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A Scandalous Tour of Washington

By ANDREW MARTON

WASHINGTON—On a bright summer day, with a warm breeze swaying the capitol trees, a gaggle of tourists prepares to board a sightseeing bus on Massachusetts Avenue.

The bus driver introduces himself: "Hi, I'm John Hennessy, and since I got a wonderful deal from prison, I'm your driver."

Unnecessary after the unsettling news, a woman tourist's startling reminiscence to Marilyn Monroe sweeps toward the bus.

Once aboard, the sex symbol proclaims a resounding rendition of "Happy Birthday, Mr. President." Showcasing her and debasing his power up to a good laugh for President George Bush.

Fear not. The sin's more practical than that. Just another day with Scandal Tours, one of Washington's newest and most entertaining attractions.

Part history lesson, part Washington-on-trial, Scandal Tours is Washington's first tongue-lashing tour. Starring Los Angeles' own Kitty Dukakis, with a cameo of "Saturday Night Live," to dig up the real story of scandals in Washington's closets.

The 90-minute city tour is hilarious entertainment, offering visitors a novel approach to Washington's corridors of power, where scandals always are lurking.

Scandal Tours is a cost-cutting suggestion to replace sightseeing bus Presidents George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Warren Harding and John F. Kennedy.

Throughout the action continues of historically various scandals are topic-focused re-confessions of Washington's "greatest hits" of sexual and political misbehavior.

Tourists hear Rep. Wilbur Mills erroneously trying to explain why his confession, the stripper Fanne Foxe (a.k.a. "The Argentine Firecracker"), had run under a bandstand in the Tidal Basin.

They listen to Rita Jenrette, wife

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Famous Washington embarrassments are illustrated by characters portraying Marilyn Monroe, above, and Fawn Hall, below.

tours of the city. It takes in the seamier side of the nation's capital—its sexily unsteady personalities by Civil War-era statesmen, Watergate dirty tricksters and Iran-Contra schemers.

From the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial to the Capitol and Pennsylvania Avenue, Scandal Tours takes one past in front of all the city's post-card sites.

Looming visitors on this stereotypical route is a theatrical cavalcade of players. Using the front of the bus as a stage, actors from Groups Nouveau Produce, the city's most popular company of satirical parodies, such persons as Bush, Monroe, Oliver North and Fawn Hall.

Each actor emerges with the various and sundry tidbits of conspiracies strewn that colored the past years of—for example—former Los Angeles Times

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of former South Carolina Congressman John Jenrette, director her own stand-and-grins confines on the third floor of the Capitol.

The master of Scandal Tours' ceremonies is the actor playing Bush.

When the bus nears the Lincoln Memorial a Scandal Tours guide describes Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd, as an unbashfully manic-depressive with a penchant for overdecorating herself and the White House. Mrs. Lincoln also maintained a stay-in psychic for seances in the Red Room.

Actor as President George Bush stars as master of ceremonies.

As the bus stops in front of the Parthenon-style Treasury Building on Pennsylvania Avenue, a guide recounts the nasty blackmail payments paid by the first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton.

The hush money was extracted to stifle whispers of Hamilton's illicit affair with Maria Reynolds. A very thorough treasurer, Hamilton always asked for a receipt after he made his $1,000 monthly blackmail payments. The guide adds the rarely more "Hamiltonian."

Even Lafayette Park, one of Washington's most gracious environs, can't hide its blood-stained past. In Civil War days, Union Army Maj. Gen. Dan Sickles chose the park as the site to shoot his wife's lover, Philip Barton Key, the son of Francis Scott Key.

On the site of the former District Building the ruthless life of Civil War Gen. John Hooker is recalled. There, Hooker received kickbacks and other favors from women. The term "hooker" can be traced to Gen. Hooker's favorite entertainers.

Scandal continues as the bus heads toward the modern period of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This provides the actress playing Monroe to unabashedly wiggle the front of the bus, pucker her mouth and coo the "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" song the real Monroe suggestively delivered to President Kennedy at his birthday celebration.

She then breathily tells the President's other rumored sexpartners, including Lieutenant Interns Elizabeth Slatt and Judith Campbell Exner, former girlfriend of Chicago Mafia kingpin Sam Giancana.

As the tour heads for the Watergate apartments complex, it shifts its center to more contemporary improprieties. Actors playing G. Gordon Liddy and Richard Nixon take center stage, creating a sappy remembrance of "The Way We Were."

The tour gives its fullest attention for last. As the bus pulls up in front of 517 6th St. on Capitol Hill, tourists are invited for a behind-the-scenes look at Gary Hart's former town house, where no entertainers adoring starlet Donna Rice.

This tour is completed by an actress portraying Lynn Armand, Donna Rice's flamboyant friend who sold her story and pictures to People magazine. In a New York accent she rolls off Rice's embarrassments while urging tourists to save the underpaid auto garage door that was Rice's escape route from a raucous at Hart's.

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Scandal Tours are scheduled Saturdays at 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m. and 4:30, and Sundays at 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m. and 4. Weekday tours are based on demand.

For more information and reservations, call (202) 387-2253.

Morton is a free-lance writer living in Chevy Chase, Md.

STAGE WEEK

A Washington 'Phantom'

By JANICE ARKATOV

Gross National Product is back, newly opened at the Cast in the late-night political revue "The Phantom of the White House."

"The theme of the [title sketch] is that whoever is elected will be haunted by the present Administration," said John Simmons, a writer/director with the dual-based (Washington and Los Angeles) company. "We have Duke and Kitty and Barbara and George Bush. And we have a series of debates—which are improvised, with suggestions from the audience. Ted Koppel moderates Duke and Bush, and Morton Downey gets the women into a blood lust."

Also on the topical agenda: "A little tribute to Jesse (since 22% of Los Angeles public schoolchildren wanted Jesse Jackson to be President), a scandal tour of Washington, a parody of the McLaughlin Group, a Hollywood party/fundraiser, 'Wall Street Week' and a tribute to Ed Meese."

Added Simmons: "These media phenomena are popping up all the time—and our job is to keep up with them. Of course, they're the purists. We're derivative." □