

Cisneros Calls Pardon a Surprise

By Steven H. Lee
SAN ANTONIO - Former Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros said Tuesday that President Bill Clinton pardoned him out of disdain for "extreme" independent counsels and believed that Mr. Cisneros was pursued for his association with his former boss.

During an interview at the San Antonio housing project of his new company, American CityVista, Mr. Cisneros emphasized that he was surprised by the pardon and didn't seek it.

Mr. Cisneros also said he has no plans to seek public office, a declaration likely to disappoint backers of the former San Antonio mayor who has touted him for statewide office.

While grateful, he said he sometimes wished the pardon hadn't been granted amid controversies surrounding other recipients - most notably fugitive financier Marc Rich. Mr. Clinton's action also refocused attention on the episode that ultimately resulted in charges against Mr. Cisneros.

Following a lengthy investigation, he pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of lying to the FBI about payments he made to former mistress Linda Medlar Jones prior to joining the first Clinton Cabinet in 1993.

When he called the former president to thank him, Mr. Cisneros said, Mr. Clinton gave him two reasons for the pardon.

"One, because he abhors the extremes of the independent counsels, and he felt he just wanted to wipe that out of existence [to end] a bad chapter of American jurisprudence," Mr. Cisneros recalled during his most extensive comments on the presidential pardon. "Secondly, he felt that people came after me principally because I was associated with him."

"Now, I don't agree with that," he said. "I made mistakes, and I've got to own up to them and be responsible for them."

A Clinton spokesman couldn't be reached for comment Tuesday.

A spokesman for the Justice Department, under whose auspices the independent counsel operates, declined to comment.

A pardon primarily reinstates certain rights, such as the right to vote. But it doesn't have any legal effect on Mr. Cisneros because he didn't lose those rights with his misdemeanor conviction. However, it helped Ms. Jones, who was convicted of a felony in the case and sentenced to prison.

"For her, it meant something," said Mr. Cisneros, whose payments to Ms. Jones



began in 1990. "And I'm happy if it helps her get her life on track."

When notified of her pardon on Jan. 19, the former political campaign fund-raiser told The Dallas Morning News that Mr. Clinton did the right thing.

"He put an end to something that should never have happened in the first place," Ms. Jones said. "It was just horrible. One of the things they had taken away from me was my right to vote. Since I had always been so involved in that, it really did hurt."

She, too, said she never petitioned for the pardon, though she contemplated doing so after President Bush took office.

Mr. Cisneros indicated that the decision was Mr. Clinton's alone.

"In many ways, it's classic Bill Clinton that he would think generously about a colleague ... with no request."

Mr. Cisneros said he's "sad" for the former president that other pardons have stirred controversy and the specter of more investigations. He said it's an aspect of public life that he doesn't miss.

After his stint as secretary of Housing and Urban Development during President Clinton's first term, Mr. Cisneros became chairman of Univision, the nation's largest Spanish-language television company. He recently left that post to form American CityVista, which is developing new affordable housing subdivisions in inner cities.

The effort is a joint venture with KB Home, the nation's largest home builder, formerly known as Kaufman & Broad Corp.

Mr. Cisneros said Tuesday that he has ruled out any run for public office.

"Building a self-reliant business that I can share with family and friends, and doing something that I think is noble, give me the best course," Mr. Cisneros said. "Without hellacious election cycles, huge fund-raising requirements and all of the personal attacks that seem to be part of the [political] game."

News Briefs

Health Care for Immigrants Would Carry "Minimal" Cost

New York - Providing adequate health care for thousands of immigrants living in New York legally, but who are denied care due to a lack of federal funding, would represent a "minimal" cost for the state, according to a report released today.

The report, presented by The Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation that supports independent research on social and health issues, concludes that the health care system is unfair because it excludes these immigrants even though they work and pay taxes.

Karen Davis, president of the Commonwealth Fund, says that the consequences of not having medical insurance are devastating for immigrants, their families, medical providers and the health care system.

The organization warns of the destructive effects of a system that, by denying preventative or early care, overloads emergency services and aggravates existing illnesses.

The report analyzes three options for resolving the problem. The first would be to reinstate Medicaid coverage - a medical assistance program for low-income families - as it was before 1996 health reform, and to offer another program called Family Health Plus (FHP) to adult immigrants.

A second option would be to extend FHP to cover low-income immigrant adults who could be candidates for these programs but might be excluded from the more "generous" benefits such as long-term care.

The third possibility would be to design a new program that would provide limited coverage such as out-patient care to legal immigrants.

The total cost to the state would be \$5.1 million the first year, but, according to the report. This amount would increase as the number of beneficiaries increases.

However, after three years, when an estimated 33,000 adults would be participating in the program, the cost would be some \$72 million, which is only 3 percent of the Medicaid budget of \$24 billion.

At least 10 states including New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania have changed their policies since the federal government in 1996 decided to withdraw its contribution for Medicaid coverage for legal immigrants - except for emergency care.

One-fifth of AIDS Patients in U.S. are Hispanics

Washington - Some 62,200 Hispanics residing in the United States were suffering from AIDS by late 1999, a figure that amounts to 20 percent of all those affected by the disease in the country's metropolitan areas, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) said today.

The number of AIDS patients "in every state and metropolitan areas with populations greater than 500,000" rose during 1999, the health center reported.

"The increase is mainly due to better survival" possibilities given the more effective medical treatments available, the CDC added.

The state with the most patients was New York, with 17 percent of the 317,652 cases reported around the country, followed by California (14 percent), Florida (11 percent), Texas (7 percent) and New Jersey (5 percent).

About 83 percent of those affected lived in cities with more than 500,000 people, particularly in Los Angeles, where 15,532 cases were tabulated, New York with 44,994 and Washington with 10,534.

Of the total number of AIDS patients, 79 percent were men. The distribution of cases along racial or ethnic lines went as follows: 41 percent were African-Americans, 38 percent were non-Hispanic whites and 20 percent were Hispanics.

Most of the Latinos with AIDS lived in New York (more than 17,200), California (11,109), Florida (5,527), Texas (4,967), New Jersey (2,847), Massachusetts (1,671), Connecticut (1,627) and Illinois (1,326).

The CDC report reads that by late 1999 there were more than 4,300 children and adolescents with AIDS, although 77 percent of those infected with the virus were between 35 and 64 years old. "People who live with AIDS and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) have a longer life expectancy, but this is accompanied by new problems," the report adds.

Puerto Rican Governor Asks U.S. to Stop Bombing Vieques

Washington - Puerto Rican Gov. Sila Maria Calderon today formally requested that the Pentagon halt its controversial military maneuvers on Vieques until the results of new studies concerning the effects of those maneuvers, which include the detonation of numerous explosives, on the health of the island's more than 9,000 residents are available.

Calderon made the request Tuesday afternoon at a meeting with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, with whom she spoke at the Pentagon concerning the subject that has caused tension between the United States and Puerto Rico for the last two years.

"Today's meeting follows an extensive conversation at a dinner given by the White House (for the National Governors Association)" last Sunday, Calderon noted.

Calderon asked Rumsfeld to stop training missions at the island's firing range until the U.S. Department of Health completes a preliminary investigation of the effects the noise from bombings has on the residents of Vieques.

Defense Department spokespersons say the Navy has not made a final decision concerning the use of the Vieques facility for training exercises next month.

Calderon hopes that Rumsfeld's office will respond to her request before ordering further bombing training missions on Vieques.

"No decision was made at the meeting, but they indicated they would get back to me soon," Calderon said at a Washington press conference in which she gave some details concerning her talk with Rumsfeld and U.S. Senate Republican leaders.

Calderon, a member of the autonomous Popular Democratic Party (PPD) and former mayor of San Juan, said she was "very grateful for Secretary Rumsfeld's kindness."

Apparently, Secretary Rumsfeld did not subject her to another lecture concerning the vital importance of Vieques to the Pentagon, which considers the island "the crown jewel of its air, land and sea training facilities."

"This is the first time Rumsfeld has confronted this subject," a conflict inherited from the Clinton administration, which had scheduled a meeting to determine the future of military training on Vieques residents.

Clinton's initiative, which had the support of former Puerto Rican Gov. Pedro Rossello, consisted of a referendum giving Puerto Ricans the choice of having the Navy withdraw from Vieques in May 2003 or continuing unlimited training on the island.

Calderon insists options should include an immediate and permanent halt to military operations on the island. The governor also met Tuesday with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, and his second-in-command, Senate Majority Whip Republican Don Nickles.

Calderon acknowledged that Lott favors the Navy's continued use of Vieques as a training facility, but she added that she had not discussed the subject with Nickles.

WTOS Meets to Discuss Issues



Over 400 leaders of the West Texas Organizing Strategy convened in a delegates assembly held at Second Baptist Church on Sunday, February 25. The purpose of the assembly was to initiate the next step in the organizing project. For the last year and a half, the leadership of the West Texas Organizing Strategy has been recruiting member churches, raising money, and training leaders. The project is now in relationship with 30



congregations and schools in the city and the county of Lubbock. The next goal will be to have 200 leaders from these 30 institutions initiate a house meeting campaign over the next six months in order to understand the pressures on families and to develop an action plan to begin to deal with some of those pressures.

photos by John P. Cervantez 744-1654

Bush Grabs Another High Tech Executive

By Scott Harris

In a move that deepens ties between the Bush administration and the high-tech industry, the White House announced on Wednesday the appointment of the CEO of Joint Venture: Silicon Valley to serve as a deputy assistant to the president and director of the office of intergovernmental affairs.

In a brief phone interview, Ruben Barrales, who will assume duties March 5, said he will serve as "a portal" between the Bush administration and state governors and mayors of larger cities. Among his pressing concerns, Barrales said, will be coordinating efforts between the states and the federal government in addressing the West's energy crisis. Building up the nation's broadband infrastructure, Barrales said, is "an emerging issue" that will be another priority.

Barrales, the bilingual son of Mexican immigrants, also adds to the diversity that has distinguished this administration from its Republican predecessors. In 1992, Barrales became the first Latino elected to the San Mateo (Calif.) County Board of Supervisors and was re-elected in 1996. Tabbed as a rising star by GOP leaders, Barrales ran for state controller in 1998 but was defeated by incumbent Kathleen Connell.

He was later named president and CEO of Joint Venture: Silicon Valley in December 1998, overseeing an organization of business, government and education leaders that conducts research and creates programs designed to enhance the region's economy and quality of life.

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Bush Nominates Barreto for SBA Post

By James E. Garcia

WASHINGTON - President Bush has nominated Hector Barreto to lead the Small Business Administration.

His nomination drew immediate praise from the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), a small business advocacy group.

Barreto served as a co-chairman of Bush's presidential campaign in California and owns a Los Angeles-based insurance and financial services company that has 10 employs.

USHCC President George Herrera said Barreto has "extensive experience as a successful entrepreneur," and added, "Mr. Barreto has shown himself to be an astute businessman and dedicated member of the community."

Mary Leon of NFIB told Business Week, "The Bush Administration needs to shift the focus of the SBA toward helping small-business owners on a day-to-day basis. And from everything we can see, Hector Barreto seems to have that same vision."

Barreto gained national attention as a Bush supporter after delivering a speech at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia. In his speech, he previewed the Bush agenda on cutting taxes, reducing federal regulations, and curbing the power of trial lawyers. Barreto also attended a recent White House ceremony in which Bush laid out his federal budget priorities and \$1.6 trillion tax cut proposal.

Barreto's nomination must be approved by the U.S. Senate, but observers say there will be little if any opposition. Under President Clinton, the SBA



post was held by Aida Alvarez, who focused on increasing loans to minority- and women-owned businesses.

Business Week magazine's website reported Monday that not all of Barreto's potential constituents are thrilled by his nomination. According to the website, Frances T. Nevarez, president of PowerUP!, a technology-training company in San Jose, Calif., says, "Barreto lacks experience with small-business concerns beyond the Hispanic community, in which he has been politically active. He is too narrowly focused on that community -- and I'm Hispanic," Nevarez said, adding that the SBA chief needs to, "represent all small businesses and cross all ethnic lines."

Barreto's involvement with small businesses, particularly in the Hispanic community, has

been a family affair. His father, Hector V. Barreto, Sr., helped found the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Barreto now sits on the USHCC board as a vice chairman and head of its legislative committee. It was not clear if Barreto will resign his USHCC post if confirmed to lead the SBA.

Last year, the General Accounting Office (GAO) criticized the management of the SBA's program to assist minority-owned businesses in qualifying for government contracts.

Barreto is also the former head of the Latin Business Association in Los Angeles. He holds a bachelor's degree in management and Spanish from Rockhurst College in Kansas City, Mo., and lives in suburban Glendale with his wife and two daughters.

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President Bush's Extraordinary Opportunity

By Raul Yzaguirre © Hispanic Link

President Bush campaigned as a "compassionate conservative" and promised to be "everybody's president," pledges he reaffirmed in his inaugural address. For Latinos, that's an excellent sign.

More than one-third of Hispanic families struggle every day with low wages, lack of basic benefits such as health insurance, and housing and utility costs that outpace the modest income gains of recent years, no matter how hard they work. They need for Bush to be their president.

A clear test of the Bush administration's compassion will come soon, in the form of the president's budget and tax priorities. This presidency, at the dawning of a new century and coming at a time of unprecedented economic prosperity, presents an extraordinary opportunity to help narrow the gap between the "haves" and "have nots," extend access to health care to all and assure a tax cut for all working families.

Despite two decades of nearly continuous economic growth, millions of Hispanics, particularly children, cannot count on the basic necessities of life — food, shelter and medical care. More than one-third of Latino children (34 percent) live in poverty. Nearly one-third (30 percent) lack any form of health insurance coverage.

About one-third of Hispanic children live in inadequate and/or overcrowded housing, and most of their families pay more than half of their incomes on rent. More than 4 million Latino children don't get enough to eat, or don't have adequate, healthy diets because their families can't afford it.

Latino children are less likely to be enrolled in early child

development programs, which research shows is the key to later educational success, and almost 30 percent of Hispanic children don't graduate from high school. The overwhelming majority of these Latino children come from working families, and most of these families do not receive government help.

Fortunately, several interventions have proved to be effective in addressing these problems, and President Bush has the opportunity to invest in these efforts by:

* Assuring that everybody benefits from proposed tax cuts. The best way to do this will be to make the president's proposed \$1,000-per-child tax credit refundable. There are families that may not make enough to pay income tax but are still hit hard by payroll and Social Security taxes. Through "refundability," all families with children — not just the well-to-do — would receive the benefit. Without refundability, about 6 million Latino children will be shut out of the tax bill. With refundability, they and their families will get a desperately needed boost, and perhaps 1 million of them, almost all from working families, will be lifted out of poverty entirely. * Supporting bipartisan efforts to expand access to health insurance.

Particularly as the economic slowdown threatens to push more U.S. workers off the private health insurance rolls, the government should respond with initiatives that quickly and efficiently reduce the number of uninsured. * Restoring basic health and nutrition benefits for legal immigrants.

There has been widespread, bipartisan support recently for restoring the "safety net" for immigrants, particularly children, who are excluded from help no matter how needy. At a time of record budget surpluses, there is no excuse for denying essential services to

kids simply because of where they were born. * Ensuring essential investments in effective education, affordable housing and child care programs.

These supports provide working poor families, adults trying hard to leave welfare and those most vulnerable to an economic downturn with the help they need to build a better future.

"Leaving no child behind" means making Head Start and other early childhood learning efforts accessible to every preschool child, and ensuring that older children have safe environments for supplemental learning and recreation in non-school hours. Helping families who can afford it to buy homes and increasing support to those who can't will assure progress toward our national goal of safe, decent housing for everyone. The federal budget surplus is about \$5 trillion over the next 10 years. We have the resources to pay down the debt, protect Social Security and Medicare, and make needed investments in those children and families — if we spend wisely.

These proposals would not only help struggling Latino families, they would promote our country's future economic security and well-being. In less than two decades — around the time children born today begin to enter the workforce — one in four children in the United States will be Hispanic. If he's truly going to be remembered as their president then, Bush needs to act now.

Raul Yzaguirre is president and CEO of the National Council of La Raza, based in Washington, D.C.

Related Articles: Tiny Mexican Town Becomes Stage for Presidential Meeting Banking on Star Power, Mexico's Fox to Push Bush Administration

El Grupo Congresional Hispano Surge En Apoyo De Alianzas Internacionales

Por Cynthia L. Oroscó

La llegada de una nueva era de alianzas entre México y la comunidad mexicanoamericana en los Estados Unidos ha sido confirmada por la cumbre de dos días entre el presidente Vicente Fox y una docena de los miembros del Grupo Congresional Hispano en la Ciudad de México.

Las sesiones se llevaron a cabo entre el 19 y el 20 de febrero en la residencia del presidente, Los Pinos, a sólo tres días de la reunión de Fox con el presidente George W. Bush en su rancho de Guanajuato. Marcaron el comienzo de un "diálogo continuo" que surtirán influencia sin precedentes en la política nacional e internacional de los Estados Unidos por muchos años, según informó el representante del congreso del estado de Texas, Silvestre Reyes, jefe del grupo compuesto por 18 demócratas en total, al volver a éste país.

"El presidente Fox reconoce que el Grupo Congresional Hispano está en una posición especial para servir de intermediario para muchos de los diferentes temas que serán tratados entre los Estados Unidos y Latinoamérica," dijo Reyes a Hispanic Link. Así, al comprometerse Fox a consultar y trabajar con el grupo, este grupo podría también jugar un papel interesante de manera regular en la relación de Fox con Bush.

Frank Gómez, jefe fundador del Consejo Hispano de Relaciones Internacionales con sede en Washington, D.C., se refiere a la sesión del Grupo Congresional Hispano en Los Pinos como "una indicación de la aparición del grupo como ente

importante para asuntos interamericanos -- específicamente asuntos de los Estados Unidos con México." Percibe que el grupo puede asumir un rol poderoso en áreas afines como los asuntos gubernamentales, el comercio, las finanzas y el sector bancario.

En reuniones individuales con Fox el mes pasado, los doce miembros del grupo y Bush concordaron en unirse más para el trabajo sobre asuntos como la energía, el comercio, la educación y el medio ambiente. Se sumaron también con entusiasmo a una propuesta de Fox para establecer un panel bi-nacional con el fin de tratar temas de mano de obra y migraciones.

También presentes en las reuniones con Fox y los miembros del Grupo Congresional Hispano estuvieron varios de sus secretarios del gabinete, así como representantes de la Cámara de Comercio Estadounidense-Mexicana. Entre otros temas discutidos se encuentran el proceso de certificación de narcóticos y relaciones entre empresas de los Estados Unidos y México. Representante del estado de California, Grace Napolitano, informó a Hispanic Link que la delegación del grupo compartió con Fox y sus secretarios la preocupación que tiene con asuntos de camiónaje y migración.

"No necesitamos un programa de trabajadores huéspedes (braceros). Algunas personas en los Estados Unidos sólo quieren mano de obra barata", añadió. Napolitano enfatizó que cualquier programa de mano de obra que apoyara el grupo debe incluir provisiones para que los trabajadores mexicanos se queden legalmente en los Estados Unidos

y debe dirigirse a los temas de salud, seguridad personal y asuntos legales de trabajo.

Durante la visita a México, los miembros del grupo pudieron concertar diferentes reuniones, además de varias con senadores del Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) de Fox, y con otros legisladores de la oposición, el Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).

Los miembros del grupo y los del gabinete de Fox también discutieron la creación de un panel compuesto de representantes de ambos congresos -- de los Estados Unidos y de México -- para facilitar el acercamiento entre los legisladores líderes en los dos países sobre temas de política difíciles. Este panel tendría reuniones periódicas durante el año.

Llegaron rápidamente a un acuerdo sobre el proceso anual de certificación de narcóticos por el que el gobierno estadounidense pasa revisión a los esfuerzos de diferentes países en minimizar el tráfico de narcóticos. Los miembros del grupo declararon que pronto presentarían legislación al congreso estadounidense para eliminar el proceso para México.

Después de reunirse Bush y Fox en el rancho San Cristóbal, en León, estado de Guanajuato, los dos presidentes emitieron una declaración conjunta que denominaron "La propuesta de Guanajuato," en la que concordaron en crear el panel sobre temas de mano de obra y migraciones, compuesto por el secretario de estado de los Estados Unidos, Colin Powell y el fiscal John Ashcroft y ministro del exterior mexicano, Jorge Castañe-

da y ministro del interior Santiago Creel.

El panel buscará respuestas a los temas relacionados con los mexicanos que trabajan en los Estados Unidos que sean aceptables a los dos países. Tratará específicamente el problema de la violencia cada vez más aguda contra los migrantes mexicanos.

"Trabajaremos por el desarrollo económico y social de nuestras comunidades de la frontera, lucharemos contra la violencia y nos empeñaremos en crear un ambiente seguro y ordenado," indica la declaración. Además, se comprometieron los dos países a buscar la implementación de la decisión del panel del Tratado de Libre Comercio a permitir la circulación con mayor libertad de los camiones comerciales mexicanos en los Estados Unidos.

Otros miembros del grupo que viajaron a la Ciudad de México fueron los representantes de los Estados Unidos Hilda Solís, Joe Baca y Loretta Sánchez de California; Solomón Ortíz, Ciro Rodríguez y Rubén Hinojosa de Texas; Ed Pastor (de Arizona); Robert Menéndez (de Nuevo Jersey); Luis Gutiérrez (de Illinois); y comisionado residente Anibal Acevedo-Vilá (de Puerto Rico). El grupo de trabajo de relaciones exteriores del Grupo Congresional Hispano y la cámara colaboraron en coordinar el viaje.

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Read El Editor - Lubbock's Leader in News for the Hispanic Community!

Here's An Unpopular Idea For Your Consideration

By Victor Landa

First it was George W. who made his way to Mexico in his cowboy boots and shirt collar. Then it was 12 members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus who traveled south in their business suits and shoes. Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox spoke of cross-border trade, drug trafficking and immigration. The caucus members and Fox spoke of specific human needs.

There are more than 5 million undocumented workers in the United States. The vast majority of these are Mexican. It's been said many times before, but at this point it merits repeating: The workers who come to our country to toil without proper documentation do so as a last resort, out of necessity. They work stooped over in the agricultural fields, or washing dishes, or cleaning houses and other such jobs that U.S. workers disdain. This is an irrefutable fact, and to refute it is to be blind to our own conceit and national self-importance.

In Mexico they're called *paisanos*, a euphemism that describes men and women so desperate for a decent job that they abandon their homeland in search of opportunity.

What Mexican leaders are just now admitting is that these millions of *paisanos* infuse much-needed dollars into the Mexican economy, and that these dollars have been the saving grace of Mexico's thriving informal economy.

It's under these circumstances and for this specific purpose that the dozen members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus traveled to meet their congressional counterparts in Mexico.

The reports say the conversation was open and frank. All agreed that a proposed U.S. guest worker -- *bracero* -- program amounts to little more than serfdom. The Mexican workers would be regarded as less than indentured servants.

The program would "let in" workers as needed in the agricultural fields, then usher them back to Mexico when the work was done. As it stands, the agricultural workers in our country toil in the worst conditions of any laborer in our land. Imagine the conditions that would prevail -- the safety hazards, the low pay, the backbreaking hours with no rest -- if the workers were to be scuttled back to Mexico before they had a chance to voice complaints.

The idea that came from this meeting is very unpopular, but this group of binational legisla-

tors has had the wherewithal to voice it. The idea is to grant permanent residence to all undocumented workers of good moral standing who have worked consistently for five years in the United States.

I can already hear the hordes of "aginers" sharpening their tongues.

I'm certain that when this proposal is brought before Congress the divisions will be deep and the fighting fierce. I'm sure that the racial slurs and stereotypes will run rampant, if not within the halls of Congress, then for sure in the vast void of the right-wing spin machine. This has the potential to get ugly.

But maybe we should consider the ugliness that already exists. We should consider the neighborly way we treat people who want nothing from us besides what we won't take for ourselves; the way some of our corporations siphon human energy and dignity in the (ITAL)maquiladora(ENDITAL) factories along the border. We should consider the way human beings are deemed "illegal" because they "don't play by the rules," when many people in our own country ignore the rules of basic human decency, adequate working conditions, fair wages and business practices. We should consider how the term "illegal" has become in itself a justification. We can look the other way at their working conditions, we can turn a blind eye to their deplorable wages, we can ignore them when we happen to notice them because they are, after all, "illegal."

I have no way of knowing if the worker residency idea will take hold. And if it takes hold there is no way to predict if it will survive what will surely be a brutal battle in Congress. But what I do know is that at the very least this proposal will raise the visibility of the undocumented worker, and keep us honest.

If we are to continue treating them as we have, then let it be in the light of awareness. Let's stop fooling ourselves and turning the other way. If we are to act in a way that is less than humane, then let it be a conscious act, and let us see how long we can live with it.

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Congressional Hispanic Caucus Emerging As International Advocate

By Cynthia L. Oroscó

The advent of a new era of alliances between Mexico and the Mexican-American community in the United States has been confirmed by the two-day summit in Mexico City between President Vicente Fox and a dozen members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

The sessions were held Feb. 19 and 20 at the presidential residence, Los Pinos, just three days after Fox met at his Guanajuato ranch with President George W. Bush, and marked the beginning of "an ongoing dialogue" that will have unprecedented influence on U.S. national and international policy for years to come, said U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-Texas), chairman of the 18-member, all-Democratic caucus.

"President Fox recognizes that the caucus is in a unique position to be an intermediary for many different issues between the United States and Latin America," Reyes said told Hispanic Link. Thus Fox's commitment to confer, and work, with the caucus could also play an interesting role in his relationship with Bush.

Frank Gómez, founding chairman of the Washington-based Hispanic Council on International Relations, calls the CHC's Los Pinos session "an indication of the emergence of the caucus as a player in inter-American affairs -- in U.S.-Mexico affairs, specifically." He sees the caucus as a potentially strong advocate in areas of natural affinity, such as government, trade, finance and banking.

In their separate meetings with Fox last month, the 12 caucus members and Bush agreed to work more closely on such matters as energy, trade, education and the environment. They also readily bought into a



Mexican President Vicente Fox, center in back row, poses for a picture with the U.S. Hispanic Caucus in his presidential residence of Los Pinos, Mexico City.

proposal enthusiastically promoted by Fox to establish a binational panel to address labor and migration issues.

Joining Fox and CHC members were several of his cabinet secretaries, as well as representatives of the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce. Among other issues brought to the table were the drug certification process and relations between U.S. and Mexico businesses.

U.S. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-Calif.) told Hispanic Link that the caucus delegation shared its concern on the trucking and migration issues in their dialogue with Fox and his cabinet secretaries.

"We don't need a guest-worker program," she added. "Some people in the United States just want cheap labor." Napolitano stressed that any labor program the caucus would support must include provisions for Mexican

workers to remain legally in the United States, and address health, safety and labor law issues.

During their Mexico visit, caucus members took time to schedule meetings with senators from Fox's National Action Party (PAN) and legislators from the rival Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Caucus and Fox cabinet members also discussed creation of a panel made up of representatives of both the U.S. and Mexican congresses to enable the legislative leaders in both countries to find common ground on hot-button policy issues. It would meet periodically throughout the year.

They quickly reached accord on the annual drug certification process by which the U.S. government reviews a country's efforts to curb drug trafficking. Caucus members stated they would soon introduce legislation

in Congress to eliminate the process for Mexico.

After Fox hosted Bush at his San Cristóbal ranch outside León, Guanajuato, the presidents issued a joint statement called "The Guanajuato Proposal," in which they agreed to create a labor and migration panel comprised of U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Attorney General John Ashcroft, and Mexican Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda and Interior Minister Santiago Creel. The panel will seek answers to issues related to Mexican nationals working in the United States that would be acceptable to both countries. It will specifically address increasing violence against Mexican migrants.

"We shall work for the economic and social development of our border communities, fight violence and strive to create a safe and orderly environment," the statement read. Additionally, it committed the two countries to pursue implementation of the NAFTA panel's decision on allowing Mexican commercial trucks to travel more freely in the United States.

Other caucus members who traveled to Mexico City were U.S. Reps. Hilda Solís, Joe Baca and Loretta Sánchez of California; Solomón Ortíz, Ciro Rodríguez and Rubén Hinojosa from Texas; Ed Pastor (Ariz.); Robert Menéndez (N.J.); Luis Gutiérrez (Ill.); and Resident Commissioner Anibal Acevedo-Vilá (Puerto Rico). The CHC's International Relations Task Force and the chamber worked to coordinate the trip.

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Lea El Editor

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The Tricky Business of Cross Cultural Theater

By MIREYA NAVARRO

© New York Times News Service

NEW YORK - Dasha Epstein, the producer of "4 Guys Named José ... and una Mujer Named María!" a musical revue playing off-Broadway since September, says she never counts on advance sales to tell her how well her show is doing on any given week.

"It gives me an ulcer because you never know what's going to come in," Epstein said. "This audience wants the ticket in their hand. It's a spontaneous 'What are we doing tonight?'"

The audience for "4 Guys" is mostly Latino, and despite its idiosyncrasies it has helped the show survive at the Blue Angel Theater for more than five months. The musical, which will close on Sunday and reopen in Miami, has succeeded in tapping a cross-cultural market of Anglo and Latino theatergoers with a high-energy revue of Spanish songs, many of them old standards with familiar English versions.

Reviews have been generally favorable, and Ben Brantly of The New York Times called it a "chipper, very likable musical revue."

Even so, finding an audience in New York has not been easy. The experience of "4 Guys" underscores the challenges of creating and marketing theater, whose traditional audience is largely white, not only to different audiences but to the diversity within those audiences, the Latino one being a prime case in point.

"It's been an education," said Epstein, a veteran Broadway producer who won Tonys for "Ain't Misbehaving" and "Children of a Lesser God." "If I'd known then what I know now, I would have done one major thing differently. I would have said 'limited engagement.'"

"The one disappointment I've had," she said of the Hispanic audience, "is that they haven't come quickly enough." She said she spent 10 years looking for a musical like "4 Guys," something different that would lure first-timers. She had considered and rejected financing projects like "Zoot Suit," the Luis Valdez musical play about the imprisonment and subsequent vindication of a group of young Chicanos in World War II Los Angeles. Epstein said she feared that the work was too Mexican and would not speak to the more diverse Latino population of New York City. ("Zoot Suit," the first Latino-theme musical on Broadway, opened at the Winter Garden in 1979 and closed after 58 performances.)

She also rejected investing in "The Capeman," the Paul Simon musical about the gang-related deaths of two teen-agers in New York in 1959 and the life of their 16-year-old killer, Salvador Agron. Hurt by bad reviews, the show closed in 1998 after 68 regular performances.

"I didn't want negative," she

said. "Negative works sometimes, but you live in a society where you should walk out of the theater with hope."

She found what she wanted at a staged reading presented by Amas Musical Theater at the John Houseman Theater last March. David Coffman and Dolores Prida were trying out what became a humorous celebration of Latin music and dance that played on the cultural pride and nostalgia of Hispanic groups in the United States.

"4 Guys" is about a show being presented by four Latino men and one Latina at the veterans hall in Omaha. Forty-one songs, spanning the decades from the 1940s to Ricky Martin, constitute the core of the show.

For Prida, a playwright based in nonprofit community theater and better known for comedies with social commentary, "4 Guys" was a departure and her first venture into off-Broadway theater. But this time she managed to make "important points," exploring Latino identity and sending up stereotypes within the community, Prida said.

More important than appealing to both Spanish and English-speaking audiences was luring diverse Hispanic groups, which often gravitate toward theater from their own countries.

To enhance the show's crossover appeal, Prida selected songs by composers from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic, four major nationalities well represented in this country's Latino population. Many songs, like "Bésame Mucho" and "Sway With Me," were familiar to American audiences in either Spanish or English.

At first the theater got calls from people asking if they would understand the show, Epstein said. But English-speakers now make up 20 to 30 percent of the audience on most nights, she said.

Latinos also had to be drawn in. So Epstein enlisted Enrique Iglesias as a producer in name only - he has no financial investment in the musical, she said - because Iglesias, who happens to be her godson, was the only name Latinos would recognize in a show performed by unknowns, she said.

Epstein also advertised on Spanish-language radio, television and in print, including a promotion with El Diario La Prensa that allows the newspaper's readers to pay only \$25, instead of the regular \$47.50, for some performances.

Still, the audience was slow to build and the show was sold mostly by word of mouth. Epstein, the show's sole financial backer, said that "4 Guys" cost about \$500,000 to produce and is recovering costs but not making money yet.

So when the owners of the Blue Angel Theater said the show had to leave by March to make room for a new restaurant,

she decided to take the company to Miami sooner than planned. Despite certain peculiarities of the audience - "Tuesdays and Wednesdays we need the Anglo audience," Epstein said, because few Latinos attend those days - she said she has refuted those who warned her away from the show on the assumption that Latinos prefer concerts to the theater.

She noted that "Ain't Misbehavin," the celebrated Fats Waller revue, took a full year to pull in the black audience, while the white audience came immediately because it was about jazz. "It took us a year to get the black audience because it was considered a white show," Epstein said. "Now I'm having problems in reverse because the Anglo audience asks, 'Will we understand it?'"

Other producers noted that it is necessary to market shows differently when the target audience is more diverse.

Michel Vega, a former producer of the touring musical "Selena Forever," which played several cities in the Southwest

Penelope Cruz: Gains Ground in Hollywood With Each New Release

By Rocio Ayuso

Penelope Cruz on the cover of the most recent issue of "Premiere"

Los Angeles - Penelope Cruz's Hollywood career has taken a new step toward the top:

"Premiere" magazine has compared the Spanish actor to legendary stars such as Sofia Loren, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich and Ingrid Bergman.

The publication, which has the largest circulation of any focusing on the Hollywood scene, has placed Cruz on its March "Oscar" cover.

Inside, beneath the suggestive headline "Is Penelope Cruz Too Beautiful for Words?" some even more suggestive photos accompany the story with which the magazine has given the actor her baptism by fire in the US market.

At 26, Penelope Cruz is on the verge of becoming one of the few European actresses - and the first Spaniard - to secure permanent fame in the United States, the article states.

The assessment comes at a time when Spanish actors have racked up considerable success in Hollywood, where Antonio Banderas' by now familiar face is often accompanied by Javier Bardem, the first Spaniard to be nominated for an Oscar.

The "Premiere" piece only confirms the buzz elicited over the past few years by Cruz, who already enjoyed "Julia Roberts" type fame in Spain before working in the United States.

"Sometimes someone has such magic that it doesn't matter if they have an accent. They're just too strong to tear down," said Billy Bob Thornton who directed Cruz in "All the Pretty Horses".

After her English-language debut in "The Hi-Lo Country" in 1998, Cruz has worked con-

last year with mixed success, said that this was particularly true outside New York, where there is a less developed theater audience.

"I probably would have tried to put some star on the show just to help create awareness for the show itself," Vega said.

But the assumption that Latinos do not support Broadway is not justified, he said, citing the popularity of shows like "Forever Tango" and John Leguizamo's "Freak." The dearth of Latin-theme shows may be more a function of a shortage of Hispanic writers and directors than public apathy.

"You need to make a special effort to make sure they have a proprietary interest in the show, that they feel proud of the show," he said. "Not just a positive portrayal, just that it's not a condescending view of the Latino existence. It has to come from an authentic point of view."

Dan Klores, one of the producers of Simon's ill-fated "Capeman," said that show, which featured well-known La-

tino stars like Marc Anthony, attracted "extraordinary support" from the Latino media and ticket-buying public. The Latino turnout, about 18 percent of the audience, was higher than usual for a Broadway show, he said.

But after negative reviews in the English-language press, the show failed to attract enough of the general theater public, which is essential to a musical playing in a 1,600-seat house. "You can't start out zeroing in on an ethnic audience," Klores said. "The overhead is too high."

At a recent Saturday performance of "4 Guys," most of the 230 seats were occupied, with many Latino couples and groups, sometimes including three generations of a family who grew up listening to the same oldies. The Spanish-speakers sang along while everyone else, regardless of ethnic background, clapped and danced.

"It makes you realize how far back the music goes," said Debi Brown, 41, a director of opera-

tions for a multimedia company, who said she recognized many of the tunes. "It just brought back a lot of memories."

Among the five actors in the ensemble cast, some said they had tried to be sensitive in their portrayal and not overplay stereotypical traits associated with a particular nationality. One was Henry Gainza, 25, a Cuban-American who plays the Mexican José in the show.

"If Mexicans come to see the show, I want them to feel well represented," he said. "We still play characters because it's the nature of the piece, but within the character we try to be as real as possible." Judging from the audience reaction that night, Gainza need not have worried.

"I was impressed with all five," said Felix Vasquez, 46, a retired New York City police officer who was seeing the show for the second time and had brought three friends. "The singing and the dancing and the performers - they put on a great show!"

a well-dressed Hollywood muse. "She has an extraordinary physical presence on film," Madden says.

Cruz has also had a vivid presence on the tabloid pages, where each of her film's releases has been accompanied by rumors of a new romance.

First it was Matt Damon, her co-star in "All the Pretty Horses," followed by new rumors of a romance with Cage, who according to "US" magazine is always at her side, going so far as to lend her his private plane so she could visit her ailing grandmother.

The rumors have gone so far as to speculate that Cruz might have had something to do with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman impending divorce, given that Cruz worked with Hollywood's best-paid actor in "Vanilla Sky."

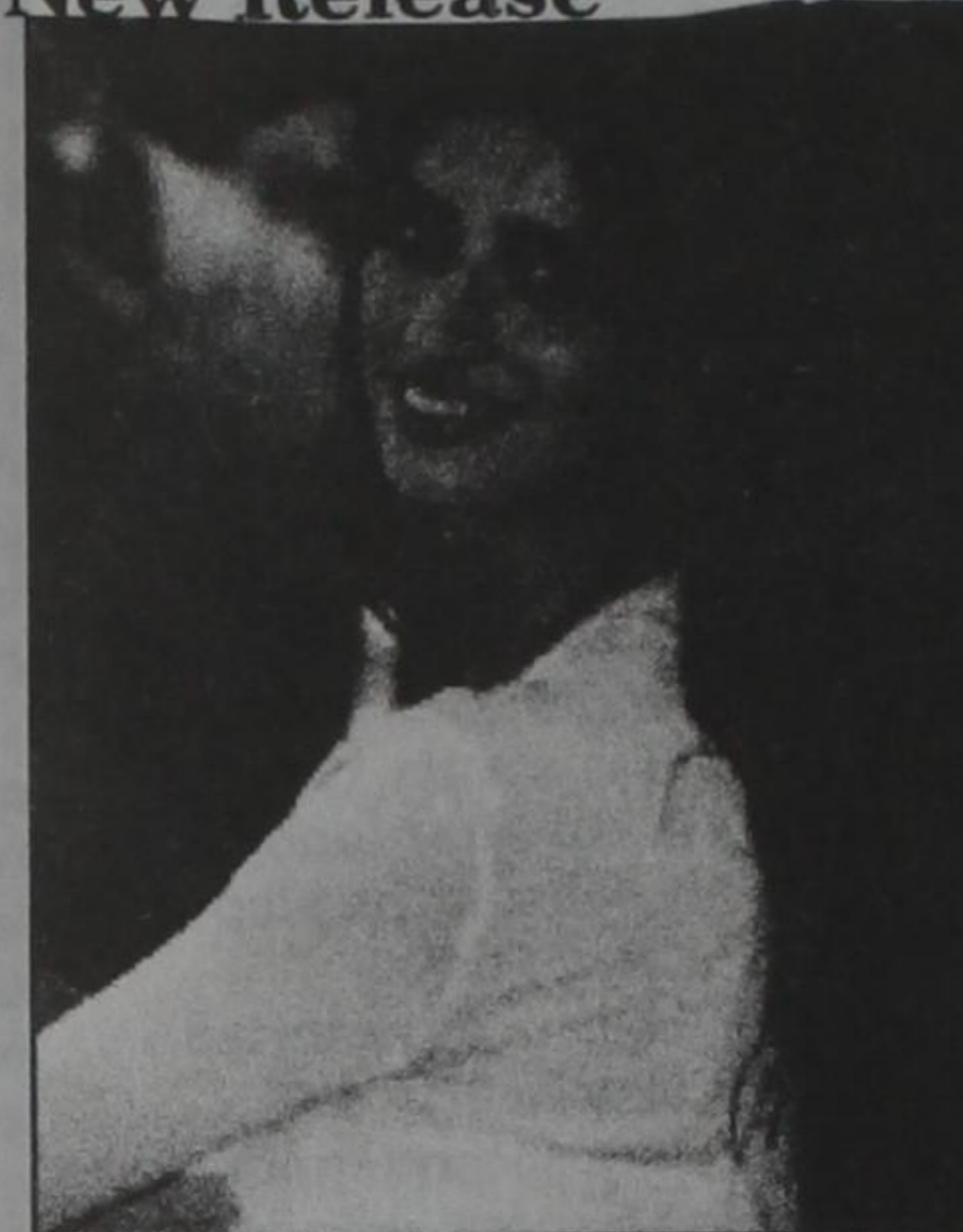
"What's really amazing are the things that people dare to ask... Because I have this job am I supposed to tell the world everything I do or who I sleep with?"

Cruz's pace will only increase in over the next few months with the March release of "Blow", in which she plays the role of a drug-addicted dealer's wife, and "Captain Corelli's Mandolin", one of the most eagerly awaited films of the year, directed by the creator of "Shakespeare in Love", John Madden, and co-starring Nicolas Cage.

"I've sought it," Cruz confesses of her growing fame in the U.S.

"It's not a matter of ending one career (in Spain) and starting again. It's a continuation of what I had already started, with greater possibilities, more interesting characters and story lines," added the woman who became a sex symbol in Spain at the age of 17 for her work in "Jamón, Jamón."

With 26 films under her belt - two of which, "Belle Époque" and "Todo sobre mi madre," earned "Best Foreign Film" Oscars for Spain - Cruz has become



Penelope Cruz consistently in Hollywood, earning the industry's respect with films that include "All the Pretty Horses" and "Woman on Top".

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From Page One

Barrales, who lives in Redwood City, Calif., with his wife, Kelly, and two children, is the latest individual with strong Silicon Valley roots to take on official duties in the Bush White House. Stanford University Provost Condoleezza Rice is national security adviser; former San Jose Congressman Norman Mineta is transportation secretary; former TechNet co-CEO Lezlee Westine oversees the White House office of public liaison; and Margita Thompson left duties with National Venture Capital Association to become press secretary for Vice President Dick Cheney's wife, Lynne.

As an elected official and activist, Barrales is known for his efforts in addressing crime in East Palo Alto, Calif., and for helping to create one of California's first public charter schools. He has served as a member of the Speaker's Commission on the California Initiative Process, and as an adviser for the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research.

The appointment was saluted in bicoastal press releases. President Bush said he is "pleased that a former local elected official, who brings such a strong background in the policy issues facing state and local governments, has agreed to head the office of intergovernmental affairs."

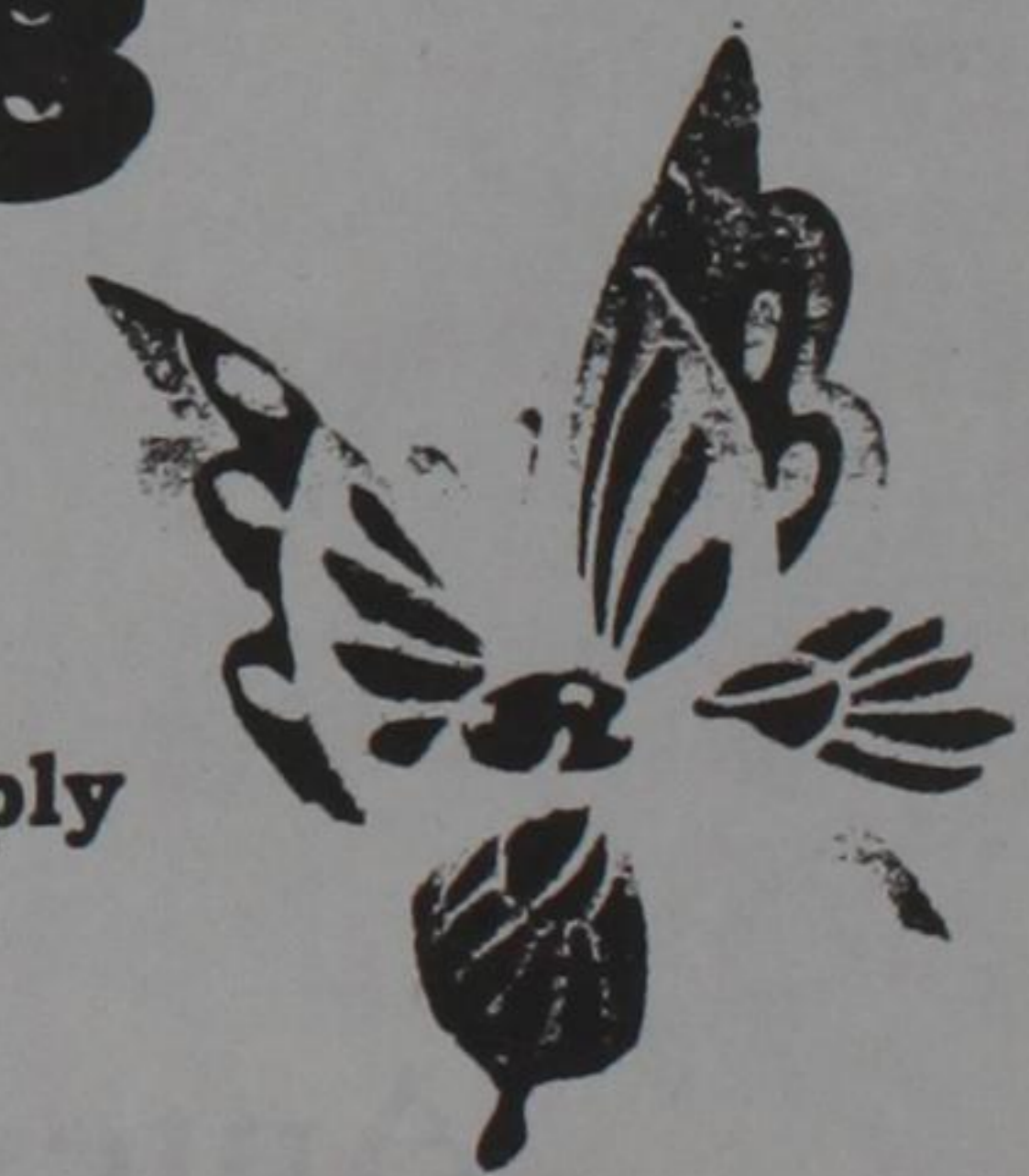
San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzales said, "Washington will be an excellent opportunity for Ruben, and I look forward to having him in the White House as a Silicon Valley contact to help us with critical issues that affect the people in our communities."

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El Salvador's: Earthquake Survivors Face Another Threat

By DAVID GONZALEZ
© The New York Times News Service

VERAPAZ, El Salvador — Six weeks after a disastrous earthquake and two weeks after a second major quake, Salvadoran officials say assistance from abroad, especially the United States, is lagging.

Farmers, victims of the earthquakes, demonstrated Tuesday demanding humanitarian aid from the government in San Salvador, El Salvador. (Photo / AFP)

With 1.2 million people left homeless — one of every six Salvadorans — officials say they are racing against time and running out of patience. They are worried about an all but guaranteed third disaster when the rainy season begins in May, bringing with it a very real danger of mudslides, floods and disease that could overwhelm them.

Foreign aid — volunteers, donations of food and medicine and outright grants — has helped this country recover from the first quake, on Jan. 13, which killed more than 800 people, and another on Feb. 13 that killed close to 300.

But officials say they need more sustained help from governments and international groups that are juggling priorities and emergencies, like helping India after its own major earthquake last month.

An equal concern for many people here has been what they view as a relative lack of leadership shown by the United States, which has so far provided \$10 million in aid, less than half of what Spain



An unidentified Salvadoran girl carries water for her family in Guadalupe El Salvador, 45 miles east of the capital. The people of San Vicente were affected by the earthquake in February and are suffering from a scarcity of water. Many residents have to walk several miles to fill family needs.

has provided. They contrast the United States contribution with the money and attention lavished on this embattled nation during its 12-year civil war, when Washington-backed soldiers fought bitterly against leftist rebels in the name of building democracy.

President Francisco Flores will go to Washington in a few days to seek more help from the United States, not just in direct aid, but in a grant of temporary protected immigration status to Salvadorans who are working in the United States and sending home more than \$1.5 billion each year.

"In all the other natural disasters here, the United States was with us," Mr.

Flores said in an interview on Friday. "Today, unfortunately, the first earthquake happened at the worst time for the United States, one week before the end of one president's mandate, and we understand the transition has affected their capacity to respond."

In El Salvador's second quake, exactly a month after the first, entire villages, like this one east of the capital, were almost destroyed. Officials estimate losses from both earthquakes at almost \$3 billion. Tens of thousands are jobless, left without homes that doubled as barbershops, stores or restaurants, or without fields to till after landslides roared down the slopes of hills and volcanoes.

Today, in this devastated town that was nearly destroyed by the second quake, Emilio José Santos, who is blind, shuffled along with a broomstick and a child to lead the way.

He was oblivious to the piles of rubble on every block, the lines of people waiting for food or even the pale yellow clouds of dust swirling about

his weary head. He was searching, with his heart rather than his eyes, for someone to help ease the suffering he has endured since he lost his

home and store in the quake.

"I'm not giving myself up for lost, and I'm blind," he said. "I'm trying to see if some institution can give me a hand."

But Salvadorans say that helping hand is becoming harder to find. Officials of international aid groups said that while the response to the first earthquake was fast and generous, the second earthquake came just when people thought the worst was over. And while international aid givers have not reached their limits, attention can quickly shift to other problems.

"Governments have to make choices where to give funds," said Abby Spring, spokeswoman for the United Nations World Food Program, which has received only \$2 million of the \$10 million it requested from donor nations to feed 200,000 of the most vulnerable victims for the next six months. "We're kind of in this Russian roulette."

This is not an entirely new experience for El Salvador. After the havoc wrought in 1998 by Hurricane Mitch, government officials said, billions of dollars were pledged by donor nations, but much less was received.

With tens of thousands of people living in temporary shelters, some with as little as a carpet stretched on a rope between trees for protection, the rush is on for temporary housing. Several international aid groups have already begun building temporary homes of wood and zinc panels, but supplies of lumber, metal and even nails are low.

"Traditionally, we had the capacity to build 20,000 houses a year," Mr. Flores said. "Today, we need to build 200,000 in one and a half months."

He received some good news on Friday from the Inter-American Development Bank,

which gave permission to redirect \$200 million in loans destined for development projects to emergency construction.

After weeks of arguing with his political foes in the legislature — former rebel leaders he faulted for seeking concessions on everything from the economy to aid distribution — Mr. Flores finally was able to get them to approve other needed loans.

Soon after his trip to Washington, he will go to Madrid, where a consortium of 20 donor nations will consider other grants and loans to help the country rebuild.

"The trauma of two earthquakes means that those who were most vulnerable have passed from poverty into misery," he said. "What happens in a country after a catastrophe this big is the gap between resources and need is widened. We will have to close that gap with some aggressive steps."

In the town of San Agustín, sacrifice is all that the residents have known since the first earthquake destroyed most of their houses. They talk about punishment or providence and say they lost their homes but clung to life, such as it is, surrounded by the debris of their past.

About a dozen listless families are still living in makeshift tents spread out in the town square, where pigs and dogs root through the dirt. The plaintive sound of accordion music mixes with that of hammers on metal as some of the more fortunate have begun to build temporary houses. About 55 homes have been built, a fraction of what is needed.

"There was some help but not enough, and it slowed down after the second earthquake," said Juan Antonio León, a farmer who is now without crops to tend, as he nailed a metal panel to a post. "We're just waiting for the winter so maybe we can go back to the fields."

Although donor nations have praised the response of the Salvadoran government, some aid groups have said its apparent reluctance to concede any political or financial power has delayed aid efforts in some areas.

William Keh, a New Yorker who is a leader of a Buddhist volunteer relief group based in Taiwan, said that his group had enough money to build 1,400 homes but that only 300 might be built before the rainy season.

"We are trying to make it faster, but the bureaucracy is killing us," he said, taking a break from a food distribution project in Verapaz. "We are trying to persuade the government to allocate the land to us

to build permanent homes."

In the nearby town of Guadalupe, families have yet to hear when they might be able to leave behind the makeshift tents they set up in a shaded clearing. Children run about the yard, where an altar has been set up with a crucifix and a poster of a guardian angel has been tacked to a tree in thanksgiving for their survival.

"My daughter has changed," said María del Socorro Mejía. "She is disobedient. She is nervous and her hands tremble. She wants to do everything fast. Sometimes when she sleeps, she talks. 'Mommy, Mommy, it's shaking!'"

Fear is the bond that unites young and old. Juan Antonio Lozano, 62, said he was still too scared to return to the coffee fields where he worked. He and his family remember how the most recent earthquake sent tons of dirt crashing down the sides of the volcano that towers over the fields.

"I'm not brave enough to go back there," he said. "First we had the war. Then Mitch. Then the earthquakes. What is going to happen next, the end of the world?"

De La Hoya, Reach Agreement to Televised Bout

NEW YORK -- Oscar De La Hoya, involved in a legal battle with HBO, will fight on the cable network March 24 when he returns from an eight-month layoff.

An agreement to televise the fight against Arturo Gatti at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas was reached Friday between the network and promoter Jerry Perenchio.

"We're delighted to have reached an agreement," Ross Greenburg, president of HBO Sports, said Monday. "He's a franchise fighter."

Perenchio became De La Hoya's promoter when the boxer broke with Bob Arum's Top Rank, Inc.

On Feb. 15, a federal judge in New York rejected a request by HBO for injunction to halt the fight or to allow it to be televised only by the network.

HBO still is asking for declaratory judgment seek to verify its claim that it has a long-term contract with De La Hoya. He has fought on HBO for seven years.

The 12-round welterweight fight will be televised at 10:30 p.m. ET and 10:30 p.m. PT, meaning the match will be seen on a delayed basis in the West.

De La Hoya's comeback bout will be followed by the taped showing of a WBO heavyweight championship defense by Vladimir Klitschko of Ukraine against Derrick Jefferson of Detroit to be held earlier in the day in Munich, Germany.

It will be the first time HBO has shown title bouts from different sites on the same telecast.

Perenchio became De La Hoya's promoter when a federal judge in Los Angeles ruled last August that De La Hoya's contract with Arum was void and unenforceable.

De La Hoya, a champion in four weight classes, last fought when he lost the WBC welterweight title on a split decision to Shane Mosley last June 17 in Los Angeles.

Adviser Denies Tyson Will Wrestle in Japan in June

NEW YORK -- Mike Tyson might box in the United States in May. As for wrestling in Japan in June -- no way.

"Not only is Mike not wrestling there, he has never spoken to these people," Shelly Finkel, Tyson's adviser, said Tuesday about reports the former undisputed heavyweight champion is planning to wrestle in Japan.

Finkel was angered by a statement released in London by Frank Maloney, manager of WBC-IBF champion Lennox Lewis of Britain, contending Tyson had no interest in fighting Lewis and instead planned to wrestle in Japan.

"What Tyson has not told the public is that team Tyson has been in negotiations to follow the legendary Muhammad Ali, but this will not be in the boxing ring, instead it will be in a

continued on Page 5

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Para Su Consideracion: Una Idea Sin Popularidad

Por Victor Landa

Primero, fue George W. quien se marchó a México con sus botas de vaquero y en cuello de camisa. Después fueron los 12 miembros del Grupo Congresional Hispano que viajaron de traje y con zapatos de vestir. Bush y el presidente mexicano Vicente Fox hablaron del comercio fronterizo, el tráfico de drogas y la inmigración. Los miembros del grupo y Fox hablaron de necesidades humanas específicas.

Hay más de 5 millones de trabajadores indocumentados en los Estados Unidos de América. La gran mayoría de éstos son mexicanos. Se ha dicho muchas veces ya, pero a estas alturas merece repetirse: los trabajadores que vienen a nuestro país a trabajar sin la documentación correspondiente lo hacen como último recurso: por necesidad. Trabajan de cucullas en los campos de cultivo o lavando platos, o limpiando casas, entre otros trabajos que los trabajadores estadounidenses miran con desdén.

Es un hecho irrefutable y el refutarlo es cegarnos a nuestra propia vanidad y auto-importancia nacional.

En México los llaman "paisanos," un eufemismo que describe a hombres y a mujeres tan desesperados por un trabajo decente que abandonan su patria en busca de la oportunidad.

Lo que las autoridades mexicanas recién ahora vienen a admitir es que estos millones de paisanos inyectan dólares muy necesitados a la economía mexicana, y que estos dólares han sido la salvación de la muy próspera economía informal de México.

Es bajo estas circunstancias y por este propósito específico que la docena de miembros del Grupo Congresional Hispano viajaron para reunirse con sus contrapartes congresistas en México.

Los informes dicen que la conversación fue abierta y franca. Todos concordaron en que un programa estadounidense para trabajadores huéspedes -- braceros -- no vale más que un sistema de servidumbre. Se vería a los trabajadores mexicanos como algo menos que sirvientes derepartimientos.

El program "permitiría entrar" a los trabajadores según la necesidad de los campos de cultivo, para después regresarlos a México al concluir la faena. Actualmente los trabajadores del sector agrícola en nuestro país trabajan bajo las peores condiciones de ningún otro trabajador de nuestra tierra. Sólo es de imaginar las condiciones que prevalecerían -- los peligros a la seguridad personal, el sueldo bajo, horas inhumanas de trabajo sin descanso -- si se les regresara sin más a los trabajadores a México antes de que tuvieran la oportunidad de dar voz a sus

quejas.

La idea que surgió de esta reunión no es nada popular, pero el grupo de legisladores binacionales ha tenido el coraje expresarla. La idea es de otorgar la residencia permanente a todos los trabajadores indocumentados de buena posición moral que hayan trabajado consistentemente en los Estados Unidos por cinco años.

Ya se oyen a las manadas de voces en contra afilando la lengua. Estoy seguro que cuando la propuesta llegue al Congreso, las divisiones serán profundas y las peleas feroces. Estoy seguro que los insultos raciales y los estereotipos abundarán, si no entre los corredores del Congreso, en definitiva desde la máquina productora de imágenes de la derecha. Estamos ante una situación potencialmente fea.

Pero quizás deberíamos considerar que ya existe entre nosotros la fealdad. Deberíamos considerar la manera poco cortés en que tratamos a nuestros vecinos que no quieren nada de nosotros salvo lo que desdenamos; la manera en que algunas corporaciones succionan la energía y dignidad humanas en las fábricas maquiladoras de la frontera. Deberíamos considerar cómo categorizamos a seres humanos "ilegales" porque "no siguen las reglas del juego," cuando muchas personas en nuestro propio país a propósito hacen la vista gorda de las reglas de la decencia humana básica, condiciones de trabajo apropiadas, sueldos y prácticas laborales equitativos. Deberíamos considerar cómo el término "ilegal" en sí se ha vuelto una justificación. Podemos quitar la vista de las condiciones de trabajo, podemos insistir en no ver los salarios deplorables, podemos no hacerles caso cuando por casualidad nos damos cuenta de ellos porque son, después de todo, "ilegales."

No tengo forma de saber si tendrá éxito la idea de la residencia para trabajadores indocumentados, y si lo tiene, no hay forma de predecir si sobrevivirá lo que es seguro será una batalla brutal en el Congreso. Lo que sí sé es que como mínimo, esta propuesta realzará la visibilidad del trabajador indocumentado, y nos mantendrá honestos.

Si vamos a continuar tratándonos como los hemos tratado, que sea con la luz de la conciencia. Dejemos de engañarnos y quitar la vista. Si vamos a actuar de manera menos que humana, que sea un acto de conciencia, y veamos hasta cuándo podemos vivir así.

(Victor Landa es director de noticias del afiliado de Telemundo KVDA-TV60 en San Antonio, Texas.

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In Loving Memory of Fernando Paredes

by Joey Uvalles

Tuesday Feb. 27th began with a bone chilling drizzle, a dense fog clouded the city limiting visibility to a minimum. The wind gusts forced the thirty degree temperature feel as if it were fifteen degrees lower. Not exactly ideal burial conditions. Last Saturday February 24th Lubbock witnessed its 4th homicide this year alone. The victim, Fernando Paredes, thirty-six years old. He was found by a pedestrian at approximately 3:00 PM lying in a pool of blood brutally stabbed around the

neck and thoracic region.

A police patrol was flagged down and an ambulance was immediately summoned. He was then rushed to UMC where two hours later efforts to save his life were unsuccessful. Homocides occur every day and it especially hits home and hard when that someone is someone we know and care for, because you see, Fernando was a personal friend of mine. My mother knew his mother and most of my siblings knew his siblings as well. We grew up

together in the barrio Arnett Benson, we both attended the same schools. It was shortly after Jr High that we drifted apart, nonetheless we remained friends and maintained contact over the years.

Fernando Paredes may not have been a pillar of society or a saint, but then again what mortal is? Fernando was Fernando and he was loved and respected by his friends and family. Regardless of what one does, no one is deserving of such a brutal demise. My

heart goes out to his family and especially his mother, because in theory, parents should out live their children, not the other way around. Daily I find myself giving thanks to my creator, because indeed each and every day we wake up, every breath we take and every blink of an eye is after all truly a blessing. Here's to you Fernando, and in your loving memory, you will dearly be missed by us all, God bless you and may you rest in peace.

From Page 4

wrestling ring in Japan, Maloney said.

According to the official website of Antonio Inoki, who wrestled Ali in 1976, Inoki said he had received an offer from Tyson's lawyer for a fight with a Japanese martial arts expert and a match was tentatively planned for June 15 or 16 in Tokyo. Naoya Ogawa, a pro wrestler, was listed as a possible opponent.

Maloney identified the attorney who contacted Inoki by fax as Michael J. Smith.

"Michael Smith is not Mike Tyson's attorney, and he is being put on notice," Finkel said.

As for Tyson's next fight, Finkel said, "We're looking at either the winner of Holyfield-Ruiz or David Izon. If it's Izon, it would be in early May."

Evander Holyfield, who twice beat Tyson, once in the notorious Bite Fight, will defend the WBA title in a rematch against John Ruiz on Saturday night in Las Vegas.

Lewis is scheduled to fight American Hasim Rahman on April 21 at Johannesburg, South Africa.

When Ali met Inoki in a 15-round match June 26, 1976, Inoki spent most of the time lying on the mat kicking out at the boxing champion. Ali required hospitalization for damage to his legs.

Billy Alexander, CPA

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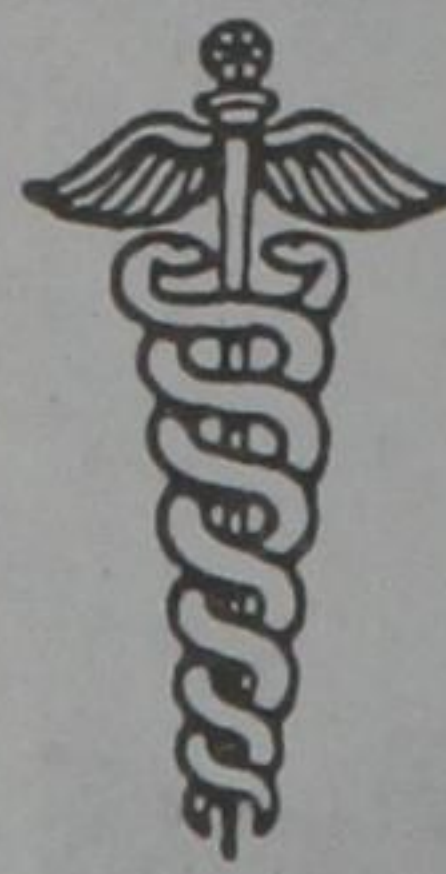
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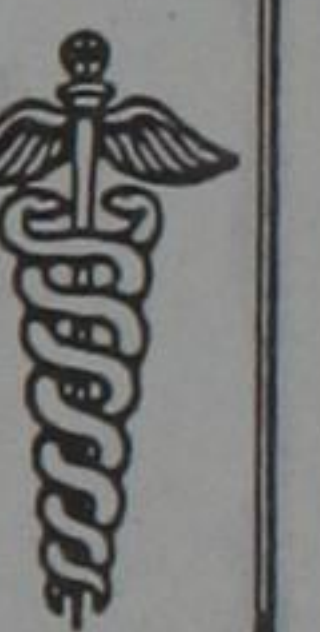
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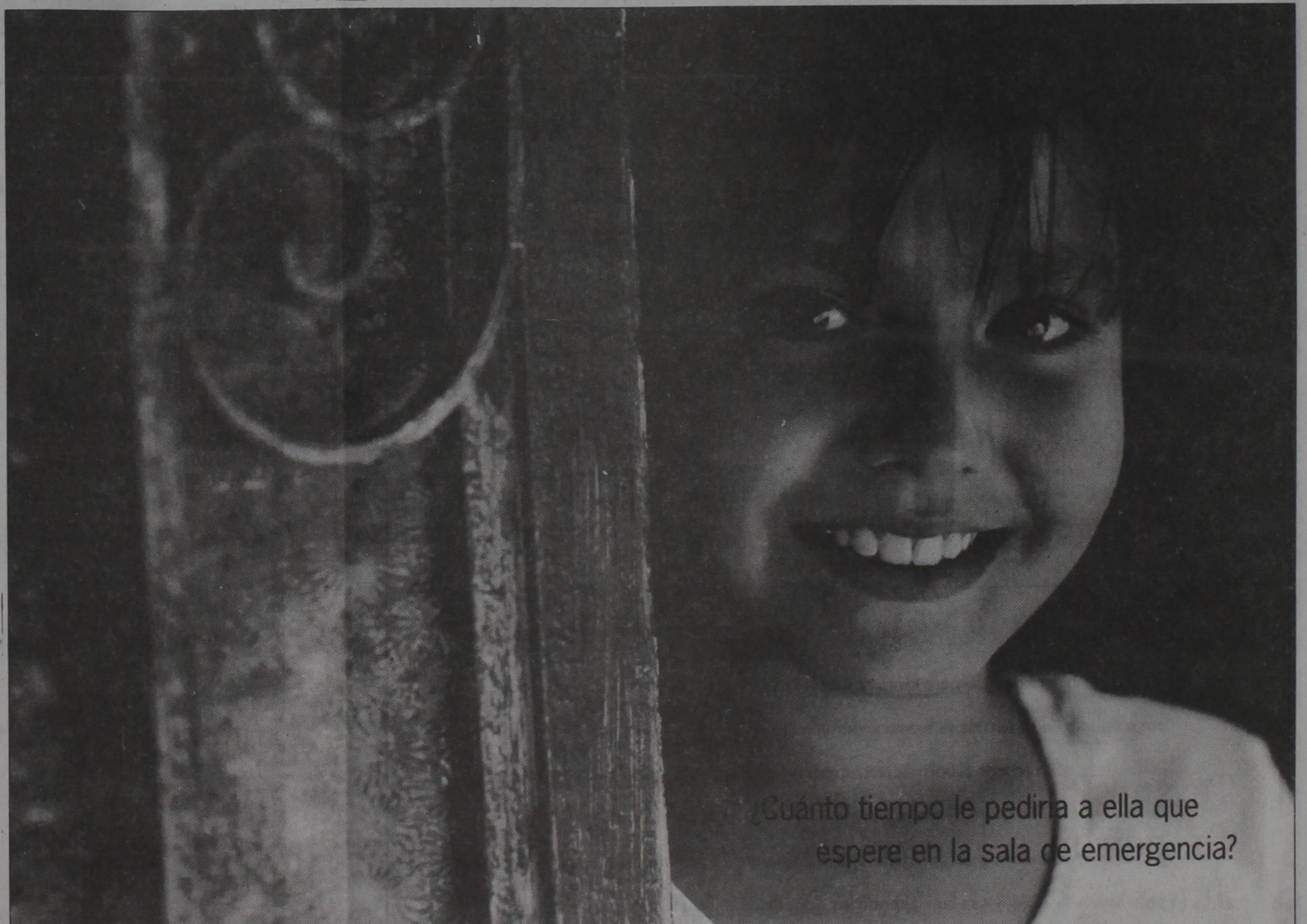


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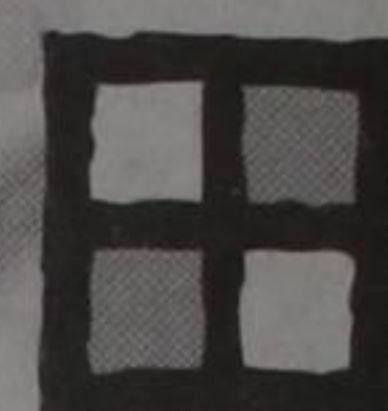
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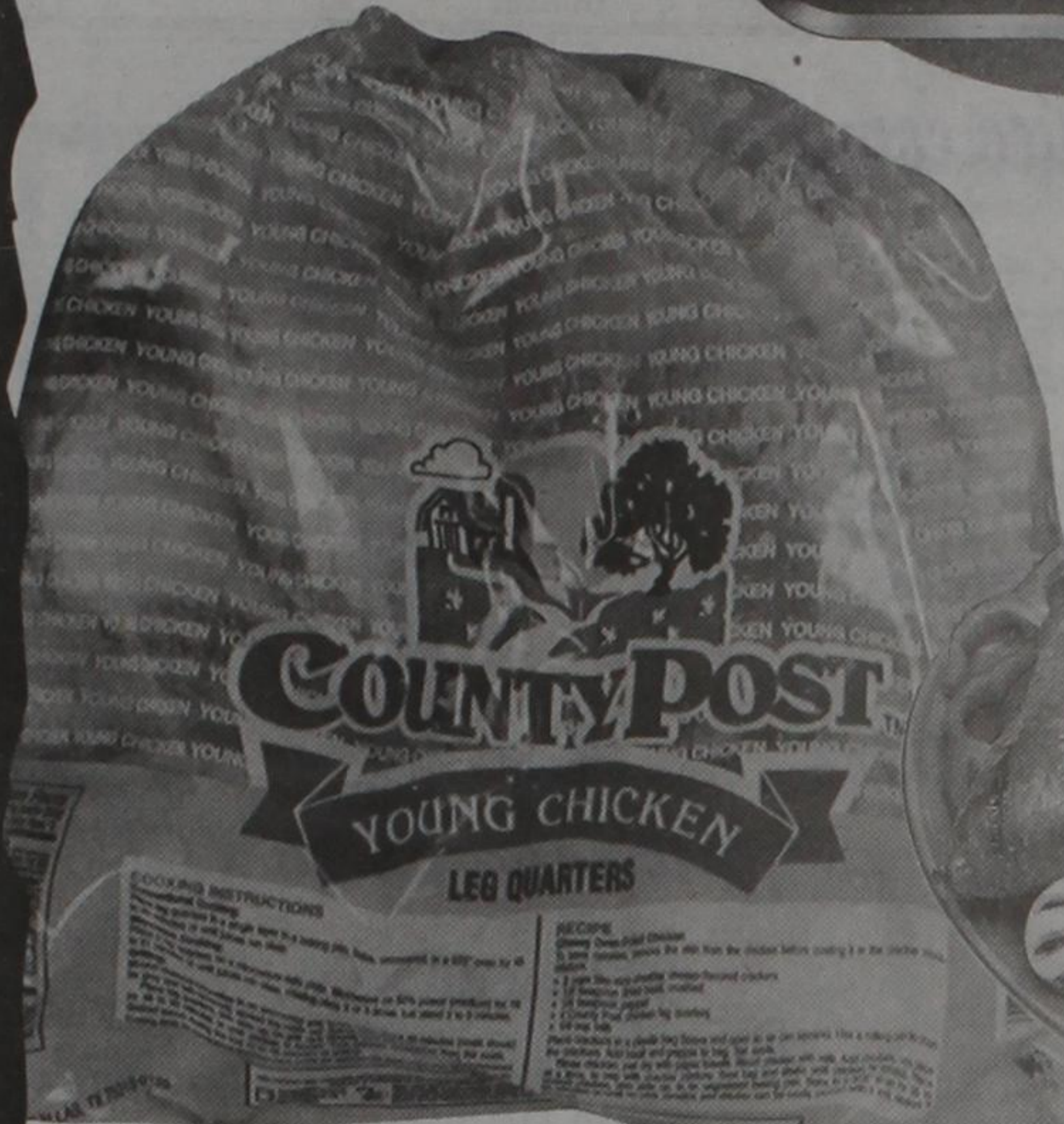


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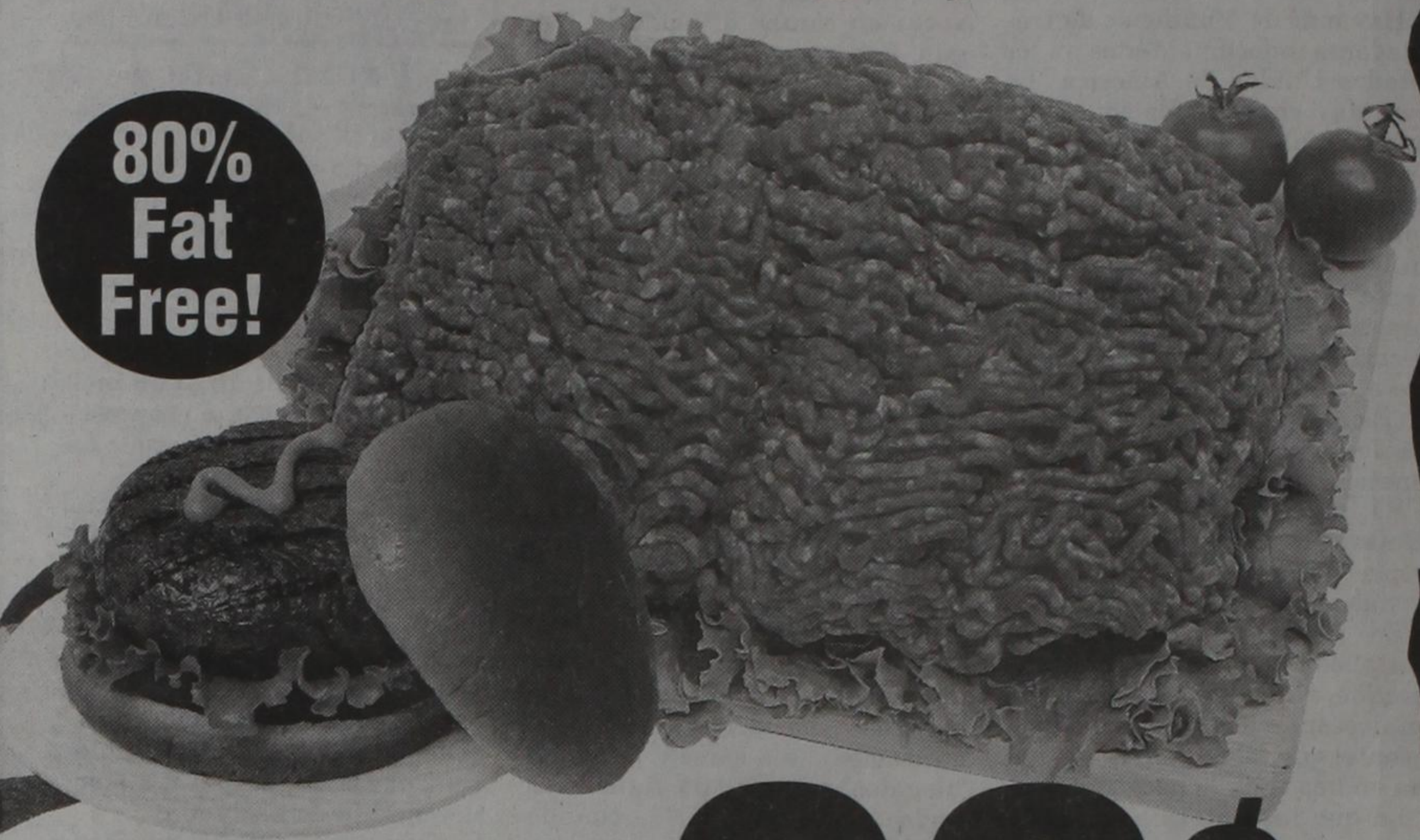
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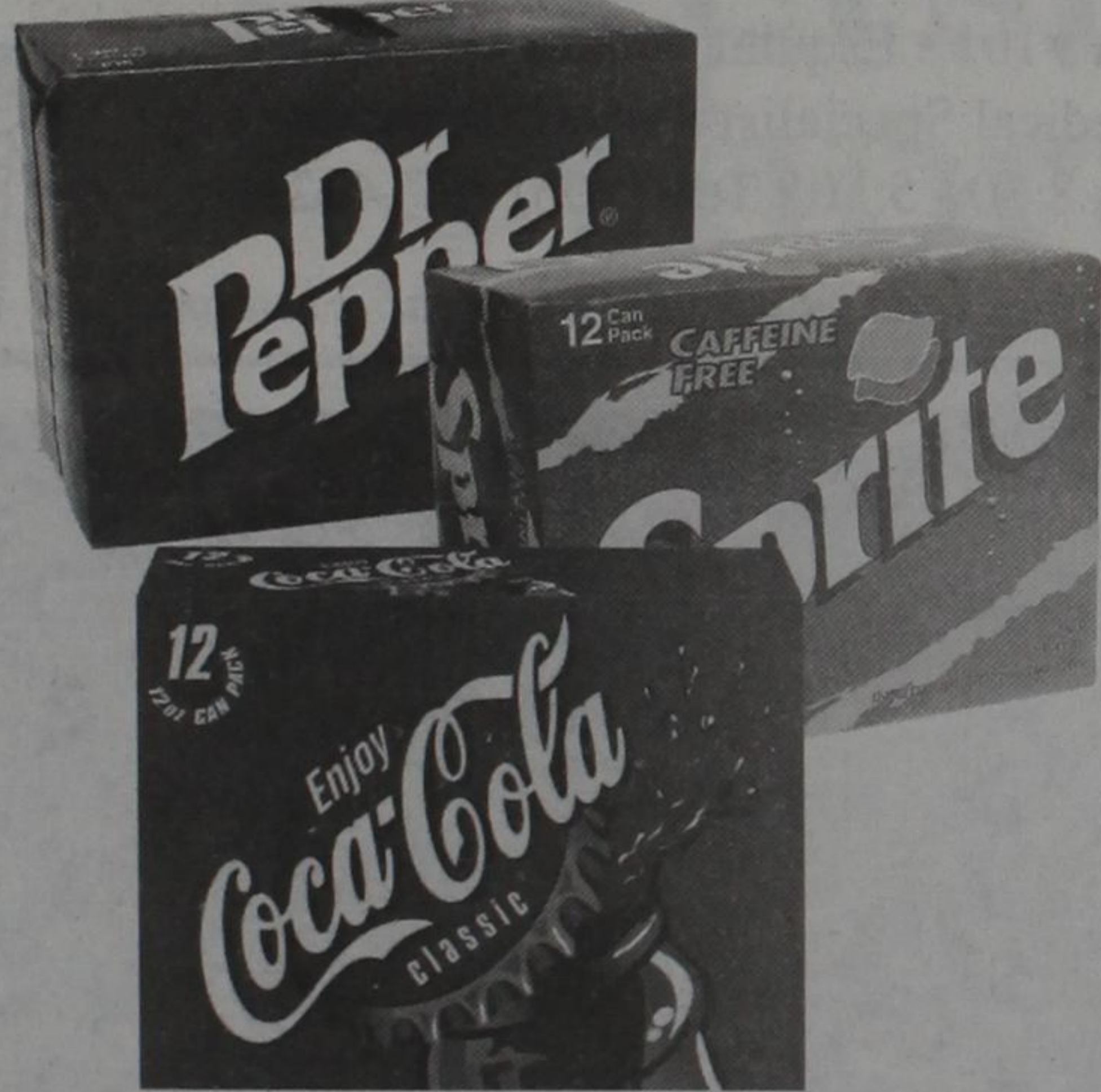
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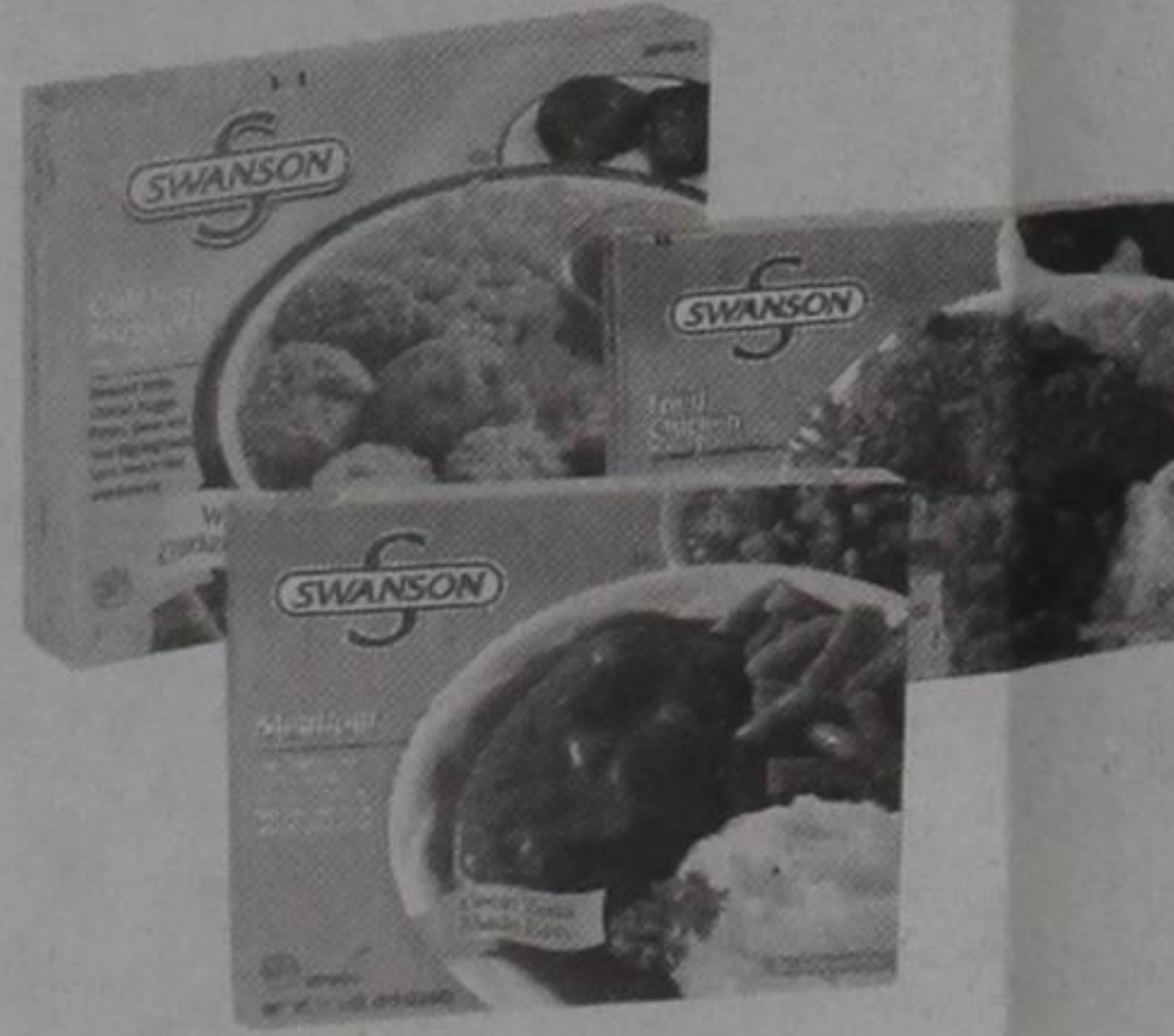
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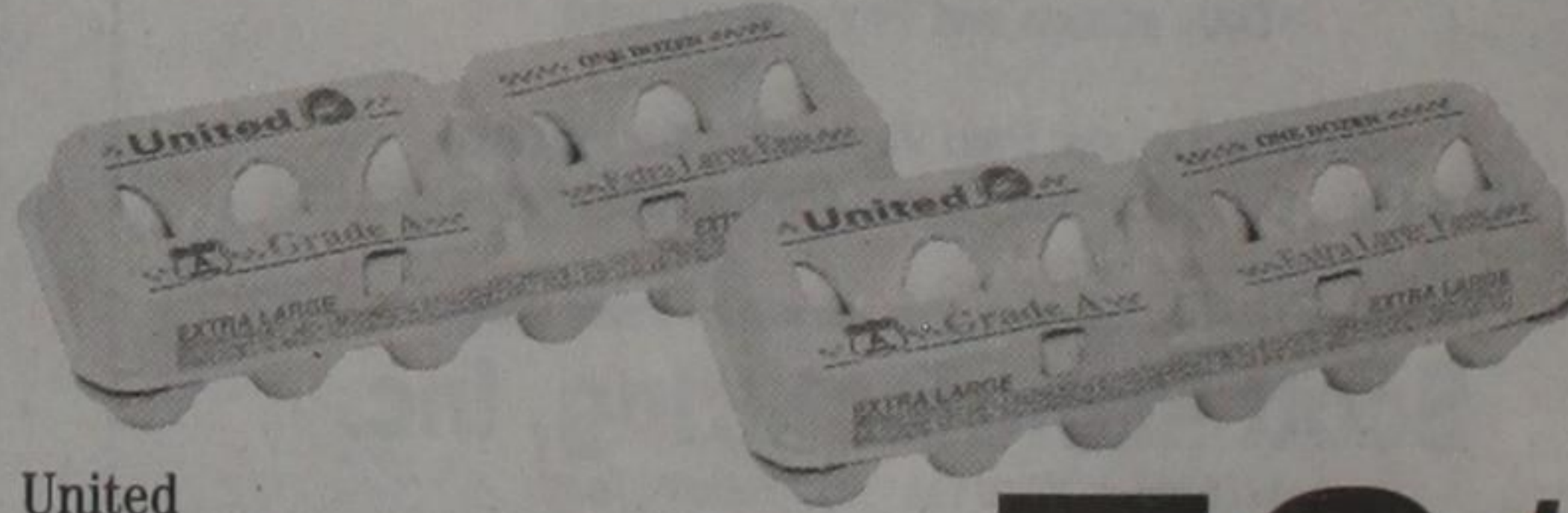
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