

Speed Dial

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Answer: **DEEP THROAT**

Every button on the telephone has an image that clues a nine-letter phrase, which when typed on a T9 keyboard uses every lettered button once, except one used twice.

Starting with easily confirmable ones like “STRANGELY” and “BLIND FURY” should help identify the pattern for some of the more esoteric ones. Once you have the images settled, arrange the resulting strings in button order. (Don’t forget to start at zero!)

Button	Description	String	Repeated Key	R-Key Number	Index into String	Unused from Key
0	Woman in front of troops	JANESWIFT	DEF	3	N	D
1	Rutger Hauer movie cover	BLINDFURY	DEF	3	I	E
2	Woman in front of grey	VICKYFORD	DEF	3	C	E
3	Semisonic album cover	STRANGELY	PRS	7	E	P
4	Letters on some shrubbery	VOWELBUSH	TUV	8	S	T
5	Azure feathered appendages	BLUEWINGS	GHI	4	E	H
6	Mouth saying computer code	SPEAKUNIX	PRS	7	N	R
7	Spooky man on percussion	LYNCHDRUM	MNO	6	D	O
8	Glass of port, some golf irons	WINECLUBS	ABC	2	I	A
9	Pokémon with ampersand	VULPIXAND	TUV	8	N	T

You get the first half of the message and a solid pointer you’re on the right track (“NICE SEND IN...”) if you index the repeated key into the original string. (For example, STRANGELY repeats the “7” key, and the 7th letter is E.)

For the second half, instead you look at the letter from the doubled key that wasn’t used. (For STRANGELY, both R and S from the “7” key are used, but not P.) Do this for all the clues to arrive at the correct final answer, **DEEP THROAT**.

Author’s Notes

Adam: Believe it or not, the options available for this answer were tricky enough for the T’s that adding the bonus message wasn’t much more complicated. Some (...okay, many) test solvers never even saw the bonus message, but not being required was supposed to be the nice thing about it. If only that had stayed true during the actual hunt, this might have caused a lot less headaches for the people who found it first and struggled finding the real message after.

Lesson learned! My bad.