



# MIKEY D'S STORYTELLIN' BLOG

2020/09/05 BY ORIGMIKEYD

## Can You Tell a Story in a Sentence?

If you polled people of the street and asked them this question, the average person would probably answer “no” or look at you as crazy. In Hollywood, it’s necessary to tell a story in one or two sentences maximum. This sentence is known as a logline. This article from reputable Hollywood trade magazine, Backstage, explains the logline’s purpose and gives an opinion as to why an actor needs one. The story defines a logline is ” A one (maybe two) sentence synopsis that shares the plot and emotional hook of a screenplay or project.” Backstage is reputable because it has been the number one source helping performers get work or “talent-seekers” find creatives to progress their projects for over fifty years.

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/every-actor-needs-logline-craft-1630/>

Going to IMDB can give a person examples of what loglines are. Some famous examples are:

**Casablanca (1942):** “A cynical American expatriate struggles to decide whether or not he should help his former lover and her fugitive husband escape French Morocco.”

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**Casablanca** (1942) ★ 8.5 / 10  
110,095 ☆ Rate This

PG | 1h 42min | Drama, Romance, War | 23 January 1943 (USA)




A cynical American expatriate struggles to decide whether or not he should help his former lover and her fugitive husband escape French Morocco.

Director: [Michael Curtiz](#)  
 Writers: [Julius J. Epstein](#) (screenplay), [Philip G. Epstein](#) (screenplay) | [3 more credits](#) >  
 Stars: [Humphrey Bogart](#), [Ingrid Bergman](#), [Paul Henreid](#) | [See full cast & crew](#) >

**The Godfather (1972):** *“The aging patriarch of an organized crime dynasty transfers control of his clandestine empire to his reluctant son.”*

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**The Godfather** (1972) ★ 9.2 / 10  
1,573,189 ☆ Rate This

R | 2h 55min | Crime, Drama | 24 March 1972 (USA)




The aging patriarch of an organized crime dynasty transfers control of his clandestine empire to his reluctant son.

Director: [Francis Ford Coppola](#)  
 Writers: [Mario Puzo](#) (screenplay by), [Francis Ford Coppola](#) (screenplay by) | [1 more credit](#) >  
 Stars: [Marlon Brando](#), [Al Pacino](#), [James Caan](#) | [See full cast & crew](#) >

**Pulp Fiction (1994):** *“The lives of two mob hitmen, a boxer, a gangster and his wife, and a pair of diner bandits intertwine in four tales of violence and redemption.”*

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**Pulp Fiction** (1994) ★ 8.9 / 10  
1,780,653 ☆ Rate This

R | 2h 34min | Crime, Drama | 14 October 1994 (USA)




The lives of two mob hitmen, a boxer, a gangster and his wife, and a pair of diner bandits intertwine in four tales of violence and redemption.

Director: [Quentin Tarantino](#)  
 Writers: [Quentin Tarantino](#) (stories), [Roger Avary](#) (stories) | [1 more credit](#) >  
 Stars: [John Travolta](#), [Uma Thurman](#), [Samuel L. Jackson](#) | [See full cast & crew](#) >

While telling a story in a sentence may seem impossible, “And, But Therefore (ABT)” structure makes it easier. The ABT method is also known as the “rule of replacing” and was made famous by South Park’s Trey Parker and Matt Stone.



In this clip, Trey Parker and Matt Stone explain their “rule of replacing” to NYU students on MTVU’s “Stand In.” They also analyze why it helps make a story stronger. I would consider MTVU a reliable source because 1. Matt Stone and Trey Parker are talking to college students about story structure, and 2. Viacom, a mainstream media company, owns MTV.

### Writing Advice from Matt Stone & Trey Parker @ NYU | ...



Matt Stone and Trey Parker explain that if someone tells a story where they say “this happens and then this happens,” you have a boring story. When discussing their editing process, they say they go back through a script to replace “and” or “and then” with either “buts or therefore.” By doing this, Matt Stone and Trey Parker give the story cause and effect.

Scientist turned filmmaker, Randy Olson expanded upon Parker and Stone's "rule of replacing" In his book, "Houston, We Have A Narrative," Olson developed it into the "ABT" method. His purpose was to help scientists communicate better when presenting research.



Randy Olson explains "And, But and Therefore" in this Ted Talk

## Randy Olson Great Challenges Day at TEDMED 2013



Randy Olson was a scientist and tenured professor who left his teaching job to go to film school. After a while in Hollywood, he wrote a book arguing that if scientists used narrative structure when presenting facts and information, they could better engage and persuade audiences.

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/and-but-therefore-randy-o\\_b\\_8813330](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/and-but-therefore-randy-o_b_8813330)

This Huffpost article is a great source to explain and analyze why the scientific community needs to learn how to become better storytellers. After describing how Randy Olson and South Park use ABT structure, they talk about how scientists are notoriously abysmal communicators. Contributor Steven Newton, a professor of Geology at The College of Marin, explains and gives his opinion by saying that even if a scientist presents “groundbreaking” material if a presentation is just facts upon facts after facts, it runs the risk of becoming boring, esoteric, or convoluted.

In this Medium.com post, Joe Romm, author of *How to Go Viral and Reach Millions*, explains and gives his opinions on Randy’s process. Romm says the word “and” gives an idea or situation, “but” provides conflict or reaction and “therefore” introduces the change that’s occurred.

<https://medium.com/@jromm/this-viral-storytelling-trick-will-change-how-you-write-forever-b26f9751e58a>

Though the story I chose to explain Randy Olson’s Methods is informative, I would not think of Medium.com as a reliable source. I say this because anybody, no matter their

expertise, can blog on the site.

My last article is from Nature.com. The column's writer, Josh Ettinger, analyzes how screenwriting classes and his stint as a production assistant for *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* made him a better communicator. He says stories are persuasive speech, and a scientist should start with a question. Ettinger argues by doing this, a scientist hooks in a listener in an audience. Nature Magazine is a reliable scholarly journal. The reason I believe it's reliable is that it is peer-reviewed.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01731-9>

All in all, I believe that my articles and content show how important it is for people of all walks of life to tell stories. It is crucial to keep an audience engaged no matter what line of work someone is in, and the "And, But, Therefore" method is an easy way to do so.

### WEEK THREE