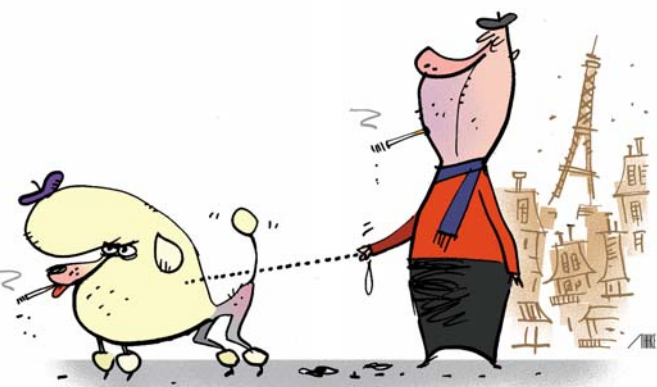


The Style Invitational

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST

Week 673: Mess With Our Heads



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

France Wins Ugly Contest

Perpetual Sneers, Dangling Cigarettes, Stupid Berets Key to Victory

Take any headline, verbatim, appearing anywhere in The Post or on Washingtonpost.com from July 30 through Aug. 7 and reinterpret it by adding either a "bank headline," or subtitle (like the joke bank head offered in the example, under an actual Post headline for a World Cup story), or the first sentence of an article that might appear under it. Please include the date and page number of the headline you're citing from the paper; for Web articles, give the date and copy a sentence or two of the story so it's clear what the original was about. Headlines in ads and subheads within an article can be used, too; photo captions cannot.

Winner gets the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy. First runner-up scores an only partially damaged ceramic front side of a little duck, at right, discovered by the Empress at the thrift store. If you install it as intended, hanging on a wall (the duck, not you), its little feet stick out and you can hang a hand towel on them. We prefer, however, placing it on its back, feet up in the air, in the dead-duck position.

Other runners-up win a coveted Style Invitational Loser T-shirt. Honorable Mentions (or whatever they're called this week) 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 or by fax to 202-334-4312. Deadline is Monday, Aug. 7. Put "Week 673" 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 Aug. 27. 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 Stephen Dudzik. The Honorable Mentions name is by Brad Alexander of Wanneroo, Australia (but formerly Alabama and Florida).

REPORT FROM WEEK 669

In which we asked for bad advice to immigrants to the United States. Just everyone suggested that we explain that because we are an English-speaking country, we always drive on the left.

- 4** If you're not sure exactly what someone said to you in English, it's always polite to respond, "That's so gay" or "God, that's retarded." (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)
- 3** Stand at a freeway on-ramp with a handwritten sign that says, "Will work for green card." (Patrick Mattimore, San Francisco)
- 2** The winner of the "GERM" swim cap from the Germantown team: During the Pledge of Allegiance, place your right hand either over your heart or under your armpit. If you choose the latter, after the words "for justice," pause to punctuate the Pledge with a patriotic toot. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)



AND THE WINNER OF THE INKER

Those silver or white bidets in office hallways are available for either sex to use. Shorter people can use the lower ones. (Gordon Labow, Glenelg)

EVEN WRETCHEDER REFUSE

Looking for a nice park where you can spread out a picnic blanket? In the U.S.A., we call that "scoring grass" — just ask any policeman where's the closest place to score some. (G. Smith, Reston)

It's not posted, but in Washington, D.C., there's always free parking on a "state" avenue if your car has a license plate from that state. They don't publicize that so that Maryland and Virginia avenues don't get too crowded. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

If you make a down-and-up "check" motion with your finger, the waitress will bring your bill. And if you stand up, wave one arm and grab your crotch with the other, she will show you to the restroom. (Drew Bennett, Alexandria)

When you select a name for your bogus ID card, use "Lou Dobbs," a common name in the U.S. that no one will notice. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

They may not taste good or seem filling, but you really should eat all your food stamps every month. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

To make sure he doesn't spread germs in a public place, such as a bank, a man suffering from a runny nose customarily wears a bandanna over the lower half of his face. (Lawrence McGuire, Waldorf)

Make sure there aren't any ink blots on the letter you send your new congressman: Dust it with talcum powder or flour before you send it. (Stephen Dudzik, Olney)

If you're unfamiliar with Washington's Metrorail system, make sure you take your first ride during rush hour. That way there are sure to be hundreds of people who can help you figure out how to use the Farecard machine and turnstile. (Lois Bangiolo, Gaithersburg)

To pay the bill in a restaurant, stand, face the waiter, count out loud the exact amount, and then add two pennies, preferably shiny new ones. (Drew Bennett)

A common phrase of disbelief is "Bob's your uncle." If the person says, "Beg your pardon?" that is the cue to strike him about the head and shoulders. (Chuck Smith)

British visitors should remind the former colonists how much they've missed by being isolated from Britain and the Continent, not to mention how they've bastardized the language. And don't forget to comment upon their odd names. (Duncan Seed, Robin Hood's Bay, North Yorkshire, England)

White people will be offended unless you address them as "Mister Cracker Sir." (David Kleinbard, Jersey City)

Using indoor plumbing every single time just makes you look uppity. (Russell Beland)

Americans are very friendly. Always say hello and shake hands with the man at the urinal next to you. (Chris Doyle, Forsyth, Mo.)

When asked if you have anything to declare, wink at the customs officer. If he does not respond, wink again. Continue to wink until someone allows you to pass. (Tim Vanderlee, Rockville)

As a foreigner, you should carry handy maps of several major U.S. cities. Be sure to circle any interesting buildings, tunnels, etc., that you want to see, and print out from the Internet as much detailed information about them as you can. (Eric Murphy, Ann Arbor, Mich.)

America is a very fast-paced society, so you must drive even faster than you do at home. The fastest drivers are cheered on with noisemakers and flashing lights. (Barbara Turner, Takoma Park)

American farms are all pick-your-own, so just drive in and dive in! This includes beef and dairy farms. (Bill Spencer, Exeter, N.H.)

If you disapprove of the war in Iraq, protest it by burning your green card. (Ned Andrews, Charlottesville)

Your country probably has a deep, abiding passion for that goofy sport where people run around kicking a ball and nothing happens. So do we! So come on, talk about it with us all day long — we just can't get enough! (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

You see those guys with "Minutemen" on their shirts? That means they're more than happy to give you a minute of their time. Just go up to them, tell them you've just crossed the border and say, "I'd like you to help me out." (Arthur C. Adams, Laurel; Jay Shuck)

Remember when flying in the States to bring your own cutlery for the sumptuous airline meal. (Cecil J. Clark, Asheville, N.C.)

Address young American women as "Miss," while the term for American women over 40 is "you old hag." (Robert W. Sprague, Alexandria)

At sporting events, you're allowed to stone people who do the wave. Please. (Russell Beland)

To meet your neighbors, it is customary to play very loud music starting around 8 p.m. on Sunday, but don't be surprised if they don't start coming over until after midnight. (Drew Bennett)

And last: A good way to fit in is to wear these super-trendy T-shirts with "Loser" written on them. You don't see many because most people can't afford them, but I'll let you have one for just 50 bucks. (Russell Beland)

Next Week: A Test of Character, or Switch Craft



Cheadle as Petey Greene: Trying to Give an Iconoclast His Due

CHEADLE, From D1

gonna have something called black power, y'all!"

And then someone calls, "Cut!" And the man in the fake Afro and fake sideburns — actor Don Cheadle — applauds the extras for their performances and starts rapidly unbelted the taupe-and-blue-striped concoction he describes as a "beautiful vest." Nearby, a gaggle of teenage girls allowed to get close to the set simultaneously snap photographs and call friends on their cellphones. "What's the movie? What's the movie?" they say back and forth to each other.

No one gives them an answer, and it's a pretty safe bet if they'd been told their faces would draw a blank.

Cheadle, star of "Hotel Rwanda" and "Crash," is portraying the legendary Washington television and radio talk show host Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene, who stood on these very steps to protest poverty and racism 38 long years ago. Dead since 1984, Greene — an ex-con and ex-drug addict who made his way from the Lorton penitentiary all the way to dinner at the White House — is getting his story told, Hollywood-fashion, in a film called "Talk to Me." "Outside of Washington, D.C., I think very few people know of Petey Greene," said Cheadle in an interview Friday. Inside Washington, too, if they're not of a certain age or haven't had the stories passed down.

Described in an authorized biography by local author Lurma Rackley as a man "who conned, rhymed, 'speechified' and laughed his way to heights he hardly dared imagine," Greene was known for his outlandish humor and wardrobe and his outsize efforts to help the young, the old, the poor and the former cons like himself.

His youth in Washington was a blur of poverty, crime and addiction that landed him in Lorton in 1960, sentenced to 10 years for armed robbery. One day, he helped talk down a suicidal fellow inmate; that earned him an early parole. In a life turn that is legendary, he then became an activist, television personality ("Petey Green's Washington" aired on WDCA-TV) and radio talk show host (WOL's "Rapping With Petey Greene").

By the time of his death, he was so well-known and beloved that more than 8,000 people lined up outside Union Wesley AME Zion Church on Michigan Avenue NE to pay tribute.

"It's not necessarily a heroic de-



"In some ways, I see this as an anti-censorship movie," says director Kasi Lemmons, pictured above with actor Don Cheadle. Below, Cheadle in the acclaimed 2004 film "Hotel Rwanda," for which he earned a Best Actor Oscar nomination.

scription," said Cheadle, who feels the script captures Greene as honestly as it could. "I think that was his whole thing, being straight-up. He saw what he thought were injustices, what he thought was right or wrong. It's his own skewed vision, but he had really a kind of inarguable position about most things, I find."

"His take on things was very street level, just real, which is why I think people loved him so much. He'd be the one to say, 'The emperor has no clothes.'"

This bluntness is what attracted director Kasi Lemmons, who also directed "Eve's Bayou." She said she "fell in love" with Greene's story. "I guess the major thing for me," Lemmons says, "is that we're in a time now where people are afraid to speak out. It's all about conforming. This story shows there was a time when you could use your voice and be completely uncensored. It's a beautiful thing. In some ways, I see this as an anti-censorship movie."



BY FRANK CONNOR

Lemmons was thrilled when Cheadle agreed to take the part and become a producer. "When he's got the wig on and the clothes and the voice comes out of it, I don't see Don Cheadle, I see Pe-

Also starring in the film is Taraji P. Henson ("Hustle & Flow") as Greene's girlfriend Vernell, while Martin Sheen, Cedric the Entertainer and Lemmons's husband, Vondie Curtis-Hall, all play characters at the radio station.

The film begins late in Greene's term at Lorton and is centered around his friendship with Dewey Hughes (played by Chiwetel Ejiofor of "Kinky Boots"). Hughes, then the program director at WOL, is the man who put Greene on the air and became his life-long friend. Very little film and tape remain from Greene's shows, according to Cheadle and Lemmons, though they were able to view and listen to some of it. A lot of the famous Petey-isms and Petey stories they learned from old newspaper clips. Like the infamous story of Greene's visit to the White House where maybe he stole a spoon or maybe he didn't. Or the fact that he liked to refer to himself as having a "PhD in poverty." How he liked to brag about overcoming protests at all-white Walt Whitman

High School in Bethesda to his invitation to be commencement speaker.

They also got a lot of help from Hughes, who now lives in Los Angeles and served as a consultant on the film.

"Oh, my God, I'm in love with him," Lemmons says of Hughes, whose former wife is Cathy Hughes, the owner of Radio One. "He really moves me. He's a very beautiful, elegant, intelligent man. He has a certain presentation that is immaculate. It's a great contrast to Petey, who's flashy and coming apart at the seams all the time."

Cheadle says that it's been unique filming a movie about a "very male, brotherly relationship" through the lens of a female director. Lemmons, he says, sometimes sees things that would never have occurred to him. She laughs at that.

"When I went in to pitch myself as a director, I said that as a black woman, I know black men better than they know themselves," she says.

Most of the film was shot in Toronto, and the stop in D.C. was brief — three days in town, with five scenes shot yesterday. One crew shot some local color (including the obligatory scene at Ben's Chili Bowl), while Lemmons and the leads shot at various locations around the Mall, including the Washington Monument and the carousel outside the Smithsonian.

Cheadle, who himself speaks up on issues, made the most of his scant time in the city, but he did it in that other time-honored Washington way: He set up meetings with the important and the powerful. Deeply concerned about the genocide in Darfur (he's making a documentary on the subject) — he met Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.), Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.) on Thursday. On Friday, he was late for an interview because he was with Sudanese rebel leader Minni Minnawi. He also spoke to a group at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Asked how successful these meetings were, the actor says, "No one's for genocide. But it's really the bureaucracy and the very real question and challenge of international diplomacy/pressure, especially at a time like this. There's a really high bar to vault."

It's the kind of careful, measured response that never would have passed Petey Greene's lips.