

TEXAS'S MODERN DAY ROBBER-BARONS

By Keith NICKERSON

THERE IS A PRACTICE THAT IS KNOWN, TODAY, BUT IS STILL ALLOWED BY THE TEXAS STATE GOVERNMENT. BY AN OTHER NAME, IT IS ROBBERY, EMBEZZLEMENT, AND/OR LARCENY.

I GUESS THEY JUST CALL IT "SKIMMING".

IT IS WHAT OFFICIALS OF THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE DO WITH THE FOOD PROVIDED FOR PRISONERS. NOT ALL OF IT, OF COURSE. JUST THE GOOD STUFF.

IN AN RURAL TEXAS PRISON TOWN, YOU WILL FIND SEVERAL RESTAURANTS, OWNED AND OPERATED BY A T.D.C.J. OFFICIAL.

THIS IS WHERE THINGS LIKE FRESH FRUITS, FRESH VEGETABLES, CHEESE, HOT DOG (HAMBURGER BUNS), FISH, STEAKS, RIBS, AND OTHER QUALITY MEATS, NUTS, BUTTER, SUGAR, COOKING OILS, AND VARIOUS OTHER FOODS PROVIDED FOR PRISONERS ARE TAKEN, TO BE SOLD TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

SO, WHY IS THIS A BIG DEAL? THINK ABOUT IT: TAXPAYERS ARE PAYING FOR THIS FOOD TO BE GIVEN TO PRISONERS, ARE BEING TOLD IT IS GIVEN TO PRISONERS, (THROUGH T.D.C.J. PRISON MENUS, WHICH CAN BE VIEWED ON ITS WEBSITE), BUT ARE ACTUALLY BUYING IT BACK, AT THESE RESTAURANTS!

AND, WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE PRISONERS, WHO DON'T GET THESE FOODS? NO BIG DEAL, RIGHT? I MEAN, WE'RE PRISONERS; WE DON'T DESERVE A BALANCED DIET.

BUT, WITHOUT THE PROPER FOODS, PRISONERS END UP WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS, LIKE HYPERTENSION, DIABETES, HIGH CHOLESTEROL, ETC. THEN, WE BECOME MEDICAL BURDENS, WHICH THE TAXPAYERS HAVE TO BEAR. OR, IN EXTREME CASES, (LIKE ROBERTSON UNIT IN 1995-1996), YOU GET UNEXPLAINED SKIN RASHES, LOSS OF WEIGHT, AND/OR DEATH.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO STOP IT, OR EVEN IF IT CAN BE STOPPED. ALL I KNOW IS THAT IF YOU LOOK FOR RESTAURANTS IN THESE PRISON TOWNS THAT SERVE FOOD ON BABY BLUE PLATES, AND FIND OUT IF THEY'RE OWNED BY ANY NEARBY PRISON'S MAJORS, CAPTAINS, OR FOOD SERVICES MANAGERS, (OR IN ONE CASE, A COUNSEL SUBSTITUTE), YOU WILL FIND THE MOST EXPENSIVE - CHEAP FOOD THAT A PRISONER WILL NEVER SEE, SERVED UP NICE AND HOT, FOR YOU. AND, IT IS JUST BLAZZ ROBBERY.