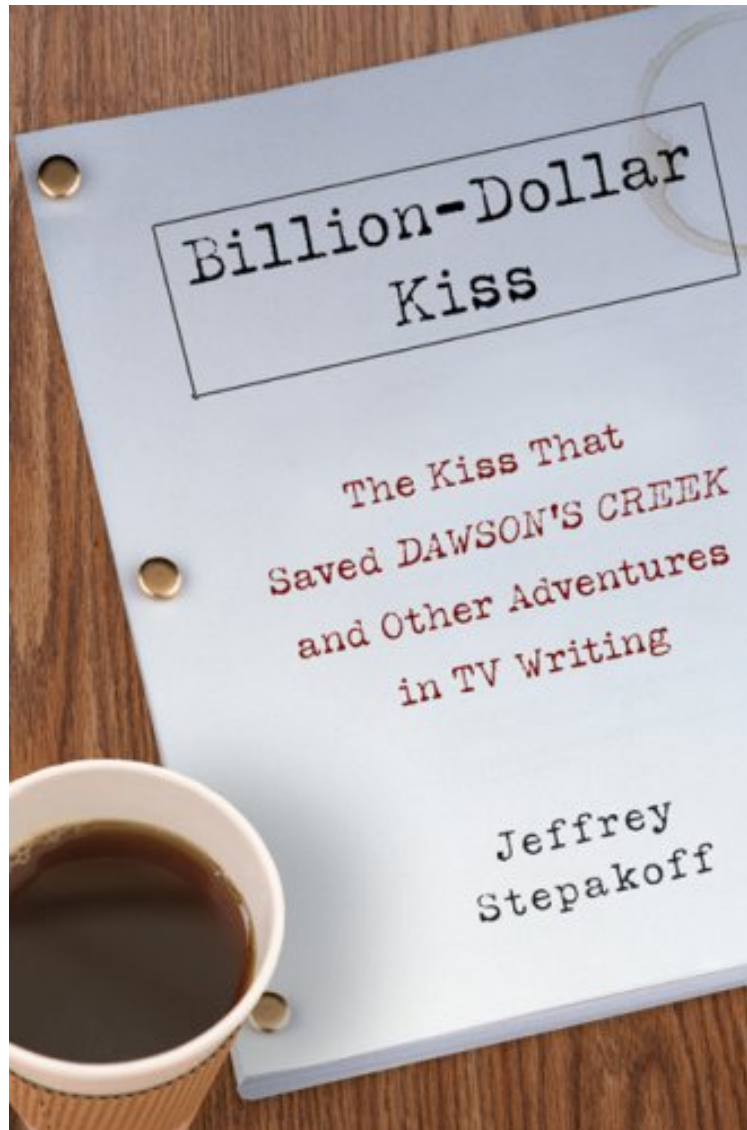


[Mobile library] Billion-Dollar Kiss: The Kiss That Saved Dawson's Creek and Other Adventures inTV Writing

Billion-Dollar Kiss: The Kiss That Saved Dawson's Creek and Other Adventures inTV Writing

Jeffrey Stepakoff

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Jeffrey Stepakoff : Billion-Dollar Kiss: The Kiss That Saved Dawson's Creek and Other Adventures inTV Writing before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Billion-Dollar Kiss: The Kiss That Saved Dawson's Creek and Other Adventures inTV Writing:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. fascinating topic, somehow often boring to read
By Nancyhua
I read this book because I'm wondering how TV production is going to change in the next few years with the advent of Hulu and Netflix so I wanted to get some background on the history of the industry. This book does provide some color from a TV writer's perspective. I'd guess 10% of this book has anything to do with Dawson's creek or actor celebrity gossip. The kiss referred to in the title is when (spoiler?) Pacey kisses Joey, officially kicking off the new love triangle franchise that would rescue the show from declining ratings and carry it through the rest of its run. Sadly, this is one of the only insider examples of anything interesting happening because of TV writers. The other contents I feel like you could piece together from wikipedia. Some ideas I took away from this book: For a while TV was all about the writers creating content so writers were kings, but when unscripted reality and/or game shows became popular writers started losing ground. Because of some court rulings, networks started producing their own TV shows, which turned out to be more profitable because they kept making money on them after production due to reruns, etc. I'm surprised the writing was so bland considering this guy is a professional writer, but I think it makes sense if TV writing is just direct and flat like that. Stepakoff ignores the "show, don't tell" thing and relates his story to you in almost an outline-like listing of events and facts that I doubt would be fundamentally interesting or engaging to most people unless he threw in something that got us emotionally involved, which he doesn't. Many memoirs have a tendency to just list people and events, maybe as a shout out to old associates, or just for the sake of completion, but certainly not out of consideration for the reader. He also relates many events that he personally had little to do with, proving himself to be a rather dry historian. Here's a snapshot, with some numbers thrown in to get attention via \$\$\$ factor, "The Wonder Years sold into basic cable when Nickelodeon purchased it in the mid-nineties, right about when the prices started to go through the roof. Fox Cable Networks paid \$400,000 an episode for Dharma Greg. Lifetime paid over... TNT paid... TBS paid..." I am overall happy I read the book. I think it basically delivers on what it offers.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great trip through 90's TV
By R P
The 90s were a golden age of television, and perhaps the last for the particular brand of scripted TV that flourished at the time. This is one man's walk through the TV business and Los Angeles in that period full of observations of the excesses and the culture of the time. Anyone who is interested in the reality of the television business or of TV history in the 90s will get a lot out of it and enjoy the book. Well-written and engaging characters throughout bring the story to life. What doesn't it have you may ask? Well, it doesn't go deep into any craft issues like what distinguishes a good story or a good TV writer from another. It's not a craft book, it's a memoir but a very engaging one.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars
By Erin G.
Great look inside a t.v. writers life, I enjoyed it a lot.

When Jeffrey Stepakoff was graduating with an MFA in playwriting, he imagined a life in the New York theater, wearing a beret and smoking clove cigarettes. Writing for the "boob tube" didn't even cross his mind. But he ended up in L.A. in the late 80s, when television writers were experiencing their equivalent of a gold rush. After the billion-dollar syndication of Seinfeld, when studios were paying astronomical amounts of money to writers to create the next Friends or ER, the sudden mania for scripted entertainment made the TV writer a hot commodity. He found himself meeting with big agents, inside primetime story rooms, pitch meetings, and on the set of some of TV's most popular shows, and making more money than he'd ever thought possible. Weaving his personal story with television, Stepakoff takes us behind the scenes to show what it's like to have a story idea one week and see it come to life and be seen by millions of people just a week later. Stepakoff also takes us inside the industry to explain what we're watching and why by exploring the growing problems of media consolidation, the effects of interference from executives, the lack of diversity, and what reality television is doing to quality scripted television. When the market crashed and the dust settled, TV executives and the media conglomerates they worked for were sitting on a broken business model. Slowly, a new programming idea began to take hold: what if the writer and their salaries were removed from the equation? Reality TV was born and the TV writer suddenly became obsolete at least temporarily.

From Publishers Weekly
From 1988 until 2004, Stepakoff led a charmed life. A co-executive producer of Dawson's Creek and a writer on Major Dad and The Wonder Years, among other shows, he achieved his lifelong dream: working in television. The 1990s were the glory days, Stepakoff says, when big money was thrown at everyone. Armed with an M.F.A. from Carnegie-Mellon and several key Hollywood contacts, Stepakoff parlayed youth, ambition and luck into gigs on several shows both as a writer and producer, netting himself a fortune in the process. He details the money, the madness and the industry in his memoir, in which, along the way, he explains how to break in, how the industry works (from development deals and pilots to bona fide hits) what agents do and why. He chronicles the people and the experience, admitting there is nothing "more intoxicating than making TV shows every week," and noting that a successful show can demand 16-hour workdays to churn out 22 episodes a season. He also explains how, with the advent of reality TV, the party ended. Would-be TV writers will crave these behind-the-scenes details of a writer's life even if that life no longer exists. (May) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
From Booklist
Stepakoff packed up and moved to Los Angeles at the tail end of the 1980s after hearing an inspiring speech by TV writer John Wells at Carnegie Mellon. Stepakoff picked the right time to go

since television was experiencing a renaissance of sorts. Groundbreaking dramas such as *Hill Street Blues* and comedies such as *The Simpsons* were launched during the 1980s and 1990s, changing the face of television and catapulting writers into a stratosphere of power and wealth where they were courted, valued, and paid accordingly. Stepakoff's spec script garnered him attention and a lucrative deal, and he found himself writing for some of the hottest dramas of the era, including *The Wonder Years*, *Sisters*, and *Dawson's Creek*. But in 2001, the threat of a writer's strike brought the golden age to an abrupt end and ushered in the era of reality TV. Savvy, smart, and chock-full of insider knowledge, Stepakoff's book is a must-read for anyone who aspires to be or currently is working as a television writer. Huntley, Kristine Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved *Billion Dollar Kiss* is the true story of a nice, talented guy who came to LA and hit it big. It's a great read! -- Rob Lotterstein, Creator/Executive Producer of *The War At Home*, and Writer/Producer of *Ellen*, *Suddenly Susan*, *Will Grace* Call it 'Adventures in the Small Screen Trade,' a memoir with insight into history, culture and business. *Billion-Dollar Kiss* tells its story with everything we strive for in great TV -- some great lines, cool twists, and the one thing we don't always achieve -- truth. -- Juan Carlos Coto, Writer-producer, *NCIS*, *Invasion*, *The Pretender*, *The Dead Zone* Episodic TV is lucky to have someone as intelligent and even-handed as Jeffrey Stepakoff sorting its laundry. Richly detailed, dead-on-accurate and painfully amusing. I'm a big fan! -- Dana Coen, Co-Executive producer and writer on *Bones*, *NCIS* and *JAG* Everything, everything, everything I would tell someone who wants to be a TV writer is in this book-- the good stuff, the bad stuff, the sad stuff, juicy details, actual dollar amounts, names and gossip, plus all the real-time advice you can truly use. Plus, there's something even more important holding it all together-- Jeffrey Stepakoff's heartfelt, hilarious journey through the TV biz. Next time someone asks me if they can pick my brain I'll recommend this book first. -- Jill Soloway, Co-executive Producer, *Six Feet Under* For a business with all-too-short a memory, Stepakoff has provided a funny and insightful chronicle of how we got where we are today. The only way you could learn more about the business of writing for TV would be by writing for TV. -- Naren Shankar, Executive Producer/Co-Showrunner, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* Jeffrey Stepakoff tells the 'true truth.' More than a memoir, *BILLION-DOLLAR KISS* gives the reader a history of the business of television from the heady days of the late eighties until today. It's an indispensable book for not only for anyone thinking about writing for TV, but for seasoned writers wondering what's happening to their careers. -- Loraine Despres, author of *The Bad Behavior of Belle Cantrell*, *The Scandalous Summer of Sissy LeBlanc* and former TV writer