

# hollywood q&a

By Adam Thomlison  
TV Media

**Q: I need help finding a song (and a movie). The movie was from the '80s and was about a friendly robot of some kind. What was the song that played during the chase scene at the end?**

**A:** This is surely a proud moment in the history of "Short Circuit 2" (1988).

Most people remember the song "Holding Out for a Hero," by Welsh singer Bonnie Tyler, from the movie "Footloose" (1984), a much more successful film that's now considered a classic. "Short Circuit 2" is not as fondly remembered (a sequel to a movie with a pretty limited premise: What if robots were sassy?).

The song was written specifically for "Footloose," though the scene it was used in wasn't particularly pivotal — it was the somewhat random part near the middle of the movie where two characters play chicken with tractors.

By comparison, the scene that "Holding Out for a Hero" is used for in "Short Circuit 2" is the climactic final chase — arguably the most crucial scene in any movie. In this scene, the robot (named Johnny 5) chases down the bad guy and makes himself into a hero.

Maybe it's this difference in context that makes you remember it better in "Short Circuit 2." Or maybe you just prefer '80s cinematic fantasies about smart-mouthed robots to '80s cinematic fantasies about towns saved by dancing.

**Q: I have a couple of problems with how they use English subtitles on shows when a character speaks a foreign language. Why don't they stay on screen long enough for everyone to read them? And why do they leave them in the same spot on the screen even when the background is white (since the type is usually white)?**

**A:** I think the problem here is the "they." There are lots of different "theys," all with "their" own guidelines for how subtitles should look.



## A scene from "Short Circuit 2"

That said, there are some standards — subtitles generally aren't in wacky fonts or bright colors and, as you say, they're always at basically the same spot at the bottom of the screen.

Their time on screen is one of the least standardized elements. The British Broadcasting Corporation, for example, gets quite technical, recommending a screen time of "0.3 seconds per word (e.g. 1.2 seconds for a four-word subtitle)." Netflix recommends no more than two lines of text, and each line should be no more than 42 characters wide. The U.K.'s Channel 4 (for some reason the Brits are more transparent about this stuff than we are) says 38 characters wide, or 34 "if wide letters such as M and W occur frequently."

Also, in terms of their time on screen, subtitles are unfortunately constrained by the speech they're transcribing. If the actors are speaking quickly (think of a Quentin Tarantino movie, for example), the choice is either make the subtitles keep up or else drop some words (and that's not a great solution).

As you can see, things get pretty complicated. But interestingly, almost none of these sets of guidelines even mention placement. It's just assumed the text goes on the bottom of the screen.

The problem of white text on white background should, however, be solved by font choice. A number of these guidelines recommend fonts with outlines or shadows so that they show up on any background. But again, as your question points out, not everyone agrees.

**Q: I watch "The Curse of Oak Island" and would like to know if historian Doug Crowell and his family are from Cape Sable Island, N.S.**

**A:** Doug Crowell is definitely from Nova Scotia, but where exactly is hard to say.

He runs a research organization called Blockhouse Investigations, and the group describes itself as "a great bunch of Atlantic Canadians with adventurous spirits and a keen interest in the legends and mysteries of our region and beyond." But Atlantic Canada is a big place.

We can zero in a little closer. It's known that he works at Nova Scotia Community College on the northwestern coast of Nova Scotia — that is, the other side of the province from Cape Sable Island, which is on the southern tip.

Oak Island is, of course, a pretty great mystery in that region, located on the east coast of the province.

But don't let all this "other side of the province" stuff mislead you: Nothing's very far away in Nova Scotia. For example, Oak Island on the east coast is only about an hour and a half away from Nova Scotia Community College on the other coast. And it's only about two hours from Cape Sable Island on the south coast.

*Have a question? Email us at [questions@tvtabloid.com](mailto:questions@tvtabloid.com). Please include your name and town. Personal replies will not be provided.*

# Late laughs

## Conan

President Trump's legal adviser, Jenna Ellis, criticized the halftime show as "demeaning to women." She said the president believes there is a time and a place to demean women, and that's Twitter.

After President Trump gave his State of the Union address, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi tore it in half. Then Melania said, "Great! Now do my pre-nup."

## A Little Late With Lilly Singh

I'm realizing I need to get better at dating. Let's be real: I'm bored, I'm lonely, I need to put someone else on my will besides my dog, Sparkles.

You can tell I'm new to drinking because of what I order. I'm not one of those cool people who likes whiskey or scotch — I like really sweet drinks like cosmos, fruit-flavored vodkas, the stuff that makes the bartender assume I got in with a fake ID.

You know the first record of a woman wearing high-heeled shoes dates all the way back to the 16th century, and I'm sure her blisters will be healed any day now.

## The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon

Congrats to the Kansas City Chiefs on winning Super Bowl LIV. And an even bigger congrats to

everyone in Kansas City who actually showed up to work today.

Bernie Sanders hosted a Super Bowl party in Iowa yesterday. He even made his special three-layer dip of Robitussin, Metamucil and Werther's Originals.

If NBC can count the votes for "The Voice," then Iowa should be able to do it for a presidential election.

Nancy Pelosi extended her hand to President Trump, and he wouldn't shake it. I'm not saying it was bad, but even flights circling LaGuardia aren't left hanging that long.

## The Late Show With Stephen Colbert

Of course, Trump doesn't think of marriage when he thinks of Moscow. For Trump, Moscow means a binding oath of loyalty that you can not break until death.

This is like saying, "Yes he cheated at poker, but how dare you accuse him of cheating you at poker! He will now prove his innocence by cheating you at poker."

## Jimmy Kimmel Live

According to USA Today, the most popular Super Bowl ad was the Jeep ad where Bill Murray rode around with a groundhog. And the least-liked commercial — was Donald Trump's re-election campaign ad. It was rated last. Donald Trump is less popular than Scientology and a hummus.

All the liberal networks pre-empted their regular

programming for [the State of the Union]. Instead of a new episode of "This Is Us," most Americans spent tonight going, "This is us?"

The day after Robert Mueller testified was the day [Trump] threatened Ukraine and Biden. Tomorrow, he'll probably call China to see if he can give Bernie the coronavirus.

Before his victory speech, Trump spoke at the National Prayer Breakfast, which was a tough decision because on the one hand, he doesn't like to pray, but on the other hand, he loves breakfast.

## Late Night With Seth Meyers

Officials in China opened a new hospital today to deal with the outbreak of coronavirus that was built in just 10 days. And officials in New York said the escalator at the 125th Street subway station should be fixed by 2024.

President Trump delivered the State of the Union address today. And I think he's feeling cocky, 'cause he just said, "It's good," and walked off stage.

The makers of Peeps have announced they will be selling Hot Tamale-flavored marshmallows this Easter season. And when he heard that, Jesus announced he's not coming back.

President Trump delivered the State of the Union address last night and claimed that he has led a "great American comeback." Please. Everyone knows the great American comeback is, "That's what she said."

