



# The Washington Post

Entertainment

## Style Invitational Week 1121: The an(n)als of civilization

Sum up a 'bad day in history'; plus top parodies about the news



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Bad Day: Famously falling for doctored photographs made by two young sisters. (Bob

Stake for The Washington Post)

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By Pat Myers April 23  Follow @PatMyersTWP

(Click [here to skip down](#) to the results of Week 1117, song parodies about the news)

### **No Shot, Sherlock!**

*June 30, 1920:* Convinced that two teenage sisters have photographed actual fairies, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle asks their permission to use the photos in an article he is writing. (In a sort of proto-'Shop, they had clipped drawings from a children's magazine and took photos.)

### **The Riot of Spring**

*May 29, 1913:* Crowds brawl, throw things at the premiere of Stravinsky's "Sacre du Printemps."

### **Cassius Belli**

*June 20, 1967:* Muhammad Ali is convicted of draft evasion and sentenced to five years in prison.

### **He's Ex-Ex-Ex-Excommunicated**

*September 29, 1227:* Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II was excommunicated for the first of four times.

For every glorious day in history, there's more than enough unglory to balance it. D.C. author Michael Farquhar has come up with 365 "[Bad Days in History](#)" — one pegged to each day of the calendar, from the woes of ancient emperors to the debut of "Keeping Up With the Kardashians," and including the less than red-letter events mentioned above.

The book "Bad Days in History: A Gleefully Grim Chronicle of Misfortune, Mayhem, and Misery for Every

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# Bad Days in History

A GLEEFULLY GRIM CHRONICLE  
of MISFORTUNE, MAYHEM, and MISERY  
for EVERY DAY of the YEAR



Author of *A Treasury of Royal Scandals*  
**MICHAEL FARQUHAR**  
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You can end up with your own Bad Days —  
by losing just enough in this week's contest.  
(Amazon.com)

"Day of the Year" was just released this week by National Geographic, but already Michael (who as a tyke 23 years ago was The Style Invitational's very first flunky, mailing out prizes and whatnot) is thinking about a Bad Days II, which of course would comprise another 365 unsavory or inauspicious events. And he'd like some input.

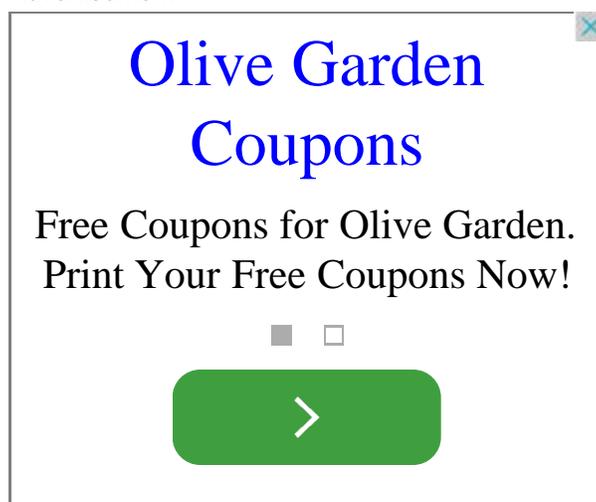
**This week: Briefly describe some "bad day in history" — you may be, as Michael himself was, creative in what you classify as such — and sum it up with a humorous heading, as in the examples above from "Bad Days in History." If Mike does write the sequel and thinks your Bad Day and heading would work in it, he'll use it and credit you in the book. (If you don't have an exact date for the event you use, that's fine for this contest.)**

Winner gets the [Inkin' Memorial](#), the Lincoln statue bobblehead that is the official Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives — yes! a copy of "Bad Days in History," signed by the Farq himself.

Other runners-up win their choice of a yearned-for [Loser Mug](#) or the ardently desired "Whole Fools" [Grossery Bag](#). Honorable mentions get a lusted-after Loser magnet designed by Bob Staake: either "[The Wit Hit the Fan](#)" or "[Hardly Har-Har.](#)" First Offenders receive a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" ([FirStink](#) for their first ink). E-mail entries to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or, if

you were born in the 19th century, fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, May 4; results published May 20 (online May 17). You may submit up to 25 entries per contest. Include “Week 1121” in your e-mail subject line or it might be ignored as spam. Include your real name, postal address and phone number with your entry. See contest rules and guidelines at [wapo.st/invrules](http://wapo.st/invrules). The headline for this week’s results is by Chris Doyle; the honorable-mentions subhead is by William Kennard. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at [on.fb.me/invdev](http://on.fb.me/invdev). “Like” the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at [bit.ly/inkofday](http://bit.ly/inkofday).

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**The Style Conversational:** The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at [wapo.st/styleconv](http://wapo.st/styleconv).

[And the results of The Style Invitational posted four weeks ago . . .](#)

NEWSICAL COMEDY: CURRENT-EVENTS PARODIES FROM WEEK 1117

In Week 1117 we asked the Parody Animals amid the Loser Community to write a song about someone or something in the news, set to a familiar melody. Among the hundreds of entries were lots about Hillary Clinton’s e-mails and Binyamin Netanyahu’s visit, and at least three songs about Indiana’s “religious freedom” law that were sung to “Oklahoma!” (Below, the title of each original song contains a link to a video clip so that you can sing along with the melody.)

4th place:

## **Obama is irked by Netanyahu:**

**(To "Be Our Guest" from "Beauty and the Beast")**

"He's a pest! He's a pest!

With our atom talks he's messed!

'Twas a breach to give a speech

At the Republicans' behest!

He's got tricks up his sleeve

Over there in Tel Aviv,

Where he casts unfair aspersions —

Don't believe me? Ask the Persians!

He negates our "two states"

While our leaders he berates,

For an ally he is easy to detest.

How better off would we be

If they'd vote out Bibi,

He's a pest! He's a pest! He's a pest!"

(Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)

3rd place

## **Indiana enacts a law permitting discrimination on religious grounds:**

**(To "Oklahoma!"; start at 0:45)**

Indiana — we're a state that made a big mistake

When a baker said, "If two guys wed,

I refuse to make their wedding cake!"

Indiana — where we treat most everybody well.

And if you are gay, you're free to stay

Even though someday you'll burn in hell.

We know that it got too intense

When the nation heard Governor Pence.

So when we say, “Weeee just clarified the law!”

We’re only saying, “We made a mess, Indiana!

But we saved Arkansas!”

(Barbara Sarshik, McLean, Va.)

2nd place and the copy of Bill Cosby’s book “Fatherhood”:

(To **“Maria”** from **“West Side Story”**)

Benghazi! ’Twas treason took place in Benghazi!

And ever since, that name has been our claim to fame, you know.

Benghazi! A whitewashed disgrace in Benghazi!

Two years gone by, and yet — we’re not about to let it go.

Benghazi! And then let’s talk about her e-mail!

“What’s-she-hiding-from-you-and-from-me” mail.

Benghazi . . . and also, she’s female. Benghazi!

(Nan Reiner, Alexandria, Va.)

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The advertisement is a rectangular banner with a dark red border. At the top, the text "Bray & Scarff" is written in a white, serif font, with "APPLIANCE & KITCHEN SPECIALISTS" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. Below this, the words "EARTH DAY SALE" are prominently displayed in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font. The central part of the ad features the Whirlpool logo on the left, which includes the word "Whirlpool" in a stylized font with a yellow swirl, and "HOME APPLIANCES" in a smaller font below it. To the right of the logo are two side-by-side images of white Whirlpool front-loading washing machines. At the bottom left of the ad, the text "Shop Now >>" is written in a white, sans-serif font.

And the winner of the Inkin’ Memorial:

(To **“It Had to Be You”**)

Shalom, U.S.A.,

I’ve come here to say,

Been reading your plan  
For peace with Iran  
And thinking, “Oy vey!”  
I love when I hear  
Those senators cheer,  
And prate how they hate  
States talking straight  
Out of their rear.

Those mullahs I’ve seen,  
They’re evil and mean.  
Believing their word  
Is simply absurd —  
They’ll never come clean!  
Best way to defend is to attack,  
Don’t mean Tehran, I mean Barack!  
Stand up for the Jew,  
That’s what I do,  
I’m Netanyahu.  
(Stephen Gold, Glasgow, Scotland)

PARODY POOPERS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

**Hillary Clinton’s e-mails:**

**(To [“I’ve Been Working on the Railroad”](#))**

I’ve been wipin’ out my e-mails all the livelong day;  
I decided to delete them so you won’t know what they say.  
Can’t you hear the whistle-blowers: “Whoa! 30,000? That’s a lot!”  
Can’t you hear the people shoutin’: “Show us what you’ve got!”  
Don’t you know (guffaw!)  
I’m above the law?

Your silly rules are not for me;

I'll keep you apprised

That all is sanitized —

There is nothing left to see.

(Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala.)

### **Pete Rose asks to be reinstated to Major League Baseball**

Put me back in the ballgame,

Put my bust in the hall

Never took P-E-Ds in my life,

Never once took a swing at my wife,

Yet I still am banished from baseball,

It's time to open the door

For it's twen-ty-seven-to-1 I will bet no more!

(Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

### **Sen. Ted Cruz runs for president:**

Hey Cruz, don't lose the fight,

Take the right wing and make it righter,

Just carry the White House into your heart,

Then you can start to make it whiter.

Hey Cruz, you are the one,

When the issues that count are reckoned,

Who knows that the First Amendment pales —

Really it fails — next to the Second.

From Iowa right up to Maine, hey Cruz, campaign,

Don't move to the left, no compromising!

For well you know that we all lose if women choose

Or you say it's true the sea is rising!

Just tell them: Nah nah nah nah nah. . .

(Robert Schechter, Dix Hills, N.Y.)

**Food giants Kraft and Heinz merge:**

(To [“New York, New York”](#))

Start spreadin’ the Cheez that comes from a can,

Then squirt some ketchup onto it,

Kraft Heinz, Kraft Heinz!

White Miracle Whip can be a rich tan

With Worcestershire mixed into it,

Kraft Heinz, Kraft Heinz!

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I’m gonna wake up from a fat-and-salt-torpor sleep,

To find my arteries clogged, blood pressure steep!

That Velveeta glow makes Tater Tots say,

Combine our brands, be part of it,

The new Kraft-Heinz!

If it could make you fit, we’ll overprocess it.

That’s what we do, Kraft-Heinz, Kraft-Heinz!

(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)

**In Re Your Transition, to Bruce Jenner**

(to [“Bosom Buddies”](#) from “Mame”)

You’re gonna need bosoms, buddy, to be one of the gals.

You’re gonna need strong narcotics

When they start to mangle your parts that now dangle.

Don’t let ogling your girlish figure lead your mind astray!

You’d better be – real careful when you are driving,

Especially near NSA.

Could he who’s so decathletic be really a she?

Should we be more sympathetic?

Without your Kardashians, you need panache. Even

So, should you surmount this hurdle so long in the tooth?

You're gonna get – much more than some bosoms, buddy.:

You'll cast off your javelin; it will be travelin'

Farther than e'er in your youth.

And even with – pure silicone bosoms, buddy,

It ain't gonna look like the truth. (Nan Reiner)

**Jon Stewart to leave “The Daily Show”**

**(to [“What Would We Do Without You”](#) from “Company”; start at 2:55)**

What will we do without you?

How will we ever get through

Twenty sixteen's dreaded election

Without your objection

To Tea Party brew?

Who'll label Congress a zoo?

Who'll stir up all of Fox's poo?

You were so smart and you were so wise,

The pope should start a movement to have Jews canonized.

How will we ever get through?

What will we do without you?

(Phyllis Reinhard, East Fallowfield, Pa.)

**:An unprecedented amount of campaign money**

**(To [“Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend”](#); start at 0:24)**

With cash in the hand politicians have power:

Yes, money is a pol's best friend.

The donor can help see that things don't go sour

And if he coughs up more, why, he'll be an ambassador.

Millions? No — it's billions, so

Give the max, and the message you'll send

Is "Make sure I'm nabbin' it, that job in the Cabinet" —

Money is a pol's best friend.

(Mae Scanlan, Washington)

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**Sen. Bob Menendez indicted on 14 corruption charges:**

(To "[I Love Trash](#)" from "Sesame Street")

Oh, I love cash!

Anything jingly and silver — it's funny

How I can run through a carload of money!

Yes, I love cash.

A doctor in Florida frequently sends

Big campaign donations, plus nice odds and ends;

Hey, what harm's a million in gifts between friends?

So what if my world goes crash! )

Oh, I love cash!

Anything greenish and "In God We Trust"-ish;

And I sure hope all my perks don't go bustish,

'Cause I love, I love, I love cash!

(Beverley Sharp)

**Hillary Clinton deletes e-mails from her personal server:**

(to "[Maria](#)")

The most wonderful things I've ever typed

(My e-mails my e-mails my e-mails)

All the beautiful work product words that will soon be wiped

(My e-mails my e-mails my e-mails)

My e-mails, my e-mails..

My e-mails! I've just wiped away all my e-mails!

I've flushed away the shame,

The White House I'll reclaim, you'll see.

Benghazi! You'd think that they think I'm a Nazi!

Inspection I eschew: A gal has secrets too, you see,

My e-mails! Find a trace of my guilt? Remove it!

I was bad, but for now you can't prove it.

My e-mails, you'll never recover my e-mails!

(Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

### **NFL hires its first full-time female official**

(to "It Takes a Woman" from ["Hello, Dolly!"](#))

Our stance on women is under critique;

The league gets lambasted whenever I speak!

And the press alleges we're not men of action;

To stop their complaining, we need a distraction.

So we'll hire a woman! The Shield's pro-woman;

We crack down on violence and rape

Because we care for women! Three cheers for women!

(Make sure that we don't lose this tape!)

(Matt Monitto, Bristol, Conn.)

### **The campaign heats up**

(To ["I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts"](#))

At a caucus event to choose the president,

When I got my ballot it was fully evident:

We've got a loserly bunch of cuckoo nuts

On a ballot, lined up in a row,

Dumb ones, daft ones, all of 'em thick in the head

Give 'em a check in their box, what the heck

That's what their funders said.

We've got a loserly bunch of cuckoo nuts;

Every one is owned by someone rich —

The left and the right in bed every night

With whoever's paying the most to sell their pitch.

(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)

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**Obama negotiates with Iran over nuclear plants:**

(To **“A Taste of Honey”**)

Can we inspect what we need to see?

Or is Iran only fooling me?

To trust Rouhani —

That is what I must decide.

I might be spurned, or get burned

If this deal with Rouhani falls through.

Do I ignore what the critics say?

Shall I rely on the IAEA,

And on Rouhani?

Will he take us for a ride?

(Larry Passar, Reston, Va., a First Offender)

**Jeb Bush runs for president:**

(to [“I Am What I Am”](#) from [“La Cage Aux Folles”](#); start at 1:25)

I am my own man.

I don't need Dad or my big brother.

I run my own race,

Set my own pace, blessed by my mother.

I don't turn to my dad or brother for advice now.

I have Porter Goss and Condoleeza Rice now.

So, give me your dough.

On with the show.

Hey, world, I am my own man! (Barbara Sarshik)

**Italian designers Dolce and Gabbana [tweet opposition to gay adoption and “synthetic kids”](#), prompting boycott threats:**

(Domenico Dolce singing, to [“I Dreamed a Dream”](#) from [“Les Misérables”](#))

My foot I put into my mouth,

Now Elton tweeting no buy dresses.

The whole caboodle going south,

Look like I make the mess of messes.

My tweety box it full of gays

Who all agree I worse than Nazi.

I gonna tweety back a phrase

For which they won't be saying *“grazie!”*

But if some baby someone wish,

It be big stupido blunder

To try make it in a dish,

Must to make in usual way.

Hold on *momento*, it the phone.  
Must be my bestest friend Gabbana.  
I wish he leaving me alone!  
I tell him, “No! We can’t change name!”

My rage it rising up like hem.  
I flare like pants with grande passion.  
Pooh-pooh to everyone of them!  
They no big genius of fashion!

I have a dream “synthetic” kids  
And IVF will be forbidden.  
But dream is all it gonna be,  
No thanks to imbecile like me. (Stephen Gold)

**Another Ted Talk: Sen. Cruz’s filibuster:**

(to [“I Could Have Danced All Night”](#))

I could have talked all night  
(Oh, yes, I did – that’s right.)  
When I was new in town.  
I didn’t want you, there,  
To have Obamacare,  
So I shut the gummint down.  
Be thunderstruck when this Canuck discourses:  
Yon Mister Smith, thy myth I’ll smite!  
The world has got no choice;  
I love to hear my voice,  
And I could talk, talk, talk... all night.

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I sure could talk all night

To the extremist Right;

I preach of liberty.

No one will take away

Our precious right to pray!

(For those who pray like me.)

Imagine me the next to see the White House!

Nay, don't bewail our nation's plight.

To govern, I'm no use;

I'll just read Doctor Seuss, "Cause I could talk, talk, talk... all night!

(Nan Reiner)

**And Last:**

**(To ["The Great Pretender"](#))**

Oh-oh, yes, I'm a First Offender —

Loser with a capital "L."

I'm tickled pink that my name is in ink,

And this air fresh'ner smells to high hell.

I once was a weekly dead-ender

Whose entries got tossed in the trash,

But I played the game and won something that's lame

'Cause The Post is too cheap to give cash. (Chris Doyle, Ponder, Tex.)

**Still running — deadline Monday, April 27: our perennial compare/contrast contest. See [bit.ly/invite1120](http://bit.ly/invite1120).**

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