What is a logline?

A logline is a brief summary of a movie that hooks the reader and describes the central conflict of the story.

A logline is a pitch

“What is your film about?”

promotion

reader/agent/funder/distributor/exhibitor/audience

A logline is a tool

diagnostic

story focus

Unique identifier

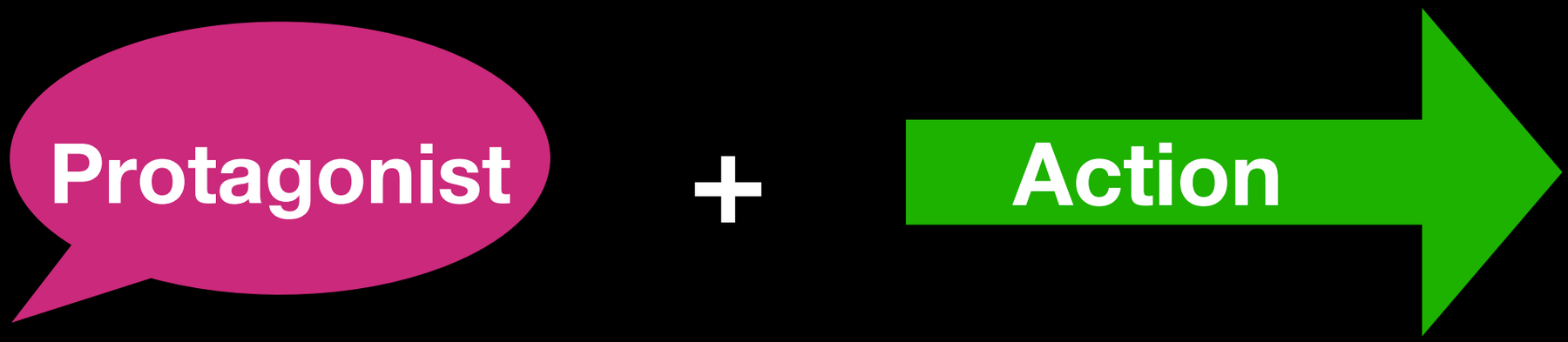
it can be no other film

A national manhunt is ordered for a rebellious kid and his foster uncle who go missing in the wild New Zealand bush.
(22 words)

Logline formula

Concise
Character
Conflict

A: Protagonist



+ **Stakes**

When a MAIN CHARACTER does a MAJOR EVENT a CONFLICT arises.

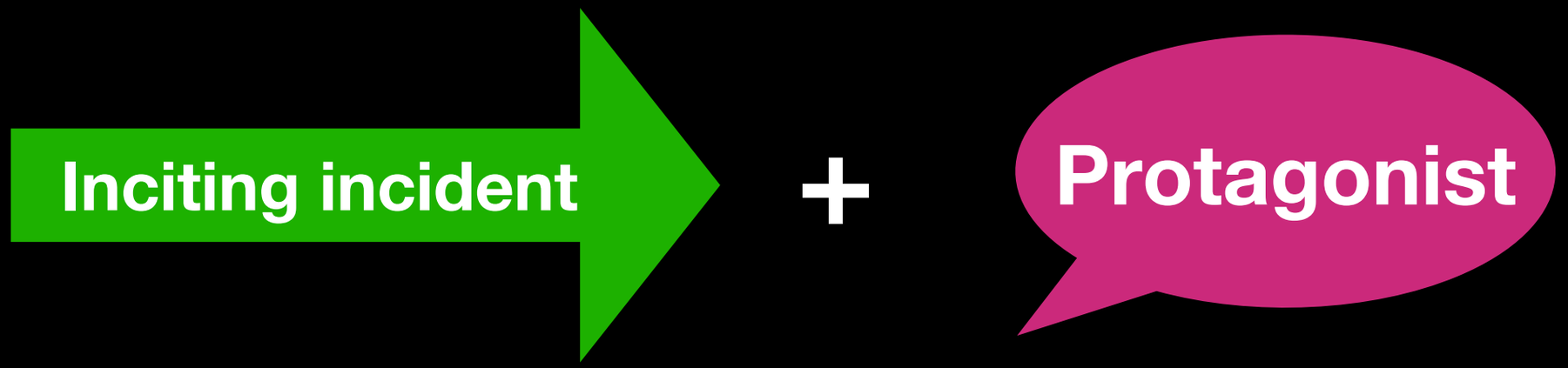
Protagonist

When a MAIN CHARACTER does a MAJOR EVENT a CONFLICT arises.

When the aging patriarch of an organized crime dynasty
transfers control of his clandestine empire to his reluctant son,
a gang war erupts over drugs and turf.

The Godfather (1972)
Oscar: Best Picture, Actor, Writer

B: Inciting incident



+ **Action**

When an **MAJOR EVENT** happens a **MAIN CHARACTER** must do the **MAIN ACTION/GOAL**.

Inciting incident

When an MAJOR EVENT happens a MAIN CHARACTER must do the MAIN ACTION/GOAL.

When a terrorist plants a bomb aboard a city bus, a young police officer must prevent an explosion by keeping the bus above 50 mph.

Speed (1994)
Oscar: Best Editing, Sound

Tagline vs Logline

Tagline: In space no one can hear you scream

Logline: After a merchant space vessel answers a distress signal on a distant moon, the crew must battle a sinister alien life form which invades their ship.

Alien (1979)
Oscar: Best Visual Effects

Synopsis vs logline

Synopsis: Describes the story

Logline: Summarises the story

Logline problems

- Lack of dramatic **CONFLICT**
- **LONG**/wordy (25 words max)
- Vague/forgettable/**BORING**/generic
- **REDUNDANT**: “a film about …”
- Includes protagonist **NAME**
- Includes **GENRE** (“a comedy thriller …”)

Rewrites

Logline, synopsis & script must match

Update all documents after each draft

Proof read your copy !!!