

New York City

The smell hits me as I get off the plane. New York has a smell unlike any place in the world, the smell of old leather, of a banker's study. It's the smell of establishment and hidden vice.

In the baggage claim area, New Yorkers begin to dominate the crowd. I overhear a man who could be the Emperor of Japan who speaks English in an accent that comes from somewhere between the Bronx and Long Island. No matter where someone originates, the city can embrace them.

As I wait for a taxi, I reflect on the faces around me. Like those of most New Yorkers, the lines seem to have been sharply cut out of putty and left to erode for varying amounts of time. They show the wear of holding a disinterested expression as a shield.

The faces are best when they explode with recognition or excitement. New Yorkers greet friendly faces with a loud holler and animated expressions. The contrast with the shape worn into their flesh only enhances the sparkling of the greeting.

The city itself bubbles and pops. People bump, joke, shout, and argue. It is a city where people move the city; personal interactions are primary. Road rage here leads to stabbings, not shootings.

It's a fun place to spend a week.