



ASK DEANNA!
*Real People,
Real Advice*

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

Dear Deanna!

The holidays are over and I no longer have a need for my boyfriend. We dated during the summer but as the New Year rolled in I realized I don't want to be with him. The problem is the fact he gave me some expensive gifts that I don't feel I should return. He's selfish and I know he'll want the gifts back if I dump him. How can I end this relationship but keep the gifts?

Tee
Oklahoma City, OK

Dear Tee:

You're very rude and don't have the right to discard this man like a dust cloth. You were with this man long enough to build respect even if the relationship needs to end. You need to close the relationship with decency and give him the courtesy of knowing why. If he wants the gifts back, you should return them to avoid conflict. Besides, there's nothing too expensive that you can't work hard and buy for yourself.

Dear Deanna!

I'm in a serious relationship with a prisoner. I visit him weekly and now he wants to get married. I love him and want to be with him but I'm scared. I've never been married and would prefer to wait for him when he gets out in 7 years. He thinks we should marry now for benefits and income tax purposes, but I don't see it that way. I don't want to lose him, but I don't want to marry him now just to keep him. What do I do?

Anonymous
Riverside, CA

Dear Anonymous:

You need your head examined if you don't get it. He placed his desires for financial gain on the table in plain view. It would be more acceptable if he professed faith, love and devotion, but he didn't. You need to wake up and see how crazy it is to worry about losing someone who can't do anything for you but talk and write letters. If the love is so strong, he'll wait for 7 years because he's not going anywhere no time soon.

Dear Deanna!

I love going to church but I'm losing my faith. Everything in my life is going wrong at the same time. I lost my job, my girlfriend and my desire to enjoy life. I was drinking heavy for a while and my friends left me. Now that I'm down on my luck, everyone has disappeared. How do I get myself together during a time like this? I'm really coming apart. Where do I start?

Neal
Memphis, TN

Dear Neal:

When the enemy attacks he seeks to kill and destroy. During periods of distress, lack of hope and the good times, you need to pray and lean on your faith like there's no tomorrow. This is a time of life revelation and cleansing so you can trust in God as He prepares you for a new season of blessings. At least you know who your friends are so that when you're back on your feet you can leave them in the cold.

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Keys expands into movies, TV

LOS ANGELES (AP) - After conquering the world of music, Alicia Keys is expanding into movie and television production. Keys, 24, and her longtime manager, Jeff Robinson, said Thursday they have formed a company whose first project will be a UPN TV series inspired by Keys' experiences as a biracial youngster growing in New York.

"A lot of times I watch TV and I watch film and there's so many things I'd love to talk about that I feel don't get the opportunity to be shown," Keys told The Associated Press. "Sometimes things become very stereotypical and one-sided, and I feel like it's such a colorful world."

Their company, New York-based Big Pita, Lil' Pita, will provide "the opportunity to expose that array," Keys said in a phone call.

She's also intent on developing projects that give women their due, she added.

"I was mostly raised by very strong women, and I consider myself one as well. So I'd like to see things explore that and see that strength shine through," she

said. Keys, a singer, songwriter and musician, was born to a White mother and Black father.

Her parents split when she was 2, and she was raised in the Hell's Kitchen area of New York by her mom, Terri Augello.

The new company's eye-catching name has a special meaning for Keys and Robinson, who have worked together for more than a decade: "Pita stands for pain in the ass," Keys said. "That's what he and I both are — so watch out."

The two will serve as executive producers for their untitled TV drama, which has a script commitment from UPN and which Robinson said may be on the air by next fall. The pilot, not yet cast, will be written by Felicia Henderson ("Soul Food," "Moesha").

Keys is making her film acting debut in the upcoming "Smokin' Aces," which stars Ben Affleck and Andy Garcia.

Asked about movies their company will produce, Robinson and Keys declined

to provide details. "I couldn't give away all my secrets," Keys said in her trademark husky tones. But she said the films will be "the most thrilling" aspect of the company's work.

The goal is to create projects she's proud of, Keys said — and some with juicy roles for her.

"One of the great parts of being able to produce your own movie is to come up with a story that you find interesting... You don't have to wait for someone to tell you what they think you should do," she said.

She labeled herself a "very independent person. People do tend to call me a control freak, and I will gladly say that I am, in a good way. I'm totally involved in what I do."

Keys began playing piano when she was 7, with dance and voice lessons following. She studied at the Professional Performance Arts School in New York, graduating at 16 and studying at Columbia University briefly before deciding to devote herself full-time to music.

Her first album, "Songs in

A Minor," debuted atop the Billboard chart in 2001 when she was 20.

With nine Grammy Awards to her name, Keys is nominated for five more at next month's ceremony, including best R&B album for "Unplugged."

She vowed that her music won't suffer as she expands into new areas.

"I'm a juggler by nature, that's how I've always been. My dream is to be part of a multitude of things... These activities feed back into my music, my music feeds back into these activities."

Asked about her next album, she said, "It's bubbling. I'm very excited about it."

Robinson, president of MBK Entertainment, attests to Keys' ability to handle a heavy load.

"Alicia is a very energetic workaholic. She's always thinking. We're always feeding ideas off each other — which generates huge cell-phone bills, by the way," Robinson said.

"I'm constantly telling her to slow down, let's not conquer the world in one day. But she wants to do it all."

Glory

(Continued from Page 8) peeves, namely, how Hollywood has to lace any African-American drama with elements of comedy, as if Black people find everything comical, even integration. It's funny that none of the other docudramas currently in theaters, like Munich, Capote, Syriana or Good Night and Good Luck, undercut their plot's tension with copious servings of comic relief.

Had I cared enough to sit through the closing credits of "Glory Road," I understand that some of the real-life Texas Western team members appear to share their heartfelt recollections. Too little, too late.

I wonder how they feel that about their movie having so many ethnic slurs, profanity and gory violence and still landing a PG rating. Probably disappointed, especially if, like most folks, they were expecting a dignified, uplifting cross of "Remember the Titans" and "Coach Carter," not clown-like impersonations of The Harlem Globetrotters.

Poor (0 stars). Rated PG for profanity, ethnic slurs, graphically-depicted, bias-crime violence, sexual situations and mature themes.

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