

Veteran TV Writer Lets California's Earthquakes Write His Unproduced Pilots

New website StoryQuake.org turns daily USGS seismic data into AI-generated fiction, starting with sci-fi comedy "Ryan Random and the Mall of the Multiverse."

CULVER CITY, CA, UNITED STATES, July 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- What happens to a TV pilot that never gets produced? For most writers, it gathers dust on a hard drive. For veteran television writer/producer John Derevlany, it gets handed to the most unpredictable showrunner on the planet: the planet itself.

“

I developed more than 20 TV shows that made it to air. I wrote another 60 pilots that didn't. I don't have millions of dollars to produce them now. But it turns out I have earthquakes. Lots of them.”

John Derevlany, Creator of StoryQuake & Veteran TV Writer

StoryQuake.org is a new storytelling experiment that transforms daily California earthquake data into original works of fiction.

Each day, seismic readings are scraped from U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) feeds and run through a proprietary algorithm. The system converts physical tectonic numbers—including magnitude, location, and even the fractional digits of the Richter data—into dozens

of immediate creative decisions that dictate the genre, tone, characters, length, and exact level of weirdness for each story.

These real-world seismic instructions drive a generative AI writing system built on an entirely human foundation: a detailed story treatment, character world, and original hand-drawn artwork created by Derevlany.

From Fault Line to Plot Line: How the Algorithm Works

To bridge the gap between hard geology and creative storytelling, the platform's backend maps real-time physical metrics directly to narrative variables:

* The Tectonic Trigger: StoryQuake's backend continuously monitors USGS data feeds for California seismic events.

* The Richter Blueprint: A higher magnitude might trigger high-stakes cosmic peril, while a minor tremor might spark a lighter, character-driven comedy. The event's coordinates and fractional digits mathematically dictate plot points, settings, and structural chaos.

* The Human Foundation: The algorithmic output is strictly guided by the pre-established boundaries, rules, and artistic assets of the creator's universe.

StoryQuake's debut series, *Ryan Random and the Mall of the Multiverse*, is based on an unsold TV pilot about a hapless security guard at a 4,500-store intergalactic shopping mall—a workplace comedy where the environment occasionally dissolves into the void.



A scene from "Ryan Random and the Mall of the Multiverse," an original story world created by John Derevlany that is dynamically shaped by daily California earthquake data. (Illustration by John Derevlany)

"In three decades in television, I co-created or developed more than 20 shows that made it to air and wrote maybe 60 or 80 pilots that didn't," says Derevlany, whose credits include "LEGO Legends of Chima", "Wayside", "Gerald McBoing Boing", and the upcoming animated action-comedy "Wildcat". "I don't have a studio, a staff, or millions of dollars to produce them. But it turns out I have earthquakes. Lots of them."

Giving AI a "Random Spark"

Derevlany describes StoryQuake as an attempt to give AI the one ingredient it fundamentally lacks: the random spark behind human creativity.

"Great ideas aren't engineered—they're provoked by the world around us," Derevlany explains. "StoryQuake connects machine-generated stories to something real and physical: the ground we stand on. The Earth moves, and a story is born."

New stories appear on the site as California's faults dictate, with each literary piece linked back to the specific, verifiable USGS earthquake event that generated it. Recent titles generated by the Earth's movement include "Everything Must Slide!", "The Full Price Prophecy," and "The Stall of No Return."

StoryQuake was developed by Derevlany with coding support from his son. The site openly and

transparently documents its methodology—offering a unique, collaborative blend of human authorship and algorithmic production at a moment when the role of AI in creative industries is hotly debated.

About StoryQuake

StoryQuake is an independent storytelling project that uses daily California earthquake data to generate serialized fiction from human-created story worlds. Its first series, Ryan Random and the Mall of the Multiverse, is publishing now at <https://storyquake.org/>.

Media Contact:

* Contact: John Derevlany

* Email: jd@storyquake.org

* Websites: <https://storyquake.org/> and <https://johnderevlany.com/>

John Derevlany
StoryQuake.org
+1 424-738-0002
jd@storyquake.org

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