

# THE PANGRAM FILM FESTIVAL

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Although it will be my first year there, the Pangram Film Festival is in its seventh year. It is not a place where films are tested on unsuspecting audiences or premieres are launched in attempts to get distributors and garner critical praise. But the films, which range from recent releases to early black and whites, and run the gamut from classic to cruddy camp, have a theme you won't find at any other film festival. The titles, combined, form a holoalphabetic pangram.

Of course, this is not so unusual, since the Pangram Film Festival takes place at Pangram Community College, just half an hour from Philadelphia. The festival was founded by Linda Gofkus (a professor in the English department) and Don Fugik (a TA who maintains the web site), and takes place just as winter's ending. Let me turn the typewriter--okay, the keyboard--to Ms. Gofkus.

Thanks. Testing, testing, is this thing on? Well, I've always been a puzzle person, and given the name of the college, I always try new ways to keep the students interested in playing with language. The first rule we need to establish is that numbers don't count. Out of several possible line-ups, we went with the oldest, in fact the only line-up doable in the 1970s:

Bog, Dinky, 45 Fathers, Luv, McQ, PJ, W, X-15, Z.

I'm not so proud of some of the earlier line-ups, so let's jump ahead. Three years ago, the challenge was to come up with a list without numbers, using only eight titles. We almost went with:

B.O.R.N., Hud, JFK, McQ, Sylvia, Tex, W, Z.P.G.

but ended up with a campier, briefer run of:

Gaby, Jinxed, Kotch, Luv, Q, R.P.M., SWF, Z.

Two years ago, the challenge was to come up with a list with no one- or two-letter titles. There were nine different line-ups submitted; we went for a largely political series with only seven titles:

Dave, JFK, McQ, Ruby, THX-1138, Wilson, Z.P.G.

Last year, you had to find the shortest sequence (again, 7 movies). The line-up we chose included the longest title we ever managed to use:

28 Up, JFK, Low, McQ, Very Bad Things, X-15, Z.

"Boulevard Nights" and "The Foxy Duckling" are longer than "Very Bad Things," but we couldn't find a sequence that worked; it's like throwing away your vowel pool before you even get started.

This year was "make up your own theme". Someone suggested listing as many movies as we can with each containing at least one letter:

9 To 5, CB4, Fled, Ivy, K9, M, PF, Q, Run, Shag, W, X-15, Z.

I am pleased to announce that in March, thanks to the availability of EdTV, we will instead unleash our first festival where letters and numbers appear in the titles exactly once:

35 Up, 48 Hrs, K9, EdTV, F/X, Gaby, Joni, L.627, McQ, W, Z.

By the way, L.627 is French, and supposed to be very good.

Some words of advice on making up your own lists:

- Q is the letter with the fewest options. IQ and Q&A are hard to use because they both knock out a vowel without killing any consonants besides 'Q'. Q and McQ are the two that you're left with.
- Titles that anagram are interchangeable, so SFW and SWF can be swapped for each other, as can McQ and # Up for M, Q and PCU (also getting rid of the number).
- Here are some one-letter movies, in order of necessity: Q, Z, W, X-15, K9, M, L.627 (V was a TV miniseries, then a series).
- Here are some more no-vowel options: F/X, FM, R.P.M., PJ, CB4, THX-1138, JFK, McQ, Z.P.G.
- Some sequels let you gratuitously throw in an extra letter: Rocky V, Jaws 3-D.
- The best 2's and 3's I found: PJ (best 2), CB4, F/X, FP1, PT 109, Ms. 45, Luv (best three, surprisingly), JFK, THX-1138, Ivy, Z.P.G. and McQ.
- Sometimes a promising title like "SLC Punk" just isn't helpful. However, "Antz" and "EdTV" were very helpful.

I can't wait to start planning the next line-up, though. I wonder if the release of "28 Days" will help? Oh, and in case you noticed, my name and Don's names are anagrams of the author's name. I'm sure that is more than a coincidence. Ta-ta for now!