

Fifth Wheel makes longtime friendship screech to a halt

Dear Abby: I am an older woman, living alone in a small apartment. I recently invited a couple I'll call Mary and John to my place for dinner. Mary told me her brother was visiting her from out of town, so I made him welcome, too.

I have a small table in my dining area which seats only four people comfortably. I have service for only four in china, crystal and silverware, as well as a set of four hand-embroidered place mats.

I prepared four shrimp cocktails, four porterhouse steaks, four baked potatoes and four baked Alaskas.

An hour before my guests were due to arrive, Mary phoned to say that "Cliff," a friend of theirs whom they know I dislike intensely, had dropped in on them, and could they

Dear Abby

with ABIGAIL VAN BUREN



bring him along to dinner?

I told Mary I could accommodate only four at my table, and not to bring Cliff. She stammered a bit and said she'd call me back in a few minutes.

A few minutes later, my phone rang. This time it was John. I couldn't believe my ears when he said, "If we can't bring Cliff, we'll

have to take a rain cheque." I told John that bringing Cliff was out of the question, and with that I canceled my dinner.

Abby, after a friendship of more than 30 years, Mary and John are no longer speaking to me.

Do you think I was wrong to have refused to let them bring Cliff? It would have been terribly inconvenient on such short notice, and besides, I really didn't want him.

End of Friendship

Dear End: You were not wrong. You do not need the friendship of

people who would attempt to pressure you as did Mary and John. Let them cash in their "rain cheque" when it hails in the Sahara.

□□□

Dear Readers: I recently received a poster which will soon be seen in the halls of all the public high schools in Indiana. The poster pictures six typical high school students - boys and girls, hanging around their lockers, talking to one another. The banner across the top reads: "Six Reasons to Say No to Sex." Then it lists the reasons:

1. Getting caught;
2. Getting a bad reputation;
3. Getting pregnant, or getting her pregnant;
4. Getting V.D. or herpes;
5. Getting AIDS;
6. And after that - there's no getting better.

This courageous educational campaign was developed by Dr. Woodrow Meyers, director of Indiana's Department of Public Health. I applaud the efforts of Dr. Meyers, and would like to see every high school in the nation display this poster.

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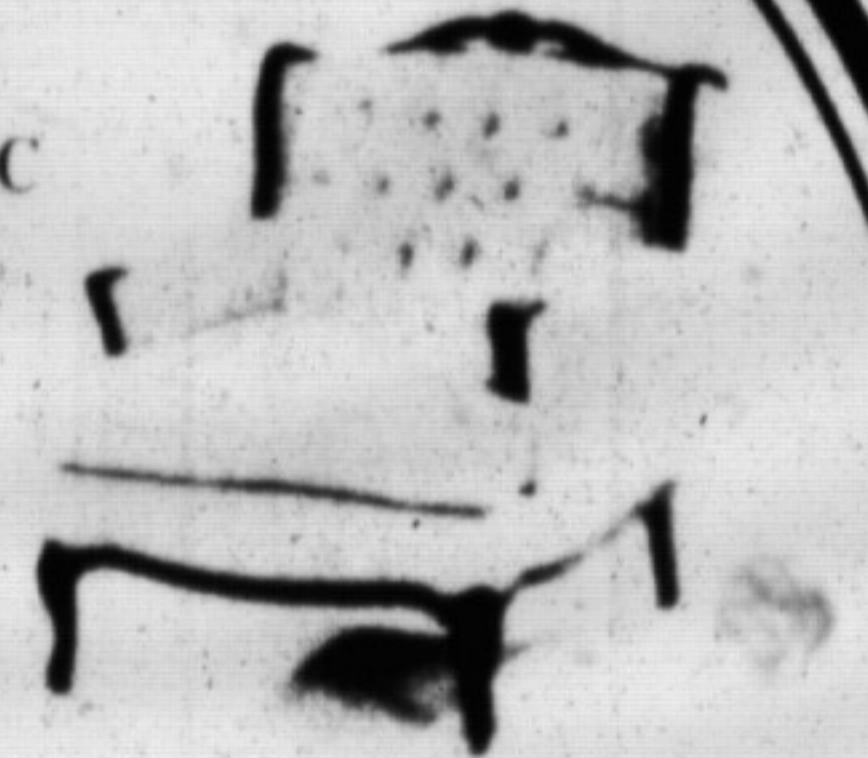
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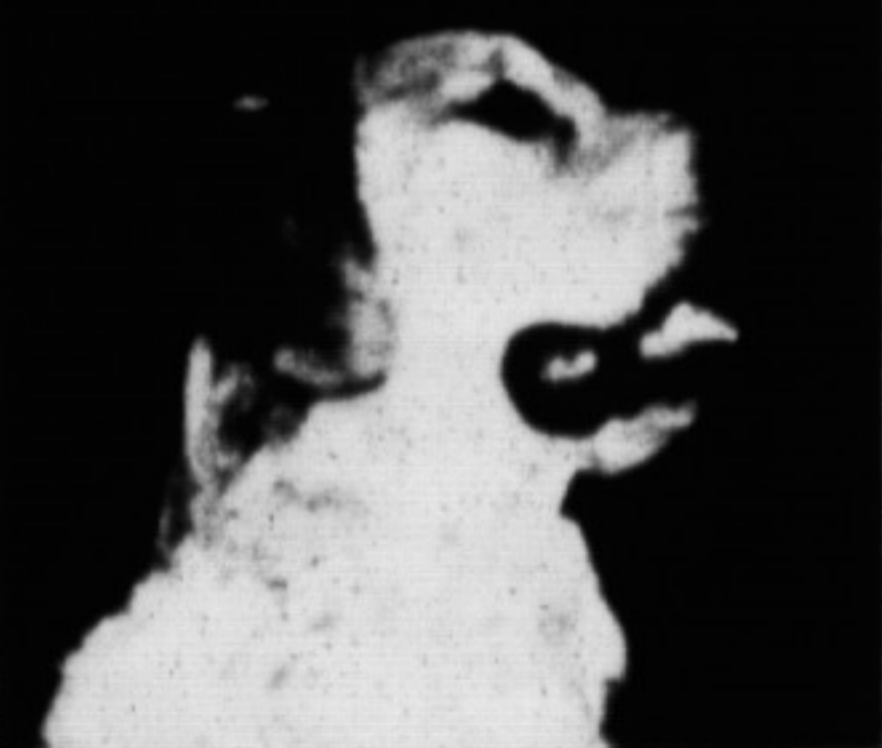
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