

# SCENE ANALYSIS

FALL 2015

# USES of ANALYSIS

- PREP FOR REHEARSING A SCENE
- EXPLORING THE BEGINNING OF THE SCENE
- RESEARCH TOWARD IDENTIFYING THE EVENT OF SCENE
- HOMEWORK FOR HELPING ACTORS FIND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN SCENE

begin with  
**CIRCUMSTANCES**

**FACTS AND CONDITIONS RELEVANT TO THE CHARACTERS' ACTIONS  
AND OBJECTIVES**

# TWO KINDS

- GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES
- IMAGINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Begin with Given

# GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES

aka REAL FACTS

# Two types of Given Circumstances

- GENERAL CIRCUMSTANCES
- IMMEDIATE CIRCUMSTANCES

# GENERAL CIRCUMSTANCES

UNALTERABLE FACTS

REAL FACTS IN THE LIVES OF THE CHARACTERS OR STORY THAT HAVE OCCURRED PRIOR TO THE SCENE.

YOU MUST BE FAMILIAR WITH ALL THE FACTS --- BUT --- YOU SHOULD HIGHLIGHT THE ONES THAT HAVE BEARING ON THE SCENE IN QUESTION. – THINGS THAT EXERT AN INFLUENCE ON THIS SPECIFIC SCENE

for example – the ones you would use if you were “setting up” a clip for an audience that hadn’t seen the whole film.

AVOID WEIGHING YOURSELF OR YOUR ACTORS DOWN WITH TOO MANY FACTS AT ONCE.

# IMMEDIATE CIRCUMSTANCES

WHERE & WHAT

a Subset of General – these are the ones that are most immediate to where we are

STATE THE OBVIOUS PRESENT FACTS -- SIMPLY, SUCCINCTLY,  
LITERALLY -- WHERE ARE WE AND WHAT IS GOING ON?





**REAL FACTS**  
GIVEN BY THE SCRIPT

GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES BOTH GENERAL AND IMMEDIATE ARE MADE UP OF REAL FACTS ONLY -- FACTS THAT THE SCRIPT LAY OUT. YOU CAN'T CHANGE THESE -

REVIEW THE GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES  
and  
MAKE A SELECTION RELEVANT TO YOUR SCENE

REMEMBER YOU DON'T WANT TO CARRY TOO MUCH BAGGAGE –  
INCLUDE ONLY THE ONES THAT HAVE DIRECT RELEVANCE TO THE  
SCENE YOU ARE ANALYZING

NEXT WE FIND THE OCCASION

# OCCASION

AGREED UPON or PRETEXT

SOME SCENES HAVE A LITERAL OCCASION -- IT'S A BIRTHDAY; A HIGH SCHOOL REUNION...

OTHERS HAVE A LESS FORMAL BUT STILL SPECIAL OCCASION UNDERSTOOD BY THE CHARACTERS... e.g. "MAKE-UP SEX" "BOOTY CALL"

SOMETIMES A SCENE HAS A "PRETEXT" -- A STATED OR IMPLIED REASON THAT COVERS A DIFFERENT, HIDDEN AGENDA - explore and name the occasion....

# GOVERNING SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

## ETIQUETTE

ONE BEHAVES DIFFERENTLY IN A RESTAURANT THAN IN A PARKING LOT...THE RESTAURANT SETTING CARRIES WITH IT A “GOVERNING SOCIAL OBLIGATION”

G.S.O = THE RULES OF THE ENCOUNTER -- THE RULES OF THE GAME...that pertain to the occasion

OR TO THE RELATIONSHIP – one behaves differently with a boss than a subordinate – or classmate....A sibling or a parent...NOTE THE G.S.O.s of the scene

# IMAGINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

MUST BE  
USEFUL!

YOU GET TO DECIDE WHAT THESE ARE ---BUT USE SPARINGLY! THEY CAN BE ENHANCERS -- MADE UP "FACTS"--try them out - audition them - but be ready to jettison or exchange- WATCH OUT FOR "BEDTIME STORIES" -- BITS OF NONSENSE THAT MAY OCCUPY THE ACTORS BUT DON'T GIVE THEM SOMETHING SPECIFIC THAT WOULD HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER IN THE SCENE...IN ORDER TO BE USEFUL, THAT EFFECT MUST ENHANCE THE CHARACTERS' WANT OR GOAL

# BACKSTORY

KEEP IT IN ITS PLACE....

HISTORY BEFORE THE START OF THE ACTION OF THE STORY – MAY HAVE BEEN LEARNED THROUGH EXPOSITION – IN WHICH CASE IT'S A REAL FACT ----

OR IMAGINED BY ACTOR & DIRECTOR....

TENDS TO BE OVERRATED – LEADS TO LONG-WINDED BUT NOT VERY USEFUL DISCUSSIONS -- GENERALLY TOO BIG A MOUTHFUL FOR REHEARSAL

# THE MOMENT BEFORE

“WHERE AM I COMING FROM?”

WHAT JUST HAPPENED BEFORE DIALOGUE STARTED? MAKE A SPECIFIC CHOICE. IT WILL GROUND THE ACTOR AND HELP HIM INTO THE SCENE.

YOU EXPLORE THIS AND DECIDE THRU DISCUSSION WITH ACTORS &/ OR IMPROVISATION

YOU MAY OR MAY NOT INCLUDE YOUR IMPROVISATION IN THE FINAL CUT

# OBJECTIVE

WHAT DOES THE CENTRAL CHARACTER WANT?

WHAT DOES ONE CHARACTER WANT FROM THE OTHER? WHAT DOES HE or SHE WANT TO GET OUT OF THE SCENE? WHAT IS HIS/HER AGENDA FOR THE ENCOUNTER?



# OBSTACLES

WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?

THINGS THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF A CHARACTER ACHIEVING AN IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE...HAVING TO DO WITH FACTS, CIRCUMSTANCES, OCCASION, OBLIGATION, BUT ESPECIALLY HAVING TO DO WITH THE OTHER CHARACTER

# DOINGS

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

SHIFTING APPROACHES THE CENTRAL CHARACTER MIGHT USE TO  
ACHIEVE HIS OBJECTIVE

THINKING BEYOND  
THE FRAME:

# HOPES & FEARS

IMAGINE THE CHARACTER'S BLUE SKIES AND WORST CASE SCENARIOS... whether we are conscious or unconscious of it, in real life we always have an intimation of these things  
WHEN WE GO INTO ANY ENCOUNTER WE KNOW WHAT OUR DREAM OUTCOME (HOPE) IS -- WE USUALLY HAVE AN IMAGE OF WHAT ABJECT FAILURE WOULD LOOK LIKE...THAT'S THE CHARACTER OWNING HIS FEAR AND RECOGNIZING THE WORST CASE SCENARIO.

# WHAT'S MY COVER?

DENIABILITY

IF CHARACTER B SAYS TO CHARACTER A “I KNOW YOU DIDN'T REALLY COME OVER TO BRING ME FLOWERS BECAUSE I BROKE MY LEG...YOU PROBABLY JUST WANT TO BORROW MY CAR WHILE I'M LAID UP...” CHARACTER A HAS TO HAVE SOMETHING READY TO COVER HIS ASS...SOME PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY...WITH WHICH HE COULD ATTEMPT TO MAKE CHARACTER B FEEL BAD FOR EVEN SUGGESTING SUCH A SELF-SERVING MOTIVE (EVEN IF IT IS TRUE). WE DO THIS IN LIFE – THE ACTOR SHOULD BE ABLE TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS THAT DON'T EVEN COME UP IN THE SCRIPT....

# CREATE A COUNTERWEIGHT

to the SUCK of the VORTEX



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EVENT

TARGET

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO HAPPEN EMOTIONALLY TO YOUR CENTRAL CHARACTER? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO AIM FOR?