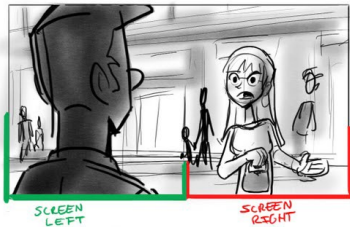


STORYBOARD TIPS

These are simply tricks and fundamental techniques I've picked up along the way that I've found to be successful in my own work. Please absorb these pointers to improve upon your own boards.

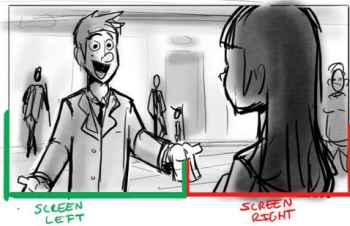
1. Maintaining Screen Side

MAINTAINING SCREEN SIDE



ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A SPECIFIC SCREEN PLACEMENT FOR CHARACTERS CAN HELP EASILY GUIDE THE AUDIENCE THROUGH THE SCENE.

IN THIS CONVERSATION I THUMBRED OUT I ESTABLISHED A MALE CHARACTER ON SCREEN LEFT AND THE FEMALE ON SCREEN RIGHT



WHEN WE CUT TO OVER THE FEMALE'S SHOULDER, WE MAINTAIN THE CHARACTERS SCREEN SIDE.

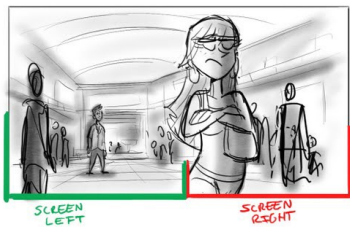


NOW WE CUT TO THE MALE'S POV FOR A REACTION SHOT. IN THIS SHOT WE FAVOR THE FEMALE SCREEN RIGHT

IF WE PUSH HER TOO FAR TO THE RIGHT WE CREATE AN UNBALANCED COMPOSITION.



THERE IS ALSO A LOT OF UNUSED SCREEN SPACE. WE ALSO RISK CUTTING OFF OUR CHARACTER



NOW WE CUT WERE TO SHOW THE FEMALE STORM OFF. WE MAINTAIN SCREEN SIDE BY HAVING HER EXIT SCREEN RIGHT.

MAINTAINING SCREEN SIDE



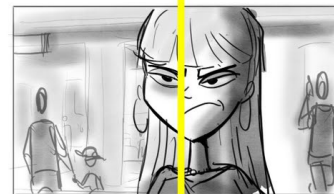
WE HAVE ESSENTIALLY CUT THE SCREEN IN HALF.



WHAT MAINTAINING/ESTABLISHING SCREEN SIDE DOES:

IT SETS UP AN EASY TO FOLLOW PATTERN FOR THE AUDIENCE WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO FOCUS ON THE DIALOGUE/ACTING.

WHEN THINGS ARE JUMPING AROUND ON SCREEN THE AUDIENCE HAS TO PUT MORE EFFORT INTO TRACKING THE CHARACTERS/ACTION.



IN PANEL 3 BELOW I HAVE SWITCHED SCREEN SIDES FOR THE FINAL SHOT. NOW, IF YOU LOOK THROUGH THE SEQUENCE AND END ON PANEL ③ INSTEAD OF ② YOU SHOULD NOTICE A SLIGHT REACTION TAKE PLACE IN YOUR BRAIN



BECAUSE WE HAVE BROKEN OUR PATTERN OF SCREEN SIDES, OUR GRAIN FEEL MUST RE-ASSESS THE STAGING OF THE SHOT. ONLY THEN WHEN WE HAVE FIGURED OUT WHERE EVERYTHING IS, CAN WE TAKE NOTE OF THE ACTING.

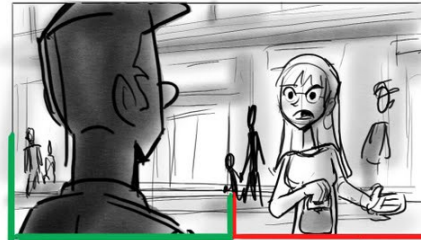
Note: there would obviously be more panels if this was flushed out, to play up the acting and also hook up the action. And on the last panel, I would probably frame it more centered while the female is farther away and then adjust right as she walks towards camera.

This is a simple theory of cutting that can easily help create a sense of continuity within a sequence and or exchange. The idea is not exclusive to 1 character interacting with another. The same principle can be used between 2 different groups of characters, or even a character and an object (ie. A telephone. A man waits anxiously for a very important phone call).

The example above is a bit rudimentary for the sake of demonstrating the concept. More realistically, you will have characters moving around as they interact. In this case what we can do is create multiple patterns to track the exchange. The important thing to focus on when trying to handle multiple staging set ups is making sure the audience clearly sees our new staging occur. The simplest way to achieve that is by having characters physically cross paths on screen >>

As long as you continue to establish any new screen spacing, the sequence should maintain a certain level of continuity that will allow the audience to follow along quite easily.

MAINTAINING SCREEN SIDE



①
SCREEN LEFT
SCREEN RIGHT

IF YOU NEED TO, OR WANT, CHANGE THE SCREEN SIDE OF A CHARACTER, IT HELPS THE AUDIENCE FOLLOW ALONG WHEN WE SEE THE ACTUAL CHANGE TAKE PLACE.

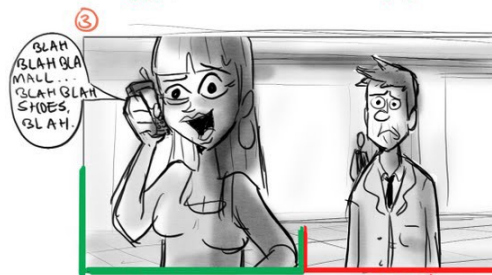


SCREEN LEFT
SCREEN RIGHT

②
THE WOMAN HEARS HER CELL PHONE RING, SHE STEPS AWAY FROM THE MAN TO ANSWER IT



THE WOMAN WALKS OVER, AND THE CAMERA ADJUSTS WITH HER. HERE WE SEE HER PHYSICALLY OVERLAP THE MALE.



SCREEN LEFT
SCREEN RIGHT

NOW WHEN SHE SETTLES, WE HAVE VISUALLY ESTABLISHED A NEW SET UP WITH THE FEMALE SCREEN LEFT AND THE MALE RIGHT.



SCREEN RIGHT

NOW THAT WE HAVE ESTABLISHED NEW STAGING, WE CONTINUE BY CREATING A NEW PATTERN OF SCREEN SIDE.

WE FAVOR THE MALE SCREEN RIGHT TO HOOK UP WITH OUR PREVIOUS SHOT

2. Maintaining Screen Direction

This is similar to the previous theory however involves more characters and objects moving in and out of frame.

I think the most important thing to remember with storyboarding is that; anything and everything we can do visually will invoke a specific response from the audience. The key is to determine what exactly you want the audience to feel and then find the best way visually to achieve that reaction.

Refer to images on next page.

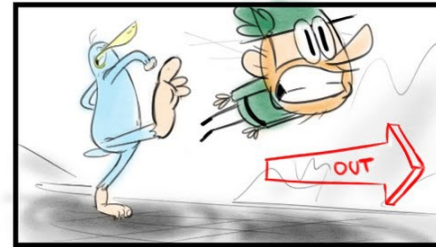
I hear a lot of people say "You can't do that cut" or "You are breaking the 180 line, you can't do that".... well obviously you can do it, because if you can board it, you can shoot it. It's not that you "Can't" do something, it's that that "something" is confusing the audience, or isn't visually pleasing, or isn't achieving what is necessary of the scene. All of which are appropriate critiques of a jump-cut or breaking the line, however not so much if that is the desired effect you hope to have on your audience.

Please note, there are no "right" or "wrongs" in storyboarding (and most art forms for that matter), only ways that work better than others. These are simply tips, tricks and principles I have picked up along the way that I've been able to apply directly to my own work and found to be very successful.

MAINTAINING SCREEN DIRECTION



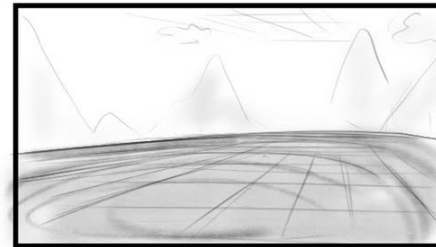
MAINTAINING A CERTAIN LEVEL OF CONTINUITY WITH SCREEN DIRECTION (CHARACTERS/OBJECTS COMING IN AND OUT OF FRAME) CAN HELP EASILY GUIDE OUR AUDIENCE THROUGH A SCENE.



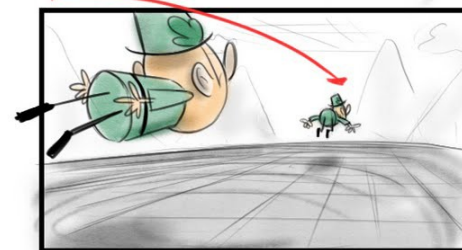
HERE I HAVE SET UP A LITTLE SCENE WITH **MANNY** AND **KHAN**.

IN THIS SHOT **KHAN** IS KICKED OFF SCREEN GOING **LEFT TO RIGHT**

SINCE I HAVE ESTABLISHED A SCREEN DIRECTION OF **LEFT TO RIGHT** I WILL TRY AND MAINTAIN THIS ACTION IN THE FOLLOWING SHOTS.

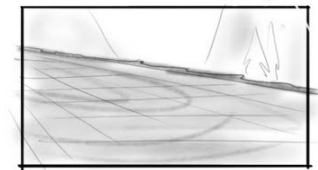


← HERE WE CUT TO WHAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS **MANNY/KHAN'S** P.O.V.



KHAN COMES INTO FRAME FROM **LEFT TO RIGHT**, AND CONTINUES THIS DIRECTION AS HE FLIES OFF INTO THE DISTANCE.

NOW WE CUT TO THE GROUND

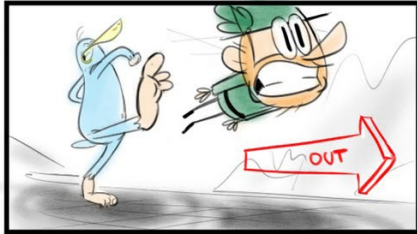
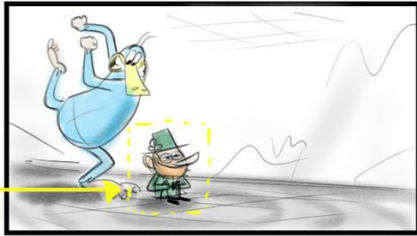


KHAN HITS THE GROUND AND CONTINUES HIS ACTION GOING **LEFT TO RIGHT**.

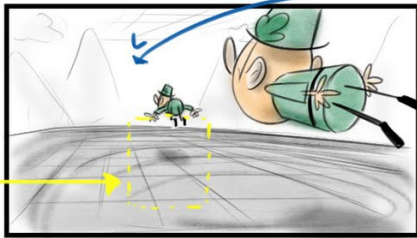


NOTE: EVEN THOUGH WE CUT FROM A SHOT WHERE **KHAN** IS GOING AWAY FROM CAMERA, TO A SHOT WHERE HE IS COMING TOWARDS CAMERA, WE STILL MAINTAIN OUR **LEFT TO RIGHT** SCREEN DIRECTION.

MAINTAINING SCREEN DIRECTION



IF WE CUT TO A SHOT WHERE KHAN IS GOING **RIGHT TO LEFT** INSTEAD OF **LEFT TO RIGHT**, WE BREAK OUR CONTINUITY.



WHAT BREAKING SCREEN DIRECTION DOES: IT CAN CONFUSE THE AUDIENCE BECAUSE YOU ARE BREAKING A PATTERN OF MOVEMENT YOU HAVE CREATED.

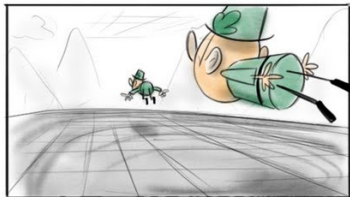
WHY THIS HAPPENS:

1. IF WE TAKE NOTE OF WHERE KHAN IS IN OUR **ESTABLISHING SHOT**

AND COMPARE THAT TO WHERE HE IS GOING IN OUR CURRENT SHOT, WE WILL SEE THAT HE APPEARS TO BE MOVING TO THE EXACT SAME SCREEN SPACE WHERE HE STARTED.

THIS GIVES THE IMPRESSION HE IS **NOT** MOVING.

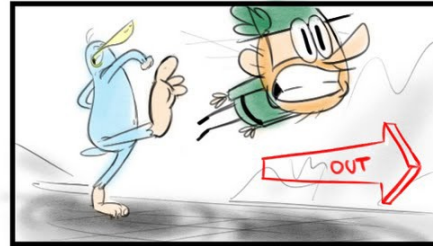
2. IF WE WERE TO PULL OUT, WE WOULD SEE THAT WE HAVE STAGED **MANNY** SCREEN RIGHT (EVEN THOUGH HE IS OFF SCREEN).



THIS IS CONFUSING BECAUSE WE HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED HIM SCREEN LEFT IN OUR **ESTABLISHING SHOT**. SO WE ARE THROWING OUR AUDIENCE OFF BY FLIPPING OUR INITIAL STAGING.



MAINTAINING SCREEN DIRECTION



IF YOU NEED TO OR WANT TO CHANGE SCREEN DIRECTION, YOU CAN DO SO QUITE EASILY BY INTRODUCING A **NEUTRAL** SHOT.

HERE WE HAVE ACTION ON SCREEN GOING **LEFT TO RIGHT**.

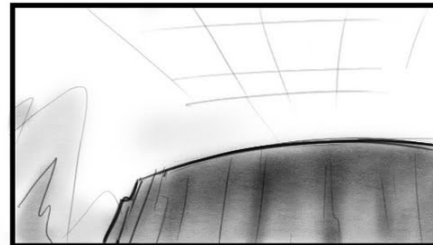


NOW WHEN WE CUT, WE GO TO A SHOT WHERE HE IS GOING **NEITHER LEFT TO RIGHT** OR **RIGHT TO LEFT**.

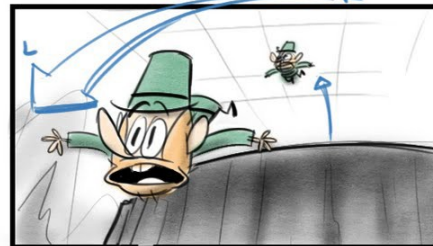
HE IS FLYING DIRECTLY AT CAMERA (ANIMATED SWISH PAN IN BACKGROUND GIVES IMPRESSION OF MOVEMENT).

THIS SHOT ESSENTIALLY **NEUTRALIZES** OUR SCREEN DIRECTION.

↑ THIS ALLOWS US TO CREATE A NEW DIRECTION FOR OUR ACTION.



SO NOW WE CAN CUT TO A SHOT THAT IS COMPOSED FOR **RIGHT TO LEFT** ACTION WITHOUT BEING TOO JARRING FOR THE AUDIENCE.



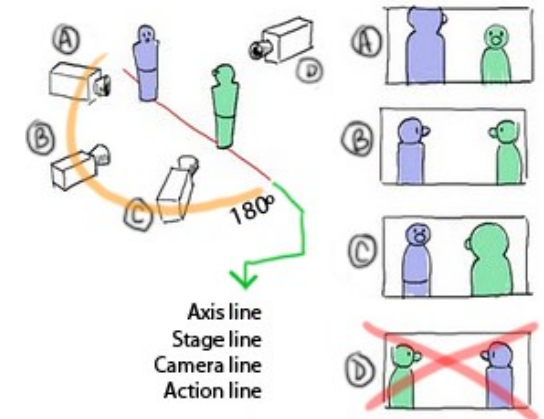
SINCE NOW WE HAVE CREATED A NEW SCREEN DIRECTION **RIGHT TO LEFT** WE SHOULD MAINTAIN THIS DIRECTION IN THE FOLLOWING SHOTS TO BUILD ON OUR CONTINUITY.



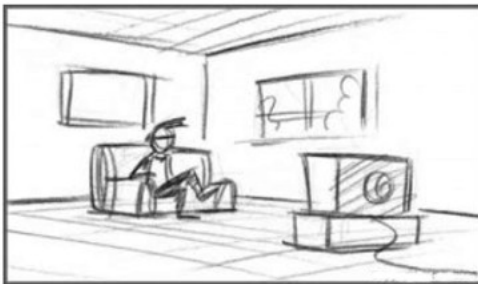
EXAMPLE OF POSSIBLE NEXT SHOT ↑

This is all referring to the **180 Rule** – which is the principle to never flip the screen side or direction. The 180 degrees is based upon the invisible line that runs through the shot to maintain screen direction and continuity. Most times this line is the line of sight between two characters and is part of a semi-circular area where the camera can be placed to maintain continuity.

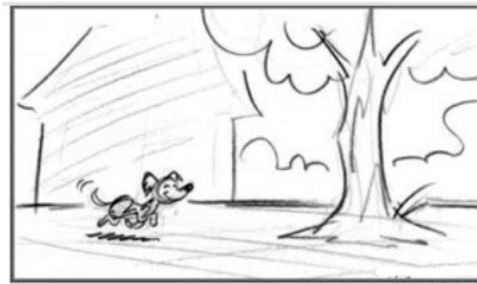
Always keep the characters on their own sides and you will never cross the line. I know it sounds stupidly simple. But people screw it up all the time. When they start using different shots and angles, it can slip away from them for a shot or two (or seven). It doesn't just work with people in a shot.



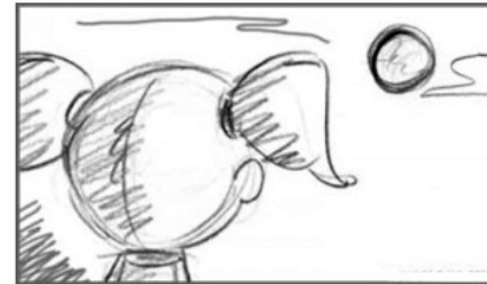
It can be the guy and his TV.



The dog and a tree.



The child and the moon.



Just keep asking yourself the questions.

Which side did you establish the TV, the tree, the moon on?

Then which side of the frame must the guy, the dog, the child face to see it?

Then face them that way and keep the person/object on their own side. Now things can get a lot more complicated. Add in a few more people. Have them all sitting at the dinner table. Have them enter and exit. You can change the line and establish new ones. Then you follow the same rules. But I think this is enough for one post. I hope it made some sense. I just wanted to give you the simplest examples so you grasp the basic concept.

Remember you have to learn these rules and learn them well, before you can break them.

How to 'Cross The Line'

With some directors, this is a hard and fast rule that is not broken; with others, it is broken liberally. Most directors fall somewhere in the middle. The most important thing (at least to me) is knowing HOW and WHY one crosses the line. To me the 180 is not really a rule; it is a suggestion. Most of the time we are within the comfortable confines of the 180 semi-circle, but every now and then, to break up what can turn into monotony and also to generate interest, we go over.

It's up to you to use all the tools available to make your scenes and shots interesting. Just because a character is on the left side of the screen doesn't mean they have to be there for the whole sequence; or because a car is moving from left to right doesn't mean it has to be moving left to right in every shot for the rest of the episode, especially in action sequences.

Some suggestions on how to go over the line:

1. Lead the viewer's eye to the part of the screen where you want them to look when you cut over the 180.
2. Create a big enough change in the shot that the characters don't jump or pop.
3. Cut away to a third character or object or action.
4. Cut to a neutral angle - an ON AXIS shot, where the camera is ON the line of action (a POV or eyeline shot).
5. Move the camera over the line, creating a new line.
6. Just do it - to elicit a reaction from the viewer, good examples are the opening of The Insider by Michael Mann.

3. Motivating the Camera

Motivating the camera is a simple technique of using visual cues to set up a cut or camera-move and in doing so, ease the audience into a new shot or new information. Below is a simple example of how utilizing the above theory can have a huge influence on the overall feel/continuity of a sequence.

MOTIVATING THE CAMERA: CUTS

EXAMPLE 1:

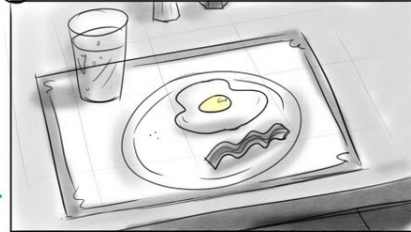
I HAVE BOARDED A SIMPLE SCENE: MAN EATS BREAKFAST.

MOTIVATING THE CAMERA IS A SIMPLE TECHNIQUE OF USING VISUAL CUES TO SET UP A CUT OR A CAMERA MOVE. DESPITE BEING VERY SIMPLE CHANGES/ADDITIONS THEY CAN HAVE A DRASTIC EFFECT ON THE OVERALL FEEL OF A SEQUENCE.

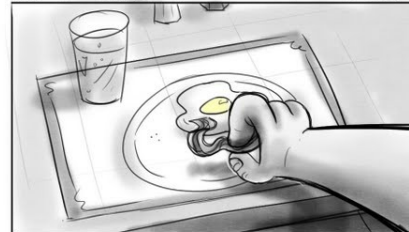
① MAN EATS TOAST.



② WE CUT TO HIS PLATE



③ HE GRABS A PIECE OF BACON.



IN THE ABOVE SEQUENCE, THERE IS AN AMBIGUOUS CUT FROM PANEL ① TO ②

NOTHING IN THE PREVIOUS PANEL HAS SUGGESTED A CUT. SO WHEN WE CUT, THE AUDIENCE IS CAUGHT OFF GUARD.

WE AS AN AUDIENCE ARE UNSURE WHAT WE ARE LOOKING AT.

- IS IT THE MAN'S P.O.V.?
- IS IT A DIFFERENT CHARACTER'S P.O.V.?
- WE DO NOT SEE THE TABLE IN PANEL ①, SO IS THIS HIS TABLE?

NOW BY THE TIME WE GET TO PANEL ③ THE MAN'S ARM WOULD COME INTO FRAME, AND WE AS AN AUDIENCE WOULD BE ABLE TO FIGURE OUT:

- IT IS THE MAN'S P.O.V.
- HE IS AT A TABLE.
- HE IS GOING FOR THE BACON.

THE PROBLEM HERE IS THAT THE AUDIENCE IS PLAYING CATCH-UP. THEY ARE BEHIND IN TERMS OF THE INFORMATION THEY HAVE BEEN SHOWN. THEY ARE ALSO FORCED TO PROCESS A LARGE AMOUNT OF INFO IN A SINGLE SHOT. (GO TO EXAMPLE 2).

IN EXAMPLE #2 BELOW, I HAVE ADDED ONLY ONE DRAWING, YET YOU SHOULD FEEL A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE FLOW OF THE SCENE.

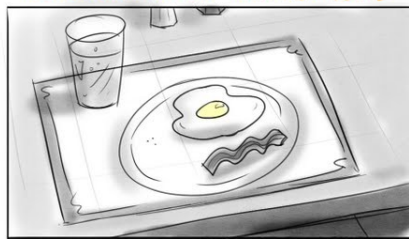
① MAN EATS TOAST.



② MAN FINISHES TOAST AND LOOKS DOWN



③ WE CUT TO HIS P.O.V. OF PLATE



BY ADDING A SIMPLE EYE GLANCE (②) WE CAN DRASTICALLY CHANGE THE FLOW OF THE SEQUENCE BY SPACING OUT THE INFORMATION FOR THE AUDIENCE.

HERE IN PANEL ②, THE LOOK DOWN ACTS AS A MOTIVATION TO CUT. IT CUES THE AUDIENCE BY VISUALLY SAYING "OK, NOW WE ARE GOING TO SEE WHAT THE MAN SEES."

NOW THE INFORMATION BEING REVEALED TO THE AUDIENCE IS SPACED OUT AND EASY TO FOLLOW.

- PANEL ② - MAN LOOKS DOWN AND PREPARES US FOR A CUT.
- PANEL ③ - WE SEE WHAT HE SEES, HIS PLATE/TABLE.
- PANEL ④ - HE REACHES FOR THE BACON.

IN EXAMPLE 1 ABOVE, ALL 3 OF THESE THINGS ARE ONLY REVEALED IN THE FINAL PANEL. HOWEVER BY ADDING ONE SIMPLE EYE GLANCE WE ARE ABLE TO SPACE OUT AND CLARIFY THE INFORMATION THAT IS REVEALED TO THE AUDIENCE, ALLOWING THEM A MUCH EASIER TIME FOLLOWING ALONG.

④ HE GRABS BACON.



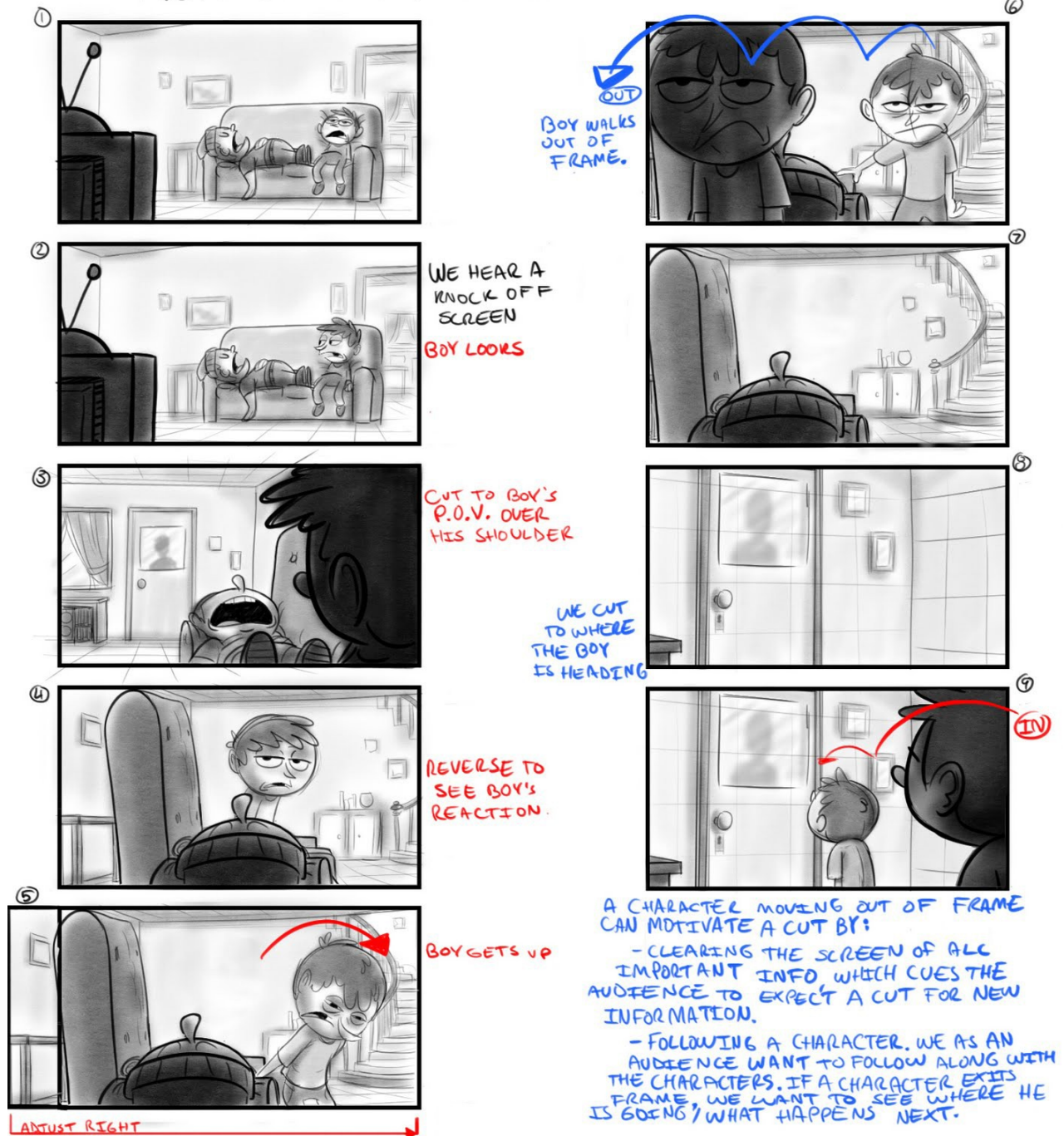
Hopefully this isn't over-complicated. Essentially you should be able to look through each of the examples and feel the difference.

Basically: Use a character's eye line to motivate a cut. It helps ease the audience through the cut and into new information. (While also putting us directly in the character's shoes)

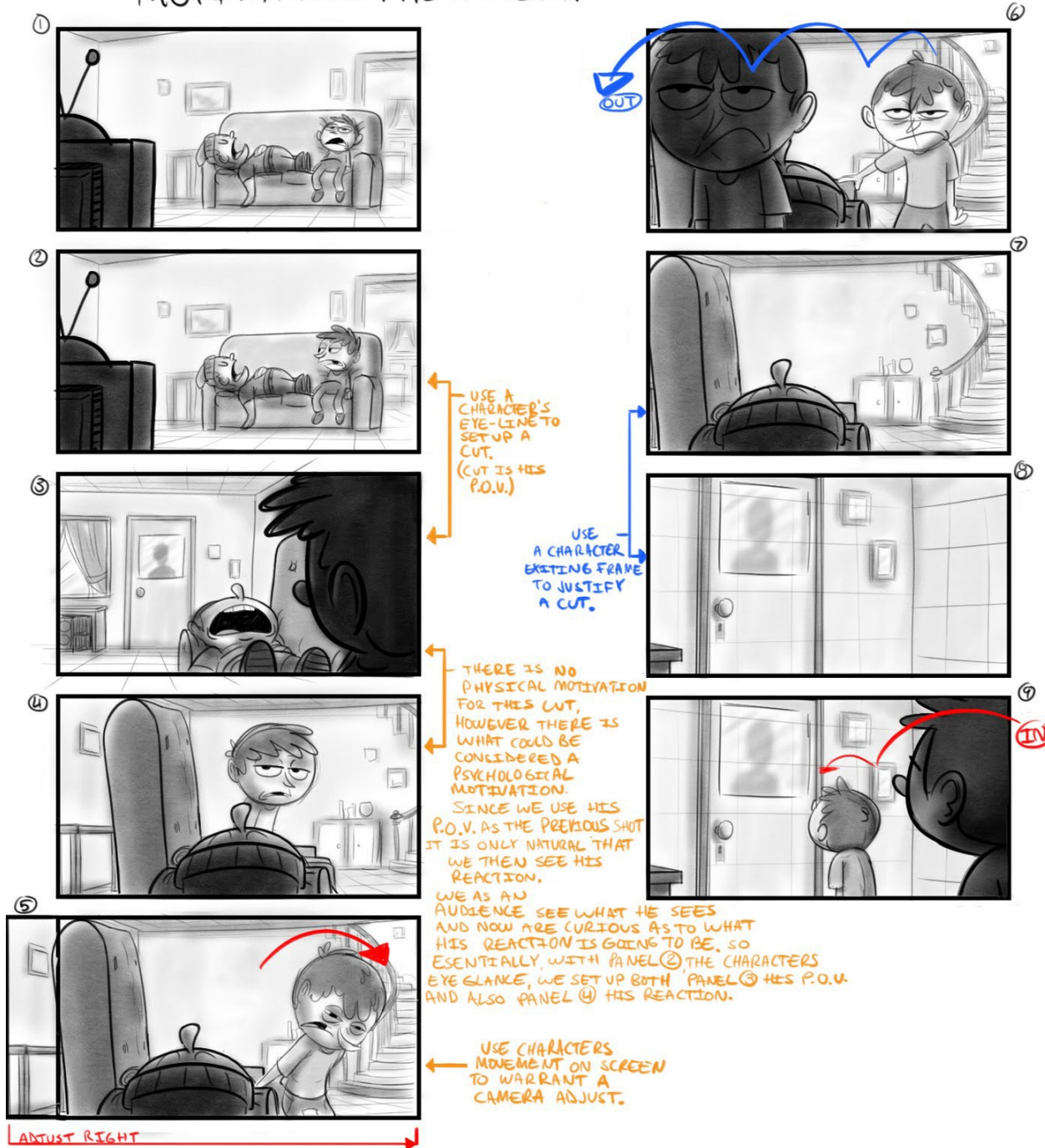
There are many other ways to motivate the camera. To the right here is a short sequence I've boarded out with various examples all strung together. The idea is to create as much continuity within the sequence as possible, making everything clear and easy to follow.

Always draw a map for yourself to keep track of the characters positions within the environment and in relation to the camera. On the next page I have pointed out the specific methods used to motivate the camera.

MOTIVATING THE CAMERA: CUTS



MOTIVATING THE CAMERA: CUTS



So as you can see in this sequence – ways to motivate the camera;

- Using a Character's eyeline/P.O.V.
- Having a character move on screen and adjusting the camera accordingly.
- Having a character exit frame.

There are other ways not represented in the above example, for instance;

- Having a character enter frame. (illustrated in a tip sheet below.)

I think ultimately what it comes down to, specifically for 'cutting', is the fact that a 'cut' is not natural, it doesn't happen in real life (unless you take really long blinks). Obviously we have all seen enough film/television to accept a 'cut', nevertheless, anything you can do to smooth out the transition will only help create and maintain the continuity of your sequence.

These next examples revolve too around motivating the camera, however explores more "what they are saying visually".

MOTIVATING THE CAMERA: WHAT IT SAYS VISUALLY

- ① GOOD LOOKING KID IN A HAT
DRAWS AT A DESK.



- ② BIRD **FLIES INTO FRAME.**
AND RESTS ON WINDOW.



- ③ PUNCH IN TO BIRD.



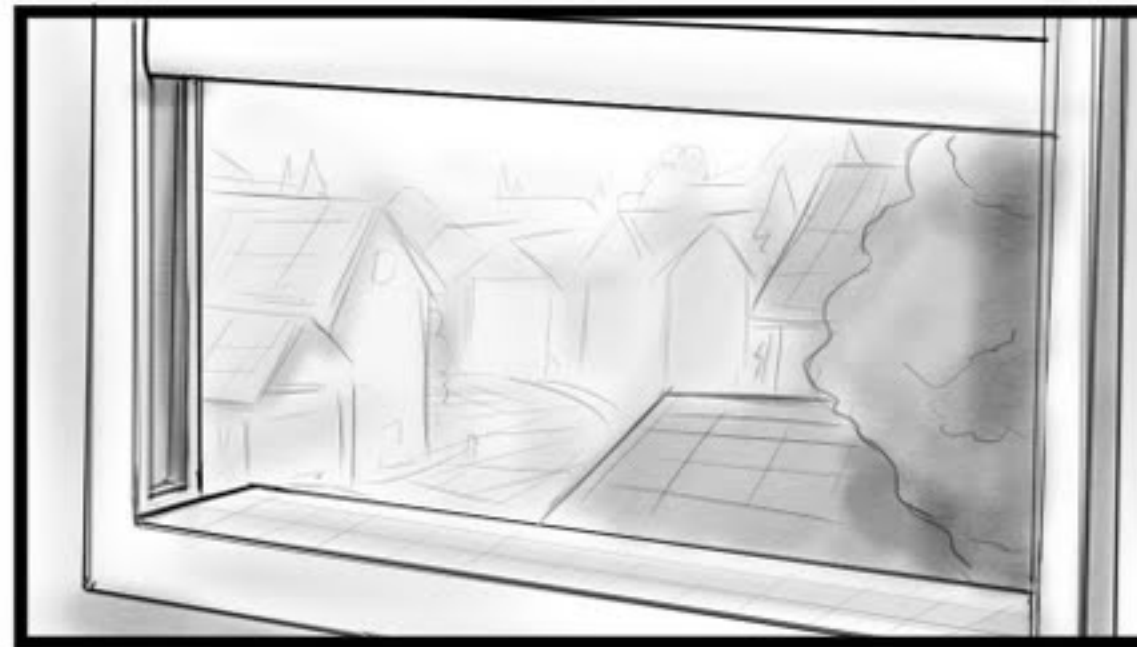
IN THE ABOVE SEQUENCE WE USE THE **BIRD FLYING INTO FRAME** AS A MEANS TO MOTIVATE THE CAMERA (THE CUT).
DOING SO ALLOWS US TO LEAD THE AUDIENCE EASILY AND EFFECTIVELY THROUGH THE CUT AND INTO NEW INFORMATION.

BY SWITCHING THE ORDER IN WHICH THE INFORMATION IS REVEALED, WE CAN CREATE A VERY DIFFERENT FEELING.
SEE BELOW ↓

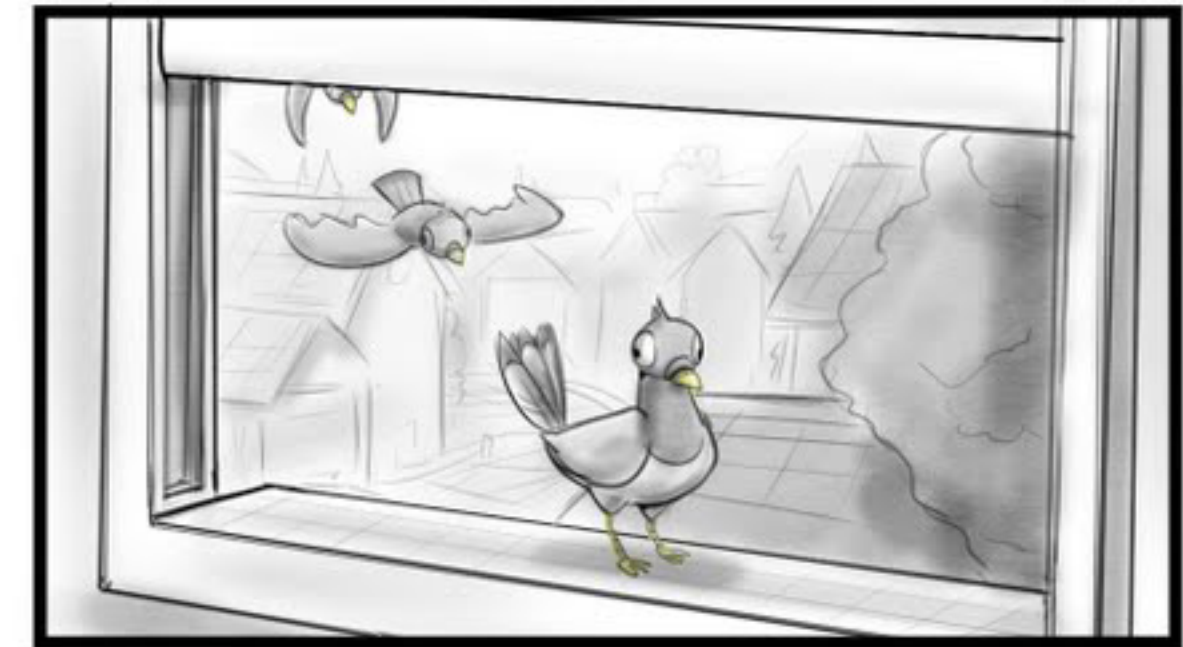
- ① GOOD LOOKING KID IN A HAT
DRAWS AT A DESK.



- ② **PUNCH INTO WINDOW.**



- ③ BIRD **FLIES INTO FRAME.**
AND RESTS ON WINDOW.



IN THE ABOVE SEQUENCE THERE IS NOTHING THAT MOTIVATES A CUT FROM PANEL ① TO PANEL ②.

NOTE: THE CUT IS NOT WRONG. IT CAN STILL BE MADE RATHER SEEMLESSLY AS WE ARE CUTTING INTO AN OBJECT (THE WINDOW) THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE PREVIOUS PANEL.

HOWEVER, WHAT IT DOES DO IS PUT THE AUDIENCE AHEAD OF THE INFORMATION.

BY **CUTTING FIRST TO THE WINDOW** WE ARE VISUALLY SAYING TO THE AUDIENCE "LOOK HERE, THERE IS GOING TO BE SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION."
HOWEVER, IT HAS YET TO BE REVEALED.

AS A RESULT, THE AUDIENCE BECOMES CONSCIOUS OF THE CUT. IT WILL NOT BE UNTIL THE BIRD ENTERS THE FRAME THAT THE AUDIENCE WILL UNDERSTAND WHY THE CUT WAS MADE.

MOTIVATING THE CAMERA: WHAT IT SAYS VISUALLY

EXAMPLE A

① GUY READING NEWSPAPER



② DOG (OBSCURED) ENTERS ROOM AND WALKS UP TO TABLE. MAN LOOKS DOWN



③ DOG LOOKING UP AT MAN.



IN THE ABOVE EXAMPLE AT PANEL ② WE MOTIVATE THE NEXT CUT WITH BOTH THE DOG ENTERING FRAME AND THE MAN LOOKING DOWN.

BY FRAMING THE SHOT SO THAT WE SEE THE DOG AND ALSO THE MAN LOOKING DOWN, WE ARE PUTTING THE AUDIENCE IN A POSITION WHERE THEY ARE LEARNING ALL NEW INFORMATION SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH OUR CHARACTER.

SO WHEN WE CUT TO PANEL ③ WE ARE SEEING WHAT THE CHARACTER IS SEEING THUS GAINING THE SAME INFORMATION AS HIM.

EXAMPLE B

① GUY READING NEWSPAPER



② DOG (OBSCURED) ENTERS ROOM AND WALKS UP TO TABLE. MAN DOES NOT LOOK.



③ DOG LOOKING UP AT MAN.



IN EXAMPLE B, WE REMOVED THE MAN LOOKING DOWN THAT WE HAD IN THE FIRST EXAMPLE. BUT WE STILL HAVE THE DOG ENTERING FRAME, WHICH, EVEN THOUGH IT IS OBSCURED, STILL GIVES US ENOUGH INCENTIVE TO CUT.

NOW WHEN WE CUT TO SEE THE DOG, THE AUDIENCE IS AHEAD OF OUR CHARACTER IN TERMS OF INFORMATION KNOWN. SINCE IN PANEL ② THE MAN DOES NOT LOOK DOWN, WE AS AN AUDIENCE ARE LED TO ASSUME THAT THE MAN IS UNAWARE OF THE DOG'S PRESENCE.

PUTTING THE AUDIENCE IN THIS POSITION (BEING AHEAD OF THE CHARACTER) CAN BE USEFUL FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES:

- COMEDIC PURPOSE: THE DOG STARTLES THE MAN BY BARKING.
- EMOTIONAL PURPOSE: THE DOG FEELS IGNORED BY THE MAN.
- AND MANY MORE!

The next three examples are all slight variations of the same scene, each exploring a different approach in regards to the progression of information that is revealed to the audience, and consequently the effect it has on them.

MOTIVATING THE CAMERA: WHAT IT SAYS VISUALLY

EXAMPLE ©:

① GUY READING NEWSPAPER



② MAN LOOKS DOWN.



③ DOG LOOKING UP AT MAN.



IN THE ABOVE EXAMPLE WE'VE REMOVED THE **OBSCURED DOG ENTERING FRAME** THAT WE HAD IN EXAMPLES (A) AND (B). BUT WE STILL HAVE **THE MAN LOOKING DOWN**, WHICH ALLOWS US TO CUT TO PANEL ③.

ONLY UPON CUTTING TO PANEL ③ IS THE AUDIENCE GIVEN THE INFORMATION OUR CHARACTER ALREADY KNOWS.

BY REMOVING THE **DOG ENTERING FRAME**, WE REMOVE ALL VISIBLE INFORMATION THAT WOULD ALLOW THE AUDIENCE TO KNOW WHAT IT IS THE MAN IS LOOKING AT. THIS PUTS THE AUDIENCE BEHIND THE CHARACTER IN TERMS OF INFO KNOWN.

PUTTING THE AUDIENCE IN THIS POSITION, BEING BEHIND THE CHARACTER, CAN BE USEFUL FOR VARIOUS CINEMATIC PURPOSES:

- SUSPENSE: WITHHOLDING INFORMATION FROM THE AUDIENCE CAN CREATE A FEELING OF BEING ON THE EDGE OF YOUR SEAT, AS THE AUDIENCE IS EAGER TO KNOW/SEE WHAT THE CHARACTERS KNOW/SEE.

- COMEDIC: YOU CAN "MISDIRECT" THE AUDIENCE BY SETTING UP A SCENARIO WITH AN EXPECTED OUTCOME, AND SWITCHING WHAT IS REVEALED TO CATCH THE AUDIENCE OFF-GUARD.

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE COMEDIC PANEL:
(OR SUSPENSFUL DEPENDING ON HOW SERIOUSLY YOU TAKE THINGS.)



Please note that none of these examples are any more "right" than any other. They are merely different takes on the same scene. Their purpose is to show how slight variations in storyboards (and ultimately film) can produce vastly differing ideas/moods/responses. Ultimately, it would all depend on what the script calls for or what is necessary of the scene to determine which of the following (if any) would be suitable.

I think the most important thing to take away from this concept of 'motivating the camera', is just to try and be conscious of the decisions you are making in your storyboards. Try to understand what you are actually saying visually, what information you are revealing to the audience (and when) and what effect it will have on them. Thinking about these things as you board can significantly enhance a sequence and really help 'sell' an idea in the storyboard stage.

4. Incorporating Design Principles

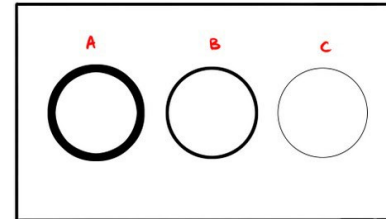
These next few tip sheets examine the elements of design; line, shape, space and value, and how to incorporate them into your storyboards to help direct the eye and clarify information. The focus here is not the cinematics of storyboarding but the execution of idea to paper and ultimately how to utilize design principles to achieve desired results in an efficient way within a given panel or shot. Storyboarding is not necessarily about drawing 'good' but drawing effective.

NOTE: There are two other elements of design, texture and color. However they would only be used in rare cases with storyboards and when employed probably wouldn't be for design purposes but most likely for clarification

(I.e. using colors in digital boards to keep track of specific objects of similar size and shape in a given sequence, such as small prop or gems, that each have varying story-specific trajectories).

INCORPORATING DESIGN PRINCIPLES INTO STORYBOARDS

SIZE AND THICKNESS:



YOU CAN USE SIZE AND LINE THICKNESS TO IMPLY AND CLARIFY DEPTH IN YOUR STORYBOARDS.

- IN THIS PANEL I CREATED 3 CIRCLES OF EQUAL SIZE WITH ONLY THE LINE THICKNESS VARYING.
- DESPITE BEING OF EQUAL SIZE AND POSITION (VERTICALLY WITHIN THE PANEL) CIRCLE (A) APPEARS CLOSEST, THEN (B) AND (C) WHICH APPEARS TO BE THE FARTHEST AWAY FROM US.

THE THICKER THE LINE,
THE CLOSER IT APPEARS TO BE.



APPLYING IT TO YOUR BOARDS:

- IN THIS PANEL I HAVE DRAWN A SIMPLE OVER-THE-SHOULDER SHOT. I DREW IT USING VERY LITTLE VARIANCE IN THE THICKNESS OF THE LINES.

THE RESULT:

- ① IT IS DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH THE CHARACTERS FROM THE BACKGROUND.
- ② THE DEPTH IN THE SHOT IS UNCLEAR.



- IN THIS PANEL, I HAVE DRAWN THE SAME EXACT SHOT HOWEVER VARIED THE LINE THICKNESS OF OBJECTS TO COINCIDE WITH THEIR POSITION IN SPACE.

THERE ARE ESSENTIALLY 3 LEVELS OF LINE THICKNESS:

- — — — — - FOREGROUND
- — — — — - MIDGROUND
- — — — — - BACKGROUND

THE RESULT:

- ① CHARACTERS ARE EASILY DISTINGUISHED FROM THE BACKGROUND.
- ② THE DEPTH OF THE SHOT IS CLEAR AND EASY TO READ.



- AN EXAMPLE OF INCORPORATING LINE THICKNESS INTO A SHOT TO HELP CLARIFY THE DEPTH.

To the right are a few examples of how incorporating varying line thickness into a panel can help clarify not only the information presented, but the depth of the shot.

There are many things you can do within a given panel to help focus or direct the eye to the important information. A simple way to achieve this is through contrast. Contrast can exist in many forms, and below we look at how contrast within a specific design element (shape, space, value) can create a focal point.

Now we can take these principles and incorporate them into storyboard panels.

I think the most important thing to take away from the sewer-rat example (on the next page) is realizing that even though panel 1 and 3 are the exact same compositions, the shading can either greatly enhance (1) or greatly distract (3) from the important information. This holds true of the other design principles as well. Thinking about these principles while you are boarding can help in creating clear and easy to read compositions.

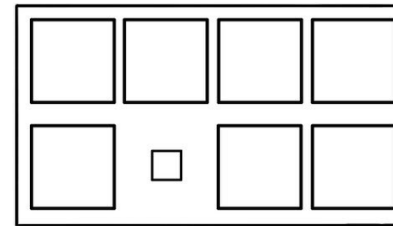
Storyboards, by nature, are disposable. They are not finished pieces of artwork. The main goal is to present ideas on paper quickly and clearly. Design principles can help sell ideas very effectively in storyboards. Below are a few more examples;

INCORPORATING DESIGN PRINCIPLES INTO STORYBOARDS

CONTRAST: INCORPORATING CONTRAST INTO YOUR BOARDS CAN HELP CLARIFY A SEQUENCE BY CREATING EASY-TO-READ COMPOSITIONS THAT DIRECT THE EYE'S OF YOUR AUDIENCE TO IMPORTANT INFORMATION.



CONTRAST IN VALUE: HERE WE HAVE CREATED A FOCAL POINT IN CONTRAST BY HAVING 1 CIRCLE OF HIGH CONTRAST SURROUNDED BY OTHER CIRCLES ALL OF LOW CONTRAST.



CONTRAST IN SIZE: HERE WE CREATE A FOCAL AREA BY HAVING 1 SMALL SQUARE SURROUNDED BY LARGER, EQUAL SIZED, SQUARES.



CONTRAST IN POSITION/PLACEMENT: HERE WE CREATE A FOCAL AREA BY PLACING A SMALL CLUSTER OF STARS IN A UNIQUE AREA OF THE COMPOSITION IN RELATION TO THE LARGER MASS. (NOTE: IT IS NOT AS STRONG AS THE PREVIOUS TWO).

COMBINING CONTRAST: IN THIS EXAMPLE I HAVE USED BOTH CONTRAST IN VALUE AND CONTRAST IN SHAPE TO HELP GUIDE THE EYE, CREATING A FOCAL POINT: THE BLOB.

VALUE: HIGHEST CONTRAST IN VALUE IS BETWEEN BLOB AND SURROUNDING SHAPE.

SHAPE: BLOB IS ONLY ROUND/CURVED OBJECT IN COMPOSITION, ALL OTHER OBJECTS ARE STRAIGHT/ANGLED.

KINDS OF CONTRAST:

- CONTRAST IN VALUE
USING VALUES OF BLACK, WHITE AND GRAY TO CREATE A FOCAL AREA OF HIGH CONTRAST SURROUNDED BY AREAS OF LOW CONTRAST.
- CONTRAST IN SIZE/SHAPE:
CREATING A PATTERN VISUALLY OF SIZE OR SHAPE, AND THEN BREAKING THE PATTERN TO CREATE A FOCAL AREA OF CONTRAST SURROUNDED BY AREAS OF REPETITION.
- CONTRAST IN POSITION
CREATING A COMPOSITION WHERE A PARTICULAR ELEMENT IS UNIQUELY PLACED IN RELATION TO A LARGER MASS OF COMPARABLE OBJECTS.

CONTRAST = UNIQUENESS:

OUR EYES ARE ATTRACTED TO CONTRAST. CONTRAST IS AN AREA OF UNIQUE PROPERTIES, WHETHER IT BE OF SHAPE, SIZE, POSITION, OR VALUE, WITHIN A GIVEN COMPOSITION.

HIERARCHY OF CONTRAST:

SOME OF THESE TYPES OF CONTRAST ARE MORE DOMINANT THAN OTHERS, WITHIN A GIVEN COMPOSITION, WHEN USED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

VALUE > SIZE/SHAPE > POSITION

VALUE IS THE MOST DOMINANT AND CAN OVERPOWER THE OTHERS. EXPERIMENT WITH THESE PRINCIPLES TO FIND COMBINATIONS THAT WORK EFFECTIVELY.



INCORPORATING DESIGN PRINCIPLES INTO STORYBOARDS

APPLYING IT TO YOUR BOARDS:

EXAMPLE 1: RAT IN SEWER



- I TRIED TO CREATE A COMPOSITION THAT WOULD SPOTLIGHT THE **RAT**, BOTH FIGURATIVELY BUT ALSO LITERALLY.
- WAYS I TRIED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS:
 1. PLACING THE **RAT** AT THE END OF A **SEWER PIPE**, WHICH ALLOWS ME TO DRAW A BIG CIRCLE AROUND THE CHARACTER. ANY TIME YOU CAN FIND AN EXCUSE TO FRAME YOUR CHARACTER/IMPORTANT INFO WITH A CIRCLE (I.E: THE MOON, THE SUN, A SPOT LIGHT) GO FOR IT! IT IS AN EASY AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO SAY "LOOK HERE!"

2. I PLACED THE VANISHING POINT BEHIND THE **RAT**, WHICH MEANS ALL MY LINES (ESPECIALLY THE GRIDS) POINT TO THE **RAT**.

3. CONTRAST IN VALUE.

- I DECIDED TO PUT THE **RAT** IN SILHOUETTE WHICH, WHEN STAGED AGAINST A CLEAR BACKGROUND, CREATES HIGH CONTRAST IN VALUE.



- THE DIFFERENCE IN VALUE IS GREATEST BETWEEN THE **RAT** AND THE **SEWER OPENING**.

- IF THE **RAT** IS 100% BLACK AND THE BACKGROUND IS 20% BLACK - $100 - 20 = 80\%$

THE HIGHER THIS NUMBER IS, THE GREATER THE CONTRAST.

- THE (A) SIDE OF THE PIPE, WHICH IS CLOSER TO THE LIGHT SOURCE IS $\approx 40\%$ BLACK
- THE (B) SIDE OF THE PIPE, CLOSER TO US, IS $\approx 70\%$
- THE DIFFERENCE EQUALING $70 - 40 = 30\%$
- SMALLER NUMBER, LESS CONTRAST

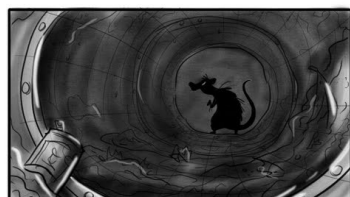
- THE (C) SIDE OF THE PIPE IS $\approx 90\%$ BLACK, SO AGAINST (B) IT CREATES CONTRAST AT $90 - 70 = 20\%$
- SO YOU CAN SEE, AS WE GET FARTHER AND FARTHER AWAY FROM THE FOCAL AREA, THE **RAT**, THE CONTRAST BECOMES LESS AND LESS.

← INVERSE LIGHTING:

- IN THIS EXAMPLE I HAVE MOVED THE LIGHT SOURCE SO IT WOULD BE EMITTING FROM INSIDE THE PIPE, AS IF WE WERE SHINING A FLASH LIGHT DOWN IT.

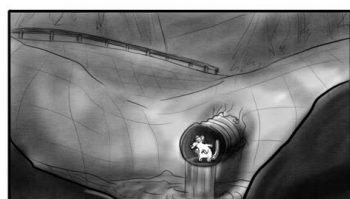
- THIS CREATES HIGHER CONTRAST IN THE FOREGROUND WHICH DISTRACTS FROM THE IMPORTANT INFO, THE **RAT**

- ALTHOUGH YOU CAN STILL MAKE OUT THE **RAT**, IT IS NOT NEARLY AS CLEAR, AND DOES NOT READ AS QUICKLY AS IN THE TOP PANEL. IN THE TOP PANEL THERE IS NO QUESTION ABOUT WHAT YOU SHOULD BE LOOKING AT!



ALTERNATE SHOT:

- BY HAVING AREAS OF HIGH CONTRAST WITHIN AND IN THE GENERAL AREA OF THE **RAT** WE CAN DIRECT THE EYE TO IMPORTANT INFORMATION.



INCORPORATING DESIGN PRINCIPLES INTO STORYBOARDS

APPLYING IT TO YOUR BOARDS:

EXAMPLE 2: MAN IN PRISON



- I TRIED TO CREATE A COMPOSITION THAT WOULD PUT THE FOCUS ON THE **MAN**, WHILE ALSO MAKING HIM FEEL TRAPPED.

- WAYS I TRIED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS:

1. CONTRAST IN VALUE:

- USING LIGHT AND DARKNESS WE CAN CREATE AN AREA OF HIGH CONTRAST SURROUNDING THE **MAN**, THIS MAKING HIM A FOCAL POINT OF THE PANEL.

- ALSO BY CLOSING OFF THE SHAPE OF THE CONTRAST, AND SURROUNDING THE COMPOSITION WITH MUCH MORE DARKNESS THAN LIGHT, WE CAN HELP EMPHASIZE VISUALLY THE IDEA OF BEING TRAPPED.

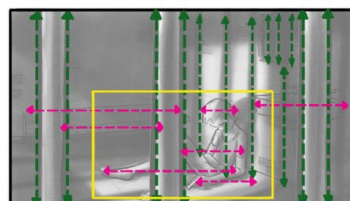
2. CONTRAST IN SHAPE:

- I TRIED TO INCORPORATE A LOT OF **VERTICLE** SHAPES AGAINST **HORIZONTAL** SHAPES TO VISUALLY REINFORCE THE IDEA OF BEING TRAPPED.

- **VERTICLES** EXIST IN THE PRISON BARS AND THE SHADOWS THEY CAST.

- **HORIZONTALS** EXIST PRIMARILY IN THE POSTURE OF THE **MAN** BUT ALSO IN SOME OF PROPS WHICH POPULATE THE PRISON CELL (THE BED AND THE SINK).

- IN ORDER TO KEEP THE FOCUS ON THE **MAN** I TRIED TO HAVE THE HIGHEST FREQUENCY OF CONTRAST WITHIN OR DIRECTLY SURROUNDING HIM.
- MEANING, A MAJORITY OF THE CONTRASTING **VERTICLES** AND **HORIZONTALS** ARE WITHIN THE CHARACTER HIMSELF OR IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDING HIM.



EXAMPLE 3: BASKETBALL LINE UP

- UTILIZING CONTRAST IN SIZE TO CREATE A FOCAL AREA.

- SHORT GUY DRAWS MOST OF THE ATTENTION TO HIMSELF BECAUSE HE IS UNIQUE SIZE - WISE IN THE COMPOSITION.



EXAMPLE 4: BLIMP IN SKY

- UTILIZING CONTRAST IN SHAPE TO CREATE A FOCAL AREA.

- ALL OBJECTS IN PANEL ARE STRAIGHT AND ANGLED, EXCEPT FOR BLIMP WHICH IS ROUND AND CURVED.

There is no single 'right' way to present an idea visually. The 'blimp' idea, for instance, could easily be boarded successfully in a variety of different ways. Ways that would vary in stylistic choices based on the artist, but that could all achieve the same goal of focusing the attention on the blimp. In fact there are probably compositions that could be more successful than the one presented.

So start experimenting with design principles and find ways to incorporate them into your boards that work for you. Figure out what you want to convey in a scene, and find the best way to present those ideas to your audience. If you follow all these basic principles closely, it will make your boards look better.