Remembering an Event

Client Name

University Name

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The moment of significance in my life can be described as the first time I visited USA. The USA is a large, beautiful and amazing to visit. The people are warm irrespective of race. I have never felt any issue while dealing with people. The food is good and portions are huge. I particularly love how everyone follows rules irrespective of whether someone is watching or not. The weather was awesome. People care about fitness as one can see them running at any time of day. The roads/highways are far better than Vietnam. In fact the number of vehicles on road is way more than Vietnam. Cleanliness is something that every Vietnamese likes in western countries and USA is no exception. I heard car horn only twice during my stay as compared to Vietnam where the situation is totally opposite owing to lesser availability of cars.

Before I visited US, my perception of the country was limited to and gathered from Hollywood movies. So, basically big cities, sky scrapers, crowded and crazy party scenes. When I landed in Buffalo, NY my perception about USA changed. Buffalo is a city in upstate New York which is around 8 hours from New York City by road but 20–30 minutes from Canadian border.

As a city, it was booming in mid 70s and 80s but couple of big corporations had shut down leading to huge unemployment so there’s really not much that the city offers except most of the international population go to University at Buffalo. So when I landed at the Buffalo airport, it was tinier than the most US airports that you’ll find in metropolitan cities. I was surrounded by Asians and Indians at the airport and there were not many locals.

As we drove down to the university, what struck me immediately was the huge infrastructure particularly roads. Wide, well maintained and motorists being well disciplined. Lorries and trucks on roads which were huge, majestic, and fast caught my eyes. I had never seen anything like those vehicles before. Vietnam has its own share of vehicles but never had I ever witnessed such a variety of auto motives. Particularly astonishing was the sight of recreation vehicles on road. Though, back home, we see such vehicles occasionally, the sheer number and variety of those RVs anywhere stumped me. Designated parking lots for such vehicles, facility for water & power connection wherever they had to park was something beyond my imagination. Another surprise to me was to see dealers in boats and yachts at Shopping Malls. When I visited RCR Buffalo Marina, I was taken aback to see boats & yachts being sold there. Never seen such things back home. Similarly it is commonplace to see boats and yachts being transported on road

I had reached around 8–9 pm at night and had to take a cab to the apartment. While going through the city, it was nothing like what I imagined it to be in terms of what I had seen in the movies. It had a more suburban feel. One thing that surprised me during the cab ride was we hit a traffic signal and we were pretty much the only ones on the road. There was no car in either direction for miles. Instead of what you see in Vietnam, people just drive through the red lights. He stopped for the entirety of the red light until it turned green. It was a little surprising/ shocking for me at that time.

The other thing I noticed was everything was very systematic, easy and convenient. So my friends and I had to sign the lease for an apartment the next day and moved in. The entire process took less than 15 minutes and we had the keys for the place. There was no running around. We took an appointment, went there, signed, provided passport copies and voila had the keys.

I noticed the air quality was so much better there and sky was so blue. Everything looked so scenic. The university itself was huge. I feel United States is the country that has mastered the art of small talk. People here are so friendly that you can just about start a conversation with anyone, be it the waitress serving your table, the cashier at your nearest Walmart or just about anyone waiting with you at the bus stop. For someone who’s not used to making small talk with strangers, it can get a little nerve-wracking the first few times.

One thing that shocked me the most was when I visited the Buffalo Downtown over the weekend - Sunday evening around 6 pm. The entire place was dead. There were no stores, restaurants open. Everything was shut and my friends and I were the only ones there. It was almost a little scary. As we were driving to the restaurant, I noticed something which struck me as extremely odd. The number of people walking on the sidewalks were so few that I could count them off my fingers. I asked my uncle, “Where are the people?” To which my uncle promptly replied, “In the cars, driving!” Places are located so far away in the United States that everyone just prefers to drive. One will hardly see people walking on the streets unless he or she is in a major city’s downtown area. The silence was deafening.

In a nutshell, I can say that it was a truly overwhelming experience and I look forward to visit again.

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