

# THE CAREER AUTHOR



Bonus Episode 19 // *Breaking Bad*, S1E1 (2008) // 58 minutes



*A high school chemistry teacher diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer turns to manufacturing and selling methamphetamine in order to secure his family's future.*

Genre: Crime, Drama,  
Thriller

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0903747/>

**Internal:** Worldview – Disillusionment  
**External:** Action – Clock – Countdown

**What is the promise(s) made to the viewer?**

I (Vince Gilligan) promise to show you what happens when good guys lose—that “doing the right thing” is not always clear.

## STORY LEVEL 1

### **Pixar Pitch**

Once upon a time Walter White was a typical American. Every day he taught high school chemistry and supported his family. One day he was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. Because of that, he is forced to think of ways to provide for his family when he's gone. Because of that, he decides to cook meth with a former student. Until finally, he has committed felonies and can no longer return to his ordinary life.

### **Logline (from IMDB.com)**

A high school chemistry teacher diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer turns to manufacturing and selling methamphetamine in order to secure his family's future.

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*“To all law enforcement entitles, this is not an admission of guilt.”*

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# STORY LEVEL 2

## Progressive Complication - Turning Point

*Walter* (31:25) = Walter asks to go on the ride along with Hank, meth lab bust. Sees Jesse Pinkman.  
*Jesse* (12:00) = Jesse discovers Walter's meth is of the highest quality.

## Crisis

*Walter* (31:37) = Get into meth business to make money for his family or not and let them become destitute after he dies?

## **IRRECONCILABLE GOODS**

*Jesse* (11:57) = Tell the dealers that he cooked the meth or take them to the RV lab and introduce them to Walter.

## **BEST BAD CHOICE**

## Inciting Incident

*Walter* (39:30) = "Lung cancer. Inoperable."  
*Jesse* (23:00) = They have nowhere to cook the meth.

## Climax

*Walter* (29:00) = Asks Jesse to be his partner in a crystal meth production (or he turns Jesse into the cops).  
*Jesse* (11:57) = Takes the dealers to the RV to meet Walter.

## Resolution

*Walter* (26:00) = Gets supplies from school and is now partners with Jesse.  
*Jesse* (10:37) = The dealers think Jesse is a snitch, Walter says he'll teach them to cook, Jesse is not shot.

## What is the hook?

A man without pants and wearing a gas mask, driving a beat up RV through the desert with unconscious passengers while being chased by someone/something.

# PROLOGUE/EPILOGUE

Progressive Complication  
- Turning Point  
(07:34) = The grass catches on fire forcing Walter to flee in the RV.

Crisis  
(06:21) = With the sirens wailing, does Walter take his own life before the police arrive or surrender when they do?  
**BEST BAD CHOICE**

Inciting Incident  
(08:15) = Walter explodes the chemicals in the RV and kills the dealers.  
*\*Causal Inciting Incident.*

Climax  
(05:10) = Tries killing himself but the gun doesn't discharge (or wasn't loaded). The sirens were from firefighters who drive right past him. It's not the police.

Resolution  
(01:49) = Walter is in bed with his wife. He is the sexual aggressor (mirroring from earlier scene), signifying a change in his character.

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# STORY LEVEL 4

## What's it *really* about?

Desperate times call for desperate measures.  
The line between good and evil is not always clear.  
We are sleepwalking through our lives.

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# STORY LEVEL 5

The Protagonist – Walter White

**Wants:**

To provide for his family after his death.

**Needs:**

To live before he dies.



The Antagonist – Cancer

**Wants:**

N/A

**Needs:**

N/A



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# STORY LEVEL 6

## What is wrong with this world?

An honest, hardworking, upright citizen can't take care of his family without resorting to highly illegal activities. This IS our world.