

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Theme Park Press Announces New Jim Korkis Book: *Who's Afraid of the Song of the South?*

Orlando, Florida — November 19, 2012 — Disney historian and best-selling author Jim Korkis is not afraid of the classic but forbidden Disney film *Song of the South*. Who is afraid of it? The Disney Company, as Jim explains in his new book *Who's Afraid of the Song of the South*, available in print and digital editions from Theme Park Press.

In the book, Jim provides the first definitive account of the film, its history, its production, and the controversy that still surrounds it. Is *Song of the South* racist? Is it inappropriate for modern audiences? Why has Disney refused to release the film theatrically since 1986?

Using a multitude of sources, including personal interviews with those who worked on the film, Jim examines every aspect of *Song of the South's* troubled and troubling history: the problems writing the screenplay, the background of the live actors, how the animation was created, Walt Disney's personal contributions, why the film remains controversial today, and every other aspect of the film you can't but should see.

The book features a lengthy foreword by Disney Legend Floyd Norman, Disney's first Black animator and storyman. An [excerpt](#) from that foreword is included in this press kit.

Who's Afraid of the Song of the South? isn't just about the film. Jim also shares seventeen amazing — and equally forbidden — stories the Disney Company wishes were never told. You'll learn about Disney's sex education film, Walt's plan for Mickey Mouse to commit suicide, Tim Burton's depressed stint at the Disney Studios, Ward Kimball's UFO obsession, Walt's owl nightmares, the Disneyland Memorial Orgy poster, and lots more.

For a complete list, see the [Table of Contents](#) also included in this press kit.

Jim's authoritative but friendly and accessible style makes the book a treat not just for film buffs and academics but for Disney fans everywhere.

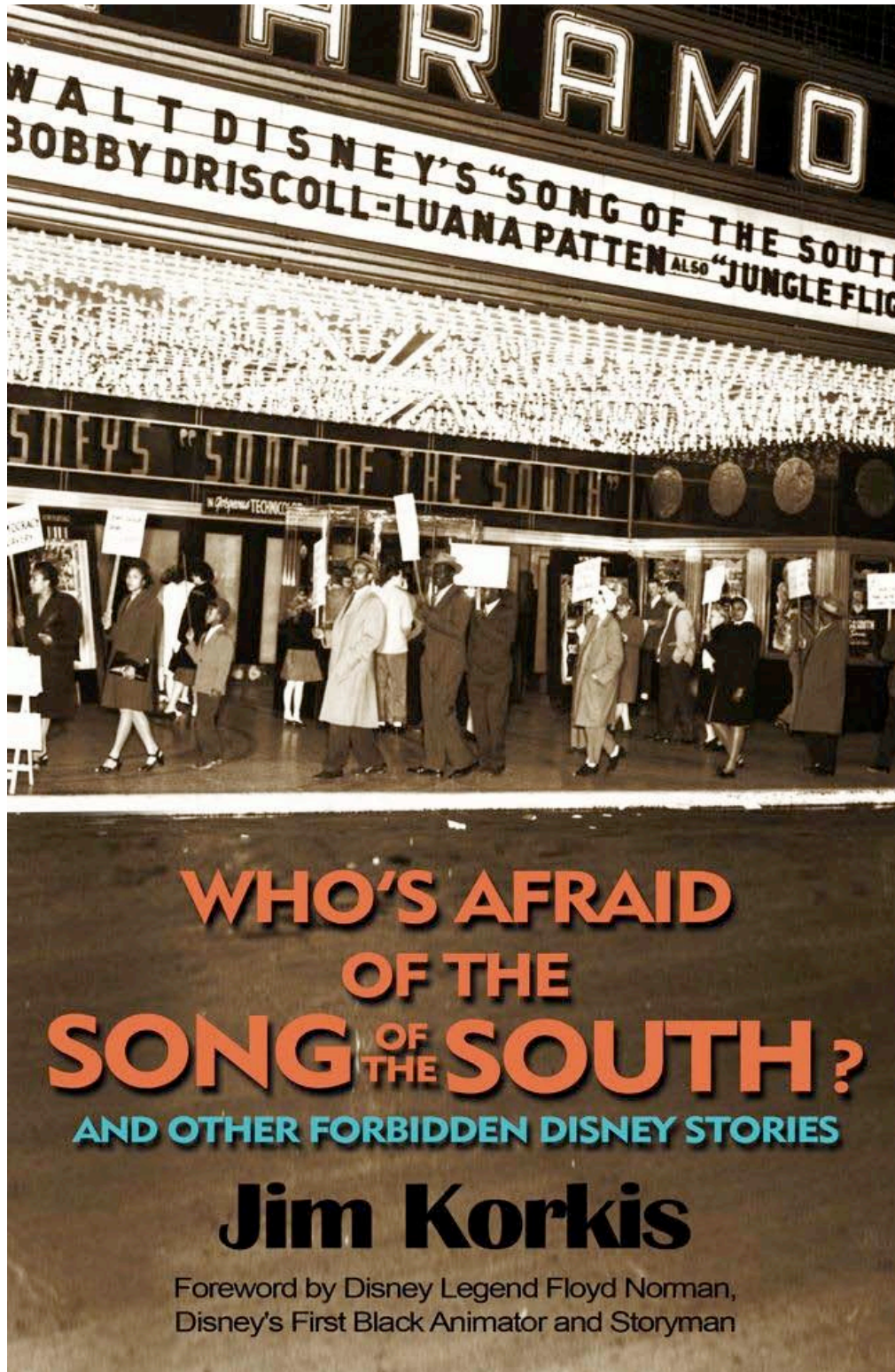
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Availability for *Who's Afraid of the Song of the South?*

Who's Afraid of the Song of the South? [978-0-9843415-5-9] is available in print and digital editions. For price, excerpts, and full details, visit www.ThemeParkPress.com.



Jim Korkis on *Who's Afraid of the Song of the South?*

“The story behind the controversy of why the Disney feature film *Song of the South* (1946) has been locked away tightly in the Disney vault for decades is a sad mixture of insensitivity, misunderstandings, and urban legends.

“The very mention of this historic Disney film continues to spark heated emotions and effusive oratory from both its defenders as well as from its detractors,” remarked Korkis, author of the popular book *The Vault of Walt*. “Since just discussing *Song of the South* at all was going to create a furor, I decided to fill out the rest of the book with stories that might not be appropriate in a different Disney history book.

“For instance, the story behind Disney’s involvement in the sex education film *The Story of Menstruation* was cut by the original publisher of *The Vault of Walt* who felt its inclusion would be improper. I didn’t know it had been cut until I was reading the final galley proof!

“Now, finally, that information can be shared for Disney fans and future researchers.”



Jim Korkis is a well-known, respected Disney historian who has been researching and writing about Disney history for over thirty years. His research has garnered international acclaim for recording previously unexplored areas of Disney history, and his extensive expertise and knowledge is used often by the Disney Company itself for special projects.

Jim Korkis is available for interviews, podcasts, and events. Contact Theme Park Press [authors@themeparkpress.com] or write to Jim directly [jimkorkis@themeparkpress.com].

Praise for *Who's Afraid of the Song of the South?*

- Jim Korkis has come up with material that deepens our understanding and appreciation of Walt Disney's work on *Song of the South* and puts it into a proper historical context. I learned a lot I didn't know before, and I'm sure other Disneyphiles will feel the same way.

- **Leonard Maltin**
Film Critic, Historian, and Author of *The Disney Films*
- Everything the Disney Company did in its Golden Age is worth watching and discussing — and nobody discusses it better and with such accuracy and passion as Jim Korkis. Korkis digs into the nooks and crannies of the most obscure politically incorrect films not covered by the Studio's approved historians. A must-read!

- **Jerry Beck**
Animation Historian, Author, and Webmaster of CartoonBrew.com
- Jim Korkis has accomplished what Disney hasn't done — present us with the facts on *Song of the South*, and let us be the judge. Jim's excellent book should be a poignant reminder that censorship is not the answer."

- **Christian E. Willis**
Webmaster of SongoftheSouth.net
- Jim Korkis cuts skillfully through decades of misunderstandings and inaccuracies to confront the positive and negative issues — many of which are emotionally charged and culturally significant — presenting the most comprehensive examination to date of a unique film's odyssey from one century into another.

- **Greg Ehrbar**
Disney Musicologist, Author, and Webmaster of MouseTracksOnline.com
- Disney stories are insightful as well as fun, and no one tells them better than Jim Korkis. Jim truly loves his material and so will you. I heartily recommend his new book.

- **Floyd Norman**
Disney Legend and Disney's First Black Animator and Storyman

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Excerpt: Foreword by Disney Legend Floyd Norman

When this young artist and others arrived at Walt Disney Studios in the Fifties, we found ourselves having access to the coveted Disney vaults. This meant any movie we wanted to see was suddenly available for screening. Naturally, one of our first choices was *Song of the South*.

However, I took this a step farther. Because employees were able to check out 16mm prints on occasion, I set up a special screening of the Disney film in a local Los Angeles church. The screening of the Disney motion picture proved insightful. The completely African-American audience absolutely loved the movie and even requested a second screening of the Disney classic.

It's a long time from *Song of the South's* initial release. Yet even today the film continues to be mired in controversy and that's a shame. I often remind people that the Disney movie is not a documentary on the American South.

The film remains a sweet and gentle tale of a kindly old gentleman helping a young child get through a troubled time. The motion picture is also flavored with some of the most inspired cartoon animation ever put on the screen. If you're a fan of classic Disney storytelling, I guarantee you'll not find a better film.

I survived three different managements at the Disney Company beginning in the Fifties when I worked as Disney's first black animator and later as a storyman. Not once did I observe a hint of the racist behavior Walt Disney was often accused of long after his death.

Why bury the wonderful performances of James Baskett, Hattie McDaniel, and Ruth Warrick? Why deny animation fans some of the finest cartoon animation to ever come out of the Disney studio? Finally, hearing the voice performances of Johnny Lee as Brer Rabbit, and Nick Stewart as Brer Bear, never fails to bring a smile to my face. America has come a long way since a little black kid sat in a movie theater in Santa Barbara and dreamed of a Disney career. Maybe it's not too much to hope that the Disney Company might one day get over its self-imposed fears, and finally finds its own Laughing Place.

Floyd Norman is an African-American animator who worked on the Walt Disney animated features Sleeping Beauty, The Sword in the Stone, and The Jungle Book as well as more recently contributing creatively as a story artist on films such as Toy Story 2, Monsters, Inc., Mulan, Dinosaur and The Hunchback of Notre Dame. He continues to work for the Walt Disney Company as a freelance consultant on various projects. He was inducted as a Disney Legend in 2007.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Jim Korkis?

Jim Korkis is a well-respected Disney historian who has written hundreds of articles and done hundreds of presentations about all things Disney for over three decades. He is the author of the popular book *The Vault of Walt*, featuring thirty-eight previously untold stories about Walt Disney, his films, his parks, and more.

Jim's personal research has received international acclaim for documenting previously unexplored areas of Disney history. His extensive expertise and knowledge has been used many times by the Disney Company itself for special projects. Jim is not currently a Disney cast member but is the recipient of the prestigious Disney "Partners" award.

How is this book different than other Disney books?

The biggest difference is that it is written by Jim Korkis and includes what many Disney history experts refer to "the Disney stories only Jim Korkis knows". The book is written in a style to appeal to both academic scholars and ordinary Disney fans.

Each chapter is a short, self-contained section, making it easy for readers to go to an area of interest and read a complete story quickly. The book is filled with information garnered from decades of personal interviews, extensive research, and obscure sources of information.

What is in the book?

The first part of the book tells the entire story of the making of *Song of the South*. In addition, there are short chapters about other aspects of the film, from the long-running Sunday newspaper comic strip to the Splash Mountain attraction at Disney theme parks.

The second part of the book features seventeen separate chapters that focus on a wide range of topics relating to the worlds of Disney organized in three categories:

- **SEX** How Disney created one of the most popular and effective sexual education films. The story of the Disneyland Memorial Orgy poster. And more!
- **SECRETS** The urban myth of Walt Disney's final words. Why Walt thought it'd be fun for Mickey Mouse to commit suicide. Walt's owl nightmares. And more!
- **FLUBBED FILMS** Tim Burton's depressed stint at Disney Studios. Ward Kimball's UFO obsession. Disney's failed attempt at filming the Land of Oz. And more!

How do I get the book?

For price, availability, and lots more, visit www.ThemeParkPress.com. Or, if you run a relevant blog or site, and would like a review copy, contact bob@themeparkpress.com.

About Theme Park Press

Theme Park Press was founded in 2012 by Bob McLain to provide the very best print and digital books about the Disney theme parks, Disney history and culture, Disney guidebooks and biographies, and theme park topics in general.

Forthcoming books through late winter 2013 include:

- A revised edition of Jim Korkis' best-selling *The Vault of Walt*
- A memoir by a well-known Disney Legend who worked with Walt
- A behind-the-scenes "diary" by a Disney College Program graduate
- A unique series of historical Walt Disney World guidebooks
- A humorous guide to the Disney characters you *don't* want to meet
- A series of extensive "dialogs" with Disney Legends and luminaries
- A young adult novel called *Disneylanders* set in Disneyland
- An in-depth history of the Carousel of Progress from 1964 to the present
- An anthology series by the world's foremost Disney authors and bloggers
- And many, many more!

Bob McLain, the founder of Theme Park Press, retired from a successful career spanning two decades as an editorial consultant and information architect for Fortune 100 companies to launch this new venture. His first visits to Disneyland and Walt Disney World were in the early 1970s. He has extensive experience writing about Disney.

Theme Park Press actively seeks new authors. If you have a compelling topic, let's talk: bob@themeparkpress.com. We offer the best royalty and compensation packages in the industry, and our books are produced and printed to the highest standards.