

Longer Lines at the Movies

WE HAVE ANOTHER PUZZLE FROM JERRY MICCOLIS! Enjoy! Jerry writes: “I had a few ideas for a title to this puzzle, aside from the one above. Some of those other candidates were:

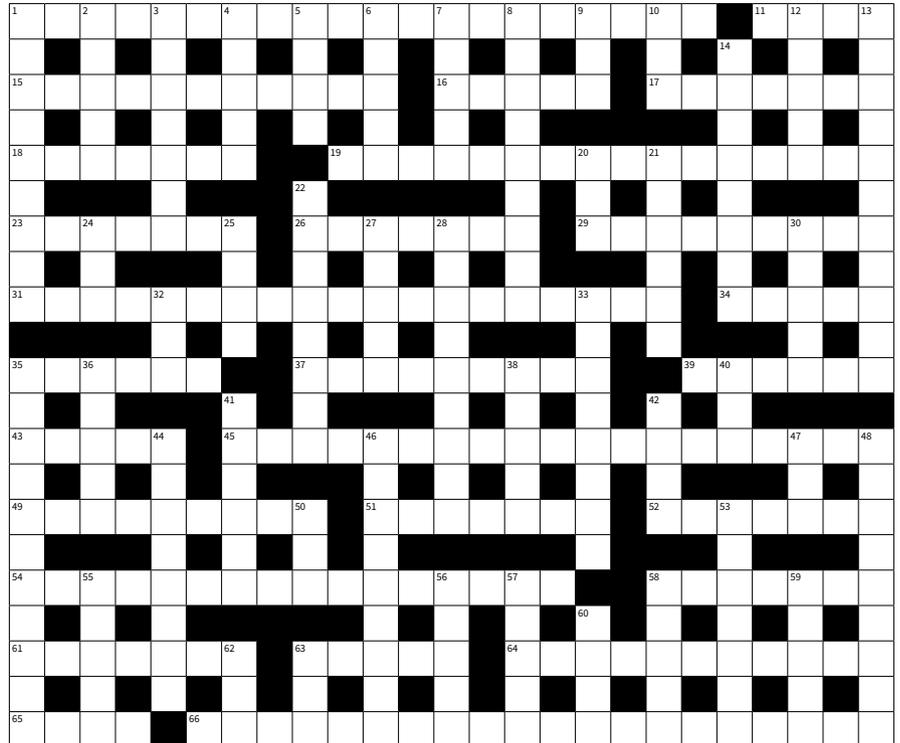
- Not-So-Famous Last Words
- Going Off Script
- Getting in the Final Word
- And another one left for you to discover, encoded in the completed grid
“Here’s the backstory...

“I have it on good authority that several prominent movie actors, past and present, have had the temerity to take perfectly good lines of scripted dialogue and try to embellish them with extraneous verbiage. The six long, symmetrically-placed, Across entries in this puzzle are my imagined examples of this phenomenon, based on adding a single word to some of the most famous movie lines of all time. These entries are unclued, but to help you flesh them out—and to give the actors the benefit of the doubt—here’s what I imagine each of these embellished lines might have actually represented:

- Mr. Schwarzenegger’s notice that his hiking trip will keep him from filming tomorrow?
- Mr. Eastwood’s direction to the crew after his on-set nap?
- Ms. Garbo’s plea to play a gender-bending role in a Western?
- Mr. McKellen’s behest to the defensive line if he is to quarterback the cast football team?
- Ms. Zellweger’s recollection of her first backstage tryst?
- Mr. Costner’s query about his co-star’s 1930s-vintage perfume?

“These lines are not presented in the same order as their associated entries appear in the grid—what would be the fun of that?

“There is something else going on with the six extraneous words. They have



roughly analogous, albeit perhaps not strictly synonymous, counterpart entries (though their clues may define them in a different sense), placed throughout the grid—a hint as to their location is in the hint box below. If you take the first letters of those six analogous entries, in the order implied by the actors’ lines above, you will spell out the other alternative title that I considered for this puzzle. Solvers should submit the completed grid and the decoded alternative title.

“One of the clues employs a type of cryptic logic that is making its *Contingencies* debut—a “reverse letter bank,” which is a variant of an anagram. Its location is contained in the hint box below.

“Among the entries, there are three proper nouns, one initialism, and one hyphenated word with informal spelling. All other words, including those in phrases and compound words, are playable in Scrabble. Beware of punctuation, which has been known to deceive.

“Oh, and the multiple references to Al Gore in the clues? They have nothing to do with the puzzle’s theme (or my political leanings), they’re just something I did for my own amusement while writing the unusually large number of clues that this puzzle required (which was *inconvenient, truth* be told 😊.)

Thanks to Bob Fink, Eric Klis, and Tom Toce for test-solving and helpful editorial suggestion-making.”



Across

- 1 [see instructions] (1,4,2,2,1,4,6)
- 11 Run back to womanizer (4)
- 15 Taking a breath can be a great idea (11)
- 16 Boxing pro married once again? (5)
- 17 Leading artist renovating some art (7)
- 18 Inclination to monkey with Underwriters Laboratories' evacuated site (7)
- 19 [see instructions] (2,4,6,4)
- 23 Property needs water lilies (7)
- 26 Shaken Al Gore accepts loss quickly (7)
- 29 Democrat focus: human resources unit at fast-food establishment (5-4)
- 31 [see instructions] (3,5,3,4,4)
- 34 Sofa carried by Audi vans (5)
- 35 Grave pub fight (6)
- 37 Gore runs deli's restoration (9)
- 39 Cavalryman embodied in Catalan ceramic (6)
- 43 Dream lazily, unlike Venus de Milo? (5)
- 45 [see instructions] (2,5,4,2,3,3)
- 49 Close call: native missing cowman's rear (9)
- 51 Clear about crying vestal (7)
- 52 Marine acting primarily in the capacity of Trusted Internet Connection (7)
- 54 [see instructions] (3,2,11)
- 58 Started over, very quietly expressed (7)
- 61 An intellectual like George, initially he takes advantage (7)
- 63 Dance rhythm upset my balancing act at the start (5)
- 64 Gee, Mr. Gore, Ms. Ullmann put up her stake but ran off (11)
- 65 Servant is swell, reportedly (4)
- 66 [see instructions] (3,3,2,2,5,5)

Down

- 1 Still contending I cooperate at first (9)
- 2 Fabulist and '50s DDE rival led short mission (5)
- 3 Three-baggers but failure to replace pitcher? Nonsense (7)
- 4 Speak with no tempo (5)
- 5 Live up to iniquity (4)
- 6 Mr. Gore elevated National Defense Strategy countries (5)
- 7 Empire State hwy. speed siren (5)
- 8 Adjustments to gun are singularly charged items (9)
- 9 Gov. DeSantis is upset with neither running-mate (3)
- 10 Velma stripped on nightmarish street? (3)
- 12 Strange, strange route (5)
- 13 Oddly forlorn startup: non-metro leader (11)
- 14 Show about nothing ends life sadly (8)
- 20 Put a stop to appropriating needed unique components (3)
- 21 Actor Jon has V-8, loses energy, takes in oxygen (6)
- 22 Main goal? Sculptured ornamental tree (8)
- 24 Tel Aviv Univ. identifies mathematical constant equaling 2 x pi (3)
- 25 We hear steer is for purchase (4)
- 27 After a while, Gore talked back somewhat (5)
- 28 Piano note at melody's conclusion identifies "The Father of Pop" (9)
- 30 Chaotic situation in geisha vocation (5)
- 32 Medical plan spelled the end of Satchmo (3)
- 33 Inappropriately-united nations observe mass on the banks of Liffey (8)
- 35 Alto and soprano butt into best lines--that's vulgarity (11)
- 36 Tenant heard gossip (5)
- 38 Correct former do (5)
- 40 Like a wing (3)
- 41 Lizard takes heads of innocent geckos until alligators nestle alongside (6)
- 42 Boston's small starling (4)
- 44 Levi stood up to interrupt Dr. Ed but spoke stupidly (8)
- 46 Rattled, a mild exec cried out (9)
- 47 Nail Halloween decoration (3)
- 48 Without qualification, the Department of Environmental Conservation pinpointed Lily, first and last (9)
- 50 Actress Sommer almost becomes member of fraternal organization (3)
- 53 Troop group tardy after Ty leaves to get bodysuit (7)
- 55 Sovereign lifted beer (5)
- 56 Reprobate in center of church, being vocal (5)
- 57 Near time for darkness (5)
- 58 Motionless moonshine maker (5)
- 59 Engage in foreplay above Mr. Gore's pad (5)
- 60 What is this, a game? (4)
- 62 Couple is arduous at heart (3)
- 63 Cheer for sun god on high (3)

Alternative title: _____

HINTS

Hint 1: The six analogous entries are placed symmetrically throughout the grid.

Hint 2: The reverse letter bank clue is at 20 Down.

TOM TOCE is an FCAS and a senior manager at EY. He is a member of the Jeopardy Hall of Fame. Solutions may be emailed to ttoce@nyc.rr.com. In order to make the solver list, you should send him your solutions by February 1, 2024.