

Got A Problem?

By Gwendolyn Baines

Dear Gwendolyn:

Last year my sister went on vacation with some co-workers and came back different. Before the trip she was talkative and kept no secrets. Now, she is quiet and never gives any indication as to what's happening in her life.

Every Saturday night since we became adults, all my siblings and I have rotated the family fun gathering; which includes children in one section of the house and adults in the other. We play Spades — not for money, just fun. Now my sister doesn't attend and informed us not to include her house as a setting. I tell you she is different. Two weeks ago, my brother called and said he ran into one of my sister's friends. She informed him my sister met a man while on vacation.

Gwendolyn, my sister has never acted like this before. She has always been the old maid type because of her single, dull and unpopular life. Besides playing cards, she is the family babysitter. This unknown stranger is going to mess up everything. We found out he is coming to visit? Should we check this man out?

Jeanna

Dear Jeanna:

Of course you should. Have a talk with your sister. I realize this may be difficult, but you must insist. She needs to have someone present when this stranger comes to visit. It is not a good practice to allow someone you don't know to enter your home. With the high rate of crime all over the country and abroad — this is a no-no. In fact, crimes have been committed even when the victim knew the attacker.

I am glad you and your siblings are concerned. However, I find it interesting you feel she has a dull and unpopular life because she is single. That is such small-minded thinking.

Jeanna, let me tell you this: If the gentleman proves to have good intentions and they are in love, then let your sister have her life, and you and your siblings go find another "babysitter and card player."

Dear Gwendolyn:

I have had an interesting year. Growing up, my mother never cooked for holidays. We were always taken to my grandmother's house. Well, the fact is, my mother couldn't boil water. We were fed food from the fast food restaurants or she made sandwiches, foods like cheese and bologna. She never fed us hot dogs unless they were cooked in the microwave. Remember, I told you she didn't know how to turn on the stove and boil water. This is my problem: Last year my husband refused to eat. I told him before we were married that I didn't know how to cook. He said it didn't matter because he loved me for me — and not for my cooking skills. It totally upset me when he went to his grandmother's house to have his Thanksgiving dinner. Since last November, I have been learning how to cook. He is now looking forward to this holiday season's dinners at home. Gwendolyn, we have three wonderful children aged 4, 7 and 10. Otherwise, I think this man would be seeing the back end of me walking away.

Karen

Dear Karen:

I am glad you learned to cook and didn't walk away. It shouldn't have taken your husband to refuse a meal for you to make a change. Let me tell you this: with three children and yourself, cooking is a priority over fast foods to keep you and your family in good health. Studies have proven that food from fast food restaurants have caused deaths because of clogged arteries. Continue your cooking lessons. Learn to cook your vegetables in steamers, and do not deep fry your meats, unless you use oils not consisting of trans fat.

Karen, you are too comical, believing your husband loved you for you. Girl, when a man wants you, he wants you. Before marriage whatever your downfalls, he will say, "It doesn't matter."

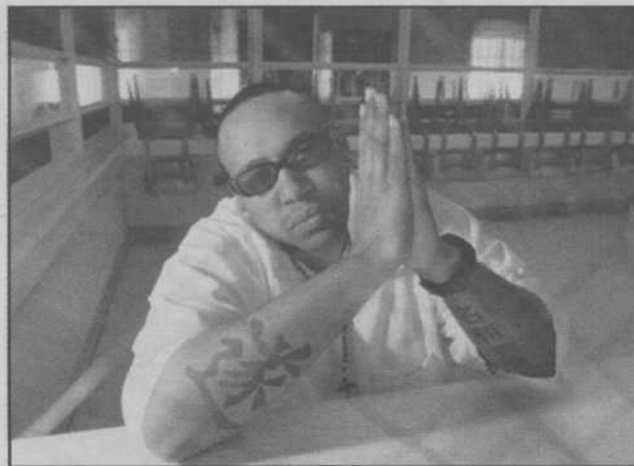
Ask Gwendolyn Baines, national author, lecturer and syndicated advice columnist. Got a problem? Ask Gwendolyn Baines. Write to her at P.O. Box 78246, Nashville, TN 37207-8246, and send a SASE for prompt reply. Email her at gwenbaines@hotmail.com.

Rapper Pimp C dead at age 33

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Pimp C, who spun searing tales of Texas street life into a key role in the rise of Southern hip-hop, was found dead in an upscale hotel recently. He was 33.

The rapper formed Underground Kingz with partner-in-rhyme Bun B while the pair was in high school, and their often laconic delivery paired with wittily dangerous lyrics influenced a generation of current superstars like Lil' Wayne. T.I. had the group on as guests when he remade their 1994 song "Front, Back and Side to Side" for his "King" album.

To a mainstream audience, Pimp C was best known for UGK's cameo on the Jay-Z hit "Big Pimpin,'" and for "Free Pimp C" T-shirts and shout-outs, ubiquitous in rap several years ago



Pimp C, seen here, when he was serving time in prison.

while he was jailed on gun charges. On Tuesday, his MySpace page had been changed to read: "C the Pimp is FREE at last."

Born Chad Butler, Pimp C was found dead in a room at the Mondrian hotel, a long-time music industry hangout not far from the House of Blues on Sunset Strip, where

he had performed on Saturday night alongside rap veteran Too \$hort. Capt. Ed Winter of the Los Angeles County coroner's office said Butler had apparently died while in bed in his hotel room.

"At this time there's no signs of foul play," Winter said. "It appears to be possi-

bly natural, but pending autopsy and toxicology we can't say the cause."

Manager Rick Martin identified Butler and his death was announced by publicist Nancy Byron.

"This morning saw the loss of a man that was not only a client, but a very dear friend at a time when he had the most to live for," Martin said in a statement. "He was my best friend and I will always love him."

Though they never enjoyed massive pop chart success, UGK's early CDs are considered landmarks for the then-burgeoning Texas hip-hop scene, which also featured the Geto Boys. Signed to a deal with Jive Records, they released "Too Hard to Swallow" in 1992, "Super Tight" two years later, and

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Tome touts Internet matchmaking

"Fishing for Love on the Net: A Guide to Those Searching for Love"

By Myles Reed Jr.; Universe Paperback; \$14.95; 156 pages ISBN: 978-0-595-42491-7

By Kam Williams Sentinel-Voice

"Many people have tried online dating with no success. The steps necessary to secure love online still remains a mystery. Many more people are sitting on the sidelines, waiting and wondering if they should try it. Online dating is a phenomenal avenue to meet that special someone. I am going to share with you six years of experience that will take the mystery out of online dating. I will show you that there is a process that is unique to online dating and is inescapable. The truths of my experience will give hope and clarity to those serious about finding love." — excerpted from the introduction (pages xiii-xiv)

Judging by all the lovey-dovey couples you see snuggling in the TV commercials promoting Internet dating, it's easy to assume that finding your life-mate in the 21st century is as simple as signing up with a matchmaking service, like Dr. Neil Clark Warren's eHarmony. Truth be told, searching for Mr. or Ms. Right is far more complicated than those ads imply. That's the contention of Myles Reed Jr., author of "Fishing for Love on the Net."

The author, a CPA/MBA with 15 years experience in corporate America working for Fortune 500 companies, spent a half-dozen years using the net as his primary means of meeting women. And now that he's very happily-married with a newborn baby, he's written a book to help others avoid the common pitfalls encountered by singles seeking a companion in cyberspace.

Perusing this informative how-to tome, one soon gets the sense that it was written by a highly-organized individual who knows his subject matter thoroughly.

In addition, the chapters are well-structured, with each being broken up by sub-headings and bullets, which highlight salient points.

"Fishing for Love" opens by putting the uninitiated at ease about virtual socializing, since just as most of us now send far more email than snail mail, Internet dating is now mainstream, and has already replaced face-to-face meetings as the preferred means of auditioning a potential partner.

With millions of contacts a keyboard away, the challenge, apparently, is in effectively narrowing down your choices as you negotiate your way around the Web without being worn out by option fatigue.

Among other things, Reed suggests being honest, not dating more than four people at once, and not carrying on more than two Instant Mes-

sage conversations simultaneously.

Apparently, it is also wise to subscribe to a service specializing in the type of mate you're looking for. In his case, his efforts came to frui-

tion after meeting his wife-to-be at ChristianCafe.com.

This book is a practical guide stocked with sound advice from a satisfied customer and sage veteran of the cyber singles scene.



All charges against Remy Ma to remain

NEW YORK (AP) - Remy Ma, accused of shooting an acquaintance in July over missing money, also has to face trial on gang assault and witness intimidation charges.

The charges stem from an Aug. 19 attack on a witness' boyfriend in a nightclub in the New York City borough of the Bronx. The 26-year-old rapper, whose real name is Remy Smith, is accused of having several male friends assault the man, who suffered a shattered jaw.

Smith's lawyer, Ivan Fisher, tried to have the August charges dismissed recently, saying the evidence was insufficient to indict his client. Manhattan State Supreme Court Justice Rena Uviller disagreed.

She adjourned the case until Jan. 3.