

The Style Invitational

WEEK 191: GOING THROUGH A PHRASE

I'm sorry to hear that your concubine is sick.

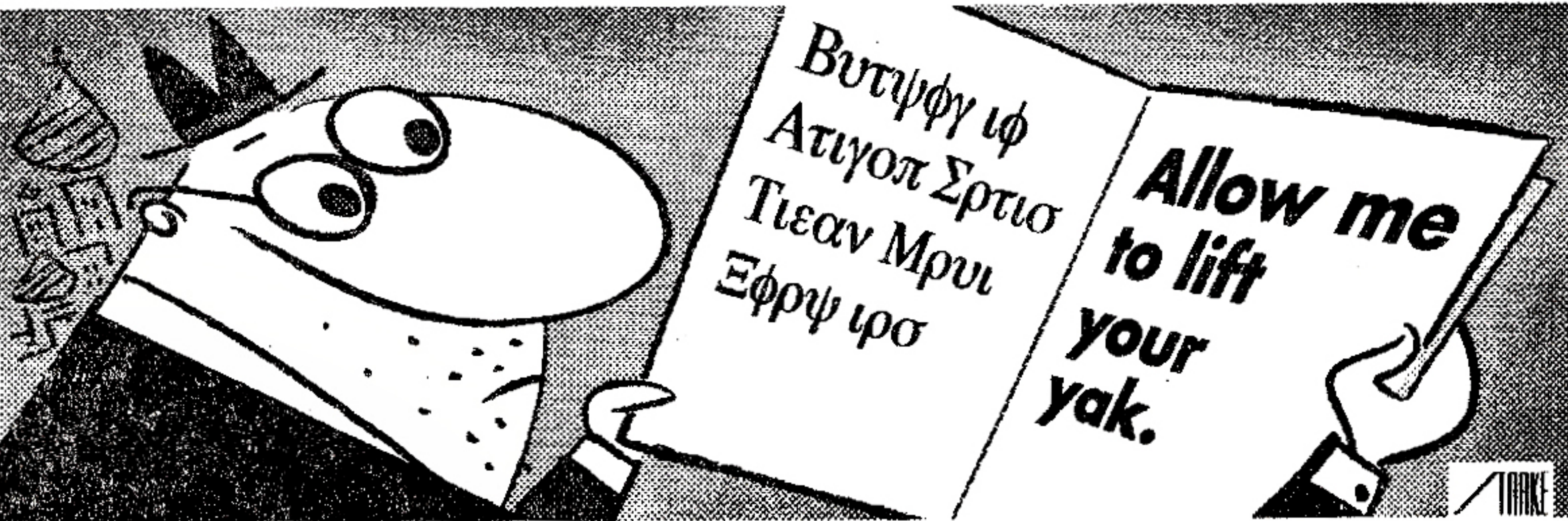
Here comes the executioner!

Hi! I wish to have sexual relations with your daughter.

Can you recommend to us a store that sells bacon grease?

I am happy to meet you, Son of Sam!

I am so sorry that I cannot attend your spanking.



BY BOB STAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

This week's contest was suggested by Sarah Worcester of Bowie, who stole it from a book titled "The Last Cuckoo." Sarah wins a Presidential Physical Fitness patch. The contest is to come up with a phrase from an American English phrasebook that would

provide no practical help whatsoever to a foreigner trying to get along in the United States. First-prize winner gets the game Baltimore in a Box, a chintzy, shameless ripoff of Monopoly featuring Baltimore-related real estate. It is worth \$25.

Runners-up, as always, receive the coveted Style Invitational Loser's T-shirt. Honorable Mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to The Style Invitational, Week 191, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, fax them to 202-334-4312 or submit them via Internet to this address: losers@access.digex.net. Internet users: Please indicate the week number in the "subject" field. Entries must be received on or before Monday, Nov. 18. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced in three weeks. Editors reserve the right to alter entries for taste, humor or appropriateness. No purchase necessary. The Faerie of the Fine Print & the Ear No One Reads wishes to thank David Genser of Vienna for today's Ear No One Reads. Employees of The Washington Post and their immediate families are not eligible for prizes.

REPORT FROM WEEK 188

in which you were asked to fill in the blanks in one of four sentences:

If they can _____ why can't they _____?; If you _____, they will _____;
You can _____, but you can't _____; and it's not the _____, it's the _____.

A few people asked what seemed to us a perfectly reasonable question: If you can lead a horse to water, why *can't* you make him drink? You shove his head in the water, he drinks or drowns, no?

◆ Fifth Runner-Up: **IF YOU sit 1 million chimps at typewriters for a million years, THEY WILL eventually ruin a whole bunch of typewriters.** (Dave Zarrow, Herndon)

◆ Fourth Runner-Up: **YOU CAN run off and make a bimbo your second wife, BUT YOU CAN'T get around the community property laws, you piece of crap.** (Sue Lin Chong, Washington)

◆ Third Runner-Up: **YOU CAN treat attention deficit disorder, BUT YOU CAN'T** (David Genser, Vienna)

◆ Second Runner-Up: **IF THEY CAN have Ric Ocasek date Paulina Porizkova, WHY CAN'T THEY have Cindy Crawford return just one of my calls without police intervention?** (Kevin Cuddihy, Fairfax)

◆ First Runner-Up: **IT'S NOT THE PMS that bothers me, IT'S THE way my life is falling to pieces and everyone is getting on my nerves AND I'M FAT AND NOBODY LOVES ME.** (Susan Reese, Arlington)

◆ *And the winner of the Elvis® cologne:*

YOU CAN talk with your hands BUT YOU CAN'T type w8th y4ohufr el;bo9ws. (Joe Shepherd, Gaithersburg)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

IF YOU tell people about the Astroturf in your pickup, THEY WILL automatically assume the worst. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

YOU CAN walk like an Egyptian, BUT YOU CAN'T pull your brain through your nose with a hook. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

IF YOU tell them you can nail down a piece of Jell-O, THEY WILL create a Handyman's Special Jell-O Nail N' Hammer Kit at Home Depot. (Sue Lin Chong, Washington)

IT'S NOT THE ethics, stupid. IT'S THE economy good. (Susan Reese, Arlington)

IF YOU build a 1954 Plymouth, THEY WILL commit you. (Charles Jeffries, Chesapeake Beach)

IF THEY CAN send exploration missions to Mars, WHY CAN'T THEY put a man on the moon? What's that? Oh. Well, why can't they put him there in a bikini? (Jacob Harley, Landover)

IT'S NOT THE low salaries of jobs awaiting English majors, IT'S THE lousy tips. (Allan Massie, Baltimore)

YOU CAN explain quantum physics to your dog, BUT YOU CAN'T prevent him from getting his head stuck in the cat door. (Sandra Hull, Arlington)

YOU CAN tell your wife that she's getting a nice, matronly look, BUT YOU CAN'T expect to live for more than two seconds afterward. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

YOU CAN call 1994's big dyspeptic voting bloc "angry white males," BUT YOU CAN'T call 1996's big dyspeptic voting bloc "hysterical, estrogen-crazed females." (Andy Spitzler, Baltimore)

IF YOU run, THEY WILL hide. (Bob Dole, Russell, Kan.; Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

IF THEY CAN call a shoe store the Athlete's Foot, WHY CAN'T THEY call a woman's lingerie store the Yeast Infection? (Louisa Payne, Herndon)

YOU CAN lead a horse to water, BUT YOU CAN'T make it accidentally kick you in the groin so you can send the video to "America's Funniest Home Videos" and win \$10,000. Um, not that I have tried or anything. (Kevin Cuddihy, Fairfax)

YOU CAN carry on relationships with several women at once, BUT YOU CAN'T brag about it in the newspapers. Oooops. (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

YOU CAN have fun with a nude art model, BUT YOU CAN'T have fun with a nude Art Modell. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

IF YOU teach a village to fish, THEY WILL be happy to buy lots and lots of tartar sauce from you later on. (Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

YOU CAN call for Philip Morris, BUT YOU CAN'T call for Dick Morris. His line has been disconnected. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

IF THEY CAN make an ointment that shrinks hemorrhoids, WHY CAN'T THEY make one that shrinks the rest of your butt? (Susan Reese, Arlington)

YOU CAN pour Wesson Oil all over my naked body, massaging me from head to toe, BUT YOU CAN'T, mmmm, actually, do that and you can do whatever you damn please. (Michael Levy, Silver Spring)

IF THEY CAN make Fat-Free Entenmann's, WHY CAN'T THEY just burn the American flag while they're at it, huh? (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

IF YOU crack one little joke about having to smite your enemies, THEY WILL take away your postal route and have you selling stamps. (David Genser, Vienna)

IF THEY CAN find life on Mars, WHY CAN'T THEY find The Ear No One Reads? (Joseph Romm, Washington)

◆ And Last:

YOU CAN expect it, BUT YOU CAN'T escape it—the word "proctologist" will find its way into this contest. (Paul Kocak, Syracuse)

Next Week: You Can Prank on It