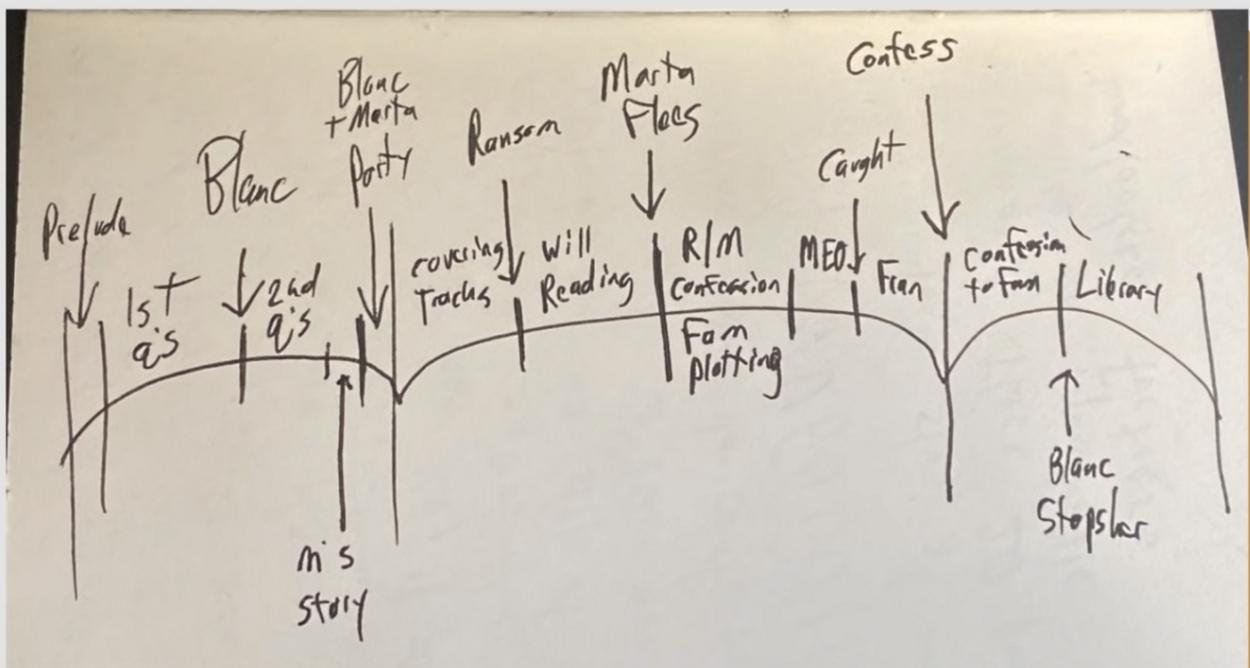


Video: How Professional Screenwriters Outline

[Scott Myers](#)

A compilation of outlining approaches featuring screenwriters and filmmakers including Vince Gilligan, Quentin Tarantino, Alex Garland, Greta Gerwig, Rian Johnson, Michael Arndt, and more.

Knives Out (2019) OUTLINE



Over the years, I've interviewed 50+ writers whose scripts have made the annual Black List. One of the questions I often ask: ***What aspects of story prep do you devote the most time and focus to?***

Here are links to check out some of their responses:

[Black List writers on the craft: Story Prep \(Part 1\) — Research](#)

[Black List writers on the craft: Story Prep \(Part 2\) — Characters as the focal point of prep](#)

[Black List writers on the craft: Story Prep \(Part 3\) — Not using an outline as part of prep process](#)

[Black List writers on the craft: Story Prep \(Part 4\) — “Preliminary” outlines](#)

[Black List writers on the craft: Story Prep \(Part 5\) — Working with an extensive outline](#)

[Black List writers on the craft: Story Prep \(Part 6\) — Comprehensive approach to story prep](#)

There are LOT of different approaches represented here ranging from no outline to a complete scene by scene outline.

In other words: There is no one way to break a story. Whatever works. That’s all that matters.

That perspective is also reflected in this video, a compilation by Behind the Curtain of perspectives on the subject from many different screenwriters and filmmakers.

Here is that roster:

[00:30](#) Vince Gilligan (Breaking Bad)

[00:50](#) Quentin Tarantino (Pulp Fiction, Inglourious Basterds)

[02:48](#) Paul Thomas Anderson (There Will Be Blood, The Master)

[03:16](#) Alex Garland (Ex Machina, Annihilation)

[04:22](#) Coen Brothers (Fargo, No Country for Old Men)

[04:43](#) Rian Johnson (Knives Out)

[05:35](#) Greta Gerwig (Little Women, Lady Bird)

[06:03](#) Aaron Sorkin (The Social Network)

[06:36](#) Kenneth Lonergan (Manchester by the Sea)

[07:23](#) Michael Arndt (Little Miss Sunshine, Toy Story 3)

[09:35](#) M. Night Shyamalan (The Sixth Sense, Split)

[10:04](#) Vince Gilligan (Breaking Bad)

The consensus? There IS no consensus. Same thing as Black List writers. Some outline. Some do not. Some have variations.

My take? If you've never put together a scene by scene outline, I recommend it at least once. But start with your characters. End with your characters. And allow the characters to drive the process.

For more Behind the Curtin videos, go [here](#).

Twitter: @ntjrdn.

For 100s more interviews with screenwriters and filmmakers, go [here](#).