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NEW YORK POST

SUNDAY

APRIL 9, 1989 / $1.00

D.C. TOUR OF SHAME

Infamous hot spots attract visitors

By Eli Teiber
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WASHINGTON — You say your eyes glaze and your feet cramp at the prospect of yet another trudging tour of the nation's capital?

Forget the Washington Monument — go straight to the townhouse where Gary Hart brought Donna Rice and ended his bid to be president.

Scratch the visit to a musty museum selling souvenir copies of the Constitution — help yourself to an "authentic" replica of Ollie North's shredded Iranscam documents.

Ditch the Jefferson Memorial — feast your eyes on the Tidal Basin where former Rep. Wilbur Mills was stopped for driving under the influence and Argentinian bombshell Fanne Foxe went swimming.

For $20 you can take a 90-minute bus tour of Washington's Hall of Shame — the places where the high and mighty turned up drunk and disorderly, from Watergate to Wayne Hays — and they throw in a drink too, according to Scandal Tours' creator Rick London.

"A Tower Sour — no whiskey," said London, a political comedy writer, referring to the no-booze pledge by defeated Defense Secretary-designate John Tower, whose favorite watering hole, The Monocle, has been added to the tour.

Guided by fellow writers and performers with the political satire group, the "Gross National Product," tourists see a gossipy version of Washington's points of interest.

Anyone can walk past the White House — Scandal Tours takes you next door to the Old Executive Office Building where Iranscammer Ollie North shredded the documents for which he is now on trial.

Your tour guide here is an actress playing North's secretary Fawn Hall who presents patrons with souvenir scraps of the shredded papers from the top of her dress.

"I just finished typing my autobiography," says Fawn, played by actress-writer Marianne Curran in a flowing blonde wig.

Fawn isn't the only performing Washington superstar on the bus.

Other tour highlights are:

■ President Bush — played by GNP director-writer John Simmons — leads the bus in the Pledge of Allegiance, and talks of his vision for a "kinder gentile nation" and warns of the environmental dangers of the "clubhouse effect" — the impact of a drought on the golf course.

■ Swinging past the Watergate Hotel, a G. Gordon Liddy look-alike tells visitors, "I'd tell you more but I'd have to kill you."

■ Reputed JFK paramour Marilyn Monroe, played by actress Helen Van Hook, takes over as the tour bus passes the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. She sings a breathless and sultry version of "Happy Birthday Mr. President."

A former New Yorker, London said he got the idea for the Scandal Tours last year after giving visiting friends the obligatory tour of the capital.

"They were bored, they asked 'Where's Gary Hart's townhouse?' I thought I should be charging for this — now I am," said London.

Some 300 spicy and scandalous bits of history are imparted during the tour.

Included is the 19th century fatal affair that drove a cuckolded general to empty three revolvers into the son of "Star Spangled Banner" composer Francis Scott Key at Lafayette Park across from the White House.

And don't forget the tour's questionable claim that Abscammer John Jenrette was told by his Playboy-posing wife, Rita, that she liked the "third step" as they indulged in marital hanky panky on the Capitol steps.

But the climax of the tour is without question the Hart townhouse.

The bus stops and the tourists walk through the quiet Georgetown neighborhood where they are shown the garage entrance of the townhouse where reporters spotted Rice and Hart together.

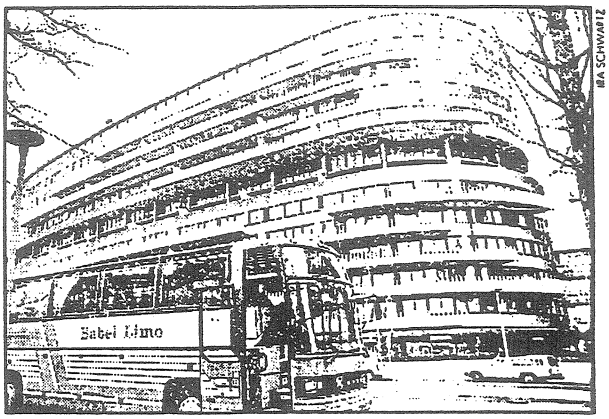
"This is where it all happened," said a tour guide in the role of Donna Rice's adviser as she leads a group to the front of the well-kept brownstone — a landmark to the end of Hart's political future.

Is London worried that his business is dependent on fresh controversy?

"No," he said, "In Washington, scandals are a growth industry."

BRA SCHWARTZ

JFK LINK: *A Scandal Tours guide portraits JFK paramour Marilyn Monroe in front of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.*



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NIXON DEMISE: *The Watergate Hotel, where the scandal that brought down the Nixon administration started.*

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HART-BREAK: *Gary Hart's Georgetown brownstone, where he rendezvoused Donna Rice, resulting in the end of his presidential bid.*