

## New York City for the First Time

Krista LeFevre



The chaotic buzz of people on every inch of the street, the sound of car horns incessantly honking, and the blistering heat all filled the air as we drove through New York City for the first time. The four of us, in utter amazement, tried to take in our surroundings while Mark, our boss, tried to find our hotel. The trip to New York was a reward for working so hard at selling vacuum cleaners. I was employed as an appointment setter, and the other three guys were vacuum salesmen who worked with me. They were being rewarded with a fun but quick getaway to New York City, and although I wasn't a salesperson, I insisted that I be included on the trip, because I, after all, was the one who set most of their appointments!

It was getting late, somewhere near 9:00 p.m.; the van's dome light was on, and Mark had the map plastered across the steering wheel as he was now desperately trying to find our hotel in Brooklyn. Those things, in combination with the fact that we were driving a van that plainly announced that we were from Dunbar, WV, couldn't possibly have made us look more like tourists. After trying to explain to Mark that it wasn't necessarily safe for us to look like tourists while driving around what we had now discovered was The Bronx, we insisted that he turn off the dome light, put away the map, and try to follow the signs to our hotel. After another hour of straining to see road signs and driving in circles and back alleys not on our map, we arrived at our hotel. It was a grimy little place with bars on the windows, dirt and spill-stained carpet and employees wearing street clothes with only nametags to identify them as such. As we slowly traipsed into our room, we were completely unaware of its condition (stained carpet and hair on the bathroom sink signifying that it had not been cleaned after the previous guest's departure) and all quickly fell asleep.

Rubbing our eyes like sleepy children, the five of us awoke early the next morning and were rather excited to begin our adventure in New York City! After only a few minutes of driving, we found ourselves in Times Square. (It seems there are many more signs to assist you in finding Times Square than there are to find Brooklyn!) I looked up to see, in the median, standing atop a huge box, a man dressed as an angel. His wings appeared to be ten feet wide, and the box upon which he stood seemed fifty feet high. He was preaching, quite loudly, "Women should not be free! Why, as a society, are we allowing

women to walk freely on the streets of America?" What a first impression I had of Times Square!

On our first day we didn't have much of a plan; we took a leisurely walk and marveled at the flashing neon lights, towering skyscrapers and overly congested streets. We took pictures, bought things from street markets and stood in amazement at the entertainment on the streets. It was nothing to walk down the street and almost trip over someone entertaining for cash. I saw men playing buckets like drums, groups of teens break-dancing and even a man painted silver, with a whistle in his mouth, pretending to be a robot. It was a very strange experience! As we walked we were also chased down continuously by street peddlers trying to sell us everything from a fake Rolex to a knock-off pair of Oakley sunglasses.

We decided that for our second and final night in New York City, we would treat ourselves to an ultra-nice hotel room. We had suffered through Brooklyn one night, and none of us felt the need to try it again. As we were standing in Times Square, we looked up to see the biggest, most beautifully lit, extravagant hotel. It towered over nearby buildings, and the red neon sign that stretched across the entire building said, "Double Tree Suites." That was it! That was where we wanted to stay. Unlike to our first room in Brooklyn, this room smelled of fresh citrus and looked immaculate. There was one king-sized bed, one double bed and a couch bed. Again, after a tiring day of exploring the city, we all fell quickly asleep.

Waking up early the next morning, we knew we had to get on the move because it was our last day in NYC, and there was so much more that we wanted to see! One of the guys and I had promised friends at home that we would bring them a David Letterman *Late Show* t-shirt, so we decided to make our way to the studio store. We bought our t-shirts and quickly realized that the show was about to begin taping (the studio was just around the corner from the store). We ran outside just in time to see a long, black stretch limousine pulling up, a limo that could have probably held fifty people. We all stared in amazement. Whose limo could that be? Whoever it was, apparently was a guest on *The Late Show*. The driver quickly got out of the car and shuffled his way to the other side of the car. He slowly opened one of the many rear doors, and a man with dark, somewhat wavy hair arose from the back seat. It was Tom Selleck! Like kids in a candy store, the five of us waited to see if any other guests were to arrive. There were none.

The street quickly cleared, but we stayed, hoping for just one more glimpse of Selleck or, for that matter, of anyone famous. As we stood in the middle of the street, a man from approximately three or four stories up stuck his head out of the window and yelled, "Why are you still standing there? No one else is coming! Go away!" Wow! I couldn't believe how brazen and rude this man was! But, being out of my comfort zone, I decided to ignore the remark. However, one of the guys with us proceeded to argue with the man for three or four minutes. I couldn't believe he had the nerve! After the arguing came to a standstill, the man, bald with a small build, told us to come back at 6:00 after the taping, and he would let us tour the studio. Still unsure of whether or not to believe him, we walked away but later decided to go back...just in case.

Promptly at 6:00, the five of us arrived back at the Letterman Studio, only to be greeted by a three hundred pound security guard assuring us that we were not, in fact, invited to tour the studio. Disappointed and jaded we turned to walk away with our eyes on the sidewalk below us. "Wait! I told them they could come in!" We all quickly turned to see

the small built bald man from earlier in the day running to stop us from leaving. It was the leader of the band on the Letterman Show: Paul Shaffer! He showed us around the studio, which looked quite different from how it appeared on my television screen each night. The New York scene behind Dave on the show is an assortment of wood, Christmas-style lights and multi-colored electrical cords. Dave's desk was covered with what looked like a painter's scrap canvas, off-white with colored paint splatters. We asked two New York City police officers to take our picture behind Dave's desk and one of me on top of the desk! We visited for about a half hour and then were on our way to the van. Shortly thereafter, four of us were sleeping soundly in the back of the van, while Mark, again, was driving us safely back to Charleston, West Virginia.



## Where I'm From

Krista LeFevre

I'm from a matchbox house  
A busy little place  
Occupied by three.  
I am from a neighborhood of  
Busybodies and well meaning know-it-alls.  
A place where I feel safe and secure.  
A place I call home.

I am from climbing trees and playing checkers.  
Chutes and Ladders and riding skateboards.  
I'm from slap jacks and rundown,  
Cartwheels and handstands.

From jump rope songs and Chinese Checkers,  
Backbends and leap frog.  
I'm from kickball and two-hand touch,  
Atari and Nintendo.

I am from Motley Crue and Poison,  
Cinderella and Guns and Roses.  
I'm from White Snake and Ozzy,  
Bon Jovi and Duran Duran.

I am from parachute pants and slap bracelets,  
Jelly shoes and slouch socks.  
I'm from Pop Rocks and candy necklaces,  
Break-dancing and poofy bangs.

I'm from a quiet little place.  
A place my family makes comfortable.  
A place where I can be myself.  
I am from serenity.  
Peace.  
Home.