



The Style Invitational

Week 264: Ask Backwards

Sunday, April 5, 1998; Page F02

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**The Book of Job,
but not the Book of
Love**

**Microsoft-brand
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**Darth
Lewinsky**

**1. Elvis
2. Toto
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Dorcas McFutz

Saddam and Eve

**Leonardo
DiCaprio's
Dental
Hygienist**

**Tinker to
Evers to
Leibniz**

**The Farrakhan
Express Card**



**Sunshine,
lollipops and
cancer**

**Bwa ha
ha ha
oink**



This Week's Contest: You are on "Jeopardy!"
 Here are the answers. What are the questions? Choose one or more. First-prize winner gets a still-in-the-box vintage 1972 genuine chrome license plate frame featuring a recumbent nude motif favored by long-distance truckers with overbites. This is worth \$15.

First runner-up gets the tacky but estimable Style Invitational Loser Pen. Other runners-up receive the coveted Style Invitational Loser T-Shirt. Honorable Mentions get the mildly sought-after Style Invitational bumper sticker. Winners will be selected on the basis of humor and originality. Mail your entries to The Style Invitational, Week 264, c/o The Washington Post, 1150 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20071, fax them to 202-334-4312, or submit them via Internet to this address: losers@washpost.com. Internet users: Please indicate Week 264 in the "subject" field. Entries must be received on or before Monday, April 13. Please include your address and phone number. Winners will be announced three weeks from today. Editors reserve the right to alter entries for taste, humor or appropriateness. No purchase necessary. Today's Sign No One Heeds was written by Jonathan Paul of Garrett Park. Employees of The Washington Post, and members of their immediate families, are not eligible for prizes.

Report from Week 261,

in which you were asked to alter some fact of history, and tell us how things would have changed. But first, a special message to certain readers who have been sending in letters complaining that the same names keep appearing as winners. They ask why we don't

choose their entries, instead of entries from people like Jennifer Hart of Arlington and Chuck Smith of Woodbridge. To the letter writers: Yours is a legitimate question, deserving of a serious, respectful response. Basically, if humorists were foods, Jennifer Hart of Arlington and Chuck Smith of Woodbridge would be fillets of Icelandic salmon, lightly braised in butter, kissed by tarragon, dotted with capers, presented in candlelight by your naked lover on a deserted beach in the South of France. In comparison, you would be a single rancid clam in ketchup, fished out of a Jersey City dumpster. We hope this answers your question. Back to history.

Fourth Runner-up: What if Germany had not attacked Russia during World War II?

The expression would be "As American as apple strudel."
(Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

Third Runner-Up: What if human beings were descended from reptiles instead of mammals?

At her fabulous parties, Sally Quinn serves "squashed horseflies on Melba toast."
(Jennifer Hart, Arlington)

Second Runner-Up: What if Johnny Appleseed had planted marijuana instead of apples?

Our national pastime would be Hacky Sack.
(Steve Fahey, Kensington)

First Runner-Up: What if Adam and Eve don't eat the apple?

Worms eat the apple, obtain Knowledge, and rule the planet. The Macarena and the high-five are never invented.
(Ned Bent, Herndon)

And the winner of the autographed "Best of the Annals of Improbable Research": What if television had been invented in 1832 instead of 1932?

"Our American Cousin" is broadcast live. In front of cameras, John Wilkes Booth shoots President Lincoln in the ear, and jumps to the stage shouting, "Sic semper tyrannis!" The crowd responds by leaping to its feet and stadium-clapping while yelling "Woof! Woof! Woof!" Later, Jerry Springer's great-great-grandpa interviews Booth and asks him about his feelings. He tries to arrange an on-air reconciliation between Booth and Mrs. Lincoln. Booth becomes an instant celeb. After a jury acquits him, he gets a running part in Springer's show, sneaking up behind people and shooting them in the ear.
(Andrew B. Gibson, Washington)

Honorable Mentions:

What if Bill Clinton had lost the election in 1996? Bob Dole, an honest, decent man, would be the president and there wouldn't be all of those scandals. You could trust Bob Dole with interns. All of

those eager, young interns. Trying to impress Bob Dole. Dressing provocatively to catch Bob Dole's eye. Willing to do just about anything Bob Dole wanted them to do. Golly. (Bob Dole, Russell, Kan.; Meg Sullivan, Potomac)

What if we had lost the Revolutionary War? That nanny would have been tried by blokes wearing powdered wigs, given a proper flogging and her arse sent home to her mum. (Charlie Myers, Laurel)

What if, at Ford's Theatre, Lincoln had worn Darth Vader's helmet? It depends if Booth had a light-saber. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

What if the 1972 Democratic National Committee headquarters had been located in the Mayflower Hotel? Journalists would think it exceedingly clever to add the word "flower" to the end of any scandal: Iranflower, Whitewaterflower, Monicaflower, Flowersflower. (Jerry Pannullo, Kensington)

What if Achilles had worn high-top Air Jordans? The Greeks wouldn't have had to try that corny wooden-horse bit. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

What if humans had evolved as ruminants? There would be no colostomy bags and, therefore, no Chuck Smith. (Robin D. Grove, Arlington)

What if Hitler had been accepted into art school in 1906, and given up politics? Mussolini later has to go it alone. When "Casablanca" is filmed, the actors in the bar scene try to compete against "La Marseillaise" with "That's Amore." The movie bombs. (Elden Carnahan, Laurel)

What if dogs had developed oversize brains, instead of monkeys? There'd be no color TV! (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

What if the Titanic never sank? James Cameron would be forced to make his big-budget disaster film about the Exxon Valdez. Leonardo DiCaprio would play the drunken, brooding loner Cap'n Hazelwood, only his love interest would be not Kate Winslet but a 600-pound walrus named Rosemary. (T.J. Murphy, Arlington; Steven King, Vienna)

What if the Axis had won world War II? We'd all be driving Japanese and German cars; all of our electronic appliances, like TVs and radios and computers, would be manufactured in Germany and Japan; and we would have a terrible trade deficit. (August Amurao, Ashburn)

What if the British had won the Revolutionary War? July Fourth would be celebrated by public beheadings, the final episode of "Seinfeld" would be preempted for the Westminster Dog Show, and, upon his induction into Cooperstown, it would be said of Roger Clemens that he "bowled an extraordinary googly." (Corey Jenkins, La Plata)

What if Marion Barry hadn't been caught in that sting, smoking crack and trying to get it on with that babe? He'd probably still be mayor! (Jonathan Paul, Garrett Park)

What if every historical fact had repercussions forever, no matter how trivial it might seem? For example, what if Rutherford B. Hayes had not stolen the election of 1876 from Samuel Tilden? Let's see, what would be different? Um. Well, I never would have sent this entry, that's one thing right there. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

What if the French had successfully repelled the Germans in 1940? They would have become a vainglorious, pompous, rude people with a ridiculous sense of their importance in world affairs. (Jeff Chostner, Burke)

What if they had not invented a time machine in 2036? Then no one would have traveled back in time to prevent George Bush from being assassinated and we would still be living through the disaster caused by the Quayle presidency. (Art Grinath, Takoma Park)

What if Gregor Mendel had not invented the laws of heredity? Your wife might have given birth to a raccoon. (Barry Blyveis, Columbia)

What if Prince Charles had been born a woman? She'd be one butt-ugly woman, that's for sure. (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

What if Socrates had a choice between drinking hemlock or drinking Zima? Same result. (Chuck Smith, Woodbridge)

What if Heaven's Gate members had believed a ship was meeting them at Bayonne, N.J.? Then they'd really wish they were dead. (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

What if the expression "I'm like hello-ooooo?" had never been invented? All those cloying suburban real estate agents named Marci, Tori and Marlene would have devised something even more grating. (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

What if real New York pizza were available in Virginia? Then I would be the effing Queen of England, that's what. (Jean Sorensen, Herndon)

What if the Brady bunch had landed on Gilligan's Island? Part of the Mary Ann camp would splinter off into a Marcia camp and Ginger would win the debate easily. (Russ Beland, Springfield)

Next Week: Campaign for One

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