

## [A. B. C. Employment Agency]

Beliefs and Customs - Folk Stuff

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Form to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 W. 130 St. New York

DATE December 8, 1938

SUBJECT A. B. C. EMPLOYMENT AGENCY AGENCY

1. Date and time of interview Observation: December 2, 1938, 9:45 A. M. - 1 P. M.
2. Place of interview 200 W. 135 St. New York City Room 212 B
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

## Library of Congress

Creque's Employment is situated on the 3rd floor at above address — A small, stuffy room with eight or ten benches, six of which are reserved for women and the remaining four for men.

A wooden partition with a small glass window separates Mr. Creque from his clients.

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FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

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Mr. Creque is a short red-skinned Negro, with large bland eyes which do not belie the guile that lies in his alert scheming brain. He knew the tricks, alright.

The 'phone rang.

Mr. Creque picked the 'phone up and placed it between his shoulder and his ear, holding it thusly so that he could write more freely. "ABC Employment Agency."

The people who are seeking jobs out front suddenly halted their cross-exchange of problems, the better to hear the telephone conversation that was going on in the office back of the glass partition.

## Library of Congress

"You want a girl for 8 hours? That will be \$3.20 Mrs. Fink; No, you pay carfare both ways. I'll send her right out. Goodbye Mrs. Fink."

Creque got up and walked over to the opening that stood for a door. His eyes roamed over the group as if he was searching for someone to send to Mrs. Fink, but he knew that Mrs. Banks would be the person elected to be sent out. Hadn't she been the first to be sent out every morning when there was a call for day's work? In fact the massive Mrs. Banks was so certain, that she had already risen from her seat.

"Mrs. Banks," Creque beckoned to her.

"Who me? Ah'm sho lucky!" beamed the beefy Mrs. Banks as she flounced out of the room to the office.

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"Here, Mrs, Banks," said Creque, handing her a card, "Mrs. Fink is expecting you in half an hour."

"Fink", asked Mrs, Banks dubiously, "Aint she Joosh? You know Ah don't wukk fo' no Joosh folks, cause dey sets de clock back an' - -

"Mrs. Banks, you know I wouldn't send you out on a Jewish job. I have never done it, have I? Of course not. Forty cents, please.

That's 10% of \$3.20."

"You sho' calc'late fas'!" said Mrs. Banks handing him the money.

That job being settled, the hubbub burst out again among the hopefuls in the receiving line.

## Library of Congress

The smart, young girl in the green hat was talking, confidentially, to the girl in the yellow coat:

“You know, chile, Ah'm goin' tell you sompin dat he'ps you git on roun' heah. Yo' know ole Crick, whatever his name is, laks me. Bet Ah gits the fust parttime job dat comes heah. Nevah tek nothin' but parttime, honey; you' makes more money dat way. As Ah was goin' to say, the way to git roun' ole Crick, in dere is to say, in a whiney voice, 'Mr. Crick, why don't ya gi' me a break on these part time jobs. Ah'm a hard-working girl trying t' git along.' Dat ole fool will fall all over hissself tryin' to git fresh, but you'll git jobs long as y'u don't let him date y'u up. Ah know chile — O! an' y'o c'n kine O' show y'o figger!’” Dere's the foam now—Part time—Watch 'im call me.”

She started to powder her nose.

“Miss Lane.”

The lady in the green hat got up and went to Mr. Creque's office. The lady with the white, high, laced-up shoes, dropped her lower lip and began grumbling:

“Sho' Lawd don' know why dat li'l fas' gal gits all de parttime jobs fus'. Mr. Crick mus' be lakin' huh!”

There was subdued laughter from the other members of the unemployed audience.

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Mr. Creque rapped, sternly, on his desk and the merriment ceases.

As Mr. Creque was talking to Miss Lane, a spry, wiry young woman quickly came in upon them.

## Library of Congress

Mr. Creque was confounded at her for bursting in unheralded. He began indignantly: "Mrs. Gray, why dont ————?"

"Dont' Mrs. Gray me," flamed that little lady. "What do you mean sending me and six other women after one job?"

"Mrs. Gray ——

"Shut up! Give me my four Dollars! she commanded.

"After four days ——

"I want my money, now!"

Creque got up and gingerly touched the arm of the irate woman, saying: "Please sit down and lower your voice. P-I-e-a-s-e."

"Lower nothin'", fumed the lady condescending to sit down.

"Now the law says, after three days, you can collect your money, if I don't get you another job."

The lady stood up swelling with anger and a vitriolic outburst was on the way.

"Please sit down," said Creque, softly, "I'll give you your money. Creque handed her the money under the desk, saying: [?]"Please keep quiet.") "Now Mrs. Grey, come in Friday, and I'll return your money, if I've found no other job for you. Gooday."

Mrs. Gray tucked, the money in her stocking looking at Creque as if he were [insance?] insane . What was he taling [talking?] about? With an apprehensive glance, she scurried from the room.

## Library of Congress

A tall, raw-boned bumpkin walked in and made his way to Mr. Creque's office. He stood twisting his cap and shifting his feet.

"Well, what is it?" asked Mr. Creque, confidently.

"Well," fluttered the gawky youth, "dat job you' sent me on at dat dere bowlin'-alley—"

"Well"?

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"Dat woman down dere toll me dat y'o wukked twelve hours stead of eight. Y'o does the janitor's wuk, an' y'u only gits paid every mont'"

"What?" asked Creque, in mock surprise.

"Yassuh. An' 'stead of gittin' \$36 a mont' ya only gits thutty five."

"I'll call them up" fumed Creque, as he picked up the 'phone. "Misrepresenting the facts to me'."

"Hello". "I sent you a boy down dere and I want to know who talked to him. Miss Cohen? Wait a minute."

He turned to the boy asking: "Who talked to you? Miss Cohen?" Then he turned back to the 'phone and said: "OK. I have it straight now. Goodbye."

"Is it straight now?" asked the gawk.

"Yes—er. You went to the wrong woman. You were to see Mrs. Foley— Mrs. Foley—yes —Mrs. Foley."

"Den Ah mus' go back?"

## Library of Congress

“No, no” flustered Creque, quickly. “I’ll send you out on a better job. Let me see—  
Tomorrow — yes, tomorrow.”

“My money —-?”

“Oh you won’t need dat money after you get your job tomorrow.

Goodday.

“Yassah.” The gawky fellow shuffled out.

What a hell of a trying day an employment manager has! but it is nothing compared to the bitter disappointments and false exultations that the poor person suffers as he sits day in and day out waiting for a job which only comes in one case out of twenty, and then the good jobs are “in the bag.”