Twitter Thread by Hilluminati

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Gonna talk "pitching story" for a moment, because that's how I get most of my screenwriting work and it's hard to find practical information about the art of it online and in books. This is just my experience and approach, but in the age of zoom, some of this may be helpful...

My primary goal when I pitch is TO ENGAGE THE AUDIENCE EMOTIONALLY. Yes, I'm telling the story, but for me storytelling is a vehicle that delivers emotion to an audience. I structure my pitch around emotion.

I learned this from my TV boss, Greg Walker.

How do I do it?

Two things I make sure I have in my pitch.

1. An early moment, usually in the first 30-60 seconds of speaking that creates a VIVID, EMOTIONALLY PROVOCATIVE IMAGE in the mind of the listener. We're pitching movies and TV. Those are VISUAL MEDIUMS. I drop that image early.

Sometimes, even though I can't draw, I'll sketch it out just to make *sure* it works. It'll usually revolve around a plot point, but the main goal is to get the audience to stop listening and start SEEING what I'm saying.

Then it's like storytelling at a campfire.

Having that image EARLY in your pitch can let the audience know that THIS IS INDEED A MOVIE. Once they can see the movie, then they're a little more with you. It still may not be the movie they want, but it's a movie. That's a win. The second thing I do is --

Articulate an early moment in the story that invests the audience into the protagonist. The late Blake Snyder would save "save the cat," meaning the protagonist does something kind to help you identify. I don't think it has to be that...

...it can be something cruel (if they're an anti-hero) but just make sure it's INTERESTING and it sets up their character for their arc.

Generally, people remember your open. They remember your ending. They lose a lot of your middle. Because of that I always make sure --

I'm setting up the protagonist's arc in a powerful way so when I complete that arc in a *hopefully* equally powerful way, they remember the set up and appreciate that payoff.

They remember the open. They remember the ending. If you're lucky, they remember the middle.

Keeping with the theme of emotion, I make sure to track how a character is FEELING throughout the narrative details of plot.

"...And now they're devastated because their one chance is gone..."

"...but that little victory gives them the hope they need to keep going..."

I call it *emotional annotation* but it's just me making sure the audience can track how the characters are feeling because if they can do that, even if they're confused about a plot point (which you'll get a note about later) they're with you on your overall story.

Pitching is not a defensive art. Pitching is an offensive art with the goal of taking your audience from the real world into the world of your imagination. It's making a little magic happen in the room (digital or otherwise).

Emotion is the ally of the magician. Engage it.

Homework:

Go through your pitches and make sure you have FIVE POWERFUL, EMOTIONAL moments (ideally tied to cinematic imagery). One in the open. Two in the middle. Two in the end. Roughly. YMMV, but tracking that and actively communicating it will help your career.

/END

*when I said you'll get a note later about the audience being confused by plot I meant that if you're hired usually the executives will target those bumps in their notes.

So your story will have to make sense, hahahaha. You can't just use the "feels" and be incoherent.