

LOS ANGELES
SPORTING GIRL

A prostitute, intrigued by the monotony of her customers' questions, talks straight about her job. The hours, earnings, hazards, pleasures, advantages, drawbacks, opportunities for promotion, etc. The nationwide venereal publicity has increased caution without reducing trade. The idea that the life of shame makes outcasts is an exploded notion. Away from work, virtue is their relaxation, their modest dress and decorous behavior almost a give away. They go into the career from choice, the only actual white slavery being the occupations that are the available alternatives. As for competition, the only serious kind is amateur.

FOR five years I have been a "sporting girl." Some vulgar people call me by another name, but that is a name that any respectable prostitute dislikes.

Working at this racket I've learned a great deal about life, for instance, I've found out how basically stereotyped men are. Truck drivers, bankers, lawyers, newspaper men, politicians, cops and even an occasional reformer; all have the same batch of questions.

How long have you been in this game? How do you like it? How much do you make? What did you used to do? When are you going to quit? These questions inspired me to write the answers.

How do I like it? I don't! But it's better than standing eight hours behind the yardage counter of the 5th St. Store, getting flat-footed and sway-backed. Three times as much money and half as much work—and not so hard on my feet.

Get a kick out of it? Sure—why not? That is, at least once or twice a day. It all depends on the customer. With some people you just naturally click. However, if we take our work seriously we pretend we like it—a clientele is the thing. Our simulated enjoyment flatters a man's ego and brings half of them back. Regular customers come about once a week, and it's the regulars we want. If it's a frowsy guy with buck teeth and B.O. we hustle him through as fast as we can and hope never to see him again. Occasionally they come in pairs, two pals take the same girl or two girls and two men in the same room. That's really a wild party and calls for double money.

What did I or any other prostitute used to do? Well—most of us finished high school, we got a job; soda jerker, usherette, drive-in-joint, clerk, factory worker; any one of a million such foul slave jobs. Maybe we gave away a little free, or maybe we just let the Boss paw a bit. Sooner or later we began to figure that 15 minutes for two bucks is better pay than we were getting. We just located a House and applied for a job.

There are two types of Houses. The "ringer" and the "independent." I work in a "ringer." The casual customer can't tell one from the other, but there is a lot of difference. A "ringer" House is one that belongs to a ring or chain, with a central office, like a chain store. Girls are registered at the office, according to age, complexion, measurements and years of experience. This is all done in code in case anything slips. Most of us never know where the central office is, though we can guess. The Madame who operates the House handles the card index and keeps Headquarters posted as to our popularity and tests. Ringer Houses are sanitary, at least much more so than the pick-ups that "wise guys" take off the streets, dance halls and even in more respectable places. We examine our men carefully, we disinfect them, we have a G.C. test once a week and a Wassermann once a month. It costs us plenty to get cured so we try to keep well. I've known girls to work ten years without a trace. I've never had a sign of a "positive" so far. We have to show our certificate of health

to the Madame or lose our job. The customer can always see it if he wants to. The tests cost us \$3.00 and \$5.00, respectively, but it is worth it. Tests are usually made by reputable M.D.'s, high up in society. They like easy money, too. We go to their office, usually by appointment to avoid wasting time sitting in the reception room. Ringer Houses get a 12-hour advance tip before any raid—this is a big help and worth the 50% split each girl pays out of her earnings.

The independent House is opposite in every respect. Here the girl gets what she can, takes anybody that comes along, looks after her own health and in a semi-conscientious manner and gets slung in jail about four times a year. I've only been in jail once in five years and that one time caused me to dislike jails. The only value an independent has over a ringer is that in the independent you can quit any time you want. In a ringer you keep working until you go into another line or get married or sick.

Professionals seldom hint for tips. A man likes to know how much a commodity is going to cost him before he makes a purchase.

However, some tipping is always done by grateful men who appreciate the artistry of services rendered in a professional manner. In a good House with 10 to 15 customers per day per girl it is not uncommon to gather up five extra dollars. This is handy because it covers our laundry bill and payment for two meals per day. Half of the regular \$2.00 fee goes to the House to pay for the well-known protection. This goes into a pot for the Big Guns with the false front. They really clean up, not only off us, but the taxpayers, for they usually are in some sort of political job, too. The periodic roar in the newspapers about the awful vice conditions gives us a dry laugh for the chances are the guy who gets the credit for starting the investigation and closing up the town, is one of the boys who is in on the pay-off. The thing that crimps us the worst is the Grand Jury, evidently the Big Guns are afraid of that bunch, for when they go into session, we usually get an order to close up shop. We then go "on call" for private parties.

Maybe that 10 to 15 customers per day seems like an abnormal life. It is. About as abnormal as being an old maid, only in the opposite way. We get cynical, but we don't get sour.

It's an 8-hour shift with most of the business from 3 p. m. to 11 p. m. A girl knows how she rates according to her shift. The old girls from 11 p. m. to 7 a. m. really take a beating. Too often these hours include the drunks and riff-raff. They turn down the worst ones. No use in taking a drunk. Half the time he's impotent, abusive and usually wants something that delays the works. About half the customers have had something to drink, just enough to do the thing they have been wanting to do for a long time. Most of the girls leave it alone; they know that as a rule booze doesn't agree with anybody for very long. Saturdays and holidays are the busiest days. Usually one or two extras are put on to handle the patronage adequately. Monday is the dull day—often one girl doing the tricks that it took five to do on Saturday.

A House is always an innocent enough looking place from the outside. A landlady, usually a Negress, answers the bell and knows with remarkable acumen whether it's a customer or just a yokel that is really looking for a room. If the latter, she says there are no rooms left. If she senses a customer she says, "Who do you want to see?" If he names someone, or just says, "Let's see what you've got," she ushers him into a sitting room and tells him she will send in all the girls that are not busy. They come in gowned in lounging pajamas or semi-evening dresses. The girl selected takes him to her room. Here she examines him for disease and if satisfied, washes him with disinfectant.

After all, my profession is fundamentally and biologically essential. A girl that knows her tricks can change a man from a lion to a lamb in five minutes and as such is a valuable crime preventer. The maladjusted reformers never seem to know that.

Some girls are much more successful in their profession than others. It is the same old formula; take an interest in your work, put all you've got into it, have a pleasing personality, be generous and try to do what

your customers ask you to do. Skinny girls and fat girls take the leavings. Bleached blondes get left too. I really believe brunettes have a slight edge over blondes, but after all, that's only my opinion, because I'm a brunette. Being perfectly natural with your customer is the best way to get him to repeat. Don't rush him, visit a little, but don't ask him his business. You can ask him if he's in town long as a starter, then he'll frequently go on from there.

Sometimes men want to take us home after work, but we don't go for this, for two reasons. One, we wouldn't want the boy friend to get sore. Yes, we have boy friends. Sometimes he helps us get customers, sometimes he's a person we really like or regularly enjoy parties with. Another reason is that we try and live in a good part of town far enough away from our work to really be away—we don't want to be bothered when we are not open for business.

The average age of the customer is from 30 to 40, perhaps most of them married. Most of the latter have been sent us by their dumb stingy wives. Men don't know how to pick a wife. An ex-prostitute makes a good wife. She makes it her job to be a *real* wife and she holds her man too—yes, she can also cook. I hope to marry in the next year or two. About one-half of us do and many times to a customer. We are loyal wives too. If we marry a non-customer, obviously we only tell him what we think is best for him to hear.

About the same number of boys in their early twenties come as men in their early fifties. Of the two, I prefer the young ones—less work.

Once I got a reformer, He wanted me to kneel and pray with him before we did anything. I told him I'd just lie on the bed and close my eyes while he prayed, that maybe my prayers would gum up the works. Well, it was quite a prayer. He sort of made a goddess out of me. I remember reading about an early religion like that. I suspect that a lot of reformers who are always raving about us are doing so because they want to be with us.

The nation-wide publicity on venereal diseases has made all patrons and employees more cautious, but I don't believe it has reduced business appreciably. The publicity has increased sanitation. After all, the commodity we have to offer is highly in demand. Of course what men think is "free stuff" is our greatest competition but as long as the urge to reproduce is equal to the urge to live there will be customers. Men and women risk more for sex satisfaction than they do for anything else. Some male animals persist in the pursuit of the thrill even when they know that death is the result. Wonder if a male black widow spider thinks it was worth it?

This life of shame gag is all stuff and nonsense. We don't consider ourselves outcasts. Why should we? On days off we mingle with anybody, often travel in a better society than before, simply because we have better clothes. About four times a year I go to church. I have women friends who think I'm a secretary—and as for secretaries — well — what is the difference between selling yourself for \$2.00 cash from selling yourself for an 89c pair of silk stockings?

We all take four to seven days off a month. If a girl is smart she takes a couple of months off besides this or manages to play a man for a trip somewhere. Variety and rest is the point. When away from work, we dress very modestly, in fact, our decorum is almost a give away. Namely, virtue is our relaxation.

Once the Chief phoned me if I wanted to be a member of a party of six girls to go on a week-end cruise on a millionaire's yacht. The pay was to be \$100.00 plus food. I took it. It was hard earned money. I'll take the rough and tumble truck driver in preference to a half-drunk spoiled and discourteous play-boy any time. It took me a week to recuperate from that experience.

Some girls work from a call house. That is a customary start. They usually have a day job, as a waitress or usherette or drive-in-joint or movie extra with their phone number listed

for any call from headquarters to go to an apartment for an hour or so. Usually this brings in three to five dollars but it's unsteady and tiresome after your other work.

A banker and a loan shark customer of mine persist in asking me if I've saved any money so I'll tell you the answer. In five years I've owned two cars—low priced ones; bought plenty of good clothes; own a lot at Lake Arrowhead and have a little over \$2,400 in the savings bank. Besides this I've been all up and down the Pacific Coast, including trips to Salt Lake, Denver and Honolulu. If I had stayed at the 5th Street Store I'd have gotten about one trip to 'Frisco in a second-class bus. Yes, virtue is its own reward!

My girl associates are, in a feminine sense, the most honest women I have ever worked with. All of the trickery, deceptiveness, double dealing and hypocrisy that is the average woman's attitude toward other women is gone.

As for white slavery. Tommyrot! We all go into it from choice. Have you ever walked through a garment factory that employs a lot of wretched women? That's white slavery. Admire the virtuous women employed there, they wouldn't sell their bodies, would they? Look at their faces and figures and you'll see why not. The loud-spoken virtuous woman condemner of our profession, is usually a cold, homely, flat chested, masculine, box-car female who prattles about her virtue for the simple reason that she would starve to death in a four-bit House. Do I sound bitter? Well, maybe so. That time I was in jail I had four old hatchet-faced hens visit me. First they stared at me like I was a mad dog, then they called me a lot of names. Not cuss words. Worse than that. What could I do? Nothing, but stare back and listen. I half suspect they were jealous—nothing else could make a woman so mad.

Once I mingled in with a convention, not a Legion Convention, don't get me wrong. I knew what it was all right, but I'm not mentioning it here. No use of casting any aspersions upon what is considered a noble and

high grade calling. I just sat in the lobby of the hotel and watched the big-wigs mill around. Then I saw one of my regular customers. Right away I saw that he was a Big Shot, not only in this town but in a lot of towns. Men were slapping him on the back and giving him the old Rah, Rah. You know the stuff they hand you when you are the King Pooh-Pooh. I knew if I moved I would be noticed. Well, I didn't want to embarrass him or have him think I had trailed him, so I just sat and pretended to be asleep with one eye open.

In a little while they all went into a big assembly room. There were some women in the crowd, "respectable ones I suppose," so I also strolled in. There were short speeches and general palaver, all a build-up for the main speech of the evening. And who do you think it was? My boy friend! And his topic? "A Clean City." He was down on everything that was bad, he was in favor of cleaning up the city, casting out the racketeers, taking corruption out of politics, conducting a thorough investigation of supposed vice conditions existent in the city. He made an awful public roar against everything he privately stood for and got a big hand when he sat down.

Do you wonder that I'm a cynic?

I'd heard about such people, but didn't believe it was possible for anyone to be such a liar and double-crosser. I felt like getting up and making a speech of my own, but knew I'd only be thrown in the jug as a public nuisance so figured on waiting until his regular night for visiting me. I planned on giving him a good verbal scorching but by the time he showed up I had cooled off in that respect so I just kidded him about his speech, we laughed about it, and he gave me a ten-buck tip because I had done the kidding in the right way at the right time.

A lawyer customer of mine took me out to his house a few times. Once his wife came home unexpectedly. He introduced me as a client of his. If she hadn't been such a horsy woman I might have added, "Your husband is also a client of mine," but I could see that I was

really doing them both a favor. Odd the women some men marry! During dinner his wife commented upon how proud she was of him because of his legal progress, clean politics, chairman of the Anti-Vice League and all that. I told her that knowing her husband was more of a thrill than I could possibly convey to her.

Well, it's a great life, everyone should like their work. I like mine better than anything else I've ever done. Some of my men say I'm just naturally built for this job—of course that helps.