

Paris, AngelHack, API Days 2012

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Themes: Technology



I just returned from a lovely trip to Paris, France. I was there for a Heroku-sponsored hackathon: AngelHack:Paris.

Getting There

Unfortunately, I had to fly to Paris straight from Las Vegas, so I had a grueling ~15 hours of flying ahead of me. Luckily, the flights on the way over were lovely. I got bumped up to premium economy and had power outlets on both flights.

I took advantage and brushed up on my Ocarina of Time skills.

Gaming on the plane

I landed at noon already adjusted to local timezone and with all my batteries fully charged.



Perfect. :)

Paris: Rich, Filthy, and Beautiful

This was my second trip to Paris. It's one of my least favorite cities in general, I have to say. Strangers are rude, there's little English to get by, credit cards are rarely accepted, and hotel rooms are extremely small.

Despite that, I love visiting Paris for one reason: contrast.



Paris, where even the stray dogs are well dressed.



Where sketchy people sell odd steaming beans out of shopping carts.



Where graffiti clings to ancient monuments.



As well as beautiful buildings.



Where tourists stick out like sore thumbs.



Where pigeons have no fear.



Where families raise their children.



Where motorbikes aren't in style.



Where the homeless are either handicapped or simply out of luck.



And empty bottles of wine can be found in phone booths.



It's a magical place.

Accommodations

My last stay in Paris was fairly rough. The hotel featured a single wall outlet, a shower large enough for a small child, and a rock-hard twin-sized bed.

This time, I studied up on TripAdvisor and decided to try a nicer (€220 a night) hotel in the non-tourist district of town: Hotel Magenta. While still quite uncomfortable by American standards, the Magenta proved to be a much better place to spend some personal time. It even had a bathtub (oooh).

The room also featured a single outlet for the entire room, but this time I was prepared:

Power strip in hotel room

Getting around the city wasn't as hard as I expected. Uber finally came to town!



AngelHack:Paris

The purpose of this trip was to accompany some Salesforce evangelists, Guillaume Roques and John Stevenson, and show them the ropes of representing Heroku.

AngelHack was a fantastic hackathon, with an incredible amount of energy and excitement in the air. I highly recommend checking it out next time it comes to a [city near you](#).

Much to my surprise, ran into my good friend and fellow PSF Member: Tarek Ziadé.



The first and second place teams won an all-paid trip to San Francisco to pitch their startup ideas to some angel investors (hence the name AngelHack).



The thirds and fourth place teams of the hackathon won 5x 13" Retina MacBook Pros and 4 iPad Minis, provided by Heroku. Many congratulations to the winners!



Designer Jeans

In my travels, I've learned to pack as lightly as humanly possible. Unfortunately, a single point of failure was discovered this trip: my jeans. While in Vegas, my pants developed a very small tear between the legs. Much to my surprise, by the end of the hackathon, this small imperfection had transformed itself into a 10 inch hole. No number of hotel sewing kits could possibly repair this situation.

I had a keynote the next day. My hand was forced: I had to buy new jeans. In the fashion capital of the world. On a Sunday.

After frantically searching through the city for several kilometers, I stumbled into a men's clothing shop that was open on a Sunday. I begrudgingly walked away with a €195 pair of **Dolce & Gabbana** jeans (luckily, they were 30% off).

Sigh.

API Days

The next day, I headed over to EPITECH, a technical university, for API Days:



Due to some complicated circumstances, I had the opportunity to give an impromptu keynote. Despite only eight hours of advance notice, it went fairly well. I did make a few [comical mistakes](#), however:

My name is Kenneth Reitz, and I work for a subsidiary of Heroku named Salesforce. Err, I mean..."

Lots of suits. Lots of sales. Lots of hackers. Lots of buzzwords. Lots of enterprise.

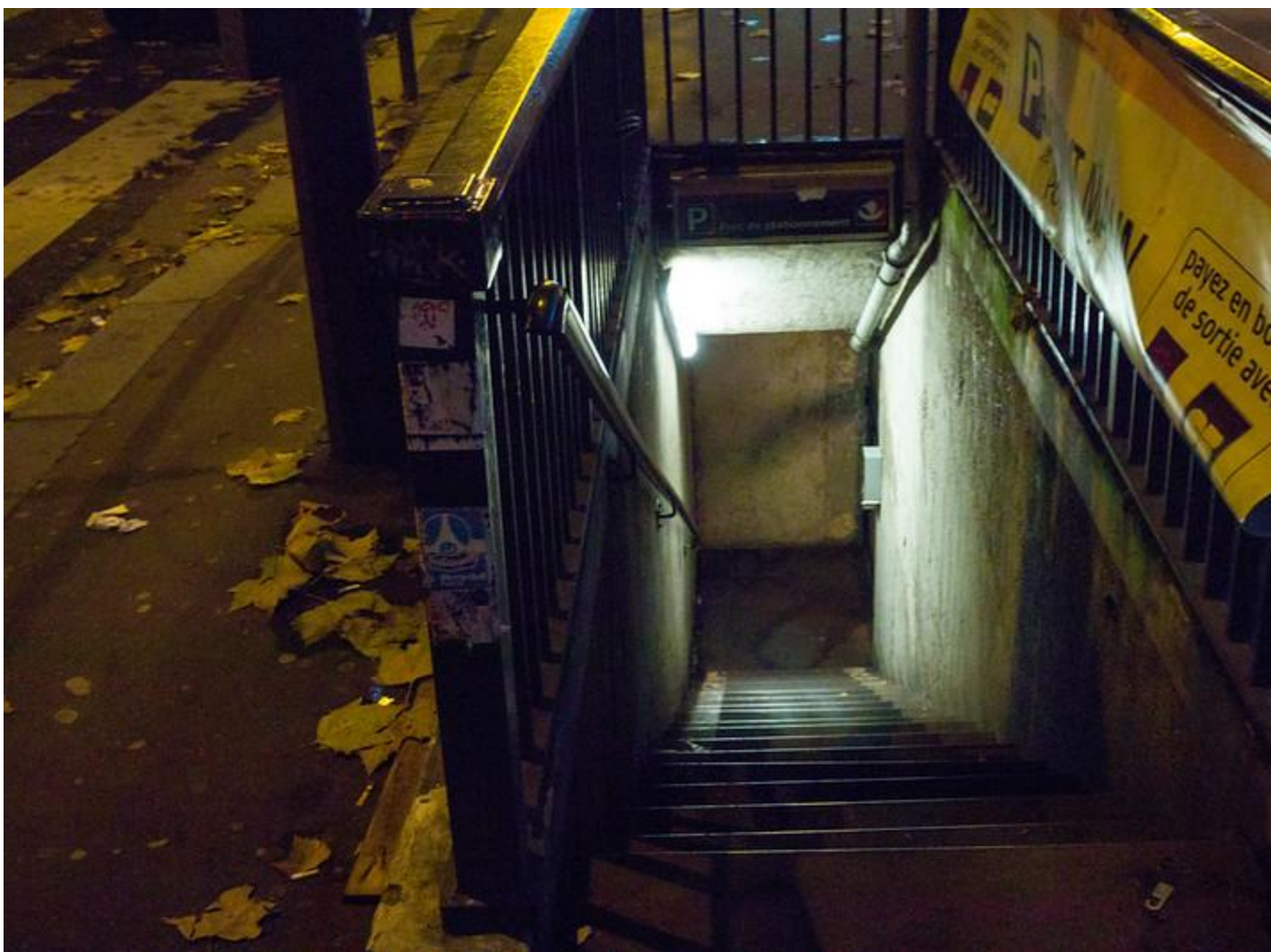




Interesting event.

Photo Trek with Guillaume

In exchange for doing Guillaume's API Days keynote, he agreed to take me out for a late night photo tour in the city.





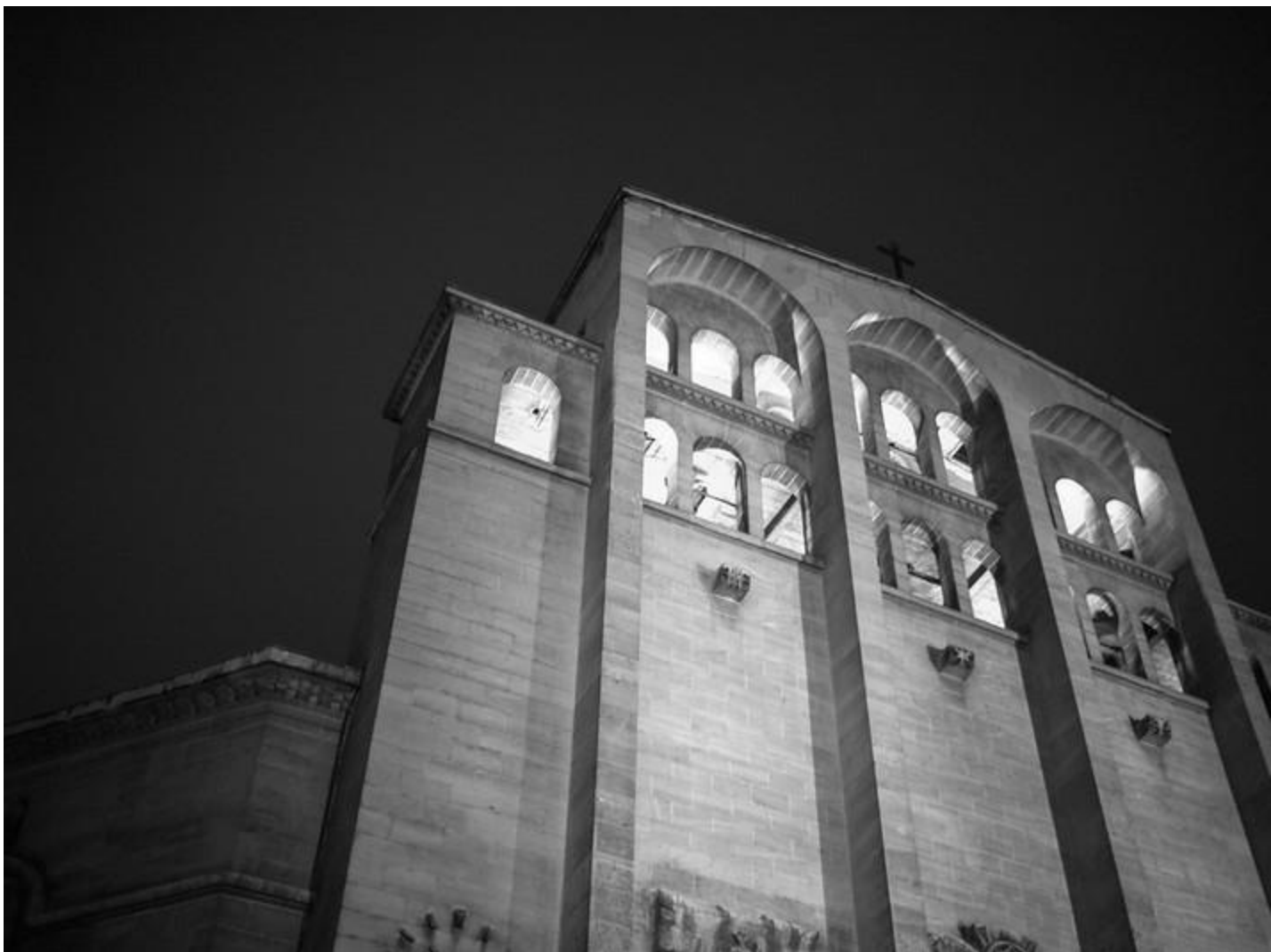














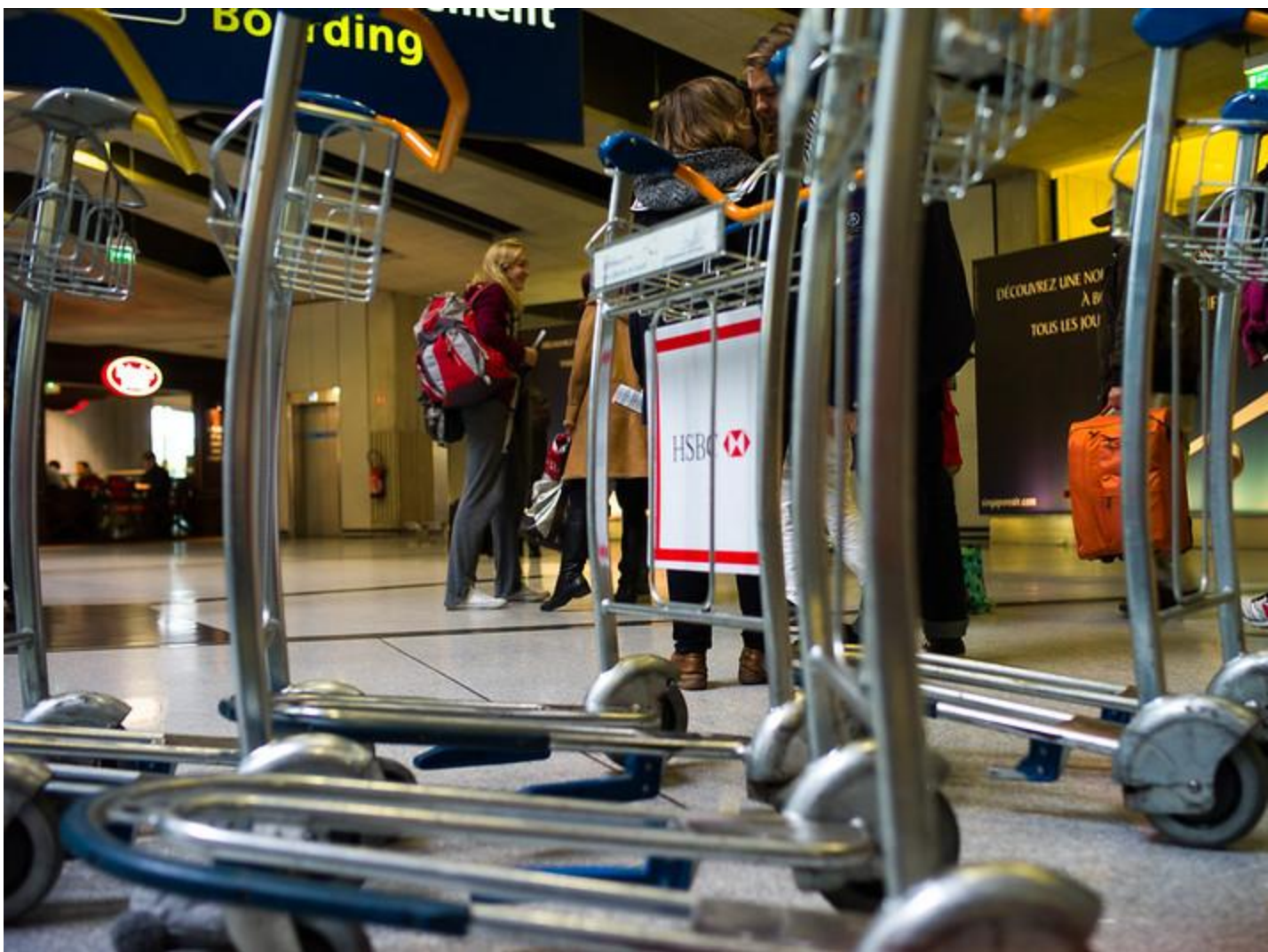


It couldn't have gone better. Thanks, Guillaume!



Heading Home

I've flown home through Charles de Gaulle (CDG->IAD) several times.





It's somehow one of my least favorite flights. 10 hours in the air seems to strike the perfect balance between almost-over and never-ending. The 16 hour flight I took to Australia last year went past faster than this.

Regardless, it was a fairly uneventful flight. I got a good photo of two strangers cuddling while watching a film on a MacBook:



Funny how technology brings us together.

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