

the eastern



# SCRIPT

Shameless self-promotion since 2011

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## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Here is another newsletter filled with shameless self-promotion that you can immediately delete from your "incoming" (you're still reading, aren't you) or you can read it with your left eye while keeping your right eye on your new iPhone.

Well, we made it through another action-packed summer season here although it was often hard to tell if the sun was setting or rising. Just before what we call "summer madness" began (and about the same time one of our staffers left for other pastures), it came to our attention that the indexing software we had been using was not 100% foolproof. After taking notes and before starting script research, we use this software to make sure that the story elements have not already been checked and established (no one here wants to waste that kind of time).

Desktop indexing software's reliability is critical for us. The struggle to troubleshoot that situation while plowing through summer fields of half-hour, 1-hour, and feature-length scripts made us, well, crazier than you

might be used to. Some of you like "crazy," I know, but we're happier when we are crazy with time to drink coffee and debrief on last night's homefront hijinx.

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## DESKTOP INDEXING SOFTWARE

Speaking of desktop indexing software, here's my "free gift" for this newsletter. The Canadian software company Copernic Technologies makes both a meta-search engine product (Copernic Agent) and a desktop search product (Copernic Desktop Search) that have worked very well for us over the years. Copernic Desktop Search even allows you to index onto your local computer files from across a network. Our server lives in an office in southeastern Ontario but our researchers are spread across Ontario and Massachusetts. With that software, they are able to access file content and even preview file segments (without having to open the whole doc). Well recommended from all of us, visit them for free download at [copernic.ca](http://copernic.ca).



## RECENT PROJECTS

### big screen:

Breakaway - Rob Lowe and Russell Peters lead the cast of this Bollywood-flavoured NHL aspirant story. Hard to imagine a more unlikely combination, but the film which MacLean's magazine describes

as "a genre that I don't think there's any previous examples of" has had box office legs so far this fall.

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The Expatriate - Aaron Eckhart stars in this thriller that mixes CIA agents, a father and daughter on the run, and a "wide-reaching international conspiracy." Shot this year in Belgium and Canada.

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Guys Who Move Furniture - From BaseLine: "Four guys working for a moving company suffer from various degrees of damaged pasts... But when... their working relationships start to fall apart, we discover who will have the gumption to face their future." Written and directed by Mike Clattenburg, famed for his Trailer Park Boys projects.

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Take This Waltz - Seth Rogen, Michelle Williams, and Sarah Silverman star in Sarah Polley's most recent directorial excursion. From the film's website: (The story) "leads us, laughing, through the familiar, but uncharted question of what long-term relationships do to love, sex, and our images of ourselves."

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The Words - Featuring Dennis Quaid, Bradley Cooper, Jeremy Irons, Olivia Wilde... from IMDb: "When an aspiring writer claims another man's long lost work as his own, the price he must pay is more than he could have ever imagined."

## small screen:

Good Dog - Recent project from Ken Finkleman featuring his long-time fictional alter ego George, a "narcissistic producer" who is dropped into weekly scripted explorations of "issues that both intrigue him and tick him off."  
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King - A 1-hour police drama but this time the cop is a woman (played by Amy Price-Francis). This weekly who-dunnit is set and shot in Toronto. Called by critic Bill Brioux "a drama with a bit of a dark comedy tone."  
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Life With Boys - A spirited "tween" show about young Tess who lives in an all-boy household (3 brothers and a dad) and is trying to find her way. The show examines issues of alternative families and gender stereotyping with a big dose of fun.  
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Stella and Sam - Based on the popular children's book series by Marie-Louise Gay, this animated project focuses on the big sister/little brother dynamics of "irrepressible redhead" Stella and "slightly apprehensive" younger brother Sam.  
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Wild Kratts - Biologist Kratt brothers Martin & Chris return to the small screen, vastly multiplying their animal adventure possibilities as animated versions of themselves. No self-respecting 5-year-old would miss it.



## E&O "STALEDATING"

Clients have asked "when should I get my title search done" and it's not an easy question to answer. One reason it's hard to advise on this is that we're hearing different reports on how long an insurer will accept title search results as current. The rule-of-thumb that I had heard for a long time was 6 months, but this spring I heard for the first time of a producer being told by his insurer that 2 months was their cut-off point. Best advice is to get this answer directly from insurance company/broker before proceeding.

## OFFICE CONSOLIDATION

We pulled the plug on the 53 Pine Island office in Massachusetts this summer. Although there is still an administrative address in the States, the U.S. staffers are all working from home offices at this point. We communicate constantly throughout each workday by emails that route through the server that lives at 9 Wellington Street in Kingston, Ontario. Adding a staff member in 2011 who has extensive technical expertise has been invaluable as we have now brought our central hardware brain (a.k.a. "Gord the server") in-house.



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## HOW DID YOU GET THAT JOB?

What do you need to know to get this job, anyway? Here is a bit of background on the Eastern Scripters...

Denise Archer - This mother of three boys and a beagle got the job by picking up the phone 10 years ago and asking: "are you hiring? this sounds interesting" (or something equally

masochistic). She is yet another in-house example of what can happen when you start out intending to be a teacher and make a silly phone call that sends you down a 10-year-long primrose path. Through her we are now all confident that blonde Elementary Education majors have more fun.

Jamie Desrochers - Our gift from the gods of technology (computer programmer analyst degree), he is the proud parent of an English bull dog (did not actually give birth to him, though) and wears various hats at Thursday gig night but typically defaults to the bass guitar and is able to build and/or repair pretty much anything under a hood or roof. 100% Flames fan.

Robin Gautreau - The second of three (insane!) staffers who has three sons, still not sure how she squeezes in working full-time. In the camp of "white vs. red" she is fully in the white camp (wine, that is). Spent years in corporate public relations so knows how to sugar coat our pills. Another one of us who started out to be a teacher/took wrong turn into clearances thereafter ... an avid book clubber (English major).

Cathy Gleason - She is the third of three (yes, also insane!) staffers who has three sons... another staffer who started out in childhood education then took a nose-dive into corporate legal (elevators, stockings, commuter rail) before getting the call from her sister: "do you think we

could work together?" Ten years later the answer is still "YES! YES! SAVE ME FROM CORPORATE MADNESS!"

Anne Marie Murphy - Studied literature then film studies and can keep half-an-eye on a pot of home-cooked veggie chili while (still) trying to learn how to play the violin. Tries hard not to be too silly but being surrounded by too many brothers in her formative years did lasting damage. On the fence in the red vs. white drama but wholeheartedly "crunchy" over creamy in peanut butter matters.

Christine Somerleigh - College degree was in no way related to clearances. Nor were the 15+ jobs - stopped counting (retail, legal, public relations, architecture, bookkeeping, data entry, admin for a church etc) "when I was told I was an expert at anything I would run for the hills, that meant my learning curve was over." What attracted her to this profession: a desire to always be learning, and the endless learning curve. self-professed "red wine fly."

Cathy Spencer - a U of T grad and avid book clubber who worked at library bookmobiles through high school & university summers before going full-time after university in the reference dept. Hates clearing periodical titles. White wine over red wine anyday. Mother of 3 humans and a West Highland terrier. Newly adept at stocking and enjoying her wood stove while tearing into next installment of anything about the Tudors. he is

a crossword puzzle aficionado-- especially the Globe and Mail Christmas crosswords.



## NEW TEACHING GIG

We have just finished putting the finishing touches on an alliance with the National Screen Institute. Starting with the next crop of their new filmmakers (2012), we'll be providing clearance reports and title searches for their productions. Later in the winter, Anne Marie will travel to Winnipeg to run a training session at the NFB offices. Already a long-time sponsor to the Canadian Film Centre by providing the same services to their emerging talent, we're looking forward to this new opportunity to partner with the NFB. It gives us a chance to explain what we do and how we do it, thereby helping filmmakers know how best to plan for this aspect of their future productions. We look forward to

this new venture and to the thrill of a trip to tropical Winnipeg in February!

## PROP GUN USE

Everyone knows that you can't put the name "Chevrolet" on a Mercedes-Benz and have anyone believe what the sign says. It's the same situation with gun use. You can put the fake label "xyz guns inc." on a Smith & Wesson but anyone who knows anything about guns will know you are using that company's firearm, as will anyone who works at Smith & Wesson and might object to the use. Brands in both automotive and firearms industries are distinctive. How do productions, then, handle clearing gun use for film & television projects?

I have always wondered about this and thought I'd go ahead and find out for this newsletter and then share the insights (after getting proper permission, of course). So here are comments from four individuals who deal with prop gun use on a regular basis, interesting observations and explanations that will help us to put together some new language for our reports going forward.



PROPS MASTER #1 - "In my 15 years doing this I have never worried about clearing any gun brand. No greeking, no permissions, nada. The reality is no gun company would ever give you direct permission to use their weapon to kill someone etc, but no gun company would ever sue after the fact, as there is no such thing as negative publicity for such companies. The same applies for cigarette brands. Don't ask, don't tell policy. When we use fake guns, they are often molded off real guns or they are replica toys which often look exactly like the real thing."

PROPS MASTER #2 - "As far as I know no one ever asks permission of the manufacturer. I do not. I think I tried once and was told that I didn't need to ask. All guns that we use are actual and identifiable unless the gun is custom made by a gunsmith for a movie.

It is a unique situation. It seems to be understood that they are being used as intended so no permission is needed. I do not know of any occasion that a manufacturer has litigated a production for using a gun. Guns in movies are free advertising for the manufacturer. For example the "Dirty Harry" gun is a Smith and Wesson model 29 revolver but everyone knows it as the Dirty Harry gun. In fact some manufacturers actively want their guns placed in film to boost popularity.

We never use fake guns. They don't exist. There are no generic guns. We use real guns that have been made non-firing, or airsoft replica guns or exact replicas made in hard or soft rubber. Each and every gun has to be registered and owned by someone even if it is rubber or plastic. Typically these are owned by a gun wrangler and when he lets me carry the gun on set, I have been issued a form saying that I have permission to temporarily possess that particular gun. When we need to have a gun fire a blank we have the gun wrangler bring the gun and ammunition."

clearance risks, we limit camera close-ups on guns that are used in production, and also generally avoid their negative portrayal (e.g. the unreliability of a gun)."

PROPS MASTER #3 - "I've never attempted to 'clear' a firearm for use in tv or film. As we're doing with cars... we 'greek' guns by way of vinyls and tape to avoid logos and trademarks, but never approach manufacturers for clearance. It's my understanding that we avoid the use of specific brands on network television to avoid conflict with advertisers, I've yet to see an ad by a gun manufacturer. We do use 'fake guns' in so much that they are non-firing, but they're exact replicas of the original. Most people with an interest in firearms could rapidly identify make and model, as could people interested in cars."

PROPS MASTER #4 - "Our approach is quite straightforward in that we aim to use very generic looking guns as props, and consequently avoid using guns with distinctive brand-specific looks. To mitigate