P.S. to the NEWS
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AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

To paraphrase the famous ballad about the old gray mare, the old gray American Bar Association ain't what she used to be. For about 100 years, the American Bar Association was a model of rectitude and dignity, made up of proper lawyers who are officers of the court, and many of whom are judges. American Bar Conventions were usually conducted with great decorum, sometimes in formal morning attire.

But times have changed. I hold in my hand the program for one of the important sections of the American Bar Association which will hold its annual Convention in Honolulu next month. This section will devote one day of its two-day meeting to Watergate.

On the second day, papers will be presented with the following titles: "Decriminalization of Consensual Sexual Conduct from the Viewpoint of the Homosexual," and "Efforts Being Made to Legalize Prostitution and an Overview of the Issues Involved."

The windup speech of this odd afternoon will be "Criminal Laws Against Prostitution from the Viewpoint of the Prostitute" and presented by Margot St. James, the head of a San Francisco organization called COYOTE, which is identified in the advance program as "the Hookers Union."

Such an agenda, combined with the new string bikinis on the beach at Waikiki, should stimulate a record attendance for the annual lawyers' convention.

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The American Bar Association is acting as though vice were debatable and should be given a sympathetic hearing by the lawyers. It shouldn't. Vice does not deserve equal time with virtue.

It may be that, ever since two years ago when the American Bar Association came out in favor of legalizing abortion, it has simply turned its back on Judeo-Christian morality. After a year which has seen more prominent lawyers disbarred for moral turpitude than ever in history, the American Bar ought to be trying to raise rather than lower the moral standards of our country.

On June 20, the 22-year-old son of the president of the American Bar Association and a 21-year-old daughter of another prominent Florida lawyer were arrested and charged with indecent exposure for allegedly streaking through a pancake house at 3:00 A.M. That may be merely a coincidence, or it could be another sign of the changing moral standards of the Bar.

Even the so-called "victimless crimes" do have a victim, according to Liam Coonan, head of the Federal Organized Crime Strike Force in St. Louis. Coogan was not talking about moral issues, but real economic damage to our pocketbooks, when he said recently that the victim is usually each and every one of us as members of the community. Coonan explained that almost all money collected from so-called victimless crime finds its way into the coffers of organized crime.

"This money doesn't lie dormant," he said, "but is used to finance other criminal operations or buy control of legitimate businesses which are then operated illegally. The result is that legitimate merchants in competition with these people are driven out of business by such pressures as hijacking, strong-arm tactics, or even fire bombings."

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