

OCCULT OCCUPATIONS

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Most people watch movies. I watch the credits listed at the ends of movies. For a logologist, those credits are often more interesting than motion-picture plots. The time has come for me to share some of my discoveries with you.

To begin with, it hasn't been easy to assemble this information. The credits, listing all of the behind-the-scenes executives and technicians working to create a motion picture, are frequently shown in very small print, or moved up the screen so rapidly, or shown against such a multicolored background, one itself in motion, that reading the credits is a stellar feat. However, if you read the credits at the ends of enough movies, what you were unable to catch in one picture will turn up in another one, and you can gradually build up an impressive file of credits.

Many of the credits are straightforward enough: the producer, director, hairdresser, and accountant, for instance, excite no logological interest. There are, on the other hand, individuals listed in each set of credits who pursue arcane occupations - the kinds of careers which sound mysterious. Not only do they sound mysterious, they are mysterious - try looking them up in a dictionary, and you discover that they aren't there. This article focuses your attention on such occupations: with possibly just a few exceptions, none of them is listed in any general dictionary of the English language. The following list enumerates 88 such occupations, one for each key of a standard piano keyboard:

ADR assistant	chief dubbing mixer
ADR editor	chief set dresser
assistant grip	cinemobile technician
assistant propman	cinetechician
best boy	clapper
best boy electric	clapper/loader
best boy electrician	construction grip
best boy gaffer	continuity
best boy grip	continuity breakdown
boom	continuity girl
boom man	craft service
boom operator	crafts person
cable man	crowd marshal
camera grip	DGA intern
camera mounts	DGA trainee
camera pilot	dolly grip
Chapman crane operator	driver/grip
	dubbing mixer

electric best boy	operator
first grip	optical line up
focus	opticals
focus puller	outside prop
Foley editor	Panaglide operator
Foley effects	production mixer
Foley sound	property master
gaffer	prop master
genny operator	re-recording mixer
greensman	second boom
grip	second grip
grip best boy	second unit manager
head wrangler	set dresser
honey wagon	set prop
key focus	sound assistant
key grip	sound mixer
lead man	steadicam operator
leadperson	swing dresser
lead set dresser	swinger
lighting gaffer	swing gang
loader	third grip
location manager	transformation sequence
loop dialogue editor	unit production manager
loop editor	unit publicist
looping editor	visual futurist
mix	worst boy
music scoring mixer	

The first characteristic of the list to engage our attention is its extreme alphabetical imbalance. The center of the list is between the terms GAFFER and GENNY OPERATOR. That alphabetic midpoint is earlier than any of those in nonsupplementary reference works enumerated in Alan Frank's article on the subject in the August 1984 issue of *Word Ways*. Why such an extremely displaced midpoint? The list includes no significant blocks of occupational titles early in the alphabet - say, a group of 10 or 12 "assistants." My own explanation is a highly personal one, keyed to the fact that I have noticed such extreme displacements toward the beginning of the alphabet in a good many alphabetical lists that I have compiled over the years. As in the case of the list shown here, I exerted no influence on the content of such lists. What I have theorized is that the fact that each of my three names, DMITRI ALFRED BORGMANN, begins with a letter in the first sixth of the alphabet exerts a supernatural influence on the lists I compile, literally pulling the words or names in it toward the front of the alphabet. If you have a more impersonal explanation for the phenomenon, please come forward with it.

A second interesting characteristic of the list is that many of the occupational titles in it consist of interchangeable parts - a mass-production efficiency of sorts. Thus, we have both a BEST

BOY ELECTRIC and an ELECTRIC BEST BOY; both a BEST BOY GRIP and a GRIP BEST BOY. Lateral shifts are even more frequent, so that individual components of two-or-more-word designations can be detached, being reattached to other components. The occupation GRIP, for example, can be modified by attaching a variety of descriptors to it, many or most of which could equally well be attached to other bases: ASSISTANT, BEST BOY, CAMERA, CONSTRUCTION, DOLLY, DRIVER/, FIRST, KEY, SECOND, and THIRD. The production of motion pictures is evidently a gripping enterprise. Similarly, the occupation of an OPERATOR, listed in specifically that unrevelatory fashion at the end of one movie, can be modified with these terms: BOOM, CHAPMAN CRANE, GENNY, PANAGLIDE, and STEADICAM. Virgules (solidi or separatrices) indicate that different occupations can be combined in one individual, as in the cases of CLAPPER/LOADER and DRIVER/GRIP. The same modifier may also be attached to different terminal components. Thus, we have a BEST BOY ELECTRIC, BEST BOY ELECTRICIAN, BEST BOY GAFFER, and BEST BOY GRIP; a FOLEY EDITOR, FOLEY EFFECTS, and FOLEY SOUND.

Surprising is the inclusion of examples of illogic in the list. Thus, we have technicians responsible both for CONTINUITY and CONTINUITY BREAKDOWN. There is an OUTSIDE PROP, but no inside prop; a HEAD WRANGLER, but no assistants or subordinates; a CONTINUITY GIRL, but no continuity boy or continuity man; an ADR ASSISTANT and an ADR EDITOR, but a DGA INTERN and a DGA TRAINEE, with neither initialism offering counterparts to the terminal elements of its confrere. One conspicuous pair of mutually balancing occupations - BEST BOY and WORST BOY - is the result of a deliberate spoof. The picture Airplane II - The Sequel listed Adolf Hitler as worst boy among its credits.

The principal fault of the list, however, is the unavailability of definitions or explanations for most of the occupations in it. In a public-spirited attempt to overcome this fault, I have started formulating my own definitions. I jump in boldly to fill the breach, where lexicographers seemingly fear to tread. My initial efforts have produced the following definitions. I invite readers to continue my efforts, devising explanations for other occupational titles:

- BEST BOY A honorific appellation bestowed on the best-behaved technician - at the close of motion-picture production
- BOOM MAN One who lowers the boom on any actor stepping out of line during film production - a hatchet man of sorts
- CABLE MAN The Western Union messenger who brings pompous actors their telegrams while they are on the set
- CAMERA PILOT A pilot who takes the camera up in a helicopter, filming motion-picture sequences from the air
- CLAPPER A menial hired to applaud the actors' performances, no matter how poor they are, to build up their self-confidence
- DGA INTERN A representative of the Durum Growers Association of the United States, present at some motion-picture productions to make sure that films display no bias against agricultural interests - an obvious risk in a highly-urbanized society

- GAFFER A subordinate guilty of frequent social blunders, serving to distract onlookers from those made by important actors
- HEAD WRANGLER The leader of a team of bickering disputants placed off-set, providing a background of voices, when needed
- HONEY WAGON Someone who cleans up after actors inconsiderate enough to relieve themselves while at work on the set
- KEY GRIP An officer holding the key to the locked set with an iron grip, preventing bored actors from taking an off-set break
- LEAD MAN A technical responsible for weighting a flimsily-constructed set down with leaden weights, so that it and the actors don't float off into the wild blue yonder
- SWINGER Someone who engages freely in sex, providing actors with welcome recreational activities

SLOGANS

Slogans, like beauty parlor names (Word Ways, May 1979) offer a rich source of wordplay for the logologist. The search for examples is materially aided with the appearance of Slogans (Gale Research, 1984; \$65), a collection of more than 6000 from product advertising and presidential campaigns, edited by Laurence Urdang and Celia Dame Robbins. Not surprisingly, rhymes and puns are the commonest wordplay encountered. Some examples:

- A bear for wear (tires)
 The bike you'll like (bicycles)
 Powered by Howard (motors)*
- The right way to weigh right (scales)
 The last fits - the fit lasts (shoes)
 Thirst come, thirst served; Prince of ales; A Dutch of class;
 In a glass by itself; Keeps a head (beer)
 What foods these morsels be (restaurant)
 Try them on for sighs (hosiery)
 Word to the wives is sufficient (salt)
 Our wurst is the best (sausages)*

A surprising number of other wordplay tricks can be found: acrostic (Beware Of Smokers Teeth [BOST toothpaste]), letter change (Pep for your pup), letter deletion (Power without powder), transposal (Smile at miles), reversal (Serutan), tongue twister (Be chic - chew Chicks), and pangram (The quick brown fox).

The two strangest slogans? My nominees are:

- Every man should wear at least three straw hats
 Wears like a pig's nose (overalls)*