



ROADMAP WRITERS

Taste of Roadmap Night #3

CAREER WRITER PROGRAM

STEP 1: PITCH PREP PROGRAM

Logline & Comps Formula

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ROADMAP WRITERS - LOGLINE FORMULA

Give Logline from PROTAGONIST'S PERSPECTIVE

➤ When **Trigger** happens, **Protagonist** must face **Struggle** in order to reach **Goal**.

WHO - TRIGGER - STRUGGLE - GOAL

WHO: Protagonist & Main Characterization - What sort of person they are.

→ Do not name characters in a logline, unless it is a true story/historical figure.

- ◆ In that case, put Name AND Main Characterization i.e. U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, grandmother of the underground railroad Harriet Tubman, etc...

Be sure to tell us what type of person they are, i.e.:

- **Emotionally:** A depressed optimist
- **Professionally:** A disgraced lawyer
- **Socially:** A jaded teen, etc...

Character Arc: The adjective you use to describe your Protagonist should give some indication of what their arc is going to be.

- **What's their flaw?** Should give a sense that this character does have a need to grow. Nobody wants to watch perfect people.
 - i.e. If you describe them as "childish", their arc is likely to have something to do with growing up/coming-of-age.

→ BREAKING BAD: a **mild-mannered** high school Chemistry teacher

→ ROMA: a **lonely** indigenous live-in housemaid

→ CALL ME BY YOUR NAME: a **naive** high school grad

→ STRANGER THINGS: a **precocious** group of childhood besties

Man, Woman, Boy, Girl - Gender words are pointless!

★ **EXAMPLE:** "12-year-old boy" is a lot of words for not a lot of information.

You can just refer to him as a tween. More important, what is he like? Is he a loner? A jock? Is he thoughtful? Arrogant?

What is his character arc going to be? Try to have the adjective you use to describe your Protagonist have something to do with their arc.

i.e. "a headstrong tween dreamer" tells us WAY more about your character than "12-year-old boy".

TRIGGER / INCITING INCIDENT:

What has changed that is the reason we are joining the Protagonist now?

- BREAKING BAD: *When he's diagnosed with terminal cancer...*
- CALL ME BY YOUR NAME: *When he visits his professor father in Europe...*
- STRANGER THINGS: *When their young friend mysteriously disappears...*

Soft Trigger: your Protagonist's state of mind (rather than an event)

- DORIAN: *Finally fed up with the dating scene...*

STRUGGLE / ANTAGONIST / DILEMMA / OBSTACLE / JOURNEY (**FORMATIVE EXPERIENCE**):

Protagonist's Main Conflict Faced (the Meat of what this is going to be about)

- BREAKING BAD: *breaks bad, plunging into the world of meth production*
- STRANGER THINGS: *team up with his mother and a police chief to confront the terrifying forces of the Upside Down*

Soft Conflict/Slice of Life: The formative experience the Protag is going to go through.

- CALL ME BY YOUR NAME: *enters into his first homosexual relationship*
- ROMA: *an illegitimate pregnancy ending in a stillbirth*

GOAL / PROBLEM: Protagonist's Main Story Objective (**DISCOVERY**):

What Protagonist Wants

- BREAKING BAD: *to ensure his family's financial future.*
- STRANGER THINGS: *in order to get him back.*

Soft Goal/Slice of Life: What the Protagonist will **discover** at the end of this slice of life.

- CALL ME BY YOUR NAME: *and comes to terms with his own budding sexuality.*
- ROMA: *and discovers that family is more than common blood.*

DON'T BE VAGUE - Don't hide your twists & turns - be specific.

- This is a SELLING document—it ain't TV Guide!
 - We need to know what's cool about it *immediately*.

WHO are we watching?

WHEN do we join them?

WHAT are we watching them do?

WHY are we watching them do it?

BREAKING BAD (One-Hour Serialized TV | Crime Drama | Cable)

When he's diagnosed with terminal cancer, a mild-mannered high school Chemistry teacher breaks bad, plunging into the world of meth production to ensure his family's financial future.

CALL ME BY YOUR NAME (Feature | Coming-of-Age Drama)

When he visits his professor father in Europe, a naive high school grad enters into his first homosexual relationship and comes to terms with his own budding sexuality.

ROMA (Feature | Drama)

When a lonely indigenous live-in housemaid finds herself carrying an illegitimate pregnancy ending in stillbirth, she discovers that family is more than common blood.

STRANGER THINGS (One-Hour Serialized TV | YA Sci-Fi Thriller w/ Comedic elements | Cable)

*When their young friend mysteriously disappears **from a quiet 1980's suburban town**, a precocious group of childhood besties team up with his mother and a police chief to confront the terrifying forces of the Upside Down in order to get him back.*

WORD CHOICE

Be choosy about the words you use to describe the 4 pieces of info.

- **Connotation:** Teacher vs. Professor
- **Genre:** What words did you use to tell us if this is funny, sad, or scary?
- **Adjectives = Tone** | Don't go overboard (1-2 per noun will suffice)
 - BREAKING BAD: Ruthless vs. Zany "world of meth production"

LENGTH

One Sentence. Need to be able to say the entire logline in a single breath.

Making Your Logline 1 Sentence When You Think You Need 2:

Ex. PHARMACOPEIA

A nerdy, African-American Pharmacist decides to sell craft marijuana to pay off massive school loan debt. She soon realizes there's not much difference between selling drugs legally and illegally.

***When** a nerdy, African-American Pharmacist decides to sell craft marijuana to pay off massive school loan debt, **she discovers** there's not much difference between selling drugs legally and illegally.*

TV LOGLINES:

Series Logline vs. Pilot Logline

- **Series:** What is the **show** about? What is the **concept** or **story engine** week after week?
- **Pilot:** What happens in **this episode**?
 - Optional for 2-pg. Pitch, Required for Series Bible

Episodic:

LAW & ORDER: SVU (One-Hour TV | Case-of-the-Week Procedural Crime Drama | Network)

- **Series:** *A crack team of special victims unit detectives solves weekly sex crimes in the city that never sleeps.*
- **Pilot:** *When a teen girl is abducted by her teacher, it hits close to home for Det. Stabler, whose daughters attend the same school.*
 - ****Pilot & Episode loglines can include character names because we read them *after* we've met your characters.**

Serialized:

GAME OF THRONES (One-Hour Serialized TV | Supernatural Period Drama | Premium Cable)

- **Series:** *While seven kingdoms vie for control over the medieval peninsula of Westeros, a larger threat grows beyond the giant ice wall that protects them from the frozen North. Winter is Coming.*
- **Pilot:** *The Stark Family of Winterfell answers the call when King Baratheon summons Ned to King's Landing to become the Hand of the King.*

BREAK IT DOWN - LOGLINE 101:

Determine what each piece of information is independently, then put them together.

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

TRIGGER: *When...* THIS HAPPENS

WHO: Protagonist

STRUGGLE: *must...* DO THIS (or finds him/herself) DO(ing) THIS

GOAL: *in order to...* REACH THIS GOAL

EXAMPLE - Feature (TRIGGER first):

TRIGGER: *When* a nuclear bomb goes off,

WHO: an EPA agent

STRUGGLE: *must* traverse the radioactive landscape

GOAL: *in order to* save a young girl.

EXAMPLE - TV Pilot / Ensemble (WHO first):

WHO: *When* a family of demons

TRIGGER: are sent to suburbia,

STRUGGLE: *they must* out-manuever their angelic counterparts

GOAL: *in order to* win the battle between Good, Evil, and the PTA.

ANOTHER STYLE... *without* using *When, must, in order to*:

TRIGGER: Fed up with the dating scene,

WHO: a jaded teen

STRUGGLE: develops her own dating app

GOAL: in search of the perfect prom date.

***You'll notice all the same pieces of information are still there!*

LET'S GET CRAZAAAAAY!!

WHO: An advice-dispensing YouTuber

GOAL: discovers she's got a lot to learn

TRIGGER: when an embarrassing moment gets her court-ordered

STRUGGLE: to volunteer in the place she fears most: the ER.

ARRANGEMENT

Example: BLUE MOON FIRE

TRIGGER: When she lures her friends to a remote lake in the woods,

WHO: a manipulative charmer

STRUGGLE: must make the ultimate sacrifice

GOAL: to close the book on a curse that has plagued her family for 25 years.

WHO: When a manipulative charmer

TRIGGER: lures her friends to a remote lake in the woods,

STRUGGLE: she must make the ultimate sacrifice

GOAL: to close the book on a curse that has plagued her family for 25 years.

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COMPS (Comparable Projects):

Your COMPS should help us visualize what we should be picturing for the space where your project lives. It should anchor us in something familiar / recognizable / relatable, and then give us the twist that updates it and makes it fresh & unique.

My project is similar to the familiar dynamic / vibe / space of THIS MOVIE, and here's the thing about my project that makes it different / fresh / unique.

Ideally, your comps should complement your logline.

- We should be able to look at your comps & your logline and be able to pick out which pieces of the logline each of your comps is referencing.

The “Meet”

If you mash THIS MOVIE up with THIS MOVIE, it makes my movie.

First comp should anchor us in the most visible/recognizable aspect of your project (often the WORLD, or specific microcosm), then should throw in the monkeywrench that makes it different.

Features: WORLD meets TONE (+ THEME)

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY: POLTERGEIST meets BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

- Ghosts terrorizing a family in a house, **but** in the style of found footage...

LAST VEGAS: THE HANGOVER meets GRUMPY OLD MEN

- Guys' trip to Vegas, **but** with old dudes...

PACIFIC RIM: INDEPENDENCE DAY meets TRANSFORMERS

- Humanity in a fight for existence against an invading alien race, **but** with humanoid metal machines (vs. conventional military)...

ARMAGEDDON KNIGHTS: MAD MAX: FURY ROAD meets MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL

- A tongue-in-cheek comedy about a post-apocalyptic motorcycle gang led by a distant descendant of King Arthur himself... + All are **Quest** Movies.

TV COMPS

FORMAT meets WORLD/TWIST

FORMAT (Genre/Tone) meets **TWIST** (Update / aspect that makes it new)

A half-hour comedy about a group of hip 20-somethings, but set 500 years in the future in space where Central Perk is the coffee bar on the space station...

It's **FRIENDS** meets **STAR TREK**.

→ AVENUE 5 (HBO):

A single-cam half-hour Workplace Comedy about the ill-fated crew of a disabled space-faring cruise ship.

It's **THE OFFICE** meets **STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE**.

*** (Or, since AVENUE 5 is not mockumentary, maybe go with 30 ROCK over THE OFFICE)*

Don't cross-pollinate: Meet TV w/ TV & Features w/ Features

- You don't want to confuse them on which your project is.
- Animation - avoid if yours is Live Action

Your Logline & Comps should work together. When we consider your logline in conjunction with your comps we should see what you're going for.

EXAMPLES:

★ Which piece of the logline is each comp referencing?

TITLE: BLACK CREEK TRAIL

FORMAT: Feature | Psychological Thriller

LOGLINE: *A recent divorcee's search for independence takes a dark turn when she encounters an unsettling guest who she can't shake on a solo backpacking trip in the Angeles Crest Forest.*

COMPS: WILD meets MISERY

TITLE: VAMPI-E.R.

FORMAT: Half-Hour Single-Cam (Episodic) TV Series | Dark Supernatural Comedy | Cable

LOGLINE: *A socially-conscious ER doctor finds herself with no choice but to join the staff of a mismanaged hospital for mythical creatures and monsters when she's unwillingly turned into a vampire by a bloodsucking HR recruiter.*

COMPS: SCRUBS meets WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS

TITLE: ADVENTURES OF THE MISFIT WARRIORS

FORMAT: Feature | YA Sci-Fi Action/Adventure

LOGLINE: *When a precocious tween science nerd believes he's a for-real alien, he recruits a ragtag group of neighborhood geeks to help him build a space-ship disguised as a fort to escape planet Earth before he's tracked and detained by the mysterious Men In Black.*

COMPS: E.T. meets THE GOONIES

TITLE: FAMILY BLOOD

FORMAT: Half-Hour (Serialized) TV | Single-Cam Dark Zombie Comedy | Premium Cable

LOGLINE: *When a witty, gay Hollywood hotshot's big break is interrupted by a zombie contagion in which the only cure is to consume a blood relative, his sole shot at survival is to locate the birth mother he never knew and EAT HER before his undead transformation is complete.*

COMPS: WALKING DEAD meets SCHITT'S CREEK | THE BOYS meets END OF THE F*ING WORLD

TITLE: THE DEVIL AND THE ANGEL

FORMAT: Feature | Conspiracy Crime Thriller | Based on True Events

LOGLINE: *When her ugly custody battle uncovers widespread corruption throughout the Arizona judicial system, a devoted mother goes to extreme lengths to get the evidence she needs to expose the truth and win her son back.*

COMPS: ERIN BROCKOVICH meets ENOUGH

TIPS ON CHOOSING COMPS:

Consider **TONE** when making your choices.

- SCRUBS vs. NURSE JACKIE
 - (both are Half-Hour Medical Comedies)
- SIGNS vs. MARS ATTACKS! vs. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
 - (all are families dealing with an alien invasion/first contact with aliens)

Comps Pool - Projects to Choose From:

- Made in the last 10 years. The more recent, the better (for the most part).
- In the zeitgeist: Awards bait, cult classics, commercially successful, critically acclaimed, famous literary works (i.e. *Oedipus Rex*), etc...
- Don't pick shows that were canceled after one season.
- Don't pick movies that bombed or that no one has heard of.
 - If they don't know what it is, your comp is useless.
 - We need to know what the comp is in order to understand what you're trying to tell us with said comp.

**THE POINT IS TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THE TONE
OF THE PROJECT WE ARE GOING TO HEAR ABOUT!**