

L.A. Confidential

By STANLEY ROBERTSON

20TH CENTURY SLAVERY . . .

You can look into any book on American history and find out that slavery hasn't existed legally in the U.S. in 96 years. If it's a pretty good book you're peeping into, you'll discover that down through the years, many devious means have been used in an attempt to set aside the Emancipation Proclamation.

The other day, I learned of one of those devious means. It exists in the form of a racket which appears to me to be in violation of several United States and local laws.

Even a greater crime than the law violations is the fact that this racket preys upon the emotions of young women who are attempting to improve their station in life.

The racket works this way:

Local Caucasian families who are seeking domestic help are going outside the labor market in this area for help. They do it by placing glowing advertisements in the newspapers of the South, particularly the rural areas, pointing out the advantages of living in California, plus high wages, "private rooms" and a personal television set for the employee. The prospective employer also agrees to pay the prospective employee's travel expenses to California.

However, when the employee arrives in California, she finds the picture a lot different than the way it was supposed to be.

Miss Archie Bennett, 18, of 2426 Marvin avenue, who recently quit the job she came out here from Jackson, Miss., six months ago to take, told me of her experiences. Said she:

"When I arrived, I found that the 'private room' that was promised me was nothing but a room that the family used to store the things they either didn't want or were not using at the time. Instead of a television set, they let me use a beat-up old radio.

"The 'high wages' turned out to be \$100 a month from which was subtracted the price of your train fare. In the advertisements, they also said that after the girl worked a month, she would receive a nice raise. I worked for my employers six months and they never mentioned a raise once."

The young woman, fresh out of high school, said that the employer would frown upon her even talking to a girlfriend who also came out from Mississippi in response to one of the advertisements and who happened to be working next door.

"They just wanted me to work, work, and do more work and didn't want me to have any time off. Luckily, I have cousins here and could afford to quit and look for something else. However, I know personally of three other girls who came out here after reading the advertisements and who had to work until they could find something else better.

"The things the people say in the advertisements sound good to young girls like me, I know, but if I knew what I know now, I would have never made the trip. Other girls are in the same situation as I am. But it sounded so good. I just quit my job last week and already they have another 18-year-old girl from Mississippi to take my placee," Miss Bennett concluded.

According to an ex-college classmate who is currently employed by the State Department of Employment, the racket which has trapped Miss Bennett and her friends is one which is widespread now.

"I've talked to at least eight or nine girls a week in the past several months who have been lured into the state by such means," he said. "For the ones who have some skill, we try to find what jobs we can. For the others, well, there's not much we can do. None are eligible for employment compensation," he added.

Obviously, the racket is one which should be looked into by the FBI for the violation of U.S. laws, and, the District Attorney of Los Angeles County for the violation of local statutes.

A's A TOWN IN WHICH . . .

You can walk along a certain quiet residential street near West Adams and Crenshaw, which is lined with nice-new modern apartment houses, and note to your disgust that some of the tenants have hung their clothes along the fence rather than on the clotheslines . . . That a street like West Jefferson boulevard, between Arlington and Normandie, can become so attractive to degenerates that police have to patrol the area in the hours immediately after the close of school in order to protect the small children from th bums . . . A city official can, as one recently did, blame the spread of prostitution along Western avenue to the stand taken two months ago by Judge David Williams that police were showing discrimination in arresting Negro gamblers . . .

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JOKESVILLE, USA . . .

Bob Johnson, over at the Bathhouse, tells about the guy who had tried to make ends meet by joining the live-by-their-wits-set but who had failed. Dejectedly, Bob reports, the guy told him: "I was out on the streets trying to learn to play the game but I found out when I learned how to play, I was too old to make the team!"

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FACES IN THE CROWD . . .

CLORA BRYANT, one of the finest entertainers and people I know, is currently blowing her trumpet and leading a trio at classy Ben Rollack's on the Sunset Strip. In the works for Clora is an upcoming engagement at the plush New York nitery, The Embers, before which she'll play Denver, Cincinnati and points East.

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THE FINAL REEL . . .

There's a dinky little eating place in the 200 block on West Manchester boulevard in which the following incident happened:

Two young Negro women went into the place to order a snack. After waiting for a long period without any service, one of the women asked a waitress when they would be served, to which the waitress replied:

"I'm sorry, but this is not my section. The other waitress will wait on you."

The women waited, waited, and waited. Finally they attracted the attention of "the other waitress" and inquired when they would be served, to which the waitress replied: "You people are disturbing the peace and if you don't leave I'm going to call the police."

Surprised, the women said: "Well, call them then!"

Result: the women were served their sandwiches and the police were never called. Said one of the women: "I guess they felt they could scare us away but even though I wasn't too particular about eating that sandwich, after they tried to scare us, nothing could have made me leave."



"STAN"