

DVD COLLECTION - SOLUTION

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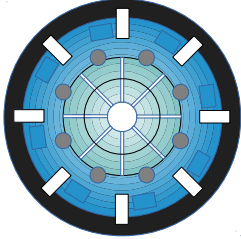
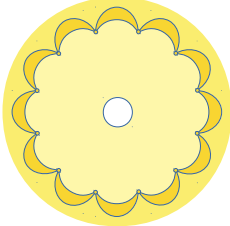
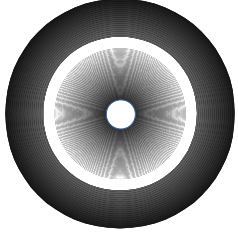
ANSWER: SCARFACE

Each pair of plot summary and DVD image clues a specific movie and its remake. Each plot summary is exactly five sentences long, and each sentence includes something unique to either the original or the remake. This suggests extracting one letter from each movie using binary, with original = 0, remake = 1, and 00001 = A, 11010 = Z. The movies are presented in order of the release date of the original, so reorder by the release date of the remake. Doing so yields the phrase AKACAPONE, or "also known as (A) Capone." Searching "aka capone" reveals that Al Capone was nicknamed **SCARFACE**, which is--thematically--the name of a movie that has a remake and the answer.

MOVIE	ORIGINAL	REMAKE	SORT	REMAKE	BINARY	LETTER
Miracle on 34th Street	1947	1994	→	1994	00001	A
Ocean's 11	1960	2001	↘	1996	01011	K
One Hundred and One Dalmatians	1961	1996	↗	2001	00001	A
Poltergeist	1982	2015	↘	2002	00011	C
Ghostbusters	1984	2016	↗	2012	00001	A
RoboCop	1987	2014	→	2014	10000	P
Total Recall	1990	2012	↘	2015	01111	O
Beauty and the Beast	1991	2017	↗	2016	01110	N
The Ring	1998	2002	↘	2017	00101	E

DVD ART

MOVIE	DVD ART	EXPLANATION
Miracle on 34th Street		Christmas wreath because Christmas movie.
Ocean's 11		Poker chip because robbing Las Vegas casinos. Waves because "Ocean."
One Hundred and One Dalmatians		Black and white because Dalmatians. The abacus reads 101 because "101 Dalmatians".
Poltergeist		TV because several paranormal events involve the TV. Also on the movie poster.
Ghostbusters		Simplified version of the Ghostbusters logo.

MOVIE	DVD ART	EXPLANATION
RoboCop		Police uniform because RoboCop.
Total Recall		Recall machine used to implant memories. This is the machine from the remake, which looks a little different from the original one.
Beauty and the Beast		Belle's ball gown that she wears during her dance with the Beast.
The Ring		The Ring from the videotape.

PLOT SUMMARIES

The Wikipedia plot summaries for each movie should be sufficient to distinguish original vs remake, and certain words or phrases can often be ctrl-f'ed to speed up extraction. Detailed explanations of the summaries and DVD images are below, in puzzle order.

Key phrases that distinguish the original vs remake are sometimes **marked**.

MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET (00001 = A)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Original	The jolly man, who can even speak Dutch , is working a holiday position at a department store.	Original: Kris speaks Dutch with a child.
		Remake: No equivalent.
Original	He breaks policy and directs a shopper to the rival store which sells the item they want, which spreads goodwill about his store.	Original: Entire sentence.
		Remake: No equivalent.
Original	He passes a psychological evaluation but is confined after hitting the examiner .	Original: Hits the psych eval examiner.
		Remake: Hits the previous store santa.
Original	The post office "confirms" the jolly man's identity by delivering thousands of letters from kids to the courthouse.	Original: Entire sentence. Kris's defense attorney argues that a government office has recognized Kris as Santa Claus, so he isn't crazy and can be released.
		Remake: See below.
Remake	The little girl convinces the judge to acquit the jolly man by slipping him a dollar bill.	Original: See above.
		Remake: Entire sentence. The dollar bill has "In God We Trust" circled, which gives the judge the idea that he can declare that Kris is Santa without proof in the same way the government can declare trust in God without proof that God exists.

OCEAN'S 11 (00001 = A)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Original	A crew of WWII veterans plots to rob several desert resorts.	Original: WWII veterans.
		Remake: Varied.
Original	They cause a blackout as a diversion to steal the money and dump it in the garbage .	Original: The blackout is the main diversion. They dump the money in the garbage and later collect it.
		Remake: There is a blackout, but it's much less important. They steal the money in a more convoluted manner.
Original	Unfortunately, the crew's electrician dies of a heart attack during the operation.	Original: Entire sentence.
		Remake: No equivalent.
Original	An ex-mobster tracks them down and extorts them for half the winnings.	Original: Entire sentence.
		Remake: No equivalent.
Remake	The crew makes off with the money in the end.	Original: Money is accidentally cremated.
		Remake: Entire sentence.

ONE HUNDRED AND ONE DALMATIANS (01011 = K)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Original	A songwriter lives with his dog before meeting his wife and her own dog.	Original: Songwriter.
		Remake: Video game developer.
Remake	The pets have puppies, and the wife's boss offers to buy them but is rebuffed.	Original: Schoolmate.
		Remake: Boss.
Original	The ex-schoolmate steals the puppies, and their parents team up with a dog, horse, and cat to rescue them.	Original: Dog, horse, and cat.
		Remake: Dog.
Remake	The puppies escape as the boss falls into a vat of molasses and is arrested .	Original: No equivalent.
		Remake: Falls in molasses / is arrested.
Remake	Reunited, their owners adopt all the puppies, and the husband releases a hit video game .	Original: Song.
		Remake: Video game.

POLTERGEIST (01111 = 0)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Original	The family lives in a quiet community where the father works in real estate .	Original: Works in real estate.
		Remake: Unemployed.
Remake	The son finds a box of clown dolls, the daughter is sucked into the wall, and the parents learn from friends over dinner that their house was built over a cemetery.	Original: Boss tells them / the entire community is built over the cemetery.
		Remake: Friends tell them over dinner / only their house is built over the cemetery.
Remake	The family brings in paranormal investigators, one of whom in turn calls in her psychic ex-boyfriend .	Original: Unrelated medium.
		Remake: Ex-boyfriend.
Remake	The son , feeling guilty, enters the wall after the daughter and they both successfully escape.	Original: Mother rescues daughter from wall dimension.
		Remake: Son rescues daughter from wall dimension.
Remake	Later, as the family searches for a new house , they coincidentally visit an eerily similar house.	Original: Ends with them at a hotel.
		Remake: Ends with them searching for a new house.

GHOSTBUSTERS (01110 = N)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Original	The male scientists discover that spirits are real.	Original: Male.
		Remake: Female.
Remake	They rent an office above a Chinese restaurant and start an extermination business.	Original: Disused firehouse.
		Remake: Above Chinese restaurant.
Remake	They learn that a lone occultist is causing the increase in spirit activity by planting devices along ley lines.	Original: Evil god trying to manifest.
		Remake: Human occultist.
Remake	The occultist kills himself and takes the form of the spirit from their business's logo , terrorizing the city.	Original: God / Stay Puft marshmallow man.
		Remake: Occultist / logo ghost.
Original	They defeat the evil god and save the day by crossing the streams .	Original: God / crossing streams.
		Remake: Occultist / exploding nuclear reactor.

ROBOCOP (10000 = P)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Remake	A law banning militarized drones within the United States inconveniences a corporation.	Original: Robot prototype fails, so they fall back to a cyborg.
		Remake: Entire sentence. Law makes robot police illegal, so they fall back to a cyborg.
Original	In response, it transforms a police officer who was shot to death into a cyborg.	Original: Shot to death.
		Remake: Car bomb explosion.
Original	The cyborg is initially unaware of his origins but learns from his ex-partner.	Original: Doesn't know who he was.
		Remake: Knows from the start.
Original	During a police strike to protest underfunding, the cyborg kills his killer using his data spike .	Original: Police strike / killed with data spike.
		Remake: No strike / shot.
Original	The corporate boss fires a corrupt executive, freeing the cyborg from his hidden prime directive .	Original: Freed from prime directive.
		Remake: Magically overcomes his programming through sheer will.

TOTAL RECALL (00001 = A)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Original	The human colony on Mars is rebelling.	Original: Mars colony.
		Remake: Post-apocalyptic Earth.
Original	On Earth, the hero pays a company to alter his memories, but they wipe his memory and kick him out, after which he's attacked and kills his friend .	Original: They wipe his memory / he's attacked after leaving / he kills his friend at this point.
		Remake: No memory wipe / he's attacked before leaving / he kills his friend at a later point.
Original	He flees to Mars where he kills a company employee who claims the hero is trapped inside his own memories and must take a pill to escape.	Original: Employee / on Mars / take a pill to wake up.
		Remake: His friend (killed here instead of earlier) / on Earth / shoot a particular person to wake up.
Original	The hero activates the Martian reactor and creates a breathable atmosphere.	Original: Entire sentence. Ending.
		Remake: See below.
Remake	He finally destroys the elevator through the Earth and stops a massacre.	Original: See above.
		Remake: Entire sentence. Ending.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (00101 = E)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Original	The heroine sings about her boring life in France, then visits her father who has invented an automatic wood-chopper .	Original: Automatic wood-chopper.
		Remake: Some other unexplained invention.
Original	When her father is captured by a monstrous prince, she takes his place but is allowed to leave when a magic mirror shows him collapsing in the woods .	Original: Collapsing in the woods.
		Remake: About to be committed to an asylum.
Remake	Her father is left to die in the woods by the ex-soldier, but he is rescued by the local hermit.	Original: Maurice goes into the woods on his own / Gaston isn't an ex-soldier / Maurice is rescued by Belle (after she sees him in the mirror) / hermit isn't a character.
		Remake: Entire sentence.
Original	As the villagers storm the prince's castle, the heroine escapes house arrest with the help of a ceramic stowaway .	Original: Chip (the teacup) breaks them out.
		Remake: Maurice picks the lock with Belle's hairpin.
Remake	In the final showdown, the ex-soldier fatally shoots the prince.	Original: Gaston stabs the Beast.
		Remake: Gaston shoots the Beast.

THE RING (00011 = C)

FROM	SENTENCE	ORIGINAL/REMAKE DIFFERENCE
Original	In Japan , some friends discuss a videotape.	Original: Japan.
		Remake: Seattle.
Original	One's aunt locates the tape, watches it, and receives a phone call consisting solely of screeching .	Original: Screeching.
		Remake: Whispers "seven days."
Original	She shows the tape to her ex-husband , and together they investigate.	Original: Ex-husband.
		Remake: Ex-boyfriend.
Remake	They learn the tape was made by a horse breeder's adopted daughter , who was murdered.	Original: Psychic / bio-daughter.
		Remake: Horse breeder / adopted daughter.
Remake	After her ex-boyfriend dies, she destroys the tape before realizing that the only way to lift the curse is to copy and share it.	Original: Ex-boyfriend / destroys (a copy of) the tape.
		Remake: Ex-husband / doesn't.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

DVD Collection went through a few different iterations. It started with the basic idea that I wanted to do a text-based puzzle involving differences between movies and their remakes. Extracting a phrase using binary was always the first step. My first idea was to have the phrase be something like YEARSBETWEEN, and then the final extraction be taking the letters corresponding to the differences between the release years of the original and remake, possibly mod 26. This turned out not to work because movies are usually remade something like twenty years after the original, so finding good letters was hard. I ended up scraping the entire Wikipedia articles on film remakes ([\(A-M\)](#)) and ([\(N-Z\)](#)) and sorting by years between, but I concluded that the movies I would need to use were too obscure and would not be fun to read about.

The next major iteration was to have the binary phrase be something like OGDIRECTORS, REDIRECTORS, and the final extraction be the first letters of the last names of the film directors of the originals and the remakes. Here I ran into a different problem: there's a small set of directors who do remakes and a small set of directors whose films are remade, so the letters are bad again. Adding horror films helped, because that's a different pool of directors from mainstream film, but not enough. The Wikipedia lists were again not enough to find good films.

Next I pivoted slightly to the top-billed/leading actor/actress, with the binary phrase TOPBILLING. This was workable enough to create a full prototype, with mostly recognizable films. During playtesting, we discovered that people 1) strongly preferred to have popular films, 2) didn't think that the final extraction added much to the puzzle, and 3) found solving the binary somewhat tedious.

Giving this feedback, I stripped out the final extraction, created a list of the most popular films with lots of original/remake differences across genres, and found a shorter binary phrase (AKACAPONE). I also limited the lengths of the summaries, and tried to make every difference as clear as possible so that people would not get stuck on incorrect letters. This was especially important because the shorter clue phrase had less room for error.

This design had much better feedback from testsolving. The puzzle was still a bit tedious, but it was shorter and ID-ing the popular movies was more fun.

The final touches were the sort by remake year and the DVD images, which helped with identifying the movies and made the puzzle more visually interesting. All-in-all, I think that DVD Collection worked out pretty well given the initial constraints.

DVD Collection and Storytime were developed independently at around the same time. The similarity is a bit unfortunate, but they were different enough that we felt okay having both.