

op/ed

# Marine recruiting scandal taints 'few good men' image

The Marine Corps proudly proclaims that it wants "a few good men" to join the ranks. But we have gathered evidence that Marine recruiters have been employing unsavory and illegal tactics. As a result, the Marines are stuck with thousands of unfit recruits.

Some of them had stand-ins take their intelligence and physical exams for them. Others were admitted after the recruiters had falsified their school and criminal records.

Officially, the Marine brass claim the problem is not serious. They blame it on a few recruiters. But Senate investigators see it differently. They have heard the horror stories of recruiters who claim they were bullied and threatened into increasing their enlistment quotas.

jack anderson

One former Marine recruiter told of receiving threatening calls in the middle of the night. Another recruiter told us he had never met an honest recruiter in the four years he had been signing up men.

The recruiters who have been brave enough to blow the whistle have been rewarded with ugly threats, menial jobs and ruined careers. The Marine Corps meanwhile, is desperately trying to keep a lid on the exploding scandal. But the congressional investigators intend to blow the lid wide open.

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**Festival Frauds:** Fairs and carnivals have long been a part of the American scene. But behind the cotton candy, kewpie dolls and amusement rides, there is a sordid side to the carnival business.

The traveling shows are often conduits

for stolen goods and narcotics. Some of the rides are unsafe. But the most widespread vice is gambling.

Those games of skill on the midway are often fronts for multimillion dollar gambling operations. The con men who run the games can change the stakes from stuffed animals to cash at the throw of a dart.

The games, of course, are rigged. The unsuspecting victims are fleeced. One game alone has been known to clean up \$95,000 in a night. The take is seldom reported to the Internal Revenue Service.

It is the responsibility of the local police to investigate the seedy carnival operators and arrest the offenders. But this seldom happens. Now we're beginning to learn the reason.

Apparently the carnival operators are generous in handing out gifts and cash to city officials. In Cleveland, for example, a grand jury is considering charges against some city councilmen who allegedly accepted cash payments to allow illegal gambling at the carnivals.

There have been similar investigations in other cities. In Atlanta, the FBI is investigating the connection of city officials to carnival gambling. The evidence was gathered by an FBI informant who posed as an operator of the gambling games.

The informant, Gene Sorrels, called on city officials. They were unaware that he had a microphone in the heel of his shoe, with FBI agents nearby, taping every word.

A transcript reveals that one high official was supposed to be paid \$39,000 ostensibly to provide security at the carnival. But he promised on the tape that the 10 officers who policed the carnival would make no gambling arrests.

The pious voice of a civil rights activist was also recorded. He promised to use his

influence to protect the carnival in exchange for cash.

A city councilman is also heard on the tapes asking for 20 percent of the take for letting gambling games operate. The councilman also offered to arrange a liquor license if the carnival operator wanted to open a bar.

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**Under the Dome:** Thanks to taxpayers, U.S. congressmen are able to live like royalty. They get free medical treatment, low cost meals, cut-rate haircuts and a whole host of little extras that average Americans can't afford.

Now they have given themselves a gift they can share with their constituents. It's an expensive, hard-cover picture book called *Art in the United States Capitol*. Each representative will receive 50 free copies to pass out; each senator will get 100. Ordinary citizens can purchase copies from the Government Printing Office at

\$12.50 per copy. \*\*\*

**Outer Space:** U.S. lawmakers do not seem too excited about the possibility of life on other planets. They recently slashed \$2 million from the federal budget that would have financed new efforts to finding creatures living in outer space. The project was scuttled after Capitol Hill's resident efficiency expert, Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis., selected it for his "Golden Fleece" award.

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**Campus spies:** Harvard University is at loggerheads with the CIA over the agency's "infiltration" of the nation's oldest campus. Harvard officials don't want the CIA to engage in any covert recruiting, and the agency is insisting it can recruit in any manner it pleases. The college authorities are hoping that Congress will step in and legislate an answer to the dilemma.

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