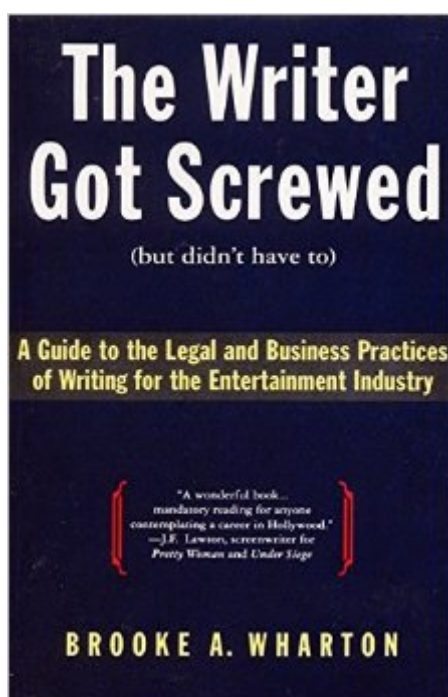


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# The Writer Got Screwed (but Didn't Have To): Guide To The Legal And Business Practices Of Writing For The Entertainment Industry



## Synopsis

An indispensable roadmap to success, *The Writer Got Screwed* is the first book to untangle the legal and business aspects of writing for the entertainment industry. It is for the young TV production assistant waiting for a big break, the executive with a treatment tucked away in a bottom drawer, the techie targeting the new field of cyberspace writing, or anyone who is inspired to write screenplays. Savvy Hollywood entertainment attorney Brooke Wharton decodes legal jargon, explains how to protect creative work, shows how to read between the lines of a contract, and advises how to avoid getting sued and screwed along the way. Useful resources, including a list of agencies, competitions, fellowships, internships, and legal organizations, make *The Writer Got Screwed* an essential part of every writer's tool chest.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I had the pleasure of meeting the author, entertainment attorney Brooke A. Wharton with agent Jonathan Westover of The Gage Group. As a former paralegal, I am often questioned by friends and there are few books available that tell me something I don't already know about writer's business concerns. This book is one of them. More than just a guide, this book is a valuable and essential resource tool for every writer. Though the book focuses on the film industry, universal topics such as how to protect your work, contracts, release forms, managers, agents and lawyers - to query letters and competitions are covered in plain English and the information can easily be applied to any form of writing. For example, "pitching" is an art form similar to proposals, while rights and options are a key element in all news-related and fiction writing involving real people. Also,

many agents handle both book manuscripts and screenplays. If you're like me, your bookshelves are cluttered with writing industry books. Trust me, this one is worth it. Having this book is like having a lawyer at your fingertips. With information on networking, competitions, legal organizations and cyberscribing, this book can serve as a writer's business plan blueprint. It was the best investment I made in my writing career this year. I honestly don't know of any writer who could not benefit from the information in this book.

As an entertainment professional, I consider this book essential reading. Any aspiring or even working writer should pick this one up. In fact, anyone and everyone in the business of film-making would be well-served by reading this book. It's much more funny, informative, and relevant than the other similar books in the marketplace. The cost of the book is a small price to pay for an education that may help protect you for the rest of your career.

This is a wonderful resource for screenwriters. Wharton demystifies the copyright/WGA registration issue, explains the legalities about writing true stories, offers great sample contracts, and clears up many of the questions writers are afraid to ask for fear of sounding ignorant. This book has been on my shelves for years, and I continue to refer and recommend it often. --Jenna Glatzer, [jenna@absolutewrite.com](mailto:jenna@absolutewrite.com)

Anyone interested in writing -- not just screenplays, but fiction, nonfiction, plays or anything else that could possibly be co-opted for Hollywood production should add this book to their personal reference library. Brooke Wharton sagely lays out all the legal and political ins and outs pertaining to writers and writing in Hollywood: copyright protection, WGA (writers guild union) issues, contracts, deal memos, work-for-hire, credits, credit arbitration, agents vs managers vs lawyers, making contacts, original work vs adaptations, ancillary rights, residuals, intellectual property ownership, etc. An experienced entertainment attorney with a high-profile client roster of her own (and former faculty member at the USC School of Cinema-Television), Wharton rightfully recognizes that information is power and she lays it out in thorough, easy-to-understand and often humorous terms for a writer's benefit. This is an incredibly useful resource that writers can refer to, time and time again. A must addition for any writer's library.

Whether you are new to the biz or have been around the block more times than you'd care to admit, Brooke Wharton's book is a must-have for your screenwriting library. Not only does it lead you

through the almost impenetrable maze of legal and business aspects of the industry, it does so with incredible humor, charm and grace. All the dumb questions you are too afraid to ask in public are answered here, along with brilliant insights you'll be hitting yourself over the head for not thinking of first. Also, Ms. Wharton never lectures or talks down to you; instead, she is the smart friend you wish you could call up the night before your big meeting to make sure you're covering all your angles. I HIGHLY recommend this book to all would-be and current writers for Hollywood...it is on my shelf right above my computer, always within arm's reach. I use it a lot...and so will you.

There are a lot of books out there on writing for the entertainment industry, but this was the one book that got me started. A lot of writers tend to pass around gossip and poor information, but this book set me straight from the beginning, and is now joined by Wharton's website/blog: [brookewharton.com](http://brookewharton.com) (rated in top 10 for film blogs). This is the one book that anyone writing for film or television should START WITH. I'm mystified by a previous reviewer who said that Wharton doesn't talk about the WGA (there's a whole chapter on the guild), and also that she doesn't discuss acquisitions vs. development (it's called spec sales vs. assignments in the 1st 10 pages of the chapter on writing for film). Clearly this person couldn't have read the book. If you need real answers, buy the book.

This book (*The Writer Got Screwed*) has been around a while, but the information in it is as valuable today as it was the day it was written. It's an excellent primer for writers and others who want to learn their way around the entertainment industry guided by a real pro who knows her way around the legal and business world of Hollywood. It's very well-written and helpful. My copy has so many corners folded over from referencing parts I've re-read over and over, I'll need a back up copy soon. Highly recommended.

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