

The Invitational Week 119: Step Into the Void

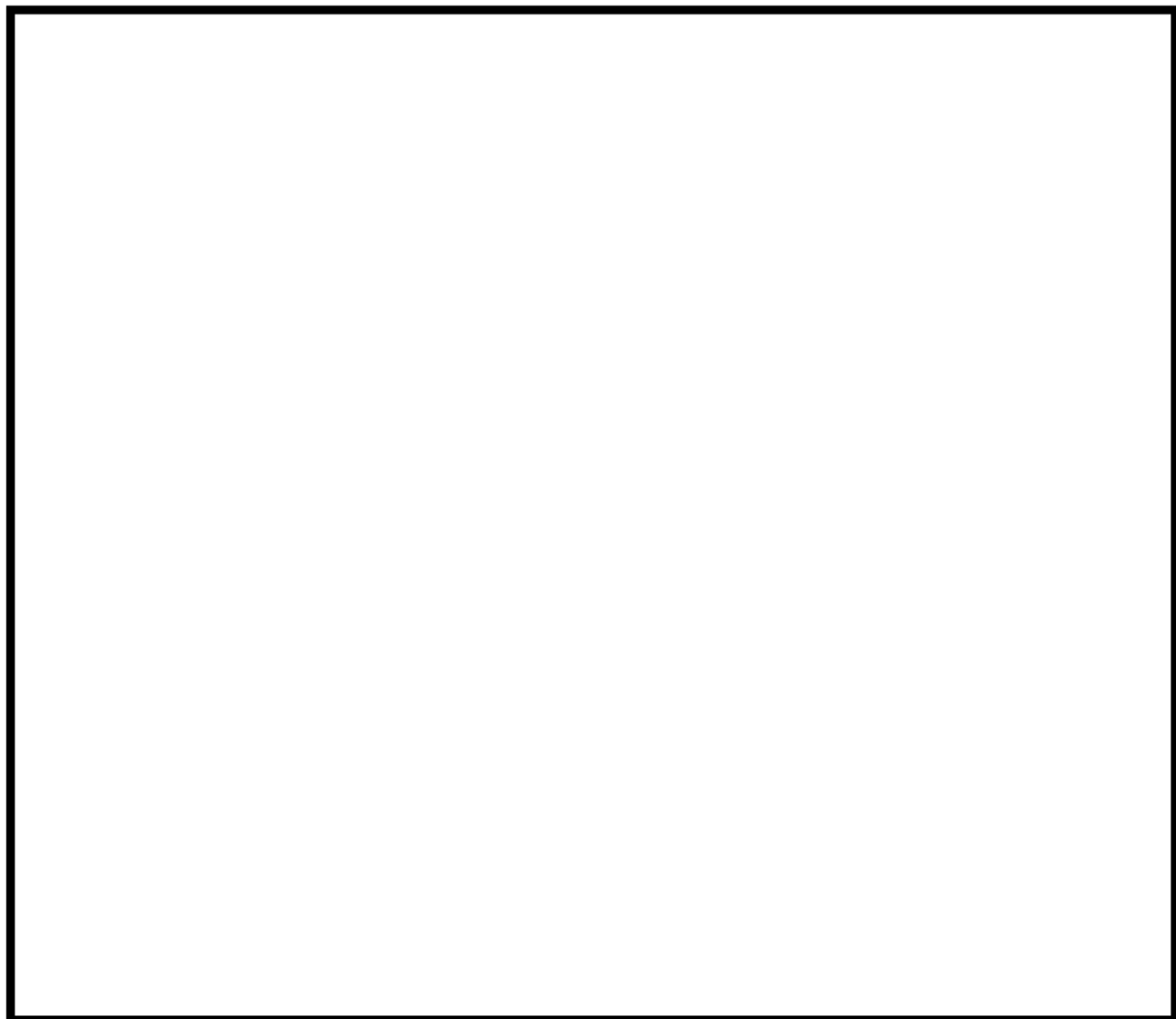
Plus winning additions to the Signalgate texts

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AND

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Hello. Ready for a challenge? Good. Want some help? Too bad.

That's the new contest, above, everything that's between the Headlines and "Hello." There are no further instructions.

The Invitational has done this only once before, exactly thirty years ago, and the results were excellent. *Are you as creative as the last Invite generation was?*

For Invite Week 119: Do what we just told you to do. Surprise us.

Formatting: Just our standard request that you write each entry as a single line (i.e., don't hit Enter until the end.

Deadline is Saturday, April 19, at 9 p.m. ET. Results will run here in The Gene Pool on Thursday, April 22.

[Click here for this week's entry form](#), or go to **tinyurl.com/inv-form-119**.



We dare you to walk into McDonald's with this on: This week's prize.

This week's winner will be crowned with a jeweled diadem. Well, close: It's a giant plush hat that looks somewhat like a McDonald's-type box of french fries, or one that has big weird googly eyes in front, anyway.

Chatterwocky: Your 'Signal app texts' from Week 117

In **Invitational Week 117** the Invite asked you to further infiltrate the infamous Signal security breach involving Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Director of Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Adviser Mike Waltz, et al. — with the option of adding new participants who'd found their way into this massive security breach, or a later one.

Third runner-up:

MWaltz: Hey, it just occurred to me, we could turn this into a drinking game. Every time someone says Houthis, you have to take a shot. 🍷 🍷

TGabbard: LOL! 😏 🍹

PHegseth: HouthisHouthisHouthisHouthisHouthisHouthisHouthisHouthis
(*Art Grinath, Takoma Park, Md.*)

Second runner-up:

Hegseth: OK the strike was successful and reports are that the target was taken out.

Kissinger: Now do Cambodia.

Rubio: I thought you were dead!

Kissinger: I just had to come back for this.

(*Sam Mertens, Silver Spring, Md.*)

First runner-up:

Waltz: Pls provide the best POC from your staff to coordinate with us for the next couple days.

Hegseth: What??? I just fired the friggin chairman of the joint chiefs for being a DEI hire.

Waltz: Pete!! POC means point of contact, not person of color.

Hegseth: Oh ... got it. Thought you were going all woke on me! 😂

(Jonathan Jensen, Baltimore)

And the winner of the glorious clacking-teeth earrings:

VP Vance: I just hate bailing Europe out again.

Hegseth: I fully share your loathing of European free-loading. It's PATHETIC.

PennyH: No, Pete, YOU'RE pathetic. And I say again that I have no respect for any man that belittles, lies, cheats, sleeps around, and uses women for his own power and ego.

Hesgeth: Mom???

(Rob Cohen, Potomac, Md.)

Nixed Signals: Honorable mentions

DefSec Hegseth: Man, if the Democrats knew about this, they'd be up in arms.

SenChuckSchumer: We vigorously and forcefully take no position.

DefSec Hegseth: Oh, OK.

(Duncan Stevens, Vienna, Va.)

PHegseth: TIME NOW (1144et): Is weather is favorable for a GO?

SMiller: For some reason, NOAA's not answering. Looking out my window now — it seems fine.

(Steve Smith, Potomac, Md.)

Hegseth: Remember — if we blow it, blame it on Biden.

Vance: No-brainer!

Gabbard: You can say that again!

Biden: Hey, folks, I can see everything you're saying.

Hegseth: Joe??!! How is that possible?

Biden: Click on Settings, then tap Font Size, then Increase.

(Judy Freed, Deerfield Beach, Fla.)

Hegseth: Where else can we bomb while we're at it?

Waltz: How about the Heard and McDonald Islands?

Hegseth: What've they got there?

Waltz: Penguins.

Hegseth: I HATE PENGUINS.

Vance: Too far away for our bombers to reach, but we'll figure out something else to do to them. *(Duncan Stevens)*

Rubio: Before launching this attack, one more time, let's read over our exact plan, forwards and backwards.

Hegseth: No problem, I'm used to having to say the alphabet backwards. *(Jesse Rifkin, Arlington, Va.)*

MarcoR: Karoline, how are you going to spin it when they ask about the Maryland man we sent to the horrible Salvadoran prison by mistake?

KaroLev: I'll say to err is human, so this is an excellent illustration of our administration's amazing humanity. *(Howard Walderman, Columbia, Md.)*

Hegseth: When should we meet next? 2100 hrs?

S Miller: My coffin has wifi, so I'm available in the daytime too. *(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase, Md.)*

Pete Hegseth: Who's still on the chat?

Jose Cuervo: It's just us, dude.

Jim Beam: Those other losers left hours ago.

Pete Hegseth: Well we can't stop the party now! 🎉🎉🎉

Johnnie Walker: All right! 🍷 *(Sam Mertens)*

Hegseth: First bombs dropped at 0600. You'd have been impressed by the size of those things. Death could be smelled for miles!

All (in unison): QUIT TEXTING FROM THE BATHROOM! *(Jon Gearhart, Des Moines)*

MarcoR: We can't repeat the same foreign policy mistakes that Neville Chamberlain did with ~hitler

KanyeW: Somebody tag me? *(Jesse Rifkin)*

Hegseth: I'm stuck in traffic on that white bridge with the arches near the Capitol.

Waltz: Oh, the Douglass Bridge.

Hegseth: Who's Douglass?

Waltz: IDK, probably some DEI hire.

Hegseth: Let's bomb it. (*Duncan Stevens*)

Vance: OK, those are the war plans. Is this secure?

Hegseth: Clean on OPSEC.

(Fox News Insta-Chyron left the chat.)

(Skywriting Messages R Us left the chat.)

(Nationals Stadium Scoreboard Readout left the chat.)

Hegseth: Mostly. (*Duncan Stevens*)

Vance: I can't get POTUS to stay focused on Greenland. He keeps obsessing about Panama because of that **that damn palindrome**.

Gabbard: "Am a pan"?! 😞

Vance: No, that's an anagram. A palindrome is when you spell the same way backward and forward.

Rubio: So let's give him one for Greenland: "Live on Qaanaaq. No evil!"

Vance: Nice. Do one for Canada!

Rubio: Niagara, O roar again!

Vance: 🙌🙌🙌

Gabbard: Hey, here's one — Not so, Boston!

Vance: 😞 No, Tulsi, we already own the libs.

(*Kevin Dopart, Washington, D.C.*)

Hegseth: What happened to our operational security plans?

Rubio: Ask JD.

Vance: Haitian immigrants ate them.

Hegseth: Makes sense. (*Duncan Stevens*)

JD Vance: Pete, I have coordinates for one more strike.

WaPo: Hello, it's Bob Woodward for The Washington Post.

Vance: WTF! Who invited you?

WaPo: Haha JK! It's me, Will Lewis. 😊

Rubio: Phew! I was worried you were a real journalist.

WaPo: 😂😂😂

(Steve Smith)

And Last:

Waltz: Did everyone on this chat expect to get the invite?

Hegseth: I did, but those jokes went right over my head. *(Judy Freed)*

The headline "Chatterwocky" is by Dave Prevar; Beverley Sharp and Dave each submitted the honorable-mentions subhead.

Still running — deadline 9 p.m. ET Saturday, April 12: Our Week 118 reverse-crossword contest: We give you a partially filled-in grid; you come up with up to 25 answers plus funny clues. Click on the box below.