

DIVERSIONS

THE STYLE INVITATIONAL

Rhythm & news: Top song parodies

BY PAT MYERS

Week 1287 was one of our contests for songs about the news, set to familiar tunes. As always, the Empress was deluged with crazy-brilliant lyrics to songs ranging from nursery rhymes to medieval carols to long raps to a full-length reworking of "American Pie."

Here in the print version of the Invite, I'm using songs that I hope are familiar to most readers; online you can click on a link to the tune and listen along to these and many other parodies. **And we have video!** See a brand-new one from Sandy Riccardi, who with husband Richard performs parodies in clubs around the country, but is a First Offender in Loserdom. And more! See wapo.st/invite1291.

4th place

Maria Butina (I)

To "Maria" from "West Side Story"

Marial I fell for a spy named Marial
With hair of flaming red,
A tiger-cat in bed, oo-weee!

Marial I didn't have any idea
That Putin pulled your strings!
What if tomorrow brings a plea?

Marial
Now my hair's prematurely graying!
For a pardon from Trump I am praying.

Marial . . . I'm done NRA-ing, Marial
(Mark Raffman, Reston)

3rd place

Maria Butina (II)

To "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?" from "The Sound of Music"

How do you solve a problem like Maria?

What do you with Russian meddling nigh?

How do you find a term that means "Maria"?

An enemy agent? An operative? A spy?

Many's the things you know you shouldn't've told her,

Now that she's compromised the NRA,

'Cause when she was there in bed,
she heard all the things you said,
Now how do you strike a deal with DOJ?

Oh, how do you solve a problem like Maria?

How do you keep those Putin goons at bay? (Duncan Stevens, Vienna)

2nd place and the squeeze toy of a shark with a foot in its mouth:

To "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me"

Praise me! Praise me!

Lavish me with kudos that amaze me, raise me

Up above my foes and then just praise me, praise me,

Make me think that I'm the greatest prez.

Laud me! Laud me!

Lay out all the ways that folks applaud me, applaud me,

Cite Rasmussen polls until you've awed me, awed me,

Show me how I'm loved, like Rudy says.

They told me, "Be sensible in the White House.

This job's not the easiest you will find."

But they didn't know I'd have the right House

To give me what I want and drive the nation out of its mind.

Back me! Back me!

Defend me from the flak when folks attack me, smack me

So I can bigly win again in 2020,
And turn this country back to '52.
(Chris Doyle, Denton, Tex.)

And the winner of the Lose Cannon:

To "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do"

My FBI is mean to me,

Ever since we sandbagged Hillary.

They won't screw who I tell them to,
And coverup is hard to do.

So I installed the Keebler Elf
To be loyal, not recuse himself
And eschew my cagey coup!

Oh, coverup is hard to do.

I sold them all a big-league beautiful tale;

Fixed Junior's mail to cover our trail.

Pulled rabbits outta my . . . hat
To keep the feds from getting at my trillion-ruble laundromat.

My goons bought off the girls I sleazed;

Now my fixer's files have all been seized.

That just grew into deeper poo;

Yes, coverup is hard to do.

To send my kids to jail would be very sad!

I'm their dad, but what about Vlad?



BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

New contest for Week 1291: Film flam — movie anagrams

Batman anagrams to **Tab Man**: In the sequel, the Caped Crusader switches to diet soda to slim down for his leotard.

Wonder Woman —> **Nerd Moan**: "Wow!" Socially maladjusted guys have a hard time accepting their powerful new female friend.

The Hunger Games —> **He Hung Gamester**: A narcissistic autocrat tries to punish athletes who don't observe patriotic rituals to his liking.

This week's contest was suggested by Seriously Funny Loser Duncan Stevens, who wins yet another free milkshake from the Empress. It's a simple concept: **Rearrange the letters of a title of a movie or play to make a new title, then describe the new work**, as in Bob Staake's and Duncan's own examples above. Even though there are bajillions of movies and plays out there — or at least 1.2 bajillion — there's an excellent chance that someone else will come up with the very same anagram that you do. And so a funny description will be paramount. Perhaps a line of dialogue could help.

Submit entries at the website wapo.st/enter-invite-1291 (all lowercase).

Winner gets the **Lose Cannon**, our Style Invitational trophy. Second place receives two new rolls of Who Gives a Crap "premium" toilet paper made entirely of ecologically correct bamboo fibers. Donated by Loser Barbara Turner, whose name only coincidentally anagrams to Rear-Burnt Arab.

Other runners-up win our "You Gotta Play to Lose" Loser Mug or our Grossery Bag, "I Got a B in Punmanship." Honorable mentions get one of our lusted-after Loser magnets, "We've Seen Better" or "Idiot Card." First Offenders receive only a smelly tree-shaped air "freshener" (FirStink for their first ink). **Deadline is Monday night, Aug. 13**; results published Sept. 2 (online Aug. 30). See general contest rules and guidelines at wapo.st/InvRules. The headline for this week's results was submitted separately by five people; Tom Witte wrote the honorable-mentions subhead. Join the Style Invitational Devotees group on Facebook at on.fb.me/invdev. "Like" Style Invitational Ink of the Day on Facebook at bit.ly/inkofday; follow @StyleInvite on Twitter.

THE STYLE CONVERSATIONAL The Empress's weekly online column discusses each new contest and set of results. Especially if you plan to enter, check it out at wapo.st/styleconv.

He's got me under his thumb;
Instead of being my best chum, he'd
slip me some polonium!

I can't keep track of every crime,
And pretty soon it will be Mueller
Time.

Low IQ is my Waterloo,
'Cause coverup is hard to do.
(Nan Reiner, Boca Raton, Fla.)

Noise media: Honorable mentions

To "Eleanor Rigby"

Vladimir Putin

Picks up the phone with instructions
for President Trump.

"Go to it! Jump!

And don't you forget, Don,
All of the dirt that I've got on you
won't go away:

Do as I say."

Half-witted Donald
Has to obey him, whatever his
master may ask,

That is his task;
Sneering at NATO,
Treating his allies with scorn and
contempt is his scheme,
And Putin's dream.

All the stupid people
Who voted for the twit,
All those stupid people
Are now in deepest (trouble).
(Brian Allgar, Paris)

The Space Force Hymn

To the Marines' Hymn:

From the desert sands of Tatooine to
the icy planet Hoth

First our sanctions on the emperor
cut an economic swath.

Then we taunt, "Hey, Little Death-
Star Man, watch our Space Force win
this fight!"

Then we have a summit, then it's
fine, we can all sleep well tonight.
(Gary Crockett, Chevy Chase)

Into the 'Woulds'

Into the "woulds" without the "nots"
Ignore the trolls, forget the bots
Everyone knows who called the
shots

When I was in Helsinki.

Into the weeds with every word,
The ones I said, the ones you heard,

Even the word I may have slurred
When I was in Helsinki

The jeers and gibes, the harsh
reviews

Are nothing more than more Fake
News!

I never back down, I never do wrong
(Except perhaps I shouldn't
Ever skip a "wouldn't.")

What are the words the world should
fear?

The secret words from Vladimir
When there was no adviser near
To hear us in Helsinki!

He vowed that I'd have hell to pay
if he released the dossier.

I followed each command he gave
And that's the only reason some may
call it treason.

Learn from the tale that I have told
Avoid the showers made of gold
Or you will see how you get rolled
When you go to Helsinki

But into the "woulds," into the
weeds,
Into the words, like Vladimir said —
And home before dark.
(Barbara Sarshik, McLean)

Donald's Favorite Things

Golfing and Big Macs and late-night
tweet rages.

Tax breaks for fat cats and babies in
cages.

Justices dancing like puppets on
strings.

These are a few of my favorite things.

Hounding reporters and calling them
traitors.

Pissing off allies and kissing
dictators.

Congress like bobbleheads mounted
on springs.

These are a few of my favorite things.

When collusion and indictments
Bring things to a halt
I go on TV and say you can't blame
me

For it's all Obama's fault.
(Thomas Vincent, Langley, Wash., a
First Offender)

**Still running — deadline Monday,
Aug. 6: our Week 1290 neologism
contest. See wapo.st/
invite1290.**

L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

"ANABRANDS" By
BRUCE HAIGHT

ACROSS

1 Muppet chimp
— Minella

4 "Patience you
must have"
speaker

8 Text for a
promo

14 Unit of weight
19 Biblical priest
20 Steady

21 First name
in the 2016
campaign

22 Informed
23 Track circuit
24 Company
covering

the ninth of
Salinger's "Nine
Stories"?

27 Spur on
29 White wine
apéritif

30 TRS-80s, e.g.
31 ___ of interest
32 Company
providing
stimulation

before a round?
36 Belief system
37 Robot arms
don't have them

38 Camera lens
feature

39 Like a D,
gradewise

40 Sidway posting
43 Madame Bovary
45 Bankrolled

47 Acronymic
distress about
being excluded
from the fun

48 Leery of
49 Opening feature

51 Company for
ones who love
taking sides?

54 "___ got it!"
55 Fax button

57 Toss in
58 Look down on,
figuratively

59 Brain areas
61 Green, in a way
65 Filike works

66 Company that
bugs people?
69 "Real Time"
host

72 Canadian site of
the 1988 Winter
Olympics

73 Tiny and
shapeless

77 Timeless, in
verse

79 '60s chic
80 ___ page

81 Acapulco gold
82 Company that
moves a lot of
cash?

87 Like some
surveys

89 Card sounding
like a platter

90 Christmas lot
selection

91 "Little House"
family name

93 Spent

94 Shirley
MacLaine, to
Warren Beatty

95 Ump's cry
96 Big heap

97 Cartoon genre
98 Trace of color

101 Company
named for
its product
container?

105 Old
marketplaces

107 United

108 Moll's limb

109 Grammy winner
Gorme

110 Company
dealing
"frankly" with
campaign
issues?

115 Even a little

116 Overhead
concern?

117 Emotionally out
of control

118 Runs on
message,
stereotypically

119 Laugh starter

120 Author Theodor
___ Geisel

121 Helpful
holdings

122 Nobelist Wiesel

123 Not even

DOWN

1 Former MLB
exec Bud

2 Dollar rival

3 Beauty product
for kissers

4 First female Fed
head Janet

5 Eggs in a lab

6 An in-box might
be part of one

7 Shenanigan

8 Legal gp.

9 Penn. neighbor
propose

10 Brunch fare

11 In the cooler

12 Money-
dispensing
needs

13 "Suh-wee!"

14 More than a job
15 Tony, for one

16 Pasted
message,
stereotypically

17 Oil acronym

18 Many a gamer

25 Three-horse
carriage

26 Dislodges

28 Key of
Beethoven's
"Eroica"

33 Silky-voiced
crooners they
are not

34 One of the
Weasley twins

35 Dog tag?

36 Italy's Lake ___

39 Whaml or
Roxette

41 Elite crew

42 Blog series

43 Awesome

44 Formally
propose

46 Support

47 Film noir hat

48 Serving no
purpose

50 "Look Back
in Anger"

52 "Nick of Time"
singer

53 Software details

56 "Glee" actress
Rivera

60 Get-up-and-go

61 They're rubbed
when mingling

62 Calls for

63 DVD forerunner

64 Piece of cake

67 "Get Shorty"
novelist ___

68 Unequivocal
refusal

69 Softens

70 '70s breakout
gaming
company

71 Toast for Mrs.
Robinson

74 Capital south of
a panhandle

75 "Dies ___"

76 How
vichyssoise is
usually served

78 Wipes out

80 Stamps of
approval

83 Pfler

84 Whirled
weapon

85 First portrayal of
Obi-Wan

86 Meditative
genre

88 Gin ___

92 Kind of cookie

95 Catches

96 Cold outburst

98 Actually existing

100 Most clubs in a
pro's bag

101 Andean people

102 Scope

103 Like much

104 Loose-leaf paper

105 Focused (on)

106 Look steadily

107 Tools in locks