

A bar stool in Vegas: Marilyn Darling

It was November 8, 2016 - US election day. I was seriously jet lagged, after a long flight from Boston, Massachusetts, and not enough sleep.

As I was to attend a meeting the following day I was grateful there were no jangling slot machines in the lobby of my Las Vegas hotel.

I was determined to get some fresh air so I dropped my bags and headed out. My walk reminded me how skin deep Las Vegas is. A block off the strip, it was hard to walk. No sidewalks - all parking lots and iffy convenience (and other) stores. My destination was the Wynn casino. I wanted to see what it looked like, because they were about to build one within walking distance of my home in Boston.

The Wynn was what I expected - a lot of surface glitz and noise. Why our governor decided to allow gambling in Massachusetts as a stop-gap budget measure, escaped me and still does.

I stumbled back to the hotel, exhausted. The polls had just closed on the east coast. I desperately wanted to go to sleep, but I needed to know. Was Hillary (Clinton) winning, as everyone thought she would?

I took a seat at the bar, in front of the big-screen TV. I picked at a nondescript dinner and wine while watching the commentators trying to make sense of the data that was coming in.

It started out as typical, cheerful commentator banter - explaining that the early results were from parts of the States that tended to vote Republican. But as more results came in, their rationales became more convoluted. Everyone knew Hillary would win, but it became harder to explain just how that was going to happen.

I was surrounded by Trump supporters, who became more cheerful - and intoxicated - as the evening progressed. Finally, I could sit there no longer. I went upstairs and collapsed into bed. At 3am I woke up and turned on the TV to confirm what I feared. Four years of Trump.

Las Vegas wasn't the travel experience I thought it would be.

Now, it's another election day - November 3, 2020. Thankfully I am in Boston, and I will stay up. But part of me will be back on that bar stool in Vegas, fearing the worst.