listed another borough of the city as the warrantor. The ticket cost just about what Grandfather Noelke spent patenting his lands in Texas. A rented hearing device and a pair of my seven-power binoculars helped me orient myself and face the right direction. The only thing I ever saw was the shadows off the far wall of the brass section standing in review.

Once the air lanes opened and the nourishment began to move from the South, I relaxed and spent a lot of time in the museums and shows.

On the last morning, I was so tired of asking questions I'd have tried reading the elevator directions in Braille before I'd have asked a stranger for help.

Two tour busses were unloading out front. To confirm flight times, I had to out-shout a lady at the next phone jabbering in Portuguese. Before I charged off to the airport, the two elevator riders came in the revolving door, safe and untarnished, in spite of the dangers of the big city.