

## The Style Invitational

### Week 625: Haven't Seen It



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Pulp Fiction:** Something in that glass of juice set the novelist's mind ablaze . . .

**This week's contest**, suggested by rising Loser Andrew Hoenig of Rockville: **Make up a new plot for an existing movie title** — just a line or two, not a whole screenplay. The description should be significantly different from the plot of the actual movie. Don't alter the title. Note: Even with this warning, the Empress knows she's going to get 347 entries saying "Gone With the Wind: The Beano Story." Only the exceptionally funny and clever and original are likely to get ink from what's sure to be an enormous pool of entries.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up gets the lavishly illustrated book "Change Your Underwear Twice a Week: Lessons From the Golden Age of Classroom Filmstrips."

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, if you really have to, by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Tuesday, Sept. 6. Results will be published Sept. 25. Put "Week 625" 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. Entries 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. 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 Brendan Beary of Great Mills.

**Report from Week 621**, in which we asked you to take a sentence from any of eight days' Washington Posts and write a question it could answer. The eight-day window was to give everyone a chance to find a paper or access the Web site, but we should have figured that a very few of the Hopelessly Invitationalized would scrutinize every last sentence in The Post for eight straight days, and submit pages and pages of entries. Good thing these people are funny as well as lunatic (see below).

◆ **Third runner-up:** A. Robinson applied it with a caulk gun, then forced it into the cracks and holes with a putty knife.

Q. **Why was the Nats' manager suspended for compelling his players to wear sunscreen?** (Elwood Fitzner, Valley City, N.D.)

◆ **Second runner-up:** Senate Democrats quickly criticized the president's move.

Q. **What happened when George Bush used a variation of the Albin Countergambit to defeat Garry Kasparov in just under 12 minutes?** (Jeff Brechlin, Eagan, Minn.)

◆ **First runner-up, winner of the storyboards for "Blair Witch 2":** To some, the smell is an unpleasant mix of volatile organic compounds (including benzene and acetone), mostly given off as gas from the vinyl and other plastic materials, plus adhesive and sealers.

Q. **What's it like to be in an elevator with Cher?** (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

◆ **And the winner of the Inker:**

His response: "I'm not worth anything anymore."

Q. **What did the English teacher reply when his depressed son said, "I ain't worth nothing no more"?** (Russell Beland, Springfield)

#### ◆ Honorable Mentions:

A. Hundreds of residents, friends and family members lined a mile-and-a-half parade route, waving flags and banners and calling out "Welcome home!" as the smiling men marched by.

Q. **What was the scene in Frederick Friday evening as the rush from the District petered out?** (Marty McCullen, Gettysburg, Pa.)

She's off to a strong start. But it takes time to turn a supertanker.

Q. **What did Jenny Craig say about her new spokeswoman, Kirstie Alley?** (Michelle Stupak, Ellicott City)

It's designed for people who want to live and work in Suitland.

Q. **Why was this place built to hold just three people?** (Russell Beland)

This excellent value should be drunk over the next 1-2 years.

Q. **How did Janice get such a bargain at the Bachelor Auction?** (Pam Sweeney, Germantown)

It could also be the brightest. Isn't Barney, the Scottie, the cutest member of the Bush family? (Brendan Beary)

It was like getting run over by the front and rear wheels of a truck.

Q. **What was it like hiding under the bed at the Schwarzenegger house?** (Ron Stanley, Reston)

There's also impotence, vision loss, a bad cough, icky teeth and lousy breath.

Q. **Are you telling me that chicks don't dig me just because of my immature sense of humor?** (Brendan Beary)

Wear gloves and boots, and make sure your tetanus shots are up to date.

Q. **Should I go out with the cute new guy in my office, even though he might be a Democrat?** (Elwood Fitzner)

But you're in good company to be confused. What is the motto of the Log Cabin Republicans? (Sue Lin Chong, Baltimore)

Perhaps the reason I cannot find the answer to this question is that it is rooted in the non-Muslim American reality, a reality that is categorically rejected by extremist Muslims. So who do you think's funnier, Jackie Mason or Jerry Seinfeld? (Michael Fransella, Arlington)

There is no safer place for your money. Stick it up my what? (Seth Brown, North Adams, Mass.)

"I thank the Boy Scouts for serving on the front line of America's armies of compassion," said Bush. What did President Jeb Bush say on his visit to Baghdad in 2010? (Phil Battey, Alexandria)

His group makes do on an annual budget of about \$500,000. What did Mick Jagger have to say about how the Stones have cut back on their drug use? (Michelle Stupak)

I'm hoping you have some good advice for my friend, who's gotten himself into deep manure. What's a typical 911 call in Oskaloosa, Iowa? (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

I have two friends, "Emily" and "Rory." How is your social life, and why do you always walk around with those two little sock puppets? (Brendan Beary)

We're almost there. Daa-aad, are . . . (Dave Prevar, Annapolis)

He also spent more than \$200,000 for drainage work and landscaping.

Q. **Did Michael Jackson get his nose bobbed again?** (Brendan Beary)

One can imagine that a cell phone, a lipstick and a tin of Altoids make up its entire contents.

Q. **What might one find in Paris Hilton's head?** (Jeff Brechlin)

"Clearly, we need to shift some of that focus to the middle school years," said Charles Pyle, a Virginia Department of Education spokesman.

Q. **How can we discourage sexual activity among elementary school children?** (Marty McCullen)

"The '60s wouldn't have been the same without me," he said.

Q. **What is the most outrageous quote attributed to John Wilkes Booth?** (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Someone put human excrement in it a few years ago, and that was the end of that.

Q. **What's a reasonable thing to say about pretty much anything except a toilet?** (Chris Doyle)

Everyone, it seems. Who has, because of increased media scrutiny, taken to qualifying almost every statement? (Russell Beland)

Sounds plausible, but the truth is more mundane.

Q. **Do you think Bush got us into this Iraq mess solely to make Condi Rice a viable candidate for 2008?** (Peter Metrinko, Chantilly)

We have a song. "Here she comes, Miss Crustacean."

Q. **It's so great of you frat brothers to get me a blind date - how will I know which one she is?** (Peter Metrinko)

Eventually, possibly by 2008, condominiums, apartments and retail will replace the blight.

Q. **What's the conclusion of the administration's plan for Yellowstone?** (Russell Beland)

Despite the decline, The Post still does sell more than 1 million copies of the paper every Sunday.

Q. **Mr. Graham, what do you think about the reductions in recreational fishing in Chesapeake Bay?** (Bob Dvorak, Saugerties, N.Y.)

She won The Washington Post's Style Invitational contest in April 1994, after offering this really "bad excuse for a moral lapse."

Q. **How would we all like our obituaries to begin?** (Marty McCullen)

The Washington Post Co. said its second-quarter earnings fell 7 percent as profitability declined in three of its five main business lines, particularly newspaper publishing.

Q. **Will budget decisions cause some Post features to be terminated abruptly?** (Brendan Beary)

## Where Roberts Learned to Just Say No

WHITE HOUSE, From D1

istration — but particularly so among counselors.

"None of us ever got over the gee-whiz aspect of working there," says Peter Rusthoven, a former associate White House counsel who worked closely with Roberts in the Reagan administration. At the same time, Rusthoven says, "you deal with a lot of the trivial flotsam and jetsam that goes with working for the president of the United States. . . . You spend a lot of time hammering on people who want to put the president's name on a jar of jelly beans or something."

Roberts fielded requests for the president to be an honorary chairman of dinners, tributes and charity drives. He wrote memos reviewing letters from prisoners, some of whom wrote several times ("You have not responded directly to Marshall in the past and should not do so now," Roberts wrote in an October 1983 memo to his boss regarding a complaint from a man he describes simply as "a convict.") Roberts also suggested that the White House deny a request from someone who wanted to use the presidential seal on a commemorative belt buckle to honor country music star Roy Acuff.

"We always thought of the White House counsel's office as the anti-fun police," says Republican lobbyist Ed Rogers, a veteran of the Reagan White House who crossed paths occasionally with Roberts. "They were always the ones coming up with a reason not to do things."

Nearly all White House jobs come with what Rogers calls "the grind and grunt work." In his case, Rogers recalls being excited when he was named a White House "point of contact" for the International Olympic Committee. But "I mostly wound up doing things like getting a transit visa for the North Korean delegate to the IOC who wanted to change planes in Chicago on a flight from North Korea to London."

Reagan's counselors received a query from a man who believed that Geraldine Ferraro, Walter Mondale's running mate in 1984, was not qualified to be vice president because the Constitution used the pronoun "he." "We had to send a letter saying the president believes there is no constitutional prohibi-



RONALD REAGAN LIBRARY

**President Ronald Reagan shakes the hand of White House staffer John Roberts Jr. in 1986. Below, counselors once had to assure a citizen that Geraldine Ferraro, with Walter Mondale in 1984, was qualified to run for vice president even though the Constitution uses the pronoun "he."**



ASSOCIATED PRESS

tion on Mrs. Ferraro holding the office of vice president," Rusthoven recalls. "Some of the stuff we dealt with was just ridiculous."

Or simply mundane: scouring presidential appointments and disaster declarations, investigating the "ordinary Americans" that Reagan would highlight in his speeches (in case these "ordinary Americans" turned out to be ordinary Klan members or something).

The counselors also reviewed the congressional testimony of administration appointees, a task that could prove exceedingly grueling.

### ASK AMY

Dear Amy:

I hope you can help with a question about my future in-laws. My fiancée's family is very Catholic, and I was born and raised Hindu. Because of this we are having two wedding ceremonies, one in Las Vegas and the other in my family temple in my home town.

My fiancée has no problem with going through the Hindu wedding ceremony because it is so very important to me, but most of her family is refusing to even show up for it, not to mention take part in any of the ceremony. Her mom cites doctrinal issues with the ceremony (it is not taking place in a Catholic Church and I am not Catholic).

I've tried everything I can think of to persuade them to make the trip, but my future mother-in-law will not budge, and neither will my fiancée's aunts and uncles, grandparents, brothers or father.

It saddens me greatly that these people who I do care about hold me in such low esteem that they would do this. I feel that my family and I are being figuratively spat upon by them because they feel a sense of moral superiority. Please Amy, if you can, tell me if there is some way I can get through to them.

Worried Groom

Unfortunately, you might not be able to get through to your in-laws. Perhaps your fiancée can — if she is furious and disappointed in them, she should let them know.

I'm not aware of any doctrinal issues preventing Catholics from attending a wedding ceremony in a Hindu temple. Even though their

church doesn't recognize this marriage, this family should. If they could find a way to witness this important ritual, they would learn so much about the world and its faith practices. (Hinduism is one of the world's oldest religions, with an estimated 750 million followers.)

You and your fiancée will find this easier to face if you seek spiritual guidance from your faith communities. Every marrying couple should seek premarital counseling, but in your case, where a mixed marriage is causing so much tension in her family, you'll both benefit from the counsel and support of clergy.

I have heard from so many couples that have made their mixed-religious marriages work. The key seems to be respect for each other's faith. If you show this respect for each other, you'll be setting an example that her family would be wise to follow.

Dear Amy:

I am the mother of three children ages 21, 17 and 15.

My husband and I have a checking account and most of our funds are at the bank. I like to keep about \$50 in an envelope at home for gas and miscellaneous expenses.

Lately, I have a little thief among my kids. I recently had \$48.30 in an envelope and I specifically told all three of the children not to touch this particular envelope because it was change for another purpose. However, one of them has taken out the two twenties and recently \$5 and \$2 more, leaving the envelope with just \$1.30.

I have asked all three together and separately who might have taken this money without asking if they took it. No one will come clean. What is the best approach to get someone to admit that they are stealing? I feel I should get over it, but I'm just frustrated that I can't even trust my own children.

Frustrated in Carol Stream

Because of the advanced ages of your kids, you don't have a "little thief." You have an almost full-grown thief, who knows that stealing is wrong but did it anyway. (Your husband could be the culprit; make sure that you ask him as well.) The answer isn't to ask your children one by one who might have taken the money, but to ask each one specifically if he or she took the money.

Expect denials. Then you can explain how this makes you feel. Tell them that it is disrespectful and wrong and that you are very disappointed. Ask them if they need the money for something specific. Then tell them that if they need money, you will help them to find a job so that they won't have to steal from the household's petty cash.

And stop telling them where your cash is; for now you should assume that they can't handle the temptation.

Write to Amy Dickinson at [askamy@tribune.com](mailto:askamy@tribune.com) or Ask Amy, Chicago Tribune, TT500, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

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### BRIDGE | Frank Stewart

N-S vulnerable

**NORTH**  
♠ K 5 4 3  
♥ 4 3 2  
♦ Q J 10 2

**WEST**  
♠ 7  
♥ Q 10 7  
♦ K 9 8 7  
♣ K Q 6 5 3

**EAST**  
♠ 10 8  
♥ 9 8 6  
♦ 6 5 4 3  
♣ 10 9 8 7

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

The bidding:  
**South** 2 ♣  
2 ♠  
6 ♠

**West** Pass  
Pass  
All Pass

**North** 2 ♣  
3 ♠

**East** Pass  
Pass

Opening lead: ♣ K

Unlucky Louie says when his ship finally comes in, it'll be docked by the IRS. When he picked up the South hand in the penny Chicago game at my club, he was sure his ship had arrived at last — tax-free. Anyone else would have tried for a grand slam, but Louie settled for six spades since he is seldom lucky enough to win 13 tricks.

When West led the king of clubs, Louie took the ace, pondered, drew trumps, cashed the ace of diamonds, exited with a club and waited for West to make a helpful return.

A club, conceding a ruff-sluff, a heart or the king of diamonds would have ended matters, but alas for Louie, West counted declarer's tricks. West knew Louie had a club trick, a diamond, six trumps and at most two hearts, so one extra dia-

mond trick wouldn't be enough. West therefore led a low diamond.

Louie won in dummy and discarded a heart, but his ship had sprung a leak: He was sure to lose a heart.

How would you play the slam?

After Louie takes the ace of clubs, he cashes the ace of trumps and the ace of diamonds and leads the six of trumps to the king (preserving his deuce). Louie then leads the queen of diamonds for a ruffing finesse. If East had the king and covered, Louie could ruff high and get back to dummy with a trump to discard a club and a heart on the J-10 of diamonds.

When East actually plays low on the queen of diamonds, Louie throws his losing club. West wins, but Louie later discards two hearts on the J-10 of diamonds.

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Next Week: Our Sunday Constitutional, or Deform a More Perfect Union