

No glamour in prostitution

Part II

by Harris Levon McRae

Investigating and reporting on prostitution presents many problems for a writer. Many of the women that I talk to don't want to have anything to do anyone from the media for fear that the conversation will get back to their pimp. Others just don't believe that the media will tell the truth about prostitution.

"If I told you some of the things I have been through, you wouldn't believe it—and there is no way that it would get printed. It's unreal out here at times," one woman told me. Another said, "No—no way am I gonna talk to any reporter."

From a distance many of these women do look exotic and very erotic but when you get up close to them their eyes and faces tell another story. The life of a prostitute isn't filled with glamour, fun and excitement as many people seem to believe. This very belief deflects attention from the violence that surrounds prostitution and how it is a system used to keep women enslaved. Life is not soft and plush for the street prostitute.

"It's a trip sometimes. There are

all kinds of freaks out here looking for more than sex—they like to beat and hurt women," I was told by a woman who sells sex whenever other possibilities for income aren't available. "Beatings, rape, and even getting killed is always at the back of your mind," she added.

Some men who do not want to beat and degrade their wives and girlfriends still feel a need to act out their hatred of women. Prostitution provides that opportunity. This use of prostitutes to act out one's contempt for women seems to be one of the main reasons why many consider prostitution a necessary social service.

"Those fools would never pull some of the stuff they pull on me with their old ladies," I was told by a prostitute. "They keep it all inside and then take it out on us."

Many of the women selling their bodies on the streets, seem to have damaged self-images. Living the life of a prostitute probably makes it hard to relate to people in other than a sexual manner. I was mistaken for a pimp a couple of times. One woman gave me her prepared speech about already having an

"old man" before I hardly had a chance to introduce myself. Other comments ranged from "Show me some paper [money] and I'll let you know all there is to know about prostitution," to, "You're a man ain't you—what else do you need to know?"

One thing is for sure. The more I investigate prostitution, the clearer it is to me that in spite of all its condemning of prostitution, our society actually condones it. There is a simultaneous existence of conflicting emotions when dealing with prostitutes. They are subject to legal hassles, imprisonment, and fines but these penalties are rarely enforced. Though some women enter into a life of prostitution for heavy psychological reasons, many enter into "the life" because of drug addiction, poverty and other social injustices that serve as recruiting centers for prostitution.

Sex is here to stay and we need to deal with prostitution realistically and not as if when we turn our heads it goes away. As a wise man said, "You just can't turn your face from the world."

Next Week: Part-time prostitutes.

Cracking down on a crime wave that isn't

by Frank Browning
Pacific News Service

There is terror in her eyes. Her jaw is clenched tight, her aged hands clenched to her purse.

A cold sullenness washes his Black face. His strong right arm is drawn around her neck, locked in place with his other elbow. "an elderly victim falls prey to yoke man," reads the caption, describing the "yoke hold" as the assault of choice among young muggers.

That is the face of the scourge of juvenile crime as portrayed a year ago in the trendy *New York Magazine*. The accompanying statistics were as grim as the illustration: In 1980, 44,170 kids under the age of 20 were arrested for major felonies and almost a third of them were under 16.

That rather dramatic item was typical of the stories that have helped fuel a national campaign for a new crackdown on juvenile crime. During the last year law-and-order initiatives aimed at juvenile crime have proliferated:

•In Illinois, the legislature is considering a provision that would allow prosecutors, without a hearing by a judge, to transfer serious juvenile cases automatically to adult courts.

•In New York City, District Attorney Robert Morgenthau has sought Federal money for creation of a juvenile crime center which would treat repeat offenders more like adult "career criminals."

•In California, the state assembly is considering legislation under which children any age can be locked up in "secure detention" for 90 days for such offenses as running away from home, skipping school or violating the 10 pm curfew. Another proposal would mandate that any child 16 or over charged with committing an offense with a dangerous weapon be tried in adult court.

Reflecting the public fear of juvenile crime, a major national newspaper recently declared flatly: "The figures are clear: Violence among juveniles is increasing."

Yet if there is any single statement that could be made about crime "figures," it is just the reverse. The trend in juvenile crime is one of steady, consistent decline. That is especially true in cities and states where the juvenile crime hysteria has been most heated, especially Illinois and California, and New York City.

Juvenile arrests declined in Chicago from 17,367 in 1974 to 16,829 in 1980.

Juvenile arrests in New York City dropped from 22,518 in 1976 to 14,764 in 1981.

Juvenile arrests in the state of California have dropped from 185,000 in 1974 to slightly under 100,000 in 1980.

Nationwide, juvenile arrests have followed the same pattern, declining from 2.7 million in 1975 to 2.2 million in 1980. Everywhere there is a marked decline in the one police statistic that experienced criminologists regard as the most reliable measure of criminal activity: arrests.

Yet, in spite of the hard evidence contained in their own files, law enforcement officials like New York Police Commissioner Robert J. McGuire continue to argue that juveniles present a growing threat.

"It ebbs and flows in terms of population," he told an interviewer. "People leave the state or get sent to prison, but always there are the kids. There's a farm team out there ready to come up into the system."

Criminologists and social scientists across the country discount such claims, arguing that the epidemic of youth crime regularly cited by politicians is mythical. Says Rutgers University criminologist Richard Sparks, "You wonder why in the 1980s we claim violent crime is a problem. Our best evidence shows it is no more a problem than it ever was."

Sparks, like most of his colleagues, says there is no doubt that juvenile crime is now declining and has been for several years. The reason, he says, is simple: "There are fewer and fewer young people. The population of youngsters below age 18 has declined 21 per cent in the past decade. It's hard to get that perception across because the media give so much attention to juvenile crime."

While some analysts are extremely cautious about projecting crime trends based upon police data, there is also preliminary evidence that the much more scientific "victimization reports" of the National Crime Survey reflect the same trend.

The National Crime Survey is conducted annually by the Census Bureau, and collects data from 135,000 individuals about what crimes they have experienced during the year as victims.

According to Rutgers' Richard Sparks, early analysis of reports between 1973 and 1979 shows a steady decline in the number of victims who have been attacked by groups, as opposed to lone individuals indicating that there is less criminal assault by juveniles who normally act in small groups or gangs. At the same time, he says, there has been an increase in older, solo offenders, as reported by the victims of crime.

Why is there such a gap between public perceptions about juvenile crime and the actual threat?

"What else is new?" asks Eugene Doleschal, director of the Information Center of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. "It's all a year when the press or the politicians have not contended that juvenile crime is on the upswing."

"The whole issue of crime is hot today," says Donald Jensen, a juvenile justice specialist at Chicago's John Howard Association. "Juvenile crime just comes along with it. There's also more media hype about juveniles. When a youngster commits a serious crime, people react to it in a much stronger way. If a 14-year-old kid stabs another 14-year-old, it makes headlines, but people forget that in large metropolitan areas that kind of crime has occurred forever. It's hard to get people to look at trends instead of gory headlines."

What is more worrisome to Jensen than public misperception is the

eagerness of ostensibly well-informed public officials to pay more attention to public anxiety than to evidence gathered by their own agencies.

"Through November, 1981," Jensen said, "there have been 967 juvenile commitments to the Cook County Department of Corrections, as opposed to 441 the previous year, and 440 the year before that. In the last 11 months commitments have jumped 119 per cent—though overall crime declined in the first three quarters of last year." Crime data for the final quarter, normally a low period, has not yet been computed."

Nationally the Reagan Administration's task force on violent crime has also recommended harsher treatment of juvenile offenders, that juvenile records be made public and that juvenile fingerprints and records be merged with adult records and fed into the FBI's crime data bank.

Last summer judges, prosecutors and some scholars from across the nation met for the first time in a special conference on juvenile recidivism which also called for tougher handling of young offenders. Among the conference conclusions: young repeat offenders should be sent to prison and treated as career criminals—even at age 14—and juveniles accused of serious crimes should be prosecuted in adult court.

The justification for more severe punishment, the conferees said, was a general belief that juvenile crime is on the rise. Said one delegate, "The problem has become that serious."

Scholars like Jensen and Richard Sparks see the trend toward stiff juvenile punishment more as a reflection of government ideology and "media panic" than as a means of fighting a real crime wave. "I find the current administration singularly impervious to what is really going on," says Sparks. "They have belief in wickedness and for them the wicked are mostly Black and Brown and under 18."

Grenada

From page 1

One of the major development projects is the on going work on a new international airport, with the assistance of several nations. Because their airport is small and cannot handle large airplanes, all air traffic must go through Barbados or Trinidad. Since the Revolution many travellers have been harassed or discouraged from continuing their journeys to Grenada.

These strides have taken place in spite of attempted isolation of Grenada and terrorist activities on Grenada by the United States, which considers Grenada a "tool" of Cuba and the Soviet Union, making diversion of its resources to arm against U.S. invasion necessary. Grenada has aligned itself with the Socialist International, remains a member of the British Commonwealth, and is a member of the United Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Nations. While Cuba remains its closest ally, relations with other Caribbean nations including Barbados and Surinam, and with the new government of France, have improved.

GOT A MINUTE?

Better yet, how about an evening?

We'd really like to tell you about our plans for billing credits. Because — whether you're a bullfrier or a banker or a ballerina — as a Northwest resident and electricity user you have a stake in this and other Bonneville Power Administration programs.

Just how billing credits affect you, your region and your electric bill will depend largely on the policy under which they are granted. That's why we want to tell you about our proposal, and why we urge you to take part in the public review and comment process.

If you can, attend one of six public information meetings. We'll outline our plans and answer your questions.

Take a few minutes to call or write for information.

Later, we'll ask you to comment, either orally at a subsequent meeting or in writing.

Billing credits are payments to Bonneville customers — either electric utilities or industries — for independent actions that reduce Bonneville's obligation to acquire power resources. Examples of such actions include energy conservation programs, construction of generating facilities, and adoption of retail rate structures that cause consumers to conserve or install their own renewable resources.

Billing credits are required by the Northwest Power Act, the same law that obligates Bonneville to acquire resources as necessary to meet customers' needs.

To request a copy of the proposed policy or to ask questions, contact:

Public Involvement Coordinator, BPA
Post Office Box 12999
Portland, Oregon 97212

Telephone 503-230-4261. Toll-free numbers for persons outside the Portland calling area: in Oregon, 800-452-8429; in Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, California, Nevada and Utah, 800-547-6048.

Remember. What you say counts.

Bonneville Power Administration



Meeting Schedule

All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. Registration begins at 7 p.m.

Portland
Tuesday, March 23
Federal Building, Room 223
1220 S.W. Third Avenue

Seattle
Wednesday, March 24
Seattle Center, Room H,
Conference Center
First Avenue N. and
Republican Street

Eugene
Thursday, March 25
Federal Building, Room 227
211 E. Seventh Avenue

Richland
Tuesday, March 30
Federal Building Auditorium
825 Jadin Avenue

Boise
Wednesday, March 31
The Hall of Mirrors,
East Conference Room
700 W. State Street

Missoula
Thursday, April 1
Missoula County Courthouse
Annex, Room 201
200 W. Pine Street

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