

## The Style Invitational

Week 582: Perversery Rhymes

Mary, Mary,  
quite contrary,  
you're pretty and  
you're goyish...



But Dad the veep  
is vexed because  
you're also kind  
of boyish.

BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**This week's contest**, suggested by Russell Beland of Springfield, who nevertheless is the father of young children: Update a nursery rhyme or children's song with an edgier text. And yes, there are similar rhymes on the Web. We see them. Don't send them to us. First-prize winner receives the Inker, the official Style Invitational Trophy. First runner-up wins a large souvenir plate depicting the many historic sights of the Town of Brunswick, N.Y. In the center is presumably the town coat of arms, which consists of an elaborate number 4.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable mentions get one of the lusted-after Style Invitational Magnets. One prize per entrant per week. Send your entries by e-mail to [losers@washpost.com](mailto:losers@washpost.com) or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 8. Put the week number in the subject line of your e-mail, or it risks being ignored as spam. Include your name, postal address and phone number with your entry. Contests are

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 Nov. 28. 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 Tom Witte of Montgomery Village.

◆ **Report from Week 578**, in which you were asked to supply questions to "Jeopardy!"-type answers:

◆ **Third runner-up: Victoria's secret broccoli:** What vegetable always has its florets airbrushed out of the picture? (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

◆ **Second runner-up: Wynken and Blynken but not Nod:** What would be cute names for the children of Mandy Patinkin? (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

◆ **First Runner-Up, winner of the beanbag donkey/elephant: Bill Clinton's right ventricle:** What, besides the Florida elections office, worked just well enough to prevent a Gore presidency? (Russell Beland, Springfield)

◆ **And the winner of the Inker: Only on Wednesdays and alternate Mondays:** What song finally became a hit when they changed the title to "Never on Sunday"? (Robert N. Levin, Rockville)

### ◆ Honorable Mentions:

#### The Plexiglass Ceiling

What did corporate America come up with to address the problem of "the glass ceiling" for female executives? (Wayne Rodgers, Fairfax Station; Jefferson Baker, Odenton)

What do they call the NHL salary cap? (Jason Mott, Waldorf)

What did Mrs. Braddock hit after learning that Benjamin did not invest in Dow Chemical after all? (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

What continues to frustrate Shamu's sister? (Marc Leibert and Mike Denyszyn, New York)

#### Wynken and Blynken but not Nod

What actions do womyn find offensive? (Gary Patishnock, Laurel)

Which communities are west of Eden? (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

#### Victoria's secret broccoli

What 150-year-old family recipe accounts for Queen Elizabeth's continued vigor but extremely pinched expression? (Jane Auerbach, Los Angeles)

What vegetable is loaded with Vitamins A, B, C, D and DD? (Tom Witte)

What did Moon Unit, Dweezil, Ahmet Rodan and Diva Zappa beg their dad not to name the new baby? (Jerry Ewing, Orlando)

What gets a rise out of your husband's jolly green giant? (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

What was the original title of "The Crying Game"? (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

#### Only on Wednesdays and alternate Mondays

When does John Kerry think that going into Iraq was the right decision? (Ezra Deutsch-Feldman, Bethesda)

According to the deal with Orioles owner Peter Angelos, how often will the D.C. team be playing at home? (Jon Reiser, Hilton, N.Y.)

"For greater convenience," when has my bank decided to be open? (Seth Brown)

What are the release dates for a Paris Hilton sex tape? (Reginald Jackson, Forestville)

What is an example of 24/1½? (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

#### The Coveted Loser Muffler

What is a crumpled Loser T-shirt stuffed into a tailpipe? (Paul Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.)

What prize could Isadora Duncan have lived without? (Veggo Larsen, Charlottesville)

What is the next best thing after thy neighbor's ass? (Cecil J. Clark, Arlington)

#### Fahrenheit 9.1

What is the temperature of Michael Moore's butt after the Secret Service strip-searches him in Flint on Election Day? (Joseph Romm, Washington)

When Karl Rove has a fever, at what temperature does it peak? (Chuck Smith)

What German actor recently replaced "Ricardo 8½" as the world's highest-paid porn star? (Jerry Ewing; Stephen Dudzik)

What is the name of the new documentary exposing the incompetence of the Olympic gymnastics judges? (Andrea Kelly, Brookeville; Pam Sweeney, Germantown)

What's showing on a double bill with "The Passion of the Christ"? (Mark Young, Washington)

Math question: If the Wizards have won 67 regular-season games and four straight playoff series to claim the NBA Championship, what is the temperature in Hell? (Brendan Beary)

What movie was released internationally as "Celsius - 12.72"? (Russell Beland)

What is the name of the new documentary exposing the incompetence of the Olympic gymnastics judges? (Andrea Kelly, Brookeville; Pam Sweeney, Germantown)

What's showing on a double bill with "The Passion of the Christ"? (Mark Young, Washington)

Math question: If the Wizards have won 67 regular-season games and four straight playoff series to claim the NBA Championship, what is the temperature in Hell? (Brendan Beary)

What movie was released internationally as "Celsius - 12.72"? (Russell Beland)

Next Week: **A Brilliant Contest! Do Enter! or Aphorisms by Clowns**

## R. Kelly Booted Off Jay-Z Tour

By LARRY McSHANE  
Associated Press

NEW YORK, Oct. 30—The tumultuous tour pairing platinum-selling stars R. Kelly and Jay-Z came to an abrupt end Saturday, one day after Kelly walked offstage during a performance and allegedly was blasted with pepper spray by a member of Jay-Z's entourage.

Kelly was booted from shows Saturday and Monday at Madison Square Garden by the promoter, who told the "I Believe I Can Fly" singer that he was banned from the facility, said his publicist, Allan Mayer. The promoter announced that Jay-Z, with special guests, would do the shows alone.

"The fans deserve better than this," Kelly said in a statement. "I'd like the show to go on. It's really disappointing that Jay-Z and the promoter don't."

Jay-Z and R. Kelly were in the midst of a 40-city "Best of Both Worlds" tour, which has been beset by canceled shows and reports that the feuding performers weren't even on speaking terms.

The tour, which had been scheduled to run through Nov. 28, has been canceled, said promoter Jeff Sharp of Atlanta Worldwide Touring. Jay-Z's



BY BILL O'LEARY—THE WASHINGTON POST

R. Kelly, above, had been feuding with rapper Jay-Z while on tour.

publicist was unsure if the rapper would try and fill the remaining dates as a solo act.

The pepper-spray incident happened about an hour into Friday night's show, when Kelly walked on stage and said he saw two people in the audience waving guns, Mayer said. Kelly abruptly stopped his set around 9:30 while arena security employees searched for weapons. Finding none, guards told Kelly it was safe

to continue performing, Mayer said. But as the singer was making his way back to the stage, a man in Jay-Z's entourage—apparently miffed that Kelly interrupted the show—sprayed him and two of his bodyguards in the face, Mayer said.

"I'm pretty sure Jay didn't realize what was going on," Mayer said.

All three men were treated at St. Vincent's Hospital and released, he said. Jay-Z performed for another 45 minutes after Kelly was sprayed.

Jana Fleishman, publicist for Jay-Z, said Saturday that the rapper's entourage knew nothing about the incident because it occurred while Jay-Z was performing. Jay-Z "did not attack R. Kelly in any way, shape or form," Fleishman said.

In a radio interview on Hot 97 FM radio, Jay-Z said he couldn't understand why Kelly left the stage.

"You can't get a gun inside Madison Square Garden," the rapper said. "If people give me love, he can't take it."

Mayer said Kelly's lawyers were filing a criminal complaint against the man who allegedly sprayed him and also were considering legal action over the decision to remove the singer from the remaining tour dates.

On Tuesday, Kelly and Jay-Z released their collaborative CD "Unfinished Business."

## In Syria, It's Law Vs. Order

LETTER, From D1

country's most prominent advocates of human rights. Bounni, a wiry, fidgety man, is a chain-smoking lawyer (a pack and a half of Alhamraas a day) and a tireless defender of those in trouble, for political reasons, with the Syrian government. He is part of a marginal but determined group of civil society advocates who say they're preparing Syrians for a more democratic future by creating a civic environment that is not controlled by the government nor by militant Islamists. That he is alive and working testifies to some kind of change in Syria; that he relies mostly on Western media to influence Syrian justice (there's little hope, he says, of winning in a Syrian court) proves that much remains to be done.

Today Bounni will participate in a frustrating ritual, arguing the case of Kurds arrested after a series of protests in March. Bounni, 45, describes the case this way:

On March 12, there was a soccer game in the town of Qamishli, at which Kurdish Syrians, who supported one team, were taunted by supporters of another team who came brandishing pictures of Saddam Hussein (who had gassed Kurds in Iraq). Some kind of fight broke out, the police came, and Kurds started dying. News of the deaths galvanized Kurds throughout Syria, and protests, with serious vandalism, broke out. Police round-ups ensued, and some 3,000 Kurds were arrested. Most were released, but according to Bounni, 200 remain in prison. Today, 15 will face the Syrian High Security Court, with Bounni defending them.

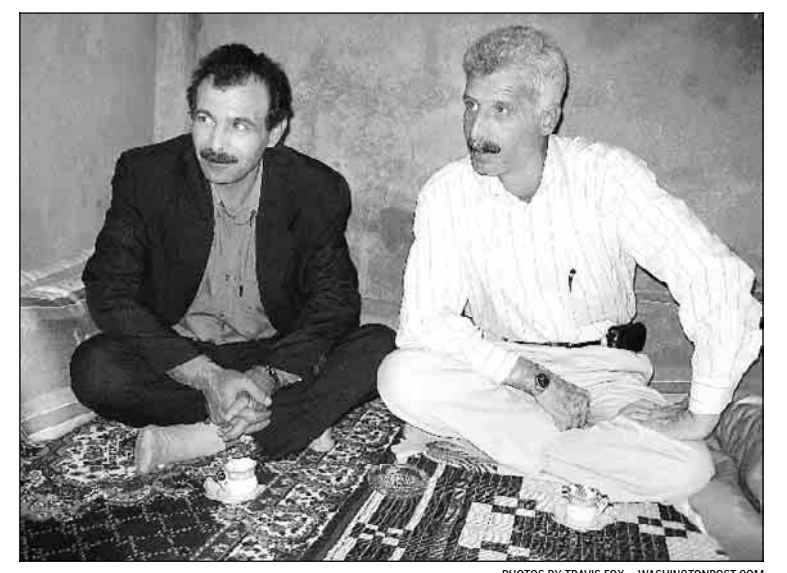
You get a clear sense of the position Kurds face in Syria—where hundreds of thousands have been divested of basic citizenship rights, such as owning land or holding a passport—by visiting Hajo Hamo Yousef, 59, who says four of his sons have been detained. Yousef lives in a suburb of Damascus, though slum is a better description. It is a Kurdish neighborhood of cinder block houses that climb the steep sides of the hills that surround the city. The narrow streets teem with people who look at a car filled with outsiders not with the usual Damascene benign amusement, but with something darker and more suspicious.

The authorities "broke in, they hit the kids, they abused them," says Yousef, who is lying on a mattress on the floor of an almost empty cement room, with only a few rugs, a bookshelf, a television and a single fluorescent-tube light on the wall. He is, he says, dying of cancer. There are medicine bottles and cigarettes lying at one end of his mattress.

"They took them by force," he recalls. "They didn't even allow them to put on their shoes." Saying this pretty much exhausts Yousef's energy. He moves from leaning on one elbow to lying flat on his back, staring at the ceiling. He doesn't expect to see his sons before he dies. Sitting cross-legged near him are Bounni and a Kurdish lawyer, Faisal Badr.

"The government is looking for an internal enemy," says Badr, 41, who is working with Bounni on the case. It uses the Kurds, he says, to justify the retention of emergency laws that restrict civil freedoms, and "to influence public opinion."

Not everyone feels sorry for the Kurds. Many Syrians are deeply proud of what they view as a tolerant society, and they will point out that Saladin, the great 12th-century Muslim warrior, was a Kurd, and hence



PHOTOS BY TRAVIS FOX—WASHINGTONPOST.COM

Syrian lawyers and human rights advocates Anwar Bounni, left, and Faisal Badr are working to free Kurds detained after a series of protests.

Kurds are more deeply woven into the fabric of Syrian life than they might appear. But others consider them a nuisance, a force for chaos in an already fractious society. The events after Qamishli did not endear the Kurds, who have long-standing grievances, to people who might otherwise be sympathetic.

"Shops were ransacked, cars were burned, schools were burned, hospitals were burned," Imad Moustapha, Syria's ambassador to the United States, says from Washington. "Yes, lots of people were arrested, and this is a normal reaction. It would happen everywhere in the world, including the United States itself when it had riots in its major cities. Now these people will face criminal charges, and if they are found guilty they will bear the consequences of their deeds. If not, they will be released, just like any judicial process in the world."

Bounni scoffs at the notion that they will have a fair trial, and he believes the decision about the prisoners' fate has already been made. The charges and the verdict, he says, are generally preordained—in his words, they come "in the same envelope." And yet he keeps going to the court, keeps making efforts at defending his clients, and keeps hammering away at the maddening inconsistencies in the Syrian legal system that infuriate the lawyerly mind. Bounni apparently doesn't see this as an exercise in absurdism, knock-your-head-against-a-wall futility. Rather, he considers the Syrian problem to be basically a legal one: Through years of malignant accretion, the Syrian legal code has been warped by undemocratic, arbitrary and abusive laws.

Americans tend to imagine authoritarian countries through the prism of clichés that arose with the Cold War. Syria, we think, must be a gray, nervous place, with even the daily tasks of life fraught with cloak-and-dagger danger. But Syria has a constitution, which announces that "freedom is a sacred right," and for many people, the Syrian state doesn't impinge on daily life. Restaurants and cafes are full, teenagers throng the old city when the sun goes down, and although the government's warplanes buzzed the capital one morning, there's a lot of pride and comfort in the stability of the country. And while the system may be corrupt and sometimes cruel, it is by no means the personal fiefdom of Bashar Assad, who doesn't have the freedom or absolute control of an imperial potentate.

Bounni works within the system because his basic objective is not revolution or change of government; it is legal reform. After the Iraq War, which most people here deplore, even the most ardent advocates of democracy in Syria are essentially incrementalists. And as much as these advocates might give an American a warm glow of historical recognition—is this the Syrian Thomas Paine? The Damascene Jefferson?—they want no part of such an associa-

tion. The U.S. support of Israel, the war in Iraq, and hostile American criticism of Syria's occupation of Lebanon and its lax control over a long border with Iraq have driven human-rights and democracy advocates to turn to Europe for inspiration. Even the word "democracy," Bounni explains, strikes the Syrian ear with a hint of American-inspired subversion and hegemony.

Bounni's basic sense of Syria is not that far from the views of Ambassador Moustapha, who argues that Syria's legal problems stem from emergency laws passed some 40 years ago. When asked about the peculiar status of human-rights advocates, Moustapha says: "The main issue here is the emergency law in Syria. The emergency laws in Syria were primarily legislated because of our state of war with Israel. But it has been abused and misunderstood too many times." The problem in Syria, in other words, is all about the fair and consistent application of the law.

Bounni knows how to pack a lot of misery into a single day. His clients include a doctor, recently released from prison, who was placed there, he says, for criticizing corruption in the government. And Farook Al-homsi, who is hoping to free his brother Mamoun Alhomsi, a Syrian parliament member arrested after criticizing the government during the "Damascus Spring" that broke out when Bashar Assad promised change. And Ali Ferzat, a cartoonist who began publishing a popular but short-lived independent newspaper that he says was shuttered by the government.

Ferzat still goes to the empty newspaper office. He says, wistfully, there was once a productive chaos in the now-vacant rooms, but not anymore. At least he has his cartoons, which are still seen (and win him awards) around the world. One of them, drawn well before the Damascus Spring, is based on "Waiting for Godot," the existentialist play by Samuel Beckett. It shows a man with a valise, standing at a train station in front of a short section of unconnected railroad track. It is, he says, an allegory of the lack of political change in his region.

Syrians looked to Assad for change, and Assad seems to be waiting for something, though no one knows what. Pressure from the outside, especially the United States, tends to make the Syrians recoil, no international pressure, however, helps the status quo. The legal system, and the bureaucrats who enforce it, has grown into a big, ugly habit that no one can quite shake. A sense of futility takes root. But even Syrians who openly criticize the government don't place the country on our axis of evil, but see themselves simply as a society that has been on the wrong track for a long time. Not irreparable, exceptional or beyond the pale. Just debilitated. As Vladimir says in "Waiting for Godot," "At this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not."