



## ASK DEANNA! Real People, Real Advice

Ask Deanna! Is an advice column known for its fearless approach to reality based subjects!

Dear Deanna!

I'm a young father who's been claiming a son I thought was mine. I've recently learned of the possibility someone else may be the father. I feel devastated because I look at this baby as my flesh and blood. Should I do anything to stop the paternity results, or should I take the risk and find out. I feel as if I won't be able to handle it if the test comes out negative.

Anonymous  
Pennsylvania, PA

Dear Anonymous:

It's impressive to see you exhibit compassion and love for your namesake. It's in your best interest financially, spiritually and emotionally to determine through testing if the child is yours. Hope for the best, and prepare for the worst as you pray for this child's future. God will give you the strength needed regardless of the outcome, and remember that through His work, things happen for a reason.

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Dear Deanna!

I've finally overcome trust issues when it comes to being open for a relationship. I've met a man who wants to get married, but my mind is playing tricks on me. I keep thinking things are too good to be true. Recently my fiancé and I have had a lot of arguments because he's accusing me of picking fights and finding imaginary faults with the relationship. Am I messing things up on purpose, or am I just paranoid?

Renea  
Atlanta, GA

Dear Renea:

You need to calm yourself down and stop sabotaging your relationship. If your instinct is giving you certain feelings, and you have measurable things to confirm your doubt, then it's time for a chat with your fiancé. If there's no proof, then you have a commitment issue that needs to be addressed before taking the final step. Lay your cards, fears and doubts on the table, and keep it real, and keep it moving.

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Dear Deanna!

On the surface, my neighbors appear to be nice people with morals and good character. I met another couple who knows them and says they aren't married. We've invited them into our couples group, they go to events with us, and we've become close friends. Now, I feel they're being deceptive because everyone in our group is married. If they aren't legitimate, we don't want them in the group but don't know how to tell them.

Shannon  
Portland, OR

Dear Shannon:

You're not in a playground playing nanny, nanny boo-boo. Unless you communicated to your neighbors that you're a married couples only group then there's no problem. You should consider yourself blessed to have nice people next door instead of loud party animals. Get the chip off your nosy shoulder and ask your neighbors if they're married. Prepare yourself to be insulted if they find you rude, childish or judgmental and decide to kick you to the curb.

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# Cases of missing Black women solved

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
WASHINGTON (NNPA)

Two missing Black women who got little national news coverage to help solve their cases despite their families' pleadings have both been found murdered.

The badly decayed body of 24-year-old Tamika Huston of Spartanburg, S.C., was found Aug. 12, about 14 months after she was reported missing. Christopher Lemont Hampton, 25, a man she had reportedly been dating, was arrested and charged with her murder.

Slightly more than a week later, on Aug. 20, the body of 24-year-old Latoyia Figueroa of Philadelphia, Pa., missing little more than a month, was discovered in a grassy area of Chester, Pa., 10 miles west of Philadelphia. Figueroa was five months pregnant and the mother of a 7-year-old daughter. Her ex-boyfriend, Stephen Poaches, has been arrested and charged with murder in the deaths of her and her unborn daughter.

The missing cases of both women sparked grassroots search efforts by many who complained that the news media appears to give inordinate coverage of missing White women but virtually ignores the plight of African-Americans.

Now that the more than a yearlong search for Huston is

over, family and friends said they have found some closure, but will need time to heal from the trauma of months of searching.

"Oh, my gosh, it was just terrible," recalls Holly Funk, who spoke with her niece, Huston, at least once a week before she disappeared. "Just not knowing was heart-aching. It's a shame the way she went, but, at least, we know now what really happened." Instead of closure, Huston's best friend said the new developments reopened old wounds.

"When we couldn't find Tamika, I felt like I was going to have a nervous breakdown. I was on the verge of going to get nerve pills. I was not sleeping at night. I was scared to close my eyes because I felt like she was tugging at me," said Zeldia Teamer, who had known Huston for a decade.

Teamer said she resolved months before the arrest and recovery of the remains that Huston, the godmother of her daughter, was dead after having a dream in which a "cheery" Huston consoled her, telling her that she was gone for good but she was alright. "Then, when the remains were found, it opened up a new hole in my heart," says Teamer.

Huston's mother, Gabrilla Simehehe, and aunt, Rebekah Howard, told the NNPA

News Service last month before the bodies were found, that they had been struck by the media coverage being accorded Natalie Holloway, missing in Aruba, and Lacy Peterson, whose husband is on death row for her murder in contrast to the scant attention given to Black cases.

Howard said after months of treating her niece's case almost like one of her public relations clients, she too must now take time to grieve.

"It was so important to me to keep her story alive and to keep that pressure on police," she said. "But, emotionally, I'm just now starting to deal with it as everything comes down."

Though they occurred in different states, the killings of Huston and Figueroa were remarkably similar. Both men charged in the deaths claim to have gone into fits of rage in their apartments alone with the women. According to various news accounts, Hampton said he hit Huston over the head with an iron after she allegedly challenged his refusal to lend her money.

Poaches claims to have accidentally strangled Figueroa "a little too long" after she allegedly struck him in the face and shoulder during an argument. According to the Associated Press, Poaches was arrested when he was caught trying to move

her body from the wooded area where he had stashed her a month earlier.

Huston's family learned about Hampton's confession and the discovery of her remains in a phone call from the police to Howard, the aunt, on Aug. 12. Hampton had been imprisoned on a parole violation as police built a case against him after finding Huston's blood on the carpet in his apartment. Police found the apartment after tracing a key to the front door among Huston's belongings.

Howard said the evidence against Hampton was bolstered by a tip called in to America's Most Wanted, which picked up the story nine months after Huston was reported missing. Another young woman being entertained by Hampton on the day that Huston was reported missing, says she saw blood on Hampton's bedroom floor, according to Howard.

Detectives served Hampton with the murder warrant on the day he was to be released from jail. That is when he confessed and led police to a shallow grave deep in the woods of Duncan, S.C., according to news accounts.

Howard, a public relations professional, who worked closely with the police and tried diligently to get national (See Missing, Page 18)

## Rapes

(Continued from Page 5) places, coupled with a lack of lighting due to power outages, makes them less than ideal for emergency housing, said Pepe. She hopes the advance planning that went into making the Astrodome available will help alleviate some of those problems.

Establishing order and preventing crime should be the first priority of emergency management officials, and shelters should have stockpiles of food and medical supplies before they are brought into operation, say Florida emergency coordinators.

Florida, which has had so many hurricanes in the past two years that coordinators perform their duties almost by rote, is lending its expertise, millions of dollars in aid and hundreds of personnel to its neighbors to the west.

In the fallout following five major hurricanes in the past 12 months, Florida has moved toward using smaller,

community shelters holding several hundred people, mixed with law enforcement, counselors and aid workers when possible, said Luci Hadi, who is a key coordinator of emergency response for the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Advance preparation is crucial, Hadi said Friday.

"The difficulty that you have with these huge shelters is that they were never, never designed for this kind of work. There's no infrastructure provided, there's no stockpiling of food and water, there's no infrastructure of crisis counselors like we have here ready to go in," Hadi said.

"They are essentially a big group of people unrelated to each other who have been crammed together now for days without adequate support and infrastructure. We unfortunately have enough experience in Florida that we plan far ahead."

The Red Cross is doing all

it can, said Pepe. In addition to the licensed mental health professionals that are part of the Red Cross network, the aid organization is also recruiting counselors from airlines and other businesses that have large numbers of crisis counselors on staff or as consultants.

In the meantime, Red Cross staff and volunteers are trying to stress their safety

rules to those seeking shelter. No firearms, alcohol or drugs are allowed in shelters, children must be with their parents at all times, cots should be arranged so that family units are as close together as possible, and women and children should always shower and use toilet facilities as family groups.

Nancy Cook Lauer writes for Women's e-News.

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