

The Eastern Script

Shameless self-promotion since 2011

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS



Here are a pile of random observations from a mind that has obviously relaxed enough into summer mode that it thinks “structure” is just getting things onto a page and stirring...

Confession: I hardly ever watch television... But in my defense, my workdays in front of a small back-lit screen can be intense and on many nights that continued posture

into the evening is the last thing I want at unwinding time.

Confession counterbalance: I am an avid movie watcher and hardly a week goes by when I haven't gone to see a movie at a cinema.

Secret to share: Many years ago I had the idea that I'd like to be a movie critic. Then I figured out that my opinion had no more value than anyone else's who'd gone to see the damned movie.

Observation: This isn't much of a presidential address, is it?

I'm rambling, just like this newsletter in which we ping pong from cartoons to phone numbers to Hawaiian shirts to time travel to fictional phone numbers. It's all good stuff, there's just not a great unifying thread here except for, perhaps, the arrival of summer. Hope you find something useful on the next few pages. Best summer wishes to all who lived through our terrible North American winter.

Anne Marie Murphy
President



“COMICAL DRAWINGS” REVISITED CARTOONS, WE USED TO CALL THEM...

1670s, “a drawing on strong paper (used as a model for another work),” from French carton, from Italian cartone “strong, heavy paper, pasteboard,” thus “preliminary sketches made by artists on such paper” (see carton). Extension to comical drawings in newspapers and magazines is 1843.

etymonline.com

Nowadays one might cynically call them “enticements to further purchasing by minors” since so much animated television content — especially the most successful — has an affiliated venture run by the Merchandising Department.



As you might have noticed from the “Recent Projects” listings at the back of this newsletter, we devote a lot of our workday to children’s animation. From the start, we have used slightly different report formats for them since there are substantial differences in how animation is produced. There are no exteriors in animation, there is no featured use of actual props. There are animation versions of them both, though, so we report on them with somewhat different language.

This spring we overhauled the format for animated reports and from this summer onward you will see the difference.

Rather than dividing our comments into our standard live-action sections (cast, dialogue references, art dept., etc.), we now discuss each clearance issue in the script line by line. The only categorized section from the previous format that will remain is the one listing music use. Animated production can now integrate our comments into their scripts in one pass rather than going back and forth through the many sections of the reports.

We are confident that this restructuring will improve your ability to use our clearance reports. So far, all client input has been “thumbs up.”

CHANGING THE CHARACTER NAME: TIME TRAVELLING

1937: “A Day at the Races faced a few legal problems. The original name for Groucho's character was Dr. Quackenbush. Everyone agreed it was a ridiculous name for a doctor, but then they discovered thirty-seven actual Dr. Quackenbushes in the United States. Since most of them were eager to sue if their name was used, Groucho's character was changed to Hackenbush. At first Groucho was disappointed in the name change, but he grew to love Hackenbush so much that he even signed it to letters.”

Written by Deborah Looney

tcm.com/this-month/article/150249|30024/A-Day-at-the-Races.html

1971: “If a script featured a character named Edward Bunker living in present-day New York, for example, de Forest Research would have to check New York telephone books and directories to ensure that nobody had that name, or that the name was so common that no individual could sue, claiming they were personally maligned. In this particular example, a man named Edward Bunker did show up in a Queens telephone book, leading de Forest to come up with the now-familiar name of Archie Bunker as a replacement.”

Written by Michael Kmet

tft.ucla.edu/mediascape/blog/?p=737

1974: “In the original screenplay for Chinatown, written by Robert Towne, the villain was named Joshua Cross. After checking a 1930s period telephone directory, however, de Forest discovered that a man with that name not only lived in the area the movie was set, but was still alive. The original name of Joshua now considered too risky to use, de Forest considered several alternatives before finally recommending the name of 'Noah, since [the movie] was all about water.' The name change was ultimately adopted.”

Written by Michael Kmet

tft.ucla.edu/mediascape/blog/?p=737

FICTIONAL PHONE NUMBERS



There's no need for me to ramble on any further about using the 555- phone prefix on-screen. A quick internet search brought me to more than a few articles that can fill you in on recent standards and practices in the industry. There are some work-arounds evolving to avoid “taking the audience out of the movie” with that 555- prefix, as you'll see in your reading.

“Hold the phone — that fake number works: *Adjustment Bureau* joins ranks of movies and shows that dial real phone numbers. But movies and shows dial real phone numbers at their own peril”

From the Chicago Tribune (March 2011)

articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-03-29/entertainment/sc-mov-0330-movie-phone-numbers-20110329_1_number-customer-service-representative-dial/2

“Why Do Fake Phone Numbers Start With 555?”

From the website Mental Floss

mentalfloss.com/article/27545/why-do-fake-phone-numbers-start-555

“The End of the 555 Phone Number: What began as a creation of Ma Bell and then became a Hollywood staple is now quickly disappearing—as it should.”

From Pacific*Standard's website

psmag.com/books-and-culture/end-555-phone-number-75539

“Jonah Hill offers up his phone number for *The Sitter*”

From Entertainment Weekly (September 2011)

ew.com/article/2011/09/08/jonah-hill-the-sitter-call

ANOTHER WAY TO PAY

We continue to dodge the added overhead of credit card payments. But we have added another option thanks to a banking transition that happened in January: epayments.

Epayment comes in handy for any of our products that require pre-payment, like title searches or feature-length script reports. Payment notification goes to amm@easternscript.com — easy and usually very inexpensive (\$1.50?) for the sender. To send payment here on time for a fast turnaround report, it's the way to go.



ALTERNATIVES... OURS OR YOURS?

OURS...

We aim to provide 3 clear alternatives for anything that doesn't clear the gauntlet of sources in our reports. If we couldn't come up with 3, that means we tried long and hard and only came up with 2. Dreaming up and researching those alternatives can be quite time-consuming as quite a few of the initial options often do not make it to the final cut of report inclusion. Depending on the type of things we're clearing, we might research as many as 10 names before coming up with the 3 included in the report.

We try to match up our alternatives with what's happening in the script. If your scripted character name is an Italian opera singer named *Carlo Corsi*, for example, we're not going to suggest something like *Roger Duncan* as an alternative. If your character is mainly referred to by his last name, we'll find some new first names that will work — or if he's mainly called *Carlo* we'll work on substitutes for his last name.

Now that you know about all this invisible work, please picture your crestfallen researcher upon hearing that you don't like any of his/her suggestions. Tears! Gnashing of teeth! Falling upon the sword!

YOURS...

Recently we've worked with some shows that send us THEIR suggestions for alternatives to check in order of preference should the scripted element not work out. To any of you out there who are working on episodic television with us right now, feel free to give this a try. We like the time efficiency of this approach very much. You'll like it too because you'll get exactly what you asked for. Win/win.

TALKING ABOUT BENCH DEPTH (SINCE IT'S BASEBALL SEASON)

English term or phrase: *deep bench*

Explanation:

“In (US) English, the term deep bench comes from sports. When a team has a deep bench, they have a large number of very talented players. So the players who do not start in the game (they sit "on the bench" and watch and wait to go into the game) are very good, sometimes just as good as the players who start the game.”

proz.com

Shameless self-promotion: I did the math. Our staff has 95 years of combined experience doing this work. In November, I will reach the 25-year mark as a full-time clearance professional and there is a gang of other lunatics working here who have been at it between 10 and 20 years.

So, when you go looking for a clearance company, don't just decide based on the price. Ask about bench depth. With the experience you hire here, you'll be hard-pressed to ask us a question we can't answer. And if we can't, of course... we'll find out for you! We spend our days finding stuff out.

Finally, don't be misled by the part of the explanation above about “very talented players” sitting on a bench waiting for the green light. In our offices, none of our talent is sitting on a bench waiting. We are all hard at it every day of the year. Our season never ends.



FUN BOOKMARKS

willpryce.com/folio.php?catNo=2&gallNo=1

Before we get to the *bona fide* fun in this list, have a look at photographer Will Pryce's work in the book *The Library: A World History*. I gave a copy of this amazing volume as a holiday gift last year. It is a beauty. Click on the “book” button when you load this link.

roughguides.com/gallery/the-worlds-best-beaches

Visit this any time of year to get some ideas for your bucket list. It seems especially perfect, however, for this month of June when summer is world-wide for those of us in the northern hemisphere.

vintage-aloha-shirt.com

For more ideas as you plan your beach escape, this company specializes in bringing you “the best Vintage Hawaiian shirts from the 30's, 40's and 50's.”

RECENT WORK

BIG SCREEN

THE HEALER “Alec's life in England is falling apart. His electrical repair shop, The Healer is going out of business and his gambling debts are catching up with him. Unexpectedly a long lost uncle turns up offering to wipe the slate clean — on one condition — that he move to Nova Scotia for one year.”

[imdb.com](#)

THE COLOSSAL FAILURE OF THE MODERN RELATIONSHIP “Cat has a mediocre job, a mundane social life and her relationship with Freddy has been, well... uninspired. Enter Richard, Freddy's boss... Cat and Richard's brief encounter evolves into an affair. Overwhelmed by her own guilt, however, she breaks it off to make a final, sincere attempt to reignite the flame with Freddy with a romantic trip to wine country. Nothing, however, can prepare Cat for what happens when she finds out Richard — accompanied by his perky, perfect young girlfriend, Amy — is joining them.”

Written by Alessandra Piccione
[imdb.com](#)

SMALL SCREEN

THE BAGEL SHOW “The Bagel and Becky Show is a bugged-out, offbeat comedy that follows a mismatched brother and sister duo as they explore their neighbourhood of Awkward Falls and stumble into whackloads of outlandish situations... Created by Dave Cooper, a world-reknowned fine artist as well as a producer and creator in the animation world.”

[radsheep.com](#)

COUNTERFEIT CAT “Counterfeit Cat is the story of Gark, a naive 9 year old alien with uncontrollable superpowers and destined to save the universe and Max, an anxious but vain housecat who'd prefer to save himself.”

[wildseedstudios.com](#)

THE MUSIC ROOM “After experiencing record-breaking success with the reality tween drama The Next Step, Family Channel is teaming up with Temple Street Productions and creator Frank van Keeken on a new half-hour show, The Music Room. A tween drama featuring an entirely original soundtrack, the series follows a group of young performers who are members of an elite music program.”

[newswire.ca](#)

RANGER ROB “The sky's the limit for Ranger Rob! This super-curious, look before you leap, pint-sized explorer is the ranger of Big Sky Park, a giant 100-mile wide crater that has every kind of outdoor environment imaginable... From Alexander Bar, the creator of *Mike The Knight and Lunar Jim*.”

[nelvana.com](#)