

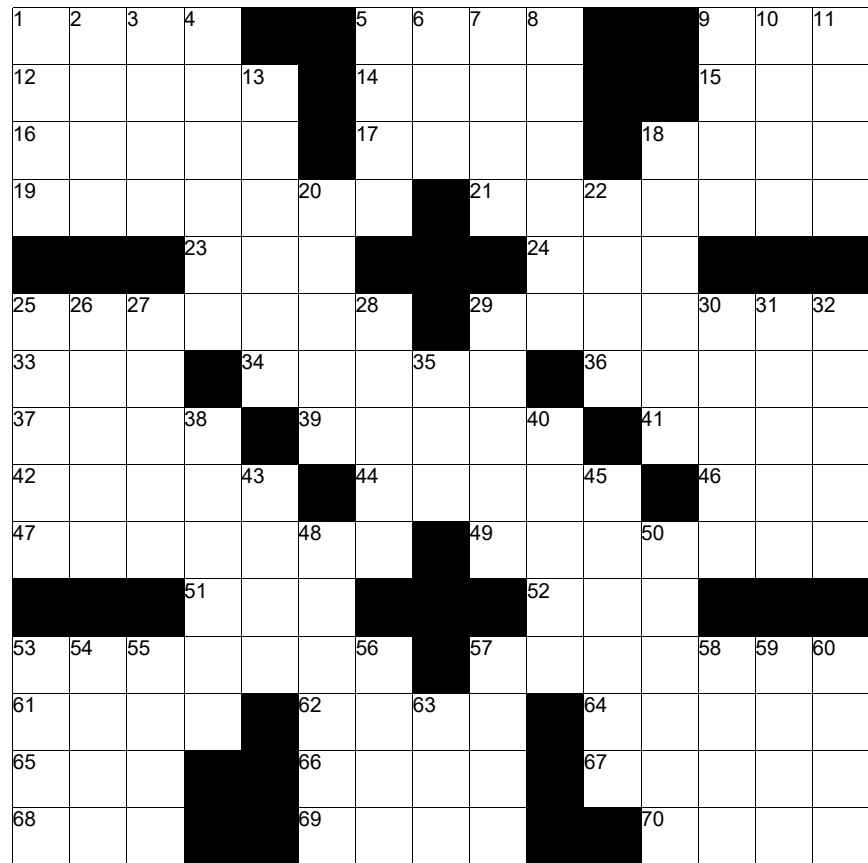
"Cut Out the Middle, Man" a metapuzzle by Peter Washington

ACROSS

1. Reagle of "Wordplay" fame
5. Prefix with pad or ski
9. U.S. agency concerned with the law
12. More standoffish
14. "Taxi Driver" character who practiced the "world's oldest profession"
15. "And She ____"
16. Picked one
17. Pine needle, for example
18. Adriana on the runway
19. Popular club
21. Turn tail
23. Jeff Lynne's band
24. Rawls who recorded "When We Get Old" and "Someday You'll Be Old"
25. Without exception
29. Toddler's utterance while waving messy hands
33. Sufijo diminutivo
34. SSN or EIN
36. Balloon man of song
37. 49ers hall-of-famer Ronnie
39. Diacritic mark on many Slavic letters (for example, the C in this entry)
41. "Hiya, how ya ____?"
42. Utterances of indifference
44. French demagogue Marine
46. Suffix used in Sussex
47. Realm in "The LEGO Movie"
49. "You get ____ ..."
51. Tub-enterer's line
52. Fed'l agency responsible for protecting government employee whistleblowers (not to be confused with Mueller's former shop!)
53. Nickname for the NBA's Kawhi Leonard
57. Take possession (of)
61. Triangle in a certain parlor
62. Stead
64. Introvert
65. Receiver's first step?
66. Target for Axe or Ban
67. Certain type of benefit plan
68. Dish featuring star anise
69. It gives you your options
70. Hotpot, for example

DOWN

1. Wolverines, on some scoreboards



The answer to the metapuzzle is a phrase consisting of two eight-letter words.

2. Result of bouncing off the walls?
3. Major disturbance
4. Mitigate
5. Sword handle
6. Central word in a palindrome about Napoleon
7. Titular player of a popular dice game
8. Can't take any more
9. Abbr. following an explanation that's no excuse
10. 2017 college football champs, familiarly
11. "Egads!"
13. Graph again
18. Put on a pedestal
20. Canadian novelist McFee whose name sounds like a Chaplin of crosswordese fame
22. Longtime Steelers coach Chuck
25. Finder of the One Ring
26. Bikini, for one
27. Assigned stars to
28. Put on a pedestal
29. Nimble
30. Like a rugby ball
31. Confusing data
32. Combining form from the Greek for "nine"
35. Agency frequently partnering with the DEA
38. Pummel
40. Character actor Jack who played the Erie Kid in "The Sting"
43. "Crazy" singer
45. Maker of South Africa's Bar One and Australia's Chokito
48. Hebrew greeting
50. Bodily fluids of greek myth
53. "Chapo ____ House"
54. Marijuana derivative
55. Clothing brand with a rhinoceros logo
56. Word with angle or load
57. One dispensing wisdom like "we are all one"
58. "I'm already working to complete that task, boss"
59. ____-majeste
60. Common chess result
63. An unreasonably long time