



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 in a relationship and I think my boyfriend has another life. We've dated for two years and he's always worked third shift. While on medical leave I noticed he never came home until noon. When I asked about this he told me that he goes to the gym. I followed him and his gym turned out to be an apartment complex. We argued and instead of telling me about the apartment, he accused me of not trusting him. What do I do?

Betrayed
Winston Salem, NC

Dear Betrayed:

If you have to stalk a man and chase him down for answers, then you're with the wrong person. He placed the blame on you instead of confessing the truth and being honest. He's burning two ends of the candle by working at night, being with one woman in the morning and being with you in the evening. Don't settle for less, because you deserve more. Heal yourself from the inside out, count your losses and keep it moving.

Dear Deanna!

My grandmother is a sweet, sacrificing lady that has given me everything in life to be successful. I've decided that I don't want any more education but she insists that I go ahead and complete my Masters Degree. She's just cleared her debt and paid my student loans. I can't bear to see her struggle again. How do I make her understand this without hurting her feelings?

Teena
Omaha, NE

Dear Teena:

Your grandmother pushing you towards a higher degree isn't a bad problem. It's good you're not a user and are willing to be concerned about her finances. Take the time and show your grandmother how to invest with the option that if you go back to school, you'll let her help. This way she can save money and have hope that you'll come to her first when it's time to hit the books again.

Dear Deanna!

I'm a white collar professional and my relationship is causing problems with my social life. My girlfriend doesn't have a degree and lacks polish when we do things with my friends. I worry that she'll say something stupid and embarrass herself every time we go out. I want her to measure up to the women in my circle but she refuses and insists she wants to be herself. I'm ready to end the relationship because my social life is important.

Anonymous
Orlando, FL

Dear Anonymous:

If you want a trophy, you need to buy a dog and place it in a dog show. Relationships are based upon personal truth, individual self-confidence and up front character. If you're afraid of your girlfriend's behavior in front of your friends, you should select new friends or change your stick-in-the-mud attitude. You don't deserve this woman if you place your social life before the relationship. Do yourself and your date a favor by ending the relationship and find a fool like yourself to date.

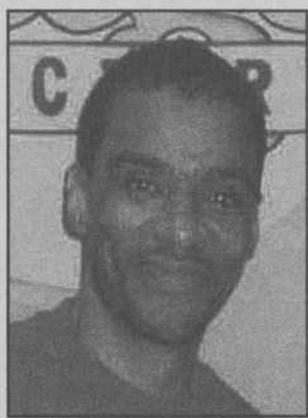
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Boom time for Black comics?

By Olu Alemoru
Special to Sentinel-Voice

LOS ANGELES (NNPA) - Stand-up comics have long occupied an exalted station in the pantheon of African-American pop culture. In the latter half of the 20th century and beyond, wildly successful comedians — from Redd Foxx and Moms Mabley to Bill Cosby and Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy and Martin Lawrence to Chris Rock and Dave Chappelle — have been perhaps the most beloved Black cultural figures, their renown among African-Americans arguably exceeding that which is enjoyed by A-list Hollywood names.

While Chappelle's recent departure from television has, in one sense, deprived the Black comedy scene of a mainstay — that is, a singularly popular figure who drives interest in stand-up — in another sense, Black comics have perhaps never been in such high demand.



Laugh Factory's Sunday night show. An Inglewood native, the 39-year-old former college basketball star found his niche as a comedy promoter after a potential NBA career was nixed by injuries.

"Black comedy has transcended the boundaries of ethnicity," he said. "You have your urban Asian, Persian, Chinese, even White comics taking a piece of what we would call Black comedy from Redd Foxx to Richard Pryor."

He added: "I think it's incredible that Black comedy has grown from the comic who does tours and makes money on the road [with] just one or two guys making a living doing TV and films... [to right now where] there are 20 guys out there making a million a year from TV and film because of their crossover appeal and don't even have to do the clubs."

Wigington's showcase is hosted by comedian-actor

"Black comedy has transcended the boundaries of ethnicity."

— Pookey Wigington
Comedy Promoter

Along the holy triangle of the major clubs on the West Hollywood comedy circuit, showcases of almost exclusively Black talent may be the hottest tickets in town.

The Laugh Factory hosts two weekly nights of Black-oriented humor: one on Sundays called "Chocolate Sundaes," and a Wednesday mix of stand-up and sketches that has drawn nationally recognized names like Lawrence and recent surprise participant Wayne Brady, who guest starred during the show's launch. At the famed Improv, engineer-turned-promoter Spike Thompson's "Mo' Betta Monday" has been going strong for the last decade. And at the Comedy Store, veteran comedian Alex Thomas hosts the weekly showcase "Trippin on Tuesday."

"I don't know if you would even define it as 'Black' comedy, because I would call it 'urban' comedy," says Pookey Wigington, who is behind the

"Black women have a horribly difficult time on the circuit. We have to fight, fight, fight, to gain recognition."

— Luenell
BET Comic View



posedly wanted to listen to rap — but look at it now. Black comedy has crossed over the same way."

Historically, a Black vaudeville set the stage for the modern-day verbal gunslinger with a mic.

Jackie 'Moms' Mabley, the stage name of Loretta Mary Aiken, was born in 1894 and became one of the most successful entertainers of her time. At the height of her career, in the 1960s, the native North Carolinian was earning \$10,000 a week at Harlem's Apollo Theater. Billed as "The Funniest Woman in the World," she tackled topics too edgy for many other comics of the time, including racism.

Redd Foxx was perhaps the funniest and certainly the raunchiest comic of his era, and he influenced the likes of Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy. The "Sanford and Son" star, whose party albums adorn many of the young comics' record collections today, was one of the first Black comedians to play the Las Vegas Strip.

With the exception of Bill Cosby, whose sugar-coated delivery seemed at odds with the styles of other Black comics, the fascination with adult-oriented themes continued, culminating in the celebrated HBO series "Russell Simmons' Def Comedy

Jam." The show, which aired from 1992-97, launched the careers of a modern day comic dynasty that includes Chris Tucker, Lawrence, D.L. Hughley, Jamie Foxx, Steve Harvey and Cedric the Entertainer.

In 2000, Cedric, Hughley and Harvey would go on to star in the successful "The Kings of Comedy" tour, which reportedly took in over \$40 million in two years and spawned a hit concert film directed by Spike Lee.

While the story of Black comedy might seem to be a male-dominated domain, just as Mabley got the ball rolling 40 years ago, some of today's hottest acts are the sisters with attitude.

"My definition of Black comedy is just that — Black comedy," BET Comic View regular Luenell, who is currently on tour in Texas, said in a telephone interview. "The urban tag is just where people live. It's defined by an aggressive attitude, but we're not bashing anybody's race because we want everyone's money."

The Arkansas native — who is soon to star in a film with notorious British comic Sacha Baron Cohen, aka "Ali G" — was no less forthright on the topic of sexism on the circuit. "Black women have a horribly difficult time on (See Comedians, Page 9)



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— Ms. Kris, Las Vegas Class of 2002

