

The Invitational Week 117: Join Our Secret Text Group!

'Reveal' to us some more chat from the Signal app bozos. Plus lots of risque business with double-entendres.

[PAT MYERS](#)

AND

[GENE WEINGARTEN](#)

MAR 27, 2025



Hello.

Welcome to the New and Improved Invitational, in which we bounce *right off the news* with our newfound catlike speed and grace.

We got the idea for this week's contest by reading the excellent Substack newsletter *I Might Be Wrong*, by Jeff Maurer, a former staff writer for John Oliver's *Last Week Tonight*. [In his piece](#), Jeff claimed that, like the editor of The

Atlantic, *he, too*, had been invited onto the now infamous leaked eyes-only chat group for top Trump regime intelligence officials reporting on war plans against the Houthis. Then Jeff made up a whole bunch of dialogue that he claimed to have seen.

That's what you get to do this week. **For Invitational Week 117: Reveal some more dialogue from the "Houthi PC small group."** Consider, especially, what peccadilloes the individuals might bring to the table. Your potential cast of characters includes **those people on the original chat**, including Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Vice President JD Vance, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, and National Security Adviser Michael Waltz, *plus anyone else you might want to bring aboard* who was also allegedly inadvertently invited. (For example, Maurer has **Jeffrey Toobin** pop up, as it were.)

Here's an elongated snippet from Maurer's piece:

Saturday, March 15



MAR

Good morning. Pete, are you going to send that update?

10:15 AM



MAR

Pete?

10:37 AM



MAR

???

11:06 AM



JD Vance

Eagerly awaiting that update, Pete

11:11 AM



Pete Hegseth

Already sent it.

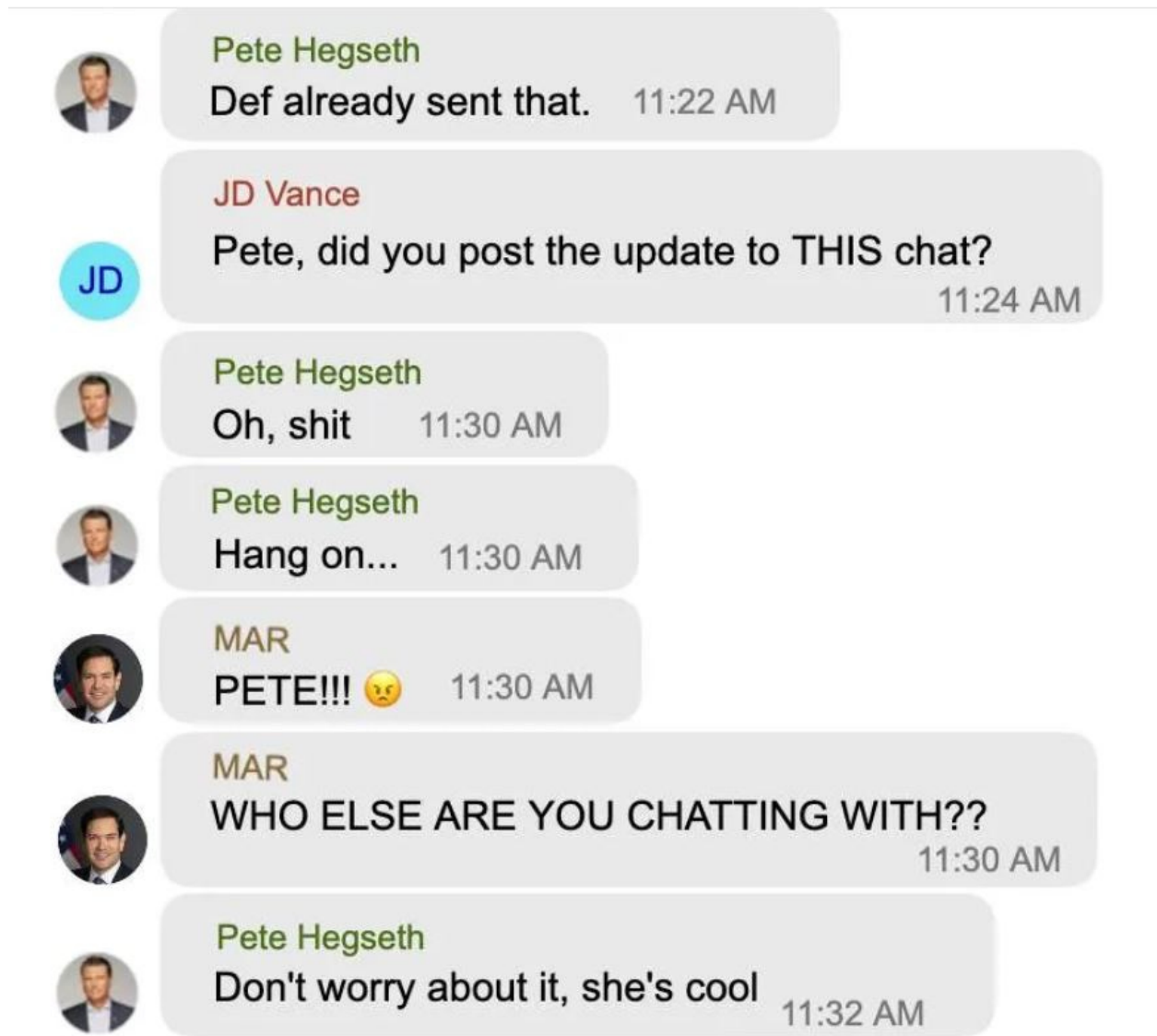
11:15 AM



MAR

I'm not seeing it.

11:15 AM



And here are a couple of short ones we wrote (and along the lines of what we're thinking of for this contest):

WALTZ: Is State prepped for the spin cycles on this, Marco?

GABBARD: Polo!

VANCE: Po... Damn, Tulsi.

—

HEGSETH: The time is 12:13. Bombs away. We're gonna nail us some hotties, dadgummit. 😊🔥

GABBARD: Houthis.

HEGSETH: You say it your way, I'll say it mine.

Length: We're not setting a limit, but longer entries have to be especially funny, worth the time and space.

No need to include art, logos, etc. Just text is fine. **Emoji won't transmit** on our entry form, but you could indicate them with words and we'd try to create them on this end (we copied out the **U.S. flag emoji** and it came out as the letters "US," though the ones above were fine).

Formatting your entries: Just type them as you'd like to see them published; don't follow our usual request to type each entry on a single line. **If you're sending more than one entry,** please separate them clearly in some way.

Deadline is Saturday, April 5, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, April 10. As usual, you may submit up to 25 entries for this week's contest, preferably all on the same form.

[Click here for this week's entry form](#), or go to **tinyurl.com/inv-form-117**.

This week's winner gets a special combination of our favorite prizes: stupid toys and ridiculous earrings! They actually wind up, chatter, and walk around (removing them from one's ears is advised for that third function).



Wondering how to accessorize that spring ensemble for Easter Mass or a Seder? Always use the right jewelry.

Runners-up get autographed fake money featuring the Czar or Empress, in one of [eight nifty designs](#). Honorable mentions get bupkis, except for a personal email from the E, plus the [Fir Stink for First Ink](#) for First Offenders.

But first, an announcement

We have a milestone to announce today. We do this on those rare occasions when a longtime Invitational competitor — a Loser, in our affectionate patois — achieves his or her 500th blot of ink and thus enters The Invitational Hall of Fame. Usually, we accompany this announcement with a recap of the Loser's first inking entry, most memorable entries, and so forth. Today will be a little different, because our winning Loser is a little different.

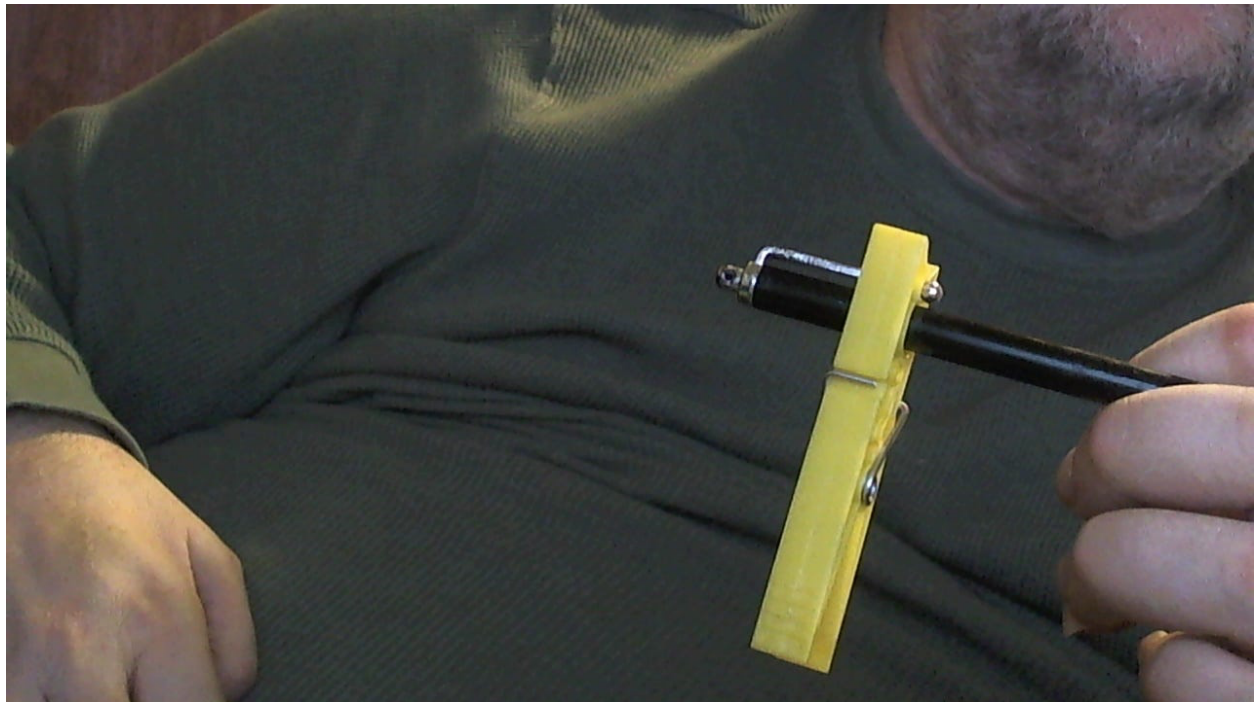
Today, Jon Gearhart, of Des Moines, Iowa, one of the most gifted and inventive and downright hilarious Losers of all time, gets his 500th ink, but he is going to tell his own story in response to the one and only question we asked him: How do you write your entries?

Not *how do you think them up* or *how do you craft them to be so perfect?* but ... *How do you write them?*

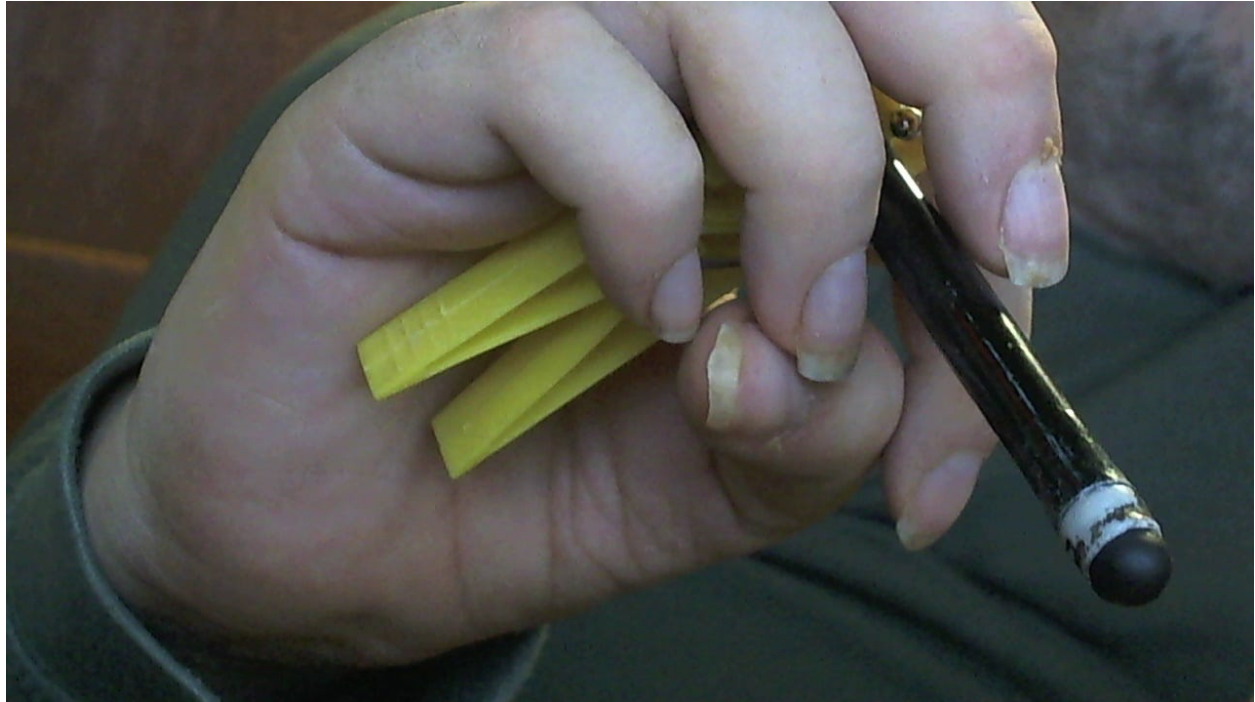
Take it away, Jon.

“When I was in rehab following **the car accident in 1996** that left me a quadriplegic with limited use of my hands, I got a device called a **Wanchik Writer**, now discontinued. I had it for a while, but the flimsy thing eventually broke. I came up with my own alternative.

“My mom had a bag of clothespins that she bought in the '60s and she carted around the country as we moved. I clipped a clothespin to a pen ...



... and I found I could palm it so the top end sits between my index and second finger and the clothespin sits against my hand.



That way when I push on the keys with the stylus tip, the pressure pushes the clothespin against my palm and I don't simply push the pen further and further between my fingers, eventually dropping it or readjusting it.

"I once took an online typing test. My highest score was 30 words per minute. That was me typing at maximum speed for a few minutes, something that quickly tired me out. Typing at my normal pace, I type around 15-20 words per minute and I do that all day, every day. When I'm in bed, I have a touchscreen laptop that I use to keep me from going nuts waiting on helpers to get me up in the morning."

Thanks, Jon. And welcome to Exalted Loserdom.



(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines) in a selfie.

Bawdy Doubles: The double-entendres from Week 115

In **Invitational Week 115** we presented a list of situations — including the evergreen “in bed” — and asked you to tell us some things that might be said in

two or more of them. “At a rodeo” plus just about everywhere else yielded jokes about “bullshit.”

Third runner-up:

Things one could say both at a rodeo and in Congress: “A lot can go wrong when you give this much responsibility to a bunch of clowns.” (*Jesse Frankovich, Laingsburg, Mich.*)

Second runner-up:

In the Oval Office and in bed: “Just think — only 44 other men have occupied this space.” (*Tom Witte, Montgomery Village, Md.*)

First runner-up:

At a football game and while dancing, *and* on the toilet, *and* in bed: “It’s time to try the Tush Push!” (*Jeff Rackow, Bethesda, Md.; Dan Helming, Conshohocken, Pa.*)

And the winner of the socks that look like feet in flip-flops:

While listening to the radio and in Congress: “We don’t need no education ...” (*Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.*)

And as always, the Gene Pool Gene Poll:

Two Bad: Honorable mentions

In Congress and at the beach: “To get the job done, you’re gonna need a bigger shovel.” (*Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.*)

At a child’s music recital and in the Oval Office: “Psst, just smile and tell him he did a great job.” (*Kevin Dopart, Washington, D.C.*)

At a child’s music recital and at the beach: “I could feel the spray from twenty feet away!” (*Jon Gearhart, Des Moines*)

At a rodeo and in bed: One o’ these days I’m gonna last eight seconds. (*Tom Witte; Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand*)

While walking the dog and in Congress: “So now you’re not even gonna try to keep him on a leash?” (*Judy Freed*)

On the toilet and in bed: “I’ll be out in just a second!” (*Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore*)

At a football game and in bed: “We can pass on the Trojans, right?” (*Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.*)

While driving and in bed: “Brace yourself for a speed hump.” (*Chris Doyle*)

At a football game and in bed: “I think you need a head coach.” (*Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.*)

In Congress and on the toilet: “I’ll feel better once it makes its way through the lower chamber.” (*Steve Smith*)

At a child’s music recital and in bed: “I’m proud of you! For a beginner, it’s surprisingly hard.” (*Judy Freed*)

At a child’s music recital and in bed: “Wow, someone’s been practicing!” (*Tom Witte*)

At a child’s music recital and in the Oval Office: “Uh-oh, is that a recorder over there?” (*Larry Rifkin, Glastonbury, Conn.*)

At a football game and in bed: “Should we go for two?” (*Frank Osen, Pasadena, Calif.; Roy Ashley, Washington, D.C.*)

At a football game and in Congress: “Those concessions made me sick.” (*Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.*)

At a football game and in Congress and on the toilet: “I can’t believe how little we’re passing.” (*Chris Doyle*)

On the toilet and in the Oval Office: “I love spending time on the throne.” (*Leif Picoult, Rockville, Md.*)

At a football game and in the Oval Office: “It was a perfect call.” (*Jesse Frankovich; Chris Doyle; Kevin Dopart*)

At a football game and on the toilet: “Looks like the bowl’s going to be filled to capacity today.” (*Jeff Contompasis, Ashburn, Va.*)

At a rodeo and in Congress: “That’s the second rider killed this week.” (*Kevin Dopart*)

At the beach and in the Oval Office: “You’re not wearing a suit? What were you thinking?!” (*Jesse Frankovich; Judy Freed; Andy Bassett*)

At a child’s music recital and in bed: “ Well, the important thing is you did your best.” (*Frank Osen*)

In bed and in Canada: “Nope, I’m not going down south anymore.” (*Jeff Contompasis*)

In bed and in Congress: “Please stop rolling over!” (*Rob Cohen*)

In bed and in the Oval Office: “We’re going to have to sanitize that later.” (*Jeff Contompasis*)

In Canada and in Congress: “How did all these **loonies** end up on the floor?” (*Steve Smith*)

In Congress and while listening to the radio: “It sounds like you need to replace that speaker.” (*Chris Doyle; Jonathan Jensen; Kevin Dopart*)

In Congress and at the beach: “They can be uncomfortable, but you’ll get used to flip-flops.” (*Kevin Dopart*)

In the Oval Office and while eating potatoes: “I said I wanted them whipped!” (*Jeff Contompasis*)

At a child’s music recital and in the Oval Office: “Maybe we shouldn’t take pictures-while the kid has a finger up his nose.” (*Judy Freed*)

While dancing and in Congress: “To the right, to the right, to the right, to the right!” (*Mark Raffman, Reston, Va.*)

While driving and in bed: “Why does everyone feel compelled to ride my ass?” (*Steve Smith*)

While driving and in bed: “No, I don’t need you to draw me a map. I’ll find it.” (*Judy Freed*)

While eating potatoes and at a child’s music recital: “Ugh, I’ve had enough of these tots.” (*Jesse Frankovich*)

While eating potatoes and in bed: “It wouldn’t be so dry if you took more time heating it up.” (*Judy Freed*)

While listening to the radio and in the Oval Office: Enough with the car commercials already! (*Eric Nelkin, Silver Spring, Md.*)

At a child’s music recital, on the toilet, and in bed: “Wow, it’s longer than I’d expected.” (*Leslie Franson, Ellicott City, Md.*)

While listening to the radio, in Canada, at the beach, and in bed: "Woohoo! Barenaked Ladies!" (*Jesse Frankovich*)

The headline “Bawdy Doubles” is by Jesse Frankovich; both Jesse and Kevin Dopart submitted the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, March 29: Our Week 116 contest for funny art made out of real food. Click on the link for details.