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Brad Bird
Pixar Animation Studios
1200 Park Drive
Emeryville CA 94608

Re: On-screen typography in *Mission: Impossible — Ghost Protocol*

Dear Mr. Bird:

One of my favorite movies is *The Incredibles*, so I was looking forward to seeing your new *Mission: Impossible* film. IMAX? Of course. Was it terrific? Absolutely: hugely entertaining, with superb action sequences and great camerawork (my favorite shot was through the back window of the SUV as it rolled over). As a moviegoer, no complaints.

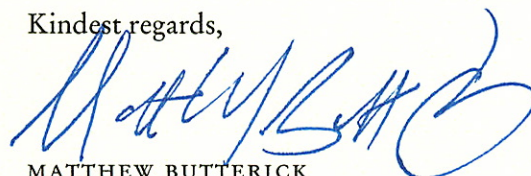
But as a type designer — meaning, someone who designs fonts — one quibble. A number of scenes had subtitles or captions. All of these were set in the font Verdana. There are two problems with Verdana.

First, it's not functionally suitable. Verdana is a Microsoft font, designed in 1996 to optimize the legibility of small-size text on low-resolution computer screens. It wasn't intended for large-size text on high-resolution movie screens.

Second, it's not stylistically suitable. Verdana is a built-in font on nearly every Windows and Mac computer. It's used on zillions of web pages. It's ubiquitous. Therefore, the person who uses Verdana suggests to readers "I couldn't be bothered to pick anything better." It's also well-known as the corporate font of IKEA — probably not the association you're going for.

Inapt typography is not uncommon in movies. But big-budget studio films employ scores of people specifically to worry about the details that ensure the on-screen experience will be seamless. Therefore, it's incongruous to put all that care (and money!) into the frame and then overlay it with an inapt font, which in its own small way, breaks the illusion. It's not *Mission: Impossible — IKEA Protocol*, is it.

Kindest regards,



MATTHEW BUTTERICK