

# If she's got a boyfriend, back off

By MARKIAN SARAY

**G**irls (or women), please tell us. Its better if you do. We may get mad, or we may be disappointed, or we may go bald, but it's best if you tell us right off the bat. We'll understand, but not really.

Just tell us if you have a boyfriend or not.

Now, I'll contend that males are dumb. So there's nothing to debate there, but somehow, we're always thinking there's more to this. We start talking to you, the female, and we think that we're doing pretty good. You, the female, are laughing, and soon we start hanging out more. Soon, the male thinks that, hey, this girl likes me. Maybe we can go out on a date. Before this progresses any farther, what you, the female, should do is tell us your status. Here's an example of what you should and shouldn't do.

After seeing each other, whether it be in class or at work or under whatever bizarre circumstance, after about the third day, you, the female, should say something like, "You do that, too? My boyfriend's the exact same way!" Now, the male will suddenly pause. This is the time the neurons need to tell the brain, which in turn tells other regions: No, she's not available, but keep on talking and looking like it doesn't bother you.. This is commonly described in second-year psychology textbooks as the "I have a boyfriend" pause, where the male is frozen for about two seconds (one second for the heart to sink and one second for the neuron thing). But you, the female, have done a good thing. You have established that you are not available, but enjoy our company. At least we know. We will never figure out why you're dating the other guy, but at

least we know. So eventually, this idea of being with you will get out of our heads, or we will shoot ourselves.

What you shouldn't do is this. You, the female are hanging out with us, the male, in history class and things are going good. Talking, flirting, using witty banter and sharing a genuine dislike of the class are good signs. It's going so good that the male buys two pairs of Neil Young tickets, thinking that you will go with him, because both of you like Neil Young, because both of you are tone-deaf. You accept the invitation and the male is thinking that life is worth living, that he is the Karate Kid. So you're at the show and everything is going great. You watch the opening band, Moist, for no good reason except for hanging out with a girl. And after their set, you mention how you think they are a bigger poser band than Sugar Ray and have as much credibility as your grade-three brothers book report in which he recopied the description off the back of the book. And the female says, "Really? My boyfriend quite likes Moist."

Now, why would you do that?

Now, the male is thinking how he's going to ask for his 40 bucks back (oh thank you, George Costanza) while "Rockin' in the Free World" has lost all meaning. The female will say that you are a good friend and that's all she thought of it, as she is in a committed relationship. The thing is that guys can't understand this. You wanted to go out with us, but not in that way. Why didn't you tell us before? And if you do have a boyfriend, could you at least wait until Neil Young is finished?

Now there's some terminology that must be defined. There are stages of hurt that males go through. The above example is

called "treeline." You're riding a horse and things are coasting along and, as you are in that state, you don't see that tree branch and it hits you in the chest. You fall off the horse and it keeps going. You get up dust yourself off and walk away. You're a little damaged, but you'll still get back up on another horse.

That's not that bad, but there's more. So there's this woman that you constantly hang out with and you aren't really "dating," but are spending a lot of time together. Then, one day, she's got a boyfriend or she moves away. And you say, "Aw, fuck," or, if you're young like me, you say "Sheesh!" But what you should really say is "Toque on the bus!" Let's explain.

You're riding on the bus and you're wearing your favourite toque. It's probably knitted and your grandma spent hours knitting it during The Price is Right. You get hot, so you take the toque off and put it next to you. At your stop, you get off the bus, but you forget to take your toque! You missed the opportunity and you just forgot about for a split second. Well, you have to make sure that you don't forget about the woman like you did the toque on the bus.

But the question remains: if the toque was so good, why did you forget it? The toque is great, it's just that one second of not thinking. It's that hesitation of should-I-kiss-her-or-not. If you do, you could be wearing a toque (or a neckbrace), and if you don't, you missed your chance.

Unless you take the same bus and it's still there, or you call "lost and found," but that's getting a tad lucky.

Now, there's the ultimate stage. A very painful one where it hurts for a quite a long time. This is where the male thinks everything is

going okay and that, if there are any problems, they will sort themselves out. It's like you think you're going to catch a football. Your hands are open you think you've got it but you don't.

You get a football in the groin.

You get the conversation of feelings-have-changed and things-aren't-the-same-anymore but we-can-still-try-to-be-friends. And as much as you want to figure this out, you, the male, cannot. It seems that females are similar to Macintosh Computers. You're typing and all of a sudden you get "System Error." "Type 1." Restart. What does type-1 error mean? And why did this happen? I was just typing! You just don't know. And even when you do restart, things aren't as good as they once were, because the hard drive has become more fragmented. However, with some work and a visit to buddy at Computer Services, the computer (and thus the relationship) can be good as new or even better.

Nobody can explain the football in the groin, but we, the males, know when we've been footballed. It's because you, the female, drive us crazy. We, the males, are just happy to be with someone where you, the female, knows this is the right person for you. Its just that you control the whole thing. We males never know! We're okay at the providing part, but as for if this is true love and stuff, you've got to tell us, because were just too busy going, "Huh?"

And you women, specifically Lucy, hold that football. And we guys, specifically Charlie Brown, know that you may pull the ol' football. Yet we still line up, we still run and kick hard, hoping that we may kick the ball instead of our nuts.