

[New Way Dry Cleaning and Laundry]

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March 10, 1939 Mr. and Mrs. L. S. Whitehead (Whit New Way Dry Cleaning and Laundry [???) tickets he addressed [incoming?] desk, and I will check them. I can do that and talk too." The girl did as she was instructed. "Now, go on [?] told the girl, if you are going want to see the baby, because some one lese others will want to go [?] and you can take their place places ."

She was wearing a red crepe dress, blue checked sport coat blocked in red, tan hose and black suade suede slippery. She is of medium weight and height , and has black hair and brown eyes.

"Now, what is it you want me to tell you? Oh, I don't mind that, I have always thought I would write my own life history and send it to the True Story Magazine, Company. I was born right here in Clarke County, on a farm, and have worked all my life. I have done field worked work in the field, [many a day *1] such as carrying water, [*1] as well as doing other necessary things . I have even picked cotton.

"I went to school first at Princeton, and after I finished grammar school there I came to Athens high school one year. Then / I / quit school and went to work. My folks didn't like it one bit . However , one of my brothers was in college and another in high school, therefore I felt like it was too much of an effort for my parents to send me any longer.

"My father gave up farm work and moved to town. My first job was at a dime store ,/# I worked in that store [about two years, *2] as a clerk [*2] than then they made me floor [?] lady. After being on this job six minths months, I quit to take a vacation. They paid me \$1.00 \$1 a day as clerk and \$10 a week when they promoted me to the floorlady job . My first money was spent on clothes and I sent money each week to my brother in college. I would buy clothes if I didn't have anything else. My husband says that is all I do anyway

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spend everything I make 3 [?] [?] on them. I didn't have to pay board ,[?] and I could do as I pleased with my money.

“My second job was as saleslady at [??] [??] Department Store. I started in for \$8 a week and was making \$12 when I quit to get married. I though I couldn't keep house work too. I worked until five 5 o'clock Christmas Even and was married at nine 9 o'clock that same night.

“The way I met my husband was , like this. I had a date one night with a boy I didn't like. We were double dating with another couple. They were telling me about Stephens Bryant. I expresses a desire to meet him. Than they dared me to write him, I took the dare, and did it. Stephens and the boy I was with worked at the same place. Mother heard us and told me later I had better not do [?] such a thing. It was too late because I had all ready written the note. If she had told me that before I had, [???] it would have been called off. I wrote told him [???] how much I knew about him and said I would like to meet him - Signed, X Betty. That was on Monday after the dare was made on Sunday night. I really met him the last Sunday in June of that year. There were four girls in the car and all of us were introduced to him as Betty. After sizing us up he knew I was the one who wrote that note.

“He wanted a date and I gave him one for the following Saturday night. He made me so mad that night I could have murdered him. We were going to the show, I was sure he was going to put his coat on, but he didn't. I thought there was no excuse for gim not wearing it. We had a date dated [?] from than then on until we married. /# Infact fact every night he could get off. He worked on the night shift at the bakery and never knew when he 4 [?] could get away as he worked at night. He made real good money working at the mixing machine. At the time we married he had a nice little bank account, and a good car.

“We lived on here in Athens for four months. than Then his boss sent him to Milledgeville to take charge of a bakery there. We During [we lived there *3] the eighteen months *3. While we were living there our first child was born, and we got just what we wanted, a

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black-headed girl. [*4] I did all my own house work, and carried lunch to my husband every day. [That summer I canned 250 cans of fruit. *4] One day I was going to take my husband his lunch. I put the baby in her carriage, and sat the lunch in the [??] on the foot of it and started out. I had on a new pair of shoes , and when I started [?] down the [?] steps [???] of our house there were about six in all, my feet slipped. I let the carriage go , and it went flying down the steps and bumped into a tree. I was scared out of my wits for fear the baby would be [????] killed, but instead the food was knocked out on the ground. [?????] We soon grew tired of that place, as we had very little social life and no relatives living there, so my husband gave up his job and came back to Athens H[??] y .

Mrs. Bryant stopped talking [?] to answer one of phone phones. . In fact , it seemed to me that [?????] it rang constantly. There are two in the office and at times both are ringing. The machinery never stopped runing running even at lunch time. # She began [?] , “After we came back here my husband went into the restaurant business , and we made good and sold it at a profit. While [?] he was operating this cafe I helped him with it. One day a woman came in and tried to get Stephens to have a date with one of her grown daughters. It made me made mad enough to fight. I didn't let her know it and took it like a good sport, because she 5 was a good customer. [?????????]

“We decided to arm after we sold the restaurant. [?] We rented a house and four acres of land way out on Prince Avenue. It was a large house so mother and dad moved in with us. Each of us had our own garden about an acre in all and farmed on the other three. We made real good and our rent cost us very little. During the time we lived there, when my husband [???] worked at the post office. # When I lease expired in December, Stephens went to Atlanta to find work. Lee Baking company had just opened their plant and my husband was the first man that company hired to work in their plant. I followed about a month later. We rented a small three-room apartment, but had so much company to drop in on us we had to get a larger place. While we were living in one section of the city I was scared to death. I knew somebody was snooping around the house at night but was never able to find out who it was. Whether white or black. I got my brother-in-law and his wife to

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come and stay with me. One night he went to the kitchen and saw the man looking in at the window. My brother-in-law didn't let on he saw him, but went out of the kitchen, crept around the house to catch him. Just as he grabbed his coat the man pulled away from him and ran. We came to the conclusion it was only a 'peeping-tom.' We moved from that section, that was the only scare I ever experienced in Atlanta. We lived in Atlanta two and one -half years. I came back before my husband did in order to be with my mother when our little boy was born. When the baby was two weeks old Stephens gave up that \$65 a week job and came back here to live. While we were living in Atlanta my husband's mother died. There was a brother brother 6 and four sisters [??] left at home. Her death was a great blow for us, for she was a fine woman and I loved her almost as much as I did my own. It took Stephens a long time to get over his great grief.

"One thing that made him quite his Atlanta job was that the plant changed managers and a man from out west was sent to Atlanta to take charge. He had a friend he wanted to work in, Stephens didn't like him so decided to quit before there was any trouble. he packed up hag bag and baggage and moved back here with my mother, who was than living about six miles from town.

"Stephens first experience with a laundry was in 1930. While we were living with my mother in the country he got a job with a laundry here in town . That called for buying a truck . However, we had kept our own car and have never been without one more than three , months of our married life. He worked strictly on [a?] commission [?] basis and worked [covered?] all the small towns out of Athens this city . While he called on people soliciting business and picking up laundry and dry cleaning he had a [body?] boy to do the driving for him. He made about seventy five averaged making dollars \$75 a week on that job. In June of 1931 we moved back to town so we could be near his work. He continued his work at this laundry about a year, than decided if he could make that much for the other fellow he could do even better for himself.

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“He went in partnership with another man , and rented a building a couple of blocks up the street from where we are now. Installed As soon as the the machinery was installed we and opened up for business. The first week , we opened we took in exactly \$218 . , and a couple of weeks later before the month was out our collections amounted between four and five hundred dollars a week. I went in there My task was to check any *5 in and out [the dry cleaning *5]. I saw to it that all everyone the garments 7 were clean and inspected [????] before I entered them on the books. I have worked many a night until one and two o'clock before I went home and was back on the job next morning at eitht eight o'clock. That was the first [?] time I had ever been inside a dry cleaning plant. Our partner, his wife, my husband and I , and one Negro were all that worked in [?] the plant. [?] [?] in the beginning.

“A short time after we opened up for business we found ourselves in a terrible condition. We had spent all our cash and were was \$11,000 in [?] debt . In order to cut expenses we moved in the house with Stephens folks. We paid them the small amount of \$10.00 a month . for rent. We had our own cow, chicken , and garden.

“Our business grew and grew until we [?] had to get a larger place, than then we bought this building with our own personal money. When we started in the dry cleaning business we didn't have but one truck . At the time we moved into this plant we had six trucks, three in town and three in the country , and we had with fifteen employees inside the plant.

“Just about the time we moved our plant and got started my husband was taken sick with a terrible kidney trouble. I was not working when he was taken ill. We were not able to hire a nurse, and I couldn't leave him and come to the plant in his place, as for I could not couldn't leave him more than fifteen minutes at a time. The children even upset him and their noise made him so nervous I had to send them to his sisters' to stay. He was sick a month before he was able to come back to work. We got lots of dry cleaning

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“We [?] got lots of dry cleaning from a North Georgia town so we decided to open a plant in that place. [It was a paying proposition. *6] There were two other plants in that town besides ours. They got together and paid us to get out of business there. *6 We [?] accepted it. Now we have our business all under one roof. With twenty folks people working for us.” “The telephone rang Mrs. Bryant answered it [???.] After the conversation was over, she told the a man who was standing near. “Do you remember yesterday when Mr. Palmer called and asked about a bill fold [?] that had been left in his pocket? I told the girl who inspects the clothes to check and see if it was in his clothes . ‘ She told me it was not. ‘ ” Well, it has been dry cleaned and delivered [?] without being removed from his pocket.” # The man made no reply , to that [?] [??] card, [?] make [a?] note of this. I found \$8.50 in this a man's pocket . this morning.”

Turning to me she began again. “Our plant is run by steam and electricity. The Negroes does The ironing in the laundry is done by We have eleven in all Negroes.” Just At this time a large Negro woman in a blue uniform brought a shirt to the office with the bottom part torn from the yoke. “Why, Lucindy , what did you do that for? [?] Without a word the woman spread the shirt on the corner of he desk, covered her face with her hands , and walked away.

“All the ironing is done by steam pressure and they are touched up by hand. That is what the Negro women does do . We have one Negroe woman who does nothing [?] else but fold, inspect and sew buttons on shirts. Oh, we have to buy them buttons by the wholesale. Whenever the trouble comes in replacing them, People will even send 8 whole suits of clothes as well as other garments to us without a button on them. We replace them [??] free of charge. “In dry cleaning the clothes. When they are brought in [?????] they are searched and all articles [??] saved for the customers. [The?] They are brushed and pre-spotted, than then they are cleaned and taken to the second floor for inspection and spotted again, before they are taken to be pressed. We have a man who does nothing else but inspect and spots spot the dry cleaning.

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“We can clean fifty suits at one time in the same cleaning tub , They are what [?] sometimes called the wheel. After they are taken [?] from the wheel they are put in an extractor. This takes out all the [?] surplus solvent solvent . This machine makes 18,000 revolutions a minute. After that they are put in a tumbler, [?] which has hot air going through it [?] . They are tumbled until the solvent solvent odor odor is out of the garments. After this they are taken to the second floor, inspected again , and steamed pressed. than Then they are inspected by two girls to see if all spots are removed and pressed correctly before checking out. When they are checked they are placed on their respective route-men's line. We also do repair work at a small charge. If there is no material used we do not charge for repairs.

“The laundry is handled practically the same way. Each driver has his own laundry vat, and every family had their [?] own mark. The smaller pieces are put in a net and [?] with the [?] mark on it.

“When we first moved to this building it was just a one-story plant the business [?] was growing rapidly. Our partner started drinking .

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Finally when he was on one of his drinking sprees, one night somebody backed a truck up to the back door, broke in and took off every garment we had in the plant. They were dry cleaned and hanging onx on the respective drivers' line lines. The clothes stolen amounted to over \$3,000. After this My husband and the police searched everywhere for a trace of the clothes. They only found three of them the garments. They were in a pawn shop in Atlanta. When the search was ended we paid our partner his part of the business and ran him off.

“Taking the business plant in charge ourselves, we worked hard day and night to build up our business and at the same time paid very every one of our customers back for their [?] loss ??????. [in a years time?] #[?????] a friend of ours wanted to come into business with

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us as a partner. After they came in the [?] business out grew the ground floor. Than Then we added the second story. We surely have had to work hard to get for what [?] we have [?] and it has taken cooperation on the part of [?] us to [?] to make our business a success build up our business . We do have a nice [?] business and take in between eight and nine hundred dollars a week. Our pau pay roll run around [\$300.00?] a week.

“Since we have added the second-story the business has increased to the extent it has enabled us to buy a hundred acre farm with a good house and out buildings on it. There is a nice pasture and good farming land. We rent the house we live in [?] here in town. However, our partner [?] own owns his home here in [??] He has a wife and three sons, one of them are married.His wife works in the plant every day. [??????] 10 [?]

“We are members of the Methodist church, I was brought up to go to church and Sundayschool, and still enjoy attending our church here. here in Athens.

“Last year we decided to speculate and go into another business . We tried selling fish and poultry. We found out we could couldn't handle two businesses successfully. After three months we [?] gave that up finding we had sunk \$15,000 in that enterprise with no hopes of getting it back. [?????] We contributed that failure to our entering the business in an off season.

[“In the last few fears *7] [????] *8 some nice trips *7, of which [Our business [?] afforded the as the pleasure of *8] We want went to Florida, Detroit, Charleston and Savannah. We take lots of trips on Sunday Sundays and always take our children with us. I am I'm not the kind to want to leave them at home while we are runing running around. [?] We do enjoy the privilege of a family car.

“Going back to our dry cleaning and laundry, we decided our pick-up [?] business in the country didn't bring in sufficiant sufficient revenue so we have called some of our drivers [?] in . Now , we have four trucks working in town and it surely keeps us busy keeping up

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with them and their work when they come in from gathering laundry and xdry dry cleaning. We are very proud of our business and hope it will continue to grow."

"Veona," called Mr. Bryant, "hurry and go to the bank and deposit this money before it the bank closes." He came in the office with a handfull handful of checks. # "Now , if we have finished with the story, come on and I'll give you a lift. She said, [??????] I got in the [?] Studebaker [???" " Oh, what a nice car !" I said to her. # "This don't belong to us ," she said with evident amusement. 11 ours "Ours is a Packard, it is it's in the garage being overhauled to take a trip in Sunday. I do hope it won't rain. # [We had reached the post office.?] This is where I get our out I told her ," "You don't have an office in the post office do you?" No, in the court house. "Oh, I see," was her parting remark. As I closed the [?] door, [???? she put the gear in changed gears first and was [?] on her way to the bank.