STORYBOARDING
THE SIMPSONS
WAY

Part 1

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Tooltime for Storyboarding
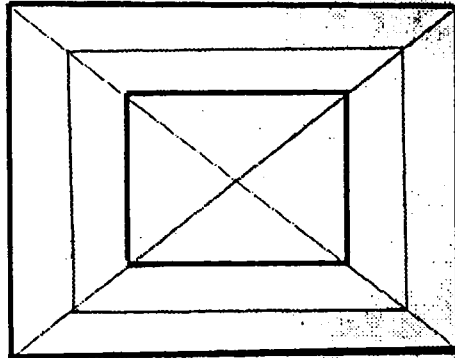Showing Camera Moves
Angles are our Friends!
Lower the Horizon
Don't cut off Heads

TOOLTIME FOR STORYBOARDING

This 'grid' will save layout lots of trouble! When you do a TRUCK IN or TRUCK OUT, use the center square as a guide for HOW SMALL YOU CAN GO! For layout, a square 1/4 the size of a storyboard frame is equal to a 6 field on a 12 field grid. Any closer and they'll need to do a 'match-cut'; not taboo, but not easy to do.

So unless the scene really calls for it, try to avoid going in too close!

The MAGIC WINDOW of COMPOSITION

Take a piece of cardboard and cut a hole in the center the size of a storyboard frame. Place it over whatever drawing you're working on! Eliminates the unwanted white space around it and lets you focus on the panel, and FIX THAT COMPOSITION!
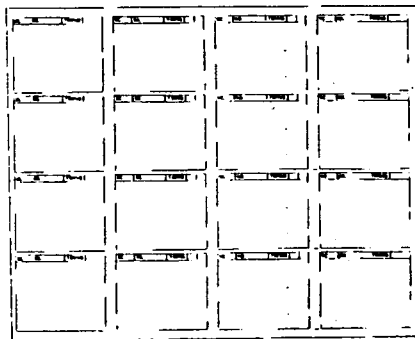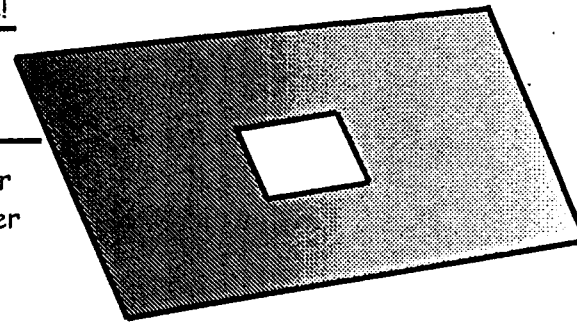
Doing roughs on a page with only four panels on it doesn't let you see enough of the whole story. By drawing on paper with 16 panels on it (keep thepanels actual size, and you may be able to use your roughs for final!), you can be sure that the pacing is good, and that you're not using too many of the same shots!

Showing Camera Moves on a Simpsons Board
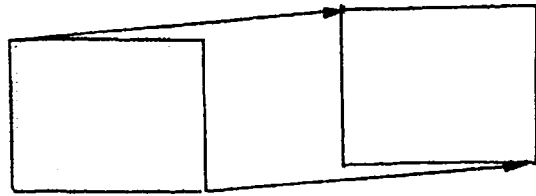
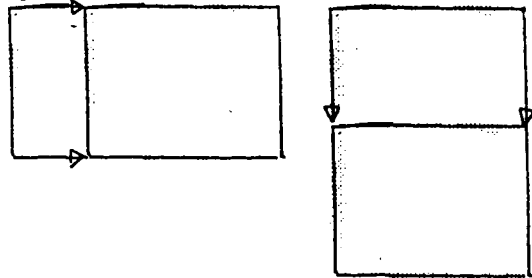**PAN:** Arrows from one frame to another...
the clearer the better!

Show the direction of the pan   Show the start point
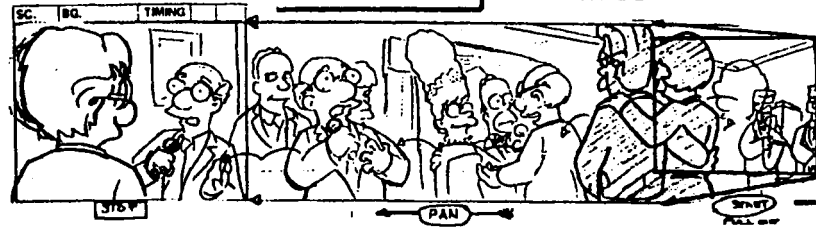
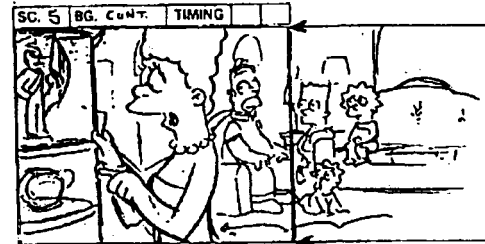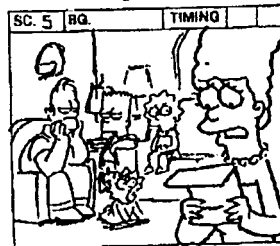Show the stop point;
box it to clearly make it different from the start point
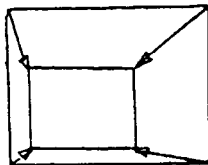If the acting changes through the pan, show a few of the poses

Adj. Left

Only show the entire frame of the stop point

Camera Adjust: the camera moves less than
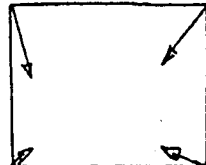one full frame in any direction; arrows drawn
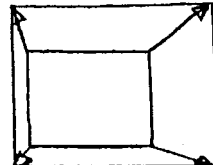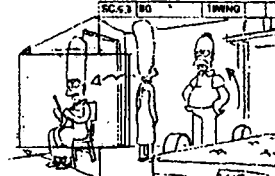from one frame to the other.

Using moves in combination-

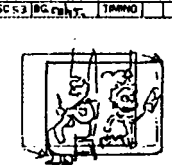Push In / Truck In
Slow In/ Smash in

Drift In
if the cut to the next shot
comes before the camera stops

Push Out / Truck Out
Slow Out / Smash Out
WIDEN

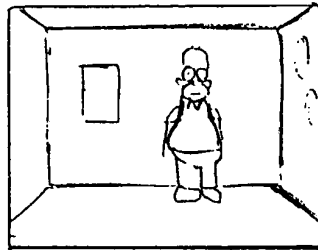Push In/ Cam. Adj. Left with Marge   Slight Adj. Right with Lisa

CAMERA MOVES WITHIN THE FRAME

Angles are our friends!
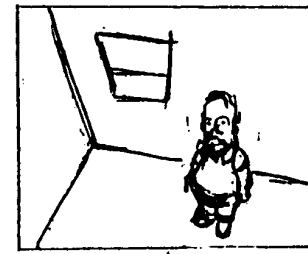
or
Springfield is NOT a two dimensional world

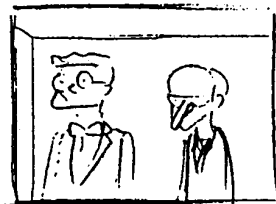BORING! FLAT! UNINSPIRED!
Unless that's what you WANT,
don't draw it!

Better!
Show at LEAST 3 PLANES
in a room!
Try to avoid having floor lines
exactly parallel to the bottom
of the frame!

Whoa! This is dynamic...but the
angle draws TOO much attention
away from the scene.
Unless it's a really dramatic
moment, keep it simple!

Ok, there are three planes in
the Background, but Smithers
and Burns are standing exactly
next to one another...which
flattens the scene out.
BORING!
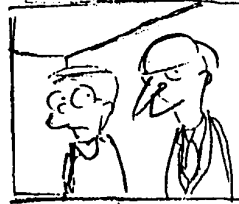
BETTER! MORE DYNAMIC!
3 planes of the room, Burns is
closer creating depth. He
is placed higher in the frame
than Smithers, subconsciously
making Burns more important!
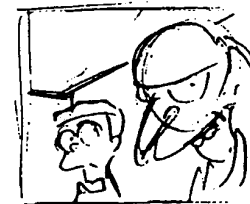
Whoa! Burns is almost on TOP
of us. Very dynamic, but again,
save it for the scenes that
call for it!

When in doubt...

Lower the HORIZON!

BRAD BIRDS PEARL OF WISDOM

HORIZON LINE
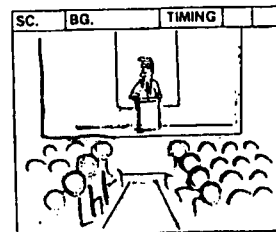
This is a 'STOCK' shot of Rev.Lovejoy speaking to the congregation. Since it's been used in shows before, it'll be easy to layout...but...the Rev. better not be saying anything too important, cause it's a fairly boring shot.

SC. | BG. | TIMING
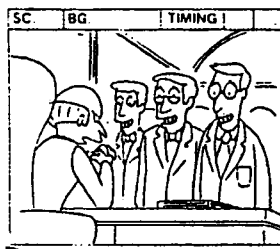
A mundane shot...Burns has no power here, and the lawyers seem to be standing the same distance from the camera as Burns is in his seat!

SC. | BG. | TIMING
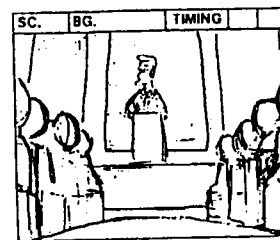
Better! Lovejoy must be saying something important, because he's above us and all the 'lines' of the shot draw the eye to him. And it still shows us where we are AND that the congregation is there...but easier to draw since you only see those people on the aisle!

A more dramatic shot. The difference is subtle. But now Burns holds more power, and the distance between the lawyers and Burns is emphasized. All thanks to LOWERING THE HORIZON!
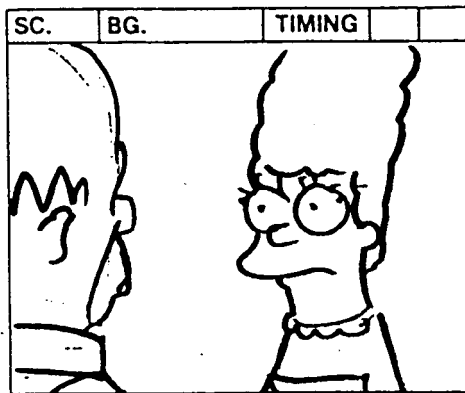
SC. | BG. | TIMING
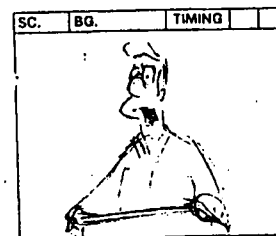
If what Lovejoy's saying is more important, you could even START on a low shot of him...then later cut to a wide shot showing the congragation...maybe an 'over the Rev.'s shoulder' shot.
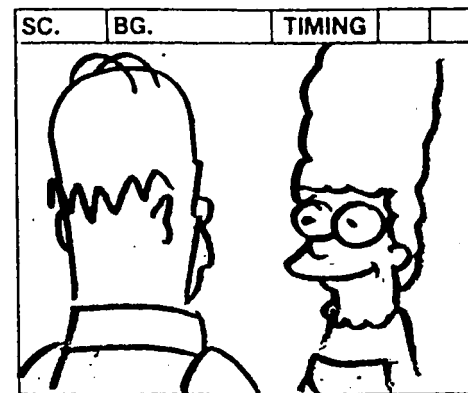
ANOTHER

BRAD BIRD'S PEARL OF WISDOM
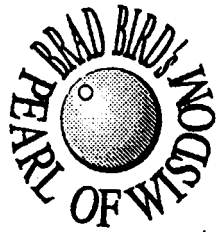
Don't cut off heads in the frame.
Cutting off heads is bad.
I hate people who cut off heads.

SC.	BG.		TIMING		

Homer! Is that you? By only showing half
of an already abstracted character, it's
harder subconsciously to recognize that it's
Homer.

Ahhh! It IS Homer. Even though his head
takes up almost half of the frame, it feels
more comfortable than when it was cut in
half. Also, he doesn't draw focus from
Marge because you can't SEE HIS FACE.

Of course, this isn't set in stone...some directors don't have a problem cutting off heads on 'over the shoulder' shots.
And sometimes, the scene may even call for it...you may want the viewer to feel boxed in or slightly confused.
But, just keep in mind...BRAD HATES IT!