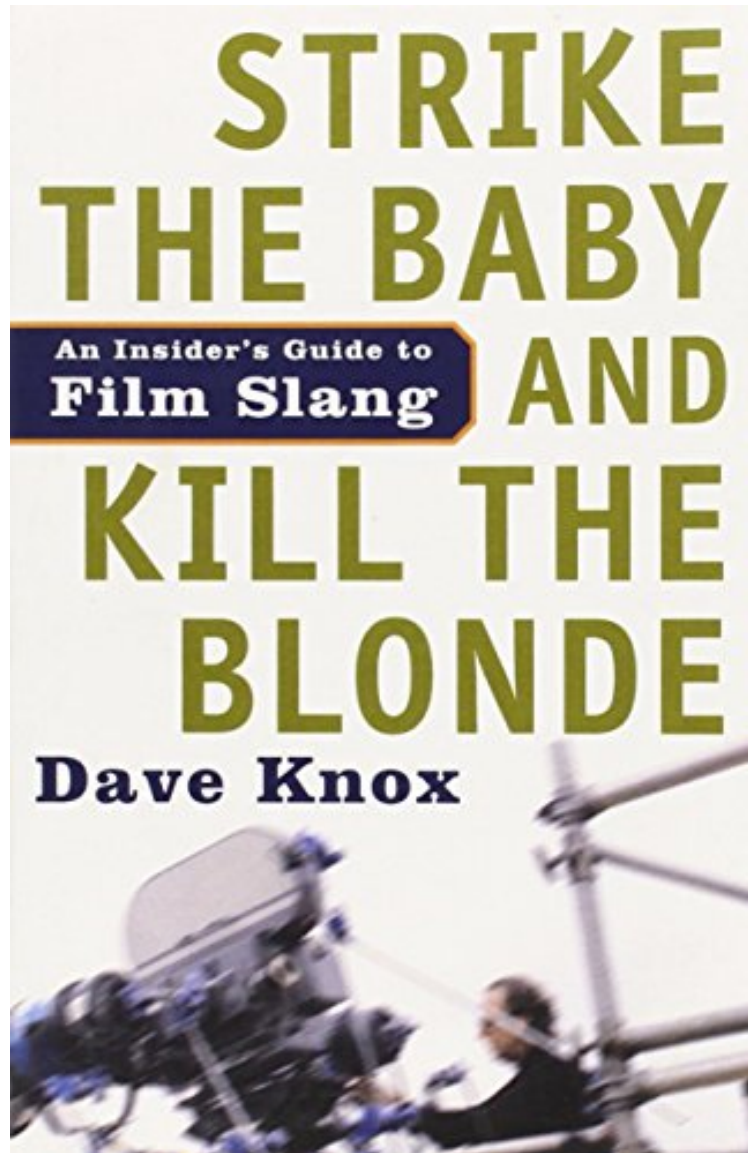


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Strike the Baby and Kill the Blonde: An Insider's Guide to Film Slang

Dave Knox

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#309479 in Books Dave Knox 2005-08-23 2005-08-23 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.01 x .46 x 5.20l, .50 #File Name: 1400097592224 pages Strike the Baby and Kill the Blonde An Insider s Guide to Film Slang | File size: 17.Mb

Dave Knox : Strike the Baby and Kill the Blonde: An Insider's Guide to Film Slang before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strike the Baby and Kill the Blonde: An Insider's Guide to Film Slang:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Useful if you're writing stories involving movies, TV shows, etc. By Aisling D. I'm working on a couple of book series that are related to TV shows. So, I wanted authentic dialogue and production insights. This book -- plus Tony Bill's "Movie Speak" -- delivered everything I'd hoped, and more. (If you're buying just one book for this purpose, either is very good.) If you need to know what people say when they're working on movies or TV shows, this is an excellent book. Easy to use. Fun to read. Nicely explained for beginners, with some good details for those who've been around productions in the past. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great conversation starter AND useful insider dictionary of movie production slang. By Daniel Reed. "Strike the Baby and Kill the Blonde: An Insider's Guide to Film Slang" "Strike the Baby and Kill the Blonde" is a fun and useful dictionary for both filmmakers and movie fans. It's great for clarifying the often confusing, and perhaps intentionally alienating, jargon used by "old guard" grip/gaff/spark crews. While it certainly doesn't have every term, and I was surprised by missing some more common slang, it has more than enough to merit including it in the collections of handy reference material for film students and professionals. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is fun to browse. By Rick Harlan. This is fun to browse. It's just set up as a glossary of the various terms and slang in the film industry. I would have preferred most history of the lingo, back-stories, and so forth. But I can still piece together the story from the individual entries.

Everything You Need to Know to Become a Film-Industry Insider Have you ever wondered what the difference is between a gaffer and a grip? Or what makes the best boy so great? In "Strike the Baby and Kill the Blonde,"* Dave Knox, a top camera operator and longtime veteran of the film industry, gives you the inside story on the lingo and slang heard on the set. This is an A-to-Z guide to making a movie: the equipment, the crew, and the sometimes hilarious terminology everything you need to know to sound like a seasoned pro.* Remove the small spotlight from the set and switch off the two-kilowatt quartz light.

What a lively and entertaining guide to movie lingo! I learned a lot of terms I never knew before . . . but then, I've never killed a blonde, either. Leonard Maltin, film critic and author of the New York Times bestselling Leonard Maltin's Movie Guides Now you can sound like you know what you're talking about even when you don't. In other words, you're ready to work in the movies. David Duchovny, actor and director (X-Files, House of D) You too can speak film-ese. Thanks to Dave Knox, what was once insider information is now available to all who want to speak the lingo of the film industry. It fits nicely on the shelf between my Oxford Dictionary and Roget's Thesaurus. Jamie Lee Curtis, author and actress (Freaky Friday, Halloween, True Lies, A Fish Called Wanda) About the Author Dave Knox has twenty years of experience in film production, including work on major motion pictures such as The Silence of the Lambs, Big Daddy, Scent of a Woman, The Age of Innocence, Hitch, and many more. He lives in New York with his wife and children. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. INTRODUCTION Go get me the two diving boards and the toilet seat for the camera dolly. This request came from the key grip (head rigging technician) on the set of the new Will Smith movie Hitch (aka The Last First Kiss), which we were filming in New York City, down in SoHo. Of course, I knew what George meant: He was going to affix extra platform space that would travel with the movie camera as I photographed the next shot. But to the layman? By using nicknames, he had identified specific equipment to the film crew and had disguised his meaning from passersby. Even a top-notch film student from New York University would have a hard time decoding his intentions. I began to think of all the confusing slang used every day on the movie set. Go fetch me a show card! Fresh from college (where I received the aptly named B.S. in Speech from Northwestern University), on my first day on a real movie set, I didn't understand what was being asked of me. Well, my first day on a television commercial set, that is. In the past, I had supported myself as a commercial still photographer, and I'd graduated from a premier film program, but this one was new to me. What is it, your first day? Actually, yes. How was I to know that a simple two-by-three-foot black-and-white piece of cheap cardboard was one of the primary tools of the professional filmmaker? The director and cameraman of that Crisco commercial, Elbert Budin, strode past the line of cooked chicken pieces, over a thousand in all. That one, that one there, not that one. He was auditioning chicken pieces, all precooked and laid out on tabletops for the commercial spot. The assistant cameraperson rigged Elbert's German-made movie camera for slow-motion filming, and the end of the day found me catching flying chicken pieces with my show card. We simply tossed the individual pieces of chicken into the air, and Elbert filmed them in slow motion on the way down, to demonstrate the idea that chicken cooked in Crisco was . . . lighter than air. I was hooked. From there, it was a matter of gaining the technical skills with the camera equipment that would allow me to graduate from the ranks of chicken wrangler. I spent a year managing a film stage in Lower Manhattan, where I handled everything from painting sets to repairing lighting gear to walking the vicious guard dog. I was enamored of the large complicated movie cameras that came through the stage. Mitchell, Arriflex, Panavision . . . To me, these names meant HOLLYWOOD. Using my passkey on weekends, I was able to sneak back onto the stage and rifle through cases of expensive camera gear. With no one else around except for the trusty dog, El Capitn, I taught myself the technical intricacies of the different motion-picture camera systems. In the 1960s, the great German director Werner Herzog reportedly stole the camera he needed to make his first film, so my extracurricular activities

put me in good company. The next year when the time came to take the test for admission to the union as assistant cameraperson, I passed with flying colors. I worked as camera assistant on several films over the next two years, including manning an extra camera on the cult classic *The Toxic Avenger*, but once again something new and wonderful caught my eye. A screening of Francis Coppola's *One from the Heart* left me breathless. How did they photograph all those beautiful, intricate moving-camera shots? I had never seen anything like it. The Steadicam had been invented by Garrett Brown in 1973, and used on such high-profile films as *Rocky* and *Saturday Night Fever*, but was still seen by the industry as something rare and exotic. I contacted Brown and took one of the first weeklong training classes for camera operators dedicated to the Steadicam, a mobile camera system worn strapped to the operators body. Everything about the Steadicam appealed to me. It addressed all my interests: camerawork, choreography, precision, athletics. I borrowed some money and bought a beat-up Steadicam rig from the manufacturer, Cinema Products, practicing camera moves alone in my apartment with imaginary actors for months. A phone call: Garrett Brown had recommended me for a job on a feature film shooting in Pennsylvania. Was I ready? We were lined up to begin filming on *Maria's Lovers*, my first major Hollywood film as a camera operator. I was twenty-five years old and had grown a bushy red beard in an attempt to look a little older. Hopefully I could convince my coworkers that I was an experienced hand at this moviemaking stuff. The actors Nastassja Kinski and John Savage were in front of me, and I was standing next to the director with the Steadicam strapped to my back. The Russian director Andrei Konchalovsky wrapped a porcelain plate into a napkin. Suddenly he brought his foot down hard. Crash! The plate was smashed for good luck; filming could begin. I'm not sure how his film fared at the box office, but my career as a Steadicam and camera operator on Hollywood films was taking off. The director may tell the actors what to do, but the cinematographer (or director of photography/DP) designs the shots that make up the film, and the camera operator is the DP's right hand. It's the camera operator who stands closest to the actors during a scene, standing, in fact, between the director and his actors. The operator holds the camera and crafts the shots that describe the director's vision; the film is literally in my hands at that moment. My eye gazes through the eyepiece as the action unfolds. If you think about it, I see the movie first. It sometimes takes screenwriters, directors, and producers years to bring their films to the screen. Endless months of meetings, planning sessions, location scouting, and casting. The camera crew, however, is hired for only the brief (four- to twenty-week) exciting period of time called principal photography. This is the most rewarding part of moviemaking, where set design, photography, and acting all come together, and something new and wonderful is conjured out of thin air. Sometimes, when staring at a scene through the eyepiece, you just know something special is unfolding. Watching Al Pacino do something unpredictable, new, and astonishing on take number ten after a long day of shooting on *City Hall*, or setting up a stunt where the actors Joaquin Phoenix and Vince Vaughan ride a bike down a steep jungle hillside on location in Thailand for *Return to Paradise*—these are just two of the indelible memories I have from the set. Now, twenty years and over one hundred films later, it's hard not to be a bit nostalgic as I review some of the highlights. Early in my career, I was more of a specialist. Moving-camera techniques, with the audience as a participant in the scene, were becoming more and more popular with directors. Sometimes I landed on a film crew for a week, or even just for a day, to lend a hand with special sequences. I flew into North Carolina and joined the crew of *Dirty Dancing* just long enough to shoot two key sequences with my Steadicam and to attend the wrap party. I worked the first week on *The Silence of the Lambs*, contributing the moving camera to the opening credits, chasing Jodie Foster as she ran through the training course at FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia. On the set of *Black Rain*, I followed Michael Douglas chasing bad guys through a meat market in lower New York and received a swinging slab of beef to the head for my efforts. I've been the man behind the camera and had an opportunity to meet many of America's favorite stars, such as Meryl Streep, Robin Williams, Sylvester Stallone, Robert De Niro, and Adam Sandler. Or perhaps you're a fan of the younger actresses Winona Ryder, Julia Stiles, Kirsten Dunst, and Christina Ricci? Well, I met and photographed them all early in their careers, when they were finding their way as young performers, before they were famous stars. Looking back on that first day shooting a Crisco commercial, I couldn't have predicted where the movie business would take me: from Ireland on *Devil's Own* to China and Thailand on *Return to Paradise*, literally from Hollywood to Hoboken. I've been fortunate to be given an opportunity to practice my craft in a job I love, in an industry populated by interesting and glamorous individuals. Now, to return to the toilet seat and diving board story . . . wouldn't you like to know what all those movie people are talking about? Everyone enjoys watching movies, but what exactly is a workday like on the set of a major motion picture? What really goes on behind the scenes? If you've ever sat through the closing credits and thought, *What the heck is a best boy?* this is the book for you. Perhaps you're a student and are thinking about trying to become a Hollywood actor or director. Then again, maybe you just want to sound like a movie-industry professional and amaze your friends with insider information. *Strike the Baby and Kill the Blonde* is organized along the lines of a dictionary to help you find explanations for specific film terms (and to settle bets during friendly discussions). On the other hand, readers looking for an immersion experience in the world of Hollywood filmmaking can choose to read it from cover to cover. It will provide you with an entertaining read, as well as a glimpse at the workings of the movie cast and crew in action. The language of Hollywood moviemaking has always been top secret, until now. I hope you enjoy the book, know, pass me a showcard. A camera: When more than one movie camera is being used on set, the

camera crew very cleverly designates them A, B, C, and so forth, so that praise or blame can be properly attributed to the crew after viewing the dailies. Abby Singer: The next-to-last shot to be photographed by the crew on a particular day is universally referred to by movie crews as the Abby, though no one knows exactly why. I have heard that Mr. Singer was employed at one time as an AD, but it's curious that his name has become synonymous with the second-to-last shot. Maybe his crews filmed only two shots a day? above the line: Refers to highly paid movie personnel, including producers, writers, directors, and actors. Their salaries are part of the above-the-line costs of filmmaking, and are accounted for separately by studio accountants from the rest of the daily filmmaking expenses. Did you know that crew people are paid weekly, but movie stars usually receive all their salary before the cameras roll?