“generating momentum—and therefore anticipation—will be your most valuable storytelling skill”
Time and Structure

- All good stories need forward movement and this is accomplished with structure

- Chronological or Theme based storytelling is the most basic and on most occasions, should be avoided (unless these are really critical elements)

- Each story needs change and development
Plots and Heroes: Character Based Structure

- Plot is the organization of situations, circumstances, and events that pressure a story’s character.

- Hero/Heroine: a flawed character that often contests the ways things are for a host of motivations (outrage, ignorance, innocence).
Drama and Three Act Structure

**Act One:** establish the set-up (characters, relationships, situation, problem/tension)

**Act Two:** escalate complications (events or circumstances), central character struggles with obstacles that prevent solving problem/tension.

**Act Three:** intensifies the situation until point of climax or confrontation, central character resolves in a way that is emotionally satisfying (not necessarily happy ending)
Dramatic Curve

Most stories first state problem, develop tension, increasing complication/intensity, arrive at apex/crisis, following is change/resolution

First determine apex or crisis, then arrange the rest of the dramatic conventions around it.

This can follow a three act structure or not, shorts are usually to quick for three acts but still follow dramatic curve. Important scenes are often mini dramatic curves.

Beat: a basic unit of dramatic measurement (change of consciousness, faced with incontrovertible evidence, moment of change that constitutes a different course)
Ideas for Organizing Structure

Place all key story elements (archive material, still photos, documents, interviews) on note cards

Lay cards on table and experiment with structure

Improvise an oral treatment to decide best arrangement

Find what POV or approach would make best structure