

spain-2007-02.txt, Ralph Abraham, March 17, 2007

NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, February 21, 2007. My journey to the south of Spain with the Ross School trip began with an early morning ride to San Francisco International Airport, and a flight to New York.

According to plan, a car met me at JFK and carried me and bags to the 71st Street apartment of Courtney Ross. Then Courtney and I, along with Darius Narizzano, her fabulous roadie, were to go on immediately to another airport for a night flight to Rome. But on arrival at the apartment I found Courtney deep in after-dinner conversation with two guests; our departure had been set forward one day.

Thursday, February 22, 2007. After a recuperative deep sleep I awoke for breakfast and an unexpected free day in the city. Recently my son Peter had been singing the praises of Central Park as a workout venue, so I headed out to the park, only two blocks away, for an aerobic circuit. It looked so familiar from the many movies shot there, and gradually some memories returned of my own movies:

- ** summer school at Columbia University, 1954,
- ** living in Greenwich Village, 1962-64,
- ** day trips from Princeton, 1964-1968,
- ** performance in the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, 1992, and
- ** staying with Ray in Andra Akers apartment in the Dakota in 2001.

This last came to the foreground as I recalled that the Dakota was directly across the park from where I now walked. I swerved westward and soon stood among a group of photo-mad Japanese tourists, gawking at the spot where John Lennon had been shot in front of his Dakota studio. But I was gazing up at the second floor window from which I had looked down so many times, from Andra's dining table. Alas, no more! Andra died March 20, 2002 after a cosmetic surgery. Her life was a constant war between her body and her mind. Her enviable physique hid her unique mental gifts from view, for all but a few close friends. We may never

forget her amazing phone raps, that blazed forth without the blinding glare of her outrageous costumes and faces. Sadly, I returned to the present, walked back to 71st Street, and packed for Rome.

#####