



CAROLYN HAX

She may be rushing in, but it's her life

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Hi, Carolyn: My roommate has been dating a guy since January and plans to marry him in December. It has only been a few months since they met and they are already engaged! They are still in the stage where they are all over each other and can't get enough of each other.

My friends and I are concerned the two of them are moving way too fast. He is a really nice guy from what I've seen. Also, he isn't an American citizen, but she told me he will get citizenship in a couple of years, for reasons unrelated to their getting married.

I have voiced my concerns lightheartedly, as I don't want to attack her, but she just laughs and brushes my comments off. I am worried they will get married before the "honeymoon" phase wears off and, once it does, will wish they hadn't rushed. I have been with my boyfriend for two years and I'm enjoying our time together before we make a lifelong commitment and settle down.

What should I do (if anything)? Is this not my business? We have been friends for 15 years.

Dallas

This is so not your business. A friend of 15 years can say, "I'm your friend and I love you, so I'll ask only once: What's the big hurry?" If she answers without getting defensive, then say, "Okay, I'll be supportive and shut up." Then drop it. If she is defensive, be on the lookout for other bad signs — but speak up only if/when you witness something troubling.

Nobody wants friends to suffer. But unless you see other signs of danger besides their being in a big hurry, you and your friends are crossing boundaries into your roommate's business. It's not your place to guide her to love everlasting, or even to prevent all emotional lumps.

There's a difference between waking up and thinking "I wish I hadn't rushed" and thinking "I wish my friends had told me my boyfriend scared them." The latter is what friends are about; the former is just growing up.

Re: Dallas: So the boyfriend isn't an American citizen? And they're rushing toward marriage? I've got alarm bells going off. He may be a nice guy, but not citizen + marrying citizen can = a nasty plan to get citizenship.

Va.

Obviously that's a concern. But it's clear the roommate knows, has asked her boyfriend about it, and is satisfied with his answer. Unless the friends have grounds to challenge that satisfaction, they have to let her form her own opinions.

Re: Dallas: I was engaged to a non-citizen. We were together for over four years and loved each other very much. What ruined it? Having people constantly question our relationship because of his citizenship status. As he said when we ended our relationship, "No one will ever believe I would marry you just for you."

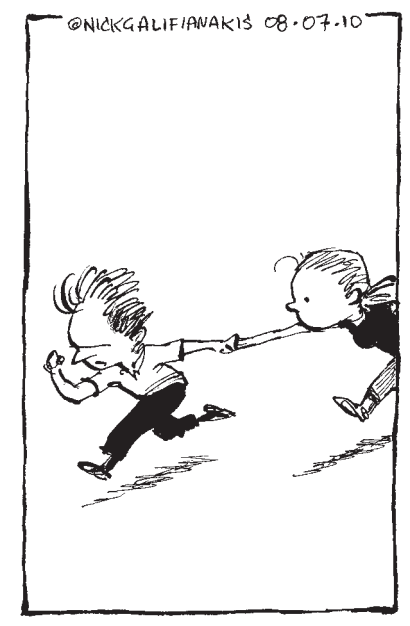
So shut up. Questioning people's citizenship motives is just cruel.

D.C.

Actually, any "s/he's just using you" message implies "You aren't the real draw" — and that's a message to convey only with great thought and care.

Read the whole transcript or join the discussion live at noon Fridays on www.washingtonpost.com/discussions.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or tellme@washpost.com.



NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

REPORT FROM WEEK 877 in which we asked for rhyming couplets on your choice of current events:



Impostor in uniform drives Metrobus with passengers: Well, first he got lost, and he then had a crash, and I'm lucky to be a survivor. Amazing how well the impostor resembled our regular Metrobus driver! (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

COUPLETS RUNNETH UNDER: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Said Barack, "My agenda a title should bear, to maximize public appeal."

Said Biden, "I know, clean, articulate friend: We'll call it the Big Bleeping Deal!" (Mike Fransella, Arlington)

Swapped back to Russia, where life is monotonous, Anna's the Spy Who Came In From the Hotness. (Brendan Beary)

He shot off his mouth like a pearl-handled pistol, And that marked the finish of Stanley McChrystal. (Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Crash test dummies' costumes given to Smithsonian:

Dummies Larry and Vince both reached 25: They never used cellphones when learning to drive. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Among many wounds, soldiers suffer from trauma. (Just a reminder, Mr. Peace Prize Obama.) (Peter Metrinko, Gainesville)

Levi and Bristol are off again, on again. Pinch me awake and I'll cough again, yawn again. (Pie Snelson, Silver Spring)

Sandra Bullock's divorce: Sandra gave Jesse a kick on his hind side: She'd finally learned what he did on her blind side. (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

They're making a movie about John Edwards, And how he traveled from forward to bedwards. (Mae Scanlan)

On the World Cup: Americans just can't relate to the thrill Of the rest of the world when the Cup ends 1 - nil. (Jim Reagan, Herndon)

» Felipe Melo and Brazil, a bunch of kiss-my-boo-boo wallers, Complaining their opponents got assists from vuvuzelers. (Gary Crockett)

2 the winner of the book "Are You a Miserable Old Bastard?": Queen Elizabeth's visit to New York: All aroun' Manhattan town Elizabeth careens; (Ironically, the monarch's never set a foot in Queens.) (Beverly Sharp, Washington)

3 The mayor's traffic ticket: Oops, Fenty is caught in an illegal turn. His car may be Smart, but the man's yet to learn. (Nan Reiner, Alexandria, a First Offender)

4 Lindsay Lohan's sentencing: Do legal guidelines really call for 90 days in jail For getting a bad manicure? On just one fingernail? (Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Somali militants ban soccer: The World Cup is boring enough to appall ya. But at least they don't shoot you like they do in Somalia. (Cy Gardner, Arlington)

On the octopus that kept choosing the winning World Cup teams: Spain or Holland — who would win? Their chances were identical; A brainy German got it right by sticking out his tentacle. (Beverly Sharp)

Switzerland won't extradite Roman Polanski: The Swiss say Polanski is free to romanski. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

Left-handers lose iPhone reception: iPhone 4 is a little bit flaw-ish; Apple tells us: Just don't be southpaw-ish. (Jeff Contompassis, Ashburn)

Elections are won with gerrymandered maps, Which is fine if they're drawn by our own kind of chaps. (William Bradford, Washington)

In Argentina now, it's deemed okay for gays to marry; It still takes two to tango, but their sexes needn't vary. (Brendan Beary)

Genetic-testing kit mix-up: You can now buy a gene-testing kit for a song. (Course it may get your gender and roots a bit wrong.) (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)

Mel Gibson's latest rantings: Mel's "Braveheart" won two Oscars, but his film career's gone south Since he showed the world that his most Lethal Weapon is his mouth. (Gary Crockett)

And last: On a Supreme Court ruling: The FCC decency rules have to go! So how 'bout a "Style Invitational Show"? (Kevin Dopart, Washington)

Next Week: Safety in Blunders, or The Errorists Win

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Week 881: What's in a name?

Redskin Albert Haynesworth, tackle from Tenne ss ee: Bet he's worthless.

Stefani Germanotta, a.k.a. Lady Gaga: "A man?!!!" "OK, a gag."

Here's a contest that two Losers recollected recently from when we did it back in 1999: Howard Walderman recounting the week that a record four of his entries were printed, and Chris Doyle griping that a similar earlier contest wasn't as good as this one.

It's certainly time to do it again, since we have another decade's worth of people to make fun of: Take the name of a person or institution. Find within it a hidden message, as in the examples above. You may add spacing and punctuation, but you may not move letters around: The hidden message must be found by pulling out letters and using them in the same order they appear in the original name.

You may add titles or other identifiers to the name, but don't go wildly overboard; the first example here is pushing the length limit.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a deluxe 12-piece set of Frogmen vs. Radioactive Octopus, which sounds better than it looks, even if it does glow in the dark. Donated by Occasional Loser Dan Steinberg.

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug. Honorable Mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Loser Magnets. First Offenders get a smelly, tree-shaped air "fresher" (Fir Stink for their First Ink). One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 16. Put "Week 881" in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post. Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results to be published Sept. 4. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week's results is by Jeff Contompassis; this week's honorable-mentions subhead is by Phil Frankendorf.

Online discussion Have a question for the Empress or want to talk to some real Losers? Join the Style Conversational at washingtonpost.com/styleconversational.

A loser in Tennessee but a winner on the Web

BASIL FROM C1

Wonkette.com fell in love: "You have a new election boyfriend!" the site exclaimed elatedly.

Jimmy Kimmel fell in love and invited Marceaux — who says he is unemployed but fighting for citizens on a freelance basis — out to California to be a guest on his show. He later got an invite to Glenn Beck's program and a mention on Stephen Colbert's. Each public appearance yielded the same internal observation: This guy cannot be for real, unless he is the realest thing anyone has ever seen.

Would he be another Alvin Greene, a plain-spoken man no one had heard of, who went on to win South Carolina's Democratic nomination for Senate?

Reached by telephone Thursday evening, Marceaux was asked to comment on how the attention had changed his life.

"I hate to say this, but I set the Internet up," he said. "I set the Internet up so they would talk bad about me because it's the only way to get hits."

He says that after the filming of the now infamous television slot, a producer told him that his hair was messy and that he'd made some "mistakes." He says he was asked if he wanted to film it over again, but he decided it was "perfect."

(He then goes on to warn the reporter that his life is in danger from the same men who shot Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr., and that if the reporter comes to visit him, she should probably bring a rifle.)

Marceaux's savviness or sobriety may have been under debate, but his knowledge of the science of Web hits is spot-on.

After all, politicians online — where forwarding is free and the audience is huge — have trotted out increasingly outlandish ads in the hopes of going viral. See California Senate candidate Carly Fiorina's "Demon Sheep" ad, which features a glowing-eyed man infiltrating an unsuspecting flock. It was proclaimed so baaaaad that it was genius, when it aired back in February. Or see Dale Peterson's butt-kicking "no prisoners" ad for Alabama commissioner of agriculture and industries — an office no one had heard of until the ad went gonzo. He didn't win, but everybody knew his name, if only to mock it.

Basil Marceaux was one step further. For a public exhausted by politics-as-usual, he offered not only an outlandish ad but an outlandish persona, so beyond reason that he demanded attention. His popularity happened at lightning speed, taking just days rather than the years most political candidates require — and those are the fortunate ones who rise from obscurity at all.

Like "Napoleon Dynamite's" Vote for Pedro campaign, like every high school that has jokingly nominated the band



WSMV-TV VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

SLOPPY OR SAVVY? Basil Marceaux in the TV clip that went viral.

geek for prom king, Marceaux's Internet success was based on the principle of ironic support. How hilarious would it be to pretend to love him? How hilarious would it be to actually love him?

Brandishing Marceaux as an ideal candidate — for real or no — was a one-fingered salute to mainstream politicians everywhere. We would rather fake-support this guy than real-support you.

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DOONESBURY BY GARRY TRUDEAU



CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON

