



CAROLYN HAX

Boyfriend reacts to breakup with threats

Adapted from a recent online discussion:

Dear Carolyn:

I have tried to break up with my boyfriend three times in the last two weeks...

I chickened out and couldn't keep pulling the trigger when he begged me not to do it the first time...

Government targets inmate's filings Vows crackdown on cakes from Mom

I am taking this as a suicide threat, although I really don't think he'd follow through.

The upshot is that he wants some sort of concrete reason, and keeps asking me, "What is wrong with me?"

The final, horrible complication: We work together, same department, same office, and he will quit if we break up. HELP.

Break-up brouhaha, California

Let him quit. You are being manipulated, expertly, and you need to get out of this relationship ASAP.

He is using your guilt to pressure you to behave the way he wants you to. That's not an "oopsie," that's who he is.

The pressure will continue — and possibly intensify — after you break up, too, so you'll need to take careful steps to distance yourself.

You don't need to give anyone "concrete" reasons for breaking up — "I don't see myself with you for the rest of my life" is as concrete an explanation as you owe anyone —

Even beyond soliciting help with the actual breakup, I think you have strong reasons to get into therapy. That's because you didn't intuitively reject your boyfriend's threats, or otherwise question their appropriateness.

So, please, find a teacher, learn where the lines are, and learn the difference between intimacy and crossing all of those lines.

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 885

in which we asked you to reinterpret the meaning of a Washington Post headline by writing a "bank head" under it...



Saudis may get huge arms deal Landmark 'oil for spinach' accord signed

2 winner of the dispenser full of actual red tape: He surprises even himself National peekaboo champion reveals grueling training program

3 Baltimore honors late rocker Frank Zappa with bust Heirs question 'honor' of posthumous pot arrest

4 These Redskins are as entertaining as they are unpredictable Excerpts published from just-discovered Custer diary

UNDERCAPITALIZED BANKS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

In back-to-school speech, Obama implores students to 'dream big' Gingrich: President tells kids to sleep in class

Essence of the D.C. sound Siren and car-alarm festival starts today

Government targets inmate's filings Vows crackdown on cakes from Mom

\$250 fine for distracted drivers in Va. In fact, most say they'd be they'd be happy getting half that much

You call this camping? New soldiers in Afghanistan learn that recruiters might have misled them a bit

Imposing talent What it takes to compete in the Brother-in-Law America pageant

County exec facing new sex charges Thought he was 'all paid up' with hooker

Musician behind 'Hot Hot Hot' Second violinist voted 'best buns' by Philharmonic

Brown leads Orange in chairman race 'What a relief to get beyond that whole white/black thing,' mayor

More alcohol-related hospital trips New liquor concession in ER spurs increase in visitors

Is George Mitchell in the Middle East, or Northern Ireland? We don't have so many foreign correspondents anymore, so please let us know

With autumn, a rush of arresting lesser-knowns Most A-list celebs already in jail

British archaeologists find remnants of a house dating back to the Stone Age Mailbox marked 'F1 ntst n' intrigues scientists

A week without Facebook? Pennsylvania college tries it out 'Things seemed pretty much the same,' reports Amish Institute

Spaceflight program is now NASA's albatross Shuttle replacement features large wingspan, low fuel costs

Exhumation confirms that Marine was buried in correct Arlington plot 'Sooner or later, someone had to be,' says cemetery official

GOP plans to replace health-care overhaul if it

controls Congress, but with what is unclear 'Death' cited as one option

Jets bounce back Boeing's new Silly Putty fuselage deemed a success in crash tests

Independence edges Freedom in OT Benign Dictatorship Runs Distant Third

Miss Manners: Keep it loose for tea parties Spandex frowned upon at Beck/Palin rally

Head-scratching follows head-spinning on 'Oprah' New sweeps-month stunts fall flat

Pumpkin launched more than a mile - Tajikistan space program advances

Search continues for beloved pet after hamster wheel accident

And last: The offensive output is no passing fancy The Style Invitational celebrates its 18th year

See more bank heads at washingtonpost.com/styleinvitational.

Next week: Look both ways, or Laff Offal, or Trope Report

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 889: Tour de Fours VII



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Pupelo: The Mississippi village where Elvis's Hound Dog came from.

For no reason at all except that we haven't used an O or a P in the previous six runnings of this annual contest: Coin and define a humorous word that includes — with no other letters between them, but in any order — the letters P, O, L and E...

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place wins this handsome squeaky dog toy in the shape of a typical bikini-wearing poultry carcass...

Other runners-up win their choice of a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt or yearned-for Loser Mug.

Send your entries by e-mail to losers@washpost.com or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Oct. 18. Put "Week 889" in the subject line of your e-mail...



Maybe it doesn't taste like chicken: The second prize.

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

At Ford's, a blessedly adult, shimmering 'Sabrina Fair'

THEATER REVIEW FROM C1

What's really arresting, though, is the acting. The cast utterly buys in — no irony, no condescension and blessedly adult, which makes for an unexpectedly laid-back, shimmering performance.

Gearhart, dusky-voiced and handsome, almost overdoes the tough-guy bit, but his serious edge situates this romantic comedy right at the border of melodrama (the pleasant kind, not the drippy brand).

among equals in a cast that's uncommonly blessed with intelligence and grace. John Dow is just the right amount of ad-dled as the Larrabee patriarch...

SABRINA FAIR

by Samuel A. Taylor. Directed by Stephen Rayne. Lighting, Pat Collins; sound design, John Gromada. With Michael Morrow Hammack, Bolton Marsh, Casie Platt, Julia Proctor, Tonya Beckman Ross and Derek Kahn Thompson.



T. CHARLES ERICKSON

FAIR PLAY: From left, Todd Gearhart, Tom Story, Susan Heyward, Helen Hedman.

Heyward does what Hepburn did: face complexity with a light style.

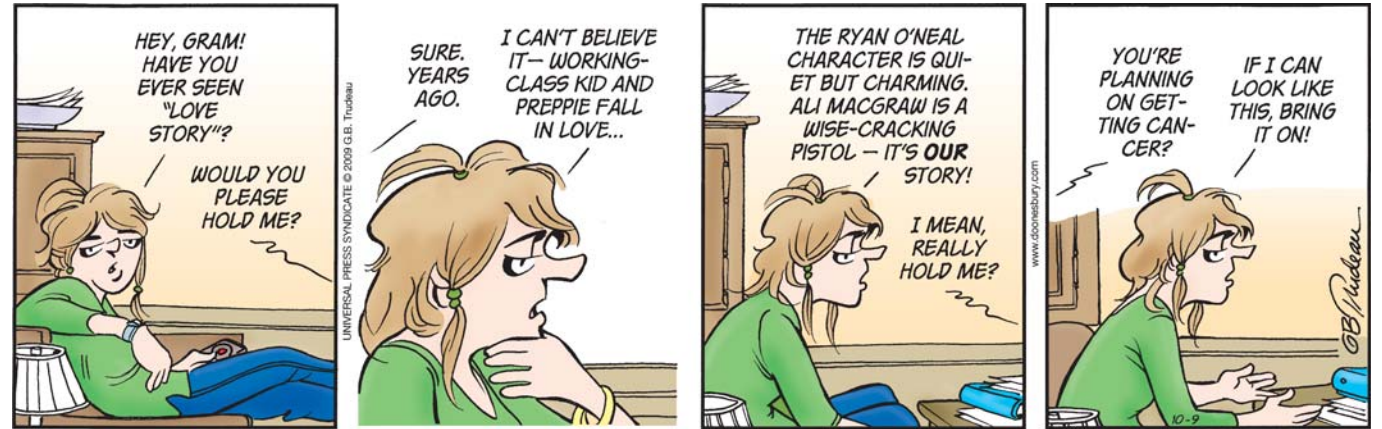
pealing script. But Linus is also philosophical, and so is Sabrina; it is clearly their feelings about the basics of living that made Ford's want to explore an extra angle.

"I shall keep my place as soon as I know it," Sabrina brightly informs her worried father, and there, of course, is a heroine to love. As that place becomes increasingly hard to define, though, Sabrina later wonders, "If I'm a girl without a home, am I also a girl without a country?"

Susan Heyward, as Sabrina, not only sparkles in the role, but pertly reasons her way through the character's dilemmas. In her own way, Heyward does what Hepburn did: face complexity with a light style.

All that may make Heyward first

DOONESBURY FLASHBACKS BY GARRY TRUDEAU



CUL DE SAC BY RICHARD THOMPSON

