



## DIALOGUE

IMAGINE A HANDSOME MAN TALKING TO A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN and THIS IS WHAT HE SAYS:



IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S SAYING, "I LOVE YOU," DOESN'T IT?  
HE'S NOT. HE'S SAYING, "ELEPHANT JUICE."

(MY 11 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER BROUGHT THIS HOME FROM SCHOOL.)

TRY IT. IT ILLUSTRATES THE POINT THAT WE DON'T HAVE STANDARDISED MOUTH SHAPES FOR EVERY CONSONANT and VOWEL. WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT. OUR MOUTHS ARE ALL DIFFERENT and WE USE THEM DIFFERENTLY. THERE'S NO SET WAY TO FORM INDIVIDUAL LETTERS and VOWELS. THE ACTOR, JIM CARREY, MOVES HIS MOUTH DIFFERENTLY THAN THE ENGLISH QUEEN.

OF COURSE ALL OUR MOUTHS OPEN FOR THE VOWELS A, E, I, O, U. (AY, EE, EYE, OH, YOO.) AND THEY CLOSE FOR THE CONSONANTS B, M, P, F, T, V. (BEE, EM, PEE, EFF, TEE and VEE.) AND THE TONGUE IS UP BEHIND THE TEETH FOR N, D, L, TH and T (THOUGH WE DON'T ALWAYS SEE IT. BUT A LOT OF THE POSITIONS IN REAL LIFE ARE AMBIVALENT and INDIVIDUAL.



## HOW NOT TO DO LIP SYNC:

I HAD AN ENTHUSIASTIC 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE TEACHER WITH A WIDE MOUTH FULL OF VERY LARGE TEETH SET OFF BY BRIGHT RED LIPSTICK.

EVERY MORNING SHE HAD US ALL STAND UP and VERY SLOWLY  
EE - NUNN - SEE - AYTEH :

" MOO VAH BULL LIPSSSSSSS,  
MOO VAH BULL LIPSSSSSSS,  
ARR THUH VEHREE BEHSSST LIPSSS  
TOO TAWK ANNND SSSING WITHTHH."

FOLLOWED BY -

" GOOOD MOHRRNNG TOO YOOO,  
GOOOD MOHRRNNG TOO YOOO -  
WEER OLL INN OWRR PLAYSEZZ  
WITH SSUNNSHEYENEE FAYSSEZZ.  
OHHH, THISSS IZZ THUH WAYEE  
TOO STAHRRT AHH NEEYOO DAYEE."

SOMETIMES SHED HAVE US SIT and SAY "P" (PUH) FOR A MINUTE  
and I KIND OF ENJOYED HEARING the LITTLE EXPLOSIONS OF AIR.

PEOPLE DON'T TALK LIKE THIS!

WE SMUDGE FROM ONE WORD SHAPE TO the OTHER.

The ANIMATORS CALLED IT

### PHRASING.

LIKE IN MUSIC - YOU SMUDGE OVER A FAST COMPLEX PASSAGE HITTING JUST the MAIN THINGS - YOU DON'T HAVE TO MACHINE GUN EVERY NOTE EQUALLY - YOU BLUR OVER IT.

WHEN WE SPEAK WE DON'T ARR TICK YOO LATEH EVERY LITTLE SIL AH BULL and LETTER and POP. SOME PEOPLE HARDLY MOVE THEIR LIPS WHEN THEY TALK.

The THING IS TO THINK OF the WORDS, WORD SHAPES and PHRASES - NOT OF LETTERS.

OUR MOUTHS ARE ALL DIFFERENT.

MOST PEOPLE HAVE EITHER the TOP  
TEETH VISIBLE MOST OF the TIME -



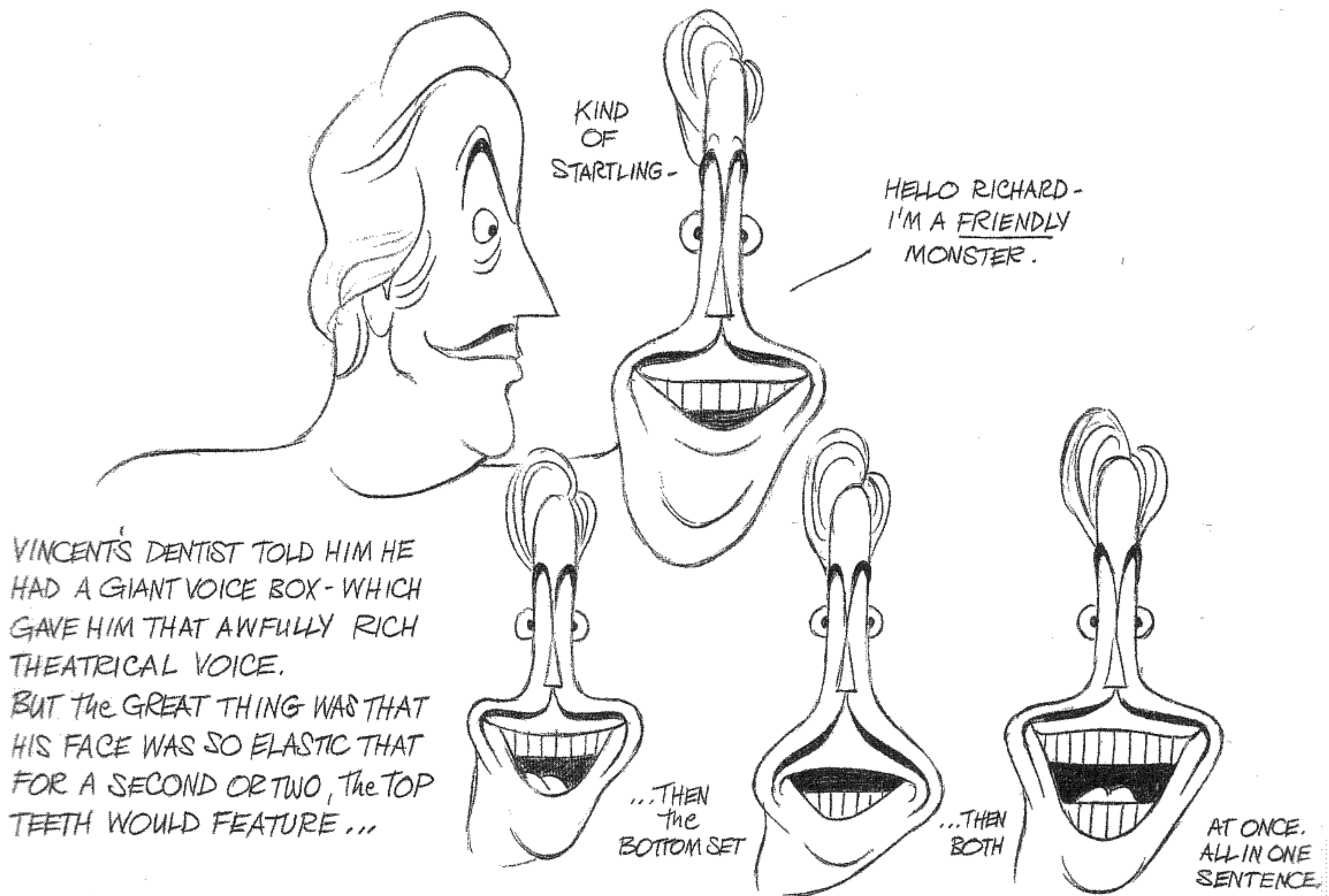
OR

The BOTTOM TEETH ARE  
FEATURED MOST OF the TIME.



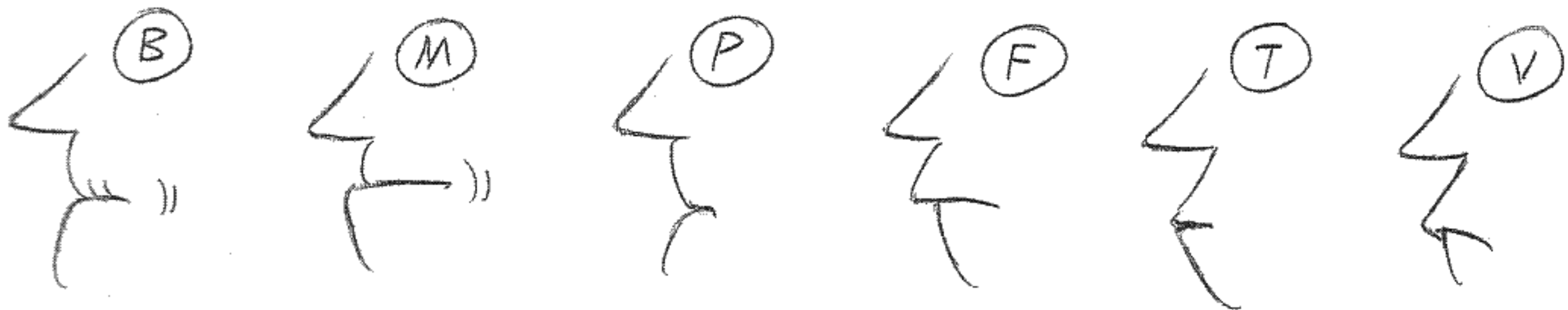


The MOST FUN I'VE HAD WITH LIP SYNC SO FAR WAS WITH VINCENT PRICES' VOICE - BECAUSE HE HAD SUCH A MOBILE FACE, MOUTH, JAWS and THROAT. FROM THE SIDE HE LOOKED AS YOU'D EXPECT, BUT WHEN HE TURNED TO THE FRONT HE LOOKED LIKE A FISH.



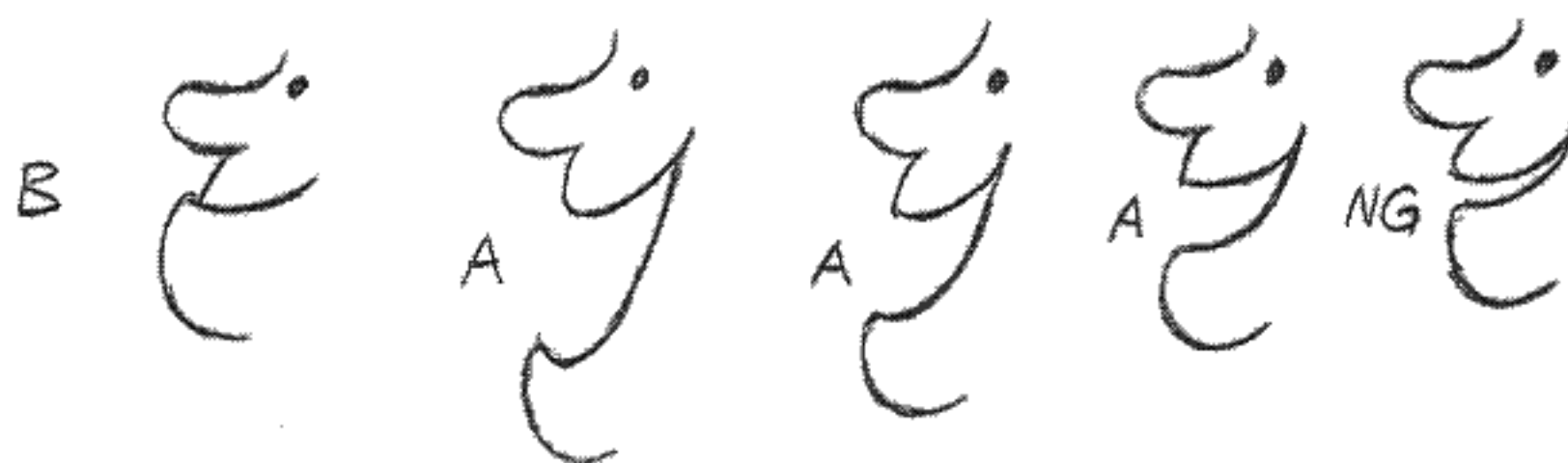
AND BECAUSE HE SPREAD OUT HIS DIALOGUE YOU HAD THE TIME TO ARTICULATE ALL THE POPS, CRACKLES, SLOW VOWELS and CONSONANTS - (LIKE BEING BACK IN GRADE SIX.) YOU COULD OVERANIMATE IT and IT STILL LOOKED NATURAL. MOSTLY WE HAVE TO HOLD DOWN OUR MOUTH ACTION, UNLESS WE'RE SHOUTING OR SINGING.

The IMPORTANT CONSONANTS ARE THE CLOSED MOUTH ONES -



IN ORDER TO READ THESE POSITIONS WE NEED AT LEAST TWO FRAMES. ONE ISN'T ENOUGH. (IF WE DON'T MAKE THESE POSITIONS THE VOWEL THAT FOLLOWS WILL BE VITIATED.)

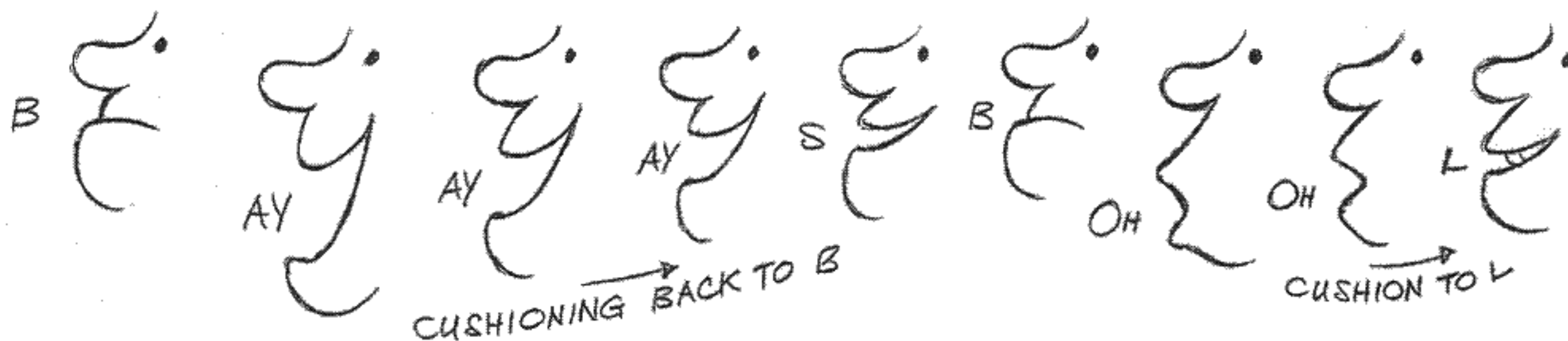
FOR GOOD CRISP DIALOGUE WE SHOULD POP INTO OUR VOWELS - (NO INBETWEENS)  
 DON'T CUSHION INTO IT. CUSHION BACK AFTER the ACCENT. HIT IT BIG, THEN SOFTEN IT.  
 HIT the DIALOGUE ACCENT - i.e. "B ANG!"



(OR) WE COULD CUSHION A BIT AT the BOTTOM OF the POP - and HAVE A SMALL POP TO the "NG"



TAKE the WORD "BAYS BOLL" WITH TWO VOWELS - HIT the FIRST VOWEL HARDER than the 2nd.



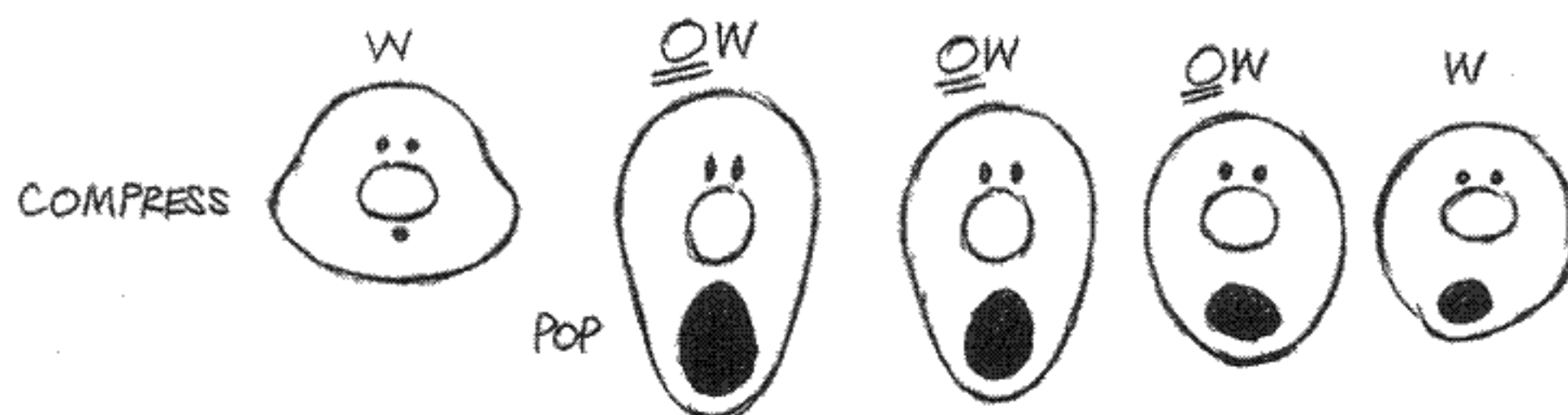
AGAIN, IF SOMEONE SAYS A BROAD VOWEL LIKE "HEY!" OR "WOW!" -  
 DON'T EASE INTO the VOWEL FROM the "W" WITH SEVERAL DRAWINGS.

I. E.



= VERY MUSHY and SOFT  
 (CRITICISM AMONG ANIMATORS)  
 "HE/SHE'S OK, BUT IT'S ALL  
 A BIT SOFT..."

LOSE the MIDDLE POSITIONS. SMACK RIGHT INTO IT and GET MUCH MORE VITALITY.



and DON'T FORGET  
 TO DISTEND the  
 FACE - STRETCH IT.

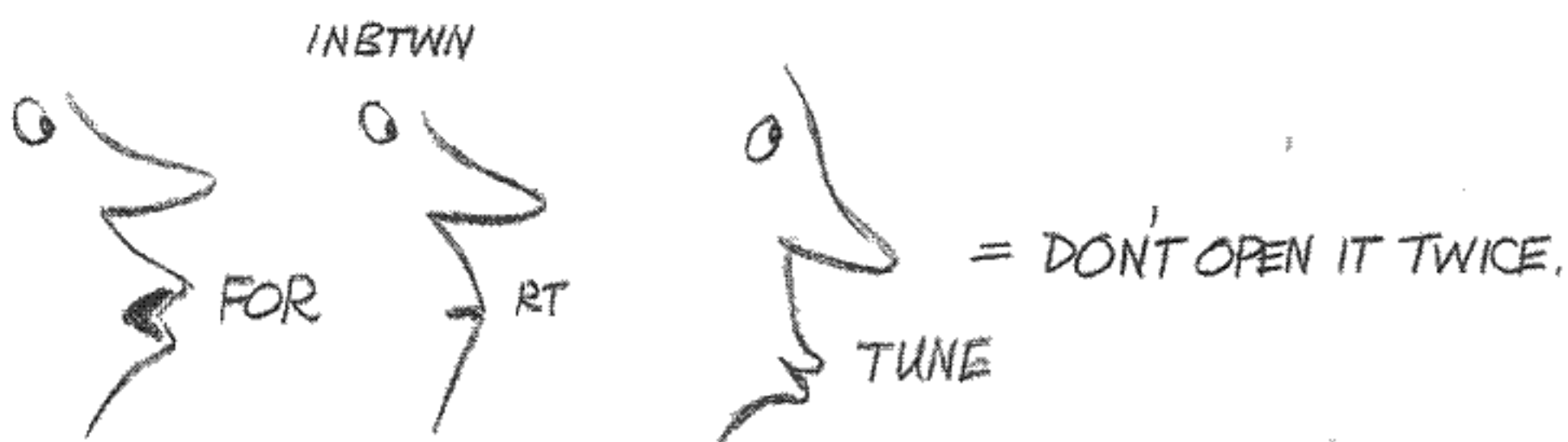
A PREVALENT FAULT IN DIALOGUE IS THAT the BOTTOM OF the FACE DOESN'T STRETCH and COMPRESS ENOUGH,  
 WHICH MAKES OUR ANIMATION STIFF and STILTED.

the KEY TO LIP SYNC IS GETTING the FEELING OF the WORD and NOT the INDIVIDUAL LETTERS  
 The IDEA IS NOT TO BE TOO ACTIVE - GET the SHAPE OF the WORD and MAKE SURE WE SEE IT.  
 SELECT WHAT'S IMPORTANT and AVOID FLAPPING the MOUTH AROUND ANIMATING EVERY LITTLE THING.  
 ACTORS FITTING DIALOGUE OVER FOREIGN FILMS HIT ONLY the ACCENTS and GLOSS OVER the MIDDLE STUFF.  
 THEY MATCH the FIRST VOWEL AT the START OF the SENTENCE and the LAST ACCENT OF the SENTENCE -  
 and WHAT'S IN BETWEEN WILL WORK (OR TEND TO WORK.)

THINK OF IT THIS WAY:

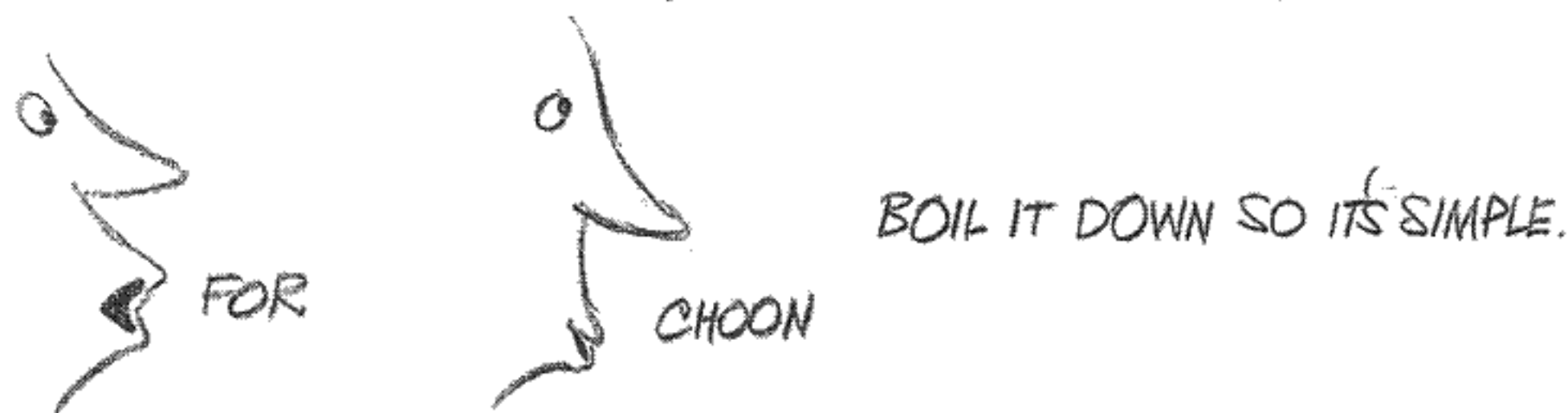
TAKE the WORD "FORTUNE"

DON'T DO THIS -



DO THIS:

JUST USE 2 POSITIONS.  
 GO FROM ONE  
 TO the OTHER -



LET'S TAKE "HELLO"

SAME THING -



GO STRAIGHT FROM  
 ONE TO the OTHER -



WE CAN'T BE LITERAL IN READING OUR SOUND TRACK.

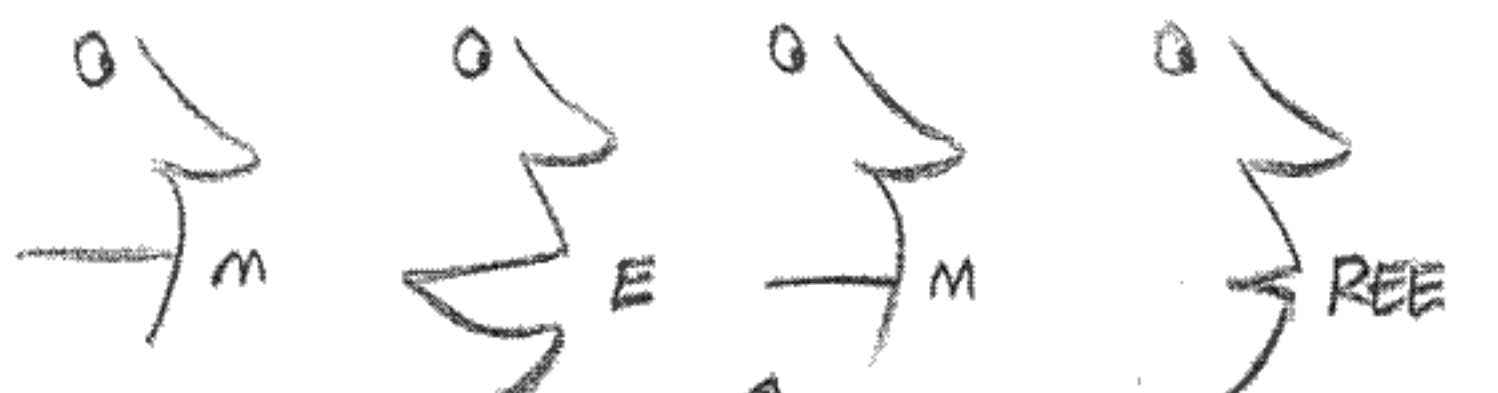
"MEMORY" IS NOT 2 OPENS - IT'S ONE

IT'S NOT:

OPEN OPEN  
 M E M O H R E E  
 UNLESS THEY'RE SINGING  
 ♪ MEM - OH - REES ♪

IT'S "MEM-REE"

↑  
 OPEN

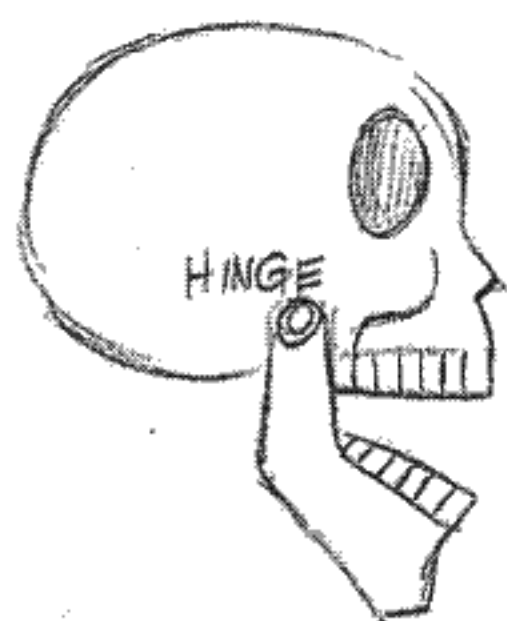


↑ IN THIS CASE  
 I'D CLOSE the MOUTH EN ROUTE to 'REE'

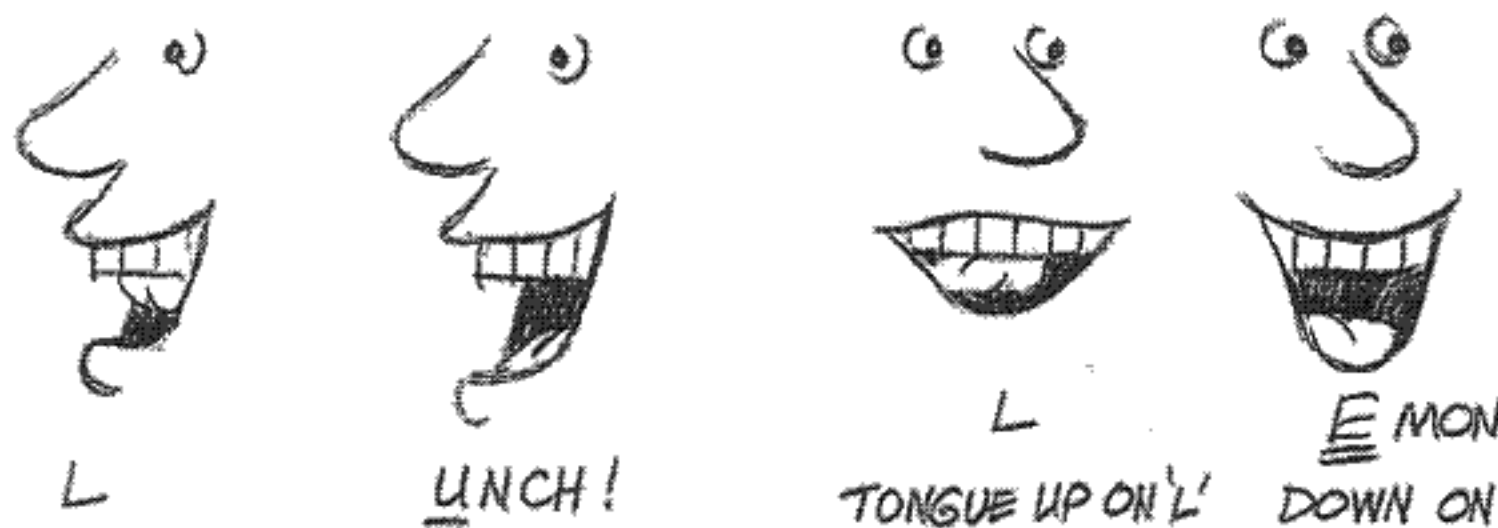
WE DON'T  
 ANIMATE  
 EVERY  
 SINGLE  
 VOWEL.



REMEMBER THE UPPER TEETH ARE ANCHORED TO THE SKULL and DO NOT ANIMATE and THE LOWER JAW'S ACTION IS MOSTLY UP and DOWN - WITH THE LIPS and TONGUE FORMING THE SOUNDS.



A RULE: NEVER INBETWEEN THE TONGUE IN SPEECH. OUR TONGUES WORK SO FAST, THAT IT'S JUST UP OR JUST DOWN - NEVER SEEN EN ROUTE (OF COURSE IT PAUSES.)



ISN'T THERE A SAYING -  
THE TONGUE WEIGHS  
NOTHING -  
YET SO FEW OF US  
CAN HOLD IT - ?

THE TONGUE IS HOOKED ON THE BACK OF THE LOWER JAW and IS NOT FLOATING AROUND IN LIMBO OR STUCK IN THE THROAT. ALSO THE JAWS and TEETH AREN'T RUBBER. BE CONSISTENT ABOUT TEETH.

HOWEVER, THERE'S SOME AWFULLY FUNNY STUFF BEING DONE THESE DAYS WHERE THEY JUST SAY, "HELL, IT'S A CARTOON - LET'S HAVE IT BE A CARTOON." AND THEY TREAT THE TEETH AS RUBBER and POP FROM



(IT'S VALID  
and OFTEN  
HILARIOUS -  
BUT NOT WHAT  
WE'RE ON ABOUT  
HERE.)

ANOTHER RULE: WE SAID WE NEED AT LEAST 2 FRAMES TO READ IMPORTANT CONSONANTS - LIKE M, B, P, F, V OR T (OR TH) IF WE DON'T, THE VIEWER WON'T SEE IT.

IF, ON THE SOUND READING WE ONLY HAVE ONE FRAME INDICATED FOR AN 'M' SOUND -  
- ITS NOT ENOUGH.

S
/
EE
/
/
M
Y
/
/

SO WE STEAL IT FROM THE PRECEEDING SOUND.  
GIVE IT ANOTHER EXTRA FRAME IN FRONT OF IT TO REGISTER - NEVER AFTER...

S
/
EE
/
/
M
M
Y
/
/

... BECAUSE WE NEED TO HIT THE INCOMING "Y" VOWEL ON THE NOSE.



## PICTURE and SOUND SYNC

THIS BRINGS US TO THE THORNY PROBLEM OF: DO WE ANIMATE LEVEL SYNC OR ANIMATE THE PICTURE ONE FRAME AHEAD OF THE SOUND MODULATION OR TWO FRAMES AHEAD OF THE SOUND, OR WHAT?

ANSWER: WORK LEVEL.

S	1
EE	2
/	3
M	4
y	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10

← PUT OUR 'M' DRAWINGS #6 and 7  
← RIGHT ON THE 'M' SOUND.

OR IF WE'RE ON TWOS -  
and IT WORKS OUT THAT WAY -  
WORK ONE FRAME AHEAD.

S	1
EE	3
/	5
M	7
y	9

← PUT OUR 'M' DRAWING #5  
ONE FRAME AHEAD OF THE 'M' SOUND  
← (and #7 'Y' DRAWING 1 FRAME  
AHEAD OF THE 'Y' SOUND etc.)

THERE IS A CRUDE RULE OF THUMB THAT IT LOOKS BETTER WITH THE PICTURE LEADING THE SOUND BY 2 FRAMES. BECAUSE OF THIS, A DISEASE SPRANG UP WHERE SOME EDITORS SET UP THE TYRANNY THAT ANIMATORS MUST ANIMATE EVERYTHING 2 FRAMES AHEAD OF THE SOUND SO THEY COULD JUST PLOP IN THE RESULT and GO HOME.

WRONG. THERE ISN'T JUST ONE RULE. SOMETIMES LEVEL SYNC WORKS BEST - SOMETIMES IT'S BETTER WITH THE PICTURE ONE FRAME ADVANCED, OFTEN IT IS BETTER 2 FRAMES AHEAD (HENCE THE DISEASE) and SOMETIMES IT'S BETTER WITH THE PICTURE EVEN 3 FRAMES AHEAD OF THE SOUND.

IF YOU ALWAYS ANSWER,  
"IT'S 2 FRAMES AHEAD"  
YOU GET A CRAZY SITUATION  
WHERE YOU'RE THINKING SIDWAYS -

S	1	← 'EE' DRAWING
EE	3	← ANOTHER 'EE' DRAWING
/	5	← 'M' DRAWING
M	7	← 'Y' DRAWING
y	9	← ETC.

WHY?

CONCLUSION:

THERE IS ONE REAL SYNC and THAT IS LEVEL. RIGHT ON THE MODULATION IS 100% PERFECT, LOGICALLY. IT JUST DEPENDS WHAT LOOKS BEST WHEN WE PLAY WITH IT. SO WE EXPOSE RIGHT ON THE NOSE - OR ONE FRAME AHEAD - IF IT'S CONVENIENT - NEVER LATE.

THEN WE CAN RUN OUR TESTS AT LEVEL SYNC, THEN ADVANCE THE PICTURE ONE OR TWO OR THREE FRAMES - DEPENDING ON WHAT LOOKS RIGHT TO US. WE LEARN THINGS THIS WAY. IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE CHARACTER and TYPE OF VOICE and HOW WE'VE DONE THE JOB.



## ACCENTS

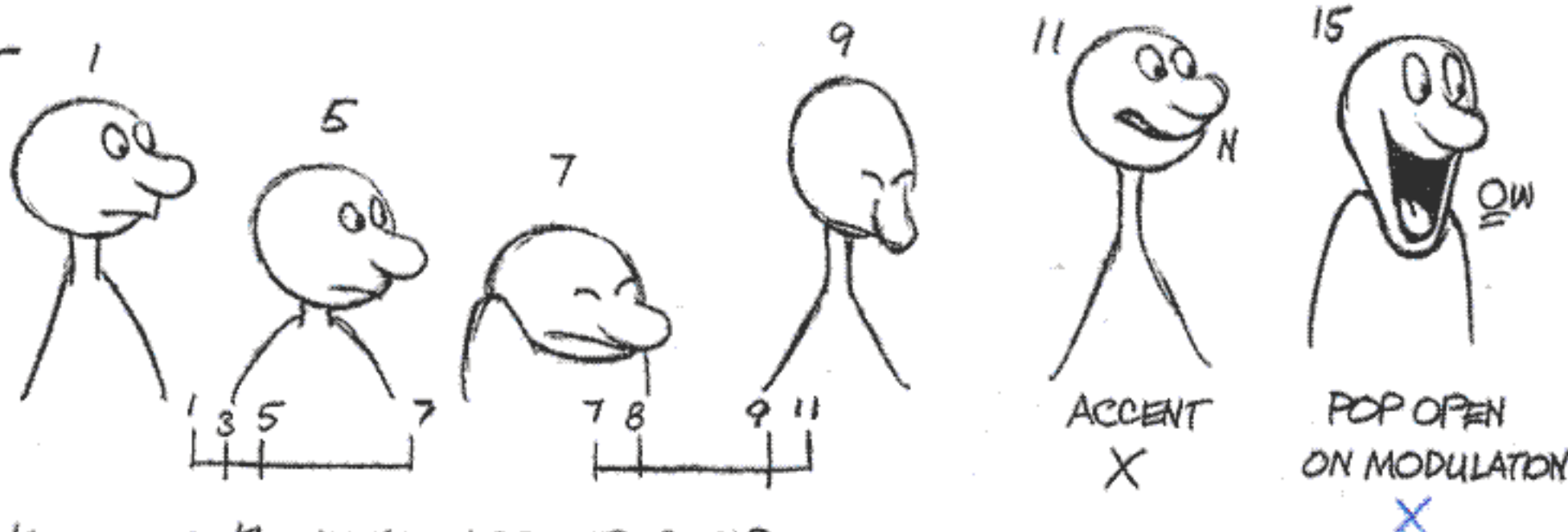
The OLD MASTERS PUT SHARP PHYSICAL ACTIONS and HEAD MOVES **3 OR 4 FRAMES AHEAD** OF THE MODULATION — THEN PUT THE MOUTH ACTION ON THE NOSE — (IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING.)

IF ON ONES -		1
		2
	HEAD ACCENT X	3
	3 FRAMES AHEAD	4
		5
		6
	SOUND ACCENT X	7
		8
		9
		10
		11

IF ON TWO'S -		1
		2
	HEAD ACCENT X	3
	4 FRAMES AHEAD	4
		5
		6
	SOUND ACCENT X	7
		8
		9
		10
		11

THEY GET UP THERE (OR DOWN THERE) FOR THE ACCENT 3 OR 4 FRAMES EARLY — THEN THE MOUTH OPENS ON THE SOUND.

PUT SIMPLY -



THIS DEVICE GIVES  
A BEAUTIFUL  
RESULT.  
MUCH BETTER  
THAN HITTING IT  
ALL AT ONCE

MOST OF THE TIME THE HEAD ACCENT IS UP.

- ① ANTICIPATE DOWN
- ② THEN HEAD ACCENTS UP
- ③ THEN LIPS ON THE VOWEL (IT'S USUALLY A VOWEL THAT WE'RE HITTING.)

WE CAN DO IT IN REVERSE, BUT MOSTLY ITS STRONGER GOING UP. (BUT DOWN IS FINE, TOO.)

ANYWAY, THERE IS ALWAYS AN ACCENT — UNLESS IT'S AN UTTERLY BORING PERSON SPEAKING.

TAKE: "WELL, AT LAST YOU'RE HOME!" = 3 ACCENTS

↑                      ↑                      ↑  
 VOWEL              VOWEL              VOWEL

HIT ONLY THE VOWELS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT. GLOSS OVER THE OTHERS. WE HIT CERTAIN ACCENTS WHEN SPEAKING and WE SLUR OVER THE REST.

OR "WELL, AT LAST YOU'RE HOME!"

↑  
BIG ACCENT

OR "WELL, AT LAST YOU'RE HOME!"

↑                      ↑  
 SMALL ACCENT      BIG ACCENT

JUST HIT THE MAIN ACCENTS. SELECT WHAT'S IMPORTANT — WHETHER IT'S A SOFT OR HARD ACCENT.

HARD ACCENT: "NO!" GO DOWN (OR UP) and YOU BOUNCE BACK.

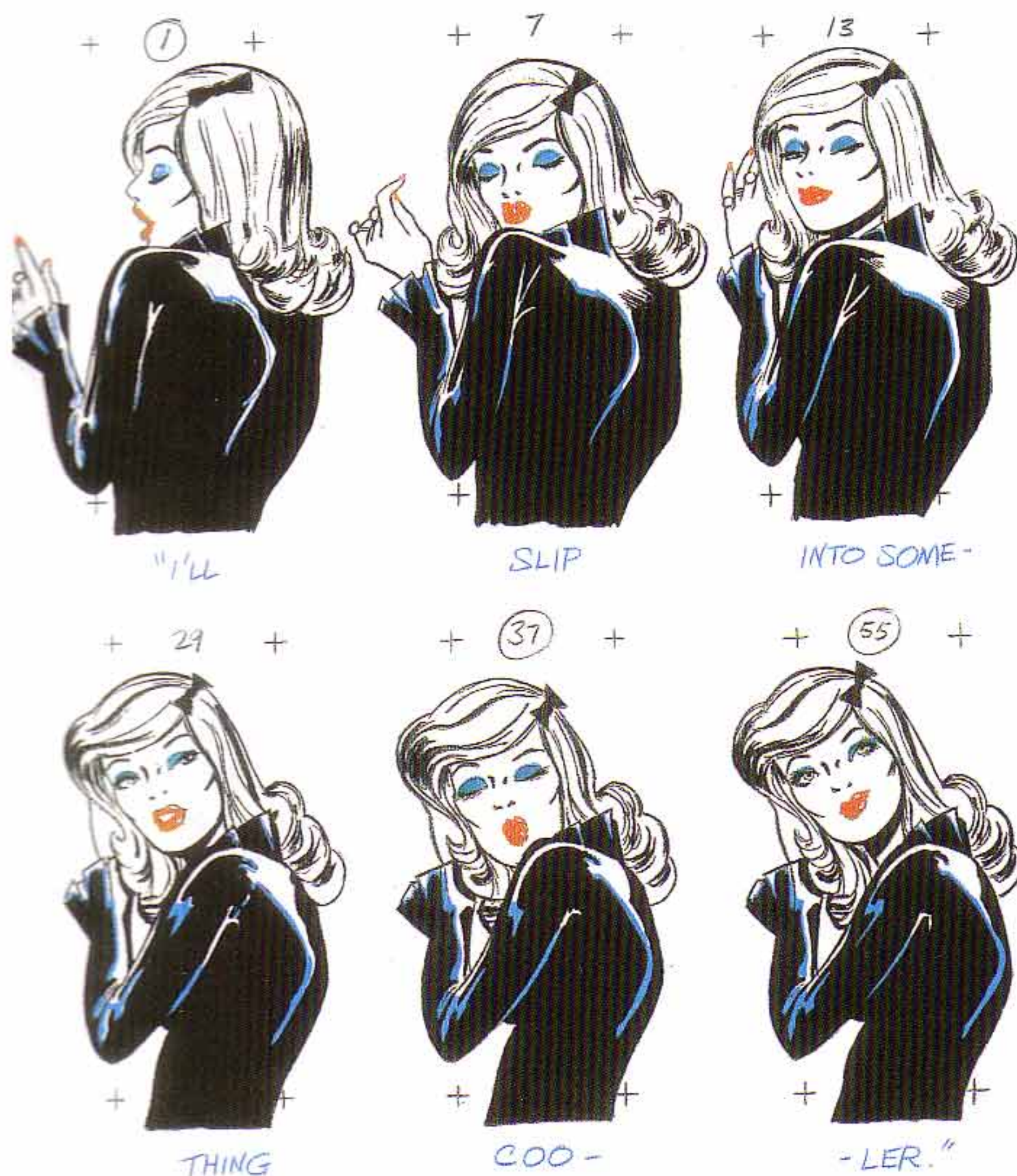
SOFT ACCENT: "NOOOOO..." GO DOWN (OR UP) and CONTINUE.



HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF BODY ACTION PREDOMINATING.  
SHE'S SAYING, "I'LL SLIP INTO SOMETHING COOLER."  
↑  
ACCENT

SHE DOES IT WITH HER SHOULDER.  
IT'S UP AS SHE TURNS TOWARD US, ANTICIPATES DOWN  
and GOES UP FAST FOR THE MAIN ACCENT ON COOLER.  
ALSO AT THE SAME TIME HER HEAD ACCENT GOES DOWN  
ON THE "OO": THE ONLY MOUTH ACCENT ALSO ON THE "OO".  
SHOULDER UP, HEAD DOWN, MOUTH EXAGGERATED -  
ALL TO HIT THE ONLY ACCENT IN THE SENTENCE.

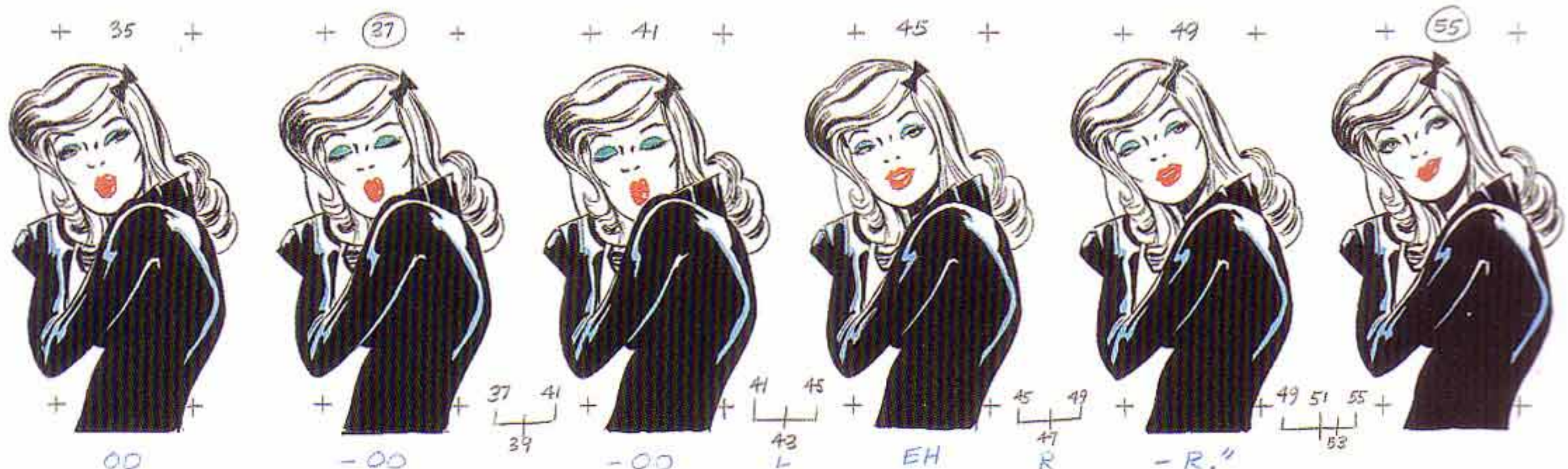
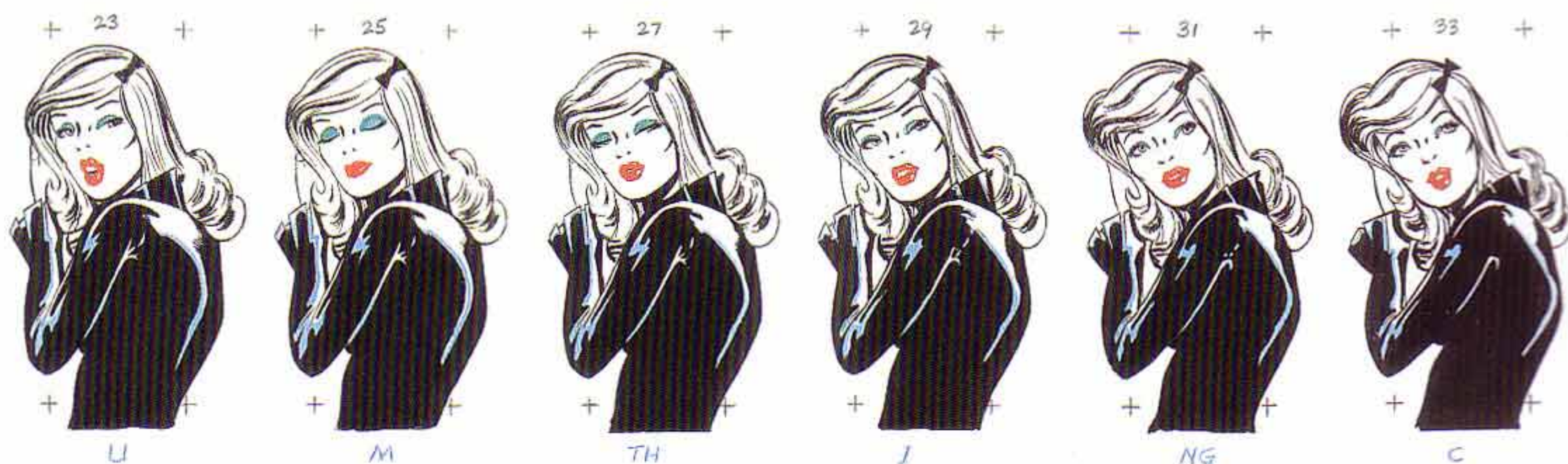
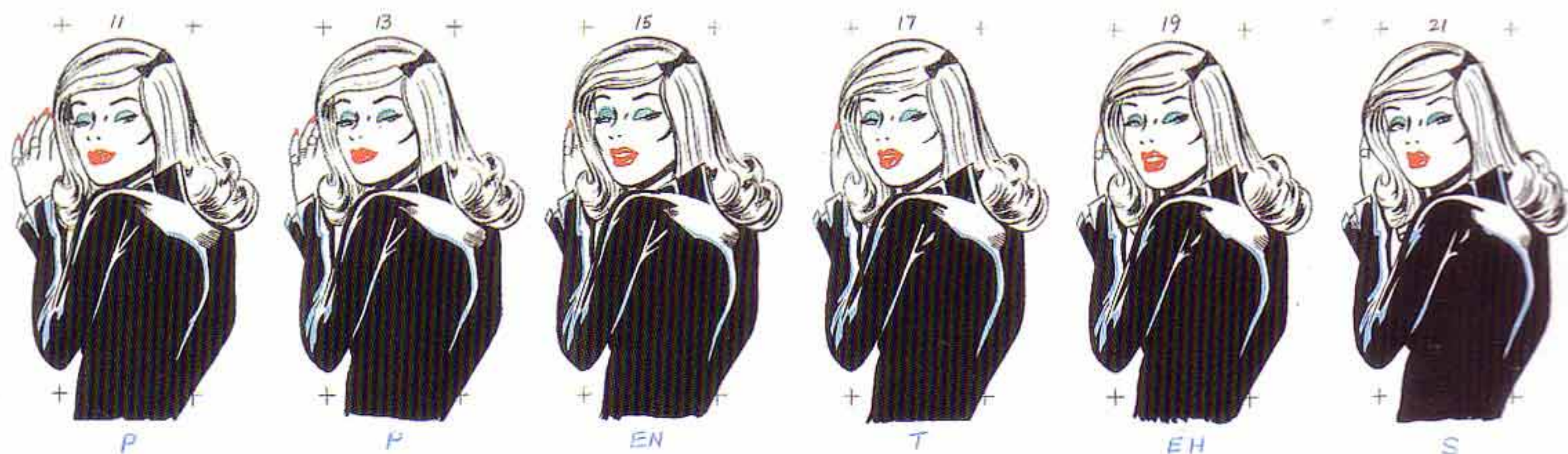
HERE ARE THE MAIN EXTREMES: KEYS #1 (37) and (55) TELL THE STORY.



THIS WORKS FINE, BUT WOULD HAVE BEEN EVEN BETTER IF THE HEAD and SHOULDER ACCENT HAD COME 3 or 4 FRAMES AHEAD of the "OO" MODULATION.

ACTION	DIAL	
0 TURNS	I	1
	LL	3
		5
HEAD ANTIC. DOWN X	S	7
	L	9
	E	11
HEAD UP X	P	13
	E	15
	N	17
	T	19
	EH	21
SHOULDER GOES DOWN TO ANTIC. ACCENT	S	23
BLINK X	U	25
	M	27
	TH	29
	ING	31
2 HEAD GOING DOWN		33
SHOULDER GOES UP	C	35
ACCENT X	O	37
	O	39
		41
HEAD GOING UP	L	43
SHOULDER DOWN	EH	45
	R	47
3		49
		51
		53
		55
		↑ CUT







## ATTITUDE

MAKE the POINT OF the SHOT CLEAR WITH BODY ACTION FIRST. The BODY ATTITUDE SHOULD ECHO the FACIAL ATTITUDE. IT'S ALL ONE. The EXPRESSION OF the BODY and FACE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN the MOVEMENT.

IF WE GET the BODY and HEAD IN the RIGHT ATTITUDE WE CAN ALMOST GO WITHOUT the MOUTHS. The MOUTH ACTION CAN GO ON LAST - THEY CAN BE the LAST THING TO WORK ON.

KEN HARRIS SAID HE LEARNED the MOST ABOUT LIP SYNC WHEN HE HAD TO ANIMATE A MARTIAN CHARACTER WHO HAD NO MOUTH. THIS MEANT HE HAD TO GET the HEAD ACCENTS RIGHT TO MAKE IT CONVINCING.

IN PLANNING WE SHOULD MAKE SURE WE DON'T HAVE TOO MUCH GOING ON. HOW MANY POSES FOR THIS SENTENCE - FOR THIS THOUGHT? ACT IT OUT and BOIL IT DOWN SO ITS SIMPLE and KEEP IT SIMPLE.

WE CAN ONLY PUT OVER ONE THING AT A TIME. JUST AS WE CAN ONLY SAY ONE WORD AT A TIME, WE CAN ONLY PROJECT ONE GESTURE AT A TIME. The WHOLE POSE SHOULD WORK TOWARD THAT ONE THING.

## The SECRET

ONE EVENING IN the EARLY 70'S I WAS TALKING TO MILT KAHL ABOUT the SUPERB MOUTH SHAPES HE ALWAYS GOT IN HIS ANIMATION. HE SAID, "WATCH SINGERS FOR MOUTH SHAPES."

I ASKED, "IS THERE ANY REAL SECRET TO LIP SYNC?"

HE LIT UP. "YOU WANT the SECRET? I'LL TELL YOU the SECRET! YOU KNOW THAT JIM HENSON WITH HIS FROG MUPPET? WELL, HE'S A GENIUS! HE UNDERSTANDS SOMETHING THAT PUPPETEERS NEVER DID BEFORE. HERE HE'S JUST GOT A SOCK OVER HIS HAND and THOUGH HE CAN NEVER MATCH the SOUND EXACTLY, HE DOES A FAR BETTER JOB THAN MOST OF US ANIMATORS WITH ALL OUR TECHNICAL RESOURCES. YOU WATCH WHAT HE'S DOING! HE'S PROGRESSING the ACTION. HE'S GOING SOMEWHERE WITH THAT FROG WHEN HE'S TALKING.

"I LEARNED THIS BACK ON 'SONG OF the SOUTH' WHEN I HAD the FOX SAYING TO the RABBIT, 'I'M GOING TA ROAST YUH, ETC, ETC'. I HARDLY MOVED the MOUTH AT ALL. HE WAS SPEAKING THROUGH HIS TEETH WHEN HE PUSHED FORWARD TOWARDS the RABBIT. HE PROGRESSED TOWARDS the RABBIT! I PROGRESSED IT AS HE SPOKE and THAT'S the SECRET. GO SOMEWHERE, ANYWHERE, AS YOU SPEAK."

WHEN I GOT BACK TO ENGLAND I RUSHED IN TO KEN HARRIS and JUMPED UP and DOWN, "I'VE GOT the SECRET! The SECRET OF LIP SYNC! MILT KAHL TOLD ME the SECRET!"

KEN LOOKED UP QUIZZICALLY.

"the SECRET!" I BURBLED, "the SECRET IS to PROGRESS the ACTION AS YOU SPEAK!"

KEN'S EYES ROLLED HEAVENWARD. "WHAT DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YA?"

WELL, the PENNY DROPPED (FINALLY) AND I NEVER LOOKED BACK. THAT'S IT.