

August 28, 2000

Dear Richard,

I'm writing this letter to you to bring an important point, which I hope doesn't become an issue, to your attention. In your enthusiasm to have your name associated with an interesting, meaningful and possibly important project, you seem to have forgotten the source of the idea for that project. It saddens me that I actually need to remind you that the idea, which you seem to be pursuing, regarding making an animated film from the book by Penny Jones (The Brown Bottle), was actually an idea which I conceived and brought to you, literally in detail.

I would like to think that I would not need to remind you of this. I would like to think that you would acknowledge this. It wasn't very long ago that while you, Jerry, and I were driving in Jerry's car, that you said the idea for the film was yours. If you recall, my reaction was immediate. I was surprised and upset. Several years ago, when I originally showed you the book by Penny Jones (the first time you had seen it), it was because I had an idea which I thought would have some social value, and which I thought you could develop. I outlined the possibilities that an animated film of this wonderfully written book might be useful as an educational tool for everyone, especially the young. I told you that Thomas Warkentin would be a good candidate for illustrating a story line, I told you that you could create a music score, I told you that it would be a good idea to form a non-profit organization, which could offer the completed film to schools, libraries, and organizations such as AA, etc.. I told you that it would be likely that major alcohol producers may even have an interest in funding or offering such a film. I went as far as contacting Seagrams, to see if they had a department that supported/funded alcohol awareness and education. I suggested to you how to contact Penny Jones, and you and Jeff Cook followed my suggestion and finally contacted her. I suggested ways to deal with the publishing company which held the rights to her book. Above all, I told you that if you were to realize success with this "project", that I would want some compensation, and acknowledgment.

I didn't bring you the book to show you a book, I brought you the book to tell you the idea. It was NOT your idea. I brought you the book AND the idea. The idea was and still is mine.

I'm not going to speculate on the reason(s) for your denial of where this idea originated, it may be your ego, or your general deceptive nature, but I am going to give you an opportunity to clarify this point. As far as compensation for what I did, which was to contribute the "seed" idea for this project, I feel that if this project ever comes to fruition, I should be acknowledged as the person whose idea it was to make the film, and I would also expect to receive some monetary compensation.

Another thing I would like to mention is that when I brought you the book and the idea, I said I wanted the book returned to me, and you promised to give it back. I still want it back.

John