SORKIN THEFT LETTER FROM ENGLAND

Not long ago I received this email from Kevin R. Craft, a writer in England:

Dear William,

First of all I’d like to say I’m impressed with your web site <http://www.williamrichert.com/> which contains your and your partner’s dispute with Aaron Sorkin and the infamous THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT screenplay..

I have read all the information you’ve written and the details regarding yourself, your then writing partner together with the other people involved in this dispute so I am familiar after reading this last night from your web site.

Let me just say I’m horrified this happened to you and your partner and the fact big players in the industry allowed this to happen, and the WGA arbitration system failed to protect you, is nothing more than a crime of the century.. To make matters worse, not only did Aaron Sorkin steal your screenplay but he also developed the TV Series based on same which is a kick in both balls so to speak! I really am astounded and outraged for you..

The reason I stumbled across your web site is I have recently come into possession of a copy of THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT screenplay, THIRD DRAFT, with all revisions and dated same. I acquired this from the UCLA web site. The UCLA Writers Program previously hung up 850 screenplays for their student body to be able to download and study in Adobe Acrobat PDF electronic document format. These scripts were not meant for public consumption, merely for the academic staff and student body however, the internet being what it is, people discover screenplays on-line and the next ting you know those who want then get access and download.

I’m not an American citizen I am in fact British, or as you guys say English. I am actually emailing you this very minute from the North-West of England.

I’m not a professional screenwriter and have no professional credits but I am a writer learning and trying to develop my craft writing for the screen. So to supplement my published book reading on screenwriting I also read a large amount of screenplays downloaded from the internet. I also purchase scanned screenplays in Adobe PDF format too. But when I came across the UCLA scripts on their web site I found a goldmine and downloaded all of them. In that treasure chest of scripts I found Aaron Sorkin’s Third draft of THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT with all the revisions scanned in Adobe PDF document format. The document was not in US Letter paper size but looks more like twice the paper size with the opposite portion being the right of the page blank.. So I decided to export every page as a separate PDF and import into Adobe Photoshop with the view of cropping every page using an ACTION script which would produce the correct US Letter sized pages and therefore facilitate a correct paper sized screenplay in electronic document form should I wish to print this to hard copy. Needless to say I also have a database and where possible I enter information about the screenplay, the dates and writers together with a photograph of said writer or writers and in order that I could enter the information about THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT I ventured into Google and performed a search and low and behold I then discover your web site. Not only do I find your web site but I also then discover that Aaron Sorkin has plagiarised. The fact this mess runs far deeper with lots more people involved which has further confounded the problem beggar’s belief!

So now I have a copy of Aaron Sorkin’s THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT Third Draft screenplay and feel really crap I have it because I’ve read your treatise on your web site.

I just wanted to say thank you for sharing what must be your own personal nightmare. I really am very sorry this happened to you and your writing partner.. The fact the WGA did nothing to protect you and you continue to pursue this through the courts also beggar’s belief!

The WGA needs revamping, it needs the rank and file members to revised it’s rules and regulations so this doesn’t happen again. It is a shame that those responsible within the WGA should let this become a problem in the first place only to still be hanging around years and decades later is a tragedy of Über proportions!

My only intension is to read, learn and develop as a writer and the fact I downloaded this infamous script, as a decent human being, to respond and contact you, if only to say hello to you and to offer my sympathy and support.

If there is anything I can do for you please let me know and if I am able in any capacity to offer my help consider it done.

I’m sure you must have copies of this infamous script but if you do not have a copy of this particular draft then please do let me know and I will send it you as an attachment..

The world can be a terrible place some times but it is other humans who make it bad not the world itself. Aaron Sorkin did this and others helped him to avoid detection and pay for his crime. I sincerely hope you find the justice you and your writing partner of the original script truly deserve.

To say I’m shocked is an understatement. This whole affair is a travesty of justice and something needs to be done about it..

Have a great day and I hope you read this email from a decent guy in Great Britain, who is seeking to develop in the black arts of screenwriting, a fellow human, who really does empathize with your plight.

Take care.. Anything you need anytime please contact me..

Best regards

Kevan R. Craft. B.A. P. G. Dip.