

(Editors Note: Mining “Towns” as well as Mining “camps” can offer lifestyle and situations with a flavor all their own. While my parents were living in the town of Battle Mountain Nevada, the local Brothel invited ladies of the town to have tea and satisfy their curiosity about the inside of a Brothel. It was the highlight of the social season and inspired Gladys Whitlock to write this story.)

High Tea at the Warfield Brothel

By Gladys Whitlock

WARFIELD HOTEL

Warfield, Nevada

GEORGE!

This morning I was humiliated to find out that my cousin’s business was really a brothel instead of a dress shop and that you knew it all the time! The lawyer, Mr. Browning, explained it to me in the gentle manner you would use to talk to a dim-witted child, until he realized I didn’t know what he was talking about. Why didn’t you tell me the facts? By the time he finished, I was embarrassed and furious and the lawyer was more than a little upset. All he said though, was “I should think your husband might have found a better way to handle the situation.”

I couldn’t agree more!

I need to tell you much more about my day, but it will have to wait till tomorrow. Now I have to find that taxi driver and apologize for hitting him.

Goodnight, George,

Dolores

THE WARFIELD HOTEL

Warfield, Nevada

Dear George,

Perhaps I should have listened to you and just had the lawyer sell the business my cousin left me and send me the money, but you know I've always wanted a business of my own and a little dress shop seemed like the opportunity of my dreams. So far, however, the trip to claim my bequest has been a very unpleasant experience.

The plane to Salt Lake City was late, so I missed the morning bus to Warfield and had to wait four hours for the next one. That made the 50 mile bus trip to Warfield longer than the rest of the trip from Missouri.

Exhausted by the time I got to Warfield I was wishing I had rented a car and driven here like you always do. As I stood on the sidewalk in front of the bus station, a taxi pulled up to the curb. I was surprised because the town doesn't look big enough to support a cab company.

I really had planned to check into the hotel first and then call the lawyer to take me to my cousin's dress shop, but on impulse, I told the driver, "The Les Girl's shop, please."

He just sat there and looked at me over his shoulder and finally I asked, "What's the matter? Don't you know where the Les Girl's is"?

"Oh, yeah, I know where it is," he said, and started driving down the street whistling a tune that sounded vaguely familiar. He kept glancing at me in the rear-view mirror, but I really didn't get nervous until we left the business district and started down a back street in a pretty seedy neighborhood. He finally stopped in front of a big place completely enclosed by a tall board fence. I had just about decided to stay right in my seat and order him back to the hotel when I saw a Les Girl's sign on the gate, so I got out. It didn't look like any dress shop to me and the way he was watching me, I knew something was wrong. I think I'd already begun to suspect what it was, but I didn't let on, just snapped out, "Wait for me!"

He sort of swallowed a "Yes, Ma'am" like he was trying to keep a straight face. George, you know I've never even seen a brothel, but when I opened that gate and saw the "Palace of

Pleasure” slogan over the door, I knew that’s what it was. I just turned around and marched back to the taxi. The driver was leaning against the fender with a stupid grin on his silly face, enjoying his big joke.

I was furious! You know I never did think practical jokes were very funny anyway. “What makes you think this is so funny,” I yelled. “Do I look like the kind of woman who’d have business in a place like this?”

He raised his eyebrows with that silly grin still on his face. “Well, I did think you were a bit long in the tooth for this business, but . . .”

I lost my temper completely, George. You know I’ve always behaved like a lady, but I hit him over the head with my purse as hard as I could. I was so angry I actually stuttered. “You miserable m-moron! (I really called him that, George) “Take me to the Warfield Hotel and you can just bet that your employers are going to hear about this.”

He said, “Yes, Ma’am” very politely, but all the way back he kept whistling that same tune. I finally realized it was that French Can Can song. He thought he was so funny. I think he’ll change his mind after I talk to his employer tomorrow.

I’m really too upset to write any more tonight, George, I’ll write again tomorrow.

Goodnight, my Darling.

WARFIELD HOTEL

Warfield, Nevada

Dear George,

I’m sorry I was in such temper when you called, but if you had told me why you wanted me to sell the property, sight unseen, I probably would have done so. And, how could I have told you what I planned to do when I could never get you on the phone. Your office said they didn’t even know which hotel you were staying in at your sales convention and your secretary was never available when I called.

Dear, I really do appreciate your trying to shield me from the seamy side of life, if that was

your intention, but this trip is certainly opening my eyes to a lot of things. I resent your keeping me in ignorance of this situation and there will be some changes made in the future. That's something we can discuss when I get back home.

The main reason for this letter is to tell you what I have learned about Cousin Candace and her peculiar business. First, Mr. Browning says that this kind of business is a legitimate enterprise in this state, and the girls are all legally licensed and live in the bordellos they work for. According to him, (and his wife agreed with him,) the majority of the people here feel it should stay that way. A lady whose husband is a local business man told me that there hasn't been an attacks or rape in this town in years, in spite of the large numbers of single men working in the local mines. There are no prostitutes allowed to shop in town after eleven A M, or allowed to frequent the bars. (And there are surely plenty of bars!)

When I stopped at the Doctor's office for my flu shot, there were four or five girls in the waiting room. They were very friendly and one of them was crocheting a little sweater she said was for her sister's baby. She showed me how to do an unusual stitch that went round the neck and sleeves. After they left, the Doctor told me they were some of "my Girls" from Les Girl's. He said they all have regular checkups to keep from catching or spreading any of those socially unmentionable diseases. I left the office in shock.

You know, George, I couldn't understand why Candy left her business to me. We didn't even know each other. Mr. Browning says she didn't intend it that way. I just happen to be her closest blood relative. She just never got around to making a will and was killed instantly in that wreck. I'm her closest blood relative and the law says the property is mine, but I'll have to get a license to operate it. Don't blow a gasket. I'm only kidding. Josh Kinney (the Taxi driver) already summed up my qualifications for this business.

Oh, I forgot to tell you. Josh was very nice about it when I apologized for hitting him. He said it was his fault for not explaining about Les Girl's when he realized I was a stranger in town. He's not the regular driver but was subbing for a friend. He took me out to dinner to show that here were no hard feelings. It made me realize how long it's been since you and I have gone out. We'll have to do something about that when I get home.

Goodnight, George Dear,

Love, Dolores

WARFIELD HOTEL

Warfield, Nevada

I'm finding that Warfield is certainly different from any town I have known and Cousin Candace was quite a character. Locals say she was both big and beautiful and really knew her business. (you should know) She wasn't part of the local set, but they seemed to respect her in a strange way because she was elected to Women's Business and Professional Club.

I heard one story about a night when a stranger wandered into the Palace of Pleasure pretty well in his cups. He was filthy and smelled terrible. None of the girls wanted to go upstairs with him and he got pretty nasty. One of the girls tried to calm him down with a free drink and he threw it at her. Candy heard the uproar and came out of her office and told the guy he would have to leave.

"The hell I will," He started yelling. "You get smart with me, you old bitch and I'll have your house shut down before you know what's happened!"

The girls told me that before he knew what happened, Candy had him by the coat collar and the seat of his pants and he was standing on tiptoe as she marched him quick-step out the door and threw him head first into a snowbank.

I guess Candy could handle any problems that came up in her business but her former assistant Maizzee is now the boss and Candy left her with something of a problem. She has asked me for assistance and I've agreed to help her. Yes, I know you told me to stay clear of the house and the girls, but this is a business idea that might bring me more money when I put the business up for sale. I'm sure you want me to make the most I can out of this deal and no one back home will know anything about it unless you tell them. This will also give me the opportunity to go over the books. I'll let you know more about this in my next letter.

Love, Dolores

WARFIELD HOTEL

Warfield, Nevada

Sorry I wasn't able to talk when you called. We were too busy and we couldn't have dropped the plan anyway. Candy had already committed Maizzee to the plan and I had promised to help.

You're right. I was a bit vague about Candy's plan, but at that point, I didn't want to argue about something I didn't believe would happen anyway. For a house of prostitution to expect the ladies of the town to attend an open House Tea and Lingerie Show seemed so far out, I was sure the idea would be abandoned, but, it wasn't.

Candy had made all the preliminary arrangements before her death and Maizzee was determined to carry out her wishes. At first Maizzee thought Candy had flipped her wig, but Candy convinced her that every normal woman harbored a secret curiosity about the mysterious inside of a brothel, and wouldn't be able to resist the chance to see it.

Was she ever right! Honestly, George, you wouldn't believe how those women swarmed in here; not only from Warfield, but from a lot of other small towns around here. Some even came from as far away a Reno. The lingerie show was repeated every time a new group arrived and so was the tour of the sanitarily clean bedrooms. One of the tour leaders said she counted over three hundred women throughout the day. Maizzee got a big laugh every time she announced that she was taking career applications.

Well, I'm rather tired after this long day and there is some sort of commotion at the front door so I will close for now and have Nancy, (one of Les Girls,) mail this for me. More tomorrow.
Love, Dolores

WARFIELD HOTEL

Warfield, Nevada

George, I am sorry I didn't return your many calls, but I was only allowed one call and that had to be to Josh to bail me out and he didn't get the message until the next morning. I had no idea those newspapers would send a bunch of reporters out here. Candy must have contacted

every big paper in the country. I'm sorry you were so embarrassed when they called me the "Madam of the House." I told them it wasn't so, but apparently they thought it made a better picture with that caption. That's what got me arrested for running a brothel without a licence. Things got pretty complicated. I had to apply for the license I was charged with not having, so the judge could dismiss the charges when he saw I did have it. Don't worry, It's an honorary one and I'm going to have it framed.

As to the money, I don't know where that reporter got his information about the big income a house of prostitution earns. One of the girls probably told him, but I still intend to get rid of this one. This kind of business just isn't my cup of tea.

But you listen, George! You had no right to say the things you did in your phone message. Just because the girls cut my hair and showed me how to wear make-up doesn't mean I've become a prostitute. What's more, I never needed stylish new dresses before, because you never took me anywhere. I don't care what you think. The Brownings said I had very good taste and so did Josh.

And another thing, I am not chasing Josh or any other man. And before you get too free with all those accusations, I think we need to have a little talk about how all the girls in the "Palace of Pleasure" seem to know you exceptionally well and why they all thought you were single. No wonder you wanted me to stay away from here. You seem to have done a lot of business in Warfield, but it wasn't with the merchants on Main Street.

Dolores (your wife, remember?)

WARFIELD HOTEL

Warfield, Nevada

You have no one but yourself to blame if you're in a mess. I hope your company will take you back, but it would serve you right if they didn't. You quit without notice and then blew in here like a big shot announcing all your grand plans for protecting your innocent wife's business interest. All you really wanted was the income the newspaper told you this business produced.

I guess Mr. Browning pretty well shot that idea down when he told you that in this state, a “madam” can be married, but her husband can’t live with her.

No, I don’t know who reported you to the sheriff, but I’m glad someone did. If you were going to try to make a “madam” out of me, it’s only justice that you should be arrested as a “pimp.”

You needn’t have told the judge that you were going to divorce me and sue for your half of my property, though. They couldn’t have made the charge of consorting with a Madam stick because I’d already sold out to Maizzee and the judge knew it. But, since you told the court so definitely what you wanted, I’m obliging you. While you have been back trying to salvage your job, I have been quite productive.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the divorce decree. Also, in accordance with the community property law your so fond of, I am enclosing a check for one dollar. That’s exactly half of what I got from the sale to Maizzee as well as a receipt for half of our joint saving account which I withdrew on the same grounds. Maizzee has set the house up as an employee owned corporation. After a 10% Administrative fee, the girls all share equally in the profits.

By the way, that bit of newspaper information about the profits of prostitution in Nevada made an impression on someone else, too. One of the large lingerie manufactures from New York has offered me a job as a sales representative. They seem to think I have an entre into all the “houses of joy” in the sate. I didn’t disillusion them.

Good luck, George, and goodbye,
your exwife

Dolores

P.S. My relationship with Josh Kinney is none of your business.

Dolores

P.P.S. I wouldn’t try the Les Girl’s on your next trip if I were you . . . your welcome mat has been retired.

