



Movie Speak: How to Talk Like You Belong on a Film Set

Tony Bill

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When is "groucho" not a comedian? A "seagull" not a bird? A "banana" not a fruit, and a "taco cart" not a food stand? What's the "Castle rock rule" and when should you call for a "buff & puff"? And why expect trouble when the A.D. (assistant director) knowingly mumbles "*Gone With the Wind* in the morning, *Dukes of Hazzard* after lunch"? An oral tradition gathered and passed down for more than a hundred years, the language of moviemaking, like other secret lexicons, is the only accepted way of communicating on a set—and is all but unknown to the outside world. Technical, odd, colorful, mysterious, the working language of movies sheds light not only on the hugely complex process of making a film, but on the invisible hierarchies of a set, the unspoken etiquette between cast and crew, and the evolution of a process that's endlessly fascinating.

Movie Speak is a book about language, but through language also a book about what it's really like to be a director or a producer or an actor or a crew member. An Oscarwinning producer (*The Sting*), actor (who worked with Spielberg, Coppola, and Sydney Pollock), and director (*Five Corners*, *Flyboys*, *My Bodyguard*, and more), Tony Bill has been on sets for more than 30 years and brings a writer's love of language to this collection of hundreds of film terms. A futz. A cowboy. A Brodkin and a double Brodkin (a.k.a. screamer). Streaks 'n tips, a Lewinsky, *Green Acres*, rhubarb, a peanut, a Gary Coleman, snot tape, twin buttes, manmaker (and why you can yell for one if needed for a grip, but must whisper if it's for Tom Cruise)—these are the tricks of the trade.



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