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He Wants Bride He Can Fly Away From

By Michael Grieg

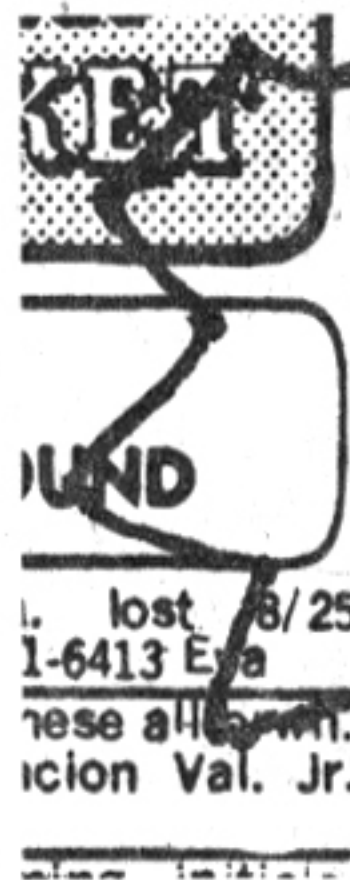
A 31-year-old graduate student at the University of California is willing to pay as much as \$2000 a year to any airline stewardess who will marry him — in name only.

He doesn't care about looks or age. All that matters is that the airline she works for be an international carrier that offers the customary free travel benefits to employees and their spouses.

This unique way to cut travel costs surfaced in a classified advertisement that appeared this week in The Chronicle:

"Grad student desiring flight privileges will pay to marry stewardess. Preston, P.O. Box 3205, Berkeley 94703."

"I got the idea from friends in Germany who have done the



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same thing," said the would-be airline groom, who got used to traveling extensively and without charge as a Fulbright scholar and U.S. Army captain.

A stewardess friend, already married, told him that after seven

years with an airline she and her husband, her parents, or children have unlimited travel privileges and have to pay only the tax.

A check with Pan American, Trans World, United and American airlines showed that employ-

ee travel benefits are, indeed, generous.

In addition to free vacation trips, employees get an increasing number of travel passes, depending on seniority. A small service charge is generally tacked on for going first class. There's often no charge at all, not even the tax, if an employee rides coach.

Aside from applying to a spouse and immediate blood relations, travel privileges on American Airlines even extend to "anyone else supported by and living with an employee," a company spokesman said.

Carrier representatives weren't entirely dismayed by the Berkeley student's enterprise.

"This is the first time I've ever heard of someone wanting to marry just for free transporta-

tion," said one carrier official. "We've had some divorces put off, however, to hold on to the passes."

A Pan American spokesman said the travel privilege has "held more than one marriage aloft." The enterprising student, he said, "should be given an 'A' for being above board."

Preston, the would-be flying spouse who prefers to use his middle name only until he finds a wife, said the stewardess he chooses will probably never even have to see him.

"I'm looking into the possibility that we might even be able to marry by mail or conference phone. After that, I'll be so busy traveling that we may never meet — except by chance, on the same plane."