

Fun with Biographies

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While in the advertising masters program at the University of Texas, I took a class called Theories of Persuasion. We were asked to persuade our teacher to buy a product or service using 4 or 5 different methods of persuasion. I asked Dr. Henderson, one of my favorite professors, if that was the only requirement for the assignment. She said: "Yes, Andrew, and I don't care how you do it, even if it only takes you fifteen seconds, which I know you'll try to do." She really liked to sass me. Anyway, I decided to try to persuade Dr. Henderson (who loves her Treo 650 and Oprah) to hire a classmate, David Roth, to write her fictionalized biography. Below is the paragraph in which I utilize the persuasive effects of drama, product familiarity, flattery, and Oprah, among other things—in less than 20 seconds—in the fictionalized ending to Chapter 15 of Dr. Henderson's biography:

Everyone looked around in shock after the car exploded. Everyone but one woman. She calmly reached into her pocket for her Treo and dialed for help, but suddenly she felt that there wouldn't be enough time. That's when she looked up the phrase "emergency amputations" on the internet through her cell phone. She saved six lives that day, not even counting later that night when she foiled the plans of the terrorist ninja pirates. By diffusing their atom bomb so quickly, Dr. Geraldine Henderson may have single-handedly demoralized every single terrorist around the world. The most amazing thing? Never smeared her makeup...not even the next day on Oprah.

I got an A.