

## Second morning in Fort Lauderdale

Second morning in Fort Lauderdale I began thinking to myself.... 'Some Americans are SOOOOO noisy'. 5.30am and they slam their doors and talk loudly down the hallway.....and knock on other peoples doors to wake them up and call out of the room to people in the hallway. After about half an hour of this I got up – wrapped a towel around me and with my cockatoo hairdo stood at my open doorway and said to them quite politely –“Did it not occur to you at 5.30 in the morning, that there may be other people in the hotel who were asleep? I have been woken up by your rudeness and arrogance and lack of consideration for others. Would you please be quiet so that I can go back to sleep?” They looked gobsmacked at me. I turned and closed my door. ..not that my little rant made any difference. At 7.15 when they all returned from breakfast – nothing changed. They might all be suffering from short term memory loss – (only in their 50's though – not oldies) ..or they are just plain rude. That's what I have found. Some people are over-the- top-nice when they are serving you or want money from tips.... but when there is nothing in it for them – some are just plain rude and arrogant. I see how many people treat each other in the supermarket and on the roads. There is a general level of 'antsiness' against people...and elevated egos...as if some are trying to be better... bigger..louder than everyone else. Oh well...

Oh...I just remembered...my trip home yesterday wasn't quite as eventful as my walk, hunt for lunch and shopping experience during the day .... but..... I after I ate my leaves and nuts in the carpark... I thought I better get a move on because it was going to be dark in about an hour and I had about 10km to walk back to my motel. My map blew away and got all wet when I was eating my greens.....and when I picked it up from the puddle, the black and white advertisement boxes along the side were all that lifted from the water.... but all the veins of roads and landmarks remained in the water... falling apart like a decaying fish.

Bummer...so I looked around in a big circle looking for landmarks. It was cloudy and showery...and I was trying to work out logically where the light was on the horizon in relation to the Northern hemisphere. It was clearing on one side of the world... but the other half where the sun was setting was quite dark and cloudy.....so which direction was east??? The sunny clearing side... Or was it the west??? No... let's go with clearing from the east. It was tricky but I was starting to get a handle on my location and my inbuilt GPS was starting to refine my grid reference. ☺

I remembered the 'wells fargo' building from the morning – tall, wide and metallic blue. That's the direction I need to head for then about 6miles further south than that. .. I thought that I wouldn't be able to make the whole distance by dark...but at least if I make it close it may make the taxi charge cheaper...and if I keep on the main road then the taxi won't take me on some obscure round-about way. So off I headed.

Puddle after puddle.... buildings toppling on their heads at my feet.

A tall man loped past me..his African-American ancestry was infiltrated by a sense of haste and despair. His umbrella was closed and he clenched it under his right arm... His blue trousers were baggy and rode up high revealing his black socks bouncing in his shoes. His blue shirt with a faint white stripe was darker on his shoulders... where the rain had started

to soak into his shirt. He had tufts of white whiskers scattered over his black face. I don't know what sort of hair he had...because he was wearing a black baseball cap. He ran across the road – against the red-hand signal....and swerved around the front of a turning car.

I saw coloured paint sliding down the wall of a building..and palms... and a sky with speckled clouds. Peak hour traffic was fairly calm....perhaps because this wasn't a central area. There were however busses... but no maps on the posts... just people sitting on wooden seats staring into their thoughts of dinner and crappy television. I walked past a group of men and one called out. "Love what's under your t-shirt"... I kept walking and didn't look up.... I had forgotten that I was wearing my T-shirt with LOVE printed across my boobs. Now I know why another man said LOVE your shirt... I felt uncomfortable so crossed the road.

I looked up and ahead of me crossing the road was the man with the umbrella under his arm. ...only now this time it was hanging limply from his wrist and scraping the concrete footpath. His lope had changed to a saunter... a sort of despondent Afro-American swagger... yet with an air of acceptance. I think he may have missed a bus... or missed something – because he was walking back with a resolute acceptance that somehow his life was shit. I smiled at him and he smiled back...his 2 amber stained teeth greeted me with kindness.

I decided it was time to get a taxi...and I was feeling uncomfortable about being by myself when all the homeless with their trolleys and hession bags were starting to seep into the darkness. Because I had crossed the road I was on the wrong side of the road and thought to myself...bummer... I will have to try and cross again so I get a taxi heading in the right direction. I looked up to the intersection and on the other road was a taxi about to turn. I waved to him and thought to myself...stuff the direction...at least it's a taxi and its getting dark...all he has to do is a u-turn and we'll be fine. He was about to drive past and I sort of looked begginly and waved my arm. He crossed the 3 lanes and obviously took pity on me and stopped. I said we had to do a u-turn and gave him the address. He told me he wasn't going to pick me up because he was a Seventh Day Adventist and he was nearly finished his shift and wanted to go closer to where he lived for his last pick up. I thanked him for stopping and said that he was doing God's work by picking me up tonight. He beamed. 25 minutes later I gave him a fist full of small US dollars..left over from the boys trip to Africa. I gave him about \$40 – the fare was about \$20.... and I glanced over to thank him as I got out of the car...he had a tear in his eye after he counted it. ..yes he did God's work. 😊