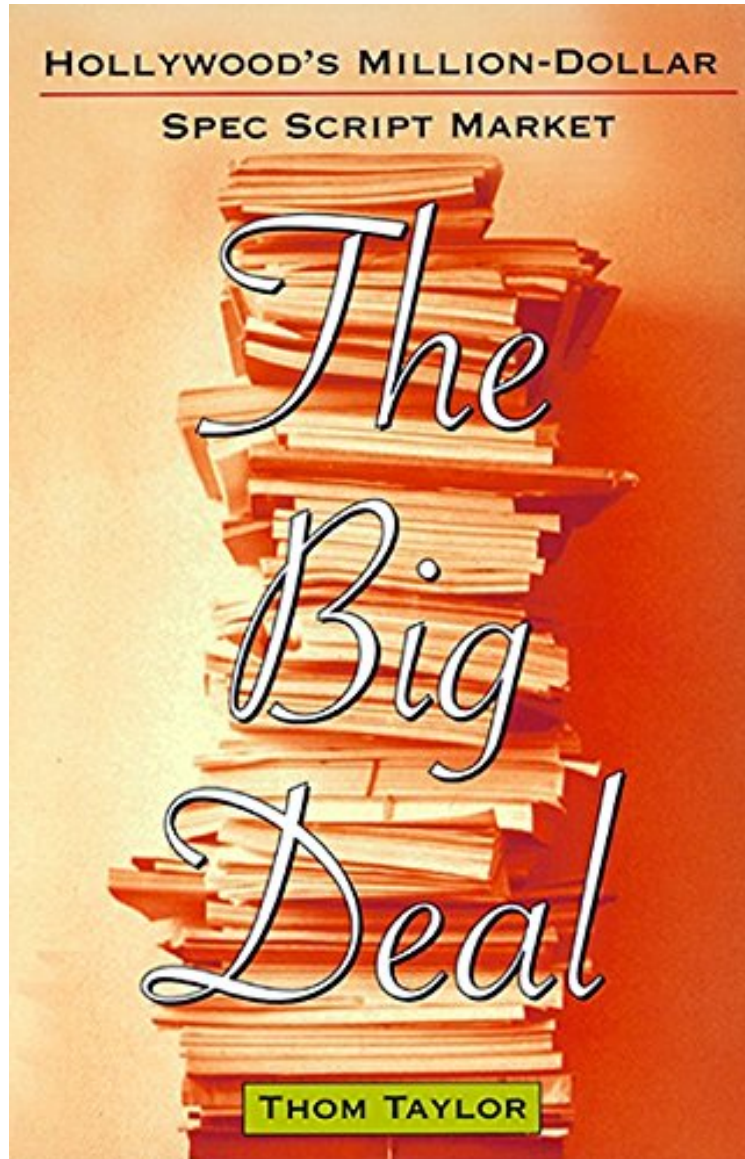


(Free pdf) The Big Deal: Hollywood's Million-Dollar Spec Script Market

The Big Deal: Hollywood's Million-Dollar Spec Script Market

Thom Taylor

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Thom Taylor : The Big Deal: Hollywood's Million-Dollar Spec Script Market before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Big Deal: Hollywood's Million-Dollar Spec Script Market:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Confirms what I've already known about the biz...By Brendon MacaraegI read this in a record-breaking three evenings. It was the fastest read I've had in a LONG time. _The Big

Deal_ is highly enjoyable yet educational at the same time. I was already familiar with Jeff Maguire's story (screenwriter of *In the Line of Fire*; I'd read a New York Times Arts section article about how Maguire was living in a friend's garage at the time he made the spec sale that became that film) but was not aware of the fact that he had previously optioned some script before that film. I guess that goes to show you can't take your previous success for granted. For anyone who has stars in their eyes about making a million dollar script sale, this is a must-read reality check. The stories *The Big Deal* traces of writers and their scripts that actually were made into films confirm that it could take you years for the stars to align before someone with money options or buys your script. And even after that it may not be a ton of fun (i.e., the screenwriter of *Waterworld* burned out after 8 re-writes over a year and the studio replaced him). Thom Taylor's book goes a bit astray during chapters 11 and 12 where he covers writing for the made-for-TV and the independent film world, but they are still interesting tangents. Taylor covers these areas with verve and gives great insight into those aspects of the film industry (basically, it's a good thing that there are so many cable channels...that means more opportunity for more writers). I was a little shocked to learn that film industry pros encourage wannabes to stay away from the B-level, direct-to-video market, and that working at that level can actually hurt your chances of making it at the A-level. Overall, this was a fantastic read. Taylor's journalistic style of writing is tight and concise and a joy to read. I highly recommend anyone who wants to be a screenwriter to spend a few hours with *The Big Deal*. You'll learn a hell of a lot about La La Land and how the agents and studios operate in terms of the screenplay market. Perhaps the most startling fact you'll learn reading this book is that half the members of the Writers Guild of America are unemployed in any given year. Now *there's* some food for thought! 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Tired of reading negative books on screenwriting? By dzine2u As a person who always puts her fears in front of dreams, I seem to always get stuck reading books on the subject of writing that are demeaning meanderings of successful people preaching how difficult it is to 'break into the field', how dedication is only matched by how much rejection one can handle. A dog chasing its tail in a downward spin. Have you ever felt that way? There's no doubt that whatever is worth pursuing to a person most often times comes with the hard-knocks of gained experience. Granted. I originally picked this book up from the library, then decided to purchase it due to all the incredible information, examples, and inspirational stories of those who DID succeed beyond their own expectations (and also those in the business who had originally brushed their scripts ideas aside). The examples Thom Taylor sites are full of details, giving the whole story, instead of brief glimpses into their successes. Therefore, I find this book to be absolutely inspiring, and if inspiration is what you need, please read this. There are plenty of books, websites, etc. that tell you how to format a script, what NOT to include in a screenplay, what sells, what doesn't, how to find an agent, how to submit a script...and just as essential it is to read those books, give yourself a break from thinking "it could never happen for ME" ...because when you really think about it, it HAS to happen for someone, why not you? Luck of the draw certainly comes into play in the script business, but this book helps put into perspective that only one person who reads your script can actually make a difference in your life. And THAT is what keeps me writing. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A Window to the Inside Offers a Refreshing Breeze By A Customer Hundreds of aspiring writers flock to LA every month. Their goal: to make a name for themselves in an industry that is as mysterious as it is naked to the public. Well, wonder no longer as Thom Taylor does a magnificent job of removing the shroud when he takes us on a tour of the inner workings of America's favorite industry. (Sorry dot.coms) Mr. Taylor, an insider himself, brings his first hand experiences and personal stories to life on the page in a way that can only be described as motivational. Aspiring artists, such as myself, should all give this book a read as it sheds some much needed light on the politics and behind-the-scene processes that make Hollywood work. We as Americans are conditioned to place people of fame and notoriety on an invisible pedestal, yet by reading and understanding Thom's book we are able to see that these same people are no different from ourselves. And to me, this is the greatest gift a book could ever give to an aspiring artist. If you have ever chased a dream, thought about chasing a dream or even just had a dream, this is a book for you. Take my word for it. It doesn't cost a lot of money and it's written so clearly that it's guaranteed not to take a lot of your time. Unless, of course, you do as I do and read it over and over and over and... You get the picture. Now get the book.

The Big Deal takes you right inside the Hollywood movie machine with behind-the-scene stories from hundreds of players--writers, agents, directors, producers, and studio execs who share their secrets of success and cautionary tales of woe. Whether you're a genuine scribe or diehard fan who craves the real dish, *The Big Deal* will put you in the picture.

.com So, you want to write a movie. You could do worse than read *The Big Deal*, a collection of funny, horrible, and/or inspiring stories of Hollywood break-ins by former Oliver Stone employee Thom Taylor. What's most striking about the book is the madly random nature of films' gestations. Allison Anders got her break (and off welfare) via the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Nicholl Fellowship (one of several competitions Taylor recommends). *Total Recall* was optioned for \$1,000 16 years before it got made. *The Elephant Man* script got to its producer because the coauthor's girlfriend baby-sat for him. *Alien* only got made because Steven Spielberg liked it. Andrew Kevin

Walker, the Tower Records clerk who wrote *Seven*, wrote a letter to then barely known screenwriter David Koepp (*Bad Influence*), who improbably hooked him up with a deal that collapsed partly because the studio's co-owner was distracted by becoming the president of Italy. Various moguls rejected and almost destroyed the story; Brad Pitt saved it, and it grossed \$340 million. Dustin Hoffman cleverly added the hero's guilt over failing to save JFK to *In the Line of Fire*, then exited; Tom Cruise's people demanded this be deleted, because a 28-year-old hero wouldn't have been around for JFK. The dead-broke writer spurned about \$100,000 from Cruise, and just when he would've settled for Bob Denver, wound up with Clint Eastwood and about \$1 million. "If Hollywood scoured the earth looking for the world's top furniture designers," Taylor writes, the studios "would bring them all to Los Angeles to design \$6 plastic chairs to sell at the local Wal-Mart." But it's the only Hollywood we've got, and Taylor has got its number. --Tim Appelo "If you want to know how that million-dollar fantasy comes true, read this book and laugh, weep, and wonder." -- Jeremy Kagan, award-winning director "Next to talent, *The Big Deal* is the best ammunition for a new screenwriter entering the Hollywood wars." -- Paul N. Lazarus, producer, *Westworld* and *Capricorn One*, and director of the Motion Pictures Program, University of Miami School of Communications "Reading *The Big Deal* is like overhearing a spec script power lunch at Morton's. To be successful in the spec market, read this book." -- Tom Holland, writer and director of *Child's Play* and Stephen King's *The Langoliers* "The title grabbed my attention. The book held it. An excellent portrait of not just the US script market, but the whole business of writing, *THE BIG DEAL* is thoroughly researched, well-organized and crisply written.... Besides describing quick auctions at inflated prices, the book chronicles sales that took years.... *LAST ACTION HERO* gets the longest chapter, and is a harrowing portrait of development hell being driven by the worst of the Hollywood blockbuster mentality.... It's not the only perversion on show. The book describes an industry where "the decisions are pushed down to the very youngest people in the process [the trackers]." Trackers are the junior story people hired to track writers and their spec scripts. Trackers can kill a good script. The book quotes an anonymous studio producer saying that because trackers "talk to each other all day long they make decisions largely based on whether or not their friends are in so you end up with insecure young children with no real guts protecting their jobs." At the same time the book totally endorses the spec market as an empowering development for screenwriters. It stresses that a script can be crushed at the bottom of the system if the person placing it isn't connected. If you want to crack the L.A. market, this book is indispensable. If you'd rather avoid the whole mess and stick to the Canadian scene, the *THE BIG DEAL* is a fun read, except for all those big numbers." -- Bruce McKenna -- "Canadian Screenwriter," magazine of the Writers Guild of Canada "This entertaining insider's look at the real, painful, pathetic, and ultimately random process by which Hollywood's power elite attempts to predict 'the next big thing' makes stock picking look logical by comparison." -- Douglas Rushkoff, author of *Media Virus* and *Ecstasy Club* "This entertaining, anecdotal, and personalized book takes an amusing look at the business side of selling screenplays in the glitter capital of the world. . . . Thom Taylor has accurately captured the flavor and serendipity of this bizarre marketplace of literary madness." -- Peter J. Dekom, entertainment lawyer and co-chairman of American Cinematheque "Thom Taylor's book, *The Big Deal*, is a most comprehensive and knowledgeable look at the subject of marketing scripts for motion pictures. It is an evening read." -- Robert Wise, film producer and Academy Award-winning director of *The Sound of Music* and *West Side Story* "[Thom Taylor] tells of a Hollywood so desperate for new material that ideas -- in the form of independently written "spec scripts" -- become million-dollar plus propositions. Unlike scripts written by writers under contract with a major studio, specs can be bought and developed by anybody. With a clever agent and a few interested stars or directors, a spec can quickly become a hot property, with dozens of studios bidding for the rights to put it into production. Taylor... tells the stories of several scripts, all of which sold for big bucks. After sale, however, a spec's path is in no way guaranteed -- some become hits, some flops, and many more never get made at all, becoming mired in what is plainly referred to as "development hell." Although ostensibly a guide for writers themselves, thanks to the depth of its research, *The Big Deal* becomes a revealing look at the whole Hollywood filmmaking process ." -- Mark T.R. Donohue - *The Daily Californian* Author Thom Taylor mixes keen observations with telling insider testimonials and in-depth case studies to vividly illustrate just how damned difficult it is to not only make a spec sale, but to then actually see your work reach the silver screen. The result is an intelligent, take-no-prisoners assault on the Hollywood Dream Factory that serves more as a cautionary tale than a blue-print for launching and maintaining a screenwriting career." -- Allen B. Ury - "Fade In: The First Word in Film" About the Author Thom Taylor has written on the film and television business for *Millimeter*, *Movieline*, and other industry magazines. He currently mines the spec market at an L.A. talent and literary agency. He lives in Studio City, California.