

# Monkey Business

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Animated musings from  
Emmy-winning screenwriter...

...Jeffrey Scott



## Lessons From the Trenches of HOLLYWOOD

# STORY ISN'T KING!

Okay, it is king. I just said that to get your attention. In fact, it's more than king. It's emperor! It's pharaoh! It's *Master of the Universe!*

Am I getting my point across?

I know what you're thinking. "Yeah, yeah. Everyone knows already that story is king." We can thank John Lassiter for that priceless quote.

Well, John is absolutely right. Everyone who says it is right. But you would be amazed at how many producers out there, despite proclaiming over and over how story is king, when it comes down to paying for a script, aren't willing to put their money where John Lassiter's mouth is. To them, story is king so long as they can pay a pauper's pittance for it. They want a Ferrari for the price of a Fiat.

Sorry, ain't gonna happen!

I'm hitting this point hard not to be self-serving but to save producers and investors from losing their money. And also because by giving short shrift to their scripts and not paying enough to get a top-notch professional writer, they are lowering the quality of animated features in general and thus harming the industry.

Great scripts make hits. Hits mean more investors wanting to put up their money to make more animated features. And so the industry grows.

Or not.

I've been working in TV and film for a long time. I know how hard it is to get a film financed. Sisyphus had it easy. So why would anyone in their right mind, after going through all the trouble of successfully finding an investor and getting the money in the bank, come up with some arbitrarily tiny piece of the budget for the script and spend a fraction of the time necessary to find the best writer for the project? It's like finally getting that Ferrari and putting bald tires on it.

In this case, story will be emperor, but the emperor will have no clothes.

How valuable is a good story? Just ask a master. Alfred Hitchcock thought the script was so important that 90% of all of the time he put into making his movies was spent on locating and developing a good script. I have a feeling Alfred didn't think story was king; I think he believed it was God. Who was it that once said, "In the beginning was the word"?

## The Latest Monkey Business...

Jeffrey's ghostwriter, Hunter N. Pecker (pictured at right), has been sentenced to 30 days in his cage with no bananas for flagrant violation of his NDA's (non-disclosure agreements).

Hunter claimed he had a right to tell anyone he wanted that he just wrote an animated feature entitled [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] of Canada, and that he developed a new animated series for [REDACTED] entitled [REDACTED], featuring the name, voice and likeness of global megastar [REDACTED].

The judge came down hard on Hunter, hoping to teach him a lesson. Bad idea! Hunter just violated his Pentagon security clearance and told CNN that what's really locked up in Area 51 is [REDACTED].

