Column by Jonathan Richmond

Dear Tech

The cab driver grinned as he handed me the morning Herald with the crushed jet spread across the front page. Two minutes later we were at Logan.

All night, working like the graduate student I thought I no longer was, I'd missed my flight and was now en route to American Airlines for their 9 a.m. departure to Los Angeles.

You can generally go to the gate and hand the agent a ticket from any other airline and even possibly a piece of paper with a smiley face on it, and be allowed to fly, but I had a bag to check, so a trip to the front counter was in order. I got there at 8:30 to find a fifteen minute wait, a surly and misinformed employee, and, ten minutes of bureaucratic delay.

Despite the airline's efforts, I got on the flight, which was promptly delayed for forty-five minutes. The passengers lined up with stretched teeth to an entertaining description of the procedures for ensuring the wings were de-iced. My bag, left behind in Boston, was delayed longer.

Warily, I waited at the buffer envelope handed me upon arrival at the Los Angeles County Hall of Administration, where I stood ready to face the consequences of the article headlined "Sex and the Single Subway" the Los Angeles Times had written about me two days previously. "Execution of Richmond read the envelope said. "Agreement for execution on Monday in your office."

I realized I needed to get my new contract notarized.

And so to Interstate 5, a traffic-forsaken freeway of late afternoon misery.

I wonder whether getting kicked out of the City of Commerce Travelodge Suites Motel deserves a place on your resume. The manager of this facility, whose mailbox rooms took off on the freezer I-5 on one side and the almost equally noisy Slauson Avenue on the other, had argued over accepting a discount voucher his reservations staff had told me I could use, and suggested I check out.

Looking into dinner possibilities in Beverly Hills the following night, I ventured into the Wilshire hotel. The silent storms went off as the matter of hotel detained the presence of a grubby, unsanitized, and tweedly-dressed Englishman. Though no one in the room so much as batted an eyelash, the man couldn't beckoned me toward the exit, and I stumbled.

I passed on the opportunity to dine on "Scratchmade Tofu" or "Vegan Curries Francaise" at the Veggie Gourmet, and hesitated only briefly at the Caverniera — eschewing the chance to buy a kilo of the stuff for a mere $2.45 — before arriving at Caviarteria. "A Pot Bakery and Boutique."

Caviarteria for the gourmet canine take-out market, supplying dog biscuits intricately crafted in the shapes of bugs and cacti and, for the social crowd, "party platters" for $25. Conscious owners can ensures their pooch is admitted to the Wilshire with the purchase of a dog biscuit for $45 or a Chanel collar and leash set for $102.

I considered dining at Critter Catered, but the prices were too high for human consumption. It's a dog's life.

My return trip began inauspiciously. The traffic was backed up on I-10, and I missed my flight back to Boston. I stood by for a last one. I was assigned seat 1F and was happy because it was in first class, courtesy of a free upgrade Continental snatched out periodically to those masochistic enough to fly with them on a regular basis.

But I turned out to be the third person to have come to claim the seat, and the first arrival had firmly comitted himself in place to minimize the high risk of displacement. The gate agents came to attend to the confusion, and I was ressigned to 20F — in coach.

There were only two people who had been assigned this seat, but since even Continental won't strap two people in one seat, I was re-directed to the empty aisle seat in the last row, Continental's prior claim.

None of the seats in the back row would recline, but the ones in front certainly did, vending into the chests of the hapless victims in the b accuso. The seat was in security, with a prisoner placed between them, handcuffed some of the time. One of the guards got up at one point and was overheard discussing the merits of magic and handcuffs with one of the cabin crew.

Was the Continental ambition intended to make the prisoner fled "at home?" The inductible appearance appeared to be made of restitutis,-

OPINION

Los Angeles — Not Really That Angelic

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