

# Writing for the Ear

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[@RadioCampNYC](#)

[@sherships](#)

**Radio  
Boot  
Camp**

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Citing that Cold War tradition, the Cliburn — a foundation in Fort Worth named for the American pianist Van Cliburn, whose victory at the International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1958 was seen as a sign that art could transcend political differences — announced that it would welcome 15 Russian-born pianists to audition next week for the 2022 Cliburn Competition, noting that they are not officials of their government.

[Too Close to Putin? Institutions Vet Artists, Uncomfortably.](#) Javier C. Hernández  
New York Times, March 5, 2022,

**Write differently.**



“For a lot of us, this was refreshing,” said Mike Gibson, chairman of the Republican Party in Fort Bend County in suburban Houston.

# Writing in and out of tape

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[Shopping in the man cave](#), Marketplace



**Hi!**

Hi.

Be **careful** with numbers.  
Reinforce in **writing**  
Provide **analogies**.

**Use Sign Posts.**





“A complicated story should have a script that reads like a map with a very detailed route laid out for the listener. It should state the purpose of the story upfront, remind you of the destination throughout and loudly announce each and every turn before it happens.”

**Chana Joffe-Walt, This American Life**

[Planet Money: Why Gold?](#)



[TAL: Giant Pool of Money](#)



# Sign Posts

Tell listeners what they need to know.

Statement of **Purpose**

**Highlight** important ideas.

Provide **reminders**

**Acknowledge** what the listener  
might be thinking

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**Challenging tape.**



## Zoom



[Pakistan's foreign minister talks about the country's flood damage](#), Steve Inskeep, NPR

## Long talkers



[Floodlines](#), Vann R. Newkirk II, The Atlantic

## Bad tape (best tape!)



[The Problem we all live with](#), Chana Joffe-Walt, This American Life

# Challenges.

Make your bad tape your best tape.

Create **action**

**Sign post**

Give the listener a job.

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## Serial



The Missing Cryptoqueen, BBC



# Structure

*Where you begin matters*



Set the stakes at the top.

**Start** with tension.

Go on a **journey**.

Create **mystery** or drama.

Create **cliff-hangers**.

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**Putting You in your story.**





For the last year, **I've** spent every working day trying to figure out where a high school kid was for an hour after school one day in 1999-- or if you want to get technical about it, and apparently **I** do, where a high school kid was for 21 minutes after school one day in 1999. **This search sometimes feels undignified on my part. I've** had to ask about teenagers' sex lives, where, how often, with whom, about notes they passed in class, about their drug habits, their relationships with their parents. **And I am not a detective or a private investigator. I'm not even a crime reporter. But yes everyday this year I've tried to figure out the alibi of a 17 year old boy.**

## ARCHIVAL TAPE

Let's give a warm applause for our creator, our founder, our lovely, Dr. Ruja...

MUSIC:

## HOST

On the 11th of June, 2016, **a 36 year old business woman** called ... walked on stage. **She was dressed as she was always dressed..** Expensive diamond earrings...bright red lipstick.. Place full of people who believed in her so much that they'd invested their money in her. ... (we hear her.. "Thank you"... ) cheers, applause... **She promised the crowd** a financial revolution that would make them all rich.

## MONTAGE

she was really impressive

She looked like a queen...

Reporter: do you know her?

Around the world, she had millions of followers

She called herself the cryptoqueen..

# Quick interview tips



# Get active tape

*The difference between doing something & talking about it.*



[As Taser Use Spreads, so do Concerns](#), Laura Sullivan, NPR



# Resources

[Transom.org](http://Transom.org)

NPR Training & [the journey from  
print to audio storytelling](#)

[Third Coast Conference](#)

[Radiobootcamp.org!](http://Radiobootcamp.org!)

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