

The Style Invitational

Week CXXIX: Cast Away



BY BOB STAAKE FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Marlon Brando as Superman.
Gilbert Gottfried as Rick Blaine in "Casablanca."
Rosie O'Donnell starring in "The Karen Carpenter Story."
Samuel L. Jackson as Helen Keller.
Kevin Costner as Robin Hood. Oh, wait . . .

This Week's Contest was proposed by Sheri Dye of Petersburg, Va. It was inspired by the line in the Terrence McNally play "Love! Valour! Compassion!" about the musical theater nightmare of seeing "The King and I" with Tommy Tune and Elaine Stritch. Your job is to come up with a similar terrible bit of miscasting in a movie or TV show, past or present, real or imagined, as in the examples above. (We actually think we may have done this contest years ago, but don't recall for sure, couldn't find it, and don't really want to know.) First-prize winner gets a package of six "Eight Legged Freaks," pellets that become monstrous bugs when immersed in water. They are a press giveaway from the producers of the new movie "Eight Legged Freaks," who hope to get good publicity for this tired slice of fetid schlock.

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. U.S. mail entries are no longer accepted due to

rabid, spit-flying fanaticism. Deadline is Monday, July 22. 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. Contests 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 Lex Friedman of Manalapan, N.J., and Chris Doyle of Burke.

Report from Week CXXV, in which we supplied nine punch lines and asked you to come up with setup lines.

◆ Second Runner-Up:
 Punch line: **Because falling would have been too obvious.**
 Setup: **Why did William F. Buckley say he was "precipitating gravitationally" in love?** (Mike Genz, La Plata)

◆ First Runner-Up:
 Punch line: **Because the rhinoceros got there first.**
 Setup: **Chelsea comes home one day and discovers Hillary watching a rhinoceros stomping Bill to a pulp. "Mom," she shouts, "Why aren't you doing something?" And Hillary says . . .** (Ken Lickliter, Bristow, Va.)

◆ And the winner of the "Bad Company" promotional material:
 Punch line: **No, you moron, you were supposed to wear it.**
 Setup: **Explorer 1 (returning from bushes): You were right, Profethor. The pith helmet thertainly came in handy!**
Explorer 2: . . .
 (William Zamojcin, Vernon, Ct.)

◆ Honorable Mentions:

YELLOW AND RED.
What's the color of the snow around Tony Soprano's house? (Judith Cottrill, New York)

From worst to first, what are the badges of courage? (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

What did the physicist get when he split the orange? (Bruce W. Alter, Fairfax Station; Dave Komornik, Berkeley Springs, W. Va.)

What color is a lemon with a sucking chest wound? (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

How does Pat Buchanan describe the journalism at The Washington Post? (Susan Thompson, Rockville)

What is the color of the flag of the People's Republic of Banana? (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

THAT'S THE VICE PRESIDENT'S JOB.
On entering office, George W. Bush was shocked to find his powers extremely limited. He tried to pass a law, but was told that is Congress's job. He tried to reinterpret the Constitution, but was told that is the Supreme Court's job. He tried to set interest rates, but was told that's Alan Greenspan's job. Finally, he said, "If you guys don't let me do something, I'm gonna have a heart attack." Sorry, he was told, . . . (Seth Brown, Williamstown, Mass.)

BECAUSE FALLING WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO OBVIOUS.

Why did the abstract artist levitate after slipping on a banana peel? (Bruce W. Alter, Fairfax Station)

BECAUSE THE RHINOCEROS GOT THERE FIRST.
What is the real reason Mei Xiang wouldn't let Tian Tian get intimate with her? (Andy Wexler, Silver Spring)

IT WAS TOO HOT.
Why didn't Satan visit Washington in August? (Tom Witte, Gaithersburg)

Three accountants die in a car crash, but are brought back to life when it is discovered a clerical error had been made and their numbers weren't up yet. The PriceWaterhouse auditor said, "Frankly, the harp music was driving me nuts." The Ernst & Young tax man said, "Same here." And the guy from Arthur Andersen said . . . (Milo Sauer, Washington)

BECAUSE TOMATOES WOULD HAVE RUINED THE WHOLE THING.
Why did wedding guests throw rice at the bride and groom as they came out of church? (Mike Genz, La Plata)

THE SECOND CANDIDATE SHOWED FAR MORE ENTHUSIASM.
Why did the first candidate get the mortician's job? (Mike Genz, La Plata)

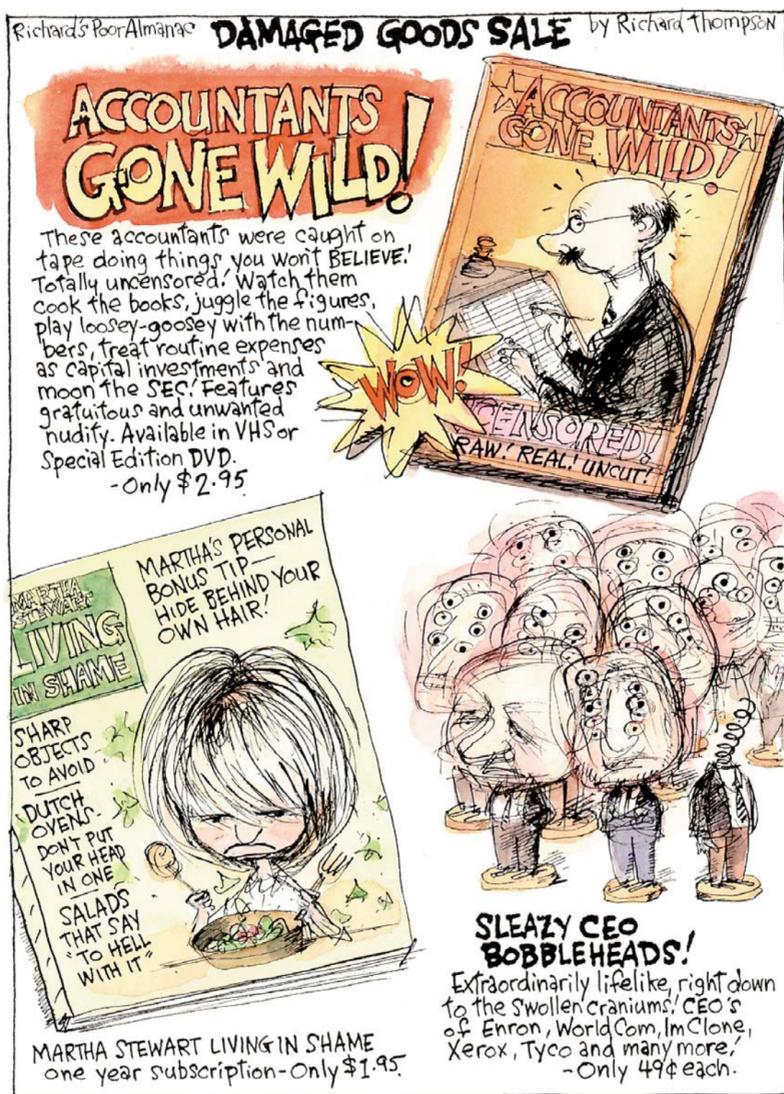
NO, YOU MORON. YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO WEAR IT.
First moron: I threw the clock out the window.
Second moron: . . . (Mike Genz, La Plata)

IT'S NOT THE BEGINNING, IT'S THE END.
What is the worst prom theme yet? (George J. Papanicolaou, Bethesda)

How can you tell a rabbit from an Italian? (Fred S. Souk, Reston)

And Last:
BECAUSE THERE IS NO NUMBER EIGHT.
How do you know the guys running the contest are morons? (Benjamin Pollack, Fairfax Station)

Next Week: Laughing Stocks



MISS MANNERS

Judith Martin

Consideration Is No Shore Thing

Who's in charge of manners at the beach house?

Well, come in and look around. Do you see any likely candidates? Do you see any signs of (voices take on decidedly sarcastic tone) etiquette? It's summertime, and people only want to relax, party and have fun. Miss Manners has nothing against summer, relaxation, parties or fun, although she does regard beaches as exhibiting a deplorable lack of natural shade. She goes so far as to recognize the value of time off from the formal etiquette of everyday life—not that she has seen enough of that being practiced to warrant its needing a vacation. But she grants no vacations from etiquette itself.

That is because vacations, like other human activities, are unbearable without etiquette. This is particularly true of a bunch of fun-loving people all sharing a house that doesn't belong to any of them, and all harboring the idea of enjoying freedom from responsibility. The evidence for this is supplied to Miss Manners by those very people—not about themselves, of course, but in the denunciations of one another that increase in number and vehemence as the relaxed, fun-filled summer progresses.

From their reports, she has a vivid idea of what people do in the typical group-house at the beach (besides unflinchingly misjudging their personal capacity for storing beer longer than a few minutes). They leave hair lying about in the sink and shower, and strangers lying about on the sofa and floors.

They appropriate food that isn't theirs and abandon dirty dishes that are. They make so much noise that nobody gets any sleep, although on different shifts: some of them making it before dawn to disturb those who sleep at night, and others making it after dawn to disturb those who sleep during the day.

They don't show up or leave when they are supposed to, and they bring people who aren't supposed to be there at all and don't always leave with them. They attract robbers by neglecting to lock the door, and they attract police by acts of commission. They run up outrageous bills that they expect everyone to share in paying, and they duck their share of bills everyone is expected to pay.

And naturally, they want to sign up for next year. They are getting exactly what they want: an etiquette-free vacation.

This brings Miss Manners back to her original point. Beach houses need residents in charge of setting and enforcing etiquette rules, as do year-round group houses, whether they are occupied by room-

mates or families or any other combination of people with varying habits and tastes. Miss Manners declines to do the job for them, and not only because she, too, wants some time off now and then. It is because the rules can be whatever the adult residents agree upon, provided they do not run foul of the legitimate claims of the landlord, the neighbors and the law. (See? She's not entirely opposed to freedom.)

In the case of summer sharing, it may not be possible to gather all those who would be affected by the rules. It falls to those who sign the lease, with visitors left the choice of agreeing to comply at the risk of expulsion, or making other rooming arrangements. The resident etiquette enforcers then have the job of judging transgressions and deciding whether to enforce the punishment, settle for a warning, or forget the entire thing and keep a list of those who should not be allowed to come back.

If they need Miss Manners' help, they can find her out in the hammock, dozing pleasantly. After all, it's summer relaxation time.

Dear Miss Manners:

How should I respond to someone who tells me I have too much time on my hands? It doesn't happen that often, but when it does, it makes me see red.

The comment is usually made when it is obvious I have taken the time to make a special gift for someone I care about. Like everyone else in this world, I am struggling to keep up with life, and the remark insinuates that I sit on my hands all day.

I'm sure it bothers me because I resent that there is NEVER enough time to do everything. But I would love to come up with something to say in response to this insulting remark.

"Not really—I made the time, because I thought it would please you." A decent person who stupidly used this phrase (which characterizes people who are making extra trouble, not taking extra trouble) will then apologize and deliver a proper expression of thanks. Only if someone persists, instead, in chastising you instead of thanking you, does Miss Manners give you permission to add, "Now that you mention it, I suppose I did waste my time."

Feeling incorrect? E-mail your etiquette questions to Miss Manners (who is distraught that she cannot reply personally) at MissManners@unitedmedia.com, or mail to United Media, 200 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.

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TODAY'S HOROSCOPE | Sydney Omarr

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Attention revolves around achievements and rewards. What starts as a routine job will become a "creative adventure." Relationship could get too hot not to cool down.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) You will hear protestations of love; separation is painful but temporary. Look beyond the immediate, take charge of your own destiny. Aries, Libra involved.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) New approach necessary in connection with sale

or purchase of property. Highlight original thinking. Do things your way because your way will be right way. Leo represented.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) Focus on relatives, emotional commitment that could lead to marriage. If married, there will be an addition to family. If single, you encounter future mate.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) What you lost 24 hours ago had sentimental value. Good news! You will retrieve item tonight. During social gathering, you will be more

popular than ever. Sagittarian involved.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Cycle high; you will be at right place at special moment almost effortlessly. Tear down in order to rebuild. With added research, you transform rejection into acceptance.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) Focus on clandestine operations; you could be dealing with classified information. Flirtation serious and will become hot and heavy. Written material will be of special importance.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Be with family during journey involving business or pleasure. Emphasize diplomacy, avoid attempting to force issues. Be up to date on fashion news, styles. Libra is in picture.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Do not equate delay with defeat. Avoid self-deception. Offer of promotion is valid—accept it. Pressure is on; you will handle it. Pisces, Virgo will play outstanding roles.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Today is tailor-

made for you! Look beyond the immediate. Give attention to abstract art. Many rely upon you to delineate subtle meanings. You will be much admired and possibly in love.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) Mysterious source of funding comes to light. Don't apologize! Keep secrets sacred. If discreet, you win allies. You will be helped by occult literature. Aries featured.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) Be positive concerning legal rights and permissions. Attention revolves around cooperative efforts,

partnership and marriage. Leo, Aquarius will play sensational roles.

IF JULY 14 IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: You are analytical; you are also a natural psychologist and have talent as a writer. You are romantic and enjoy flirting no matter what your chronological age. You are always ready to give romance another chance. Gemini, Virgo and Sagittarius persons play meaningful roles in your life, could have these letters in names: E, N, W. During August, an important domestic adjustment could include change of residence, marital status.

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