



ASK DEANNA! Real People, Real Advice

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

Dear Deanna!

My boyfriend is critical, rude and condescending when I talk about my business plans, ideas and goals. He has the experience and background to help me start my business, but he won't give me any support. There have been times when he sabotaged my efforts by spilling drinks on documents, accidentally shredding my notes or not delivering messages. I don't know what to do because it's obvious he's not going to help me. How do I get him to change?

Stressed

Washington, DC

Dear Stressed:

Unless you and your boyfriend agreed to go into business together, your chances are slim that he'll help you. He doesn't have a vested interest in what you're doing, and he doesn't care how he responds when you talk to him about your business. However, there is some underlying resentment as evidenced by the moves he has made to cause you to fail. You need to simply separate business from personal; grow your business to success, and keep it moving.

Dear Deanna!

I am so frustrated with my sister. She's a struggling single parent. The children's father has a good job, lives well and takes care of his immediate family. I've tried so many times to get her to file for child support, but she has too much pride. She claims that she's not going to beg for his money. He's willing to provide for them and do what it takes in exchange for visitation rights, but she doesn't want the kids to be with him. What can I do in this situation?

Auntie Teresa

Charleston, SC

Dear Auntie Teresa:

Your sister has issues with the children's father that she needs to get over. You need to let her know that the child support isn't about her, and it's a mistake to struggle when she doesn't have to. It would be a different story if the father was a deadbeat dad and didn't want to help or couldn't afford to. He's entitled to visitation, and it's best that she files for child support and work out an agreement now. If she keeps playing this game, he may file for custody, prove her as an unfit mother, and she'll lose the kids to him anyway.

Dear Deanna!

I'm a newly divorced female, and it's a challenge trying to get the hang of dating. I was married for six years and had no idea what single people do or what they're into. I have high morals and standards that cause me to not get second dates or call backs. I just can't see myself sleeping with someone really fast, paying money for dates or having people in my house. How can I get better at this?

Painful Dating

Columbus, OH

Dear Painful Dating:

As you see, dating isn't what it used to be, and morals and values in today's society are on the decline. This doesn't mean you have to sacrifice your standards. You'll just have to be patient and selective in your dating choices. You have options, such as online dating, matchmaking services or simply slowing down and enjoying your single life. You can get better by loving yourself, realizing what you're looking for and determining why you want to date and what you want to get out of it.

Write: Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or 264 S. LaCienega Blvd. Suite 1283 Beverly Hills, CA 90211 Website: www.askdeanna.com.

Salvation theme of Perry's latest

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

Tyler Perry has his finger on the pulse when it comes to entertaining an African-American audience in an uplifting fashion which resonates as real with that target demographic. And "Meet the Browns" is no exception, this being the latest in a string of the prolific playwright-turned-film director's screen adaptations of a popular stage production.

His modern morality plays invariably touch on timely themes of urgent concern to the Black community, though their messages might generally be delivered in conjunction with healthy doses of side-splitting humor.

But where Perry himself has generally played a lead role, bringing the comic relief by cross-dressing as the sassy senior citizen Madea, this time, he merely makes a cameo appearance in drag instead opting to introduce a few new equally-colorful characters. The picture explores such universal themes as abandonment, trust, faith and redemption on its way to resolving the challenges facing Brenda (Angela Bassett), a single-mother of three who's been struggling to provide for her family while living in the projects on the south side of Chicago.

At the point of departure, we find her barely surviving paycheck-to-paycheck with no safety net to fall back on, and having to choose be-



"Meet the Browns" is the latest Tyler Perry play to make the leap from stage to the screen.

tween paying her bills and putting food on the table.

We learn that this sorry state of affairs is due to her being burdened with raising her kids without child support from any of their fathers.

She soon bottoms-out when she loses her job the same day she learns of the death in Georgia of the father she never knew.

Fortunately, she heeds the advice of her best friend Cheryl (Sofia Vergara), a loudmouthed Latina who puts Brenda and her brood on a bus in time to attend the funeral.

Once they arrive in the tiny Southern town, not only do they "Meet the Browns," the long-lost, if flamboyant relatives they never knew they had, but also a knight in

shining armor in Harry (Rick Fox), a basketball scout. Handsome Harry is a Houdini who has the answer to their every problem, if only the thrice-burnt Brenda will let her guard down long enough to allow this good man to sign her high school phenom son (Lance Gross) to a pro contract, to buy them a house and to ask for her hand in marriage.

In the interim, the movie devotes plenty of time to getting acquainted with the Browns, as clownish a clan as you could hope to meet, starting with Leroy, an egg-head with the most garish wardrobe imaginable.

Then there's his morbidly obese daughter Cora (Tamela Mann), and the shrewish Vera (Jennifer Lewis), a witch

with nothing nice to say about anybody. Kudos to a supporting cast which includes Margaret Avery, Frankie Faison, Lamman Rucker and Irma P. Hall

As the plot winds its way inexorably towards its very predictable payoff, it comes as no surprise that rather than hang around her embarrassing kin, Brenda starts to entertain the advances of her perfect gentleman suitor.

Too laced with silly slapstick to measure up to the best of Tyler Perry's previous offerings, yet still hilarious in spots and ultimately satisfying enough to be well worth watching.

Very Good (3 stars). PG-13 for profanity, violence, mature themes, sexual references and drug use.

LA Times probes Tupac documents

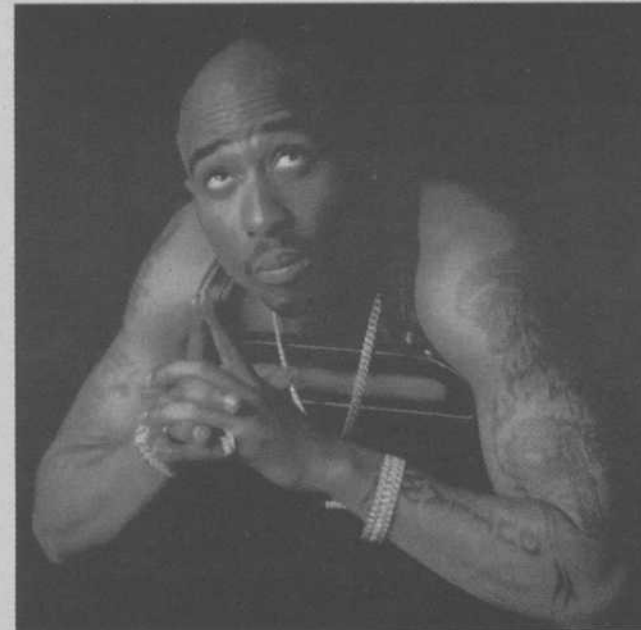
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The *Los Angeles Times* will conduct an internal investigation concerning the authenticity of documents used in a story that implicate associates of Sean "Diddy" Combs in a 1994 assault on Tupac Shakur, the editor of the newspaper said Wednesday.

In a story posted on the newspaper website, editor Russ Stanton said he ordered the review after the editor of the website *The Smoking Gun* told the newspaper he had reason to doubt the validity of the FBI records that were supposed to back up the story.

"We're taking this very seriously and we have begun our own investigation," Nancy Sullivan, a spokeswoman for the newspaper, told The Associated Press.

The *Smoking Gun* said the documents seemed phony because they appeared to be written on a typewriter in-



Investigations continue into rapper Tupac Shakur's death.

stead of a computer, included Blacked-out sections not typically found in such documents, and other reasons. The *Smoking Gun* story claims the documents were created by a convicted con man and music fan with a history of exaggerating his

place in the rap music world.

Combs denies that he had any prior knowledge of or involvement in the 1994 robbery and shooting of Shakur at a New York recording studio.

The Times has said its March 17 story was based on

FBI records, interviews with people at the scene of the 1994 shooting, and statements to the FBI by an informant. None of the sources was named. The 1994 shooting triggered the celebrated feud between East and West Coast rappers that led to the killings of Shakur and Notorious B.I.G.

The story said associates hoping to curry favor with Combs — who was overseeing B.I.G.'s white-hot career at the time — lured Shakur to the studio because of his disrespect toward them.

The Times story posted Wednesday said the newspaper had not responded as of Tuesday to a request for a retraction from Combs' attorney, Howard Weitzman.

The March 17 story and related features on latimes.com attracted nearly 1 million hits — more viewers than any other story on latimes.com this year, the newspaper said.