

# The Eastern Script

*Shameless self-promotion since 2011*

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## GET IN TOUCH

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## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS



Yes, it's true. I missed a season – no spring newsletter this year. Because it's free, though, you have no choice but to enjoy my inconsistent yet well-intentioned attempts at information sharing whenever it is that I am able to complete them. In this case, I will blame my slacker attitude to a shift in staffing (some working less, new person arriving) that left me no time for the fun stuff... like putting a newsletter together.

This time around I have some information about currency use on-screen, a topic that was discussed in our very first newsletter back in 2011. I'm sharing some compliments for any of you readers who are wondering if you should send your work to us. I'm also revisiting the topic of kids' animation which has been discussed in a previous newsletter (August 2018 "Animation, a slightly different beast") but there is still a bit more to say on the topic. Finally, I'm pointing you to a new resource from a lawyer who has begun an informative collection of podcasts.

I hope everyone has had time this summer to get away from desks, phones, and computers, and to enjoy a beach or a lake or even just the garden out back. Adjust that focal length to horizon mode. Summer is too short!

Anne Marie Murphy

President



## CURRENCY USE REVISITED

Back in the spring of 2011 we published the first issue of *The Eastern Script*. Twenty issues later I can assure you that it was not then and never has been an ambitious Murdochian enterprise. You could safely say that the motivation to begin the next one comes at a moment in which I observe: “oh no, how did 7 months just pass?” In that first issue, I see that we shared our then recently-revised clearance guideline related to use of actual North American currency on screens big and small:

*“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).”*

Since 2011, we have read scripts in which we have seen that money will be shown on-screen in stories set in countries all around the world. With each new country presenting itself to us, we have identified the agency there that regulates currency use (such as the Bank of Canada or the U.S. Treasury Department) and we have requested their on-screen reproduction guidelines. A spokesperson for the Bank of Canada, for example, told us that “It is not necessary to request the Bank's permission to use bank note images for film or video purposes, provided that the images are intended to show a general indication of currency, and that there is no danger that the images could be misused.” To-date we have information of this type on file for Canada, the U.S., the Euro, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Switzerland, the UK.

I thought I would bring to your attention in this update article two informative pieces on the topic of currency use on-screen. The first is from *The Hollywood Reporter* from March 2016 and is called “Will 50 Cent Get in Trouble with the U.S. Secret Service for Using ‘Fake’ Cash?”

[www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/will-50-cent-get-trouble-873905](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/thr-esq/will-50-cent-get-trouble-873905)

Here's a gem from that story, an anecdote that explains why there are restrictions on use of faked prop money on sets and mentions one on-set solution in use:

*“Hoback also nodded towards this Priceonomics article that recounted a notorious instance of ‘prop money’ gone wrong. It happened in 2000 on the set of Rush Hour 2 when an explosion scene led to hundreds of thousands of fake bills floating into the hands of movie extras and pedestrians. As a result, the Secret Service commenced an investigation. Since then, the makers of prop money have had to adjust. Gregg Bilson Jr., the chief of a prop company, told Priceonomics that his company now attempts to manufacture stacks of blank paper, topped by real hundred-dollar bills.”*



The other article of interest is called “Where Does Fake Movie Money Come From”

[www.cnn.com/style/article/rjr-props-fake-money/](http://www.cnn.com/style/article/rjr-props-fake-money/)

Jacopo Prisco, CNN February 22 2019. It's a profile of a business called RJR Props and if you want to throw around the term “niche company” then this is a prime example. The company makes fake money for use on movie sets. Working with the U.S. federal guidelines on creation of fake currency, RJR's owner Rich Rappaport produces two levels of prop dollar bills: “one for close-ups and one that will look real from about 15 inches away.” Re: the close-up money, he proclaims that the likeness is so close that it “looks fantastic. But since it looks so real, we can print it on one side only.” The article shows the bills and describes some of the fake money features, such as the signature Ima Not Real on the side of the bill with Benjamin Franklin's image, etcetera. If you watched the series Ozark then you have seen his handiwork on-screen as you watched Jason Bateman and his family pile brick after brick of dollar bills into the walls of his Missouri money laundering location.



## WE DON'T MAKE THIS STUFF UP (COMPLIMENTS)

We don't ask clients to write compliments for our website. Any person you ask for an endorsement is going to be someone you know will say nice stuff. Instead, we collect unsolicited kind words from emails sent by clients who are typically wrapping up a project and saying thank-you/farewell. You see, we don't ask clients to write compliments for our website because we don't need to. They send them without our asking. Then we post them at our website without requesting permission ... naughty!! In our defense, we don't include the person's name or job or phone number or address... because if we did that you'd be thinking that we are not very good at this job.

What they say to us might be helpful for you to know when you're trying to pick a clearance company. Things like:

*“Thanks for a flawless flow of information!”*

(a personal favorite)

and *“You guys made my job so much easier!”*

(This is a common thread, repeated in variously constructed sentences, e.g. *“These reports help me do my job faster and more efficiently,”* etcetera.)

how about *“Sorry for the 5000 times I dumped things on you at bad times of the day or week, and thanks for being polite about it.”* (Hard to top that one, you would think.)

but then there is: *“This is the first time that I have ever submitted anything for clearance and it is truly astounding just how detailed the report is.”*

and finally... *“The Eastern clearance reports continue to be the gold standard.”*

For more, visit “What Our Clients Have Said” at [www.easternscript.com/clients-and-credits/what-our-clients-have-said](http://www.easternscript.com/clients-and-credits/what-our-clients-have-said)

## KIDS' ANIMATION, THAT MUST BE FUN AND EASY FOR YOU!



Oh, if only that were true. Talking dogs, rabbits, a fanciful mythical setting — you would think we could phone those reports in. The work we do on animated scripts in fact presents a very challenging set of clearance concerns. I've already talked about this work (August 2018) in a newsletter but there is a bit more to be said.

"Clearing for broadcast" was the expression I had heard for many years regarding what "clearing" a script entailed. A script clearance company reviews the script and flags potential invasion of privacy, trademark infringement, copyright infringement, defamation scenarios. Once the producer had addressed the issues raised in the report, the e&o requirement was satisfied and the script was "clear for broadcast."

We have a lot of experience, however, from doing all those trademark searches for script clearance and title search reports over the years. So, producers have asked us over the years to be more and more involved in the research that happens before a merchandise line can be launched for children's television. [We have never been asked to do this work for adult-skewed animation projects.] That has added 3 time-consuming elements to the searching for kids' animation.

1. a list of sources that are specific to what's in the story. If "it's about a bunch of talking dogs" then we'll check the sources we have that list fictional dog/animal characters. Strange as it may seem, we have a bunch of materials that fall into this category.
2. a detailed internet search on the dogs' names using specific keywords in our searching. How often has the dog name BOOMERANG (made-up example) been used in projects that might be relevant? What is "relevant" might be a book series published for kids, a 1990s kids' television show, a line of plush toys by Gund, a dog greeter mascot at a chain of amusement parks. It's amazing how much we find. That part of the searching can take a dog-sized bite out of the day.
3. the trademark searching. Looking first in class 28 (toys/games), we look to see what has trademark protection in any of the 186 databases available through our subscription to CompuMark's SERION databases. Some clients who go heavy on "merch" have asked us to add a step here: searching the other classes in which most kid stuff appears.

The primary list includes class 9 – computers/technology, class 24 – textiles, class 25 – clothing/footwear, class 41 – production of media projects/entertainment services.

Because we want to focus on the two products that are our specialties, we have recently decided to restrict the amount of additional one-off trademark searching we will provide for clients. Unless the trademark searching you are requesting comes from a script we have read or is a follow-up to a title search we have prepared, we will refer you for additional searching to the trademark specialists listed on the "Resources" page of our website (See Referrals | Trademark Searching). If you are launching a product line in relation to your media project, that list of people who specialize in trademark searching is the place for you.



## LEGAL CUT PRO PODCAST



On July 2 2019 Greg Pang of Red Frame Law interviewed me for a new feature at his website: podcasts on topics related to entertainment law. Sometimes it's just more pleasant to sit back and listen, right? Here are some of the topics already covered by the podcasts:

- Who owns the copyright in your picture and the case of Gigi Hadid
- Fundraising Your Film – Interview with Jennifer Young, Securities Lawyer
- Music Licensing Part 1

Below are some thoughts from Mr. Pang on the project.

### How did you come up with the name Legal Cut Pro?

It just sounded better than Ent.Law.Talk. or Kill All Lawyers which were two of the other ideas. No relation to Apple's Final Cut Pro.

### What motivated you to start this project?

Partly giving back to the community, partly because I love the podcast medium and partly because I wanted to see if I could run a podcast!

### How much are you learning as you conduct these interviews?

Quite a bit. We've only done a handful of interviews but we've gotten some very good experts in their respective fields on the podcast. We research our guest's backgrounds and their areas of expertise ahead of time but there is always something we learn. And, of course, it's our pleasure to post those interviews on the pod so that others in the industry can hopefully learn from them as well.

### Are you open to pitches from people who'd like to be involved?

For sure. We're supported by the Alberta Media Production Industries Association (AMPIA) who provides our audio editing by the amazing Jane Toogood, but we are looking for an additional sponsor. So that's the first way to get involved so-to-speak with the podcast is to become one of our sponsors. Another way to get involved is to volunteer to do some research on new court decisions, news stories of interest and things like changes in collective bargaining agreements. The ideal volunteer would be a law student or an undergraduate student interested in entertainment law. Finally, if anyone has episode topic ideas or suggestions for interviews, we're all ears.

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My conversation with him is not at the website as of this August newsletter's publishing date but it will be soon so bookmark this fellow for future visits:

[redframelaw.com/legalcutpro/](http://redframelaw.com/legalcutpro/)



## RECENT PROJECTS

**ELINOR WONDERS WHY** – “PBS KIDS announced the animated series *ELINOR WONDERS WHY*, set to premiere Labor Day 2020. *ELINOR WONDERS WHY* aims to encourage children to follow their curiosity, ask questions when they don’t understand and find answers using science inquiry skills. The main character Elinor, the most observant and curious bunny rabbit in *Animal Town*, will introduce kids ages 3-5 to science, nature and community through adventures with her friends. This new multiplatform series, created by Jorge Cham and Daniel Whiteson and produced in partnership with Pipeline Studios, will debut nationwide on PBS stations, the PBS KIDS 24/7 channel and PBS KIDS digital platforms.”

[www.cpb.org/pressroom/pbs-kids-announces-new-series-elinor-wonders-why-premiering-september-7-2020](http://www.cpb.org/pressroom/pbs-kids-announces-new-series-elinor-wonders-why-premiering-september-7-2020)

**HERO ELEMENTARY** – “The *Hero Elementary* series (40 half-hour shows featuring 80 11-minute animated stories) follows the Sparks Crew, a team of super students with imperfect powers who are learning to harness the Superpowers of Science to solve problems, help people, and make the world a better place.”

[www.tpt.org/hero-elementary/](http://www.tpt.org/hero-elementary/)

**HUDSON & REX** – “*Hudson & Rex* is a Canadian police procedural drama television series, based on the Austrian drama *Inspector Rex*... The action takes place in a small Canadian town of St. John (sic) around the experienced detective Charlie Hudson and his partner Rex. Rex is a German shepherd with advanced professional skills, who previously served in the K-9 elite canine unit, and Hudson is a self-confident police officer who successfully investigates particularly serious crimes.”

[when-release.com/tv-series/1556855340](http://when-release.com/tv-series/1556855340)

**STARDUST** – “It’s not a big-budget musical biopic like *Bohemian Rhapsody*,” Van Carter noted. “This isn’t trying to be that film.” The producer described *Stardust* as “a very sensitive one, an homage one, about a very unique moment in (David Bowie’s) life.”

Nick Romano, [ew.com/movies/2019/02/01/stardust-david-bowie-biopic-duncan-jones/](http://ew.com/movies/2019/02/01/stardust-david-bowie-biopic-duncan-jones/)

**UP IN THE AIR** – “After exploring dance and music in popular series *The Next Step* and *Lost and Found Music Studios*, Canadian showrunner Frank van Keeken is back with a new youth drama that vaults into the competitive world of gymnastics. Newly greenlit by DHX Television’s Family Channel (Canada) and snapped up by CBBC (UK), *Up in the Air* is a 15 x 22-minute inter-generational redemption story about a 12-year-old girl who longs to become a competitive gymnast on the world stage, like her mother and grandfather before her.”

Jeremy Dickson, [kidscreen.com/2019/03/25/frank-van-keekens-gymnastics-series-takes-flight/](http://kidscreen.com/2019/03/25/frank-van-keekens-gymnastics-series-takes-flight/)

**UTOPIA FALLS** – “*UTOPIA FALLS* follows a group of teens chosen to compete in the prestigious Exemplar performing arts competition in the seemingly idyllic colony of New Babylon. When they stumble upon a hidden archive of musical and cultural relics, the experience drives them to question everything they have been taught, thus beginning a thrilling journey of self-discovery and search for the truth. The series’ creative team includes creator/director R. T. Thorne (*Find Me in Paris*, *Degrassi: The Next Class*) and showrunner Joseph Mallozzi (*Dark Matter*, *Stargate* franchise), who are also executive producers, in addition to music producer Boi-1da (Drake, Rihanna) and three-time MTV VMA-nominated choreographer Tanisha Scott (Rihanna, Cardi B).”

[sonarent.com/titles/utopia-falls](http://sonarent.com/titles/utopia-falls)