

Slick screenplay?

'Oil Slickers' a movie with a message

By Rick Moon
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Say hello to EnviroMan the screenwriter.

You've seen the movie "City Slickers," about three middle-aged men who rejuvenate their lives on a cattle drive?

Well, I've got an idea that will blow that one out of the water.

Mine is called "Oil Slickers."

Ha — when I sell this, I'll make so much money I can quit my job as a mild-mannered reporter. I'll ditch these green tights and get something sleek and shiny — like, say, spandex.

I'll let you in on my new screenplay, as long as you promise not to copy it and sell it for a million bucks. Here goes:

Tom, Dick and Harry are decent joes who work for a living and don't jaywalk. Their lives were pretty normal and happy until The Incident.

This was actually three events with a common theme: The men's wives took their cars in for oil changes on the same day.

"Oh, it was so dirty!" exclaimed Tom's wife, Penelope.

"Oh, it was so expensive!" pleaded Dick's wife, Jane.

"Oh, that attendant was leering at me!" cried Harry's wife, Mary.

Virtually in unison, the three women yelled at their husbands, "Why can't you change the oil yourself?"



This struck at the very core of Tom, Dick and Harry's manhood. That night, the three of them bought a how-to auto repair manual.

They pored over Chapter 8, "Changing Your Oil," for several days. The following Saturday, each could be spotted in his driveway, hunkered under a car twisting, pulling and pouring. Yes, they were changing the oil.

Tom put his used oil in the garbage. Dick poured his on the ground. And Harry dumped his down a sewer.

"You did what?" the wives said, again in unison.

"Don't you know putting used oil in the garbage is illegal?" Penelope queried Tom.

"Don't you know pouring oil on the ground can pollute groundwater?" Jane asked Dick.

"Don't you know dumping oil down a sewer pollutes rivers and lakes?" Mary questioned Harry.

The men were puzzled. This was an unforeseen development.

So they set off in pursuit of

knowledge. They learned that 260 million gallons of used oil are disposed of incorrectly in the United States each year. They found that this not only pollutes; it wastes a usable energy source, too.

Finally, they realized the only safe way to dispose of used oil is at a public collection tank or a service station.

So, 3,000 auto miles later, Tom, Dick and Harry each changed their oil and poured the old stuff in a tank at the municipal garage.

"Oh, you changed the oil and disposed of it properly!" the wives exclaimed.

"That's right, honey. Now, let's say we make up!" Tom, Dick and Harry replied.

The couples all hopped on their bicycles built for two, and headed off into the sunset. Destination: Unknown.

The end. A guaranteed masterpiece. It's got conflict, enlightenment and a contrived happy ending. According to my "Beginner's Guide to Screenwriting," this is a winner.

Now I'll just sit back and wait for Billy Crystal to call.

It should be any time now. Yep, pretty darn soon.

I'm waiting. I'm waiting ...

(Rick Moon is The Freeman's environment reporter. His column runs on Monday.)