

I have a question for you about our upcoming Numb3rs script that involves Reflexive Theory. Though we go into much greater depth later in the script, here's how Charlie introduces it:

CHARLIE

But we may be able to determine who's ready to commit murder.

ALLAWI

What do you mean?

CHARLIE

REFLEXIVE THEORY-- which factors moral elements into computation. It's used to model terrorist recruitment, but I can adapt it to these circumstances.

Allawi looks at Don, lost.

DON

Break it down, Charlie.

CHARLIE

It's like popcorn--

AUDIENCE VISION. CORN BEING SORTED- SOME PACKAGED FRESH, SOME CANNED, SOME BOTTLED AS POPCORN, SOME DISCARDED.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

A kernel of corn must have certain internal conditions to pop-- too much water, not enough water, the wrong variety-- it doesn't pop. In Reflexive Theory we assign numerical values to an individual's internal pressures like violent tendencies, religious extremism, history with women--

SEVERAL BOTTLES OF POPCORN SIT ON A SHELF. A HAND CHOOSES ONE BOTTLE SETS IT DOWN NEAR A STOVE. OIL IS POURED INTO A POT, THE STOVE IS TURNED ON, THE FLAME HEATS THE OIL.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Then we cross this with external pressures-- such as loyalty to a radical cleric, geographic location, financial need-- and like a kernel of popcorn dropped in hot oil-- we see who pops.

A SINGLE KERNEL POPS INTO FLUFFY WHITE POPCORN.

END OF AUDIENCE VISION.

*So here's what we were thinking...instead of popcorn,
maybe we could describe lightning strikes instead as a metaphor.
The reason is this: a) it's viscerally more interesting and b) a
lightning strike is a far rarer event, where a great many
factors have to perfectly meet for it to happen.*

What do you think?