

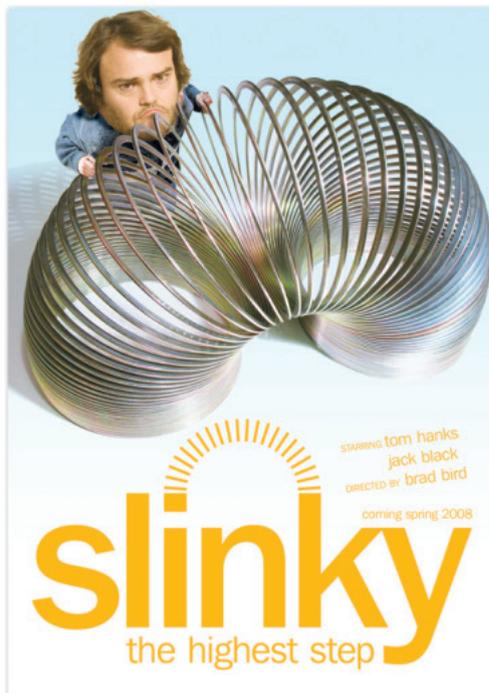
toy story



Early last month a piece ran in *Variety* about Hollywood's latest infatuation — movies adapted from classic toys. The trade magazine, using for its hook this week's release of *Transformers* ("more than meets the eye") and next month's *Bratz* film, went on to explain that the William Morris Agency recently signed Hasbro as a client and was already developing a *Monopoly* movie, to possibly be directed by Ridley Scott. And a *Candy Land* movie.

A risky proposition all around — remember *Clue*? If a toy or game movie bombs, not only does the studio suffer, but the manufacturer takes a hit. On the other side, contemporary toys so often come with a previously worked-out mythology (not to mention, legs and arms), they lend themselves to narrative. With that in mind, here are five suggestions for toy-based films, complete with a pitch and casting suggestions. Producers, if you like, you know where to send that check.

Story by Christopher Borrelli/Illustrations by Sean McKeown-Young



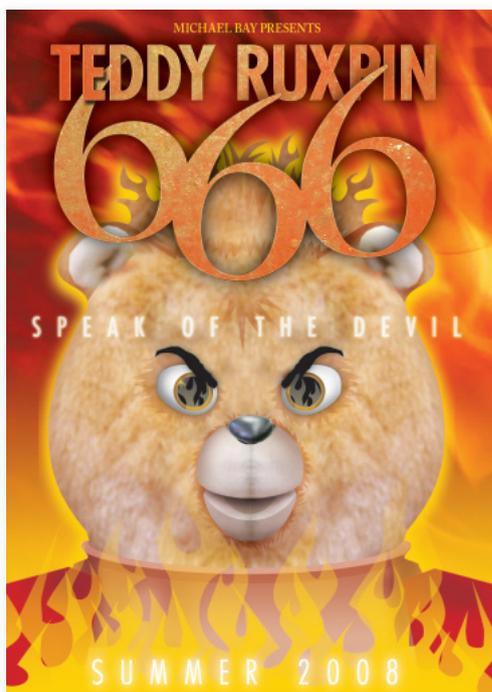
Slinky: The Highest Step

The Pitch: OK, think *The Little Engine That Could* meets *Die Hard*. An outcast swirl of metal is discovered tossed aside at an old abandoned construction site, befriended by a lonely child, and taken home. A bond is formed, followed by a montage of Slinky trying on different outfits. But in the third act, Slinky is stalked by the boy's other toys, who don't see his purpose — which, during an especially intense scene, is revealed when Slinky mistakenly finds himself on *the highest step*.

The Twist: Seconds before the closing credits, the boy's parents bring home his new toy, a *plastic* Slinky, setting up a blood feud, to be explored in the 2009 sequel (which is already green-lighted).

Suggested Casting: Tom Hanks is the voice of Slinky. Jack Black, in short pants, plays the sad boy.

Directed by: Brad Bird.



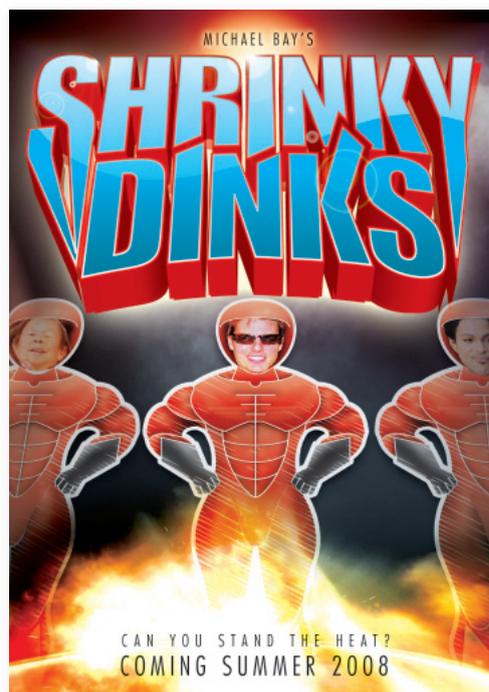
Teddy Ruxpin: 666

The Pitch: *Child's Play* meets *Make Way for Ducklings*. Opening weekend, \$175 million, conservatively. Teddy Ruxpin, our automatronic anti-hero bear, is awakened from his long slumber in the corner of a hipster retro-'80s shop at the Arctic Circle, breaks free, eats the face of a backpacking college student, outruns a fireball, learns the meaning of friendship and sacrifice, defeats the Sandman, then sets out to cross a busy highway. His goal: Reach the park, underneath which sits the ninth circle of Hades, Teddy's ancestral home.

The Twist: Keith Richards makes a cameo as Teddy's dad.

Suggested Casting: Steve Buscemi voices Teddy — 'nuff said.

Directed by: Michael Bay



Shrinky Dinks

The Pitch: Think *Transformers*, but the other way around. Millions of years ago, a comet brought technology from an advanced civilization to Earth, where it remained buried beneath the Arctic Circle, only to be awakened from its slumber by a combination of global warming and a passing team of hot-shot, 18-to-34-year-old explorers with an oven, a heat gun, and a handful of felt-tip markers. Unstoppable but brittle, Shrinky Dinks fan across the globe, infiltrating costume jewelry, shrinking plastic sheets of paper, and stopping in Winnipeg to visit their aging mother in a nursing home (Julie Christie), who must be freed from the bonds of a pirate curse.

The Twist: A cabal of human Shrinky Dinks is revealed, led by Tom Cruise, Prince, and Michu.

Directed by: Michael Bay



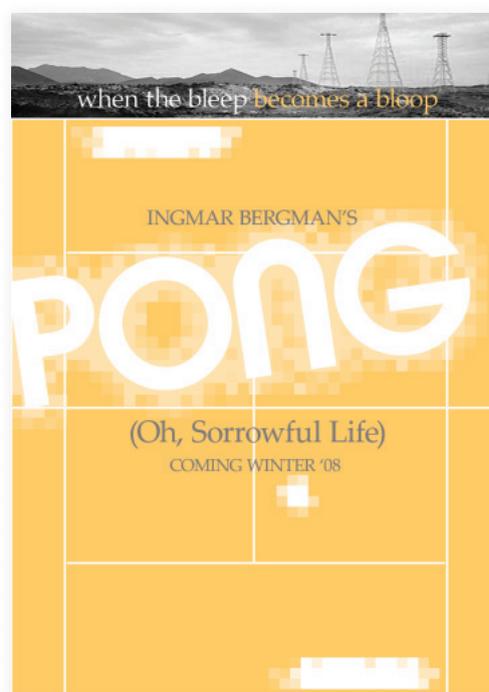
Easy-Bake Oven: The Rising

The Pitch: A group of hot shot 18-to-34-year old backpacking college-student hunters and Arctic explorers find themselves the hunted when they stumble on a secret society of businessmen who pay for the sick privilege of luring their victims into an abandoned Eastern European construction site and baking overcooked cupcakes for them. If handled properly, the *ding* that lets you know your cake is ready should become as menacing as the *dun-dun-dun* thing in *Jaws*. Also the Easy Bake Oven rides a surf board, devours planets, and learns the meaning of sacrifice.

The Twist: Orlando Bloom dies, and later builds a giant ark.

Suggested Casting: Tom Hanks is the voice of the cupcakes.

Directed by: Eli Roth



Pong: Oh, Sorrowful Life

The Pitch: A fat, pathetic brick who gets stoned all the time meets a really hot career-girl brick and they get drunk and hook up at the Arctic Circle and bat a ball back and forth and Adam Sandler isn't gay, he's just a fireman who need partner's benefits, and a lonely bond is formed with Harry Potter. The fat brick meets a surfing penguin and they rob a casino because of global warming and everything, and in the finale, the ball discovers the meaninglessness of its existence. Shot in black and white, goes on and on and on and on; ultimately a metaphor for living. Needless to say, it's an art movie.

The Twist: The *bleep* becomes a *bloop* but it's too late, and Orlando Bloom dies from a curse.

Directed by: Ingmar Bergman.