

Got A Problem?

By Gwendolyn Baines

Dear Gwendolyn:

I am engaged to be married this fall. My parents are planning a big wedding with all the trimmings. My dress is costing close to \$ 6,000 and the entire package is currently at a total of \$30,000. No, my parents don't have that type of money, but they are going to refinance their home. Gwendolyn, I feel they should be informed to stop the planning before any more money is spent. My reason for this decision is that my fiancé can be violent at times. While on vacation with him last summer, we got into an argument and he almost stomped me to death. I ended up in a hospital for two weeks. My parents were told (by him) that we had extended our vacation because we were enjoying ourselves and did not wish to return as planned. After that incident, my feelings for him are not as strong. Because we had already announced our engagement, I let it be. What should I do? I really don't want to marry this man.

Gladys

Dear Gladys:

Then don't. Your fear for him has caused you to lose whatever love you once had. Let me tell you a story: In my dating years, there were two men who claimed to be in love with me. One later killed himself and the other killed his wife. Girl, we down here on earth are truly being watched over and protected. I was saved because I never wanted to marry a man I did not love. Just because a man loves a woman, the woman should go by her feelings and not by what the man is saying — or what other people tell her. First of all, your parents are spending too much money on a wedding not to have money. I advise you to inform them today about your change of heart — and why. Think about it. He is not going to change and what was almost a fatality could turn real after you are married. I hope your fiancé does not go off the deep end when he is told. In talking with him about the breakup, be in the presence of others. Gladys, I wish for you the best and hope that your life will be long and fruitful, but mainly that you get away from this violent man — unharmed.

Dear Gwendolyn:

Please continue with your wise counseling. I read your column every week and your wisdom is given to you by God. I cannot say that about all columnists. I am writing to you to seek advice I can pass on to my step niece. My brother passed away 12 years ago. He had married a woman with three girls. He instilled in them the value of education. After graduating from high school the two older daughters moved out, found their biological father, moved in with him and met undesirable men. Their life educational wise went downhill and they ended up living on the system. Gwendolyn, this is the horror for my writing to you. The youngest girl remembered the teachings of my brother. She went to college and received a B.S. and a master's degree. She then enrolled into graduate school and is being awarded her Ph.D. next month. Ann, not her real name, called me last week in tears. She had received a telephone call from her oldest sister saying the graduation invitation they received was thrown into the trash. She even went on to say that her mother had thrown her invitation in the trash, after cutting it into several pieces. Ann was completely distraught. I fear this will cause her to have a mental collapse. She is so hurt. Their father never once tried to see them and never once sent money. How can my niece get through this family rejection?

Gloria

Dear Gloria

Go to her. Don't wait until graduation. She needs you now. This is not a time for her to be alone. Since graduation is only several weeks away, stay there and be there when she receives that degree. Keep her in good spirit and let her know it is okay to disconnect from family. Tell her to make a promise to herself to never allow them to be down and out, broke and disgusted and come to her for help. They would only be pretending. In time she will acquire new family. Let me tell you this: Sibling jealousy is common and the pain of it reaches to the bone. But how can a mother not be proud of her child? The trauma of sending an invitation to family only to have it thrown into the trash is too cold to imagine.

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.

Diddy splashes into Hollywood

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — When the one-man, publicity-generating whirlwind that is Diddy met the well-oiled hype machine of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, sparks were bound to fly.

Sean Combs received a star Friday on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, an event most honorees mark by turning up at the assigned time, smiling for cameras and going about their business.

Not Combs.

He put a video online asking fans to show up for the star-unveiling, set to the tune of Lupe Fiasco's hit "Superstar." He sat down at the Beverly Hills Hotel for advance interviews with infotainment TV shows and The Associated Press. And he's being feted with a lavish party Friday night at billionaire Ron Burkle's sprawling Beverly Hills estate.

"It's also like my coming-out party here in Hollywood," Combs told AP. "I don't have nothing to hide about that. If I'm going to come someplace, I'm going to make some noise, and you're going to know I'm here."

Fellow actor Jamie Foxx was on hand to introduce Combs as his star was revealed.

"He throws the best party you've ever seen in your entire life," said Foxx, who led dozens of people in a chant of "Diddy! Diddy! Diddy!" and rapped out famous choruses of the artist's songs.

"This is big. This is leg-



Rap mogul Sean Diddy Combs receives a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on May 2.

endary," Foxx told the music label intern-turned-entertainment mogul. "And they will never be able to take this away from you."

Combs, wearing a White suit, slapped hands with Foxx and told the crowd: "Today is proof that if you believe, all your dreams can come true. I've gone from Harlem to Hollywood." He lay down on the red carpet next to his star to pose for photographers.

Combs is house-hunting in Los Angeles now and plans to split his time between here and New York to pursue his acting career. To that end, he's looking through scripts in search of the next role.

He calls it a perfect time to stop and reflect on recent successes. Two of his "Making the Band" groups — Danity Kane's second album and Day26's first — just landed at the top of the Bill-

board charts. His ABC movie "A Raisin in the Sun" was a hit with critics and viewers in February.

"Sometimes you got to take a step back and breathe and enjoy and realize the magnitude of it, where you came from, how hard you worked, all the people that rode with you through your ups and downs," Combs said.

Family and friends from the block he grew up on in New York's Harlem neighborhood joined him at the ceremony outside the Hollywood and Highland shopping complex.

"It inspires them," Combs said. "It inspires, you know, millions of young people all over the world that are in a place that I grew up in right now, and they want to make it to that point. I don't know if we know where Brad Pitt came from, or George Clooney.

"People are familiar with

my journey, so it may inspire them more," Combs said. "So whether it's Eminem or Britney Spears or myself, you know of that journey. Whether it's coming from a small town, coming from a trailer park in Detroit, or coming from Harlem, New York. So when certain things happen to us, it's bigger than us. It inspires people."

What about that party, which was sure to inspire a few paparazzi in the direction of Burkle's mansion? Combs calls it an "intimate 250-person party" with "just very very close friends and family and people that I know throughout the industry."

The constant salesman drops shout-outs to sponsors Ciroc vodka and Cadillac, but wouldn't reveal the guest list — except to note that David Beckham couldn't make it. Becks was playing a game in Utah on Saturday.

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Hendrix estate disputes sex tape

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The estate of Jimi Hendrix says it questions the authenticity of a sex tape released this week allegedly starring the deceased musician.

"We strongly dispute the claimed authenticity and affirmatively state that Experience Hendrix is neither involved in, nor have we authorized the distribution of this film," Experience Hendrix, the company that controls the rights to Hendrix's music and likeness, said in a statement released recently.

Experience Hendrix called the distribution of the tape a "callous attempt to trade on the image and reputation of a deceased artist who is unable to defend himself against such an outrageous and baseless assertion.

We are highly offended by the disgraceful portrayal."

In response, Vivid Entertainment co-chairman Steven Hirsch released a statement saying Experience Hendrix's statement "is not in any way a refutation of the authenticity of 'Jimi Hendrix the Sex Tape.' Vivid took considerable time and spent a substantial sum of money to authenticate the footage, and we are very comfortable that this is the real thing."

The 11 minutes of footage, reportedly shot in a hotel room about 40 years ago, features a man who appears to be Hendrix engaged in various sexual acts with two women.

Vivid released the footage online and on a 45-minute DVD, which also features

interviews with women who claimed to personally know Hendrix.

Charles R. Cross, author of the Hendrix biography "Room Full of Mirrors," previously said he had seen the film and doubted the man is Hendrix.

Cross said the face and nostrils of the man depicted in the video don't match the guitarist, and the man in the tape is wearing more rings than Hendrix was known to wear.

Hirsch said in his statement that "it's worth noting that the primary naysayer about the tape is so-called expert Charlie Cross. How can Charlie say it 'doesn't add up?' I'd like to know what he means by that since he told me personally that he

only saw about 30 seconds at the beginning of the footage when Jimi was lying down with his face distorted."

When reached for comment about Hirsch's statement, Cross confirmed he had a conversation with Hirsch when he learned that Vivid Entertainment would release the footage.

Cross said he told Hirsch that Hendrix owned a video camera, but he did not think it was Hendrix in the footage.

"It's a question of opinion," Cross said recently in an interview.

"Is it him or not? You could look at it for 30 seconds. You could look at it for an hour. You could look at it for 11 minutes. It's either him or it's not him. In my opinion, it's not him."