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The Criminalization of Black Angeleno Women:
Institutionalized Racism and Sexism in Los Angeles, 1928-1938

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Afro-American Studies

by

Kaitlin Therese Boyd

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Criminalization of Black Angeleno Women:
Institutionalized Racism and Sexism in Los Angeles, 1928-1938

by

Kaitlin Therese Boyd

Master of Arts in Afro-American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles

Professor Brenda E. Stevenson, Chair

“The Criminalization of Black Angeleno Women” illuminates what happened in early 20th century Los Angeles when African American women, particularly working poor females, came into contact with the Los Angeles Police Department, the court system and the local, mainstream media. Individually, but especially collaboratively, these institutions lead to the overrepresentation of Black, statistically and in the public mind, in the local sex trade. Essentially, this thesis traces the biases of the criminal justice system that labeled Black women as criminals and prostitutes in Los Angeles. The study focuses on the years 1928 to 1938 in Los Angeles, but has broad implications of a national phenomenon that was longstanding.

The thesis of Kaitlin Therese Boyd is approved.

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2012

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The Criminalization of Black Angeleno Women:
Institutionalized Racism and Sexism in Los Angeles, 1928-1938

INTRODUCTION

Lena Collins was a devoted single mother of five “and an industrious working woman” of good standing in the community.¹ On February 20, 1931, she had just parted from her son to find work through an employment agency. Unable to afford the streetcar, she walked a few blocks before a man in a car stopped her. The man was Officer Cliff Barnes, unbeknownst to her, and he led her to believe his wife wanted to hire her as a domestic servant. She expected to go to an interview, but Barnes only meant to lure her into his car. Barnes first offered her alcohol, which Collins declined, and then he asked, “how about going to a room?” This comment warned Lena of imminent danger, and she immediately tried to flee from the vehicle.² A brief tussle ensued and she managed to leave the vehicle, but not before Barnes closed the door on her, temporarily crippling her leg. Two other men nearby, also plainclothes officers named J. J. Doherty and L. L. Miller, helped to force Collins into the backseat of the car, where they stomped her onto the floor. Lena’s screams for help alerted three female passersby, one of whom took down the car’s license plate. The officers thwarted any other attempts to assist Collins by threatening to arrest anyone who tried to interfere.³ Trying to cloak their misconduct, the men brought her to Central Station, where they “booked her for prostitution” (although the citation issued was actually “vagrancy-dissolute”). Lena Collins waited in jail for four days, pleading with the matrons to let her return home so that she could feed her children. Barnes, Doherty, and Miller told the police staff, however, not to believe Collins-- that her stories merely were fabrications to expedite her release.

“The Criminalization of Black Angeleno Women” illuminates what happened in early 20th century Los Angeles when African American women, particularly working poor females, came into contact with the Los Angeles Police Department, the court system and the local, mainstream media. Individually, but especially collaboratively, these institutions lead to the overrepresentation of Black, statistically and in the public mind, in the local sex trade. Essentially, this thesis traces the biases of the criminal justice system that labeled Black women as criminals and prostitutes in Los Angeles. The study focuses on the years 1928 to 1938 in Los Angeles, but has broad implications of a national phenomenon that was longstanding. The findings of this emerged from a three-year investigation of discriminatory policing tactics. The essential questions this study addresses are: Did the LAPD police the Black community differently than other regions of the city, especially those that lacked diversity? What was the general status of black women in this local criminal justice system? How did this status differ from other women? Was this status affected by a woman’s socioeconomic class? Which offenses did the LAPD use to incriminate Black women? To what degree were Black women arrested for sex offenses compared to other women? Did officers construct notions of Black female criminality to dismantle infamous reputation the police had gained of self-corruption? How did the local media—and by extension, public indifference or popular racist and sexist attitudes—reinforce the criminalization of Black females? Most importantly, how did Black women react to their unfair criminalization and resulting negative public image?

This project particularly took shape around the narratives of three Black sex workers recorded about 1930 by James Macfarlane Ervin, a Sociology student who worked undercover to gather data for his thesis. These women’s voices reveal, for example, the social and economic exclusion that coerced them into the sex trade. Ervin’s analysis of his findings, on the other

hand, underscored the sexist and even racist attitudes with which these women were regarded, even by a member of their own race. Even Erwin had to note, however, how instrumental the police had been in these women's victimization.⁴ Municipal court records for Los Angeles predating 1950 were scarce, but the LAPD published *Annual Reports* that indeed documented Erwin's claims and Black women's overrepresentation in sex offense arrests. Recent literature on African American criminalization warn against reading statistics at face value, as they are generated to further the agenda of the creator. Thus, information from the Annual Reports has been extracted with the desire to recompile and demonstrate exactly how policing trends impacted Black women on the streets of Los Angeles during the decade around the Great Depression. These ten reports also were useful because they captured the personality, biases and agenda of the Chief of Police, provide vital information about the organization of the LAPD, and indicate the priorities, official and non-official, that the LAPD's administration impressed upon its officers. Local media accounts from both mainstream newspapers and the Black press shed additional on the LAPD and vice crime through the lens of public perception. The *Los Angeles Times* emphasized regional crime, especially in the most diverse communities, while the Black-run *California Eagle* and the *Los Angeles Sentinel* centered attention on the police department's impartial treatment of the burgeoning African American population surrounding Central Avenue. Individual articles from both sources inform representations of Black women's criminalization and treatment in the criminal justice system. Finally, census records, manuscript collections, and social scientific publications provided specific and critical details about the Los Angeles sex trade and the individuals who were a part of and policed it.

“The Criminalization of Black Angeleno Women” consists of three major sections. The first addresses the LAPD's role in constructing Black female criminals. It traces corruption

within the department, strategic over-policing of the Black community, overrepresentation of African American women as sex offenders, and the use of stereotypes by individual police officers. The second section details local Black women (primarily domestic servants, sex workers and badgers) and their relationship with the sex trade. Individual experiences guided the analysis of each explanation whenever possible. The final part both describes and analyzes the activism and media coverage surrounding the phenomenon of black female criminalization as sex workers. It reveals, for example, that both Black and white reformers had their own agendas, which typically excluded the input of the actual sex workers, especially if these reformers believed these women had actually behaved in a manner that deviated from middle class notions of respectability. Newspaper editors, on the other hand, were not squeamish about exposing LAPD internal corruption, but only the black publications went further to implicate racism and sexism in the organization and the impact it had on black female criminalization. Local law enforcement and the local mainstream media, therefore, were able to generate a damning cycle of popular belief and actual arrests that disproportionately painted African American women as criminals, sexual deviants, and worthy of overrepresentation in jails and prisons.

THE LAPD'S CONSTRUCTION OF BLACK FEMALE CRIMINALS

The 1920s and 30s illuminate policing tactics that further predetermined who constituted a “criminal.” A centralized Vice Squad ironically sanctioned vice crime and facilitated extortion. The vice department’s officers determined who received protection, as they benefited from vice syndicate payoffs. Crime congregated in designated regions of the city that officers leniently patrolled. While white and European immigrant offenders had the liberty to transcend borders of quarantined crime—having the privilege to separate their business from private life—geographical segregation gradually thwarted this luxury for the majority of Black

Angelenos. The Vice Squad notoriously oversaw (read: “selectively policed”) the Central Avenue District. Not only did the majority of African Americans reside in Central District, the southern stretch of Central Avenue became the heart of the Black business and cultural district. In 1925, the LAPD also built a separate precinct surrounding Central Avenue called Newton Station. This new station subjected the residents to greater scrutiny by both the Vice Squad and by the Newton Station patrolmen.

Policing tactics of this period disproportionately affected African American females throughout the early twentieth century. Black female arrests almost entirely resulted from moral violations, the majority of which had sexual overtones. For example, Black females were predominately arrested for “sex offenses” surrounding the Great Depression (1928-1938) according to LAPD Annual Reports, which indicates law enforcement’s role in constructing the racial and sexual criminalization of this demographic. Vagrancy laws also adopted new meanings and purposes leading up to the 1930s: officers could issue “vagrancy” citations when there was insubstantial evidence to make an arrest under another title. For example, “vagrancy-dissolute” could be used to charge a woman for prostitution (“offering”) in lieu of direct proof of any solicitation. This type of overgeneralization from police labels and classifications stuck regardless if an individual had or intended to break a law. Individual LAPD officers profiled women based upon myths of sexual immorality and inherent criminality. The Supervisor of Policewomen, Vice Squad officers, judges, and numerous patrol officers have all left evidence of racial and gender discrimination that resulted in heightened police intervention, more arrests, and harsher punishments. Therefore, notions of inequality upheld by the LAPD ensured that Black women seldom received impartial treatment in the criminal justice system. Worst of all, countless arrests of African American women helped the LAPD to counter accusations of police

corruption. Eventually, this strategy would later eliminate citizen intervention when the LAPD passed a law in 1937 in favor of departmental autonomy.

Corruption in the Police Department

The local police department seemingly quarantined crime away from predominately rich, white neighborhoods reorganizing vice crime into poor, diverse communities. Racial covenants—Los Angeles’ legalized form of segregation—bourgeoned in the late 1910s, which relegated Angelenos of color and many immigrants into undesirable neighborhoods. The police heavily patrolled the borders between white and racially and ethnically integrated neighborhoods while police neglected vice conditions within the latter. Essentially, police enforcement (or lack thereof) strategically permitted petty crime to flourish around politically marginalized Angelenos.

Los Angeles had a long-established reputation for corrupt authorities. Personal and professional advantages could materialize through vice alliances: all individuals could benefit financially, but politicians could secure campaign funding and prolong their influence over the city, whereas officers may have found opportunities to move up the ranks in an underpaid and understaffed department. Police corruption existed in every level of the department, although not every officer participated. Some police officers and politicians forged alliances with vice syndicates as opportunities to supplement their modest wages.⁵ Others abused positions specifically designated for vice regulation, and some even acquired “assets of over \$100,000.” Considering the annual income ranged from \$2,040 for an entry-level patrolman to \$6,000 for the Chief of Police, bribery appears as the only possibly explanation for such an extreme wealth discrepancy.⁶

There was a constant flux of government officials—eleven mayors and twenty-five chiefs of police—from 1900 to the end of the 1930s. The shift in political leaders demonstrated the public’s constant disapproval with the authority and overall vice conditions of the city.⁷ Nicholas Oswald (white), for example, had investments in a common red-light district in downtown Los Angeles at the turn of the twentieth century where Black sex workers purportedly operated and interacted with an interracial patronage.⁸ Oswald managed several locations, from saloons to cribs, all of which were earning him a substantial profit. In order to prevent harassment from the authorities, he decided to make a business deal with them: minimal police interference for cold cash. Eventually Oswald was charged with bribing the former chief of police, Thomas Broadhead (white), in 1909. During the court hearing, Oswald revealed that the mayor, Arthur Harper (white), and a police commissioner also had stakes in the arraignment.⁹ Each man received approximately \$500 per week to permit Oswald to conduct illegal business ventures.¹⁰ Mayor Harper resigned after his involvement in the scandal went public; Broadhead, on the contrary, was acquitted of all charges and immediately resumed his former position as captain.¹¹

Harper and Broadhead were not the only government agents to evade disciplinary action while business owners withstood the convictions. Another mayor, Frederic Woodman (white), was indicted in 1919 for accepting bribes from George Brown and George Henderson (both African American) for \$25,000 to fund the upcoming mayoral campaign.¹² Brown and Henderson received guilty verdicts, while Mayor Woodman and the “go-between” police officers were acquitted of all charges.¹³ Investigations of vice extortion appeared sporadically over the next two decades.¹⁴ Even when alleged criminals disclosed the names of their accomplices, the court discredited their testimony as legitimate evidence. The courts considered their reputation

and association with the underground economy to destroy their credibility against the good faith reserved for government employees.¹⁵ Vice crime, therefore, could be overlooked as long as the offenders allocated a portion of the profits to those in power.

Certain individuals profited from extortion, especially those in higher-ranking positions; corruption was conducted openly and had insignificant consequences. Evidence of malfeasance could result in a demotion, however, if the Police Board of Commissioners found an officer worthy of punitive action. When Chief James E. Davis refused to submit vice reports in 1928, for example, he had to step down from his position for charges of “incompetence and neglect of duty.” Davis’ shortcomings, however, did not interfere with his ability to reclaim his position as the highest-ranking officer four years later.¹⁶ Seldom could past misconduct thwart an officer’s ascendance in the LAPD so long as his colleagues stood behind him.



Figure 1. “Chief of Police James E. Davis, 1926-1931 and 1933-1939,” in “Police Chief Davis to Make Personal Appearance,” photograph, 1933, Los Angeles Public Library Images (Online Database), no.00029844.

The department claimed a designated vice squad to deal entirely with gambling, prostitution, narcotics, and alcohol violations. This subsector of the police department constantly

shifted between being centralized and decentralized until 1940.¹⁷ Thus, either a few individuals oversaw all vice activity throughout Los Angeles or vice personnel were assigned to each precinct. The centralized squads regulated where and under whose authority vice existed. In the event that a patrolman witnessed a vice crime, no action could be taken unless an officer on the vice squad was present.¹⁸ Centralization awarded department officers complete authority over “which premises to raid and which to avoid” depending on who paid the agreed upon extortion fees, whereas a decentralized system made each division accountable in the event that “vice is found.”¹⁹ Vice Squad reorganization occurred at least five times within seven years (1926-1932). Chief James Davis and his predecessor, Roy Steckel, even restructured the division multiple times while in office.²⁰ Reorganizing the department allegedly signified the chief’s desire to increase police productivity and reduce crime.



Figure 2. “L.A. City Police Roy E. Steckel, [1929-1932],” photograph, circa 1930, Los Angeles Public Library Images (Online Database), no. 00011739.

Regardless of the rationale for shifting authority, staff members understood that such promises merely served to improve public relations. One police officer stated prostitution arrests were out of his control despite his willingness to enforce the law: “I know the pay-off men, I

know the go-betweens; but what can I do when it's sanctioned by city politicians?"²¹ Thus, patrolmen had to comply with the demands of their superiors before they could enforce the law. Since officers knew who constituted members of the syndicate, they also were familiar with who did and did not receive protection. The power distribution of the early twentieth century, especially within a centralized vice squad, optimized police protection for those who could afford it. The kingpins of the city gained more prominence while officers strategically sought after those outside the syndicate to issue arrests.²² Therefore, the individuals arrested on petty misdemeanors (i.e. those without police protection) came to embody law enforcement productivity. Police found arrest scapegoats near locations of protected vice. The authorities again tried to dispel accusations of corruption by creating another precinct to patrol sections of the city where vice crime congregated. Under the guise of reducing vice in "crime-prone" neighborhoods (rather than admitting fault for negligent enforcement), the LAPD maintained underworld connections and enabled heightened supervision over the most diverse neighborhoods.

Policing the Black Community

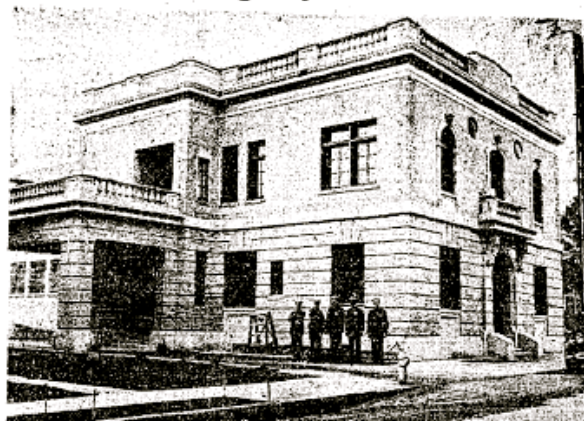


Figure 3. "Open Newton Street Police Substation," in "Telepix Wire Photographs Prove Highly Successful," *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1925.

Assembly District	African American Residents	Percent of Population	Assembly District	African American Residents	Percent of Population
51	64	0.2%	61	830	2%
54	38	0.1%	62	27,227	70%
55	450	1%	63	114	0.3%
56	275	0.7%	64	1,092	3%
57	590	2%	65	6	0%
58	849	2%	66	39	0.1%
59	2,880	7%	67	27	0.1%
60	913	2%	72	3,500	9%
Total Population: 38,894* *Data taken from United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, <i>Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930-Population: California</i> "Composition and Characteristics," 287.					

Table 1. Distribution of the African American Population in Los Angeles, 1930.

The Newton Street Police Department opened in 1925 with early signs that African Americans would receive unjust treatment. To fill the new openings, the LAPD transferred officers from the Hollywood Department, who policed the predominately white, Westside residents rather than hiring new staff from the community to fill these positions.²³ By 1930, Newton housed the second most patrolmen per square mile. This same year, the largest Black community in Los Angeles (just under 28,000) as well as approximately 15,000 other people of color fell under the station’s jurisdiction.²⁴ Central Avenue—known as the focal point of Black business and cultural life—conveniently ran down the middle of the Newton Street Precinct. Therefore, the authorities implied that anyone who patronized Central Avenue needed excessive policing. This relationship caused many to wrongfully associate perceptions of criminal activity with any Black-owned and operated businesses or organizations.²⁵ Since the area’s population density could not explain such a high level of police presence, especially when compared to other precincts, racism within the LAPD appeared to be the driving factor behind increased law enforcement. Even seven years later, Newton had more patrolmen per square mile than any

other division and would continue to do so until at least 1950.²⁶ As number of officers patrolling the community increased, so too did criminalization of the neighborhood. The increased enforcement resulted in more citations issued to the residents within the surrounding area.

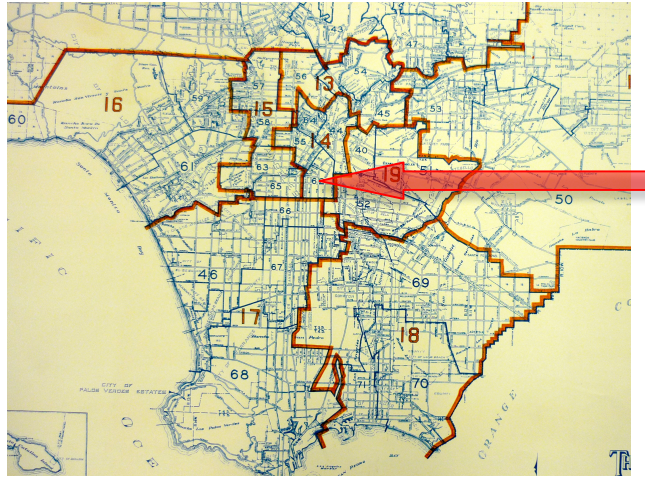


Figure 4. “Map Showing the Assembly and Congressional Districts of the County of Los Angeles,” Election Commissioners of Los Angeles County, 1931, courtesy of Special Collections, UCLA.

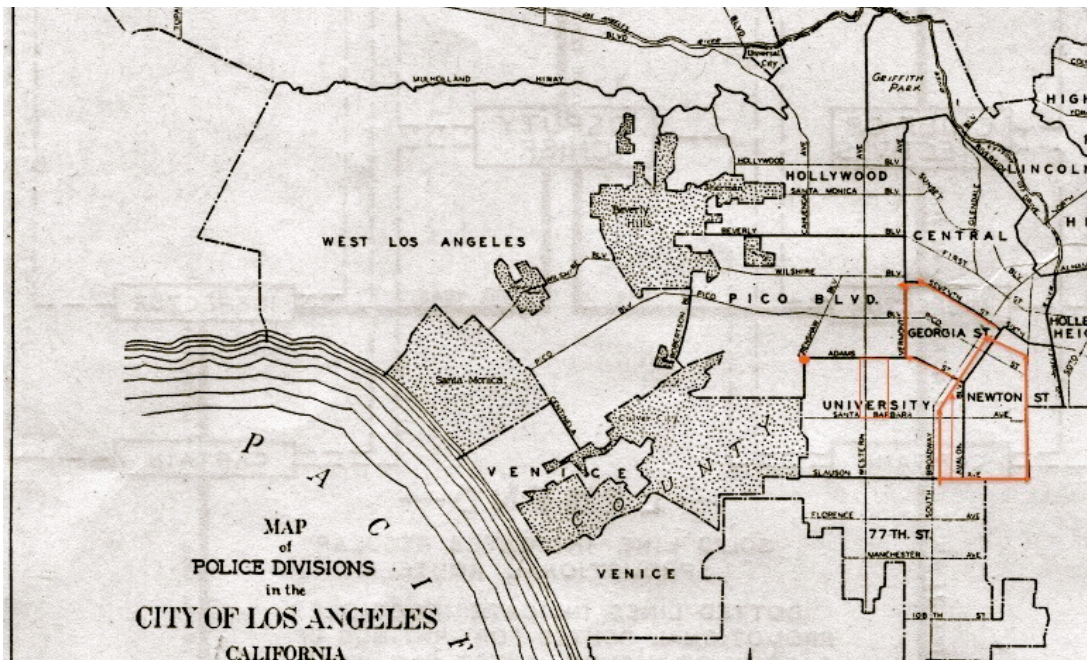


Figure 5. “LAPD Station Precincts, 1931,” City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1931-1932* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1932).

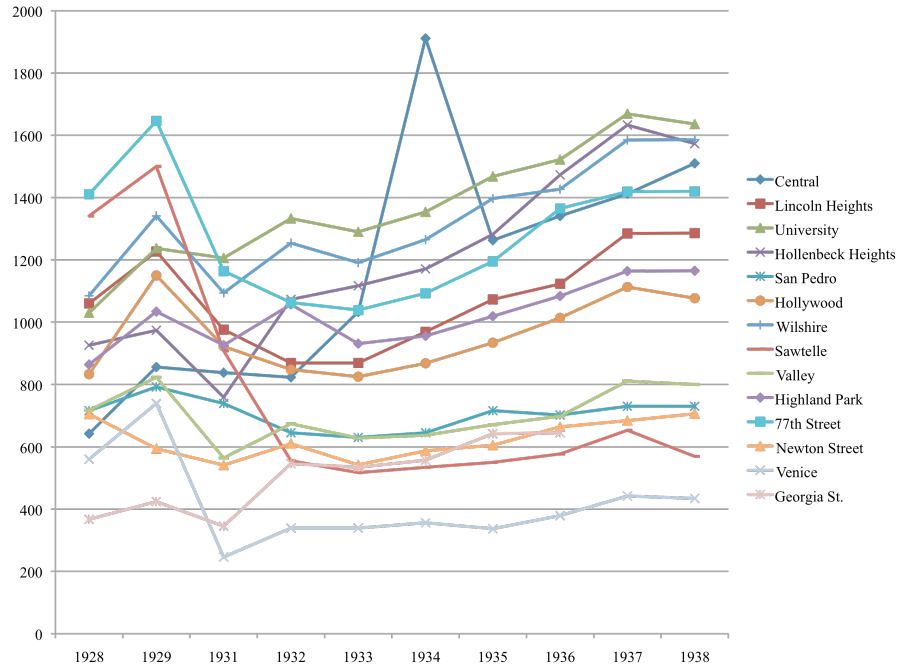


Figure 6. Ratio of Police to Residents by Precinct, 1928-1938. Square mile was factored into this diagram. Data collected from LAPD Annual Reports, 1927-1928 through 1937-1938.

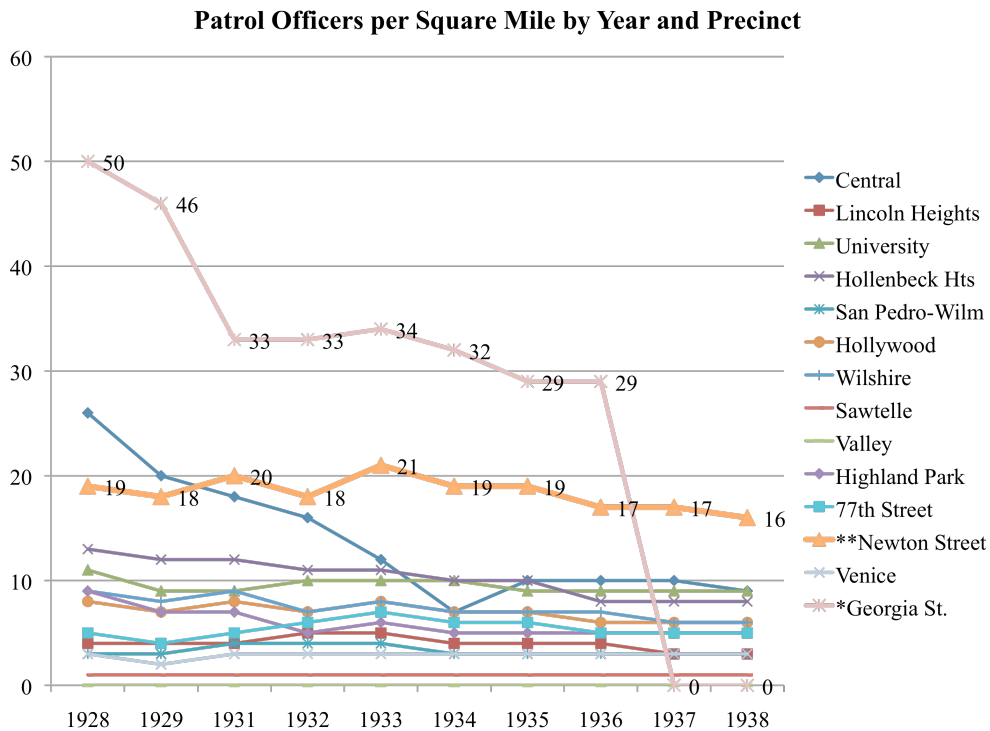


Figure 7. Patrol Officers per Square Mile by Year and Precinct. These figures were taken from the LAPD's Annual Reports, 1927-1928 through 1937-1938. The number of patrolman assigned to each precinct was divided by the total square miles for which each precinct was responsible. Please note that the Newton Street Precinct (Orange Triangles) policed the heart of the Black business district and cultural life. Georgia Street Precinct (Pink Stars) held the second

largest Black population. Newton Street and Central Division consumed the Georgia Street Precinct by 1937, thus the dramatic shift in data for 1937 and 1938.

Arrest statistics temporarily appeased the public and allowed officers to continue their malfeasance for personal gain. Vagrancy arrests in Los Angeles had dual functions: they reflected crime prevention efforts and eliminated the burden of proof. Individual officers retained the right to use their discretion in indentifying crime and criminals. Vagrancy laws made substantial proof of law violations optional, and uniform citations blurred the circumstances behind each arrest, as well as removed one’s individual identity. Countless individuals found themselves wrongfully arrested under the ambiguity of this particular offense. While vagrancy had separate legal definitions, however, Angelenos still equated the lesser vagrant offenses with their corresponding harsher citations. For example, women arrested on inconclusive evidence for “dissolute” or “lewd” vagrancy blended with women cited for prostitution. Such citations assigned complete power to the LAPD to designate who “deserved” to enter the criminal justice system and thus, deserved punishment.

Citation	Explanation	Type of Offense	Level of Offense
“Offering”	Arrested during the act of offering to engage in extramarital sex for money.	Sex Offense	Misdemeanor
“Vagrancy-Lewd”	Arrested for “idle” public presence or loitering in which one <i>may or may not</i> exhibit some form of sexual conduct.	Sex Offense	Misdemeanor
“Vagrancy-Dissolute”	Arrested for “idle” public presence or loitering in which one’s behavior is <i>perceived as “immoral,”</i> or any act that might violate public decency.	Sex Offense	Misdemeanor

Table 2. Comparison of Prostitution-Related Offenses.

The origins of vagrancy offenses came from the South. White males demanded, materialized, and enforced these laws while African Americans almost exclusively became the sole perpetrators. A Southern white journalist, for example, suggested his ideal “solution” to a significant Black female public presence: “Let the city authorities enact an ordinance forcing this class of women [Black women] off the streets after a certain hour, or lock them up.”²⁷ Similar sentiments emerged in other cities, and vagrancy laws appeared in municipal codes across the nation. The enforcement of vagrancy laws was specifically meant to reduce Black working class women’s visibility on city streets and their involvement in public leisure. Professor Hazel Carby posits that this shift in policing had a lasting impact for all urban Black women: middle-class ideologies and discourse would deem them “sexually deviant” and thus, a danger to society. Such discourse during the early twentieth century coalesced these women into broader notions of criminalized community vice.²⁸ Note that while race heavily determined whether or not an individual was arrested for vagrancy during reconstruction, by 1910, vagrancy laws coded the target female audience under “common prostitutes”—worthy of arrest and removal—thereby insinuating all public female presence constituted vagrancy, or put more simply, prostitution.²⁹

White moral panic magnified the use of vagrancy during the onset of the Great Migration, and as a result, vagrancy definitions/terms expanded. Los Angeles’ municipal code in particular had different classifications for vagrancy, including “Dissolute,” “Lewd,” “Quarantine” (all under the subheading of “Sex Offences”), “Drunk,” “Idle,” “Late Hours,” “Lookout,” “Roamer,” and “Sleeper” (under the subheading of “Vagrancy”).³⁰ Therefore, subcategory descriptors of vagrancy further linked recipients to more serious offenses like prostitution, without sufficient evidence. The Wickersham Commission, a federally funded investigation of national law enforcement, documented the LAPD’s unethical use of vagrancy to

embellish arrest statistics during the years of the Great Depression. Their findings stated, “Noteworthy are the large number of vagrancy charges [in Los Angeles], which are usually a pretext for arrest and have no relation to the charge, if any, on which the prisoner is subsequently held.”³¹ In other words, this tactic raised local arrest rates and purified the department’s reputation while the recipient’s legal rights were compromised. The commission further added that no other city’s police department compared to the amount of lawlessness practiced by the LAPD.³²

Analyzing Arrest Statistics

The Los Angeles Police Department produced arrest statistics from the Great Depression demarcated by race, age, and gender. Therefore, one can identify on how many African American women were arrested and for which offenses.³³ Such data illuminated the varying policing practices of the LAPD under different chiefs of police and city politicians and also highlight the susceptibility of African American women to prostitution-related citations. Depending on who was running the LAPD, Black women were more or less susceptible to misdemeanors. The vice squad under James Davis first reign as Chief of Police (1927-1929) consistently targeted petty offenders, according to both Joe Dominick and Gerald Woods distract reformers and discontented citizens.³⁴ During the early 1930s, under the supervision of Police Chief Roy Steckel, African American females endured a combined maximum of 26% of the prostitution and vagrancy offenses. When James Davis succeeded Steckel from 1932-1937, the arrest rates for Black women in this category rose to 46% from 1935-1936. During his first session in office, Black women were arrested for vagrancy charges more often than offering; his second term, offering was issued most often, but Black women consistently received over half of all vagrancy sex offenses. These trends dropped by the end of the decade when Davis left

office.³⁵ These figures reflect how high-ranking officials promoted their staff to police prostitution *and* female “criminals.”³⁶

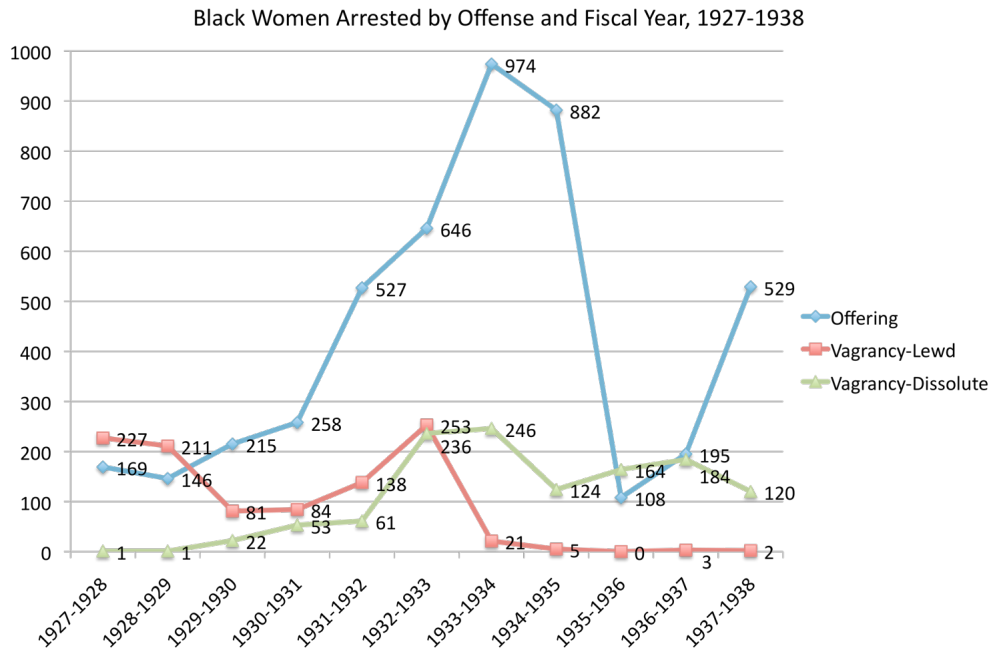


Figure 8. Black Women Arrested by Offense and Fiscal Year, 1927-1938. Data collected from LAPD Annual Reports, 1927-1928 through 1937-1938.

Women’s public presence, larger patrol units assigned to diverse communities, and individual officer’s personal prejudices towards African Americans comprise some of the reasons Black women received such disproportionate arrests compared to their makeup of the female population.³⁷ Prostitution-related offenses attempted to regulate women’s public expression of sexuality, specifically, but also their public presence, more generally, especially during the Progressive Era. Police specifically targeted Black women, and explicitly labeled them “prostitutes,” with or without incriminating evidence. Arrest data illuminated the likelihood of officers to arrest Black females for prostitution because of racial profiling, even though white women composed the largest demographic of sex workers historically.³⁸

Representation of Black Female Arrests by Offense and Fiscal Year, 1927-1938

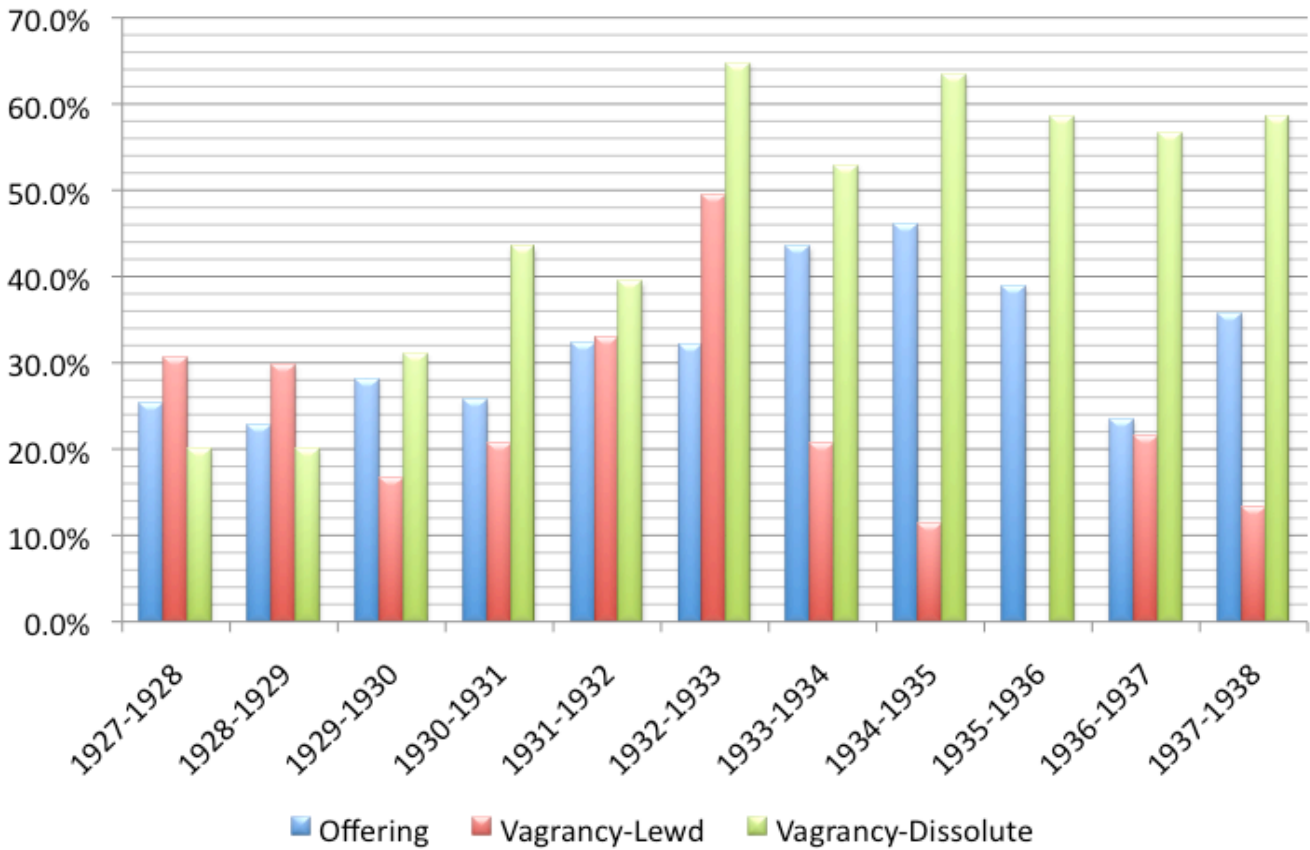


Figure 9. Representation of Black Female Arrests by Offense and Fiscal Year, 1927-1938. Data collected from LAPD Annual Reports, 1927-1928 through 1937-1938.

Further analysis of the *Annual Police Reports* illuminate African American women’s overrepresentation in sex offense arrests. From 1927-1935, Black women averaged 32% of “offering” offenses for all women.³⁹ Black females similarly received an average of 30% of the “vag-lewd” arrests from 1927 until 1933. Police almost entirely began substituting “vag-dissolute” for “vag-lewd” between 1931 and 1933; Black women endured just under half the arrests for this newly implemented citation from 1931 to 1938.⁴⁰ Since “vag-dissolute” becomes a far less common citation after 1938, one might infer that this element of the municipal code was used, if not created, for the purpose of regulating African American women. These figures

are exceptional when considering that Black women never exceeded 3% of the female population.⁴¹ Therefore, they were routinely overrepresented compared to their composition of the population. Most likely, these inflated rates demonstrate that Black women became victims of pressure to raise productivity, regardless of each woman's actual intent.

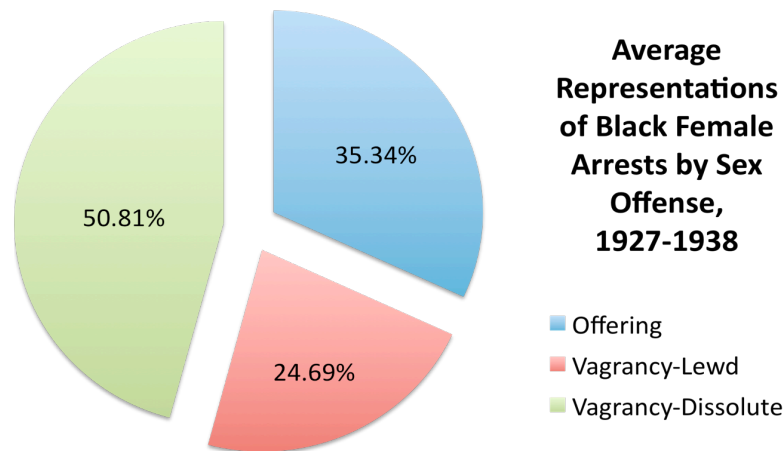


Figure 10. Average Representations of Black Female Arrests by Sex Offense, 1927-1938. Data collected from LAPD Annual Reports, 1927-1928 through 1937-1938.

In urban settings throughout the nation, Black women's overrepresentation in arrest records increased gradually throughout the early twentieth century and skyrocketed by the Great Depression, which also held true for Los Angeles.⁴² Using Kalil Gibran Muhammad's groundbreaking work, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, crime statistics merely reflected the behavior and biases of police officers rather than the actual amount of Black women who participated in prostitution. In some cities like Detroit, police made a habit of only arresting Black women for prostitution on weekends—the time of week when prostitution supposedly thrived—while letting other violators work with impunity.⁴³ The statistics, therefore, only signify that African American women suffered from heightened police enforcement, due to police discrimination and racialized criminalization. Innocent and offending women alike contributed to Black female overrepresentation in arrest statistics.



Figure 11. “Lieutenant Sidney Sweetnam, Vice Squad,” in “Vice Inquiry Called Politics,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1938.

Vice Squad Lieutenant Sidney Sweetnam, for example, arrested other women in the vicinity to counter accusations of graft. One woman, L. C. McKay, allegedly supervised a house of prostitution for Albert Marco, a kingpin of the prostitution syndicate. One of the businesses she supervised in 1936 (803 Hemlock Street) operated for at least four years under the protection of Lieutenant Sweetnam. Mollie Davis was one of the recipients who acted as the scapegoat for McKay’s establishment to continue operating.⁴⁴ Rather than an “offering” charge, however, the vice squad officer arrested her on the grounds of “vagrancy-dissolute.” Sweetnam most likely chose this particular infraction because he had insufficient evidence for any other violation, yet he needed to appease complaints and create an alibi. If Davis was in fact soliciting, Sweetnam may have chosen to lessen the offense to protect McKay: an offering citation could warrant

further investigation on Hemlock Street—further endangering her business—whereas a charge like vagrancy was more ambiguous, especially when reviewed by other officers who also used vagrancy charges in lieu of conclusive evidence. Davis, on the other hand, encountered the same consequences from either citation; she would receive the same level offense (misdemeanor) and still contract the stigma associated with prostitution. This account exemplifies how vice squad officers designated who should enter into the criminal justice system and who was exempt, which usually came down to “easy arrests,” like pedestrians.⁴⁵

The Vice Squad’s policing practices, as demonstrated by Lieutenant Sweetnam, therefore, gave off false impressions that police kept “criminals” off the streets of Los Angeles. Those who could not contest past affiliation with lawbreaking or if resources needed to clear one’s name were unobtainable, victims found themselves in jail cells, regardless of whether or not they were guilty of the charge(s) against them.⁴⁶ Moreover, petty offenders (if not victims of circumstance) like Davis, continued to overcrowd the jails for the sake of augmenting arrest statistics and improving police morale on the whole.

Far too often, the use of stereotypes denied humanity and thus produced a uniform protocol that failed to meet the needs of individuals. White Angelenos, especially members of the police department, refused to investigate how racism influenced law enforcement. As a consequence, racial profiling became standard while police remained immune to defamatory allegations.⁴⁷ Once these women entered the criminal justice system, their race heavily influenced their conviction rates and punishments. By 1934, Black women faced imprisonment rates at three times that of the next closest demographic for sex offenses (Irish); the following year they represented four times that of any other ethnicity.⁴⁸ Not surprisingly, James Davis was in office during these years—the same officer who notoriously abused vagrancy laws to disguise

corruption. In 1932, there were nearly two and a half times as many female prisoners (7,724). Had similar conditions of Black female overrepresentation existed, most likely over 3,000 Black women had been behind bars.⁴⁹

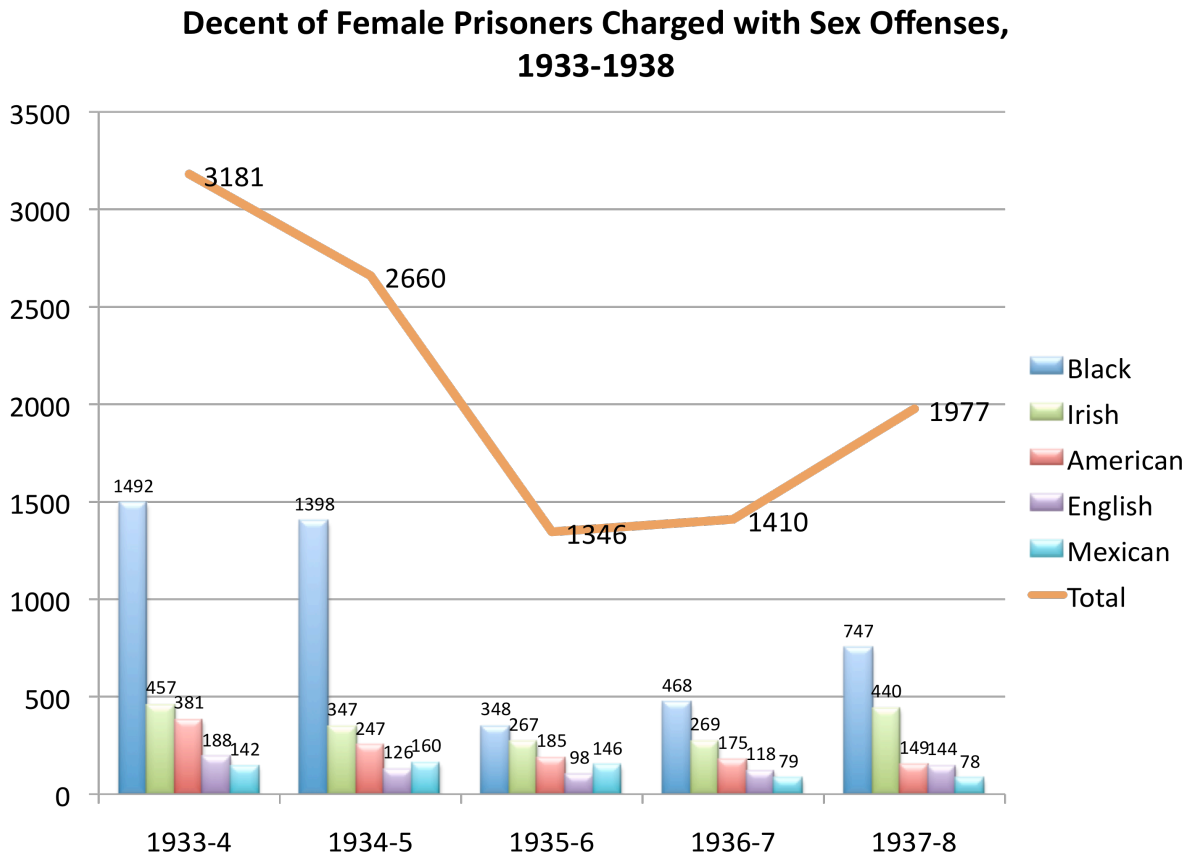


Figure 12. Decent of Female Prisoners Charged with Sex Offenses, 1933-1938. Data collected from LAPD Annual Reports, 1932-1933 through 1937-1938.

Biased Policing of Individual Officers

More white Southerners migrated to Los Angeles, bringing along their racial prejudice, and many of them joined the police force over the decades.⁵⁰ After 1920, new chapters of terrorist organizations settled in Southern California. While multiple members of the Klu Klux Klan worked in nearby police departments, Mayor John Porter of Los Angeles was a professed Klan member. Not surprisingly, his reign from 1929-1933 coincided with the increasing arrests

of Black women.⁵¹ This addition to the LAPD and government exacerbated public encounters between the Black community and police officers, especially since the few Black officers who worked for the LAPD were in entry-level positions with few opportunities for advancement.⁵² Individual officers revealed their subscription to racist myths of immorality and criminalization throughout the police department.

Racial and gendered prejudices heavily influenced who some officers' labeled criminal. According to the Supervisor of Police Women, Claudia Prophet (white), Black sex workers in Los Angeles habitually committed badger crimes. They were a serious threat to the city because they violated sexual mores (as a prostitute) and demonstrated criminal tendencies, like theft, according to her interpretation. Prophet therefore racialized this particular phenomenon by emphasizing only Black females committed badger crimes while she entirely excluded any other race from her explanation. She categorized four "special types" of African American prostitutes: "Alley Workers," "Home Raiders," "Down Town Sucker Hunters," and "Automobile Riders."⁵³ In every one of her descriptions, badgers typically stole from, lied to, and conned their "victims." Prophet claimed they often worked in pairs but occasionally worked alone. White males seemed to be the target demographic because she presumed that they were least likely to report the situation:⁵⁴ they had to hide their affiliation with prostitutes as well as their inclination towards interracial sex. Rather than be exposed, many white males supposedly accepted the financial loss. Yet badger's reputations alerted this particular officer that African American sex workers were not only guilty of morality charges but that they tended to commit crimes of a more severe nature. Since Prophet held these beliefs, she most likely shared them with her female colleagues in the legal system who also dealt specifically with female and juvenile offenders.



Figure 13. “1916, Policewoman Georgia Ann Robinson,” commemoration plaque, January 3, 2009, Topanga Police Station, Canoga Park, CA.

Officer Georgia Robinson, the first African American policewoman on the LAPD, dealt specifically with Black women and youth who were in danger of becoming “criminal” or had received any citation for breaking the law. Robinson strived to reform those whom she thought were in danger of becoming repeat offenders, but some of her cases may have been driven by presumptions. Deviation from middle class values seemingly determined which women she persecuted, which may or may not have been premised on police protocol. For example, Robinson arrested Angela Thompson on charges of sexual delinquency during their initial encounter. Robinson did so because she believed she had repeatedly seen Angela in various nightlife venues, but most importantly, because Angela admitted that she was no longer a virgin.

Policewomen and policemen, regardless of race, attempted to regulate women’s sexuality until the 1940s.⁵⁵ Officer Robinson learned Angela was around sixteen when she worked as a domestic servant. This job provided her with the financial means to enjoy the nightlife of Los

Angeles and also gave her an excuse to stay out late until her mother, Loretta, questioned her whereabouts. Soon Loretta became skeptical of Angela's pattern behavior when she had not come home three holiday evenings during the winter of 1919. Loretta was frustrated when her pleas to Angela to behave "properly" brought no change in the girl's behavior. As a single mother, Loretta felt police intervention might alter Angela's "inappropriate" conduct, which was why she turned to Robinson for help. While Angela had not committed any crimes and merely gave Robinson honest answers, she quickly realized that what she may have understood as embracing her freedoms (i.e. participating in nightlife leisurely activities) subjected her to a criminal status. Like many women who had their sexuality in question during this period, Angela was retained and tested for sexually transmitted infections—a procedure usually reserved for sex workers. This practice originated based upon the belief that prostitutes were solely responsible for spreading venereal disease.⁵⁶ By court order, with the consent of Officer Robinson, Angela relocated to Arizona to live with family. Angela's living arrangement only lasted a few months before she returned to live at the Sojourner Truth Home per her mother's request. This particular facility was devoted to helping Black migrant women establish "positive" roots in Los Angeles during their adjustment to the city. Angela remained a resident at STIH just under a year, but ultimately decided that her living situation was unsatisfactory, as the lifestyle conflicted with her own ideas of liberty and leisure.⁵⁷

Female officers like Prophett and Robinson controlled a woman's criminal record and possibly even her future. Both policewomen had a distinct rationale for their interpretations of Black female criminality. One may infer that Prophett's portrayal of Badgers stems from the importance she placed on the nuclear family, gender roles, and possibly interracial relationships. Since badgers exploited these concepts, they committed a severe crime in her opinion. Yet there

is no explanation for why she racialized this offense. Perhaps, on one hand, a prejudiced coworker influenced her thinking. On the other hand, maybe her interpretation could have been a reflection of internalized racism based upon myths that deprived African American women of feminine virtue. Thus, they were “inclined” to commit more “masculine” crimes. On the contrary, Robison, an activist herself, was fully aware of clubwomen’s national efforts to dismantle stereotypes of African American sexuality through example. Therefore, she probably issued a swift, harsh punishment in the hopes that Angela would be reformed out of fear and “tough love.” Nevertheless, racist stereotypes still seemed to have influenced both officers’ opinions.

In order to understand why the LAPD got away with exploiting the marginalized and petty offenders, one must explore the power and culture associated with the position. The elite generally revered police officers; they “regulated” crime and offered protection for those in danger. Instances of police corruption rarely happened outside communities of color. Thus, affluent whites seldom sought to change the institution because it catered to their needs and seldom threatened their wellbeing.⁵⁸ This same esteemed status granted police officers relentless power. Officers typically worked alone or in small groups, granting them autonomy over the appropriate way to handle each situation.⁵⁹ An officers’ occupation guaranteed them credibility, a strong support structure, access to protective resources, such as legal representation, and semi-immunity from accusations that may mar one’s reputation. A few officers handled situations poorly and exploited the absence of supervision, especially when they intimidated and humiliated citizens.⁶⁰

While an indeterminate number of officers employed criminal and racial stereotypes, resulting in misconduct, other officers, regardless of race or ethnicity, soon adopted similar

behaviors or at least had to passively watch according to the code of police subculture. Therefore, the entire LAPD upheld some degree of fraternal bonds—what Kenneth Bolton coined “police subculture” as fraternal-bond-like relationships meant to protect colleagues. Because many officers distanced themselves from the “criminalized” neighborhoods in which they worked, they “develop[ed] an isolated and defensive perspective and came to feel that they could rely only on themselves for support and respect.”⁶¹ When coworkers hesitated to vouch for another’s actions, their colleagues resorted to either intimidation or alienation.⁶² The code of subculture frequently required officers to protect each other on the field and in the courtroom.

The few corrupt officials utilized several techniques to exonerate themselves from misconduct: they used threats or violence to silence their victims; slandered the victim’s character, and/or relied on the police department to defend them. The LAPD regularly dismissed complaints that might further deteriorate police/community relations. Police chiefs thwarted civil investigations by using fallacies to distract the public’s attention, like denouncing citizens’ allegations of allegations of protected vice.⁶³ Roy Steckel, chief of police from 1929-1932, blatantly denied the existence of police malfeasance and requested “credit” for cleaning up the city “rather than criticism and condemnation.”⁶⁴ By becoming the victim rather than the criminal, the LAPD defended graft throughout the ranks. The long history of corruption already damaged the department’s reputation in the eyes of many Angelenos, and any additional problems would only erase any progress made towards deconstructing this image. Thus government officials stuck to internally compiled arrest data to validate efficient policing, and gradually built a case for departmental autonomy.⁶⁵

BLACK WOMEN AND THE SEX TRADE

The remaining traces from a small sampling of Black Angeleno women who received citations for sex offenses, therefore, had shared experiences with racial and gender discrimination from the LAPD, despite the unique circumstances of each case. Many women were stigmatized by wrongful association and/or without any direct affiliation with the sex trade. Presence in city streets acted as sites of sexual vulnerability. Women who participated in interracial sex work left first hand accounts about their entrance into prostitution and the significance of race within the industry. Other women capitalized from the sex trade in nontraditional positions that did not require sexual intercourse. These women worked as maids and supervisors in houses of prostitution as well as those who exploited stereotypes of sexuality to rob males (hereby referenced as “badgers”). Socioeconomic conditions, criminalization, and the threat of rape emerged as reoccurring themes, and almost all women had stories of wrongful persecution and/or harassment by authority figures.

Historical criminalization and stigmatization have long plagued sex workers, especially those who worked in urban settings throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. While the majority of sex workers were consistently white women, women of color suffered grave consequences whether or not they solicited sex due to geographical associations and oppressive depictions of Black womanhood. While most historians have excluded Los Angeles from investigations of the sex trade, vice crime was prevalent throughout the city at least until the 1940s. Such rampant vice conditions introduced these residents to various aspects of the sex trade—some of whom viewed the sex trade as potential possibility for survival. Involvement in the sex trade often pushed women away from support systems and drove them to find alternative means of security and self-validation. For many, such pathways only existed through the

underground economy, and thus, the notion of “deviance as resistance” resurfaces in several of the following narratives. These women challenged racism, patriarchy, hypersexual stereotypes, and criminalization.

Domestic Service at Houses of Prostitution

Although “maids” were the formal title, such positions afforded workers more prestige and power than most servile positions, such as working at white residences. Some even paralleled the authority of madams.⁶⁶ Sometimes, these employees acted as the mediator between clients and sex workers, especially to verify the client’s authenticity to avoid a set-up and warn occupants in the event of a police raid.⁶⁷ Duties required checking passwords upon entry and operating external light systems to welcome or refuse customers.⁶⁸ In order to regulate who entered, these women had to be trusted with every detail about the business, from the hours of operation to the alliances with police.

Evidence of such tasks remain in records of various Los Angeles reform groups, like the Citizen's Independent Vice Investigating Committee (CIVIC), whose purpose was to expose and eradicate political extortion linked to vice crime. When Harry Raymond, a CIVIC member who aided in the investigation, tried to apprehend a local house of prostitution, for example, he first made a phone call to verify his suspicions. The “colored maid” answered and responded, “Honey we is closed for the present but will be wide open for business inside the next week and no later than ten days.” Raymond then inquired how she knew, and she claimed, “well the man who is causing all the trouble is to be put out of his job and everything will be alright. The police told us so last night.” Although he seemed to have gotten the incriminating evidence he needed, the maid took her own precautions in addition to providing vague answers about the hours of operation. When asked to see the prostitutes outside the hours of operation, she denied

his request.⁶⁹ Since she needed personal contact to ascertain his intentions, her response ensured the safety of the women and that of the business.

The case of Harriet Brooks represents some African American women's transcendence into higher positions of the sex trade, without soliciting sex. These occupations, however, still rendered many immoral and criminal regardless of whether or not the individual believed she was legally employed. Harriet Brooks worked for a Lillian La Verne at Hollywood Health Institute and Massage Parlor.⁷⁰ She worked as a maid for approximately two weeks before her first encounter with the police. When confronted, she denied knowing that her employer was allegedly a house of prostitution, yet she received a citation for "vagrancy-dissolute" after the police found no evidence to warrant further arrests.⁷¹ Despite the first arrest, Harriet continued to work for La Verne. Her frustration with the job market and lack of alternative options influenced her rationality for sustaining this job. She vented, "Well, what am I going to do? I have got to make a living somehow or another."⁷² Faced with these limitations, she did not view her job as criminal; rather, it enabled her survival. Unfortunately, it also resulted in a second arrest two weeks later, which coincided with the arrest of her coworker, Barbara Brooks. The parlor owner, La Verne, conveniently never received a ticket although she was required to testify.

Even though working for La Verne caused the ordeal with the criminal justice system, Harriet also retained the services of her employer's attorney. Access to legal representation would most likely improve her chances of having the charges dropped.⁷³ For example, her attorney, Beecher S. Stowe, suspected the officers to use her prior arrest to incriminate her.⁷⁴ If the officers framed her as a former criminal, the courts would be more likely to convict her a

second time and assign more severe penalties. Fortunately, Attorney Stowe had prolonged Harriet's first arrest trial so events of the first arrest date could not be used against her.

During the trial, Harriet exemplified the Victorian attributes expected of contemporary women in order to win the favor of court officials. She spoke softly, emphasized the domestic duties of her employment, and complied with all inquiries.⁷⁵ Yet her virtue and femininity did not safeguard her from sexual harassment at the time of her arrest. Harriet's testimony referenced that in addition to the arrests, Officer F.V. Rawson forced her to change in front of him.⁷⁶ Some policemen like Rawson abused their authority to take advantage of women when they believed such actions had no consequences. Those least likely to gain attention from police violations, including but not limited to Black women, were thus more susceptible to sexual harassment. Harriet used the courtroom as a forum to testify against the injustices and sexual harassment she experienced at the hands of the LAPD. In other words, she used her voice to illuminate the violations white supremacy and the local authority sanctioned—an act that contributed to the larger fight against oppressive regimes.⁷⁷

By issuing Harriet multiple citations for “dissolute” vagrancy, the involved officers denied her the title of employee (i.e. labeling her a vagrant), albeit her presence in a private location. They also simultaneously branded her a prostitute (i.e. labeling her a sex offender). She wrongfully received a criminal record for being employed, even though she pleaded oblivious to any illegal activity. Most likely the officers used the arrest to make a statement that Harriet, a Black woman, had no place in West Los Angeles, employed or not. Brooks' first encounter with the police exemplified the dangers of working at informal businesses, especially in white neighborhoods. Both citations demonstrated the risk of guilt by (wrongful) association since the police categorized her as sex worker regardless of her refusal to prostitute directly.

Thus, the hearing of Harriet Brooks represents the similar criminalization women faced when working in any facet of the sex trade.

Black Sex Workers and Interracial Prostitution

By 1930, the numbers of sex workers steadily inclined, especially in terms of public presence in the Black community; however, the figures remain elusive. According to the one Protestant reformer, Bob Shuler, Los Angeles housed 2,200 prostitutes who benefited from police protection in 1927;⁷⁸ AnnaMarie Kooistra suggests that if this estimate is correct, than more like 3,000 prostitutes operated in the city.⁷⁹ However, Shuler was known for making bold (and discriminatory) claims against the local authorities, which may have been motivated by his own political career. Comparatively, Kooistra formulated her own method to deduce the number of local sex workers from the 1920s and 1930s, which were 574 and 1404 respectively. Again, these numbers are unreliable due to her methodology: her formulation was based solely upon LAPD arrest records.⁸⁰ According to James McFarland Ervin, however, most Black women did not work for vice establishments, rather they worked on a more independent level. His rough estimates proposed that 150-200 Black and 268-300 white interracial sex workers operated just within the Black communities alone. Likewise, newspaper accounts suggested there were 500 houses of prostitution operating in 1927,⁸¹ and 200 locations a decade later.⁸² While local media routinely accused Central Avenue (read: the Black community) of “open vice” conditions,⁸³ a diverse group of sex workers—Black women being the minority—operated in the area, especially by the 1930s. Although this data informed the community’s criminalization and heightened police enforcement, it also complicates any determination of how many sex workers actually operated versus how many women were incriminated by association or prejudice.

From slavery throughout the early twentieth century, negative depictions of Black womanhood penetrated deep into the American Psyche. Fannie Barrier Williams, a Black female activist, noted the unshakable distinction between race as it related to gender in 1905:

“Man’s instinctive homage at the shrine of womanhood draws a line of color, which places her forever outside it’s mystic circle...The women of other races bask in the clear sunlight of man’s chivalry, admiration and even worship, while the colored woman abides in the shadow of his contempt, mistrust, or indifference.”⁸⁴

Beverly Guy-Sheftall collaborates that men and women, regardless of race, upheld such perceptions, although different individuals used these images for a variety of arguments and purposes.⁸⁵ One might speculate that James Macfarline Ervin subscribed to similar notions of a social hierarchy based on race and gender, which informed his interpretation of Black sex workers.



Figure 14. James Macfarline Ervin. Courtesy of Ervin’s grandson, Agin Shaheed.

James Macfarline Ervin was twenty-six-year-old African American who assimilated with the bourgeoisie in Los Angeles but also established ties to the city's underworld for academic purposes.⁸⁶ One chapter of Ervin's 1931 Sociology Master's thesis, "The Participation of the Negro in Los Angeles," addressed interracial prostitution as it existed in the Black community.⁸⁷ Ervin preserved the responses of three Black and five white sex workers that traced their personal histories. He centralized the prostitution chapter on the reasons each woman got involved in the sex trade and why they chose to cater to men of another race. Although Ervin's analysis of Black sex workers had flaws, he was a progressive intellectual in the sense that he let a marginalized group speak for themselves—decades before other social scientists valued such opinions. He must also be commended for his ability to transcend class lines with minimal detection. This becomes apparent in narratives he preserved. The last chapter of his thesis is one of the few remaining sources that provided a candid forum for stigmatized women's experiences otherwise fragmented in court transcripts and institution records.

Sex workers forged an intuitive understanding of the events in their life and how the environment affected their decisions when engaging in extramarital sex and interracial (commercialized) sex. They did so in the face of pervasive threats of rape and harassment from clients and law enforcement, while struggling to manage society's unrelenting antagonism for deviating from middle class standards of respectability and propriety. These excerpts insinuate all three Black women centralized their explanations around the threat of rape, albeit under very different circumstances. Although no one explicitly mentioned rape, gendered violence emerges as a key stimulus for how these women lived their lives. Upon first glance, interracial prostitution and the corresponding power dynamics of the time seemingly would have increased the likelihood of rape; however, there are some instances where women used sex work as a

vehicle to regain control over their bodies and sexuality. Her sense of strength, independence, and self-awareness shifted as she tried to minimize the scars from past violations. These characteristics generally received public disapproval and were treated as a threat to the patriarchy and white supremacy.⁸⁸ As a result, attributes such as coping abilities and perseverance were overlooked (if not demonized) in countless interactions.

Ervin's interpretation of the women and the conditions that led them to "the game" reflected both the flaws in his methodology and attitude toward each group of women. Since he led the white women to believe he could have been a potential client, socializing in their place of employment, they appeared to disclose more intimate details about their experience. The Black women he interviewed, however, worked out of private dwellings, complicating his ability to gather comparable data. Most importantly, Black sex workers probably censored themselves out of skepticism: Ervin could not be a client, and their conversations most likely occurred in public. Thus, these women had less privacy when revealing their stories. Most likely, brief explanations further validated Ervin's indifference, especially when his white interviewees appeared more willing to disclose elements from their past. This prevented him from sympathizing with his Black case studies to the same extent he was able to with his white ones.

Either "fast money" or employment discrimination prompted African American women to enter into interracial prostitution, according to Ervin. Direct quotations of sex workers, however, document their search for "good money" rather than "fast money."⁸⁹ The latter connotes deviance from traditional ways of earning money (read: criminality), whereas the former is driven by personal expectations (read: dignity). Darlene Clark Hine poses in her analysis of the "culture of dissemblance" that "negative images, and debilitating assumptions filled the space left empty due to inadequate and erroneous information about the true

contributions, capabilities, and identities of Black women.”⁹⁰ Mattie, Minnie, and Nell—the three Black women who informed Ervin’s conclusion—suggested that sex work was the only means of employment that offered a satisfactory compensation for their time and effort. The cost of living, unstable job market, and limited work possibilities ironically forced them into a socially stigmatized industry, for viable wages, but also for their psychological health.

In other words, past experiences with the local “legitimate” economy were dehumanizing. Ervin’s misinterpretation exemplifies how predispositions of racist stereotypes often replaced fact, validating Hine’s claim. The way in which Ervin distorted these women’s words parallels the criminalization process of African American women at the hands of law enforcement. Ervin marginalized their experiences the same way that officers reduced them to arrest statistics. They lacked agency, were greedy, and compromised the Black community’s reputation. Social constructs of womanhood, and the individuals to whom it applied, thus, skewed and complicated Ervin’s analysis of Angeleno sex workers who solicited interracially.

While society may have devalued Black women, refusal to internalize racial and gender inferiority, therefore, was a form of daily resistance—one familiar to Minnie, Mattie, and Nell. Sex work symbolized women’s constant search for employment that validated their humanity in spite of the backlash they received.

Mattie⁹¹

Ervin found that a relationship with “a white school teacher in elementary school in Los Angeles” acted as the catalyst behind the first interviewee’s decision to prostitute (105). A thorough examination behind the power dynamics of this relationship, however, indicates that Mattie experienced ongoing psychological abuse and internalized the ordeal as a rape victim. When Mattie was fourteen-years-old, she noted a particular teacher who “seemed to take a great

amount of interest” in her (105). Her lessons proved difficult for her and she noted her teacher’s commitment to tutoring shortly after they first met. Over the course of a year, the conversations shifted towards a more personal nature, and her teacher regularly conveyed “how good-looking” Mattie was and how he “thought the brown-girls brown-skin girls were the most beautiful of all” (105). Mattie initially remained skeptical of such comments since she felt “white people thought they were the best looking people of all” (106). The repetition of such compliments, however, eventually made her believe him. In other words, this man strategically manipulated the common insecurities young girls felt about their appearances and used them to earn Mattie’s confidence and trust.

Comments about her beauty progressed into the potential of marriage between them: “He had always wished to find some good looking Negro girl in school and watch her grow to young womanhood under his guidance, and that then if she could love him he would marry her and go away to live with her as he could not do so and still hold his job here in Los Angeles...” (106). These mind games proved extremely effective, as she concluded, “he made me think I was the girl that he had been waiting for all of these years” (106). He emphasized their forbidden attraction and described fantasies of eloping to keep their relationship hidden. It was as if he was trying to isolate Mattie from friends and family so he could prolong their clandestine meetings, make her more dependant on him, and eroticize their taboo romance. He exploited her perception of him so he could make inappropriate demands of her, such as inviting her to his house where they could “talk” “alone” (106). Mattie assumed he wanted to nurture their relationship through uncensored conversation, and she may have even desired physical affection to some extent. Nevertheless, her mindset was purely naïve when she agreed to meet him,

whereas her teacher had purely sexual expectations, judging by his need to take her outside the classroom where had to withhold his carnal desires.

After lying to her mother so she could go to his house, the teacher made demands of a progressively sexual nature, much like the process he underwent to gain her trust. It started off with how to walk, stand, and then kiss in a way that would “please him,” all of which, she believed “was the right thing to do” (106). Such thoughts reveal Mattie’s divergent subscription to mainstream values regarding intimate, premarital relationships. According to Cheryl Hicks, Mattie’s thought process exemplifies the complexity of working class respectability and morality that adopted “the gendered language and behavior of the dominant society” in some circumstances while some also forged their own standards based upon personal needs and desires.⁹² Amidst a seemingly mutual and affectionate relationship, Mattie debated the possibility of and rationale for transgressing sexual norms both in terms of interracial relationships and premarital sex. Initially, she was skeptical about the idea of a relationship with a white male, but through gradual encounters, she began to view him as an honest and trustworthy man (106). When the relationship took on a more physical nature, she again established her own ideas of what qualified as “respectable” behavior. While society typically reproved premarital sex and female expressions of sexuality, Mattie perhaps justified such actions based upon future expectations of marriage.⁹³ This particular experience illuminates how she fluctuated within and outside societal norms depending on her own values and beliefs and whether or not her standards could coexist with her desires. While the two had sex during this occasion, it is noteworthy that Mattie did not anticipate such events when she agreed to meet him at his house.

Although Mattie seemingly portrayed her advocacy for the relationship, she simultaneously internalized the experience, at least in hindsight, as sexual abuse. For example, she convinced herself that having sex was appropriate since the relationship was mutually affectionate at the time. Just because Mattie had sex did not mean that she desired it or even wholeheartedly consented. She recalled, “I let him have his way” (106). This statement captures both her reluctance and her teacher’s determination and forcefulness. If sex is consensual, however, both parties need to be equally in control over their emotions and environment. As law professor Catharine MacKinnon argues, “absence of force does not ensure the presence of that control.”⁹⁴ Mattie searched for a way to silence her teacher’s desperate sexual pleas and did what she believed was for the good of their relationship, despite her reservations before and disapproval afterward. The power dynamics at play under the circumstances constitutes Mattie’s experience as rape. Her abuser was an adult and her teacher. The pressure she felt to have sex partially resulted from her status as child and student. She perceived him as an authority figure that imparted knowledge because of his age and position, and she, in her youthful ignorance, could learn from his teachings, much like she had with her studies. Her gullibility may have clouded Mattie’s understanding of what demands were acceptable and which ones forfeited her control.

Most importantly, his gender boosted his authority and complicated her ability to refuse his advances: she was alone in his apartment, and no one knew where she was. Looming in the background may have been Mattie’s fear that if she did not have sex, he may have resorted to violence and possibly forced himself upon her anyway. As an adult male, Mattie’s teacher easily had the physical advantage, but he also had the cultural advantage as well. Contemporary Victorian gender norms would have taught Mattie that she should be passive and compliant to all

men to demonstrate her femininity. In the early stages of romance, such expectations could have ended the relationship, had she denied his pleas or seemed unruly. It is possible, therefore, she gave the impression of consent as “a survival strategy” or fear of pushing him away, despite how she truly felt about sex.⁹⁵ Perhaps, some combination of these fears, coupled with psychological manipulation, and youthful optimism, and maybe even pleasure or excitement may have influenced her decision to sustain these visits for a several weeks (106). Although she may not have classified her experience as “rape,” Mattie knew she had been gravely wronged; labels were unnecessary, and perhaps would cause even more pain, so she just tried desperately to move forward.

Because Mattie’s rape occurred at the hands of a man with whom she “shared at least an illusion of mutuality,” her abuse most likely was more traumatizing, especially when their liaisons resulted in pregnancy, abortion, and abandonment.⁹⁶ For her white teacher, the pregnancy symbolized the consequences of their relationship if it went public: his occupation, her age, and their races would have caused an uproar throughout Los Angeles. For Mattie, the pregnancy represented the fickleness of their relationship and confirmed his true identity as a defiler, if not rapist. After he “corrected” the problem by taking Mattie to “a white doctor friend of his” for a dangerous (and illegal) abortion, her teacher broke off any and all contact (106). Regardless whether or not the teacher had feelings for Mattie or merely used her, he ultimately rejected her at a time when she needed him most: his selfishness prevailed and she was left alone with her confusion and betrayal. He represented nothing more than empty promises and dashed hopes.

Barbara Omolade noted that many women refrained from addressing sexual abuse by white men, “even within their own families” due to the long history of sexual offenses

committed against Black women.⁹⁷ Mattie felt completely isolated and could not even confide in her mother for support (106). Most likely, her mother would have thwarted their inappropriate relationship—familiar with the potential dangers of being with an older, white, male elementary school teacher who should have used his classroom to educate rather than seduce—to protect her daughter from a society that devalued her race and gender and privileged those of her violator. Had Mattie informed her mother, most likely it would have reduced Mattie’s susceptibility to future exposure to gendered violence.⁹⁸ Instead, Mattie was probably ashamed about deceiving her mother and feared her reaction (106). Her silence, therefore, could have been an attempt to save both her mother from knowing she lost her virginity, especially to an older, white male and dually functioned as a way to protect her abuser, for whom she may have still had feelings. Without a doubt, the guilt, responsibility, and shame Mattie felt in her youth probably derived from the notion that she brought this hardship upon herself. After the relationship abruptly ended, she most likely began viewing what happened in terms of rape as she sought through her emotional shambles, and perhaps she learned racial equality was not something that white society could reconcile; these were lies she could no longer hear.

If the ordeal had become public, either through hearsay or a trial, race would have played a significant factor in determining responsibility and innocence. Mattie probably foresaw the misappropriation of blackness and whiteness when making her decision to keep silent, believing others might deem her the instigator of the relationship. Cheryl Hicks noted that many Black working class women in early twentieth century New York knew that allegations of rape and sexual abuse usually questioned the victim’s “credibility,” rather than interrogating the abuser.⁹⁹ When exhibited for public scrutiny, “the injury of rape lies in the meaning of the act to its victims, but the standard for its criminality lies in the meaning of the same act to the

assailants.”¹⁰⁰ Most likely, white Angelenos and mainstream media would have employed racial stereotypes to argue the teacher’s innocence. It is possible that her teacher would have emerged as the committed (white) “professional,” beguiled by the young (Black) “seductress.” Such myths would have diverted attention from the teacher’s unethical behavior, professional and otherwise. Since Black women fell outside the benefits of “white womanhood,” white males, just like Mattie’s teacher, seldom faced any punishment for the sexual violations they committed, regardless of location and public awareness—a consequence both rooted in and inextricably linked to the institution of slavery. Such acts ensured that white males retained power and privilege over African Americans generally and Black women specifically by depriving them of the rights to their body.¹⁰¹ Essentially, Mattie probably felt her options for recourse, legal and political, were either non-existent or inadequate, if not entirely counterproductive.¹⁰² Therefore, she opted to “let the whole affair go” rather than having her sexuality and person publically exposed and interrogated. Unfortunately, the only way Mattie believed she could protect herself was through silence—a silence that made her go “from bad to worse after that” (106).

While Los Angeles may have attracted African American migrants with the promise of leaving racial inequality in the South, including the threat of sexual abuse and access to integrated public education,¹⁰³ Mattie’s narrative illustrates that similar threats existed in Los Angeles and such manifestations, even in the public school system, had life-changing consequences for the victims. Since her victimization began in a school setting, it probably negatively altered her perception of education, if the ethno-racial discrimination in teaching practices did not already tarnish her perception. According to historian Mark Wild, Angeleno teachers “augmented the ethno-racial stratification of vocational and remedial education with less formal methods of discrimination” to discourage educational success for students outside

racial privilege and born outside the United States.¹⁰⁴ Many immigrant students and students of color knew that a high school degree seldom changed their job perspectives, so many chose to drop out before graduation.¹⁰⁵ At the age of fifteen, work became a viable alternative to school and enabled Mattie to get away from the teacher who took advantage of her and the others who stratified racial and ethnic difference in the classroom. Working conditions also proved equally demeaning, as Mattie found, and, likewise, offered no incentive. After this series of disappointments, Mattie “turned to the game [prostitution]” (106), forever changed by the habitual violations that estranged her from her previous life. Mattie underwent a transformation at the hands of her rapist; she could no longer salvage her youthful ideals and spent the next four years—if not longer—trying to restore her identity and the rights to her body. Sex work was the only outlet to reconstruct herself after the trauma.

She found several advantages to prostitution as an occupation—most notably the economic benefits. Her ability to make “good money” from white clients had both financial and political incentive for choosing this demographic: it acted as a means for revenge. Her customers embodied various manifestations of her former abuser: “...since a white son...started me off this way [sic] I would make all white men pay and pay and pay...” (106). Mattie responded to “the limited agency available” to her and found her own way “to secure small levels of autonomy” in her daily life. One might even propose Mattie’s entrance into prostitution, or deviance, can be interpreted as a form of resistance.¹⁰⁶ While she knew the violations committed against her could never avenge her loss, determining where and with whom she had sex afforded her some semblance of control over her body and sexuality. Thus, she found her own way to overcome her former sexual vulnerability, albeit through non-conventional standards. Kali Gross also proposed that some prostitutes used their work as a “transformative

vehicle,” in which signified attempts to “dismantle sex as a potential instrument of violation.” Gross further explained that while prostitution enabled economic survival, it also “afforded black women agency and power over those areas that traditionally marked their powerlessness.”¹⁰⁷ The irony that Mattie had to resort to sex work to take control of her sexuality speaks to the lack of alternative forums where such protection was possible: her past victimization left her alone and powerless, whereas now she chose who had access to her body. Or, perhaps, she felt that if she deconsecrated sex, subsequent intimacy would be meaningless, rendering her immune to male deception and exploitation.

It took ownership of a deviant status for her to grapple with notions of where and how she exercised sexual empowerment. Mattie’s demonstration of the politics of resistance and the psychological depersonalization of sex signifies both her frustration with a society founded on her gendered and racial subjugation and her attempt to reassert power through the same corporal means in which it was taken from her.¹⁰⁸ She measured her success materialistically: “I haven’t made out bad either...I’ve got a nice car, fine clothes, and I get what I want” (106). For Mattie, sexual commodification enabled her to partake in universally recognized indications of affluence through a non-normative method. While her occupation enabled her mobility and economic survival, it also deteriorated possibilities for establishing other intimate relationships. As a sex worker, Mattie did not have to risk the probability of being abandoned by someone for whom she cared. She disassociated intimacy between her and her clients: she exploited men the same way she had been in the past. Her independence and sense of power outweighed and masked the need to establish intimate connections with strangers. In this sense, Mattie did take control of her identity and body; however, she may have lost her ability and desire to seek out healthy relationships in the process. Mattie changed her entire life trying to cope with the lasting impact

of rape through the only way she knew how: to learn from the abusers and treat sex as something meaningless and disposable.

Minnie¹⁰⁹

The second interviewee, Minnie, did not identify one specific instance that determined her decision to prostitute. This statement illuminates the complexity of the pathways leading to the sex trade and possibly the fluidity of sexual ideologies. What instigated her “decision,” however, was the extreme limitations and disappointment she encountered in the formal economy. She voiced her discontent about prostitution as “the only way” to earn “good money” (107). One may surmise that Minnie initially attempted to find work in the formal economy but was unable to find a satisfying and viable position. Employment open to Black women, on a national level, was generally restricted to domestic service. Such work required tedious hours and grueling physical—and at times, demeaning—labor for meager wages.¹¹⁰ Often domestic service required a “live-in” commitment, which interrupted social activities and prevented women from living with their own families. While racial covenants on housing deeds prohibited African Americans from living in certain sections of Los Angeles, servants could live in these locations so long as they resided as an employee for a white family.¹¹¹ Also, subjection to the sexual harassment of employers was a familiar but rarely discussed reality. Many mothers had written letters to employment agencies, noted Fannie Barrier Williams, to find work that would “save them from [the] dishonor and degradation” of being a servant in white homes, subject to the advances of men in the household.¹¹²

In Los Angeles specifically, sexual harassment was such a common phenomenon for domestic servants that some Black women assumed these positions specifically to blackmail their bosses. They learned about which men made inappropriate suggestions from first-hand

accounts of former servants. Afterward they took up work for his household and waited until they could capitalize off of his lust.¹¹³ Ninety percent of Black women worked in “scattered domestic service positions” amidst such threats of sexual harassment. Many white Angelenos specifically requested Black women to fill servant positions, according to the phone calls employment agencies received.¹¹⁴ Due to the taxing and restrictive working conditions of service positions, therefore, some women may have sought occupations that provided greater freedom and satisfactory wages. When possible, many women changed occupations to work as laundresses for financial and personal reasons, such as independence and security.¹¹⁵ Some prostituted for supplemental income in times of extreme desperation. Depending on a woman’s circumstances, occasional prostitution could eventually become a primary occupation if other job opportunities dwindled or if economic (or other) prospects from sex work materialized.¹¹⁶ The latter scenario most likely represented Minnie’s pathway into prostitution since she did not recollect a definitive point of entry, and she expressed her frustration with other kinds of employment. For her, prostitution remained lucrative even amidst the Depression, but the psychological toll nullified any positive associations for Minnie.

Minnie’s interview illuminated her personal disapproval of resorting to prostitution, which served as a reflection of her personal values rooted in mainstream sexual ideologies. She implied that her financial needs, however, defeated her ability to adhere to such beliefs.¹¹⁷ She articulated these feelings clearly: “I don’t know anything else to do...When I have contacts with the mens it nearly kills me. Nobody knows what we poor girls have to suffer” (107). One might speculate that she viewed prostitution as degrading or even humiliating work. She felt that selling her body was a direct violation of her personal standards of propriety and respectability she had set for herself, but also for her female counterparts who were also subject to the demands

of men. Her contempt for sex work may have been aggravated by performing sex acts for white clients who subscribed to myths of African American sexuality. In other urban settings, for example, Kevin Mumford asserted that Black sex workers “performed the kinds of sexual services that were deemed more degenerate, most immoral, [and] the least ‘domestic’.”¹¹⁸ Heather Miller elaborates on the specific behaviors of prostitutes in her doctoral dissertation, referencing acts of fellatio, anal intercourse, homosexual behavior, incest, and servicing clients in front of family members, amongst others.¹¹⁹ Some of the white women Ervin interviewed noted the intolerable conduct of white men, which may have resembled Minnie’s disgust. One white sex worker emphasized that white men were “the meanest brutes on earth” and treated women as subhuman; two of white sex workers even disassociated entirely from all white men after habitual mistreatment (95-104). Perhaps both the violation of Minnie’s morals and the client’s demands contributed simultaneously to her disdain. Overall, her occupation tainted her opinion of herself and how society viewed her. The immoral and criminal stigmas that plagued her most likely barred her from the few arenas of comfort and support in the community.

Despite her obvious psychological conflict, Minnie found methods to facilitate her earnings. Her profits, however, may have come at an additional burden. She mentioned the disparity of Black men where she lived, and by extension, worked. She therefore only had the option of offering services to either Mexican or white men. Opting for white clients, she explained her rationale: “They gives you your money without any trouble” (107). While historically white men may have preyed on Black women for sexual gratification, Black women sometimes similarly exploited white males. In Minnie’s case, her strategy promised the easiest exchange possible and produced the greatest financial benefits: she could rely on payment for her services and rarely had any controversy over the money owed to her. In other words, white

males symbolized compliance. Thus, she created her own way to reduce the time and effort spent in the work she despised.

Yet the fact that Minnie remained close to her home possibly signified her desperate attempt to find protection from the threat of rape within the sex trade; these circumstances simultaneously may have deprived her of a sense of domestic security. Rather than working in a different neighborhood, away from her friends and family, her sexual vulnerability and, one may infer, her past sexual assaults, robbed her of her former expressions of mobility and freedom. The world in which she lived and found comfort dwindled as the fear of (repeat) violations gradually governed her life, confining her to the small space where her private life and occupation converged.¹²⁰ Women like Minnie not only had to give up access to their bodies, but were often forced to let their clients into their private dwellings as well. Ervin noted that the majority of Black sex workers took clients “directly to her home, or room as the case be” (87). Thus, if Minnie had been one of the women that substantiated Ervin’s claim, the privacy and security of her residence transformed into the location that caused her despair. She had no place to escape her occupation or the pain it caused.

While in a constant state of physical danger, Minnie recognized the state of total desperation that coerced her into prostitution had destroyed any possibility of claiming her body and sexuality for herself. Minnie admitted, “I don’t think that I’ll last long at this game...” Prostitution invalidated her life to the extent that depression overwhelmed her. She continued, “I would just as soon be dead as living, there ain’t no difference” (107). Despite her efforts to uphold middle class values, Minnie probably understood that her experiences were a continuation of the dispossession of the Black female body as a means to perpetuate inequality. Her mental anguish caused a complete shift in her identity—one from which she tragically may

never have recovered. She alluded to suicidal tendencies; she found nothing to live for that could rectify her past abuse nor had she found a group to console her misery, if not rescue her from her self-destructive occupation. Between the loss of body her body and extreme social alienation, Minnie could not return to the person she had once been—too much had happened to forget—nor did she foresee any improvement for her future. Such a deep depression no doubt reflected the habitual abuse she endured and also illuminated the progressive deterioration of sexual exploitation. Meaningful relationships could no longer exist, and the only relationships that she could maintain were with women who shared her unspeakable hardship. Sex work was not something that she voluntarily chose, rather it existed as her only means of survival. Women like Minnie and the other “poor girls” extracted “value from the only thing the society [sic] allowed them to sell.” Darlene Clark Hine proposed that such circumstances, the socially constructed, intersecting oppressions that coerced Black women into prostitution, could only be understood as “Rape.”¹²¹

Nell

Nell, the third interviewee, demonstrated her skepticism about divulging intimate information with Ervin. Her depiction, thus, appeared guarded but still contained invaluable information about her experiences and about her interviewer. Well aware that he was not going to be a customer, since she only solicited white men, Ervin’s inquiries probably alarmed her and warned her that he most likely had an anterior motive. Branching off Hine’s “culture of dissemblance,” or the “behavior and attitudes of Black women that created the appearance of openness and disclosure but actually shielded the truth of their inner lives and selves from their oppressors,” Nell served as a testament to this convention, albeit not the traditional candidate.¹²² She opened with, “Well, I don’t know what you want to know all this d--- stuff about me...I

han't got no history" (107). Ervin may have accepted the superficiality of her responses, failing to comprehend the significance underlying her brevity—as both a strategy and test to his character. In reality, her statements most likely saved her from having to discuss personal experiences with a stranger—one whom would potentially misinterpret her, her history, and her intent. Nell also knew that Ervin could not be one of her clients so she had to evaluate his rationale, buying her time to decide whether or not he was worthy of the truth. Most likely, she quickly sensed Ervin's hostile disposition towards migrants. He believed newcomers displaced the accomplishments of the early Black settlers in Los Angeles (14), deprived locals of the more prestigious jobs (23), and were attracted to the lifestyles that fostered notions of "social pathology" before they could achieve "a normal social participation" (65). Thus, Ervin himself migrated from Maryland and found a community that accepted and praised his middle class values, while Nell, on the other hand, was treated as a blemish on society. Many established Angelenos greeted Black newcomers with varying degrees of hostility and prejudice, as Ervin did. Nell probably determined Ervin should not have the privilege of knowing her story. Sharing it with him would have an insignificant impact on her life—she had nothing to prove to him—and learning about her would hardly change his opinion towards Black sex workers and/or migrants. For him, she would just become another migrant who exacerbated racial inequality in the city.

Yet despite her lack of history, she chose to identify herself as "plain hard Nell from Louisville" at the end of their conversation (107). By circling back to her status a migrant, she implied there was a great more to her narrative; however, her audience was not deserving of an explanation behind her emersion in the sex trade. She travelled across the country when migration was costly and difficult. Her sexuality, therefore, afforded her the means of national

mobility. It is likely that she never settled because every location she visited failed to meet her standard of living, both in terms of the people she met and the opportunities available to her. Darlene Clark Hine proposed, “the combined influence of rape (or the threat of rape), domestic violence, and economic oppression is key to understanding the hidden motivations informing major social protest and migratory movements in Afro-American history.”¹²³ Nell was a testament to Hine’s claim. Leaving the South, however, did not guarantee protection from gendered violence, as Nell’s demeanor conveys. Her constant disappointment led her to Los Angeles, however she still encountered the same hardship. The fact that she still identified with Kentucky suggests that throughout her travels, she never found a place worthy of calling home since her initial move. She left with hopes of a better life and the discrimination, stigmatization, and alienation she encountered left her longing for her former home, or possibly her youthful innocence before the world left its mark on her. She offered limited information, replying, “I am just plain who I am... You know what my game is... well that is just what I is and I don’t give a d--- who knows... You can tell all the S----- that for me” (107). Most likely her background contained reoccurring situations of abuse, neglect, abandonment, and/or mistreatment, which compelled her to keep traveling.¹²⁴ To further protect herself from any further damage, especially rape and the threat of it, she adopted a tough façade to prevent future violations. Her surface identity also deterred new relationships from forming, which was probably a self-defense mechanism; if she allowed strangers in her life, pain would be the only result and relocation her only means of escape.

In addition to physical and emotional protection, Nell’s excerpt revealed the likelihood that she assumed a psychological defense as well. Sex workers achieved a healthier psychological state when they dispelled society’s condemnation and relied on themselves to

define their identity. During this process, women realized that their survival and personal understanding of their circumstances took precedence over what outsiders devised about them.¹²⁵ During this struggle, women had to form an autonomous identity and understanding of the world, seemingly removed from the influence of others, even though interpersonal interactions created the need for such an identity reevaluation.¹²⁶ Nell's statements perhaps reveal former encounters when others tried to impose labels and definitions upon her when they could never fully comprehend her past realities. Rather than accept judgment from others, Nell constructed her own identity and repelled any other hostile interpretations. While she could not entirely escape stigmatization, she established her own understanding and worth of her work, which cast off negative associations in the process.¹²⁷ Like Minnie, Nell targeted white males as a business strategy to reap the largest profits. Her claim that white men "weren't cheap" compared to her past experiences with Black clients signified her success with charging white men higher prices for the same services. Nell valued her sexuality and demanded that her clients pay an amount deserving access to her body rather than allowing it to be undervalued and exploited. Her initial prerogative towards Black males implied her reluctance towards interracial prostitution, but she ultimately resorted to it for financial reasons, and by extension, to set a price that affirmed her worth. Anything below these standards devalued her sexuality and status as a Black woman, and therefore, switching clients was less damaging than lowering her opinion of herself.

Nell's absence of fear and judgment from Ervin—and by extension, men and the established local Black community more generally—signified her control over her interactions with potential clients. Interestingly enough, she generated a persona through embracing the role of a sex worker. Her involvement in the "game" heavily influenced her self-determined identity, at least at this point in her life (107). She could then persevere without being ashamed of her

work and sexuality. Society, however, valued women heavily based on their morality. Such identification, therefore, pushed Nell further from finding help and support in traditional venues, like government aid, social organizations, and religious institutions. However, this may have enabled her freedom to explore other aspects of her life that society would also frown upon, such as sex and leisure. Perhaps she even took pride in her sexual performance or in her business prowess for attracting clientele, as she incorporated her ability to provide “keen time” into a conversation with a man, other than a potential client (107). While she never implied her own sexuality, if she knew what pleased her clients and essentially understood men’s sexual preferences, then she most likely had the opportunity during this process to explore pleasure and desire on her own terms as well. Prostitution thus, may have presented the opportunity to explore her own sexuality rather than making her body a commodity solely for the benefit of her clients. In spite of the numerous dangers sex workers faced, Nell found some space to forge her autonomy, self-worth, and sexuality in the face of hostile outsiders and adopt methods that made her position more tolerable and self-determined.

Sex Work and Police Protection

If a sex worker wanted to retain police protection, one almost exclusively had to work under the supervision of a second party or supervisor—and thus, not only cater to the sexual demands of their clients, but also appease the wishes of their employers. At least some African American women in Los Angeles chose to work under syndicate operators instead of more solitary methods such as streetwalking or working out of privately owned (or rented) dwellings. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Ruth Bolanger advertised that her business provided “more fun and good healthy amusement than you would find in a day’s walk” at the hands of her biracial, female staff (Octoroons).¹²⁸ Over the next four decades, other businesses offered Black

sex workers similar positions like those owned by L. C. McKay and Lee Francis.¹²⁹ African American women faced a similar discrimination within the underground economy, as they did within formal employment. Some establishments refused hire them based on the belief that they would earn less money due to the social devaluation of Black women; others feared that interracial interaction would draw more unwanted attention from the public or police.¹³⁰ Thus, smaller numbers of Black women could rely on syndicate establishments for employment.

Although police and sex workers rarely negotiated protection directly, there were exceptions. In 1919, for example, a sex worker could allegedly purchase police protection for fifty dollars a month. Extending this offer to several women could have supplemented the meager wages given by the department.¹³¹ Since the average police officer throughout the 1930s earned less than \$200 per month,¹³² some individuals surrendered to the temptation. Overtime, however, the profits from a few individuals may not have been worth the risk. Despite that working independently with sex workers would maximize personal profits, these transactions also made it easier to hold the officer accountable and thus, remove him from the force. A patrolman, as an entry-level position, was easily replaced and could not guarantee sex workers protection from their colleagues or superiors. By the following decade, securing police protection required significant payouts and acquaintances with higher-ranking police officers, like those on the vice squad.

In addition, independent vice protection would require close contact with the police. Black sex workers may have avoided any officer fearing his reaction. Most victims of police lawlessness and brutality were poor and people of color. Stories of wrongful arrests, houses raided without warrants, assault victims suffering in jail without medical attention, and deaths directly attributed to gang beatings by officers were plentiful in the Black community.¹³³ The

Eagle editors, for example, enraged at the assassination of a Black Angeleno, San Faulkner, at the hands of the LAPD, coupled with Chief Davis' refusal to remove the offending officers, noted at least thirty years of "hostility on the part of Colored people toward police officers." Such sentiments arose because it became commonplace for officers to "brutally beat[sic.] members of our group needlessly in making arrests" and because officers had become "intoxicated with the habit of breaking into people's houses and hell dozing and terrifying them."¹³⁴ Without a doubt, most African Americans were weary of confiding in an officer for any reason, as he would be just as likely to lash out as he would be to work with them. Seeking police alliances most likely begot more danger than security for any prostitute, but racism in the LAPD accentuated these risks for Black sex workers.

Racial Comparisons Between Ervin's Case Studies

Ervin noted that police enforcement (and lack thereof) affected Black and white sex workers differently. On one hand, white sex workers "must protect themselves from the public opinion and wrath of their own people, as well as from the white police who might become aware of their game—except in those cases where the police are paid..."¹³⁵ On the other hand, Black sex workers only preoccupation derived from encounters with "police agents," since she never experienced "any molestation from her own group."¹³⁶ Thus, white women evaded arrests, based on racial privilege, since police might encounter backlash from their superiors; whereas Black women made up for the arrest disparity that extortion caused.

Not only did Ervin's interpretation of social dangers illuminate the bias in police enforcement, it suggested interracial prostitution had different perceptions for white and Black Angelenos. Ervin implied that the former deemed it unmentionable, while the latter had varying opinions. Some could relate to the economic desperation that drove them into the sex trade,

while many others, including Ervin, condemned them. Ervin believed all sex workers were responsible for stigmatizing the Black community to varying degrees. While white sex workers “robbed [Black men] of their earnings” and “exploit[ed] him upon the appeal of her ‘whiteness,’” Black sex workers seduced “white men of low character” from all over the city to commit immoral acts in the Black business district. Thus, Ervin proposed that the impact interracial prostitution had on the neighborhood manifested differently depending on a sex worker’s race. For example, white sex workers destroyed families because “wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters” witnessed their male family members frivolously pursue commercial sex. On the other hand, Black sex workers lured outsiders to their homes that compromised “the temper and decency of the self-respecting community life.”¹³⁷ Unfortunately, the bane of the community’s reputation fell upon sex workers rather than the racist and sexist institutions that relegated women into prostitution.

Noteworthy was Ervin’s difficulty locating Black sex workers to interview, believing their business approach was “not nearly so well organized” (86). However, most women probably preferred this “disorganization” to ensure the most independence. They would not have to split their profits, they freed themselves from supervision, and they worked on their own accord, in terms of location, clientele and frequency. Unfortunately, these freedoms also sacrificed some degree of protection from clients and police that their white counterparts received by working at formal business establishments. This independent approach deterred women from forming relationships with other females who shared their experiences, eliminating any forum for discussion and support. Therefore, Black women who survived on interracial prostitution, at least those Ervin interviewed, learned to be entirely self-sufficient, but

simultaneously may have internalized the threat of rape on a seemingly deeper level than their white counterparts.

When comparing the Black and white sex workers interviewed by Ervin, race appears to have had a critical significance in how women perceived and responded to gendered violence. While these themes existed in the accounts of the five white women, racial privilege, at times, offered some degree of protection from sexual assault or at least minimized the apprehension of such fears. At times, white women mentioned the relationships with men whom they depended on entirely for survival; others looked forward to eventually entering relationships where they could resume the role of “respectable” womanhood and leave their days of prostitution behind them. Anonymity also reduced their preoccupation with rape: they did not work in the neighborhoods they lived nor were there many white residents in diverse locations in which they worked. Therefore, no one had to know about her occupation. Whereas police-enforced segregation in the city relegated Black women to working in their own neighborhoods, and they often worked directly out of their homes, according to Ervin (87). Never being able to separate work and home life ruined any chance for privacy or escape under such conditions. Also one white woman expressed her greatest fear as exposure of her involvement in interracial prostitution, while she considered prostitution as an acceptable part of her past. Therefore, this woman’s whiteness afforded her an air of superiority that transcended the stigma of prostitution but having interracial intercourse in her estimation appeared to be the equivalent of social death.

Without a doubt, some Black women felt the same disgust about interracial prostitution. Since Ervin believed Black Sex workers’ only motivation was economic (but not in the victimized sense that exculpated white sex workers), he never referenced this possibility.¹³⁸ On the contrary, a police officer expressed that many Black woman retained direct orders from their

“bosses,” forcing them to “deal strictly with the white trash that comes into the district” to optimize their profits a few years later.¹³⁹ If an officer viewed these white customers as “trash,” the women who slept with them to survive probably had even lower opinions. Perhaps they even suffered greater criticism, either from others or internally, due to the history of white men’s violations committed against Black women. While some learned to manage these painful emotions, others refused. Therefore, some women turned to badger crimes to prevent white males from accessing their bodies.

Black Badgers



Figure 15. *Los Angeles Times*’ depiction of Badgers in “Alley Rats Defy Street Traps,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1919.

Black badgers individually defied stereotypes of hypersexuality by not allowing their targets (typically white males) to sexually exploit them. Rather, they demonstrated their agency by inverting control in these situations through exploiting their exploiters. Thus, badgers “transformed female victimization into offensive tactical maneuvers.”¹⁴⁰ In essence, Black

badgers complicated the white patriarchy on a micro level. “Alley workers,” or a specific type of badger, pulled men aside and gave the impression that sex would ensue. The woman, however, would feign seeing a police officer (88-9). Preceding their flight in opposite directions to avoid getting “caught,” badgers utilized the chaos to remove her target’s wallet before he noticed. Essentially, these women played on white males’ beliefs about African American sexuality, and ultimately, proved that they did not want sex. Rather they demonstrated their ability to capitalize off the ignorance of racism. The targets of badger crimes were forced to reevaluate their prejudiced assumptions about Black females’ sexuality.

A select few exploited the criminality of prostitution and the immorality of sexual desire to escape legal intervention and potentially earn significant profits.¹⁴¹ Badgers typically tried to avoid violence. In doing so, the crimes were minor offenses and reduced the likelihood of physical harm whenever possible. Categorized as petty theft (rather than assault), these women’s fines were reduced and the severity of the offense lessened in the eyes of police and court officials. In addition, these women understood that their victims already were guilty of a misdemeanor—procuring a prostitute, although police rarely punished men for this crime. By taking advantage of the compromised character of their targets, the court would be less likely to pursue a case in favor of a person who engaged in “immoral behavior.” Therefore, badgers used such circumstances to reduce the possibility of legal repercussions. Such endeavors purportedly made \$20,000 per month since 90 percent of their targets accepted the “financial loss” due to their reluctance to report the circumstances to the police.¹⁴² Black badgers were aware of white male insecurities towards interracial relationships, despite their contradictory behavior, and thus, used this hypocrisy to their advantage.

Tragically, transcendence into a life of “crime” held greater opportunities than presented in past experiences with legitimate economy.¹⁴³ During these manifestations of personal protests, sex workers and women affiliated with the sex trade (either economically or by the police) suffered from discrimination in the criminal justice system, stigmatized labels, social deprecation, (the threat of) gender violence, and economic exclusion. Over the second half of the twentieth century, mainstream society misappropriated these individuals—their struggles and reactions to systemic oppression—and used them to both validate notions of racialized crime and perpetuate inequality. These individuals may have predicted deliberate manipulations of their commitment to survival and/or social ascendance; however, racist and sexist institutions inhibited other alternatives for survival.

ACTIVISTS AND THE MEDIA

One’s race influenced his or her social preoccupations to some extent. Successful political change depended on gaining the support of the white majority. Most often, racism interfered with white Angelenos’ ability to sympathize with the plight of African Americans. White reformers instigated quarantined vice to benefit their own communities. They also targeted the syndicate and neglected the exploited individuals at the bottom of the informal economy. Similarly, the Black bourgeoisie had to strategically select which battles to undertake to their own advantage. They often had to settle for taking on struggles that mainstream society could only view as a direct violation of justice. Many Black middle class activists had to refrain from helping anyone whose character did not espouse middle class values. Thus, female migrants took priority over women in the sex trade. Many believed that sex workers were a lost cause and could not assimilate into the formal economy after being exposed to the underworld. This decision was based upon hopeful outcomes that women never had to enter the sex trade out

of social and economic alienation. Any other causes could incite mainstream criticism that utilized racist stereotypes to promote segregation. Thus, the bourgeoisie increasingly undertook causes that mirrored the practices of white activism to optimize support and progress.

All Angelenos condemned the LAPD for corruption, but mainstream media and the Black press differed in terms of police skepticism and crime regulation. African Americans' frustrations occurred daily: they were surrounded by police malfeasance in both their professional and personal lives. Complaints seldom brought change within the police department. Mainstream media likewise thrived on addressing police corruption but the content reveals that editors were just as likely to critique government agents as they were to reinforce the racial criminalization generated by these same individuals. Countless articles stressed geographical and racialized crime around Central Avenue, and depictions of badger crimes also impressed notions of Black female criminality. Such content was taken directly from the police department without further investigation.

Reform in Black and White

Newspaper accounts regularly berated LAPD practices during the Reform Era. Local media commented on the LAPD's lenient enforcement of vice crime well before the twentieth century. Prostitution occurred "under the very eyes of the officers," yet some months the police documented as few as one arrest for the entire city.¹⁴⁴ Editorials constantly criticized methods of policing and noted vice enforcement occurred for "political effect only,"¹⁴⁵ since action only coincided with local elections. Such articles announced the need for public intervention, and some Protestant reformers rallied to suppress vice by early 1900.¹⁴⁶ These reformers were only successful in shutting down the most visible evidence of prostitution, known as cribs. Cribs were six by ten feet rooms with one door and very little furniture used solely for commercial sex.

They were rented out by the month, often shared by multiple women who worked in shifts.¹⁴⁷

Even after the cribs disappeared, the industry adapted to legal and political changes and took new forms throughout Los Angeles.



Figure 16. “‘Crib District’ in Los Angeles’ Chinatown,” photograph, 1891, Los Angeles Public Library Images (Online Database), no. 00033979.

White society’s decision to contain the sex trade within poor communities at the turn of the twentieth century dramatically influenced neighborhoods that housed the greatest number of minorities. Circumscribing vice appeased the majority, as most believed total eradication was impossible to enforce. As long as prostitution stayed within the “undesirable” communities, the sex trade remained tolerable. Geographical restrictions limited the exposure of sex workers from affluent white residential and commercial areas. Opinion columns in the *Los Angeles Times* expressed concerns that eliminating “safe havens” would result in an uncontrollable, citywide problem:

Now then, how absurd is praying and singing, with talk that does nothing but rouse the emotions, or the adoption of city ordinances that drive these women from one part of the city to another, and scatters the evil where it will do ten times the injury to society that it does when concentrated.¹⁴⁸

Prostitution kept within a designated area allegedly proved less harmful to society. In actuality, such circumscriptions reinforced morality of the white elite, while people of color dealt with the consequences imposed upon their own neighborhoods.

On occasion, white and Black activists came together for a united cause. Some Black and white female reformers sought to correct the negative depictions of Black womanhood for the sake of society as a whole. For many white women, contributions to such projects were easily abandoned when hardships arose: most lacked the personal investment to keep them committed, and racial privilege eliminated any personal consequences for failure.¹⁴⁹

Simultaneously, Black women foresaw the potential shortcomings if white women acted on Black women's behalf. Rather than allow their prediction to materialize, African American clubwomen spearheaded political activism in urban centers across the nation to ensure that the particular needs of Black women would not only be addressed but drive the agendas of each organization.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, Black migrant women retained far more assistance and greater resources than self-proclaimed prostitutes, especially in large urban centers like Chicago and New York. Yet such undertakings existed only by the complete devotion of their Black female benefactors. Los Angeles housed similar efforts to aid Black women, including "wayward" youths, while they adapted to the city.

The Sojourner Truth Club, founded in 1904, originally was a cultural organization designed by members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, financially supported by Black and white Angelenos. Inspired by notions of racial uplift, Margaret Scott (Figure 2), president of STC in 1913, suggested single Black working women needed a homelike

environment, and by extension, guidance, while they explored the unfamiliar terrain of Los Angeles.¹⁵¹ Twenty-four Black and white female charter members supported the idea and pooled their resources to construct a two-story home on East Adams Boulevard the following year, named the Sojourner Truth Industrial Home.¹⁵² This was the first home of its kind in California entirely operated by women of color—an attribute extending throughout the first half of the century.¹⁵³ All members contributed weekly dues toward operation and maintenance, but some devoted their whole lives to helping women in need, including constant commitment to the residents by those who cohabited as matrons.¹⁵⁴ The environment offered “loving care and protection while working away from home in a strange city,” and provided single women and mothers affordable housing and occupational training to combat the desperate circumstances that often led women to prostitution.¹⁵⁵ STIH was considered a “pioneer of welfare work in the city” when alternative social agencies and organizations geared towards aiding Black women did not yet exist.¹⁵⁶ The hundreds of women who filtered through this organization built lasting relationships, gained employment skills, and left the home with greater confidence and a reaffirmed sense of independence.¹⁵⁷



Margaret Johnson Scott

Figure 17. “Margaret Johnson Scott [Clubwoman],” in “Race, Pride, and Progress Sparked their Efforts,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, February 22, 2001.

The Sojourner Truth Industrial Home struggled at times to meet the particular needs of their residents, and often spatial and/or financial constraints limited the number of residents. When the building was constructed in 1914, for example, it had room to accommodate approximately twenty women.¹⁵⁸ In 1920, nineteen women lived in the home, ranging from seventeen to fifty-five years of age.¹⁵⁹ Only ten years later and two years into the Great Depression, the shelter only housed eight women, the youngest of whom was twenty-three.¹⁶⁰ Due to extreme financial difficulties, the property that was owned and mortgage-free in 1920 no longer belonged to the Sojourner Truth Industrial Club executives. Ten years later, the residents rented the building in order to stay open.¹⁶¹ Further, the organization decided to limit the age of children who were allowed to stay with their mothers as they received help from the organization. This decision ensured that the club would remain true to its original goal of helping single, migrant women. While the rules prohibited children twelve years of age from living in the home,¹⁶² the 1920 census showed that they did make exceptions: two siblings, seven- and thirteen-years-old, lived there with their mother.¹⁶³



Figure 19. Miriam Matthews, photographer, “Sojourner Truth Industrial Club,” photograph, circa 1969, Los Angeles Public Library Images (Online Database), no. 00047643.

Conforming to standards of racial uplift, the Sojourner Truth Industrial Home kept strict rules and expectations for residents. Black clubwomen prioritized fighting myths of hypersexuality on a national level because they firmly believed such depictions perpetuated oppression and inequality. In order to deconstruct such stereotypes, these women took on “a particularly militant campaign for respectability”¹⁶⁴ by creating “alternative self-images and shield from scrutiny these private, empowering definitions of self.”¹⁶⁵ They often reached out to women whom they believed easily fell victim to sexual exploitation like single Black female migrants. The Sojourner Truth Home in Los Angeles operated in a similar fashion. Guided by notions of racial uplift, residents had to abide by the rules determined by the organization—rules that reflected their middle class values, which residents may or may not have shared. Alcohol regulation, for example, illuminated how the activists’ middle class values were projected upon the tenants. Consumption of any form of hard liquor was prohibited, at least in communal areas, as was the sale of alcohol for any reason.¹⁶⁶

Under such intense scrutiny over the residents’ personal lives, some women viewed the regulations unbearable because they regulated freedoms and desires. Residents must be at home by “respectable hours,” and some nightlife leisurely activities were prohibited depending on the business’ reputation. Most importantly, the economic depression and the overall cost of the institution limited the residents who could benefit from this resource to those “of good reputation” and “girls of good character and temperate habits.”¹⁶⁷ Most likely, women who already suffered from labels of prostitution could not turn to this institution for help; they had to seek alternative means for survival, or achieve it independently.

Black sex workers, thus, rarely garnered the attention of white reformers and largely went unaddressed by the Black community. Stereotypes of African American sexuality influenced

each group's involvement, or lack thereof, and both of which refrained from helping women who had openly admitted engaging in prostitution. White reformers emphasized the "tragedy" of kidnapped white women who had been forced into prostitution (usually by men of color) to gain wide public support for vice "clean up" while fears of exacerbating racist mainstream beliefs about Black women and immorality led to the formation of the culture of dissemblance for the Black community. Essentially, most efforts went towards preventative methods for keeping Black women from resorting to sex work instead of helping women who relied on prostitution for survival find other accommodations.¹⁶⁸ Since Black sex workers never surfaced as a major concern in early twentieth century Los Angeles, most likely few Black females actually resorted to sex work exclusively. Those who did, however, had few opportunities, if any, to take advantage of reform efforts. The demand just did not exist. Unfortunately, the plight of Black sex workers was lost to prevailing beliefs of immorality surrounding prostitution, rendering Black women who solicited sex a marginalized group within an already marginalized group.

Black Angelenos and Political Activism

Black progress in the city may have further alienated African American sex workers and intensified criminal stigmas attached to the occupation. In terms of Crenshaw's acknowledgement of the strategic silences around antiracism discourse,¹⁶⁹ the Black bourgeoisie's political agenda often marginalized the plight of those already associated with the underground economy around 1930. One of the most important political forums of the Black community at this time were locally operated periodicals. Such publications acted as the "conduits for information on community activity," especially in the face of biased, mainstream media.¹⁷⁰ The Black press constantly fought to achieve racial equality in the city and used this

forum to bring awareness of socio-political injustices, organize local events, and dispel negative representations of the race.

The Black bourgeoisie had to “weigh their interests in avoiding issues that might reinforce distorted public perceptions against the need to acknowledge and address intracommunity problems.”¹⁷¹ While Los Angeles embodied superior housing conditions for African Americans when compared nationally, for example, some African Americans lived in neighborhoods deprived of government maintenance and/or in homes landlords intentionally ignored. The press denied such conditions in an effort to dispel negative perceptions of Black living conditions upheld by mainstream society on a national level.¹⁷² By downplaying the existence of housing segregation, outrageous rental rates, and overcrowding, the plight of those who lived this reality never materialized. Such publications preferred to emphasize the community’s beautiful homes and business establishments that signified progress in the city. Had they chosen to address the discrimination that created compromised living conditions, many gains could have been lost and white Angelenos may have used this information to further segregate the city on the premise of property depreciation. The *California Eagle* chose which battles to fight and how to fight them in a manner they felt best helped the race as a whole.

Faced with the challenges of attaining equal rights, the editors often had to determine who qualified as “newsworthy.” Those who did found themselves in reach of powerful community resources and strong support systems. On the contrary, anyone who may tarnish the newspaper’s reputation and credibility, or may even appear as a “risky” cause often found him or herself ineligible for such assistance. When *Liberator* editor, Jefferson Edmonds, voiced his opinion that Burr Harris had been wrongfully convicted, the *Times* used this opportunity to condemn not only those who agreed but all readers the *Liberator*. The *Times*’ writers warned,

“If the negroes support Edmonds and his newspaper, the inference is obvious: They approve of him and his efforts to defend from the law, under protection of which he lives, such Black vampires as Burr Harris.”¹⁷³ Since correcting injustices against the Black community required strenuous manpower, often accompanied by heavy financial burdens and tolerating a severe backlash from white Angelenos, the press and many local organizations reserved their efforts for individuals of a well-respected character and for situations with promising outcomes. Rather than risk perpetuating stereotypes of Black females by addressing the needs of Black sex workers, the bourgeoisie vocalized police shortcomings like their white counterparts.

When residents confronted the LAPD about their policies towards prostitution, the police justified their lack of action by reverting blame back to the public. In the absence of a “reliable source” to verify criminal activity, officers refused to conduct investigations.¹⁷⁴ This rebuttal drew attention away from police shortcomings while it preserved the authority to determine who was worthy of and exempt from police protection, depending on the source of the complaint and profitability of extortion. Most likely, only the complaint of a well-respected community member, who could challenge the department’s authority, could prompt immediate policing. LaRue McCormick, a local Communist activist, recalled that no one’s word or reputation was “credible” enough when confronting police malpractice. The Board of Police Commissioners even dismissed concerns from ministers, lawyers, and real estate brokers as often as they denied the testimonies of the poor and incriminated.¹⁷⁵ Whereas those who resided within or conducted business around “disreputable” establishments, therefore, had no hope to meet police criteria for an action-worthy witness. It was as if all residents who inhabited diverse neighborhoods sacrificed their right to a safe and modest neighborhood at the hands of prosperous government officials.

Initially, residents contacted the department in hopes of ameliorating vice. Even the annual police reports, however, demonstrated the department's reluctance to take action when informed by the public. In 1929, for example, the department received a total of 808 complaints of prostitution. While less than 500 warranted police intervention, sixty-one investigations resulted in arrest.¹⁷⁶ Thus, aggravated citizens took their complaints to the Board of Police Commissioners after local precincts demonstrated their lack of commitment. Even with accusations that “protection is being offered for 25 dollars a week,”¹⁷⁷ these officials merely offered to conduct “further investigation.”¹⁷⁸ Time and time again, the board made empty promises, and neighborhood conditions continued to deteriorate. The *Los Angeles Sentinel* writers, whose headquarters were located in the heart of the Black community since May 1933,¹⁷⁹ were convinced that “police vice squads simply serve[d] as licensing agencies for prostitution” until the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁸⁰

Methods to discredit anyone who compromised the integrity of the department continued throughout the 1930s, and the Black bourgeoisie grew increasingly frustrated with the LAPD's selective neglect, even after emphatic complaints. One man berated the police department after sex workers continued “to pace back and forth before his door despite the seven complaints he made throughout the business day.”¹⁸¹ Thus, the early LAPD enforced laws based upon personal discretion and civilians “worthy” of action. Essentially, the unanswered complaints made residents appear as if they tolerated the vice conditions surrounding them.

The Media's Role in Racialized Crime

Contemporary mainstream media flaunted crime both geographically and racially, based upon how the city was policed. Most newspaper accounts mentioned the location of crimes in a heavily segregated city—leading readers to associate crime regionally, and by extension,

ethnically and racially. Vague articles on fifty-five instances of “vice and graft conditions in *the Central-avenue district*”¹⁸² insinuated crime was geographically linked to the city’s African American residences and commercial areas. Other stories emphasized the offender’s race either in the headlines or as the only provided identifier, reinforcing the idea that criminal behavior was racial as opposed to the product of individual behavior.¹⁸³ People who broke the laws lost their individualism and humanity through media references while criminal associations lingered behind and came to represent the neighborhood as a whole, at least if the offender was outside the protection of white privilege.

Black activists drew connections between the shortage of Black officers and the way Black Angelenos were treated by the police by the 1930s: “Perhaps this attitude toward arrested Negroes and Negro officers is part of the same carelessness toward Negro rights.”¹⁸⁴ Essentially, police entered Central District with the predisposition that Central was a bad neighborhood and the diverse inhabitants were the enemy—a phenomenon that exacerbated over time. An editorial in the *Los Angeles Sentinel* illustrated the damages caused by such stereotypes: “The stereotype of the Negro as a law violator and as a vicious person is so firmly fixed in the public mind that the excuse of the police officers is accepted at face value.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, racialized crime became a self-fulfilling prophecy through police profiling. Most importantly, the media reinforced constructed criminals.¹⁸⁶

While mainstream newspaper accounts had always racialized badger crimes, the interpretation of such conduct was not always exclusively negative. An article in the *Los Angeles Times*, which appeared in 1919, for example, surmised “there are perhaps not more than fifty first-class operators of this type [badgers or ‘alley rats’] in Los Angeles, and 95 percent of them are negresses or mulattoes.” These women, however, had the tact to evade convictions—

one that verged on being admirable: She was dubbed “highly skillful;” her ability to separate “a man from his money” was regarded as “a high stage of perfection;” and her cunning resembled “the art of the magician, the hypnotist and the athlete combined.” Unlike Prophet’s direct identification as prostitutes, they employed proscribed gender norms of daintiness and fragility to garner the attention of their target. They feigned needing the assistance of a strong and intelligent man to position him where they wanted, such as asking for directions or needing his help for a small maintenance task.¹⁸⁷ By the next decade, however, LAPD staff regarded these women only as prostitutes and major criminals. The *Los Angeles Times* writers blindly appropriated similar depictions.

Local media coverage of badger crimes directly influenced the criminalization of Black women while simultaneously victimized white males. In San Francisco, the police grew skeptical about allegations from men who claimed women had robbed them—an article that reappeared in the *Times* in 1930. The article noted that men often used this excuse to conceal the purchase of commercial sex: “‘It is true,’ Captain Hoertkorn of San Francisco said, ‘that a woman may have got the man’s money and that she may have taken it illegally. And of course, there are lady stick-ups, but mostly the man’s story isn’t so.’” The article went on to say that men were equally guilty for “not know[ing] enough to go straight home when they have a lot of money” as the “Negro women” who robbed them.¹⁸⁸ The captain’s warning that white men’s complaints of such events should warrant some skepticism on the part of the police department faded, and the *Times* habitually published only the biased narratives of white male “victims.”

When accounts claimed that Black females “attacked” males, notions of self-defense were always lost to implications of violent rage or inherent criminality. One particular article in the *Times* stated there was a tussle in which a Black woman had taken four dollars from a white

man. What appeared to be an “associate” of the woman was nearby and hit him when he “made an attempt to recover the money.” Immediately afterward, the woman pulled out “a straight-edged razor from a purse, [and] slashed him three times.” This particular man earned the title of “victim,” despite the fact that the woman was most likely protecting herself from his sexual advances and/or violent assault. The paper failed to record her perspective, as she fled the scene to avoid arrest.¹⁸⁹ Stories like this article catered to the protection and dismissal of white men’s sexual harassment—a fact that would not surface in the *Times*—while Black women were incriminated for acts of self-defense. The fact that the woman carried a knife for protection signifies the likelihood that she felt endangered on a daily basis, and therefore, felt the need to be prepared to defend herself.

Being an African American female in Central District during this period heightened one’s vulnerability towards sexual harassment regardless of her actions.¹⁹⁰ This constant fear convinced women to find their own protection, much like the woman in the article. Should the woman be accused of stealing, her target had the liberty of dealing with her in any manner he saw fit. One white male dentist, G. Hudspeth, restrained two Black women, Louisa Simpson and Willie Davis, until the police arrived when a heist went poorly. From the time Hudspeth “seized” them until the time the detectives arrived, the women were subject to his every request. The newspaper only documented Hudspeth’s demand to return all his money, although anything could have transpired while waiting for the officers. The police most likely would not have cared about these women’s condition upon their arrival. The detectives had already labeled them criminal, as they had been tracking them for some time.¹⁹¹ In the absence of legal protection, through either the court system or the police department, women had to find their own recourse

and survival tactics, which often were misconstrued as criminal and simultaneously placed them in physical danger.

CONCLUSION

After establishing some rapport with one of the prison matrons, Lena Collins' five children were finally informed of their mother's whereabouts. Yet she still remained a prisoner for four days until the community advocated her release. However, the ordeal was not over, and she still had to make a court appearance to contest the preposterous prostitution charge against her.¹⁹² The offending officers, however, understood and exploited her desperation and race to incriminate her while simultaneously trying to mask their own misconduct. On a micro level, some police strategically perpetuated racism and criminality to divert responsibility for violating other's civil rights, but on a macro level, stereotypes enabled economic exploitation and ensured the elite retained power.¹⁹³ Barnes probably realized that if he could pin Collins as a prostitute, she would lose supporters, along with her possibility for recourse.¹⁹⁴ His testimony reflects this conspiracy, as he accused Collins of initially soliciting him in his car while he was on duty. Barnes also convinced his colleagues Doherty and Miller to lie under oath to corroborate his version of the events.¹⁹⁵



Figure 19. “Georgia Bullock, Judge of the Superior Court” in “Representative Judicial, Civic and Professional Men of Los Angeles,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1943.

Nearly a month later, Judge Georgia Bullock, who later went on to be the first female Superior Court Judge in California, cleared her name with a not-guilty verdict. Bullock did not want Collins' supporters to misinterpret her rationale behind the ruling, however, and "warned spectators against a [victory] demonstration of any sort."¹⁹⁶ Although Bullock acquitted Collins, she still held her responsible for her victimization and reprimanded her prior to the ruling, the defendant's race and gender most likely shaped Bullock's interpretation of the incident, as did the judge's own racial and class privilege. Collins's initial behavior—getting into the vehicle—was deemed suggestive, according to Bullock, because "such actions are always misinterpreted."¹⁹⁷ Collins, therefore, brought the assault and unwarranted arrest upon herself. The judge failed to empathize with her economic desperation and starving family—the reasons that compelled her to accept any type of employment, even through unconventional methods. Perhaps, racist stereotypes (and/or indifference) inhibited Bullock's ability to see past negative representations of poor, urban Black women as well as Collins' optimistic motivation behind her decision to pursue the job opportunity.¹⁹⁸ While Lena won her battle, her abusers most likely escaped with minimal criticism from the department, despite that members of the NAACP brought the case before the Police Board of Commissioners.¹⁹⁹ Even if Barnes had been convicted for misconduct,²⁰⁰ the most common penalties for such behavior were minor pay suspensions (from 1-3 days), according to the Board of Police Commissioner's records from the early 1930s.²⁰¹

The case of Lena Collins represents every aspect of institutionalized gender and racial discrimination Black women faced in the criminal justice system: the misuse of vagrancy laws; government agents' subscription to racist stereotypes; the most severe criminal penalties; officers immunity to perjury; and inadequate opportunities for legal recourse. Finally, the *Los Angeles*

Times did not consider her ordeal to be press-worthy. Essentially, Lena Collins proved victorious based upon her reputation in the community and possession of a clean public record. Had she failed to prove either of these criteria, Collins' outcome probably would have been less fortunate. Therefore, one can only imagine how many other women endured similar circumstances living in Los Angeles from 1928-1938, but lacked the communal support system that exonerated her.

¹ "Central Police Vice Squad Uses Cossack Methods on Frail Woman!," *California Eagle*, February 27, 1931.

² *Ibid.*

³ "Mrs. Collins Acquitted," *California Eagle*, March 27, 1931.

⁴ Ervin only mentioned the police in his chapter on interracial prostitution, even though his entire thesis was on the Black Community in Los Angeles. The questions he asked his interviewees only pertained to their introduction to the sex trade and why they opted for interracial clients. Every response was less than one and a half pages. Ervin also mentioned that white sex workers could obtain police protection; he never documented similar possibilities for his Black case studies.

⁵ Joe Dominick, *To Protect and Serve: The LAPD's Century of War in the City of Dreams* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 35.

⁶ Michael Woodiwiss, *Crime, Crusades and Corruption: Prohibitions in the United States, 1900-1987* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988), 82. An entry-level patrolman made \$170 per month (\$200 for four-tier officers); the Chief of Police made \$500 per month at least until 1936. See City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1935-1936* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1936), 10. The chief's salary increased to \$600 in subsequent years, but patrolmen's wages stayed the same. See City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1936-1937* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1937), 10.

⁷ K. Woods, "Be Vigorous but Not Brutal," 33.

⁸ "Police Board Has the Key," *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1904.

⁹ Grand Jury of California (Los Angeles County), *The People of California v. N.D. Oswald* (Los Angeles: Peterson, 1909).

¹⁰ Grand Jury of California (Los Angeles County), *The People of California v. Thomas H. Broadhead (no. 5869)* (Los Angeles: Girvin, 1909).

¹¹ Robert Mayer, *Los Angeles: a Chronological & Documentary History, 1542-1976* (Dobbs Ferry: Oceana Publications, 1978), 58; "Capt. Broadhead Acquitted, Ready to Resume His Job," *Los Angeles Times*, September 5, 1909; "Police Captain on Duty Again," *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 1909.

¹² Mark Wild, "Mixed Couples Love, Sex, and Marriage Across Ethnoracial Lines," in *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-century Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), 128; "Full Text of the Indictment," *Los Angeles Times*, March

22, 1919; “Jury Expected to Indict Trio,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 21, 1930. See also Kooistra, “Angels for Sale,” 80; Woods, *Police in Los Angeles*, 38-9.

¹³ Henderson was later acquitted in an appellate court, and Brown was released on parole the same day his sentence began. “Henderson is Found Guilty,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 1919; “George Brown is Paroled,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 1919; “Mayor Woodman is Acquitted,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 1919; Two Black patrol officers and one white sergeant had their badges restored after the trials. See “More Grafting Charges Fail,” *Los Angeles Times* June 27, 1919; “Police House Cleaning Follows Heath Ouster,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 1923.

¹⁴ Mayor George Cryer, Mayor Frank Shaw, and Chief of Police James Davis, for example, all faced similar accusations before 1940. “Ousted Police Head Gives His Side of Row with Mayor,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1923.

¹⁵ This conclusion was drawn from the series of outcomes for the court cases regarding political graft and corresponding newspaper articles that slandered the testimonies of “underworld kingpins.”

¹⁶ G. Woods, *Police in Los Angeles*, 125-8.

¹⁷ G. Woods, *Police in Los Angeles*, 197.

¹⁸ Dominick, *To Protect and Serve*, 73.

¹⁹ City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1927-1928* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1928), 13.

²⁰ G. Woods, *Police in Los Angeles*, 124-5; City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department* (1927-1928 through 1931-1932).

²¹ Bond, “Negro in Los Angeles,” 265.

²² Dominick, *To Protect and Serve*, 47; Woodiwiss, *Crime, Crusades and Corruption*, 82.

²³ “Newton Street Police Station to Open Monday,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1925.

²⁴ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930-Population: California*, “Composition and Characteristics,” 287. See also De Graaf, “City of Black Angels,” 351; Mark Wild, “So Many Children at Once and so Many Kinds’: Schools and Etho-racial Boundaries in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 474; Rick Moss, “Not Quite Paradise: The Development of the African American Community in Los Angeles through 1950,” *California History* 75, no. 3, “African Americans in California,” special ed. (Fall 1996): 230; Kyle Julien, “Sounding the City-Jazz African American Nightlife and Race in LA” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2000), 57.

²⁵ Cox, “Evolution of Black Music,” 250.

²⁶ This statement excludes the police department figures for the cities that seceded from Los Angeles, such as Beverly Hills, Culver City and Santa Monica. After 1950, LAPD Annual Reports did not release the same data used to construct this table.

²⁷ Hunter, *To Joy My Freedom*, 166.

²⁸ Hazel V. Carby, “Policing the Black Woman’s Body in an Urban Context,” *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 4, Identities (Summer 1992): 739-41; Hicks, *Talk With You*, 7.

²⁹ Gilbert Thomas Stephenson, *Race Distinctions in American Law* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1910), 58-60.

³⁰ City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1937-1938* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1938), 110-2.

³¹ National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, "Report on Lawlessness," 144.

³² Ibid. The report stated, "In no other city in which there has been field investigations by the Commission have we found anything like the amount of discussion of police *lawlessness* that exists in Los Angeles (author's emphasis)."

³³ City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department*, 1930-1931 through 1937-1938.

³⁴ Dominick, *To Protect and Serve*, 73; G. Woods, *Police in Los Angeles*, 111, 124-6.

³⁵ City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department*, 1930-1931 through 1937-1938. See also AnneMarie Kooistra, "Angels for Sale," 282.

³⁶ The Khalil Gibran Muhammad's text, entitled *The Condemnation of Blackness*, elaborates on the significance of police arrest statistics being only a reflection of their enforcement not of actual crime rates in the city. See Muhammad, *Condemnation of Blackness*.

³⁷ For the arrest statistics, see City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department*, 1930-1931 through 1937-1938. See also Kooistra, "Angels for Sale," 282. For the population figures, see United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940-Population: California*, vol. III, "Characteristics of the Population-Part 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943).

³⁸ Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 113; Blair, *I've Got to Make My Livin'*, 28; Muhammad, *Condemnation of Blackness*, 198.

³⁹ Under the Los Angeles Municipal Code, "offering" was registered under Ordinance No. 49354, Section 1, which states, "it shall be unlawful for any woman to offer her body for the purpose of prostitution or to solicit any man for money to have carnal intercourse with her, or to agree to have carnal intercourse with any man for money, within the City of Los Angeles." City of Los Angeles, California, *Los Angeles Municipal Codes (New Series)*, July 25, 1924, LACA.

⁴⁰ "Vag-dissolute" becomes a far less common citation after 1938. See "Figure 14. Black Women Arrested by Offense and Fiscal Year, 1927-1938."

⁴¹ Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940-Population: California*, vol. III, "Characteristics of the Population-Part 2."

⁴² Blair, *I've Got to Make My Livin'*, 226-34.

⁴³ Victoria W. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 111.

⁴⁴ Letter dated July 1, 1936 from Officer Sweetnam to Officer Thornburg, box A 631, LACA.

⁴⁵ Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, 1268; D'Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 296; Mumford, *Interzones*, 102; Kooistra, "Angels for Sale," 124; Clement, *Love for Sale*, 179.

⁴⁶ McCormick, *Activist in the Radical Movement*, 91-3.

⁴⁷ Charlotte Bass and Minnie Fareiri requested that the department review the possibility of racial discrimination in policing practices, to which the Board replied,

...it is the policy of this Board that no discrimination from a racial viewpoint be made against any of the members of the Police Department, this stand being fundamental and right...if they wished to make specific charges and would present in detail written charges covering each particular case, the matter would receive prompt attention by this Board.

See Board of Police Commissioners Minutes, October 6, 1931, LACA.

⁴⁸ Earlier Annual Reports did not provide prison demographics to reflect previous trends. One might speculate that police officials wanted to conceal the ethnic/racial disparity of prisoners as to prevent criticism for discriminative policing.

⁴⁹ City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1931-1932* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1932), 21. This figure was based upon a comparison of the number of prisoners from 1932 and 1934. If there were 1,400 Black female prisoners in 1934, multiplying that number times 2.4 would constitute over 3,600 inmates.

⁵⁰ Bette Yarbrough Cox, "The Evolution of Black Music in Los Angeles, 1890-1955," in *Seeking El Dorado: African Americans in California*, ed. Lawrence B. de Graff et al. (Los Angeles: Autry Museum of Western Heritage, 2001), 268; Clara Bryant, Buddy Collette, William Green, Steven Isoardi, Jack Kelson, Horace Tapscott, Gerald Wilson, and Marl Young, ed. *Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 273.

⁵¹ Carlos Larralde and Griswold del Castillo, "San Diego's Ku Klux Klan, 1920-1980," *Journal of San Diego History* 46, no. 2 and 3 (Spring/Summer 2000), <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/2000-2/klan.htm>.

⁵² The "subculture" of police officers reinforced southern racism within the LAPD. Cox, "Evolution of Black Music," 268. For discrimination on the police force see "Negro Cops Loosing Out," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, August 9, 1934; "Police Department," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, September 20, 1934; "C.P.A. Charges Negro Policemen Get 'Raw' Deal," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, October 4, 1934; "More Negro Police," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, October 4, 1934; Leon H. Washington, Jr., "Editorial," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, August 1, 1935; and "Editorial," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, May 25, 1939.

⁵³ Although Prophett and Ervin classified these women as "prostitutes," their behavior signified otherwise. This is another unjust label assigned to Black Angeleno women in the 1930s. Ervin, "Participation of the Negro," 87-92.

⁵⁴ Kali N. Gross, *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880-1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 78; Ervin, "Participation of the Negro," 89.

⁵⁵ Appier, *Policing Women*, 130.

⁵⁶ Alice Clement details the phenomenon of prostitutes being demonized for spreading venereal diseases, especially to military soldiers, from World War I to the end of World War II. See Clement, *Love for Sale*, 121-7, 242-58. For local treatment of sexually transmitted diseases in offenders, see Alida C. Bowles, "A Police Department's Social Hygiene Activities," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 15, no. 9 (December 1929): 528-37. Unfortunately, Angela had contracted gonorrhea from a previous partner, but she was able to receive treatment while waiting for her court hearing. Janis Appier, *Policing Women: The Sexual Politics of Law Enforcement and the LAPD* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 129.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 128-30.

⁵⁸ Hugh Manes elaborated on the reluctance of whites to interfere with racial discrimination. He wrote, "it is only difficult for our government to act because whites refuse to accept responsibility for the injustices in which they have either perpetrated physically upon Negroes, or which they have tolerated without protest for hundreds of years." See Hugh R. Manes, "The Meaning of Watts," *Lincoln Law Review* 1, no.1 (Dec. 1965): 24.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁶⁰ Paul Chevigny, *Edge of the Knife: Police Violence in the Americas* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 43.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶² Kenneth Bolton, Jr., "Historical Perspectives of Police Misconduct," in *Policing and Misconduct*, ed. Kim Michelle Lersch, (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2002), 42; Chevigny, *Edge of the Knife*, 51.

⁶³ "Scores Caught in Police Nets," *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 1924; "Police Board Backs Up Davis," *Los Angeles Times*, June 6, 1928; "Steckel Makes Police Changes," *Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 1930; John C. Porter, "What's the Matter with Los Angeles?," *Los Angeles Times*, February 28, 1932; Dominick, *To Protect and Serve*, 49; Gerald Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles: Reform and Professionalization* (New York: Garland, 1933), 27; and Kristi Joy Woods, "Be Vigorous but Not Brutal: Race, Politics and Police in Los Angeles, 1937-1945" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1999), 40-76.

⁶⁴ Letter dated January 24, 1931 from Chief Roy Steckel to City Council, Police Commission Minutes, box A542, Los Angeles City Archives, Erwin C. Piper Technical Center (hereafter *LACA*). For a broader history on Steckel in office, see G. Woods, *Police in Los Angeles*, 135-55.

⁶⁵ The city passed a charter amendment in 1937 that sanctioned the autonomy of the department. This would be part of a long trend of LAPD campaigning against citizen intervention. See Dominick, *To Protect and Serve*, 49, 68; G. Woods, *The Police in Los Angeles*, 27; K. Woods, "Be Vigorous but Not Brutal," 24, 40-76.

⁶⁶ Notes dated February 16, 1938, *Clifford E. Clinton Papers*, coll. 2018, box 25; Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 113.

⁶⁷ Kooistra, "Angels for Sale," 248-9, 332-8.

⁶⁸ "Civic Prostitution and Gambling Reports," *Clifford E. Clinton Papers*, coll. 2018, box 25.

⁶⁹ Notes dated October 12, 1937, *Clifford E. Clinton Papers*, coll. 2018, box 25.

⁷⁰ *The People of the State of California v. Harriet Brooks*, "Reporter's Transcript on Appeal" (Cal. Mun. Ct. (Los Angeles), March 1931, No. 21836) in *Municipal Court Cases, 1915-1931*, coll. 228, box 1, Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles (hereafter *People v. Brooks*), 2.

⁷¹ *People v. Brooks*, 39.

⁷² *People v. Brooks*, 45.

⁷³ Unfortunately, the outcome of the case is unknown. The archive that holds the court transcript contains only a partial record and lacks the final decision of the court.

⁷⁴ *People v. Brooks*, 4, 6, 39, 41, 43, 46.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁷⁷ Danielle L. McGuire, "'It Was like All of Us Had Been Raped': Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 3 (December 2004): 907.

⁷⁸ *Bob Shuler's Magazine* 5 (February 1927): 269.

⁷⁹ AnneMarie Kooistra, "Angels for Sale: The History of Prostitution in Los Angeles, 1880—1940" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2003), 88.

⁸⁰ Kooistra averaged the number "offering" arrests for each decade and these are the numbers she calculated. However, her figures would assume that 1) every arrest was a separate individual, and 2) that every woman who was arrested was actually a sex worker. Kooistra also mentions that she excluded vagrancy arrests from her calculations and thus, her figures could be low. *Ibid.*, 78.

⁸¹ J.A. Graves, "Some Reflections," *Los Angeles Times*, April 1, 1927.

⁸² “Personal Evidence of John Bogue,” June 29, 1937, in *Clifford E. Clinton Papers, 1934-1969*, coll. no. 2018, box 25, Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

⁸³ “To Create New Morals Squad,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 1921; “Is Los Angeles Wicked?,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1933; “What?—Vice in Hollywood,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, June 23, 1949.

⁸⁴ Fannie Barrier Williams, “The Colored Girl,” *Voice of the Negro* 2 (June 1905): 400-1

⁸⁵ Guy-Sheftall, “Daughters of Sorrow,” 119-33.

⁸⁶ Ervin lived with his wife and baby daughter at the house of his in-laws, Charles and Catherine Flint, on Hooper Avenue—in the heart of the Black business district—in 1930. He inherited the home sometime before 1940.

Although Ervin established his vice connections for academic purposes, there is some evidence that he kept in contact. For example, he kept a police badge that allowed him to enter vice establishments without penalties from the police. He also was arrested in 1938 for a “morals” charge, which he intended to fight in the appellate court. He was originally convicted, according to the newspapers, because the judge prohibited the cross examination of two white female witnesses. The “morals” conviction may have caused Ervin to lose his employment, as he worked for the Public School District as a Supervisor of Attendance. The census indicates that he had been unemployed for 32 weeks at the time the data was recorded (April 1940). Therefore, Ervin kept his position while the case was processed in the appellate courts but lost his job before the following school year (1939). See United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930-Population: California*, roll T626_144, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, e.d. 302, p. 1B, family no. 18, household of Charles C. Flint, line 60, image 584, <http://www.ancestry.com/>; United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940-Population: California*, roll T627_414, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, e.d. 60-495, p. 2B, family no. 50, household of James M. Ervin, line 57, <http://www.ancestry.com/>; “Police Badge Holders Found in Every Walk of Life,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1938; “J. McFarland Ervin Appeals,” *California Eagle*, July 27, 1939. See also Los Angeles City School District, *Directory of the Personnel* (Los Angeles: Chamber of Commerce, 1935-1939).

⁸⁷ Ervin never documented any findings about intraracial prostitution.

⁸⁸ Guy-Sheftall, “Daughters of Sorrow,” 130.

⁸⁹ James Macfarline Ervin, “The Participation of the Negro in the Community Life of Los Angeles” (M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 1931), 105. Ervin’s middle name has been recorded with various spellings, i.e. Macfarland, McFarline, McFarlane, etc. According to his grandson, Agin Shaheed, the above-spelling is most accurate. Agin Shaheed, telephone conversation with the author, August 26, 2012.

⁹⁰ Darlene Clark Hine, “Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West,” *Signs*, 14, no. 4, “Common Grounds and Crossroads: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in Women’s Lives,” special ed. (Summer 1989): 915.

⁹¹ Mattie is a pseudonym for the purposes of readability. Ervin failed to document anything other than her age and his opinions of her. His citation for her excerpt in his thesis merely stated, “Interview with a Negro girl nineteen years old. Could be changed.” Ervin, “Participation of the Negro,” 106.

⁹² Hicks, *Talk With You*, 8-10.

⁹³ Cheryl D. Hicks, "Bright and Good Looking Colored Girl': Black Women's Sexuality and 'Harmful Intimacy' in Early-Twentieth-Century New York," in "New Perspectives on Commercial Sex and Sex Work in Urban America, 1850–1940," ed. Timothy Gilfoyle, special issue, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18, no. 3 (2009): 433-4; Clement, *Love for Sale*, 18-25.

⁹⁴ Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence," *Signs* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1983): 650.

⁹⁵ MacKinnon speaks to the fears of rejection: "Women, as a survival strategy, must ignore or devalue or mute our desires (particularly lack of them) to convey the impression that the man will get what he wants regardless of what we want." MacKinnon, "Toward Feminist Jurisprudence," 653.

⁹⁶ The interview remained rather allusive about these details. She stated that "something happened to me... I told him and he sent me to a white doctor friend of his." One can infer she either became pregnant or acquired a sexually transmitted disease from him, but the former seems most likely. Ervin, "Participation of the Negro," 106. For the quote on rape by an intimate, see MacKinnon, "Toward Feminist Jurisprudence," 649.

⁹⁷ Barbara Omolade, "Hearts of Darkness," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall (New York: The New Press, 1995), 370.

⁹⁸ Hicks, *Talk With You*, 183, 186-8.

⁹⁹ Hicks, "Bright and Good Looking Colored Girl'," 435.

¹⁰⁰ MacKinnon, "Toward Feminist Jurisprudence," 652-3.

¹⁰¹ Hazel V. Carby, "'On the Threshold of Woman's Era': Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," in "'Race,' Writing and Difference," ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., special issue, *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn, 1985): 269-70, 276. See also Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 34; Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Perennial, 1984), 27, 44-5, 203.

¹⁰² Cathy J. Cohen, "Deviance as Resistance: A New Research Agenda for the Study of Black Politics," *Du Bois Review* 1, no. 1 (2004): 40.

¹⁰³ Hine, "Rape in the Inner Lives," 913. See also Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 82-3.

¹⁰⁴ Wild, "Schools and Ethno-racial Boundaries," 464.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 467-73 *passim*.

¹⁰⁶ Cohen, "Deviance as Resistance," 30.

¹⁰⁷ Gross, *Colored Amazons*, 82.

¹⁰⁸ Cathy Cohen captures this essence, more broadly speaking about the marginalized members of the Black community. She writes, "Ironically, through these attempts to find autonomy, these individuals, with relatively little access to dominant power, not only counter or challenge the presiding normative order with regard to family, sex, and desire, but also create new or counter normative frameworks by which to judge behavior." See Cohen, "Deviance as Resistance," 30.

¹⁰⁹ Minnie is another pseudonym. See n91 above.

¹¹⁰ Muhammad, *Condemnation of Blackness*, 120-1; Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 53-60, 111, 227-8; Gross, *Colored Amazons*, 49-50; Hicks, *Talk With You*, 30, 39, 41, 142; Hine, "Rape in the Inner Lives," 913.

¹¹¹ Julien, "Sounding the City," 62.

¹¹² Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 82-3; Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 34, 106; Blair, *I've Got to Make My Livin'*, 22; Hicks, *Talk With You*, 35, 216.

¹¹³ Ervin discusses that “Home raiders” were a special kind of prostitute who made as much as \$25,000 off one man through this kind of ransom. Such masquerades usually required an accomplice, however. Allegedly, “all the Negro sporting world of Los Angeles” knew of such practices. The supervisor of policewomen at the time, Claudia Prophet, also provided him with some similar details. See Ervin, “Participation of the Negro,” 89-92.

¹¹⁴ Nearly 80% of the calls for domestic servants requested Black women. *Ibid.*, 37, 64, respectively.

¹¹⁵ For the city of Los Angeles, see Ervin, “Participation of the Negro,” 54. For similar conditions in the South, see Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 50-68.

¹¹⁶ Blair, *I've Got To Make My Livin'*, 25-8; Hicks, “Bright and Good Looking Colored Girl',” 436-8; Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, 58; Deborah R. Baskin and Ira Sommers, “Women, Work, and Crime,” in *In Her Own Words: Women Offenders' Views on Crime and Victimization*, eds. Leanne Fiftal Alarid and Paul Cromwell (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2006), 192-3.

¹¹⁷ Hicks, “Bright and Good Looking Colored Girl',” 437. Women are considered to express “pessimistic and self-defeating” reflections of offenses more often than males. See Brenda Geiger and Michael Fischer, “Naming Oneself Criminal: Gender Differences in Offenders' Identity Negotiation,” in *In Her Own Words: Women Offenders' Views on Crime and Victimization*, eds. Leanne Fiftal Alarid and Paul Cromwell (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2006), 51.

¹¹⁸ Mumford, *Interzones*, 104. See also Blair, *I've Got To Make My Livin'*, 143-4.

¹¹⁹ Prostitutes of all races conducted similar practices to varying extents, and deviating from sexual norms was not exclusive to African American sex workers. Her dissertation does not address women's internalization of or reflection upon these practices. She merely acknowledges the existence of these acts in detail. Heather Lee Miller, “The Teeming Brothel: Sex Acts, Desires, and Sexual Identities in the United States, 1870-1940” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2002), 207-36.

¹²⁰ Ann J. Cahill, *Rethinking Rape* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 158, 196.

¹²¹ Hine, “Rape in the Inner Lives,” 919.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 913.

¹²³ Hine, “Rape in the Inner Lives,” 913. See also Giddings, *When and Where I Enter*, 82-3.

¹²⁴ Nell's brief comments parallel some of the reactionary methods to dealing with abuse in other women's accounts in more recent studies. See Commack, “Coping, Resisting, and Surviving: Connecting Women's Law Violations to Their History of Abuse,” in *In Her Own Words: Women Offenders' Views on Crime and Victimization*, eds. Leanne Fiftal Alarid and Paul Cromwell (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2006), 33-35.

¹²⁵ Ellen Strong, “The Hooker,” in *Sisterhood Is Powerful; an Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Random House, 1970), 292-3.

¹²⁶ Cahill, *Rethinking Rape*, 69, 77, 90, especially “discontinuity,” 107-8. In the latter, Cahill writes, “If subjectivity is directly related to the fact and particular experience of embodiment, then it stands to reason that significant bodily changes may produce significant and qualitative changes in the subject who undergoes them.”

¹²⁷ Geiger and Fischer, “Naming Oneself Criminal,” 45.

¹²⁸ William Wilcox Robinson, *Tarnished Angels: Paradisiacal Turpitude in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Ward Richie, 1964), 24.

¹²⁹ Letter from Rheba Crawford to Police Chief Davis, August 12, 1935, Police Commission Minutes, box A608, LACA; *Clifford E. Clinton Papers, 1934-1969*, coll. no. 2018, box 25, passim; Lee Francis, *Ladies on Call: The Most Intimate Recollections of a Hollywood Madam* (Los Angeles: Holloway House Publishing, Co., 1965), 108-9, 155; Kooistra, "Angels for Sale," 296-7.

¹³⁰ Kooistra, "Angels for Sale," 254-7. See also Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 1268; John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 296; Kevin Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 102; Kooistra, "Angels for Sale," 124; Elizabeth Alice Clement, *Love for Sale: Courting, Treating, and Prostitution in New York City, 1900-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 179.

¹³¹ The two officers allegedly accepted these bribes, R. H. Johnson (Black) and G. L. Hays (white), according to the district attorney who deemed these allegations worthy of indictment. Johnson, however, was the first and only one to have a trial, wherein he was acquitted. Hays' charges were dismissed following Johnson's verdict. See "More Grafting Charges Fail." See also "Mayor Quizzed by Grand Jury," *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1919.

¹³² City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1930-1931* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1932), 15; City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1938-1939* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1939), 12.

¹³³ "Who Will Answer if This Man Dies?," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1910; "Officers Raid Home; Kill Man," *California Eagle*, April 29, 1927; "In Scorching Reply to Chief Davis," *California Eagle*, May 27, 1927; "Council Shakes Bones of the Past," *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1929; Police Commission Minutes, September 10, 1930, LACA; Police Commission Minutes, October 10, 1930, 192, LACA.

¹³⁴ "Chief of Police Jas. E. Davis Writes Open Letter to Dr. H. C. Hudson," *California Eagle*, May 20, 1927.

¹³⁵ Ervin, "Participation of the Negro," 87.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Ervin, "Participation of the Negro," 112.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 69. Ervin referred to white sex workers as "'victim[s] of economic circumstance.'" Also, on one occasion, he documented his sympathy when listing to a white woman's story of the sacrifice she made for her family—one that provoked "a few crystal drops to ease down his cheek." See *ibid.*, 103.

¹³⁹ Bond, "Negro in Los Angeles," 265.

¹⁴⁰ Gross, *Colored Amazons*, 79.

¹⁴¹ Gross, *Colored Amazons*, 78.

¹⁴² "'Alley Rats' Defy Police Traps." Ervin believed badger crimes were equally as profitable, earning from \$30-\$1,500 in one evening. See Ervin, "Participation of the Negro," 94.

¹⁴³ It is not certain whether or not these women understood their situation as "criminal" or not. Most likely, they viewed their circumstances simply through the frame of survival.

¹⁴⁴ "Police Business," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1888.

¹⁴⁵ “A Raid: Some Disreputable Dives Overhauled Last Night,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 1, 1888.

¹⁴⁶ Joe Dominick, *To Protect and Serve: The LAPD’s Century of War in the City of Dreams* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 31; W.W. Robinson, *Tarnished Angeles: Paradisiacal Turpitude in Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: unknown publisher, 1964), 34.

¹⁴⁷ Michael D. Meyer, Erica S. Gibson, and Julia G. Costello, “City of Angeles, City of Sin,” *Society for Historical Archeology* 39.1 (2005): 110, 119-121.

¹⁴⁸ Channing Severance, “The Social Evil--A Socialist’s Logic,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1903.

¹⁴⁹ Beverly Lynn Guy-Sheftall, “‘Daughters of Sorrow:’ Attitudes Toward Black Women: 1880-1920” (PhD diss., Emory University, 1984), 72.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹⁵¹ Miriam Matthews, “Margaret Johnson-Scott (1862-1969),” in *Miriam Matthews Papers, 1845-1988*, coll. no. 1804, box 19, folder 6, “Margaret Scott, 1943, 1962-1969,” Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, 1.

¹⁵² “Valuable Worker Officer of Sojourner Truth Club Retires,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 7, 1949, C2; Kate Bradley Stoval, “Both Refined and Cultured in Life,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1909.

¹⁵³ The organization’s founders included both Black and white women in 1904. Black women initially ran the executive board, while white women held the bureaucratic positions of president, vice, and secretary. By the construction of the actual home in 1913, however, Black women seized the authoritative and intimate positions, while white women demonstrated their support largely by financial contributions. See “New Sojourner Truth Home Opens Sunday,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, March 27, 1952; “Sojourner Truth Home in Dive,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 4, 1946; “Will Assist Negro Girls,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 1906; “To Help Young Colored Girls Help Themselves,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 1913.

¹⁵⁴ Ethel Braington, “A Life of Service Sojourner’s Goal,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, May 20, 1971.

¹⁵⁵ Miriam Matthews, “untitled,” in “Margaret Scott, 1943, 1962-1969.”

¹⁵⁶ “Sojourner Truth Club Golden Year,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, October 21, 1954.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*; “Sojourner Benefit Outstanding Affair,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 29, 1954; Braington, “Life of Service.”

¹⁵⁸ “To Help Young Colored Girls.”

¹⁵⁹ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920-Population: California*, roll T625_113, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, e.d. 386, p. 16A, family no. 350, household of Caladonia Taylor, line 27, image 918, <http://www.ancestry.com/> (hereafter cited “Census 1920-STIH”).

¹⁶⁰ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930-Population: California*, roll T626_144, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, e.d. 293, p. 19B, family no. 397, household of Fanny Alexander, line 51, image 233, <http://www.ancestry.com/> (hereafter cited “Census 1930-STIH”).

¹⁶¹ “Census 1920-STIH,” “Census 1930-STIH.”

¹⁶² “Margaret Johnson-Scott.”

¹⁶³ “Census 1920-STIH.” The subsequent decade, however, showed that they youngest person living at the home was twenty-three-years-old. It is possible that these children were one of the few youths who experienced this privilege. See “Census 1930-STIH.”

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- ¹⁶⁴ Hazel V. Carby, "'On the Threshold of a Woman's Era': Lynching, Empire, and Sexuality in Black Feminist Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 264.
- ¹⁶⁵ Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives," 914.
- ¹⁶⁶ "Margaret Johnson-Scott."
- ¹⁶⁷ Stoval, "Both Refined and Cultured."
- ¹⁶⁸ Cathy Cohen discusses a similar phenomenon surround AIDS amongst African Americans that heavily applies to the politics around Black sex workers in the early twentieth century. See Cathy Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- ¹⁶⁹ Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins," 1253-8.
- ¹⁷⁰ Regina Freer, "L.A. Race Woman: Charlotta Bass and the Complexities of Black Political Development in Los Angeles," *American Quarterly* 6, no.3, "Los Angeles and the Future of Urban Cultures," special ed. (September 2004): 612; Marne Lyn Campbell, "Heaven's Ghetto?: African Americans and Race in Los Angeles, 1850-1917," (PhD diss. University of California, 2006), 154.
- ¹⁷¹ Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1256.
- ¹⁷² Cited in Lawrence B. De Graaf, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890-1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 39, no. 3 (August 1970): 340.
- ¹⁷³ "Burr Harris and Edmonds," *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1913.
- ¹⁷⁴ "A Test Case," *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1890.
- ¹⁷⁵ LaRue McCormick, *Activist in the Radical Movement, 1930-1960: The International Labor Defense the Communist Party (An Interview Conducted by Malca Chall in 1976)*, Women in Politics Oral History Project, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (Berkeley, CA: The Regents of the University of California, 1980), 91, <http://archive.org/details/activismccorrad00larurich>.
- ¹⁷⁶ City of Los Angeles, California, *Annual Report of the Police Department for the Fiscal Year 1928-1929* (Los Angeles: Bureau of Printing, 1929), "Reports of Vice Conditions," 42.
- ¹⁷⁷ "Vice Pay-Off Charges Made," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, December 8, 1938.
- ¹⁷⁸ Numerous examples can be found in the Board of Police Commissioners Minutes. For example, see entries dated August 19, 1930, September 10, 1930, October 13, 1933, November 17, 1933, and October 8, 1934, LACA. Prominent citizens like Charlotta Bass and Loren Miller, brought forth such complaints on several occasions, although many Angelenos utilized this forum to voice their complaints.
- ¹⁷⁹ "After One Year," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, May 24, 1934. In 1933, the *Sentinel* headquarters were at 1050 E. 43rd Street until 1994. See Yussuf Simmonds, "The Sentinel Turns 79," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 26, 2012, <http://www.lasentinel.net>.
- ¹⁸⁰ "What?—Vice in Hollywood," *Los Angeles Sentinel*, June 23, 1949.
- ¹⁸¹ J. Max Bond, "The Negro in Los Angeles" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1936), 266.
- ¹⁸² "Vice Affidavits Ready for Jury," *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1930 [author's emphasis]; and Kooistra, "Angels for Sale," 176-7.
- ¹⁸³ "Negress Bandit Hunt Launched," *Los Angeles Times*, June 11, 1934; "Morals and Gaming Sorties by Police Net Twenty-Nine," *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1938. The *Los Angeles Sentinel*, one of the locally owned Black newspapers, was occasionally guilty of similar accounts

as well, but to a lesser extent. See “Police Seeking Amazon Bandits,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, April 29, 1937.

¹⁸⁴ “Police Department,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, September 20, 1934.

¹⁸⁵ “Police Brutality: The Answer,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, May 5, 1949.

¹⁸⁶ Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 232-3.

¹⁸⁷ ““Alley Rats’ Defy Police Traps.”

¹⁸⁸ “Police Brand Stories False,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 17, 1930. See also, “Mayor Quizzed by Grand Jury.” This article also identified Black women as the sole committers of badger crimes. Another article claimed that 95% of the fifty badgers were Black women. See ““Alley Rats’ Defy Police Traps,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1919.

¹⁸⁹ “Running Battle Marks Hold-Up,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1931.

¹⁹⁰ Mark Wild, “Red Light Kaleidoscope: Prostitution and Ethnoracial Relations in Los Angeles, 1880-1940,” *Journal of Urban History* 28, no. 6 (2002): 721.

¹⁹¹ “Powdered Faces Mask Negresses,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 1917.

¹⁹² “Central Police Vice Squad Uses Cossack Methods;” “Mrs. Collins Acquitted.”

¹⁹³ Bolton, “Historical Perspectives,” 36-7.

¹⁹⁴ The struggle for civil rights prioritized which battles to fight. Attempts to achieve racial equality faced severe backlash from white Americans. Due to these fundamental challenges, anyone who may present additional burdens, such as individuals with compromised reputations or affiliations with the illicit economy, seldom retained public support and more likely had to manage their hardships independently. LaRue McCormick detailed her struggle to find support for an innocent young man named Irving Jordan imprisoned on false charges. Clifford Clinton of CIVIC (whom Jordan helped during the Grand Jury investigation of 1937), progressives in the Black community, and even an attorney (who later became judge) all refused to help her due to his prior record and associations. See McCormick, *Activist in the Radical Movement*, 91-3.

¹⁹⁵ “Mrs. Collins Acquitted.”

¹⁹⁶ “Mrs. Collins Acquitted.”

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Criminologist Coramae Mann found that “discrimination and a lack of concern for her [the minority woman offender’s] needs and those of her family are witnessed on every level of the [criminal justice] system—arrest, pre-trial, judicial, and corrections.” See Mann, “Minority and Female,” 271.

¹⁹⁹ The author could not find a follow-up story in any local media regarding any penalties or punishments assigned to the officers involved. As a significant gain for civil rights, had the officers had a punitive hearing, some reference would have appeared, especially in local Black newspapers committed to political activism and racial equality. The *Eagle* did mention, however, that the local branch of the N.A.A.C.P would bring the case before the police commission. See “Mrs. Collins Acquitted.”

²⁰⁰ It is unlikely that the Police Commission board ever penalized Barnes for these allegations. The *Eagle* never wrote a follow-up story regarding the matter. One may infer, therefore, these officers were merely scolded for their actions (in private) rather than having avenged the wrongs committed against Lena Collins in a public forum.

²⁰¹ Board of Police Commissioner Minutes, LACA, passim under “Officer Complaints.”

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