

Movie Vocabulary/Idioms

The People vs. Larry Flynt

(1996. Info at <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0117318>)

This movie is about the life and trials of Larry Flynt, publisher of *Hustler*, a tasteless and fairly popular monthly porn and satire magazine. At its peak circulation, the magazine sold 3 million issues annually. More recently, it sold about 500,000 annually.

The movie attempts to make a point by depicting two things:

- The tastelessness of *Hustler* and Flynt's enterprises in general, and
- The right to be tasteless and even outrageous in spoken or written expression that is afforded to U.S. citizens by the Constitution.



Please be sure to listen carefully to the legal argumentation in the court scenes, and especially the Supreme Court. This latter one was taken *verbatim* (word-for-word) from the court transcript and is a fine example of clear and forceful spoken English.

...can't be so
ornery

Main Entry: **or·nery**

Function: *adjective*

Etymology: alteration of *ordinary*

Date: 1816

: having an irritable disposition : **CANTANKEROUS**

Source: <http://m-w.com/> (Merriam-Webster Online)

we're **broke...**

Broke: To have no money.

...she **ain't**
legal...

Ain't: Improper but enormously popular contraction of "am not". Here, it's being used instead of "is not."

To not "be legal" in the context shown in the film means that the girl is not legally old enough to be dirty dancing for men.

...not **of age**

Short for "of legal age"; another way of saying "ain't legal".

tits

Crude slang for breasts.

[First] **pussy**

Pussy: Crude slang for vagina.

"First Pussy"; play on expression "First Lady". The First Lady is the wife of the President of the United States.

Jackie O.

Reference to Jacqueline Onassis Kennedy (1929-1994), First Lady to John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States. After the assassination of Kennedy, she married Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. She was a prime target of *paparazzi* ("personality" photographers). She was active in publishing and the arts.



smut

Derogatory (negative) term for pornography.

Charles Keating



Mr. Keating is given special focus due to his subsequent legal troubles as a leading figure in the Savings and Loan scandal in the United States, which cost American taxpayers \$3.4 billion in FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation) bailouts. Presenting him here seems to beg the question: "Is stealing money from retirees obscene?"

Court won't reinstate Keating convictions Supreme Court

USA Today, 10/02/00 – Updated 11:07 AM

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court refused to reinstate the California fraud convictions of financier Charles Keating, who became a symbol of the savings and loan scandals of the 1980s.

The justices, acting without comment Monday, let stand rulings that threw out Keating's convictions because of faulty instructions to the jury.

A federal trial judge and the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Keating's trial judge wrongly allowed jurors to convict him without deciding whether he intended to swindle investors.

The vote by a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit court last year was 2-1. The dissenting judge said there had been "absolutely overwhelming evidence" of Keating's fraudulent intent.


[snip] The case is *Hood v. Keating*, 99-2022.

monogamy

The state of two persons sexually dedicated solely to each other. **Bigamy** is having two spouses, and **polygamy** to have more than two.

...are you doing
her?

"Are you having sex with her?"

I specialize in civil liberties	Civil liberties are freedoms guaranteed by a country's constitution.
Larry's not in the mob	"The mob": Organized crime; typically a reference to the Mafia, a highly organized criminal syndicate originating in Sicily.
...is going to take your breath away...	"...will completely and overwhelmingly surprise you."
Objection!...	The lawyer is saying: "I <i>object to</i> (question the legal basis for) the way my legal opponent is questioning the witness."
...sustained.	The judge is responding: "I give authority to your objection; I will require your opponent to stop this line of questioning."
I won't admit [the other porn magazines] into evidence.	The judge will not allow to materials presented by the lawyer to be considered (admitted) as relevant information for the jury.
...innocent children who gaze upon your magazine...	Gaze: To look at something in a quiet and concentrated manner.
Ruth Carter Stapleton 	Sister of James ("Jimmy") Carter, the 39 th President of the United States. She was known for her religious writings and unorthodox Christian beliefs, such as faith healing and "Christian Universalism", the idea that all the souls in the universe will eventually be redeemed (saved), and none will be lost in eternal torment or separation from God. She died in 1983 of a cancer for which she refused medical treatment, on account of her belief in the power of faith to heal.
hectic schedule	Hectic (<i>adj.</i>); fast-paced, very busy and always changing.
I don't mend bones...	Mend (<i>v.</i>); to fix or heal, return to wholeness.

Epiphany	Powerful, emotional realization of truth and/or beauty.
acid flashback	Acid (<i>n.</i>); slang for LSD (German acronym for lysergic acid diethylamide), a powerful hallucinogenic drug. 200 <i>micrograms</i> (<i>millionths</i> of a gram) is considered a <u>large</u> dose. The notion of “flashbacks”—spontaneous, unexpected, non-drug-induced recurrences of acid experiences—was a subject of discussion, popular speculation, and some research in the 1970s.
to help our circulation	Circulation (<i>n.</i>); The subscribing or over-the-counter purchasing readership of a magazine.
plea bargain	To <i>bargain</i> (make a deal) with your legal prosecution for <i>conviction</i> (finding guilty) of a lesser crime, in exchange for testimony and/or a quick trial and conviction.
Reign of Christian Terror	This is a sly reference to the “Reign of Terror” in France during its revolution.

Reign of Terror

1793–94, period of the French Revolution characterized by a wave of executions of presumed enemies of the state. Directed by the Committee of Public Safety, the Revolutionary government’s Terror was essentially a war dictatorship, instituted to rule the country in a national emergency.

Source: <http://www.bartleby.com/65/re/ReignTer.html>
(Columbia Encyclopedia Online)

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency. The spy agency of the United States, created from the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) after World War II. The reference here refers to theories that the CIA <i>engineered</i> (planned) the <i>assassination</i> (murder) of John F. Kennedy in 1963, possibly for foreign policy reasons.
KKK	Ku Klux Klan; a white supremacist cult in the United States, dating from the time of the Civil War.

“We don't burn the cross,
we **Light** the cross. We
recognize that Christ is
the light of the world.”

Source:
<http://www.kukluxklan.org/>



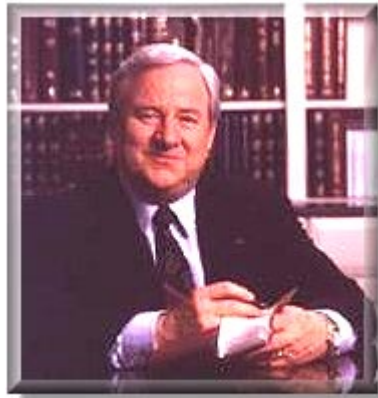
...narrow the
field...

“...eliminate some factors, to help us identify the specific
cause of a problem...”

you're just doing
this to **get off**

To “get off”; to get high on drugs. “You're just doing this to
obtain an extremely pleasurable or ecstatic effect from the
drugs [not for pain relief]...”.

Jerry Falwell



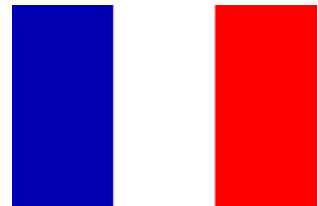
Jerry Falwell

Very visible and influential
religious leader in the United
States. He founded many
educational, media, and civic
action organizations. In the
context of the time depicted in
this movie, Falwell was
involved politically at high
levels of government, having
regular access to the
attention of Ronald Reagan,
the 40th President of the

United States. At that time, he founded a political action
organization called the “Moral Majority”, premised on the
idea of giving voice to a silent majority of Americans who
supposedly support the idea of the application of Christian
Fundamentalist religious beliefs and values to the
operations of government.

Je parle français
mieux que toi,
monsieur!

A phrase in French.
Translated: “*I speak French better
than you, mister!*”



Do you have an
aversion to
organized
religion?

Aversion [to] (*n.*); a tendency to be opposed to, to have a distaste for.

Note the **Freudian Slip** the first time the prosecuting attorney asks the question (“Do you have **a virgin** to organized religion?”). A Freudian Slip is when you mispronounce a word or make some other verbal error in a way that is thought to *belie* (inadvertently reveal) subconscious concerns.



Sigmund Freud

He has to pay
him **200 grand**

Grand (*n.*); a thousand dollars. 200 grand = US\$200,000.00.

Don’t sweat it,
bro.

“Don’t sweat it”: Don’t worry.
Bro: Short for “brother.”

Betty Boop

Famous early animation (cartoon) ingénue (innocent, coquettish (“girly”), “dumb” young woman). Created by the Fleischer Brothers. What does her presence in this movie say?



...full of **B.S.**

BS = “bullshit”; baloney, nonsense, foolishness, pretense.

Scumbag

slang for a person of very low or depraved morality.

Unanimous

Unanimous (*adj.*); having everyone in complete agreement. A unanimous vote is one in which all votes are cast in favor of one outcome, against all others.

...**Rehnquist**,
himself...

William H. Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Appointed to the Supreme Court by Richard Nixon (37th President of the United States), and nominated to the role of Chief Justice by President Ronald Reagan. He is considered to be a very “conservative” justice, so his writing of the unanimous opinion in the case involving Flynt is significant.

