WRITE YOUR PILOT

THE
BEAT SHEET

What Is a Beat?

A beat is something that happens in the story and moves the plot forward.

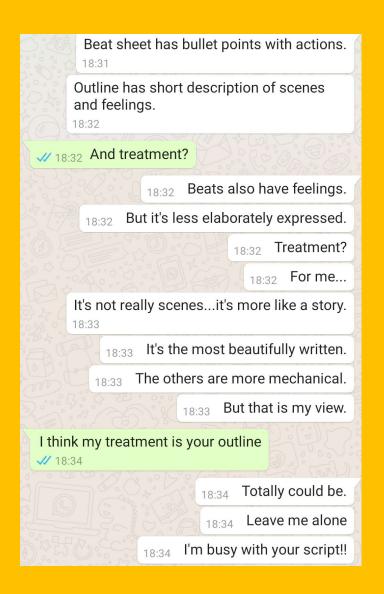The beat sheet is a document stating what will happen in the show. Beat by beat.

What's the difference between story events, scenes and beats?

My Process

Beat Sheet (aka outline) - One sentence for each beat.

Treatment - all the scenes, usually more scenes then the beat sheet. elaborated. With the tone of the show, clear relationships. Without dialogue.

Unlike the beat sheet, a treatment is a document producers and broadcasters will read too.

I'd say a beat sheet is where you cronologically flash out the scenes writing them down in short beats. Episode Outline is where you describe what happens in the episode in a text. And treatment can be similar to outline

Important!
Do it
YOUR way.

By now you have -

- **Your characters, and their want's and needs.**

- **Inciting Incident**

- **Ending.**

Now, you will -

Come up with the beats that will take you from the first scene, to the last.

How many beats per episode?

Case Study –The Ozarks

Case Study –The Ozarks

- Teaser -Marti dragging cooler in a forest.
- Marti is his office, talking to new clients.
- Lidel, the new office and the Ozark pamphlet.
- Marti watches a video of his wife cheats on him.
- NOT going to a prostitute.
- Bruce calls him – get here now.
- Del Finds The Traitor.
- Marti's live is spared – But now he HAS TO...
- We need to go!
- Privet detective. Marti knew for a while... Wendy took all the money.
- Things get complicated.
- FBI!
- I have to see that you can do it – The stakes are clear.
- The FBI is after Marti too – Stakes just got higher. (end)
- Arrive at the Ozarks. (last scene)

PETTY
Mexicans, Mafia, Muslims. We all want these people to be more than they are. They're not. They're just a product of their options. If they weren't dealing drugs, extorting businesses or flying planes into buildings they'd be cleaning toilets. These aren't criminal geniuses, agent. They're pathological liars on a path of least resistance. Liddell was no different. Entertaining though.

AGENT 1
I'm confused. Del Rio, Beltran, the Federation. Why'd we do all this if Bruce was just... entertaining?

PETTY
Where is Martin Bird?

Case Study –The Ozarks

- **Old life – Accountant in Chicago, wife cheating on him.**
- **Inciting incident – Del finds the traitor.**
- **New life - Laundry money in the Ozarks to save his life.**
- **Ending – Del is not the only threat. The FBI are looking for him as well.**

How to come up with good beats?

1. Research.
2. Trail and Error.
3. Write everything you got > leave empty space for the missing beat.
4. Go from the end to the beginning.
5. Remember: Cause and effect.
6. Ask: what is the worse thing that could happen to the character. Use it.
7. Ask: what is the worse decision/action your character can take, and why. Use it.
8. Are you saving something amazing for the next episode/season? Use it. Now.

What to do if you get stuck?

1. **Write 10 bad ideas. Didn't help? Write 20.**
2. **Take a break – Play/walk/cook/Read/paint.**
3. **Pomodoro – Write for 20 minutes.**
4. **Call/write a friend – Think out load.**
5. **Try writing the beats for one character.**
6. **Try writing the beats for one plot.**
7. **Can't look at the laptop no more? Use a notebook. Doesn't work? Try recording yourself.**
8. **Meditate. (It's magic!)**

TASK 3

Reverse Engineering

1. Watch a pilot of a show you like, in the genre your writing.

2. Write the beat sheet of the pilot.

3. In the beat sheet you just wrote .Find and highlight different types of beats:

   - Events
   - Characters interaction that leads to complication.
   - Realizations.

TASK 3

WRITE YOUR PILOT'S BEAT SHEET

WRITE BETTER SCRIPTS