***Prostitutes Walk the Streets, to Virginia***

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By Mao's standards, it did not qualify as a Long March. But Mao never tried to hike a couple of miles in translucent three-inch spike-heeled shoes and a thigh-high leather miniskirt spangled with glitter beads. Here's what happened: About 1:30 A.M. Tuesday, the Washington police, once again, began rounding up the prostitutes who cruise the Thomas Circle area, mainly on 14th Street, about half a mile northeast of the White House. The nation's capital does not have a particularly bad problem with prostitution, but now and again the 14th Street scene becomes too blatant, too embarrassing, and the police move in. A Roundup of Sorts

On this night, however, things would be different in the tenderloin. No handcuffs. No paddywagons. No pointy-shoed pimps and out-of-town customers indignantly pleading innocence.

On this night there would be only a march to the edge of town, just like in the Wild West. Get out. By sunup.

The police snared about two dozen women, and they were ordered to fall in, single file. Then the march began, down 14th Street, through the darkened business district, past City Hall, across the Mall, on and on until, after more than a mile and a half of grumbling and stumbling, a bridge over the Potomac loomed and beyond the shores of a new jurisdiction, the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In truth, the long spangled line never made it to Virginia. A Washington Post reporter, accompanied by a photographer, showed up at the edge of the bridge, and, quick as a flash, the police beat it.

Same for the ladies of the night, some hailing cabs and defiantly ordering the drivers to haul them back to the scene of the crime. Another Exotic Export

Who ordered the march?

Unofficially, police officials said today that it was unauthorized and apparently resulted from an overly enthusiastic response to instructions to clean up the 14th Street area. Officially, the department refused comment other than to report that an investigation of the incident was under way.

But Representative Stan Parris, a Republican who represents the part of Northern Virginia where the march was to end, had a comment.

Mr. Parris spends much of his time fending off efforts by the District of Columbia to ship its excess sewer sludge, garbage and convicted felons to various dumps and prisons in his district.

''Now,'' he fumed, ''it looks like we have a fourth commodity the District wants to export to us.''