



The Key to Great Story Telling. Thanks to Alphonso D'Abruzzo (aka Alan Alda)

Darrell Fusaro (May 26, 2011)



Although I'm not a huge Alan Alda fan I do know he lives in New Jersey and his real name is Alphonso D'Abruzzo. Since he and I had the Italian New Jersey connection I was curious to see what he had to say.

I recently came across this simple and easy-to-remember key to telling a great story. Like most valuable things in life I stumbled upon it seemingly by coincidence. It happened when I decided to grab a cup of coffee from a local coffee shop other than [Starbucks](#) [2]. Which is a huge step out of



my comfort zone. But I had no choice since our local Starbucks was closed this week for renovations. So on this particular day and under these circumstances the [Rumor Mill Cafe](#) [3] turned out to be the most convenient place for me and my friend Ed Biagiotti to meet for our regular afternoon coffee. I ordered my grande drip and since Ed hadn't arrived yet I decided I'd flip through one of the donated books these non-franchise chain coffee shops tend to have laying around for customers to read. On top of the short pile of books was [Alan Alda's autobiography, "Never Have Your Dog Stuffed: And Other Things I've Learned."](#) [4]

Although I'm not a huge Alan Alda fan I do know he lives in New Jersey and his real name is [Alphonso D'Abruzzo](#) [5]. **Since he and I had the Italian New Jersey connection I figured, "What the hell?" Which in New Jersey speak means, "Why not check it out?"** So I picked up his book, sat down at a two-top, opened it up to the very first page and there was this quote;

"Act One: Get your hero up a tree.

Act Two: Throw rocks at him.

Act Three: Get him down out of the tree.

- attributed to [George Abbot](#) [6]t [6], on playwriting"

This is great advice to keep in mind anytime you're about to tell a story whether it's in the form of a play, screenplay, book, or even verbally. It'll work for them all. The best advice is always simply stated. But how it gets to me is nothing short of miraculous. So for this one, thank you Starbucks for being closed for renovations, thank you Rumor Mill Cafe for being the only convenient option available that day, thank you Ed Biagiotti for showing up late, thank you who ever you are for donating Alan Alda's autobiography to the Rumor Mill, thank you George Abbott for putting this great advice so bluntly and thank you Alan Alda for just happening to be an Italian New Jersey-ian living your entire life to get to the point where you decided it was worth putting all together in a book to share, and for some reason feeling so strongly about George Abbott's advice you decided to quote him on the very first page where I would find it.

BTW, the coffee at the Rumor Mill Cafe is great, too.

Oh, and get this, when I went back to the Rumor Mill Cafe the next day to meet Ed again for coffee I searched for the book and it was gone.

"Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake."

-From the book, [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) [7]





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