

# Movie Vocabulary/Idioms

## *Tootsie*

(1982. Info at <http://us.imdb.com/Title?0084805>)

Yes, **love**.



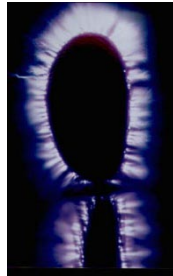
At the beginning of the movie, an English theatre director says this. It's an English term of friendly affection, used by *strangers* (people you don't know). Here, it is being used sarcastically. The director is saying "I'm not enjoying working with you right now, so you will remain a stranger to me."

There is no gender in this usage; in England, a guy might call a guy "love."

Don't **start in with** that...

"Don't give me that old argument; it won't work with me."

I felt like there was an **aura** between us when I saw it.



Aura, *n.*: energy field surrounding living things. At the party, Michael Dorsey says this to a woman to try and impress her that he's a "sensitive, new-age" kind of guy.

Kirlian photo of the aura around a finger

I really **dug** your play

"to dig": To deeply understand and enjoy. This is an old "beatnik" expression. Beatniks were American *bohemians* (poor and rejecting middle-class culture and values) from the post-war (World War II) 1950's era.



John and Ethyl Barrymore



Brother and sister actors of the American stage and screen. Born of theater parents Maurice and Georgie. Very famous; very high art.



Donnie and Marie Osmond

Brother and sister entertainers who had their own TV show in the U.S. during the 70's. Very popular; *not* high art.



Seconal™

Secobarbital sodium (barbiturate). A sedative; used for *insomnia* (can't sleep), and general over excitability.

...cheaper to **get mugged**...

To get mugged: To get robbed in the street, at knifepoint or gunpoint.

I just cry like this; like a **tic**.

A **tic** is an uncontrollable nervous *twitch* (muscle spasm), *typically* (usually) of the face. Sometimes a person will describe a small, annoying habit as a **tic**.

*The Iceman Cometh*

This is a classic American drama by Eugene O'Neill. It's a very serious drama.



When you want to **send a steak back**, Michael Dorsey is a name!

To "**send back** [some food to the kitchen]": To ask the waiter at a restaurant to take away food you ordered, because you looked at it or tasted it, and feel it is not good; not cooked or spiced or otherwise prepared correctly.

Love Canal

The "Love Canal" is a nickname for a canal built in 1896. It is a town in Niagara Falls, New York. [...]

In 1896, the canal was being built to service Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. It was never finished. Hooker Chemical company, located west of the canal, thought it would be an ideal place for dumping its waste. They filled the canal with 21,000 tons of acid, pesticides, and many carcinogenic and teratogenic chemicals. When it was full, they covered it with dirt and sold it to the Niagara Falls city school board for \$1.00.

Unbeknownst to anyone the chemicals were leaking from the site. Residents were evacuated, and now no one lives in the ironically titled "Love Canal".

Source: <http://www.nb.net/~voltz/>

Who gives a shit about that?

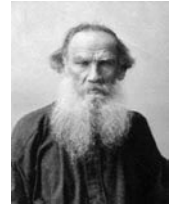
"Who cares? Nobody cares about that." This is a *vulgar* (common, "dirty") expression.

**I bust my ass...**

To work very, very hard. “Ass” in this context is crude slang for your body. “Ass” is a difficult word to use correctly; but this idiom (“bust my ass”) is fairly safe if you’re *very* angry and feeling *very* unappreciated for good, hard work you’ve done, and you want to demand respect.

**Tolstoy**

**Leo Tolstoy**, Russian novelist. Perhaps best known for his novel, *War and Peace*. He was known for mystical beliefs and *pacifism* (commitment to non-violence). He was a good friend of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov.



...get some therapy...



See a psychiatrist for counseling.

**macho shithead**

**Macho**: An overly-strong masculine ideal which often regards women as “weak” and not as important as men.  
**Shithead**: A very derogatory term.

**firing squad**

A line of soldiers put to the service of executing a prisoner.



**Cue her, Joe.**

To cue: To give an actor or actress a line that *precedes* (comes before) theirs, so as to get them started playing their role. Generally, to provide a sign or hint to someone that they may do something.

**cramps**

Menstrual cramps; *abdominal* (stomach) pains during menstruation.

...don't **play**  
**'hard to get.'**

Playing "hard to get" means to pretend to be indifferent towards (not care about) the romantic interest of another person. This expression can also be used playfully in situations which are not romantic.

Welcome  
aboard!

Traditional welcome on board a ship. Often used when someone joins a team or group of any kind.

...for the life of  
me...

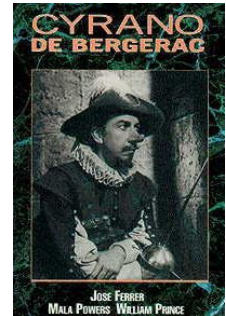
"...as hard as I try...", "...in spite of my best efforts..."

...bawled me  
out...

Bawling: Crying noisily, like a baby. To "**bawl** someone **out**" is to scold them for doing something that you don't like.

Cyrano de  
Bergerac

**Cyrano** is a classic French literary character. He was very sensitive and very talented, but cursed with an oversized nose. His nose got in the way of success in romance; women thought he was ugly.



bundle up

To "**bundle up**" is to dress warmly to go out on a cold day in hopes this will keep you from sickness.

a little overstated

When something is "overstated," it sends a signal that is too strong or forceful.

Tits

A woman's breasts. This is slang, and a bit rude.

The woman who  
bought this  
handbag I know  
**did time.**

When you "do time," this means you spend time in jail (*prison*).

nanny

A professional hired to take care of your kids.

...that **cow** they  
hired?

Cow: Very *derogatory* (negative, insulting) term for a woman. It implies she is fat, stupid, and *undisciplined* (having no life goals).

baloney



From “**bologna**” (pronounced the same way); a bland, salty, sliced cold meat for sandwiches. When you call something “baloney,” you’re saying you don’t believe it is true. This probably comes from the fact that most people aren’t really sure exactly what bologna is made of. 😊

Horseshit

When someone says something that you think isn’t true, you can call it **horseshit**. An alternate, and *more common*, word is “bullshit.” Bear in mind these are both vulgar.

electric cattle prod

Stick-shaped device that delivers an electrical shock. Used to *herd cattle* (keep cattle together, in a *herd* (group)).

I got **zip**

[I got] nothing, zero, zilch, zip, nada, nil.

**Eleanor Roosevelt**



(1884-1962) White House “First Lady” with Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States. Famous for championing politically progressive causes, such as unionization and working conditions, minority and women’s rights, normalization of relations with the U.S.S.R. and many, many more.

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eleleanor/>

AMA

The **American Medical Association**

...he asked for a **raise**

A **raise**: An increase in pay.

Upstate

This is a reference to “Upstate New York”. Anywhere in the state of New York that is not the greater New York City area; typically “in the country” where there are farms.

stand-in

This is a theatre term. A stand-in is an *understudy*; someone ready to take over a role from a regular performer who is sick or otherwise can’t make the performance.

**Threw back a few** too many

Had a few [too many] alcoholic drinks.

elk



A large, deerlike creature.

moo[ed]

This is a playful past tense of “**to moo**,” a verb meaning: To make a sound like a cow.



**let him down gently...**

When you have to tell people bad news, you want to do it gently, with some care and concern for their happiness. You **let** them **down gently**.

has-been

*n.*; Someone who used to be (“**has been**”) *great* (a significant person in sports, arts, sciences, etc.), but has since fallen from the public eye and is now unknown.

slut

Term of derision for a sexually “loose” woman. Usually insulting, but it can be used playfully among friends. It can even be used in a gender-free way! (e.g., A guy might teasingly call another guy a “**slut**” for having a lunch date with a woman who is not his regular girlfriend).



**...be straight with you**

Be brutally honest.

**wall-to-wall lawyers**

Refers to “**wall-to-wall**” carpeting; completely covering the floor. It’s a colorful way to refer to “a lot” of something.

stiff

*n.*; Slang for a *corpse*; the body of a dead person.

Movie Vocabulary/Idioms – *Tootsie*

leading you on      When someone drops hints that they're interested in you (romantically, or otherwise), when they're really not, they're **"leading you on."**

I'll be damned!      "I'm totally surprised." Damned: Destined to go to hell.