

February 18, 1993

Dear Roland & Jake,

We played around with the Goomba subtitles idea, and we think basically it creates more inconsistency and confusion than potential humor. However, since this movie isn't exactly a slave to logic here are a few approaches that might work.

Before you get your hopes up, we should preface that we're not wild about the idea, and we'll give you our detailed, overly-thought-out reasons why not at the end.

Nevertheless, here are some ground rules for any approach:

Obviously, the Goomba's can't be subtitled every time they make a sound. The shots aren't designed for it, and we'll have milked the idea to death by about the third time anyway. (In fact, the best strategy may be to subtitle only the first scene, so we see that the Goombas communicate, but don't have to make it a running joke.)

They should only address each other. Yes, you could make the argument that they're so stupid they don't realize no one else can understand their language, but since we're looking for ways to limit the number of subtitles this seems logical.

Whatever they say should be short and sweet so it doesn't stop the action or confuse kids. Also, unless we can explain it somehow, their dialog shouldn't be so overly pithy as to be inconsistent with their dim-witted actions. Unless, of course, it's really, really funny.

## **#1 - THE SOMEWHAT REALISTIC APPROACH**

What's really going through their tiny, de-evolved minds? What if they were indeed "loyal, lethal... and stupid"? Can we make a running joke out of how single-minded they are?

Toad/Hark joins the other Goombas who give him his harmonica.

SUBTITLE: "Eat, kill... Here."

SUBTITLE: "Eat, kill... Thanks."

Somewhere before the elevator scene, we subtitle them again. Ideally, after a really complicated exchange of growls:

SUBTITLE: "Eat, kill... Eat, kill..."

In the elevator we pay it off, as Luigi gets them dancing:

SUBTITLE: "Eat, kill, dance..."

SUBTITLE: "Eat, dance, dance..."

SUBTITLE: "Dance, dance, dance..."

## **#2 - THE SOMEWHAT LESS REALISTIC ONE-SHOT APPROACH**

Goombas are "loyal, lethal... and stupid." Maybe they're so stupid we can make a one-time joke out of it:

Toad/Hark joins the other Goombas who give him his harmonica.

SUBTITLE: "Duh... here."

SUBTITLE: "Duh... thanks."

### #3 - THE WHO CARES, GO FOR THE JOKE APPROACH

The strategy here is that the Goomba dialog is not going to have a whole lot to do with the story, it's not going to clarify anything for kids (which reading a subtitle could never do anyway), we're not going to really bother to explain it, it's only there because we thought it would be funny:

Toad/Hark joins the other Goombas who give him his harmonica.

SUBTITLE: "Musicians in the military, what next?"

Goombas shoulder door to hatchcheck room:

SUBTITLE: "It's Bertha on the other side."

SUBTITLE: "Yeah. Let's not push so hard."

Goombas in elevator:

SUBTITLE: "Did you see the game?"

SUBTITLE: "I hear the Hammer Brothers are getting traded."

Another Goomba gets on:

SUBTITLE: "Hey, guys. You see the game?"

SUBTITLE: "I don't even want to talk about it."

The elevator is filling up, an optional kid joke:

SUBTITLE: "Okay. Who farted?"

Once they start dancing, one of the Goombas starts GROWLING the Goomba version of the lyrics. The other Goombas reply:

SUBTITLE: "Shut up and dance."

SUBTITLE: "I hate people who sing along."

Goombas sliding in Ice Tunnel:

SUBTITLE: "We should really get overtime for this."

#### # 4 - THE MAYBE THEY'RE NOT REALLY STUPID APPROACH

Another option is to set up that the Goombas only act stupid (although this seems to negate the idea later that Spike and Iggy can be evolved to be smarter).

Toad/Hark joins the other Goombas who give him his harmonica.

SUBTITLE: "Act stupid. He likes it that way."

#### #5 - THE BEST APPROACH

The best approach, we think, is to do no subtitles. Or at most, only the first scene in the devo chamber. Here's why:

**It's inconsistent with the Goombas.** The Goombas are supposed to be stupid, and their dim-witted actions support this. If we start putting complete sentences in their mouths it seems to undermine this (as well as the idea later that Spike and Iggy can be evolved to be smarter).

**It's inconsistent in the movie.** The scenes aren't designed for subtitles. You need enough time for the Goombas to plausibly say something, then enough time to read it, and in all but a few places there isn't enough time for either. Therefore, it can only be random. If it's a simple bit that randomly pops up, that might be okay, but once you start doing jokes, the audience will start anticipating them. They may even be distracted wondering each time what the Goombas are "really saying."

**It wears thin.** After about 3 of them the jokes start to wear thin anyway, and that's if they're funny. Why?...

**It's been done.** We've seen this idea before, so unless there's a twist it will come off as corny and amateurish. Generally, the subtitle joke works best when it's something we're familiar with -- a baby, a dog -- and the surprise is, "isn't it cute what they're really thinking?" It plays off our expectations and perhaps our insecurities. But the Goombas aren't familiar to the audience yet (the way they are to us anyway). They're taking this information at face value.

**It costs money.** This ones for you, Jake. We don't think the subtitle bit gives you enough for your money -- and that's even if it doesn't cost all that much -- we'd rather see the money spent on fantastic sound, music or effects. Or even additional Writers Bonuses.

**It stops the action.** Most importantly, we think stopping to read subtitles stops the action. Given some of the weak points in the structure, we'd rather keep this baby moving. Younger kids will insist on having the subtitles read to them, and then possibly explained. It doesn't seem worth it.

Anyway, those are our thoughts. Let us know yours.

Continued best wishes,

Parker & Terry