

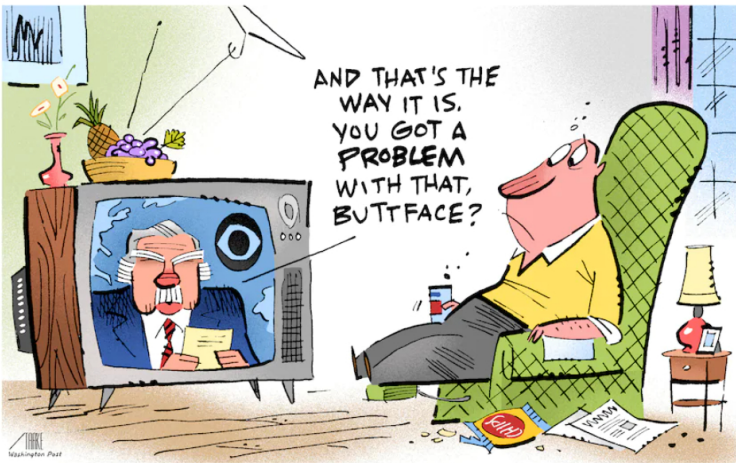


Arts & Entertainment Books Movies Music Museums Theater & Dance TV Comics Going Out Guide Crosswords

Entertainment

Style Invitational Week 1451: Could have said it worse ourselves

Give us ‘bad first drafts’ of famous lines. Plus winning ‘plain English’ translations.



(Cartoon by Bob Staakefor The Washington Post; Week 108 honorable mention by David M. King)

By Pat Myers

Yesterday at 9:38 a.m. EDT



(Click [here to skip down](#) to the inking “plain English” translations)

“And God saw that it was **scrumdiddlyumptious**.” (Kevin Mellema)

“The Giants win the NLCS! The Giants win the NLCS!” (Paul Kocak)

“I float like a butterfly and sting like a really, really angry butterfly.” (Ken Krattenmaker)

“We hold these truths to be, like, duuuuh . . .” (Joseph Romm)



Ohhhh. Well, then. Three of the 50 lies and excuses in this week's second prize.

Looking through the archives for classic entries to turn into [Style Invitational Ink of the Day](#) graphics on Facebook, the Empress realized that it's time for some new classics in a contest we first did in 1995: **Give us a humorously bad “first draft” of a famous line from history, literature or entertainment**, as in the examples above from waaay back in Week 108 (the Declaration quote won the contest). Obviously it needs to be clear to the reader what the original quote was, but please include the name of whoever said it.

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Submit up to 25 entries at wapo.st/enter-invite-1451 (no capitals in the Web address). Deadline is Monday, Sept. 6; results appear Sept. 26 in print, Sept. 23 online.

Winner gets the **Clowning Achievement**, our new Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives a little box of cards labeled “**50 of the Best Excuses and Lies for Every Occasion**,” “best” seeming here to mean “absolutely lamest.” I guess that if you’re in a bind, all you do is pull out one of these numbered cards, from “I wanted to give you extra time to get ready” to the simple “Who, me?,” and wave it at your ticked-off questioner. (I did admire No. 23, “My stigmata’s acting up.”) Donated by Loser Cheryl White.

Other runners-up win their choice of our “For Best Results, Pour Into Top End” Loser Mug or our “Whole Fools” Grossery Bag. Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, “No ‘Bility” or “Punderachiever.” First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air “freshener” (FirStink for their first ink). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline “LOL Clear” is by Jesse Frankovich; Kevin Dopart wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the lively Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev; “like” the Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; and follow [@StyleInvite](https://twitter.com/StyleInvite) on Twitter.



The Style Conversational: The Empress’s weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. See this week’s, in which she’ll share more results from Week 108 and related contests (published late afternoon Thursday, Aug. 26), at wapo.st/conv1451.

The “You’re Invited” podcast: The latest 30-minute episode features Invite legend and anagram savant Jesse Frankovich. He’s amazing. See bit.ly/invite-podcast.

[And from The Style Invitational four weeks ago . . .](#)

LOL clear: 'Plain English' translations from Week 1447

In [Week 1447](#) we asked readers to find some sentence in an article or ad, then translate it into “plain English” and tell us what it really meant.

4th place:

Washington Post article: “The exemptions for law enforcement-related records in public records statutes are often broadly worded and are often given deference by the courts.”

Plain English: “You’ll see Elvis and Jimmy Hoffa on a beach sharing a margarita before you see the complaint files on those cops.” (Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.)



1 Is Mayim Bialik’s dubious science going to be ‘Jeopardy!’s’ next big headache?

2 4 things we learned from the Bob Ross documentary, including his hair secrets and an alleged affair



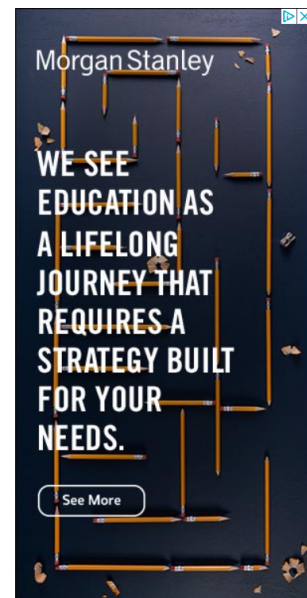
3 Christopher Lloyd is still playing characters who are unhinged — and larger than life



4 **Review** ‘He’s All That’ is not all that, not even a little bit of that



5 **Perspective** I did not spend my summer binge-watching TV. Here are the books I loved instead.



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3rd place:

"A St. Louis couple who gained national notoriety for brandishing guns at peaceful protesters last year and pleaded guilty to firearm charges have been pardoned by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson."

PE: "White votes matter." (*Kevin Dopart, Washington*)

2nd place

and the jaunty conical hat:

George F. Will: "Equal opportunity is an aspiration forever imperfectly realized. But the steady pursuit of it is as noble as today's progressive abandonment of this aspiration in favor of 'equity' is ignoble."

PE: Pursuit of equal opportunity: noble.

Having equal opportunity: ignoble. (*Ira Allen, Bethesda, Md.*)

And the winner of the Clowning Achievement:

Spelman College's study-abroad program has pivoted to "a systematic internationalization of the curriculum that infuses virtual exchange opportunities."

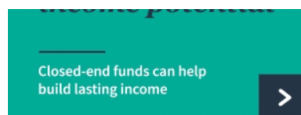
PE: You can study a broad section of your Zoom screen.

(*Drew Bennett, West Plains, Mo.*)

Poor and simple: Honorable mentions

Gov. Andrew Cuomo talking about his 2019 harassment law: "Let's honor the women who have had the courage to come forward and tell their story."

PE: "Well, not ALL the women." (*Jon Gearhart, Des Moines*)



As covid cases rise — again — doctors in D.C. area are "holding their breath."

PE: As covid cases rise — again — doctors in D.C. area are holding their breath. (*Seth Tucker, Washington*)

"Among other things, many ignored the reality that millions of African Americans were quite pleased with the decidedly sublunary consolations of equal protection under the law."

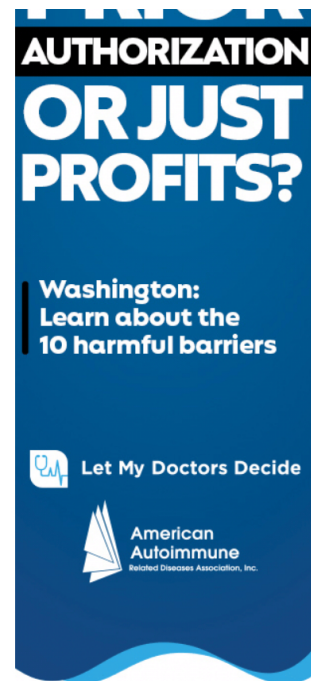
PE: "I like using decidedly fancy words." (*Jon Ketznar, Cumberland, Md.*)

"I think there's a misperception of robots taking jobs away from people. Robots are tools. Throughout time, tools have increased the productivity of people."

PE: "My new boss, who is both a robot and a tool, has asked me to give a short statement on my last day at work." (*Hannah Seidel, Alexandria, Va.*)

Pinder . . . draws on fundamental and quantitative research and used a proprietary algorithm for predicting dividend revisions.

PE: Pinder also crosses his fingers and wishes on his birthday candles. (*Chris Damm, Charles Town, W.Va.*)

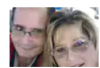


MOST READ



1 Is Mayim Bialik's dubious science going to be 'Jeopardy!'s next big headache?

2 Wife hospitalized for covid gets home to find husband dead from the same virus: 'It was like walking into a horror movie'



3 Lawyer for Afghan girls' robotics team tells Oklahoma woman to stop taking credit for rescue



4 Afghanistan live updates: At least 170 people killed in Kabul airport bombing



5 The story of an Afghan man who fell from the sky





NBC's announcers, to be fair, have been respectful of the Australians, Russians and other out-of-towners who have bested the Americans in some of the main events.

PE: And also happy to have U.S. athletes sling doping allegations against them. (*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

Rarely are video games as wholly bent on creating a feeling of serenity as "Mythic Ocean."

PE: BORRRRRING. (*Steve Brevig, Springfield, Va.*)

"You can shovel gobs of information into his brain, and he can analyze it and spit it out in a useful and comprehensive manner."

PE: "Ha-ha, see how my "compliment" makes the guy seem totally repulsive?" (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.*)

"At [Marlboro maker] Altria, we're focused on moving beyond smoking and our 2030 Vision to responsibly lead the transition of adult smokers to noncombustible products."

PE: "We're focused on offering only the most modern addictions." (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)



Sen. Mitch McConnell: "I think this is awfully important that we continue to push to get more Americans vaccinated."

PE: "We need *somebody* left to vote for us." (*Karen Golden, Prince Frederick, Md.*)

Newly traded Max Scherzer: "It is what it is."

PE: "This sucks." (*Mark Raffman; Ira Allen*)

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis: "We can either have a free society or we can have a biomedical security state, and I can tell you, Florida, we're a free state."

PE: Give me liberty AND give me death! (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

Sarah Palin on the possibility of running for the Senate: "If God wants me to do it I will."

PE: "If Trump wants me to do it I will." (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

"It's an existential feeling. I don't know how to put it. What is love? It's kind of that same thing. I'm meant to be here. All I know is that."

PE: "Whoa, that was some pretty good weed." (*Craig Dykstra, Centreville, Va.*)





“Since the start of the pandemic, China has sealed off entire cities and tightly controlled borders to keep infection rates down.”

PE: “Since the start of the pandemic, China has sealed off entire cities and tightly controlled borders to keep infection reports down.” (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

Shower renovation ad: “Don’t believe we can do it in as little as a day?”

PE: “Good thing.” (*Kevin Dopart*)

NASA: “We’re trying to partner public and private partnership with commercial industry to head back to the moon, and we’re very excited about that.”

PE: Yo, Elon! Jeff! Richard! Want to take a moonwalk? (*Coleman Glenn, Huntingdon Valley, Pa.*)

Russian statement: “Due to a short-term software failure, a direct command was mistakenly implemented to turn on the module’s engines for withdrawal, which led to some modification of the orientation of the complex as a whole.”

PE: “That ‘rocket scientist’ Ivan clicked on ‘Rotate View’ again.” (*Jeff Rackow, Bethesda, Md.*)



“Wisconsin is better than this.”

PE: “I wish Wisconsin were better than this.” (*Mark Raffman*)

Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.): “This is the country that gave working people the right to vote. This is the country that freed the slaves.”

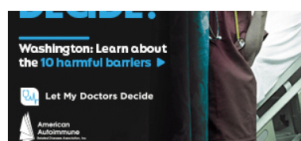
PE: “Even though for much of our history we denied most people the vote and enslaved millions of people, hey, we stopped because the South lost the war — we’re just freakin’ saints!” (*Steve Leifer, Potomac, Md.*)

“Moderation in supplier deliveries and prices paid indicate bottlenecks are alleviating, but both remain high enough to indicate supply-side problems persist.”

PE: “My pizza arrived in 30 minutes, but it was cold.” (*Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.*)

Wine review: “There is often astringency that borders on a little too much rusticity ...”

PE: “If you like turpentine, you’ll love this wine.” (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.*)



Maureen Dowd: “Suddenly the party that loved to rah-rah for family, morals and religion was in the grip of a thrice-married, grabby, foul-mouthed Tartuffe.”

PE: “I know Molière and you’ll have to Google him.” (*Jon Ketzner*)

Gov. Andrew Cuomo: “I know too well the manifestations of sexual assault trauma and the damage that it can do in the aftermath.”

PE: “As you can see by my resignation.” (*Jesse Frankovich, Lansing, Mich.*)

Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Tex.): “If politicians in Congress can demand and ultimately make public the president’s private tax returns, what stops them from doing the same to others they view as a political enemy?”

PE: “Oh, God, I’m next!” (*Neal Starkman, Seattle*)

The Washington Post Fact Checker found no evidence to support DeSantis’s claim that Biden’s immigration policies are to blame for the surge.

PE: We checked again. There’s still no Florida-Mexico border. (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

Florida Gov. DeSantis: “I think it’s very important we say, unequivocally, ‘No to lockdowns, no to school closures, no to restrictions, no to mandates.’”

PE: “I think it’s very important we say, unequivocally, ‘YES’ to the base.” (*Drew Bennett*)

And Last: *Horoscope:* To focus on your favorite interest to the exclusion of all else isn’t exactly healthy.

PE: Really, you don’t have to send in 25 entries every single week! (*Beverley Sharp, Montgomery, Ala., who has entered virtually every week since 2006*)

And Even Later: “Here’s a contest that we haven’t done in years, but — as you can see from the examples above — is as timely (and timeless) as ever.”

PE: “The Empress is out of fresh ideas again.” (*Jeff Contompasis; John O’Byrne, Dublin, Ireland; and John F. Cissel, Potomac, Md., who last got ink in 1994*)

Still running — deadline Monday night, Aug. 30: Our contest to describe an aspect of our lives as a space alien or future anthropologist would describe it. See wapo.st/invite1450.

0 Comments

Gift Article



By Pat Myers

Pat Myers is editor and judge of The Style Invitational, The Washington Post’s page for clever, edgy humor and wordplay. In the role since December 2003, she has posted and judged more than 700 contests. She also writes the weekly Style Conversational column and runs the Style Invitational Devotees page on Facebook. [Twitter](#)

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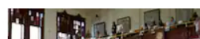


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