

## Got A Problem?

By Gwendolyn Baines

Dear Gwendolyn:

I am a 60 year old mental outpatient. In 1997 I had a nervous breakdown, but I think I am over it. However, the mental hospital refuses to discharge me. I would prefer that they cancel my social security so I can go to the Department of Homeless Services and then go to work and become a productive citizen. I use my therapy sessions to sport my strong views. I believe social workers are devil worshippers. They consider clients to be devils and they service them. They prescribe Viagra to convicted rapists. Now, isn't that a joke? Eventually, when some country uses a nuclear weapon, all mental patients will be killed. I have never been arrested, and still I am treated like a criminal. The social workers say that the community stigmatizes mental patients, but in my experience only social workers stigmatize mental patients.

Better Now

Dear Better Now:

I can understand you wanting to be released, but then you constantly talk about a dislike for social workers. Your desire to go on some type of homeless program to become eligible for work may not be your best option. Take caution how you stop your main source of income before you have another solid income to replace it. I say this because you went from talking about Viagra to a nuclear weapon — then back to social workers and mental patients. Are you certain you have recovered? If you feel you are being abused, then write a letter reporting the social workers to top authority, such as the governor of your state. You seem to have a large amount of bitterness in your heart against social workers. I do agree with you that many of them have absolutely no concern for the people they represent. You know... just drawing a paycheck — but not all are bad. I find myself being a little puzzled when you say "I had a nervous breakdown, but I think I am over it." If you are not sure, then the social workers and doctors are not sure. You see, that statement is too much like the man who said, "I used to have schizophrenia — but we are okay now."

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Dear Gwendolyn:

Six months ago my employer hired a new executive director for our department. He immediately came in with his own crew of people. For 16 years I have loved this job, but now I find myself dreading to get up week mornings to go. I gave this job my all. I have worked long hours including weekends without compensation of overtime. I have gone sometimes without pay because the company was in financial deficit. This is the problem: My new boss finds something wrong with every financial report I submit to him. I recently completed the writing of a grant that was funded. When my new boss named those to be a part of the grant project — giving them additional pay, he did not name me. What's with that? I wrote the grant. My title remains the same and so does my salary.

Gwendolyn

Dear Gwendolyn:

Gee, we have the same name and seemingly some of the same problems I experienced in my working career. Let me tell you this: The working world can be truly horrible, just horrible. You have people on your own level of status stabbing you in the back in hopes of moving ahead. Then you have those who are in charge totally ignoring your knowledge. They make every effort to not let your smartness be known. Why is this... well, most times the boss is not the one with the brains. Gwendolyn, it is wise to keep an updated resume at all times no matter how long you have been on the job. A job should be viewed as a means of making a living — having money to buy the things you cherish in life, but most of all a job provides survival. You did what most people do. It is not too late to go where you can be better appreciated, but go for benefits and higher pay. Do not leave because of a problem with your boss. In life, you will find that trouble is everywhere. I tell so many people with your identical problem "do not become married to the job." The true fact is a job will work you into bad health then throw you away — like yesterday's trash.

# Biopic hails rise of music outfit

By Kam Williams  
Sentinel-Voice

When Lejzor and Fiszel Czynz arrived in the U.S. from Poland in 1928, their parents changed the family surname to Chess and started calling their little boys "Leonard" and "Phil." By the late Forties, the ambitious siblings had already achieved the American Dream, having established themselves in the liquor business while opening up a number of bars in the Black community on the South Side of Chicago.

The bulk of the performers booked in their nightclubs were musicians from Mississippi who played the Delta blues. Recognizing the commercial potential of the exploiting the popular genre, the enterprising brothers founded a record company with such promising artists as Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Bo Diddley, Sonny Boy Williamson and John Lee Hooker.

Thus, was born Chess Records, an industry giant which would make a mark on the music business for the next quarter of a century. Over that time span, the company would also venture into R&B and jazz, jumpstarting the careers of everyone from Chuck Berry to Etta James to James Moody to Lou Donaldson to Yusef Lateef to Aretha Franklin.

Obviously, distilling the rise and fall of Chess into an entertaining, two-hour melodrama meant that the movie would merely tend to focus on the more sensationalize



Beyoncé adds to her acting credits in "Cadillac Records."

aspects of its past. Consequently, many of the company's less colorful and less controversial characters, including some cultural icons, ended up either minimized or ignored entirely, in favor of the development of more salacious storylines.

Written and directed by Darnell Martin, "Cadillac Records" presents Leonard (Adrien Brody) as the driving force behind Chess, while marginalizing Phil (Shiloh Fernandez) as little more

than a historical footnote. This Hollywood version of Leonard is a flamboyant creep who roamed around the South on the Chitlin' Circuit in a Cadillac convertible in search of gullible B lack talent so eager to be famous that they were willing to enter into bad contracts.

Apparently, he gave each sucker a key to a flashy Caddy as a signing bonus, but would then subsequently cheat them of earned royalty payments when their songs

became hits. Speaking of cheating, Len was unfaithful to his wife (Emmanuelle Chriqui), especially with his heroin-addicted protégé, Etta James (Beyoncé).

Besides that tawdry love triangle, other compelling subplots revolve around hot-headed Little Walter (Columbus Short) who has run-ins with an impersonator, with the police, and with his band mate Muddy Waters' (Jeffrey Wright) over a woman (Gabrielle Union), before finally meeting his match in a bar fight.

Then, there's Chuck Berry (Mos Def) who, at the height of his fame, draws a stiff prison sentence for sleeping with a minor.

More memorable than these kinky goings-on are the classic tunes not lip-synched but actually sung by the gifted cast.

Highlights include Beyoncé's rendition of "At Last," "Maybelline" by Mos Def, "Hoochie Coochie Man" by Jeffrey Wright, "My Babe" by Columbus Short and "Smokestack Lightnin'" by Eamonn Walker as Howlin' Wolf. Overall, "Cadillac Records" provides a nostalgic enough trip down memory lane to overlook the poetic license taken with the facts, if not the glaring omission of Aretha who recorded her very first album with Chess in 1956.

How about a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T for the Queen of Soul?

Excellent (3.5 stars). Rated R for sexuality, ethnic slurs and pervasive profanity.



## PARTY LIKE ROCK STARS

Neffe, second woman from the left, the infamous sister of R&B superstar Keyshia Cole held her birthday celebration at the Asia Night Club on Saturday. The sister is one of the stars on the BET reality show, "Keyshia Cole — The Way It Is," now in its third season. Some of the celebrities helping Neffe to party were, Jamie Foxx, Tyrese, her mother Frankie and her little sister Keyshia, who sang the National Anthem for the boxing match between De La Hoya and Pacquiao earlier in the evening.

Sentinel-Voice photos by Marty Frierson