

# The Style Invitational

Week 501: Questionable Sentences



**A:** He was “there when it happened.”  
**Q:** I hear that O.J. is finally ready to confess, but that Johnnie Cochran scripted the confession. What, exactly, is O.J. going to say?

**This week’s contest** reprises one of our favorites from yesteryear. Take any sentence appearing anywhere in today’s Washington Post (or on [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com)) and make it the answer to a question. You may not change or reorder any words; you may alter punctuation. Make sure you tell us from which story, and on what page, your source material came. (The above example was taken from today’s Dear Abby.) First-prize winner gets the “Simpsons”-theme board game Loser Takes All, based on a concept so stupid we are not surprised that, despite its big-time sponsorship, Stephen Dudzik of Olney bought it at a Kmart bargain bin for

\$8. First runner-up wins the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up win the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Send your entries via fax to 202-334-4312, or by e-mail to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com). U.S. mail entries are no longer accepted. Deadline is Monday, April 21. All entries must include the week number of the contest and your name, postal address and telephone number. E-mail entries must include the week number in the subject field. Entries will be judged on the basis of humor and originality. All entries become the property of The Washington Post.

Entries may be edited for taste or content. Results will be published in four weeks. No purchase required for entry. Employees of The Washington Post, and their immediate relatives, are not eligible for prizes. Pseudonymous entries will be disqualified. The revised title for next week’s contest is by Chris Doyle of Forsyth, Mo.

**Report from Week 497**, in which you were asked to supply questions to “Jeopardy!”-type answers. Good answer too popular to reward with a prize: **Answer: Definitely not Michael Jackson. Question: Who will replace Mister Rogers?**

◆ Fourth Runner-Up: **Answer: Zippy the Pinworm. Question: What parasite is the hardest to get?** (Joe Otchin, Ithaca, N.Y.; Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

◆ Third Runner-Up: **Answer: Definitely not Michael Jackson. Question: “Glenda Jackson, Latoya Jackson, Mahalia Jackson, Michael Jackson. Quien es mas macho?”** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.; Nick Yuran, Waynesboro, Va.)

◆ Second Runner-Up: **Answer: The Rapper Nice-T. Question: Who recorded “My Hoe’s in the Garden, and My Bitch is Named Fido.”** (Kaz Aames, Warner Robins, Ga.)

◆ First Runner-Up: **Answer: Dick Cheney but Not a Training Bra. Question: What needs wiring to provide chest support?** (Michael Kidwell, Silver Spring)

◆ And the winner of the “How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days” board game: **Answer: Mahmoud Finkelbaum. Question: Who would blow himself up, if only it wouldn’t break his poor mother’s heart?** (Kevin Cuddihy, Fairfax)

◆ Honorable Mentions:  
**Answer: Hans Blix’s right nostril**  
**Answer: What’s one MORE thing right under Hans Blix’s nose that he can’t see?** (Joanne Nickerson, Reston)

**Answer: Definitely not Michael Jackson**  
**What does Michael Jackson’s long-lost twin look like?** (Josh Tucker, Kensington)

**Who is the biological father of Michael Jackson’s children?** (Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls; Sue Lin Chong, Washington; Brian Barrett, Bethesda)

**Answer: The Rapper Nice-T**  
**Who is always bragging about his prowess with a Glockenspiel?** (Mark Young, Washington)

**Who is Tipper’s favorite gangsta?** (Anne Skove, Dendron, Va.)

**Answer: Zippy the Pinworm**  
**Who lays lots of eggs but occasionally really tickles you in a funny place?** (Milo Sauer, Fairfax; Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

**Answer: Zippo the Pinhead**  
**What was the first sign that the comics page had started accepting corporate sponsorships?** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills, Md.)

**Who is Smokey the Bear’s pyromaniac nemesis?** (William Dimmer, Merritt Island, Fla.)

**What comic explores the lighter side of cranial deformity?** (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

**Answer: Mahmoud Finkelbaum**  
**Who thinks that a viable, contiguous Palestinian state “couldn’t hoit”?** (Mark Young, Washington)

**Who is the world’s least likely person to become pope?** (Jeff Brown, Fairfax)

**Answer:**



**What would my wife and I look like today if we had never married?** (Tom Kreitzberg, Silver Spring)

**Answer: Dick Cheney but not a Training Bra**  
**Whose job covers two entire hemispheres?** (Milo Sauer, Fairfax)

**Answer: Because the French Got There First**  
**What is this whole non sequitur thing all about, anyway?** (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

**Answer: Just that Al Qaeda Guy in the T-shirt**  
**Okay, if that wasn’t the Yeti, who was it?** (Judith Cottrill, New York)

**If there are six Girl Scouts, four old ladies, three Buddhist monks, a baby in a stroller and that Al Qaeda guy in the T-shirt, which one will get on the plane without being screened?** (Mary Lou French, Lorton)

**Answer: Because It Didn’t Rhyme**  
**In the fall, on the Isle of Nantucket, A girl picked some fruit in a bucket. She picked peach, plum and apple And sold them to Snapple, But why did she never pick orange?** (Bruce W. Alter, Fairfax Station)

**Why did Mother Goose reject the rhyme “Mary, Mary Quite Conspicated”?** (Jeff Brechlin, Potomac Falls)  
**And the David Twenhafel memorial prize: Why is this entry / Worse when not in French?** (Seth Brown, Williamstown, Mass.)

Next Week: **Dipso Factos**

## BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

Both sides vulnerable

**NORTH**  
♠ K Q 2  
♥ J 6 5  
♦ 8 6 3  
♣ 7 6 4 2

**WEST (D)**  
♠ A 9 7 6 5 4  
♥ 7  
♦ K J 2  
♣ Q J 10

**EAST**  
♠ J 10 3  
♥ 9 4  
♦ A 9 7 4  
♣ 9 8 5 3

**SOUTH**  
♠ 8  
♥ A K Q 10 8 3 2  
♦ Q 10 5  
♣ A K

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	4 ♥
All Pass			
Opening lead: ♠ A			

**H**ere’s another item from a church newsletter that suggests the secretary was having an off day: “John Smith and Mary Jones were married at the church last Friday. Thus ends a friendship that began in their grammar school days.”

Most people remain friends or even stay married if they become partners at the bridge table, but the defense today’s East-West perpetrated would strain any partnership.

When West led the ace of spades, East thumbed the three to inform West that he hadn’t made the most dynamic opening lead in bridge history. Unfortunately, East told West only what he already knew, not what he needed to know. West, facing a guess, shifted to the queen of clubs, and South took the king, drew trumps and deposited two diamonds on the K-Q of spades. Mak-

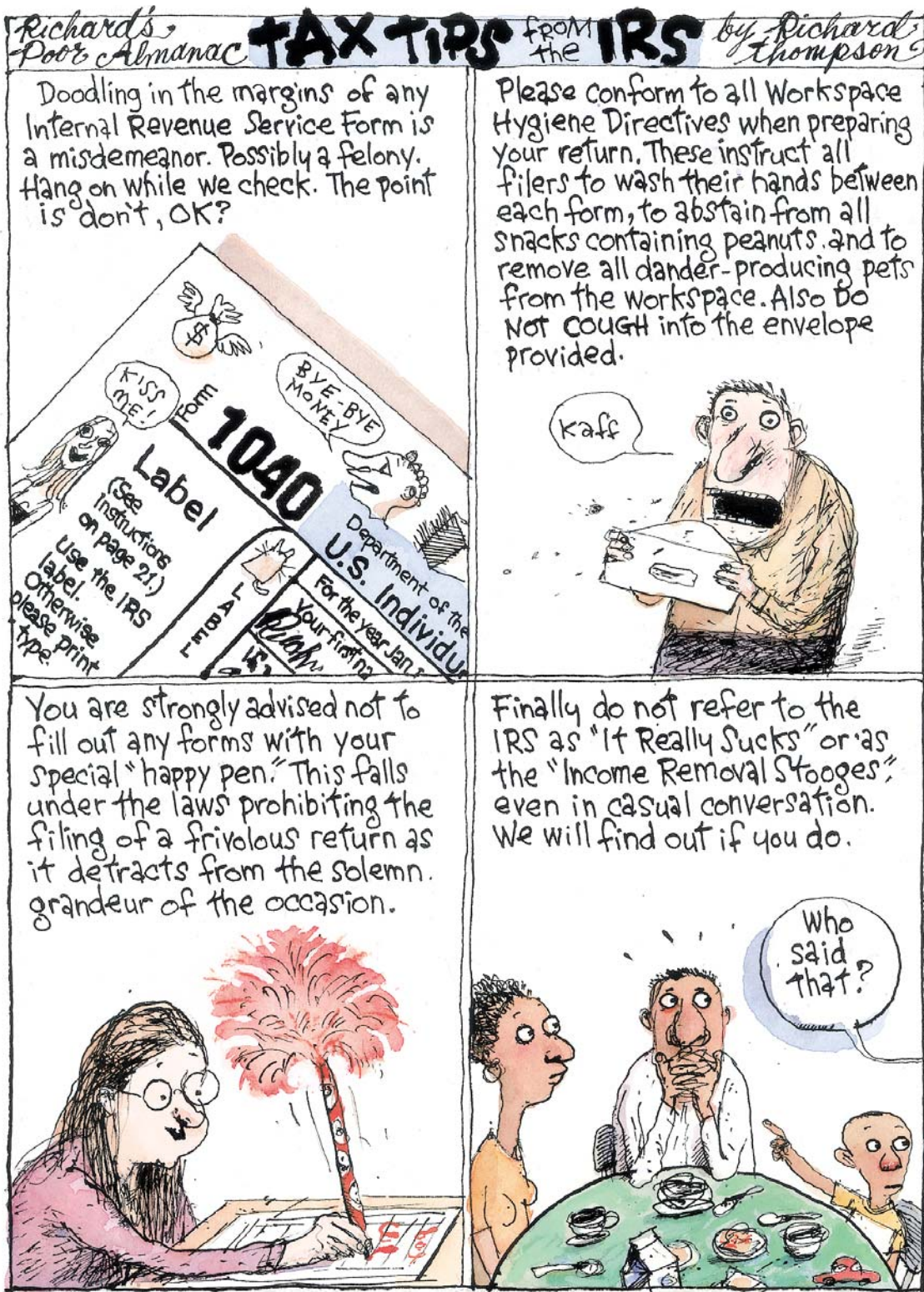
ing five.

“Suit preference,” the least-common defensive signal, is the unmistakable play of a strikingly high or low card to draw partner’s attention to a high-ranking or low-ranking suit.

East should play the jack on the first spade. The defenders must rely on suit preference here because a simple “attitude” signal won’t do. East can’t merely tell West to shift because dummy is weak in both minor suits, and the winning shift is unclear.

If East plays his very highest spade at the first trick, West should shift to the deuce of diamonds, leading the higher-ranking side suit. East will win and return a diamond, and the defenders will get the four tricks to which they’re entitled—and should remain a partnership.

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## TELL ME ABOUT IT

TELL ME, *From F1*

you’re not around, and whether you’re paranoid to be concerned—I’m a big fan of ignoring them in favor of what one actually knows.

Such as: Your girlfriend is well aware this guy is crossing the line, and yet she pursues his friendship nevertheless. And she’s the one helpfully updating you on all the inappropriate things he says to her and does—while also doing nothing to stop them. And so, whether it’s deliberate or merely thoughtless, and whether their friendship is platonic or something more, she is choosing to behave in a way that, rightly, makes you anxious.

I believe this is called “jerking you around.” You love her, so naturally you want to hang on, and so you’re looking for the thing you can say or the fact you can learn that will make everything okay. The wisest course in any murky situation, though, is to rely on what you do know—and, in this case, methinks you know quite enough.

**Carolyn:**

**My boyfriend and I have been together three years. We plan to marry when we’re ready. Got that? One more time: We plan to marry when we’re ready.**

**No one will stop asking when we’ll finally settle down. There are people who begin every**

conversation with “When are you going to get married?” I (we) have, for two years now, replied in the same fashion: “We’ll do it when we’re ready. We are not ready now.” These people do not stop asking this stupid question that I feel they have no right to ask.

**WHAT TO SAY?**

—*Not Ready and Growing Weary*

WHAT YOU MEAN seems like a winner. Experience has been trying to tell you, over and over and over, that your factual reply invites people to keep asking. What you need is a polite way to say you don’t want them to ask that question. Such as: “Please don’t ask me that question.” For them to get the hint, you have to give one.

I-don’t-just-blame-victims side note: Yes, these questions are rude.

But, given the volume of mail I get about this problem, the five people who haven’t figured out that these questions are rude are asking them at the rate of a million a day. Deflect your share, please. For the team.

Write to Tell Me About It, Style, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, or [tellme@washpost.com](mailto:tellme@washpost.com), and join Carolyn’s live discussion at noon Fridays at [www.washingtonpost.com/liveonline](http://www.washingtonpost.com/liveonline)



HI, I'M HANNAH AND THIS IS PHIL AND  
WE'LL GET MARRIED WHEN WE'RE READY.

BY NICK GALIFIANAKIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST