

“Expanding Your Plot to Fill an Entire Screenplay”

HANDOUT #1

THREE-ACT PARADIGM DEVELOPMENT

INCITING INCIDENT:.. The hero gets into a huge traffic jam.

CLIMAX ACT I:..... The hero finds that a car in the highway has a concealed bomb.

CLIMAX ACT II:..... There's a big gun fight between the hero and the terrorists.

CRISIS:..... The traffic starts moving again. The terrorists get away.

CLIMAX (ACT III):.. The hero manages to explode the bomb in a safe place.

RESOLUTION:..... The hero gets a medal.

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HANDOUT #2

HERO'S JOURNEY DEVELOPMENT

ACT I

ORDINARY WORLD: We find the hero as a discharged marine in his everyday life.

CALL TO ADVENTURE: He discovers a bomb's hidden in one of the cars in the traffic jam.

REFUSAL OF THE CALL: He realizes he's too out of shape to fight the terrorists himself.

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR: Someone--perhaps an old, retired cop--makes him see he's the only one who can avoid the tragedy.

ACT II

CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD: He decides to go after the terrorists.

TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES: He starts looking for the bomb. There's a gunfight.

APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE: He finds the bomb.

ORDEAL: The hero's almost killed

REWARD (SEIZING THE SWORD): The hero manages to escape and also gets a gun from the terrorists.

ACT III

THE ROAD BACK: The traffic starts moving again. The hero has to pursue the villains.

RESURRECTION: The hero gets into a final face-off with the terrorists.

RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR: The hero manages to explode in a safe place--and earns a medal.

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DRAMATICA'S PLOT DEVELOPMENT – HANDOUT #3

	SIGNPOST #1	SIGNPOST #2	SIGNPOST #3	SIGNPOST #4
OS	Understanding	Gathering Info	Doing	Obtaining
	<i>Nobody can understand what's stopping the traffic.</i>	<i>The hero learns there's a bomb hidden in a car.</i>	<i>Big gun fight. Traffic starts moving. Chase.</i>	<i>The bomb explodes--without taking any lives.</i>
MC/IC	Conceiving Idea	Developing Plan	Playing A Role	Changing Nature
	<i>The hero conceives an idea to get out of the traffic and lies to the cops.</i>	<i>Since he's not able to convince the cops about the bomb, the hero plans finding it himself.</i>	<i>The cops think the hero is an undercover terrorist.</i>	<i>The police realize the hero's real nature and believe him.</i>
MC	The Present	How Things Change	The Past	The Future
	<i>The hero has a dead-end job repairing cell-phone towers.</i>	<i>The hero discovers he's too out of shape to fight the terrorists.</i>	<i>The hero remembers his training and responds the way he used to.</i>	<i>The hero gets back on the force</i>
IC	Contemplation	Memories	Impulsive Responses	Innermost Desires
	<i>The police think the traffic is normal.</i>	<i>The police remember a man going berserk in a situation similar to this.</i>	<i>The Police can't avoid shooting at the hero.</i>	<i>The hero calls the cops cowards to force them to follow him--and follow the real terrorists.</i>

OS (Overall Story--includes all the characters): A story about a bomb hidden in a car during a traffic jam.

MC (Main Character Story--told from the perspective of our hero): A story about an ex-marine forced into action.

IC (Impact Character--the character that has an alternative perspective to the problem): The LAPD dealing with the jam as a normal occurrence for Los Angeles.

MC/IC (The Main vs. Impact Characters Story, focuses in their relationship): The hero tries to convince the police to help him.

STORY ENGINE SETTINGS: "Bomb on Highway 101"

CHARACTER DYNAMICS:

MC RESOLVE: **Steadfast**
 MC GROWTH: **Stop**
 MC APPROACH: **Do-er**
 MC PROBLEM-SOLVING STYLE: **Logical**
 IC RESOLVE: **Change**

PLOT DYNAMICS:

DRIVER: **Action**
 LIMIT: **Timelock**
 OUTCOME: **Success**
 JUDGMENT: **Good**

MAIN CHARACTER*(Marine)*

THROUGHLINE: **Situation**
 CONCERN: **The Future**
 ISSUE: **Choice** vs. **Delay**
 PROBLEM: **Feeling**
 SOLUTION: **Logic**
 SYMPTOM: **Temptation**
 RESPONSE: **Conscience**
 UNIQUE ABILITY: **Delay**
 CRITICAL FLAW: **Approach**
 BENCHMARK: **The Past**
 SIGNPOST 1: **The Present**
 SIGNPOST 2: **How Things are Changing**
 SIGNPOST 3: **The Past**
 SIGNPOST 4: **The Future**

MAIN VS. IMPACT STORY*(The Law v. Vigilante)*

THROUGHLINE: **Manipulation**
 CONCERN: **Changing One's Nature**
 ISSUE: **Responsibility** vs. **Commitment**
 PROBLEM: **Uncontrolled**
 SOLUTION: **Control**
 SYMPTOM: **Temptation**
 RESPONSE: **Conscience**
 CATALYST: **Commitment**
 INHIBITOR: **Closure**
 BENCHMARK: **Developing a Plan**
 SIGNPOST 1: **Conceiving an Idea**
 SIGNPOST 2: **Developing a Plan**
 SIGNPOST 3: **Playing a Role**
 SIGNPOST 4: **Changing One's Nature**

OVERALL STORY*(A Bomb in a Traffic Jam)*

THROUGHLINE: **Activity**
 CONCERN: **Obtaining**
 ISSUE: **Morality** vs. **Self Interest**
 PROBLEM: **Disbelief**
 SOLUTION: **Faith**
 SYMPTOM: **Temptation**
 RESPONSE: **Conscience**
 CATALYST: **Self Interest**
 INHIBITOR: **Openness**
 BENCHMARK: **Understanding**
 SIGNPOST 1: **Understanding**
 SIGNPOST 2: **Gathering Information**
 SIGNPOST 3: **Doing**
 SIGNPOST 4: **Obtaining**

IMPACT CHARACTER*(LAPD)*

THROUGHLINE: **Fixed Attitude**
 CONCERN: **Innermost Desires**
 ISSUE: **Dream** vs. **Hope**
 PROBLEM: **Disbelief**
 SOLUTION: **Faith**
 SYMPTOM: **Oppose**
 RESPONSE: **Support**
 UNIQUE ABILITY: **Hope**
 CRITICAL FLAW: **Rationalization**
 BENCHMARK: **Memories**
 SIGNPOST 1: **Contemplation**
 SIGNPOST 2: **Memories**
 SIGNPOST 3: **Impulsive Responses**
 SIGNPOST 4: **Innermost Desires**

ADDITIONAL STORY POINTS

GOAL: **Obtaining**
 CONSEQUENCE: **Changing One's Nature**
 COST: **Innermost Desires**
 DIVIDEND: **The Future**

REQUIREMENT: **Understanding**
 PREREQUISITE: **Developing a Plan**
 PRECONDITION: **Memories**
 FOREWARNINGS: **The Past**

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HANDOUT #5

DRAMATICA'S PLOT WOVEN TOGETHER**I**

MC-1 THE PRESENT:	We meet our hero at his dead-end job, repairing cell-phone towers.
OS-1 UNDERSTANDING:	He gets into a terrible traffic jam. Nobody can understand what's causing it.
IC-1 CONTEMPLATION:	He talks to the police, but they think the traffic is normal.
MC/IC-1 CONCEIVING IDEA:	The hero conceives an idea to get out of this jam and lies to the cops.

II

OS-2 GATHERING INFO:	The hero learns that there's a bomb hidden in a car.
IC-2 MEMORIES:	The police remember a man going berserk in a similar traffic situation.
MC/IC-2 DEVELOPING PLAN:	Since the hero's not able to convince the cops about the bomb, he plans to find it himself.
MC-2 THINGS ARE CHANGING:	The hero discovers he's too out of shape to fight these foes.
MC/IC-3 PLAYING A ROLE:	The cops think the hero is an undercover terrorist.
IC-3 IMPULSIVE RESPONSES:	The police shoot at him.
MC-3 THE PAST:	the hero remembers his training and responds the way he used to.
OS-3 DOING:	It all evolves into a big gun fight. Then the traffic starts moving and ends up in a big chase.

III

IC-4 INNERMOST DESIRES:	The hero taunts the police and calls them cowards to force them to follow him--and follow the real terrorists.
MC/IC-4 CHANGING NATURE:	The police realize the hero's real nature and believe him.
OS-4 OBTAINING:	The bomb explodes--without taking any lives.
MC-4 THE FUTURE:	The police offer the hero a job. He's back on the force.

Plot Sequence Report for "Bomb on Highway 101"

This report shows how dramatic tension makes itself manifest in a series of discrepancies between plot and theme, act by act.

Information about the relationship between plot and theme comes in two forms in Dramatica. When you begin creating your Storyform, you are presented with a "perfect world" view of your story in which plot is completely aligned with theme. There is no discrepancy between the two, and therefore no dramatic tension. This balanced view is most easily seen in the Theme Browser, available through a tile on the Dramatica Desktop.

Once you arrive at a Storyform, however, you have input information about how that "perfect world" is twisted and warped by problems and conflicting perspectives. As a result, plot no longer matches theme, and the two are often quite out of step with one another.

As your story unfolds, it is the discrepancy between plot and theme that clues the audience in on the nature of the problem at the heart of your story and tells them much about the ways in which such a screwed up situation might be resolved.

Use this report as a guideline to the kinds of thematic considerations which should be addressed in your plot, act by act for each of the four throughlines. By developing this series of plot/theme discrepancies, the progress of your story will reflect the dramatic tension of the effort to unwind all the tentacles of the central problem.

THE OVERALL STORYLINE

The Overall Storyline deals with the kinds of activities the Overall characters will be engaged in, act by act. In "Bomb on Highway 101," act one deals primarily with **Understanding**, act two with **Gathering Information**, act three with **Doing** and act four concentrates on **Obtaining**. Each of these acts is made richer by the thematic topics that are explored within it. In act one, "appreciating the meaning of something" (**Understanding**) is explored in terms of **State of Being**, **Situation**, **Circumstances**, and **Sense of Self**. Act two concentrates on "gathering information or experience" (**Gathering Information**) and is explored in terms of **Knowledge**, **Ability**, **Desire**, and **Thought**. Act three focuses on "engaging in a physical activity" (**Doing**) and is explored in terms of **Obligation**, **Rationalization**, **Commitment**, and **Responsibility**. And act four illustrates "achieving or possessing something" (**Obtaining**) and is explored in terms of **Permission**, **Need**, **Expediency**, and **Deficiency**.

THE MAIN VS. IMPACT STORYLINE

The Main vs. Impact Storyline deals with the interactions that occur between the main and impact characters, act by act. In "Bomb on Highway 101," act one deals primarily with **Conceiving an Idea**, act two with **Developing a Plan**, act three with **Playing a Role** and act four concentrates on **Changing One's Nature**. Each of these acts is made richer by the thematic topics that are explored within it. In act one, "coming up with an idea" (**Conceiving an Idea**) is explored in terms of **Truth**, **Evidence**, **Suspicion**, and **Falsehood**. Act two concentrates on "visualizing how an existing idea might be implemented" (**Developing a Plan**) and is explored in terms of **Value**, **Confidence**, **Worry**, and **Worth**. Act three focuses on "temporarily adopting a

lifestyle" (**Playing a Role**) and is explored in terms of **Closure, Hope, Dream, and Denial**. And act four illustrates "transforming one's nature" (**Changing One's Nature**) and is explored in terms of **Investigation, Appraisal, Reappraisal, and Doubt**.

THE MAIN CHARACTER THROUGHLINE

The Main Character Storyline deals with the areas that most concern the main character, act by act. In "Bomb on Highway 101," act one deals primarily with **The Present**, act two with **How Things are Changing**, act three with **The Past** and act four concentrates on **The Future**. Each of these acts is made richer by the thematic topics that are explored within it. In act one, "the current situation and circumstances" (**The Present**) is explored in terms of **Work, Attraction, Repulsion, and Attempt**. Act two concentrates on "the way things are going" (**How Things are Changing**) and is explored in terms of **Fact, Security, Threat, and Fantasy**. Act three focuses on "what has already happened" (**The Past**) and is explored in terms of **Fate, Prediction, Interdiction, and Destiny**. And act four illustrates "what will happen or what will be" (**The Future**) and is explored in terms of **Delay, Choice, Preconception, and Openness**.

THE IMPACT CHARACTER THROUGHLINE

The Overall Character Storyline deals with the areas most affected by the impact character, act by act. In "Bomb on Highway 101," act one deals primarily with **Contemplation**, act two with **Memories**, act three with **Impulsive Responses** and act four concentrates on **Innermost Desires**. Each of these acts is made richer by the thematic topics that are explored within it. In act one, "present considerations" (**Contemplation**) is explored in terms of **Prerequisites, Strategy, Analysis, and Preconditions**. Act two concentrates on "recollections" (**Memories**) and is explored in terms of **Wisdom, Skill, Experience, and Enlightenment**. Act three focuses on "innate responses" (**Impulsive Responses**) and is explored in terms of **Instinct, Senses, Interpretation, and Conditioning**. And act four illustrates "basic drives and desires" (**Innermost Desires**) and is explored in terms of **Morality, Self Interest, Attitude, and Approach**.

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HANDOUT #7

DRAMATICA'S PLOT SCENE BY SCENE

SEQUENCE A) [MC-1 THE PRESENT] We meet our hero at his dead-end job, repairing cell-phone towers.

SCENE 1. [**WORK**] (*the hero applies himself to something of his ability*) He climbs a tower daringly, as if it was a military maneuver.

SCENE 2. [**ATTRACTION->REPULSION**] (*the scene goes from being drawn to something to being repelled by it*) Some bystanders applaud the hero's intrepid actions, but his boss reprimands him for his reckless behavior.

SCENE 3. [**ATTEMPT**] (*he applies to something out of his ability*) The hero tries to repair the network and messes things up.

SEQUENCE B) [OS-1 UNDERSTANDING] He gets into a terrible traffic jam. Nobody can understand what's causing it.

SCENE 4. [**STATE OF BEING**] (*the terrorists true self is concealed*) A pick-up truck causes a seemingly honest accident that moves people to help the driver.

SCENE 5. [**SITUATION->CIRCUMSTANCES**] (*the scene goes from a logistic assessment of an environment to an emotional one*) The accident starts messing up the traffic. This irritates other drivers and causes more accidents.

SCENE 6. [**SENSE OF SELF**] (*the sense of self about the pick-up driver was wrong*) The pick-up truck driver kills the man who tried to help him.