## **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 crazybrilliant 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"

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

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

#### Maria!

Now my hair's prematurely graying! For a pardon from Trump I am praying. Maria . . . I'm done NRA-ing, Maria!

(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)



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 Invita-

## L.A. TIMES SUNDAY PUZZLE

#### EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

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#### Answers to last week's puzzle below.

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## 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.

l 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? tional 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.

## BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Aug. 5:** This year, you often accept responsibility at work or within the community. As a result, you can be found among the crowds or in late meetings. You might want more downtime at home, so be sure to schedule some. If you are single, you will meet many interesting people, one of whom could be of particular interest. If you are attached, the two of you will enjoy a great sense of involvement with your community. You prefer to work or volunteer together when involved with a cause. Taurus helps you network.

HOROSCOPE

## ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You might be weighing the pros and cons of an expenditure. You want to say yes, but you need to be careful with your budget. Once you start spending, it could lead to more of the same. Use caution and good sense, and you'll come out on top.

## TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Though you are as stubborn as a bull, you have the flexibility and intelligence to know when you need professional knowledge and advice. You will get a better grasp on the issue at hand as a result.

#### GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

You could be tired and withdrawn most of the day. Your mind is working overtime as you attempt to sleuth through a problem. A partner or a loved one who might be tied to a financial matter with you is likely to adapt and accept a new viewpoint.

**CANCER** (June 21-July 22) When surrounded by your friends, you experience a lot of happiness. You treat your inner circle like a second family. In a sense, they are even more important to you than your blood relatives because they are chosen by you.

#### **LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) You smile wherever you go, and others respond accordingly. Though a close friend or loved one assumes that you are expressing everything that is on your mind, that is not the case. You might feel cornered by a personal situation. Give it time.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Your ability to look past the obvious and get to the root of a problem is highlighted. Your understanding of where others are coming from and what they really want is a skill that is continually evolving.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Your strength emerges when relating to those around you. A discussion that could be touchy and difficult proves well worth it, as you finally see eye to eye with the other party. Do not deny what this person means to you.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) Deal with a partner, even if you seem to land in a situation that involves a power play. Express your concerns, but try not to play into this person's control game. The best strategy would be to walk away and do your own thing.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) You plunge into a project and get a lot done quickly and efficiently. A money matter could be changing right in front of you, and you might feel as if you can get it under control. Do not hesitate to ask questions, but wait for the right timing.

## CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

#### Answers to last week's puzzle.

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You could hear news that might make you uncomfortable. You seem to be more controlling than you are aware, but you'll get feedback from a friend that helps you relax.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) You don't want to move from your home. You seem to be realizing the dynamics of a situation more powerfully than usual. You often stop and assess a problem before taking action. You'll see the matter differently when you are an onhand witness.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) You are more in tune with your feelings than others realize. A friend or loved one seems ready to express what is ailing them. Many people hesitate to reveal themselves, even with you. Your vision and judgment remain different from those of others.

7/29/18