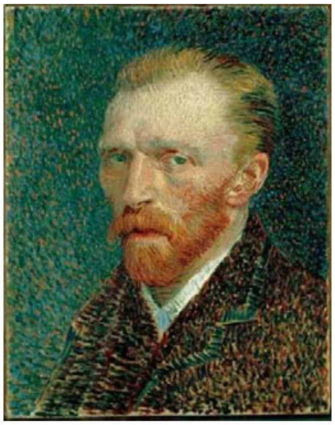
The Secret to Getting Great Story Ideas

John Brown

What's the Secret?

Malcolm Gladwell

Vincent Van Gogh



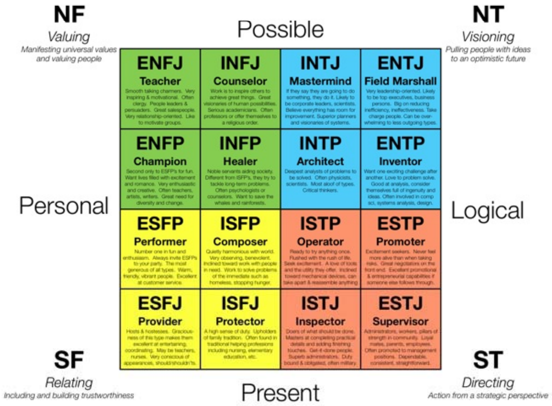
Ernest Hemmingway

Patrick Rothfuss

Larry Correia

Larry Correia

Science!



NF
Valuing
Manifesting universal values and valuing people

NT
Visioning
Pulling people with ideas to an optimistic future

Possible

Personal

Logical

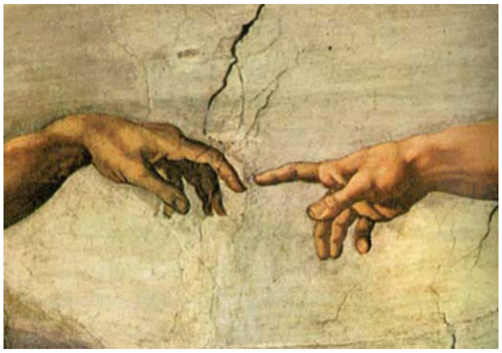
ENFJ **Teacher** Smooth talking charmers. Very inspiring & motivational. Often clergy. People leaders & persuaders. Great salespeople. Very relationship-oriented. Like to motivate groups.	**INFJ** **Counselor** Work is to inspire others to achieve great things. Great visionaries of human possibilities. Serious academicians. Often professors or offer themselves to a religious order.	**INTJ** **Mastermind** If they say they are going to do something, they do it. Likely to be corporate leaders, scientists. Believe everything has room for improvement. Superior planners and visionaries of systems.	**ENTJ** **Field Marshall** Very leadership-oriented. Likely to be top executives, business persons. Big on reducing inefficiency, ineffectiveness. Take charge people. Can be overwhelming to less outgoing types.
ENFP **Champion** Second only to ESFP's for fun. Want lives filled with excitement and romance. Very enthusiastic and creative. Often teachers, artists, writers. Great need for diversity and change.	**INFP** **Healer** Noble servants aiding society. Different from ISFP's, they try to tackle long-term problems. Often psychologists or counselors. Want to save the whales and rainforests.	**INTP** **Architect** Deepest analysts of problems to be solved. Often physicists, scientists. Most aloof of types. Critical thinkers.	**ENTP** **Inventor** Want one exciting challenge after another. Love to problem solve. Good at analysis, consider themselves full of ingenuity and ideas. Often involved in comp sci, systems analysis, design.
ESFP **Performer** Number one in fun and enthusiasm. Always invite ESFPs to your party. The most generous of all types. Warm, friendly, vibrant people. Excellent at customer service.	**ISFP** **Composer** Quietly harmonious with world. Very observing, benevolent. Inclined toward work with people in need. Work to solve problems of the immediate such as homeless, stopping hunger.	**ISTP** **Operator** Ready to try anything once. Flushed with the rush of life. Seek excitement. A love of tools and the utility they offer. Inclined toward mechanical devices, can take apart & reassemble anything.	**ESTP** **Promoter** Excitement seekers. Never feel more alive than when taking risks. Great negotiators on the front end. Excellent promotional & entrepreneurial capabilities if someone else follows through.
ESFJ **Provider** Hosts & hostesses. Graciousness of this type makes them excellent at entertaining, coordinating. May be teachers, nurses. Very conscious of appearances, should/shouldn't's.	**ISFJ** **Protector** A high sense of duty. Upholders of family tradition. Often found in traditional helping professions including nursing, elementary education, etc.	**ISTJ** **Inspector** Doers of what should be done. Masters at completing practical details and adding finishing touches. Get-it-done people. Superb administrators. Duty bound & obligated, often military.	**ESTJ** **Supervisor** Administrators, workers, pillars of strength in community. Loyal mates, parents, employees. Often promoted to management positions. Dependable, consistent, straightforward.

SF
Relating
Including and building trustworthiness

Present

ST
Directing
Action from a strategic perspective

God



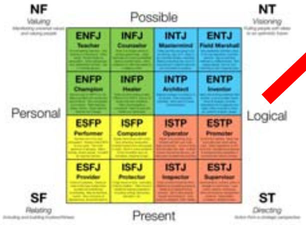
No

Passion, O Passion!

Chemicals

Moody or Depressed

Right Personality Type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Composer
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Operator
ESTP
Promoter
ESFJ
Provider
ISFJ
Protector
ISTJ
Inspector
ESTJ
Supervisor
SF
Relating
Present
ST
Directing

Eccentricity or Flair

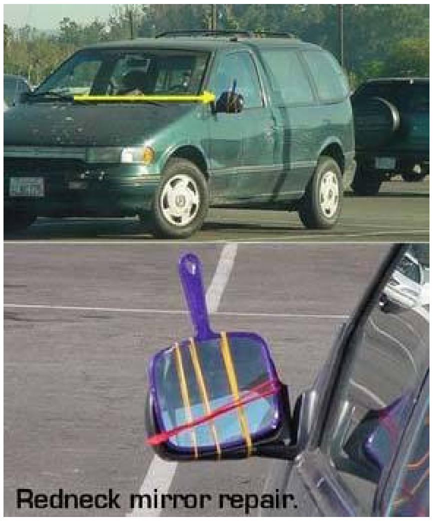
Talent Blessed

This is Creativity

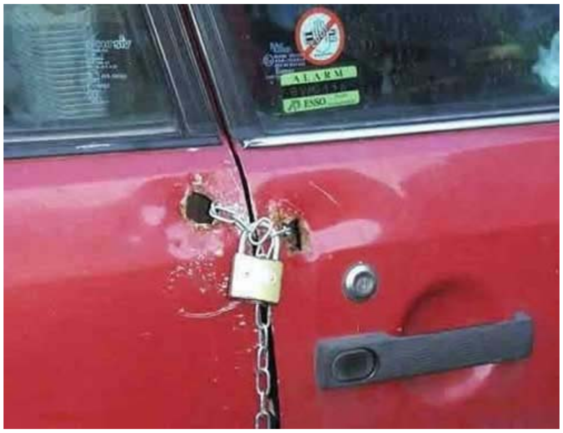
And This . . .

When we verified they had duct tape on board…

And This . . .


Redneck mirror repair.

This . . .



This. . .

Redneck Hot Dog Cooker 3
http://go.funpic.hu

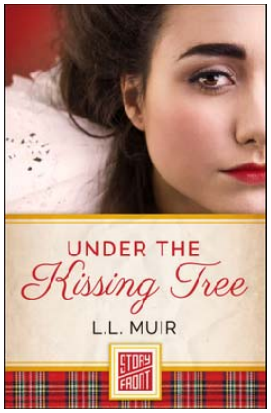
And This . . .

The Secret: What You Really Need

1. An objective
2. Basic knowledge of how things work
3. Techniques to generate options

Get More Specific

A Good Start…


UNDER THE
Kissing Tree
L.L. MUIR
STORY FRONT

THE DEFINING CHAPTER
THE HOBBIT
COMIC-CON 2014

Liam Neeson
Maggie Grace
Leland Orser
Jon Gries
TAKEN
The time for revenge has come

The Secret Sauce

The Magic is Over Here

➡

?

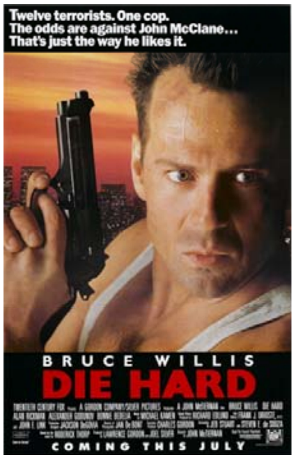
➡

Anticipation > Build > Satisfaction

Olive Garden
ITALIAN RESTAURANT

One Difference

Action Thriller


Twelve terrorists. One cop.
The odds are against John McClane...
That's just the way he likes it.
BRUCE WILLIS
DIE HARD
COMING THIS JULY

Anticipation-Build-Satisfy What?

- Physical excitement and danger
- Justice
- Mystery & surprise

Cause

- Story problem
  (someone wants something, because something important is at stake, and they're having a hard time getting it)
- A threat or danger or menace
- Important to me or can sympathize
- Jazzes me
- Maybe shady or criminal
- Leads to lots of action—chases, escapes, fights, sneaking, etc.

Technique 1: Q & L

Method

- State question
- List everything
- Include obvious, weird, new, dumb

Question

- What are some things that might present danger or menace?

List

- Russian mobsters (in Utah)
- Drug dealers
- Serial killer
- Some secret place way out in desert, walled off place, commune
- Dark side of internet
- Ashley Madison

Technique 2: 10x10

Method

- State question
- List 10 categories
- List 10 items in each category
- Include obvious, weird, new, dumb

Question

- What are some things that might present danger or menace?

List

- Places
- Professions
- Technology
- Situations
- Utah
  - West Desert
  - Abrahamic Killer
  - Elizabeth Smart Crazy
- Military
- Spies
- Petty Criminals
- Politics
  - El Chapo & Donald Trump
  - A Hit is put on Trump

Technique 3: List & Twist

Method

- List what we normally expect in these types of stories
- Twist some against type
- or just add something that normally doesn't belong

List

- Strong man
- Ex-military or army
- Alpha male.
- Rough characters
- Crime
- Mousy dude, weak guy, old guy, very out-of-shape guy, grandma, girl

What Happens When You Run Out of Ideas?

Technique 4: Gather Material

Method

- Go looking, borrow freely:
    - News
    - History
    - Research
    - People you know or have heard about
    - Other stories (models)

My Haul

- ISIS
- Have a copy of Hillary's emails…
- Bomb tech from company
- Drones
- Stock market manipulation
- Brad Thor: EMP bombs
- David Baldacci: Brother has escaped from jail, you have to hunt down
- Lee Child: Someone trying to silence you because they think you saw something
- Patterson: a woman who is bigamist and kills husbands.

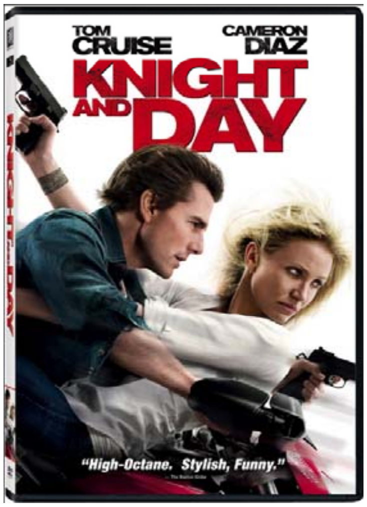
Technique 4: Gather Material

Brother is out in west desert
and he’s brought something weird home.
What?
Someone’s finger?
Some literature?
Stuff about Trump?

Technique 5:
Zing Party

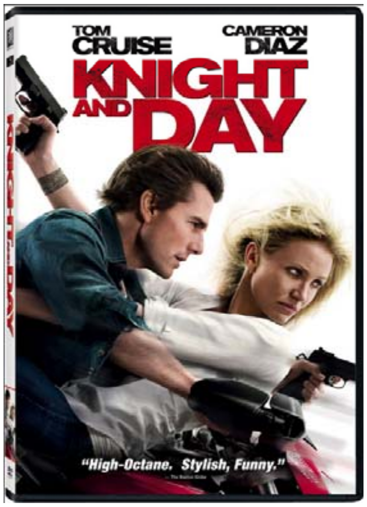
- Out of shape guy. Grandma. West Desert. Brother. Donald Trump.
- Anything?
- Brother, out-of-shape guy, lives with Grandma, who is a Donald Trump fan. Brother is in west desert working for military. And is now on the run. People trying to kill him. Grandma and brother need to save him.
- What does he have? Something new.
- Scandal on some Utah vitamin king. Commune. People are showing up. Now brother disappears?

Love Story with Action


TOM CRUISE
CAMERON DIAZ
KNIGHT AND DAY
"High-Octane. Stylish, Funny."

- **Problem**
  - Robber/Lawman
  - She's a Minute-man
  - He's a Coyote, an American
- **Plot**
  - Scenes
  - That create anticipation, build, & satisfaction
  - 30,000 /2,000 = 15 scenes

How Does Romance Work?


TOM CRUISE
CAMERON DIAZ
KNIGHT AND DAY
"High-Octane. Stylish, Funny."

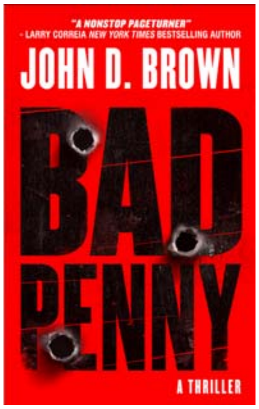
- **Anticipation → Build → Satisfaction**
  - Meet (potential)
  - Moments when they begin to trust
  - Moments when they lose trust
  - She finds out
  - Series of moments that increase attraction
  - Moment when all seems lost
  - Declaration of love

How Do They Meet?

What’s Cool and Fun?

- Bar, grocery store incident, people in back of truck or in trunk, a bathroom break, he’s broke down on highway, right after chase. Friend party. Backyard party.
- You’ve Got Mail.
- One way is that neither know. Then one of them finds out. Reader knows. They don’t.
- Some sports thing. What do they do in Texas? Mud ball? Fun and banter. She gets him. He likes her. Attraction.
- Maybe I research Texas. Weird Texas games. Clamming? Sleeper wave.

One More


"A NONSTOP PAGETURNER"
- LARRY CORREIA NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
JOHN D. BROWN
BAD PENNY
A THRILLER

What’s a new chase action gag? Something fun

- Horses
- Tractors
- Motorcycles
- Paragliders
- Cows
- ATVs
- Pickups
- Snowmobiles…

Boom!

Boom!

What Did We Learn?

- Forget about being creative
- What you need are 3 things
  - Objective
  - Understanding
  - Generation
- Get more specific
  - Genre
  - The magic is in the cause
- Story is a lot of ideas
- Doesn't matter where you start
- Generation techniques
  - Question & List
  - 10x10
  - List & Twist
  - Gather Material
  - Zing Party
- Trust the process, have fun

Next Step

- What's your genre package?
- What's your anticipation > build > satisfaction?
- What part are you missing or struggling with?
  - Character
  - Setting
  - Problem
  - Plot
- How does it work?
- Have fun and generate!

Gather Material

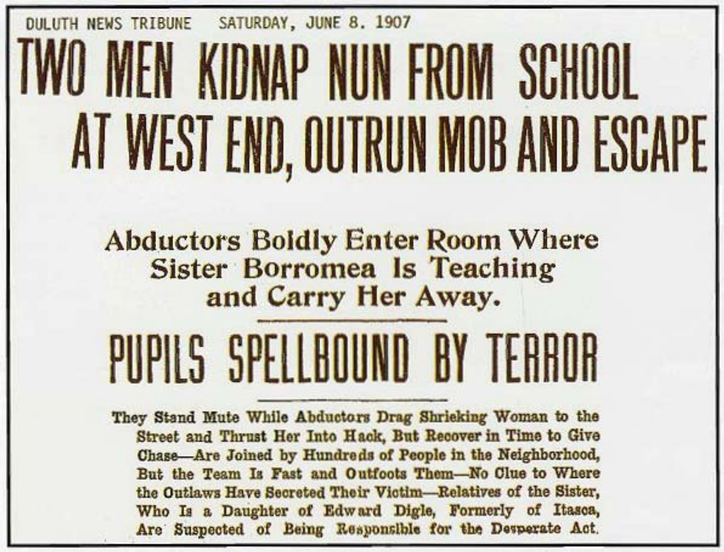
Eyes wide open

Gather Material

Abdul Hassan
Somali Pirate
Nickname :“The One Who Never Sleeps”

Gather Material

Gather Material



DULUTH NEWS TRIBUNE SATURDAY, JUNE 8. 1907

TWO MEN KIDNAP NUN FROM SCHOOL AT WEST END, OUTRUN MOB AND ESCAPE

Abductors Boldly Enter Room Where Sister Borromea Is Teaching and Carry Her Away.

PUPILS SPELLBOUND BY TERROR

They Stand Mute While Abductors Drag Shrieking Woman to the Street and Thrust Her Into Hack, But Recover in Time to Give Chase—Are Joined by Hundreds of People in the Neighborhood, But the Team Is Fast and Outfoots Them—No Clue to Where the Outlaws Have Secreted Their Victim—Relatives of the Sister, Who Is a Daughter of Edward Digle, Formerly of Itasca, Are Suspected of Being Responsible for the Desperate Act.

Gather Material

1. Research: people, places, things, ideas, issues, history, technology… planned & ad hoc
2. Try new things
3. Enjoy people: be interested in them, observe
4. Follow curiosity
5. Read other stories!

MONTE CRISTO
BLACK GOLD CATTLE CO.
TESTICLE FESTIVAL

Practice Farmer's Faith

Listen to Your Spidey Sense

follow the zing

Make Enough Time

Relax and Have Fun