

# SURELY, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS

*We are serious: Airplane! is the funniest movie ever made.  
But don't take our word for it—it's science.*

## DON'T CALL ME SHIRLEY

In 2012 the movie-subscription site LOVEFiLM asked its members to name their favorite comedy. After tallying up the entries, the staff screened the top ten, marking every time a line or a sight gag generated a laugh. Then, dividing that total by the film's length, they were able to calculate a "laughs per minute" rating. Topping the list, at an impressive 3 lpm: the 1980 disaster-movie spoof *Airplane!*, written and directed by Jim Abrahams, David Zucker, and Jerry Zucker; and starring Robert Hays, Julie Hagerty, and Leslie Neilson.

The plot: Former fighter pilot-turned-cabbie Ted Striker (Hays) boards a jetliner in L.A. bound for Chicago to win back his lost love, a pretty stewardess named Elaine (Hagerty). But when the pilots and most of the passengers get food poisoning, Striker must overcome his self-doubt to save the day and get the girl. Hilarity ensues...

**Old lady passenger:** "Nervous?"

**Striker:** "Yes."

**Old lady:** "First time?"

**Striker:** "No, I've been nervous lots of times."

**Roger Murdoc:** "We have clearance, Clarence."

**Captain Oveur:** "Roger, Roger. What's our vector, Victor?"

**McCroskey:** "Looks like I picked the wrong week to quit drinking."

**Dr. Rumack:** "Elaine, you're a member of this crew. Can you face some unpleasant facts?"

**Elaine:** "No."

**Elaine, on the loudspeaker:**

"There's no reason to become alarmed, and we hope you'll enjoy the rest of your flight. By the way, is there anyone on board who knows how to fly a plane?"

**McCroskey:** "Looks like I picked the wrong week to quit smoking."

Millie the White House dog earned more than 4 times as much as President Bush in 1991.

**Randy:** "There's been a little problem in the cockpit."

**Striker:** "The cockpit—what is it?"

**Randy:** "It's the little room in the front of the plane where the pilots sit, but that's not important right now."

**McCroskey:** "I picked the wrong week to quit amphetamines."

**Reporter:** "What kind of plane is it?"

**Johnny:** "Oh, it's a big, pretty white plane with red stripes, curtains in the windows, and wheels, and it looks like a big Tylenol!"

**Striker:** "I flew single engine fighters in the Air Force, but this plane has four engines. It's an entirely different kind of flying altogether."

**Dr. Rumack and Randy:** "It's an entirely different kind of flying."

**Striker (in a flashback):** "My orders just came through. My squadron ships out tomorrow. We're bombing the storage depots at Daiquiri at 1800 hours. We're coming in from the north, below their radar."

**Elaine:** "When will you be back?"

**Striker:** "I can't tell you that. It's classified."

**McCroskey:** "I picked the wrong week to quit sniffing glue."

**Newscaster:** "They bought their tickets, they knew what they were getting into. I say—let 'em crash."

**Dr. Rumack:** "I won't deceive you, Mr. Striker. We're running out of time."

**Striker:** "Surely there must be something you can do."

**Dr. Rumack:** "I'm doing everything I can. And stop calling me Shirley."

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### THE LIST

Here's the entire list from LOVEFiLM's top-10 funniest movies, as determined by the number of laughs per minute: **1.** *Airplane!*, 3 lpm; **2.** *The Hangover*, 2.4 lpm; **3.** *The Naked Gun: From the Files of Police Squad!*, 2.3 lpm; **4.** *Superbad*, 1.9 lpm; **5.** *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*, 1.7 lpm; **6.** *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*, 1.6 lpm; **7.** *American Pie*, 1.5 lpm; **8.** *Bridesmaids*, 1.4 lpm; **9.** *Shaun of the Dead*, 1.3 lpm; **10.** *Monty Python's Life of Brian*, 1.2 lpm.

In 1981 an L.A. man was arrested for hiding under tables and painting women's toenails.