

Columbus and Warren to Filene's

3-4 p.m.

Woman with baby carriage: I don't know. I'm not from Boston. I don't know.

Old man: Filene's. Lemme think now. Filene's. (Points finger northeast down Columbus Avenue for full minute.) Park Square. I'm trying to think of the shortest way for you now. Park Square. Lessee, Park Square. Take this street right to the end. That's Park Square. Lemme think. That's right. Go all the way to Park Square. It's a big round square. You'll see the Common right next to it. Cross the Common. Swing to the left, straight across the Common. (Thinks awhile.) Left across the Common, then turn right. A right will take you right to the door of Filene's. Jordan Marsh's and Filene's.

Oh, they're all together there, all the stores. Jordan's and Filene's together there. There's lots of signs. Both of 'em have big signs everywhere. You can't miss 'em.

Depends how fast you walk. Some are slower than others. I expect you can make it in twenty minutes.

Young Negro man: Filene's. Department Store? That's 'way downtown. You have to go downtown. That's down there with Jordan Marsh's. You know where Jordan's is? You have to go downtown. (Thinks.) Damn, I can't remember those street down there. Take this street (pointing northeast down Columbus Avenue) till you get to Washington. Jordan's and Filene's are on Washington. Go down here (pointing northeast down Columbus Avenue) to Washington Street, and go right. Take a right, and it's on Washington. Jordan's is right there next to it, across the street. They're both on Washington Street.

Ah ... Jordan's is right there. you'll see them both. They have big signs. You'll see. Ask anybody down there. Hell, I haven't been downtown in weeks. I can't remember what it's like. It's all screwed up down there, and I can't remember. Just go right at Washington, then go straight. You can't miss the signs.

Oh, about fifteen minutes.

7-8 p.m.

Old man, somewhat frightened: Filene's. Downtown. Go down there (pointing south down West Newton Street) to Washington Street. Go downtown. It's on Washington. Yeah, go that way (pointing east) for downtown.

I don't know what it looks like.

Columbus and Warren to Filene's (continued)

Young school girl with books: I don't know. I don't live here. I think you go over one block and down (pointing south and east). It's downtown. That way (pointing east) is downtown. I wouldn't know. I don't live in this ... er ... city.

Negro man: Filene's. That's the Department Store? You walkin' or ridin'? Oh, you're walkin', huh? Well. See here (pointing east down Columbus Avenue). This here's Columbus Avenue. Tremont is one block over (showing parallel effect with hands). Follow this here Columbus all the way to the end. (Points east down Columbus Avenue for most of the remainder of the conversation.) Go over one. That'll be Tremont. Keep going the same way on Tremont. Lemme see. Filene's is down there somewhere. Just follow this street all the way to the end. That'll be the Public Garden. Do you know the Public Garden? Well, go to the end. That'll be the Public Garden. Go right there one block. That'll be Tremont. Go down Tremont a ways. Filene's is the next block over, on Washington. Winter street cutoff, I think. Just go down here as far as you can go, and go right one. Then go left and right one again. It's easy of you know ... but I'm not so sure you'll get there yet. Go down here to the Public garden. That'll be Boylston Street. Go right there, to Tremont. Like I say, take Tremont right downtown. Somewhere there, Filene's will be over one, on Washington.

Oh, ask anyone down there. You get there around Tremont, and they'll tell you. Tremont and Washington are parallel, like this (indicating with hands). And this one -- Columbus -- too. They're all parallel. Just go over to Tremont and then all the way downtown. Filene's is on Washington. Got that now? All the way down to the end, and over one.

Oh, about fifteen minutes. No more'n that.

Man with foreign accent: Filene's. That's two miles. Two miles from here. That's Washington Street. But store is closed. You go straight down (pointing east down Columbus Avenue), straight down. Straight down to Park Square. You go Washington Street at Park Square. Filene's is on Washington Street. Store is closed. It maybe one and a half mile. Long way, straight down. Go to Park Square and take Washington Street. Filene's is right together with all the department stores. You see Filene's. What you want at Filene's? Inside? Outside. Just go down here (pointing east down Columbus Avenue) to Park Square. You go Washington Street to Filene's.

Ah. Filene's downtown with all the stores. You see. It big store, with big signs and things. It on corner of Summer Street. You go straight down to Park Square (pointing northeast down Columbus Avenue). Straight down. It mile and a half. Maybe you take taxi. Maybe you like walk instead. It will be a long walk, but walk is good.

You should do in twenty minutes. Straight down. (Pause.) Twenty minutes.

Man: Naw, I'd get lost, sure as shootin', tryin' to tell you. Better look around and ask somebody else. Better ask someone that's not a stranger in these parts. (Pause.) I think it's thataway (motioning in arc across downtown Boston). But I couldn't tell you for sure. You know how mixed up these streets are here. Find someone that lives here. (Leaving, yells:) Might try a policeman.

Woman: Well I ... you can take Summer Street (motioning to street squarely in front of South Station) -- this is Summer Street. Take it right on around over there (indicating other side of construction pit). See, right around there. Cross right across there (pointing to Atlantic Street) where I just came from. Go on around right over to there, to Richardson's. See where it says Richardson's? Go right on up that street and you can't miss it. Right on around.

It's a big Department Store. It's got signs -- it's a big store. Oh, there's a big overhang when you come to it. With a clock under it. It's a busy corner for people waiting for buses and things. lots of people waiting there. Marsh's -- Jordan marsh's -- is right across the street. Oh, you can't miss it. Look for the real big overhang.

About five minutes.

Young woman: Oh, lemme see. It's right up there (motioning to the right of Federal Street). Take High Street. No. See that street (pointing to Summer Street) up there. There. The one with the two big lighted signs. See Murray's Cafeteria? Take that street straight on up. It's about (pause) three blocks up. It'll be on your left. You can't miss it. Straight ahead.

Oh it's got a big sign. It's right on the corner. All the stores are there together. Gilcris't's is there. Gilcris't's is on the other corner, across the street. You can't miss it.

About fifteen minutes.

Stout old man: Filenes. Is that all you want? It's on Summer. Go right up there (motioning up Summer Street) to Washington. It's on Washington and Summer. Go around there (indicating around the construction pit) and right up there (pointing up Summer Street). You couldn't ask for better. Straight on up. Are you trying to kid me?

It's got a big sign. You can't miss it. Ask anybody. You can't miss the signs. Just about exactly six minutes.

Man: Yeh. Filenes is right up there (pointing up Summer Street). You can't miss it. Go around (indicating construction pit) and straight up. It's on the right, about three blocks. On the right, on Washington Street.

It's on the corner when you get to Washington Street. Go all the way as far as you can -- that's Washington Street. It'll be on the corner. Look for

South Station to Filenes (continued)

a subway station. There's a subway entrance on the corner. That's Filene's. You can't miss it.

Oh, I'd say ... well, about ten minutes, at least.

Woman: Oh, you're way off. You've got a long way. You've gotta go down this street (looking down Salem Street) all the way to the end. Go through a tunnel. You'll find a policeman over there someplace. You'll be nearer then, and anybody can help you. Ask a policeman.

Oh it's right down there in the middle of things. All the stores are right there. They've all got signs and things. Hi Jo Jo (waving at passing woman). Anybody down there can show you. All the stores are together.

Oh, fifteen minutes ten or fifteen. If you're walkin', fifteen minutes. You go right down there (gesturing down Salem Street) and a little to the right and you can catch a subway. Oh, well, straight through the underpass and ask would be best.

Young woman, about 25-years-old: Oh, you've got a long way ... to walk. Unless you take the subway. I tell you. Go straight down here (pointing down Salem Street) -- This here's Salem. Straight down Salem, to the end. It's eight or ten minutes. Go to the end -- to a bridge; you'll see it. Go right a couple of blocks and ask anybody. They'll show you the subway. Straight to the end, and over (motioning to the right). Oh, in that case, go straight down Salem, under the thing ... under a big thing (describing with hands). You know, it cuts across. You'll see it. Go under to Marshall Street. That's a short cut. Go along Marshall until you come to Union. It's hard to describe. I'm going that way now. I can show you. Want to come along? Well, go right along Salem (motioning down Salem Street) 'till you come to a market place. Find Marshall and take Marshall until you reach Union. Oh, do you know Union? Well, just find Marshall. Marshall's at the corner of Kennedy's. Go along ... huh? Kennedy's is a kind of -- oh, place where you buy butter and eggs and things. You know, sort of a store. It's right off the market. The market's got market baskets everywhere -- noise and things -- busy -- you'll find it easy. I'm going that way now. I can show you. Come on. Take Marshall to Union to ... to ... it'll run into Dock Square. Dock Square. Find Washington there and go along Washington all the way. Can't miss it. Filenes is right on Washington. All the stores are there in a bunch. It's on the left.

There's signs. One hundred and one signs. Signs everywhere. All over. Can't miss it. Filenes is easy to find. It's the biggest store around. Once you're on Washington, you'll find it easy.

Gee, I ... It'll take a while. For you walkin' it will be faster than me. You ... maybe twenty minutes. Me, thirty. But it'll take a while. (Leaving, turns and yells:) Hope you don't get lost.

Very old man: Uh? Filenes? Filenes. (Turns to look down Salem Street.)
(Passing young couple overhear.)

Young man (in very efficient tone, with date present) : Filenes. Oh, you're way (with emphasis) off. Go straight down (indicating Salem Street) two blocks and turn left. Go right at Hanover Street, right on through all the way to Scollay (with emphasis) Square. Got that? You'll be downtown. Take a left on Washington Street. O.K.?

Old man mumbles suggestion in Italian.

Young man: (To old man) No. (To interviewer) Do you want to take a sub-

Old North Church to Filenes (continued)

way? Walkin'. I thought so. Go down there two blocks (motioning down Salem Street). Bennet. Go left at Bennet, not the next one. One (with emphasis) block over is Hanover.

Old man mumbles something, points down Salem Street.

Young man: (To old man) Nah. Salem is too small. He'd get mixed up down there. (To interviewer) Go over to Hanover -- that's the big street. You'll find it easy. Go straight through to Scollay Square, all the way. Go left on Stremont Street. Left on Tremont. Filenes is right there. Yes, right there.

Girl: Right on Tremont. (Comment indicated Filenes' address, not direction.)

Old man nods approval.

Girl: It's got signs.

Young man: Plenty of signs. Ask anybody. Ask anybody (with emphasis). Anybody'll know.

Girl: Signs all over. It's easy. Someone on Tremont Street can show you.

Young man: Oh, five minutes. Five minutes.

Couple moves on.

Old man: You know how? Ummm.

5 p.m.

Young man, accompanied by wife and baby: Oh, let me think. What would be best? Take this street (indicating Salem Street) down to the structure, er ...goes over you. An underpass. Take the underpass to the other side. Find a little street called Marshall. Wait ... better yet, keep going straight three (with emphasis) blocks. Three blocks. Turn left. Get on the right hand side of the street. Stay there, and keep going. You'll run right into it. You can't miss it. Just stay on that street. It's on the left.

Oh, you can't miss it. It's on the left. There's lots of signs, in the windows and every where. Ask anybody. Anybody down there. What's tonight -- Wednesday? The stores are open. There'll be crowds everywhere. Ask anybody. Filenes is big (with emphasis). You can't miss it. Go straight on Salem (pointing down Salem Street), go under the bridge, and take the third (with emphasis) street to the left. The third. That's Washington. Stay on the right hand side, and go around. Filenes is on Washington. You can't miss it. Ask anybody.

Walkin', for you about ten or fifteen minutes. If you walk fast.

Woman: Filene's? Sure. just take the elevated. Go down here (pointing to Cambridge Street) and go right. You'll see the elevated. Go to Park Street. Get off at park and walk one block. Walking? It's about 25 minutes from here. Oh, see that street (pointing to Cambridge Street)? Go left, around the other way. You'll come to Scollay Square. Find Washington and go straight. Go right down here (pointing to Cambridge Street). Go to Bowdoin Square, then to Scollay. Ask anybody there. They can tell you which is Washington. Filene's is on Washington. Straight down. You can't miss it. You can do it in fifteen minutes.

Oh, it's a big building, a big store. And it's got signs all over, all over everywhere. Big ones and little ones everywhere, in the windows. Anyone can show you. It's at the corner of Washington and Summer. You can't miss it. Filene's is easy to find.

Fifteen minutes at the most.

Young woman: (Smiles.) Oh gee. Well, go down to the main street down here. Do you know where I mean (pointing to Cambridge Street)? Well, come here. (Moves to better vantage point.) See there? Go left to Scollay Square. Do you know where that is? Well, it's a wide place with buildings all around it. You're not far from town now -- about five blocks. At Scollay, keep going straight. After awhile, go left. You can't miss it -- ask anybody. Go left here, and stick to the right. Keep going straight past Scollay. You'll see E. Chapman's. Go down there one block. That's Washington -- one block left. Filene's is right there. You can't miss it.

Spastic oldtimer on crutches: Just take this street (pointing to Cambridge Street) on around ... That's (with emphasis) a long way, maybe two miles. Take a bus down there (pointing to Cambridge Street) to Scollay Square. Walking? Just go down to the fire house, go down School Street, and take Washington to Filene's. You can't miss it.

Oh, it's a big department store. Gilcrist's is on one corner, Filene's on another, Kennedy's on another (laughing).

Do you walk fast? About twenty minutes.

Woman: Filene's? Are you walking? I've never walked there but I know where it is. Go down here (motioning south down Cambridge Street) to Scollay Square. Take the first right. That's Tremont. Do you know the Common and the State House? Well, at Scollay Square you'll see all the stores. Ask anybody.

Oh, there are signs, signs everywhere. Filene's is a big store.

Oh, about twenty minutes. It's a good ways away.

Man: Whatta ya got, a car? Well, take that street (pointing south down Cambridge Street) running parallel and go to Bowdoin Square. Keep to the right and you'll come to Washington. Take the second street and you'll come to Filene's. Lessee, Washington, and the Filene's is the second. Ask anyone around there.

It's got a big overhang. Filene's is at Washington and Summer. Jordan Marsh's is across the street. You can't miss it.

It's a good distance. (Thinks.) Oh, probably twenty minutes.

Monday, 28 January 57

4-5 p.m.

Arlington Square to Filene's

Oriental man: (Long silence as he looks around.) (Extremely broken English:) It's long way from here. You must go – (motioning down Arlington Street toward Public garden) – you must go downtown. I can't really tell you, but you must go downtown (again motioning toward Arlington-Boylston intersection). Go to the square. Go to Tremont Street. It's down there.

(Thinking for long time) I cannot ... I cannot tell you ... describe it.

About 30 minutes maybe. Ten ... 15 ...

Man: Filene's? Sure. Go right down here (pointing east down Tremont Street), and around the bend. Go about 4 blocks and go one right to Washington. Ever been on Washington? Well, go across there straight ahead (pointing over Tremont railroad bridge) around the bend about 2 or 3 blocks I'd say. Go one block over – that's Washington. I think that's right. Ask anybody there – it's on Washington. Anybody can tell you.

Oh, it's got signs and stuff. Signs across the front. Anybody down there can tell you.

Oh, about half an hour. Straight ahead over the bridge. You can't miss it.

Woman with Scandinavian accent: Yah, that way (pointing east down Tremont Street). I dunno if you walkin' or what, but best way is to take bus to subway, coupla blocks down. Just go - no, not that one, the next one – just go to Park Street and take the elevated. It's coupla blocks from there. I go that way now myself. Filenes is next to Jordan Marsh. I dunno walkin'. I would never know. (Thinks) No, it's too hard.

Oh, it's easy. No trouble. Anybody show you. Lots of signs.

I dunno. Hour maybe. (Runs to catch streetcar.)

Old Negro woman with Scandinavian accent asks directions of interviewer. In turn he asks directions of her:

Ah, Filenes. Take this bus to Park street. It's only a coupla blocks from there. (Bus whips by.) Walkin' you go straight down this street (pointing east down Tremont Street) ... or the next one over – Washington. Washington is the next one over I think. Both get you to Filenes.

Oh, it's got signs, many signs.

For your long legs, it take maybe half an hour.

Old frightened woman in black, with heavy accent: You go this way (pointing east down Tremont Street). You cannot find Filenes that (with emphasis) way. Go either Tremont (pointing), or Washington, next street over. Either one. It's at Washington and Tremont. Washington and Tremont.

It's Department Store. Department Store. I don't know.

I don't know. I am sorry. I am sorry.