

MAD DASHES

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The other day I came across one of those loopy hyphenations that one occasionally finds in newspapers and magazines:

Parker, a New York Giants defensive end, was rearrested this week in connection with the death of his girlfriend's 4-year-old son.

“Rear rested” for “rearrested”? Clearly the product of a typesetting program run amok. Until these programs become more sophisticated or newspaper editors commit themselves to correcting the havoc their machines have wreaked, we readers will continue to chuckle at or sigh about the unintentional charade words miscreated by thoughtless hyphenation.

Here are some more genuine, authentic, certified mad dashes: barf-lies, warp-lanes, doork-nobs, brooms-ticks, pre-gnant, airs-trips, boots-traps, do-nation, sli-pup, ong-ong, rebel-lions, and stars-truck.

I've made up the following sentences, but most readers will recognize the type. In each statement, assume that the hyphen comes at the end of a line:

To relieve her mental anguish, she sought help from the-rapist
 The canteen was dedicated to serv-icemen
 He gave her a come hit-her look
 The veterinarian treated the tiger by inserting a cat-heter
 A history of the Middle Ages will appear on wee-knights
 Computers will one day enter their dot-age
 Her tight dress caused her to become embarr-assed
 The careless dragon burnt its-elf
 The all girl orchestra was a bit weak in the bras-s section