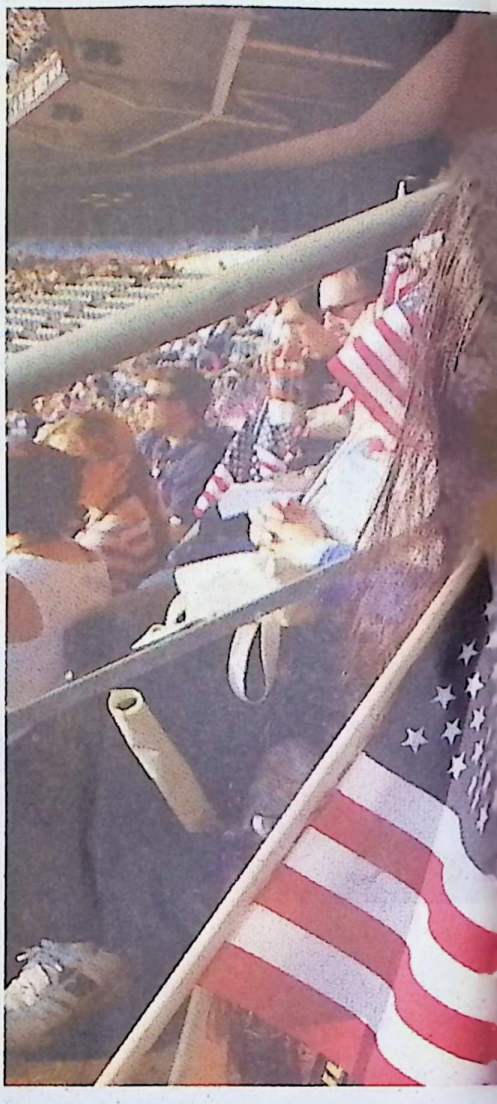
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Iffat Nawaz relives her visit to the Democratic National Convention in Colorado



IT wasn't my life long dream to attend the Democratic National Convention. Yes, I am a Democrat and I do enjoy the company of liberal-minded folks trying to achieve a balanced universe (if that exists). However, I am not passionate about politics. So when the chance came for me to attend the Democratic National Convention, I took it as it would be an opportunity of a lifetime. But I had no idea what to expect.

I arrived in Denver, Colorado the day before the convention started. It was a Sunday afternoon and Denver was still in preparation phase. At the airport, the line for taxis was a mile long. There were only 10,000 taxicabs in Denver and about 60,000 people coming in that week in need of them. Before I walked into my hotel I already had a pseudo-political-celebrity sighting -- John Kerry. I didn't feel overly excited seeing him. Does anyone?

That night, we kicked off the convention with the opening ceremony -- a 200-people reception overlooking Denver with the mountains at a distance, cocktail glasses lightly cheering each other on, international figures being introduced to each other while Nancy Pelosi and Howard Dean spoke.

We clapped after their brief little speeches and went on mingling. It was work for most but I was lucky enough to be there just to enjoy. And quite frankly, I wasn't sure how to enjoy an event. I felt like I should be somewhat intimidated, but the fact that I had nothing to lose helped me just be who I am.

This also helped me strike up conversations with people who were apparently big shots, but because I had no idea who they were, our conversations became that of any normal gathering. I didn't want anything from them, so they could talk to me about the mountains and rivers instead of Russia and Georgia. They knew I wouldn't quote them or try to use them for some benefit or other. I remember that agenda-less night being perfect.

On Monday, the first official day at the convention, I saw protesters everywhere. There were religious and political groups, nut-jobs with their crazy signs, and security in each corner ready to put any weirdo in hand-cuffs as the energy of the DNC started crawling all around Denver. People rejoicing, chanting, meeting, laughing, believing in every corner you looked. That night, Michelle Obama's speech won all hearts and made many cry.

Tuesday morning started off on a dreamy note for me. A breakfast session with Bill Clinton that I was lucky enough to attend. It was a workshop consisting of panel members who were former leaders from around the world. Bill, my old crush, kept me captivated, and I had no idea what anyone else was saying. I wondered why this man couldn't just run for his third term of presidency, he would win... no doubt. That night, Hillary Clinton made her best speech ever. I wished she spoke like this while she was