

Got A Problem?

By Gwendolyn Baines

Ask Gwendolyn Baines national author and lecturer and syndicated NNPA advice columnist.

Dear Gwendolyn:

I have been married for two years to a wonderful man. However, like they say "no marriage is perfect." Last month, my sister-in-law had a gathering at her house for family and friends. They live about three hours from us via ground transportation. I know they were delighted to see each other, but this is the problem:

Instead of giving each other a big hug or a kiss on the cheek, they kiss on the mouth. Unusual don't you think? However, their mouth is not opened, but still I feel strange every time I see it. Do you think I have cause to worry?

Janet

Dear Janet:

No, I do not, but it needs to stop. Their way of showing brother/sister love apparently started when they were only kids. The parents should have noticed it and explained to them that the normal and most accepted way of showing affection to family members and friends is not to kiss lip-to-lip, but cheek-to-cheek. If you want to see some outrageous patterns of kissing, notice how church people and the distasteful and health hazard practice of some adults who kiss babies directly in the mouth.

I do feel you should bring this issue to his attention. But if you would sometimes notice, parents often allow their children's pet (especially a dog) to lick the child directly on the mouth. You are having peculiar feelings about this because you were not brought up to show affection in this way. I want you to read: "Sisters and Brothers All These Years" by Lillian S. Hawthorne (2003).

Janet, continue to watch this, and if ever you see them kissing with an open mouth, then of course, be alarmed.

Dear Gwendolyn:

I have been married for 15 years to a man who has never put a value on money. All of our friends have purchased homes, cars, boats, and even taken luxury vacations. My husband does not seem to care for the nicer things of life. His father and grandfather were lovers of sports cars. They lived in rundown apartments, according to his family history. I guess he is just a carbon copy of them. My problem is that lately he spends most of his time driving around in his sports car listening to music. He has been seen cruising in the hood picking up street women. Although I am not happy, I refuse to lose him to the street women. Those dumb broads.

Leslie

Dear Leslie:

You won't lose him to the street women because he doesn't want them. Although that doesn't mean he wants you. He seems to be married to his car. I have a question for you. Why do you wish to stay with a man who picks up women in this dangerous time? Why would you chance getting a sexually transmitted disease?

Let me tell you this: You seem to have some type of hang-up. I do not believe you are staying with him out of your love for him. He has not even given you the nicer things of life, as you refer.

Have a talk with your husband, with or without the presence of a marriage counselor. He needs to know how you feel about the 15 years of marriage — from the beginning to the present. Think about it. Just because you are the wife gives you no reason to make the statement, "Those dumb broads." I say this because so often these dumb broads are spending money saved by a married man's wife. Don't waste time trying to determine who is dumb and who is not. Just be smart — and get out.

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.

Brown freed from prison in New York

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK — U.S. rapper Foxy Brown was freed from a New York City prison on Friday after serving eight months of a one-year sentence stemming from an assault of two nail salon stylists over a \$20 manicure.

Brown, 29, whose real name is Inga Marchand, was sentenced to three years' probation in October 2006 for assaulting the stylists. But in September 2007 a judge ruled she was not taking probation seriously and sent her to prison for one year.

Inmates typically serve two-thirds of their sentence, said Stephen Morello, a Department of Corrections spokesman, adding that Brown had been met at the Rikers Island prison by New York City Councilman Charles Barron.

He said this was an unusual move as inmates are usually taken from prison on a public bus and delivered to a city parking lot.

But he said that as a public official, Barron had access to the prison and had requested to pick up Brown.

Barron could not immediately be reached for comment.

Brown's publicist said the rapper had been released into the custody of her mother.

In October, authorities said Brown received 76 days in isolation in jail after getting into a shoving match with another inmate and refusing to do a drug test.

Then in January, Brown asked for early release to treat an ear condition she feared could threaten her hearing.

"Yes, I've made some bad choices and stupid mistakes. But please understand that sitting in a prison with murderers and criminals is not rehabilitating or what I need to deal with my inner issues," Brown wrote in a four-page handwritten letter to Judge Melissa Jackson.

The most difficult part of being in prison, the 29-year-old MC said, was overcoming others' perceptions of who the real Inga Marchand is versus the character of Foxy Brown.

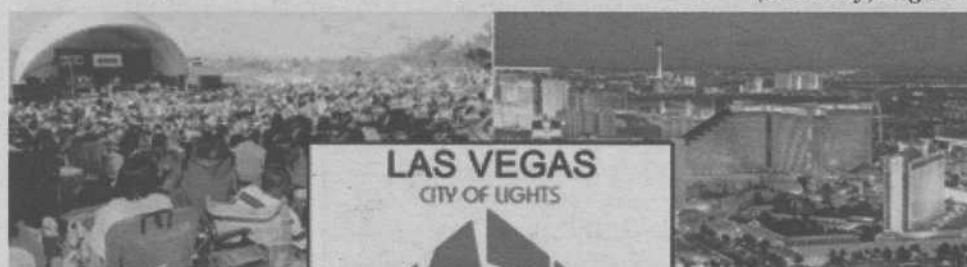
"The hardest part was people's perceptions of me," she said. "I had officers who were wonderful and the inmates showed me — you'd think Barack [Obama] was in the building when I walked through. They showed so much love, it was so incredible. But I had situations with officers who, you know, only



Foxy Brown gives the thumbs-up on her prison release.

went by what they read on [the *New York Post's* gossip column] Page Six. And then they would get to know me and say, 'Oh my God, she's so sweet, and she's so nice.' At the end of the day, they're like, 'We really love you,' and it was a great experience."

For Brown, there is a clear separation between her celebrity persona and the real woman who was locked down for most of the past year, 76 days of which she spent in solitary confinement after an altercation and for reportedly being verbally abusive to prison staff and refusing to take random drug (See Foxy, Page 11)



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