

Thelma and Louise

(Adventure) (1991)

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Major Characters

Thelma.....Geena Davis

A working class housewife who lives in a small town in Arkansas, who is married to an abusive and insensitive husband (a "jerk").

Louise.....Susan Sarandon

Thelma's best friend, who is a waitress.

Darryl.....Christopher McDonald

Thelma's sexist husband, who is a sales manager for a rug company.

Jimmy.....Michael Madsen

Louise's boyfriend, who is a struggling musician.

J.D.....Brad Pitt

A suspicious "urban cowboy" who Thelma and Louise meet on the road.

Hal.....Harvey Keitel

An Arkansas policeman who seems to have great sympathy with Thelma and Louise after all the trouble they get themselves into.

Plot Summary

Thelma and Louise are best friends living in a small town in Arkansas, which is a small state in the Southern part of the United States (and the State where President Clinton is from). Both seem to be living somewhat depressing working class lives. Thelma is the unloved housewife of a sexist and obnoxious husband, and Louise is a struggling waitress whose boyfriend seems unready to finally commit to a long-term relationship with her.

One day, the two decide to leave town for a weekend vacation together, in order to get away from their unhappy lives. While on the road, they stop in another small town in order to get some drinks at a local saloon (a type of bar where people also can dance). Unfortunately, Thelma decides to dance with a disgusting man who later tries to rape her in the parking lot. Ultimately, Louise ends up shooting this man, and thus the two of them suddenly find themselves in a lot of trouble, unable to have the relaxing vacation they had intended to have.

The rest of the film follows Thelma and Louise as they head out on the road, far from their hometown, and hopefully, far from the police, who may be looking for them. They soon decide to drive to Mexico, but on the way, they continue to dig themselves deeper into trouble with the law, and eventually, both realize that they can never go back to the lives they had before.

More than anything else, this is a film about what it can mean to be a woman in the United States, and particularly, a working class woman with few options in life. It is also about women who suddenly realize that they may have more potential and freedom than they ever thought was possible, particularly freedom from the male dominated society that has so badly mistreated them over the years. To that extent, you should be aware that this movie does not portray men very positively!

Words and Expressions that You may not Know

*Thelma and Louise prepare to get away from it all,
and without telling anyone, head off on a nice relaxing vacation...*

Smoking will ruin your sex drive.

An important socio-biological term referring to the level of sexual desire that a person has.

I'll Get it.

Put here to remind that when the phone rings (or someone knocks at the door, or whatever), the only correct future verb tense to indicate that you'll respond immediately is the contracted form of the 'pronoun + will,' so stop saying "I will get it."

Were out of here tonight.

A very colloquial way to say "we're leaving."

It's just a date, for God's sake!

Added to the end of sentences to express anger or frustration.

Don't holler!

"To holler" is another word for yell or shout.

Hun.

Short for "honey," a favorite term of affection among couples.

I don't give a shit what we have for dinner.

A crude, colloquial and common way to say "I don't care."

It's good that you're not regional manager!

The person in charge of a particular area for a company, often consisting of several states.

God damn it, Homer.

A crude but common way to express anger and frustration.

For Christ's sake.

Another curious expression that signifies anger or frustration, or possibly surprise.

What kind of stuff should I bring?

A classic word that simply means "things," either physical or abstract.

What in the hell did you bring that for?

Added to "Wh questions" to add emphasis or emotion.

I brought a gun, in case there's some kind of psycho killer on the loose.

A "psycho killer" is a great term for a potentially dangerous person (A 'psycho' is crazy). If somebody is "on the loose," this implies that they has escaped from a prison and are running from the police.

A lantern.

A portable light in a translucent case, often used outside.

All he wants me to do is hang around the house.

"To hang around" is nice little phrasal verb meaning "to stay," often implying that the person is doing nothing in particular.

You all want a drink?

In the English of the Southern United States, a person speaking to two or more people will often address them as "you all," which is almost always pronounced "ya'all."

Thelma, good lord!

Another term expressing frustration or anger that is based on religious imagery (These expressions appear to be more commonly used in the Southern states than the rest of the United States).

I have had it up to my ass with "sedate."

A very colorful way to say "I am sick of...", in this case, of being "sedate," or too tranquil.

My hair is coming down.

When a women "lets her hair down," she is getting ready to relax and enjoy herself.

Thelma and Louise stop off for some drinks and good times in the local Saloon, but soon life takes a dramatic turn.

What are a couple of cupie-dolls like you doing in a place like this?

A type of doll for children that is considered a cute toy

(A completely idiotic thing to say to grown women).

A classic but stupid "pick-up line" that some men may say to a woman in a bar is "What's a girl like you doing in a place like this?"

Tell them to get lost once and for all!

Common way to say "leave," when you want a person to go away.

Jimmy will come home and freak out when you're not there.

"To freak out" is an interesting phrasal verb meaning to go crazy.

By Monday he'll be kissing the ground you walk on.

An interesting way of saying perhaps "treating you like a god."

I'm in the little girl's room, and then we're out of here.

A sarcastic way to say the woman's bathroom.

We're going to get you some fresh air, little lady.

A completely obnoxious and sexist way to address a woman.

Shut the fuck up/Get the fuck out of here, etc.

Very vulgar ways to say shut up, leave, etc.

Either move it or I'm going to splatter your face all over this car.

"To splatter" means to splash liquid drops all over. In this case, it is a powerful verb meaning that if she fires the gun at his head, pieces of his face and brains will be sprayed everywhere.

It looks like you have a fucked-up idea of what women like.

A vulgar but common and interesting phrasal verb that can function here as an adjective. It means approximately broken, bad, or of poor quality.

I should've gone ahead and fucked her.

Very vulgar, meaning in this case to have sex.

Suck my dick!

Another vulgar expression. "Dick" is a slang term for penis, so this can literally be a sexual demand, or another way of saying "fuck you."

Suddenly, Thelma and Louise find themselves on the run, not sure what they should do, who they should call, or who would ever believe them.

Shouldn't we go to the cops?

A very common way to refer to the police.

100 people saw you dancing with him cheek-to-cheek.

A way of slow dancing that is physically very close to the person you're dancing with. Your "cheeks" are the two sides of your face. The fact that people saw Thelma dancing this way is important, since people might (ridiculously) conclude that a woman in such a position was "asking for" sex, and thus couldn't be raped.

After some coffee, I'm going to get it together and figure out what to do.

"To get it together" is a good slang expression meaning to calm down and act rationally. "To figure out" something is a very common way to say try and understand, or in this case, try and decide.

This is some vacation. We're having some fun now.

When used as an adjective in this grammatical construction, "some" is a very sarcastic way of expressing disappointment (i.e...."This vacation is hardly as relaxing as we had hoped for").

Neither of those two are the type to pull something like this.

A very colloquial way to say "do" something (In this case, to shoot the man in the parking lot).

What makes you an expert?

Another way to ask somebody how they can be so sure of something.

Some old gal's husband.

"Gal" is the female equivalent of "guy," though it's very rarely used (Even with two or more women, it's more common to ask "How are you guys doing?" than "How are you gals doing?").

The one with the tidy hairdo.

"Tidy" is a bit dated for orderly and neat in appearance. "Hairdo" is a bit old fashioned for hair style.

What the hell is wrong with you?

Added to "Wh questions" for emotional emphasis.

I'm sorry, I don't know how to act when you blow somebody away.

In this context, "to blow away" someone is a violent phrasal verb meaning to kill them by shooting them with a gun.

I'm in deep shit. Deep Shit, Arkansas.

To be "in deep shit" is a crude but fun little expression meaning to be in deep trouble. In the sentence, Louise used the words sarcastically to suggest that Deep Shit is the name of a town.

***Louise contacts Jimmy in hopes that he will help them,
while Thelma and Louise prepare for a long journey to Mexico.***

Can you wire me the \$6,700 and I'll pay you back?

In this case, a verb meaning to send money electronically.

Wire it to the Western Union in Oklahoma City.

A company that is famous for sending money electronically.

Put out an APB and see what we get back.

Police slang for "All points bulletin," which is a term warning all police in the area that possible criminals are trying to escape.

Darryl has been calling as mad as a hornet and making all kinds of noise.

A somewhat silly expression meaning "very angry."
A hornet is a type of wasp that is known for its sting.

I'm going to Mexico, but I'm going to half to haul ass.

Somewhat crude and colloquial for "go in a hurry."

Are you up to this?

A way of asking if someone is emotionally and/or physically prepared to do something.

Don't start flaking out on me.

"To flake out" is a colloquial way to say act irresponsibly.

"Peaches."

The code word that Jimmy uses in sending his money to Louise.

I go to work and you take complete leave of your senses.

A complicated way to say "go crazy."

Were going to stay here and **hang out** and fish.

Another widely used way to say "do nothing in particular."

Get your **butt** back here.

"Butt" is another word for ass, behind or derriere.

This sentence is one way of saying "Come back, now!"

That Louise is nothing but a bad influence!

A creative way for someone to say they don't like somebody.

Darryl, **go fuck yourself!**

Note that "fuck you" has this grammatically interesting variation.

The "urban cowboy" arrives in their lives to complicate everything, as Thelma begins to learn more about Louise's past.

My ride **fell through**. Are you going my way?

If something "falls through," it fails to take place.

My friend would say no. She's a little **uptight**.

A great little adjective meaning tense, or very conservative in manners, opinions or taste.

Fill her up.

The standard line to tell a person at a gas station when you want them to fill your car with gas.

How long before we're in **god damn** Mexico?

A crude expression that can be used as an adjective to show emotion such as anger or frustration.

I didn't think it would hurt to give him a **ride**.

A critical word for the act of transporting. Thus you ask someone "Can I have a ride?" and not "Can you take me in your car?"

He doesn't have a cute butt. You can park a car in the shadow of his ass.

This second sentence is truly one of the great insults in modern America cinema. In this case, it is Thelma's way of saying that her husband has a butt (derriere) that is much too fat.

The only thing between Oklahoma and Mexico is Texas!

An accurate review of the Geography of the area.

If you shoot off a guys head with his pants down,
Texas is not the place you want to get caught.
Louise's not so subtle reference to the fact that she had
been raped in Texas years earlier, and then shot the rapist.

The police begin to focus on Thelma and Louise.

There's been a murder at the Silver Bullet.
The name of the bar where Thelma had almost been raped.

Some witnesses saw a 1966 convertible speeding out of the drive way.
A type of car without a roof.

We have reason to believe your wife was the other occupant of the car.
An alternative word for passenger.

Darryl prides himself on being infantile.
A great adjective for immature and childish.

They don't get along. :: That's putting it mildly.
A clever way to say "What you're saying is very true."

He sounds like a real asshole.
A strong, vulgar and common insult.

Most of the time I just let it slide.
A good expression meaning that you let a person do or say
something that they really shouldn't, without saying anything
in response ("To slide" is literally to move on a slippery surface).

Maybe you got a few too many parking tickets.
The tickets people receive for parking their cars
where they shouldn't (such as in "the red zone").

The prints on the trunk of the car match Thelma and Louise.
Refers to finger prints, which are gathered by police
from the surfaces of objects in order to identify suspects.

What kind of gun? A 38.
Guns are often referred to by numbers.

You two better say your good-byes.
Poetic way to tell two people to say good-bye to each other.

I'm here to pick up a money order.

A type of check or certificate that can be cashed for real money.

***Jimmy arrives to help Louise, and J.D.
returns to give Thelma lessons in life.***

What in the world are you doing here?

A great little expression added to "Wh questions" for emotional emphasis (But don't get confused and ask "What are you doing here in the world?")

Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies :: Double for me.

The first sentence is a clever expression for a person who would prefer not to talk about a particular situation. The second sentence is a rare but nice way to saying "Me, too."

I reckon that's what I'm doing.

A very colloquial way to say think or assume, but its used in this way almost exclusively in the Southern United States.

Thelma kind of took to him.

"To take to" somebody is a cute way to saying to like them.

Imagine not wanting to drag him into this.

"To drag someone into" a situation is to get them involved, usually when they probably would have preferred to not be.

He got his work cut out for him.

An interesting way to say "he has a lot of work ahead of him."

Thelma, put a lid on it!

Another way to say "shut up!"

I won't wait up.

Parents will often "wait up" for their teenage daughters on dates to make sure they get home safely.

You didn't see that one coming, did you?

"You didn't expect that, did you?"

Try not to get too excited.

A sarcastic way to telling someone that perhaps they should show a little more emotion.

I get the feeling that you're going to split permanently.

"To split" is a very colloquial way to say leave.

You think I'm happy playing my one night gigs at the Ramada Inn?

A slang term used by musicians and other performance artists to refer to the concerts and shows they perform for the public. (Ramada Inn is a well known chain of hotels).

You're not the only one with dreams that didn't work out.

If something doesn't "work out," it doesn't happen as you had hoped it would.

Just chalk it up to bad timing.

A colloquial way to say blame it on, or attribute it to.

I'm the great powerful oz. Who do you want to be?

A reference to the "Wizard of Oz," the famous movie in which there is a powerful wizard (a person with magical abilities).

A guy whose parole officer is having a shit-fit right about now.

"To have a fit" is to lose one's temper and get extremely upset. This is a somewhat interesting and crude variation.

I pick my place and wait for the right moment to make my move.

"To make one's move" is to decisively take action (In this case, to rob a store).

Then I'd waltz right in.

A colloquial way to say to move with speed, confidence and grace (A waltz is also a type of dance).

Simon says "everyone down on the floor and keep your cool."

"Simon says" is the name of a game in which children do what they're told only when the person first says the words "Simon says." "Keep your cool" is an interesting way to tell someone to stay calm.

If not, you'll have a tag on your toe.

Reference to the fact that dead bodies (corpses) are tagged for identification by a small piece of paper placed on the body's toe.

If done properly, robbery doesn't have to be a totally unpleasant experience.

An interesting philosophical statement by J.D.

You're sure gentlemanly about it.

A fairly rare adjective meaning polite, or like a gentleman.

Did you take some kind of pill that makes you say all the right stuff?

Here, "stuff" is used simply to mean words (as opposed to physical things). This question is basically asking how he was able to become so charming and seductive.

I'll catch up with you later.

Another way to say "contact."

Good thing he left when he did, since we thought we'd have to put out a fire!

People seeing others in heated kisses will occasionally make metaphorical references to romantic/sexual passion as a fire.

I understand what all the fuss is about.

A useful little word meaning an obvious display of excitement, or anger or other emotion, usually marked by lots of discussion.

It's a whole other ball game.

"It's a totally different situation." Note that the pronunciation is in fact a "whole nother," which at one point must have been a contraction of "whole" and "another."

You finally got laid properly.

"To get laid" is the quintessential colloquial way of saying to have sex. It's a bit crude, but much less so than anything with the verb "to fuck."

Suddenly, Thelma and Louise are fugitives on the run without any money, but they apparently have new skills and a very new attitude.

Are we just going to trade on our good looks?!

If someone is "good looking," they are physically attractive. This is Louise's way of asking how they are going to pay for things if they have no money to spend.

As you know, we've tapped your phone.

"To tap" a phone is to put electrical devices inside the phone lines so that conversations can be secretly listened to .

Hey, live it up!

A colloquial way to say "enjoy yourself and have fun."

Don't let on that you know anything.

"To let on" is a good phrasal verb meaning to let people know.

I'm about as close as I can be to a nut-case like that.

A funny expression for a person who is considered crazy.

Act like you love her. Women love that shit.

This second sentence is a pretty funny line showing the "sensitivity" of the typical male in this film. Regardless, note the use of "shit" as a noun to refer to a general concept.

You robbed a god damn store?! :: Its not like I killed anybody, for god's sake.

An interesting way to end a sentence when trying to express frustration, anger or other emotion.

If nobody loses their head, nobody loses their head.

A clever play on words: If you "lose your head," it could mean that you are starting to act crazy or impulsively, or in the context of a robbery, it could mean to be killed, probably by gunshot.

Sir, you can do the honors and collect the cash.

An official way to say someone can do something that is considered an honor to do (here, used sarcastically).

Two bottles of Wild Turkey.

A well known brand of hard liquor.

I thank you all for your cooperation.

A common way to express appreciation, though criminals are usually not so polite.

Jesus Christ. Good god. My lord.

Three expressions that when used alone, show intense emotions such as surprise, anger and frustration.

I'd just die if we were caught over a speeding ticket.

The ticket people get when they are caught driving too fast.

I want to put some distance between us and the scene of our last god damn crime.

"The scene of the crime" is a very official police term referring to where a given crime took place.

Call of the wild.

A famous book, and perhaps a reference to "wild" people, who usually behave outrageously.

You are **disturbed**.

A funny little adjective that can mean both upset and crazy.

Thelma, don't you **litter**.

"To litter" is to throw trash on the ground, as opposed to in a trash can (Don't do it!).

Oh lord, **how original**.

Note the use of "how" in this grammatical construction, used to express sarcasm (i.e...."this is not an original idea at all").

Fucking pig.

A very strong and crude insult.

Come on Thelma. **Murder one** and armed robbery.

A legalistic way to say "first degree murder," which is the most serious offense you can commit.

I'll say he raped me and you killed him in **self-defense**.

An official term that is a legal defense to a charge of murder.

Law is **tricky** shit, isn't it.

A good word for something that is deceptive or difficult.

There is no such thing as **justifiable** robbery.

In law, there may be such thing as "justifiable homicide" (for example if you kill someone to save the life of another person), but robbery would probably never be excused.

The police zero in on Thelma and Louise after learning of J.D.'s role in their growing troubles.

He identified you through a series of **mug shots**.

"Mug shots" are photos of people's faces that are taken after they are arrested as suspects in a crime.

He said you guys were close :: You might say that we had **a meeting of minds**.

An interesting term referring to the situation when two people see a problem in a similar way (Here, used sarcastically).

She might have been a little bit **jumpy**.

A good word to refer to someone who is nervous.

Jesus, this is just a crock of shit, Mr. John fucking Law.

An interesting but crude term for a "bunch of nonsense."

A "crock" is a clay container, but this word is rarely heard.

Do you think Thelma would've committed
armed robbery if you hadn't stolen her money?

Note that people "commit" crimes when in the context of the law.

Cat got your tongue?

A colloquial expression referring to when a person
is at a loss for words and does not know what to say.

Don't fuck with me.

A crude and common way to tell someone
to not lie to, manipulate or mistreat them.

I'm going to be on you like a fly on shit for the rest of
your life, and your miseries will be my mission in life.

A horribly crude and threatening thing to say:

"I will do everything I can to make you miserable."

You girls are in some hot water.

Someone who is "in hot water" is in a lot of trouble.

That J.D. is a little shit.

A crude but common insult.

You told that thieving little shit that were going to Mexico?!

An interesting use of an adjectival form from the noun "thief."

I only told him that if he ever goes to Mexico, he should look us up.

"To look somebody up" is to try and contact them, literally
by looking for the person's name in the phone book.

We had only two things going for us. We're fugitives now.

To have something "going for you" is a common way to refer to those
things that are helping you in life. A "fugitive" is a person running
from the law and police,

Just drop it. We're not talking about that.

A common way to tell someone you
don't want to talk about something.

Thelma and Louise learn to deal with the police, truck drivers and anybody else who may get in their way.

Thelma, were getting pulled over!

The police "pull over" a car when they want to stop it in order to talk to the driver.

We'll play it by ear. Maybe he doesn't know.

"To play it by ear" is to wait and see how things develop before deciding what to do. A common and useful expression.

Hello officer. Is there a problem?

The neutral and respectful way to greet a cop who has just pulled you over.

If you get on that radio, you'll find out that were wanted in two states and considered armed and dangerous.

Fugitives from the law are considered "wanted," as seen in the famous posters found in Post offices.

Three days ago, neither of us would've pulled a stunt like this.

"To pull a stunt" is to do something considered dangerous or outrageous. A "stunt" is a physical act of unusual skill or courage.

Airholes. Open the trunk.

Holes that are made in order to allow people or other living things to breath inside a container.

My husband wasn't sweet to me. Look how I turned out!

"To turn out" in a particular way is a good phrasal verb meaning to develop, or perhaps end up.

Extra ammo.

A slang word for 'ammunition' (such as bullets).

You ready? :: Hit it!

Here, meaning "step on the gas and drive."

I feel like I got a knack for this shit.

"To have a knack for" something is to be skilled or good at it.

I think I got fucked up.

A general way to say in trouble, or to have turned out badly. In other contexts, it is also used if a person is drunk or stoned on drugs.

They would have made out like I asked for it.
Here, this phrasal verb is used to mean "said," but it is rarely used in this way.

I'm not saying that son of a bitch is dead.
A common and crude insult.

We've got some kind of a snowball effect.
An interesting expression referring to the fact that once things start to get a little out of control, they can "snowball" completely out of control (like an avalanche).

Were not in the middle of nowhere.
A widely used expression referring to those places far from any major cities or places of interest.

You're getting in deeper.
"You're getting deeper into trouble."

Incarceration. Cavity searches. Death by electrocution.
Words associated with life in prison. "Incarceration" means imprisonment. "Cavity searches" refers to searches where prisoners must strip naked so that guards can search every orifice (opening) of their bodies for such things as drugs. "Death by electrocution" refers to the electric chair, which is used in some American states to kill people.

Come on Louise, don't blow it!
"To blow it" is a very common and colloquial expression meaning to do something very badly.

I don't want anybody losing their heads.
"I want everybody to stay calm."

You're not going to make a deal with that guy, are you?
"To make a deal" is to come to an agreement (Here, referring to a deal where Louise would surrender for a shorter jail sentence).

Something has crossed over me, and I can't go back.
Thelma's poetic way of saying that her recent experiences have so deeply changed her that she can no longer live the way she had before.

You don't want to end up on the damn Geraldo show.
A reference to the Geraldo Rivera talk show, which was famous for having sensationalistic topics and guests.

We've got to figure out if we want to come in dead or alive.
Another way to ask "Should we surrender or keep going until we either escape or die trying to escape?"

We'll have margaritas by the sea.
A well known drink served with crushed ice, fruit juice and liquor.

What kind of deal is that cop going to have to come up with in order to beat that?
"To come up with" something is to create, or think of it.
In this case, "to beat" something is to be better than it.

Are you ready for a big dick?
A crude term for a penis, though also used to describe a jerk or idiot.

Fresno.
A city in Central California.

Why don't you take off those shades?
A slang term for glasses.

Where do you get off behaving like that with women you don't even know?
"To get off on something" is to enjoy it, but when used in a question like this, the entire sentence means "You have a lot of nerve behaving like that..."

A big fat slob.
A good insult meaning a pig or very messy person.

I bet you even called us beavers on your CB radio.
"Beavers" is a very crude term for women (referring to female genitals, though it is also a type of animal). A CB radio is the type of two way radio that truck drivers used to use to communicate with each other.

You're bitches from hell!
A "bitch" is a strong insult that means an unpleasant or mean woman.

***Thelma and Louise reach the end of the road,
as Hal does all he can to prevent one last tragedy.***

Both suspects are considered extremely dangerous.
"Suspects" are people who are believed to have committed a crime, but have not yet been convicted of doing so in a court of law.

Armed robbery. Kidnapping of a police officer.

Assault with a dangerous weapon.

The various crimes that Thelma and Louise may be charged with. "To assault" someone is to physically attack them.

I'm in hot pursuit of a green thunderbird.

To be "in hot pursuit of " someone is police slang for being in the process of chasing them.

Hold on!

What you say to a person when you want them to hold something solid so they will fall or blow away.

These women are armed! This is standard!

Short for "standard procedure." Meaning this is the way things are always done in this situation.

I repeat, place your hands in plain view!

If something is "in plain view," it can easily be seen.

How many times are they going to be fucked over?

A powerful expression meaning unfairly treated.

I'm not going to give up!

"To give up" is a very important phrasal verb meaning to surrender.

Thelma and Louise

Possible Questions for ESL Class Discussion

- 1) If Louise had been arrested immediately after the shooting outside the club, should she have gone to jail what she did? Why or why not? If yes, for how long?

- 2) In real life, are men as disagreeable as they are portrayed in this movie? In the United States? In your country?

- 3) What does this movie say about gender relations in the United States?

- 4) Outside of self-defense, is murder ever justified?

- 5) Are Thelma and Louise heroes?