



the eastern

Spring 2011
Issue 1

SCRIPT

Shameless self-promotion since 2011

INTRODUCING THE EASTERN SCRIPT

We're proud to introduce our first company newsletter, the eastern SCRIPT. We hope that you appreciate the scattered minimalist approach we have taken with this publication, it proved to be the least time-consuming and least creative way to keep you, our client, up to date with our most riveting news in a nutshell. After all, we're researchers not writers or graphic designers.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS



Thank you for browsing through our first newsletter, published in conjunction with the unveiling of our **newly-designed website** (visit www.easternscript.com). You'll find copies of our newsletters at our website as they add up over the years.

I promise not to clog up your inbox on a weekly basis with "shameless self-promotion" - in fact, we'll be lucky to get 3 of these newsletters out a year, so no worries on that front. Now as a reward for reading this far, here is a recently-revised clearance guideline freebie, related to the use of actual North American currency onscreen: "Spokespersons for both the U.S. and Canadian government offices that oversee currency reproduction enforcement indicate that there are no legal restrictions on videotaping or filming actual currency (paper or coin) for projection on-screen. If your intent is to make your own currency for use on set, there will be restrictions on how that can be done (please advise if you need further guidance for that scenario)." [We guarantee at least one such free gift per newsletter.]



*Photo of a St. Lawrence River inlet 40 minutes east of our Kingston office.
©2011 Anne Marie Murphy*

IN THIS ISSUE

Introduction1
Shameless Self-Promotion2
New services	
FAQt is...	
Parlez-vous français?	
The future is paperless	
New staff	
Clearances: Sucking the Fun out of Life3
Recent Clients4

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Shameless Self-Promotion

NEW SERVICES

Many of our clients are already aware that Eastern Script has expanded its repertoire of services but we would like to take this opportunity to brag nonetheless:

Global title search: includes an impressive collection of world-wide media materials in addition to the Canadian, U.S., and French language sources for a search that gives confidence to any project anticipating global distribution.

Title search for French Language Distribution: includes most of our largest U.S. and Canadian sources and adds European sources specific to a French language audience (e.g. sources in France, Belgium, Switzerland).

FAQT IS...

We've added an **FAQ page** to our website, also available in French, which addresses - you guessed it - our most frequently asked questions. Everything from the clearance logistics of block shooting to preliminary title searches for TV episodes. If you don't find your question there, we advise that you ask it more frequently.



PARLEZ-VOUS FRANÇAIS?

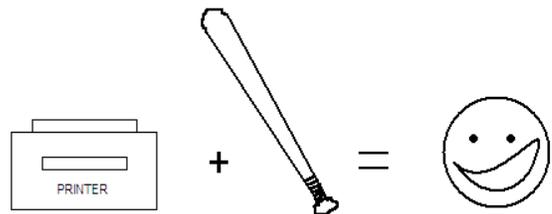
Oui oui! Our great affection for the French language and the vast client base that it represents has resulted in the expansion of our services from one official language to le autre.

Our website www.easternscript.com is now fully bilingual, or rather, bitextual. Not sure what "pre-merchandising" is in French? Now you do!

Rapports en français. Fatigué des efforts de compréhension, le dictionnaire indispensable? Maintenant vous pouvez demander les rapports en français. Ce n'est pas toujours garanti car notre personnel bilingue est limité et tout dépend de disponibilité, mais au moins c'est un pas dans la bonne direction!

THE FUTURE IS PAPERLESS

Do you like trees? We do, and we much prefer planted over pulped. We've now officially joined the growing number of paperless offices working for a sustainable future. Not only has this saved trees, expenses, and unnecessary waste, it has proven to be a time-saver as well. Gone are the Office Space days of printer battles.



NEW STAFF

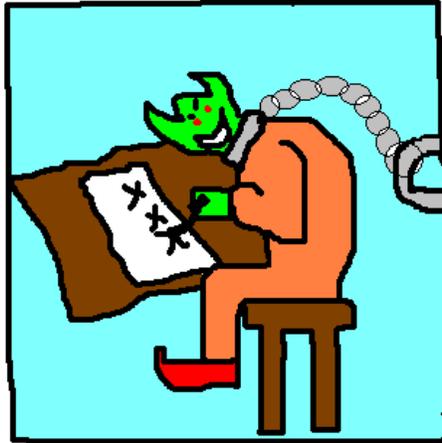
We're delighted to welcome a new Junior Researcher to the Eastern Script staff.

Justin Paul Gleason II was born ready for work at 10:15 am on Wednesday August 18, weighing 6 lbs 12 oz, all of it brain.

Featured Article

CLEARANCES : SUCKING THE FUN OUT OF LIFE

*Posted by "MCM" on the
blog "push the third
button twice" pttbt.ca
September 18, 2007.
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*Original artwork by Calvin Neufeld.
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As a show creator, you are given great freedoms to invent elaborate plot lines, character arcs and other devious things to make the audience wet themselves with glee. It's what you're hired to do. And once you get into it, it's actually a lot of fun trying to blow the minds of the other people on the production. It's a wonderful world to be in, except for...

Script Clearances.

Script Clearances are there to protect you in the same way that root canals are there to make your mouth happy. The logic behind them is a bit convoluted, but bears some examination:

You've completed your outline, done your first and second drafts, and now the script is in good enough shape that the Line Producer thinks it's ready to be reviewed for legal concerns.

Since you're writing fiction (and thus have no facts to check), the only thing to worry about are lawsuits regarding creative turf-treading. To avoid this, the script is sent off for clearance.

In the Script Clearance dungeon, a thousand little elves are chained to desks and whipped regularly until they Google every single person, place, or thing in your script. What are they looking for? They're trying to figure out if anyone ever used your ideas before you did. If you write "hey turnip-face!" they will search for "turnip-face", and discover that it's the name of a little animated GIF on deviantART. And the elves will then try and decide if there's a good chance that anybody is going to sue you over the use of the word. They will weigh all the evidence, and usually decide you're screwed.

But the elves are also helpful. Rather than just telling you "95% of your ideas aren't going to fly", they send recommendations for "safe" alternatives, which they dutifully check ahead of time. So rather than "turnip-face", you are told to use "penny-ear". Or instead of "chromotron", you get "fairyhop". "Excalibur" becomes "twinklestick".

How do they come up with these wonderful suggestions that obviously keep the tone and theme of your original work intact against all odds? Well, nobody knows for sure, but it's assumed that the elves are semi-literate inbreds whose constant exposure to unshielded magnetic radiation has distorted their appreciation of reality and made them incapable of assembling any thoughts more complex than a search query.

So the Clearance Report comes back to you after much nail-biting and anxiety, and you discover your cool show about metal and action and mind-blowing tension has been reduced to something that reads like Cinderella enacting Care Bears after being kicked in the head repeatedly with a steel-framed boot. And a little part of you dies.

And you say to the Line Producer, you say: "Please, please let us ignore all these changes. Let's just leave it the way it was and pretend we never asked the elves at all. Can't we do that?"

And the Line Producer, who has just finished his lunch of Kitten McNuggets and virgin blood, sadly informs you that there is no way to ignore the Script Clearance. The Script Clearance is the Word of God.

(con't...)



Featured Article

(...con't)

This is why: let us suppose you wrote a script with a character named Indiana Jones. Let's assume that there's a good reason you're doing this, because otherwise you seem kinda dumb.

But this character name somehow slips in, and it survives to second draft, and you've grown attached to it etc etc. Let us suppose that THERE ARE NO ELVES to tell you that Indiana Jones is a bad choice for a character name, and so the show goes into production, airs on TV, and is watched by half the world.

You get sued. You not only get sued, you get sued so badly that a collection agency invents a time machine to go back in time to steal pennies from your piggy bank, to be sure that they leave no stone unturned. You will never work in this town again (whichever town it is) and furthermore, the Line Producer is unemployed and suddenly free to prowl the nighttime streets in search for fresh victims. It's like Old Marty seeing Young Marty wearing inside-out jeans, and Christopher Lloyd crying out in a quavering voice. Those elves are damn important.

Now there's this stuff called Insurance which protects a production against space-time paradoxes, but the Insurance Masters have rules that suggest they won't insure a production that has not had Script Clearance done.

But they're nice about it: you can defy the elves and use a term like "turnip-face", and the Insurance Masters will cover you on all names EXCEPT that one, thereby maintaining your creative freedom.

Not that you can really do it, because everyone else on the production is staring at you with wide, fearful eyes, pleading silently for you to just tow the line and help them keep their jobs and houses. So "penny-ear" it is.

There are some other side-issues such as appealing to the Lawyers for permission to ignore the Elves, but as most of you know, the Lawyers charge nearly \$9 million per hour, and as such every single question you ask them reduces the number of episodes in the season by 4. It becomes a question of: "Do we want these five principal characters to have these names, or do we want to have any screen time for them to appear in?"

When you experience Script Clearances, you start to realize how amazing it is that anything ever gets made for TV. And yet, it also helps explain what appears to be the creative retardation of the entertainment industry.

It's not that they don't have good ideas, it's that they can't get the good ones past the damn Elves. •



RECENT CLIENTS

Big screen:

Cosmopolis: Robert Pattinson plays a financial genius in search of a haircut in David Cronenberg's adaptation of the novel by Don DeLillo.

Source Code: Jake Gyllenhaal has an out-of-body experience in this highly acclaimed action thriller.

Midnight's Children: Canadian director Deepa Mehta brings Salman Rushdie's Booker Prize-winning novel to life.

Barney's Version: Adapted from Mordecai Richler's final novel. Starring Paul Giamatti, Minnie Driver, and Dustin Hoffman.

Small screen:

The Listener: A mind-reading paramedic assists police investigators, reassuring us that someone who knows what people are thinking still likes them enough to want to help.

Republic of Doyle: Father and son detectives seem to be as good at creating problems as they are at solving them.

Almost Naked Animals: Visit www.almostnakedanimals.com to meet the gang of underwearing animals.

Rick Mercer Report: Canada's most trusted news reporter leaves no absurdity unmocked.