

Storytelling

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you'll learn about storytelling in the creative process and why it's important. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Storytelling Overview

Storytelling is a pretty simple concept and one that many are familiar with. In visual design, it's a great component for presenting work throughout the design process. It's important because every company wants to be identified using a main **narrative**.

Storytelling thus becomes a strategy that engages the consumer in what the company is all about, where it's going, and where it hopes to end up.

A good story can also help wrap potentially boring **quantitative** information, or information based on quantities or numbers, into exciting **qualitative** information, or information valued for its characteristics.



TERMS TO KNOW

Narrative

A synonym for story.

Quantitative

Information based on quantities or numbers (e.g. statistics).

Qualitative

Information valued for its characteristics.

2. Storytelling in Action

Below is an image from an old TV commercial for a watch.



The commercial narrative states, "And for graduation, an event of a lifetime, give Bulova, the gift of a lifetime, the amazing new Bulova self-winding watch. It winds itself automatically. Just set it and forget it. The mere motion of your arm keeps it fully wound. 17 jewels, only \$49.50. This stunning Bulova Starlet—it's so charming with an enchanting expansion bracelet. A superb gift, amazingly priced at only \$29.75. The handsome, dependable Bulova Maxim, complete with matching expansion band—this exceptional timepiece is priced at only \$29.75. Your friendly Bulova jeweler is now displaying over 300 distinctive 1951 models priced from \$27.50 to \$5,000. Each, regardless of price, embodies Bulova precision, beauty, and dependability. So for her, for him, forever, for the warmest thanks you ever received, give the world's finest timepiece, Bulova, gift of a lifetime."



You can see the ad tells the story, or sequence of events, with a clear narrative, or structure of events. You can thus think of narrative as the design of the building and story as the tour through the building.

The company was also able to give you quantitative information, like the number of varieties available, how many jewels the watches had, and the price ranges, then turn it into qualitative information about the watch having beautiful qualities and being recognized by many people as a great gift that lasts a lifetime. The ad did all of that while also providing emotional appeal and attachment to the consumer with the graduation occasion.

3. Developing the Story

In the development of a story, there are three steps: writing **ascript**, **storyboarding**, and production.

Writing a script is a bit different than writing a design brief in that a script's main objective is to flesh out a story. Below is the script for *Argo*, which won best picture.

Written by

Chris Terrio

Based on the May 2007 "Wired" magazine article
entitled "The Great Escape" by Joshua Bearman;
and chapter nine of the book entitled
"The Master of Disguise" by Antonio Mendez.

FADE IN:

BEGINNING LOGO

The familiar logo WARNER BROS. PRESENTS COMES UP.
After a beat, it is consumed by FIRE.
It becomes AN AMERICAN FLAG, BURNING in the street.

1 EXT. U.S. EMBASSY (TEHRAN) - MORNING 1

Effigies of Jimmy Carter and the deposed Shah -- crowds
chanting Magbar Carter! Magbar Ahmrika! Fists in the
air.

SUPERIMPOSE: TEHRAN - NOVEMBER 4, 1979

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN -- about 2/3 men and 1/3 women, some
with flak jackets; about half the young women wear full
chador. Many wear plastic bibs with photographs of
Ayatollah Khomeini.

PASTED TO ROOSEVELT GATE: photographs of STUDENTS who
were killed under the deposed Shah of Iran's regime.

Signs in English: U.S.A. RETURN THE SHAH -- JUSTICE
FOR MURDER. A few IRANIAN POLICE attend -- more as
bystanders than peacekeepers.

A MAN frantically stabs an EFFIGY of the SHAH.

An IRANIAN STUDENT films the scene with a Super 8 camera.

2 EXT. EMBASSY GROUNDS - MORNING 2

From INSIDE THE EMBASSY GATES we can hear the noise of
the protest. There are three primary buildings on
campus: the CHANCERY, the embassy's main building, THE
AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, and the CONSULATE.

We can see that the compound is securitized: sand-filled
traps and steel bars on the windows of the consulate.

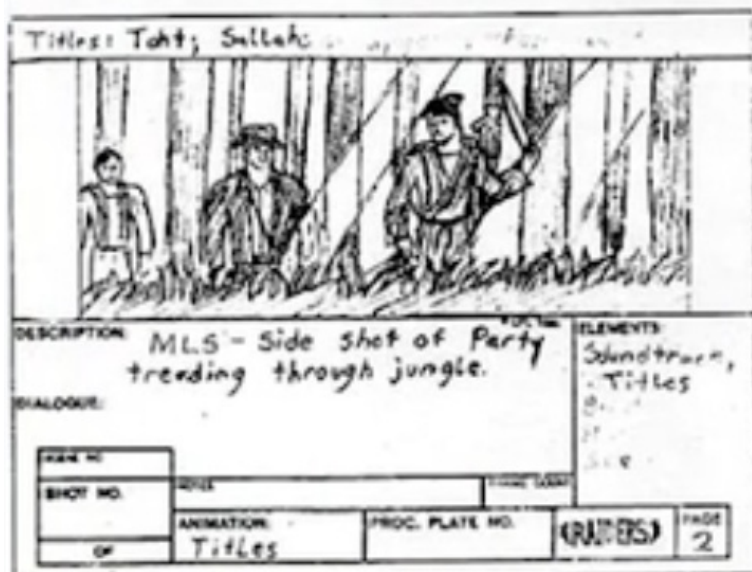
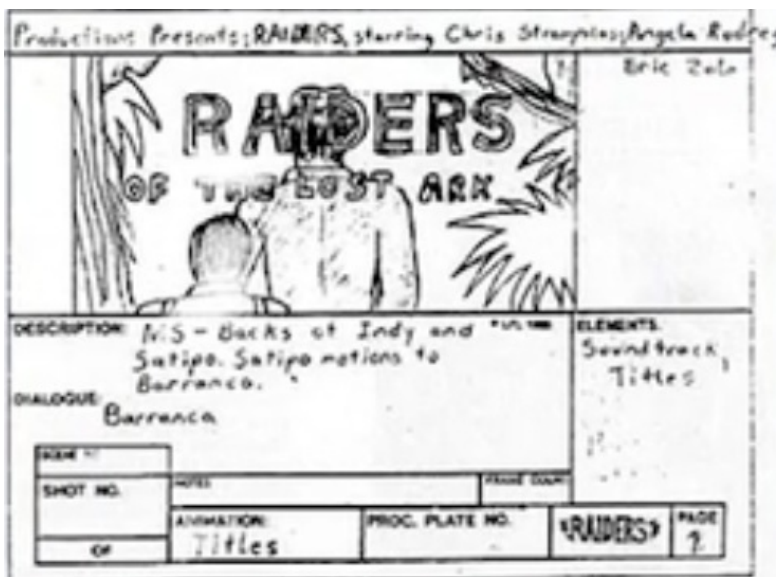
3 INT. U.S. EMBASSY - CONSULATE OFFICE - MORNING 3

Now, we see the POV THROUGH those steel bars.

Standing on a chair looking at the protest outside the
gate, is BOB ANDERS, late 40s-50s, a consular officer.

(CONTINUED)

You can see how a script is typically formatted into sections with numbered, noted, and labeled shots. You take the script and go on to the second step, which is storyboarding.



Storyboards translate or visualize the script into sequential images. Imagery is used to convey the story, so it's important to keep images in a logical order, much like you would in a comic book.

The last step in developing a story is production, which is the shooting of footage, or the animation of graphics if this is a time-based design like a commercial or movie. A time-based designer will use the script and storyboard as a guide to follow in this final step.

However, storytelling isn't just for designing time-based works like TV or film; in fact, it can be used across all media types. The magazine ad below, for example, has an implied narrative for the viewer.



Clearly this is advertising the cigarettes, but look at the story the ad created. Three guys are going fishing, one man lights up a cigarette, and gets lucky by catching a swordfish. Now, he and his two friends are talking about it.

This throws us back to that old expression of a picture being worth a thousand words and pictures having stories to tell. Still images can tell stories just as well as moving images. That's apparent in this example, and in the many types of media around you as well.



TERMS TO KNOW

Script

A writing format that is linked to time-based media such as film and television.

Storyboard

A collection of drawings or images that visualizes a story from a script.



SUMMARY

This lesson provided you with an **overview of storytelling** by focusing on the importance of narratives in weaving quantitative information into qualitative information. You then looked at **storytelling in action** and explored how to **develop the story** through the stages of writing the script, storyboarding, and production.

Keep up the learning and have a great day!

Source: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR MARIO E. HERNANDEZ



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