



What Romance Stories taught me about Incident Management

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What **RomComs** taught me **not to do** about Incident Management

About Me

- SRE & DevOps Advocate at Datadog
- Previous: SWE/SRE at Google
- I'm based in Atlanta
- Originally from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- I like crafting but I'm not good at it
- My favorite romcom is "Pretty Woman"



What is Incident Management?



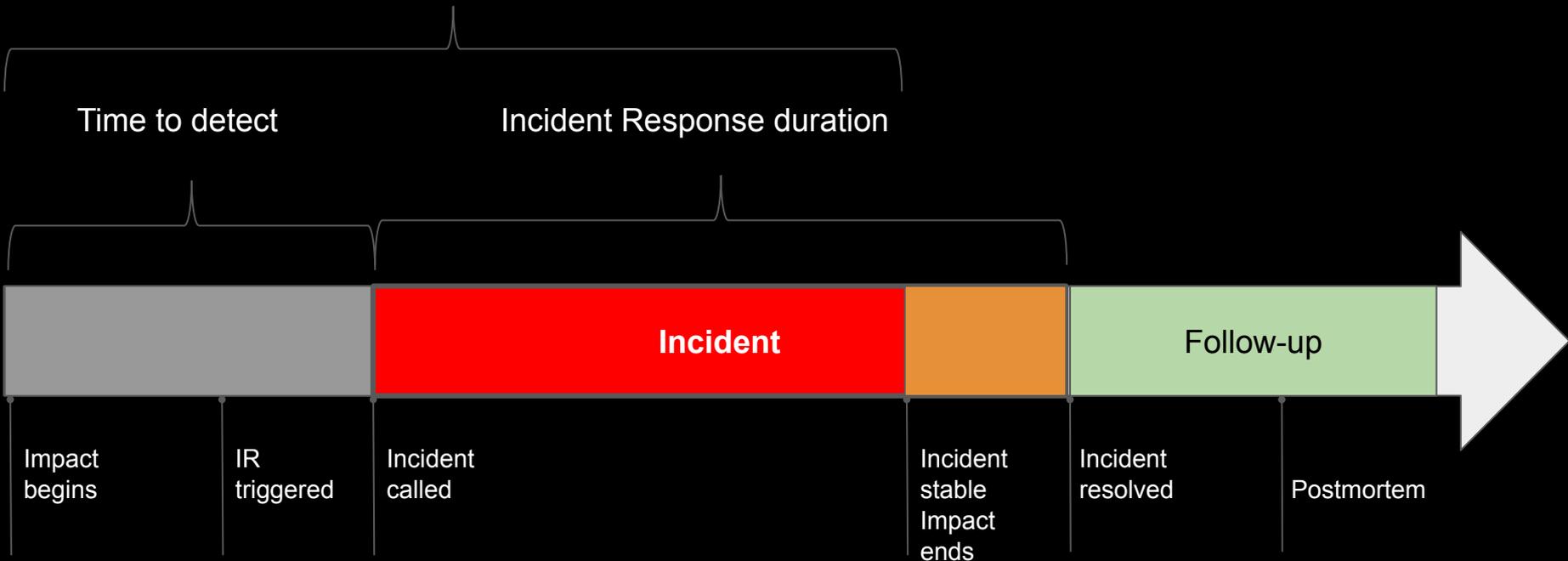
PICTURE THIS...





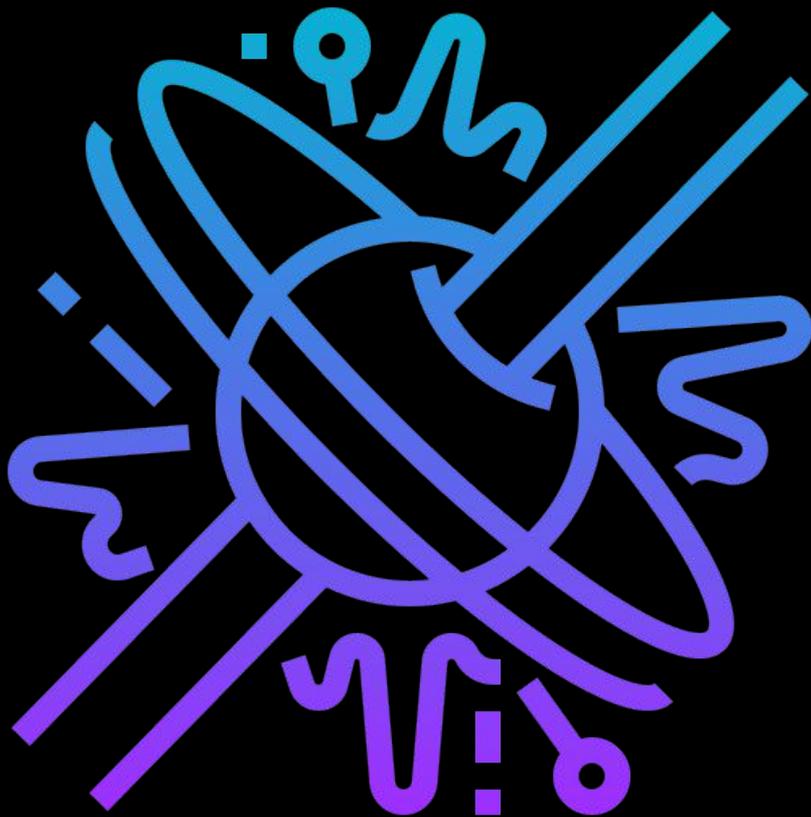
gifbin.com

Customer Impact duration

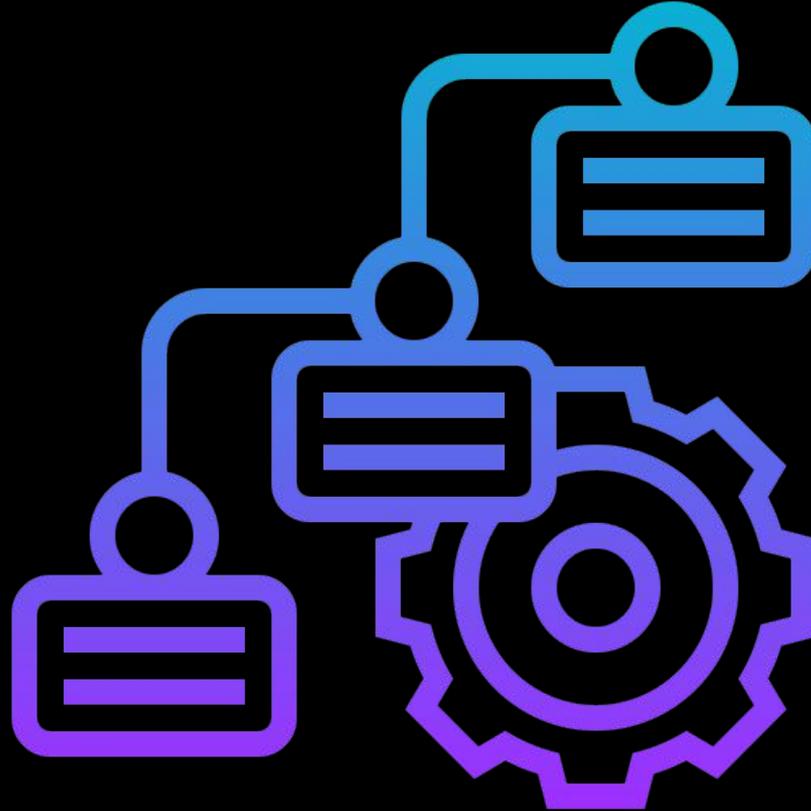


Why Romcoms?

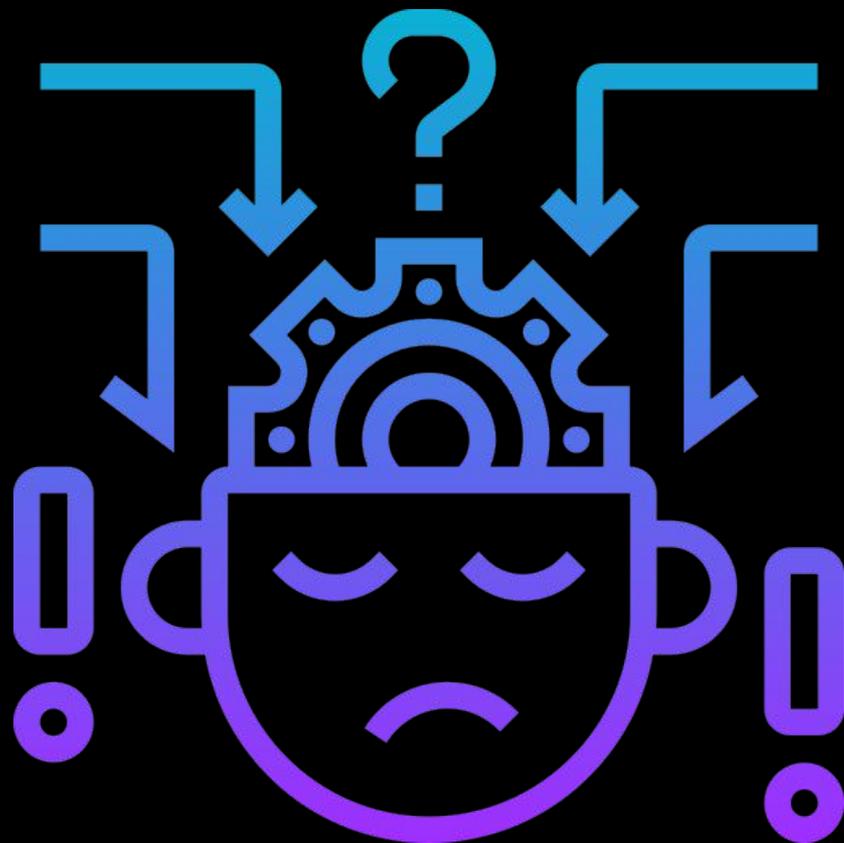
I just like them, now



Formulaic

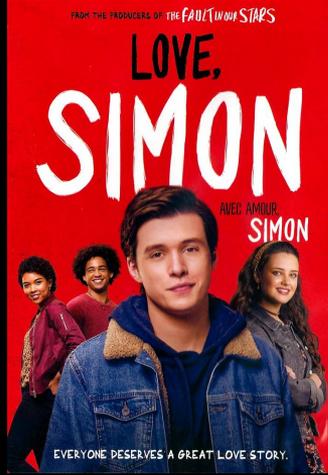
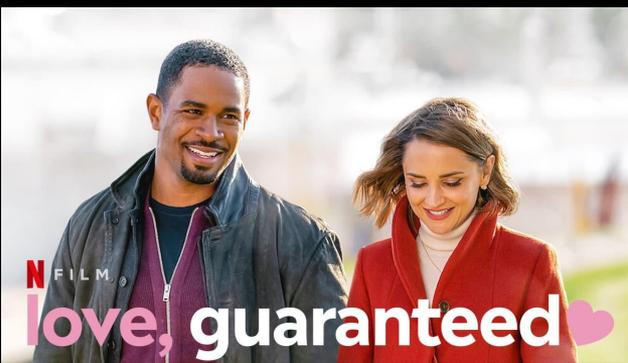


Decision Fatigue



They don't have to be real dramatic

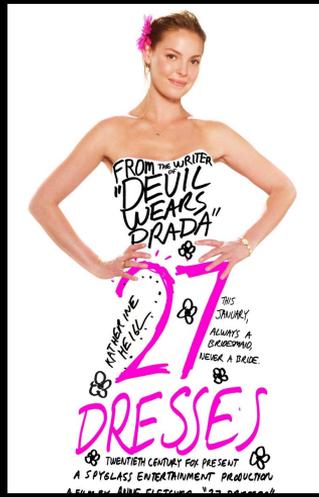




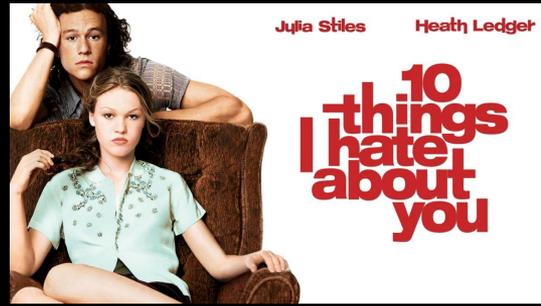
COMING TO AMERICA



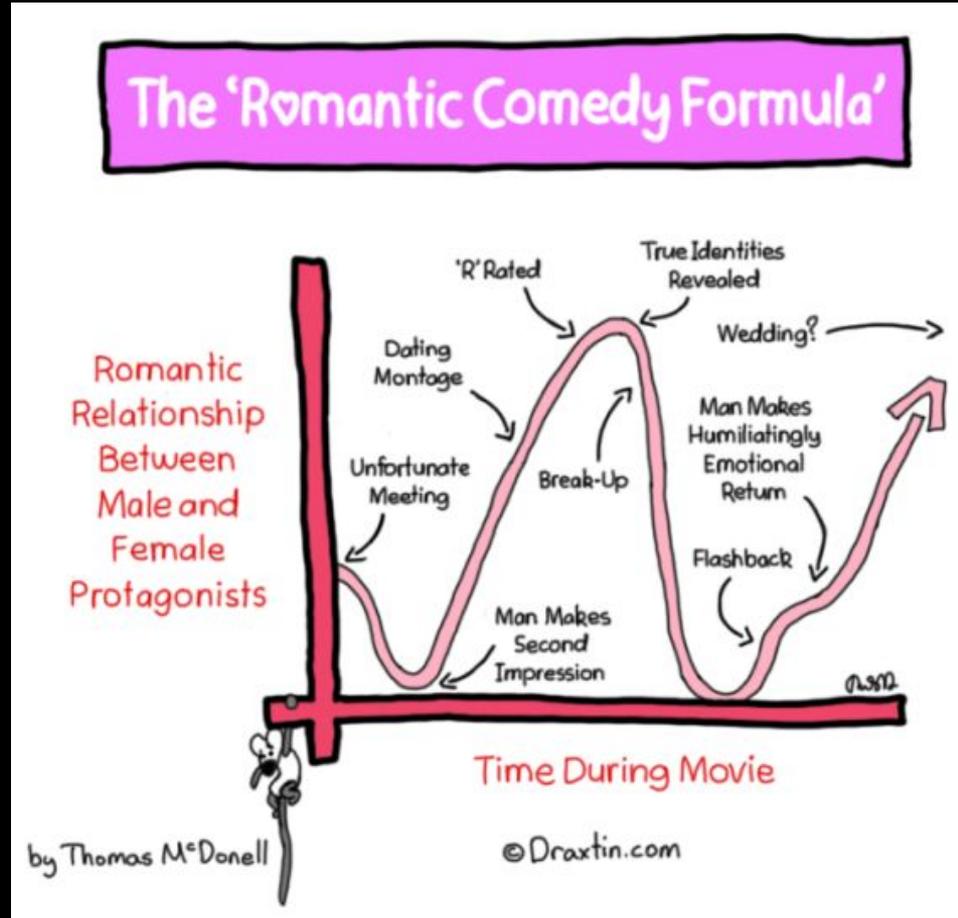
TO ALL THE BOYS I LOVED BEFORE



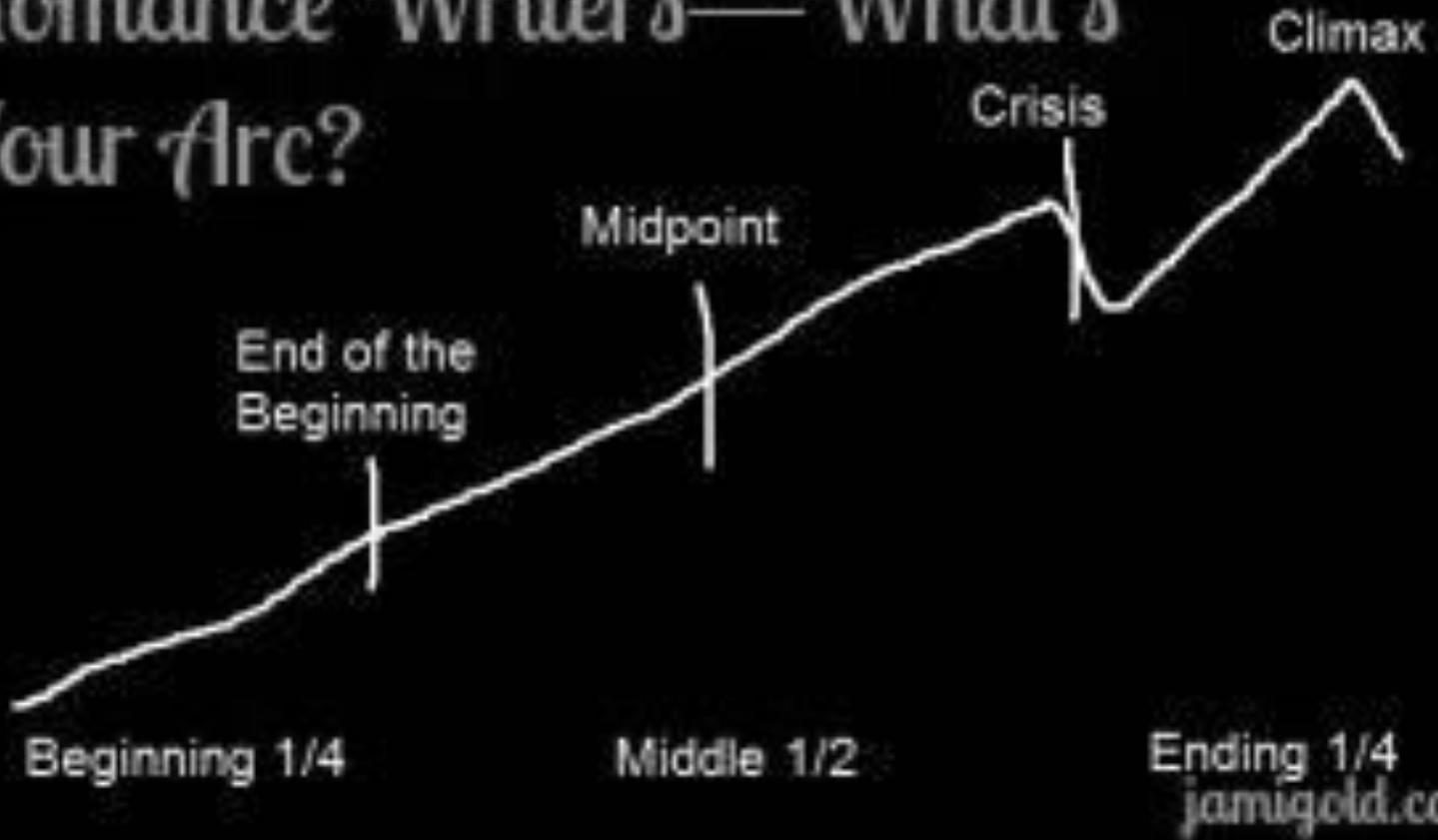
PRETTY WOMAN



The Formula is a Known Secret



Romance Writers—What's Your Arc?



They are always running through airports



Not old, Crazy Rich Asians (2018), still in airports/planes



Great lines



“IM is for tech, not people”?

Incident Management came from Firefighting



Laguna Fire, California 1970

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/public-safety/story/2020-08-30/california-fires-1970-legacy>

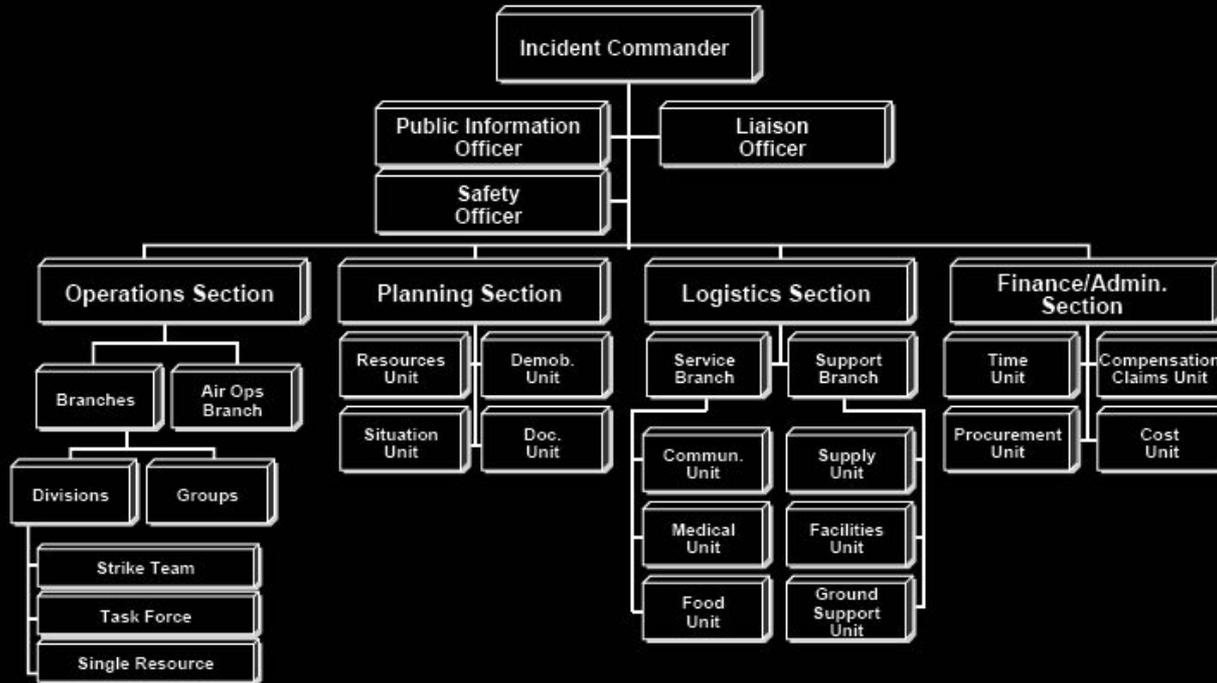
FIRESCOPE



Firefighting Resources of Southern California Organized for Potential Emergencies

<https://firescope.caloes.ca.gov/>

Incident Command System



Incident Command Structure

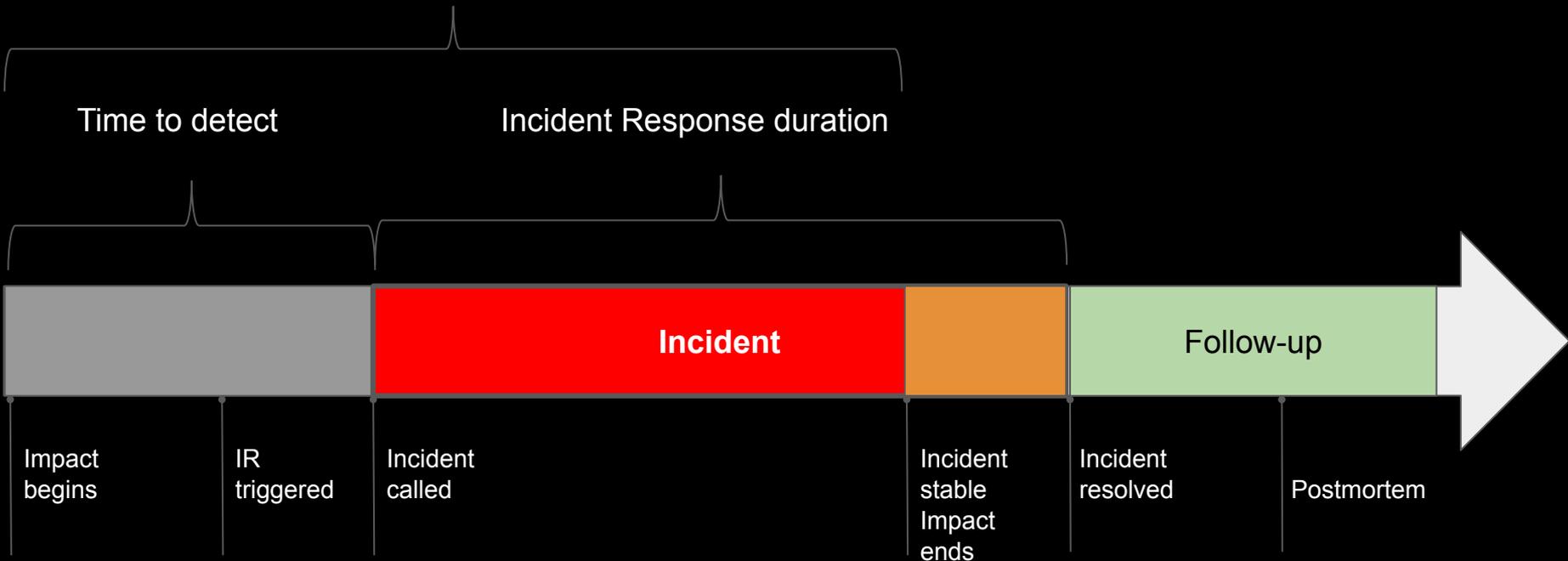
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incident_Command_System



What do Incidents have in common

- There's Incident Command
- Timing usually a surprise – little or no warning
- Time matters – need to respond quickly
- Situation not perfectly understood at start
 - Learn as you go, and adjust on the fly
- Resources change over time
 - People come and go; not all together at start
 - Need ways to bring newcomers up to speed
 - Need ways to transfer responsibilities

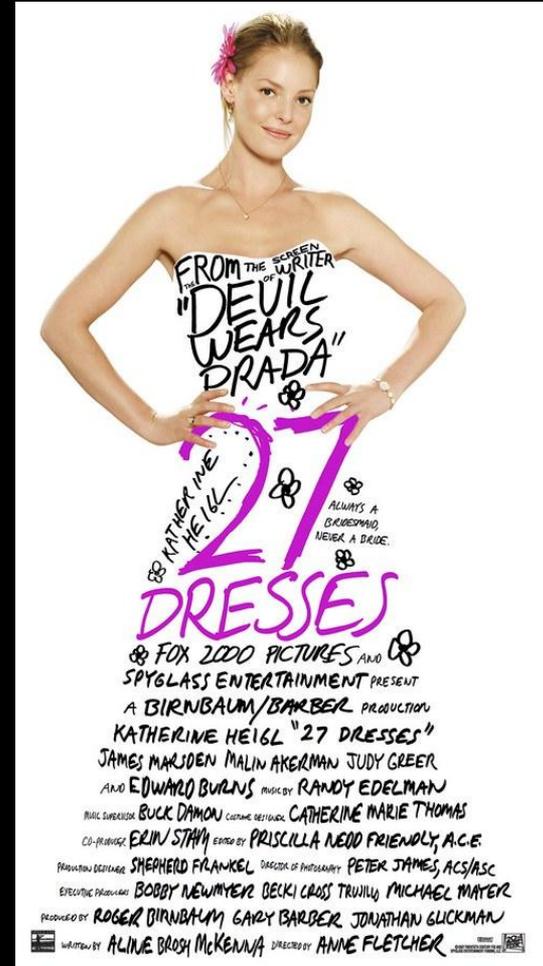
Customer Impact duration





Where RomComs get it Wrong

Where RomComs get it Wrong



Who takes responsibility?



Builds up



Communication



Review and Reflect?



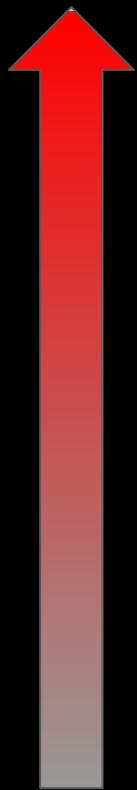


How to get it right?

Incident Commander



Incident Severities



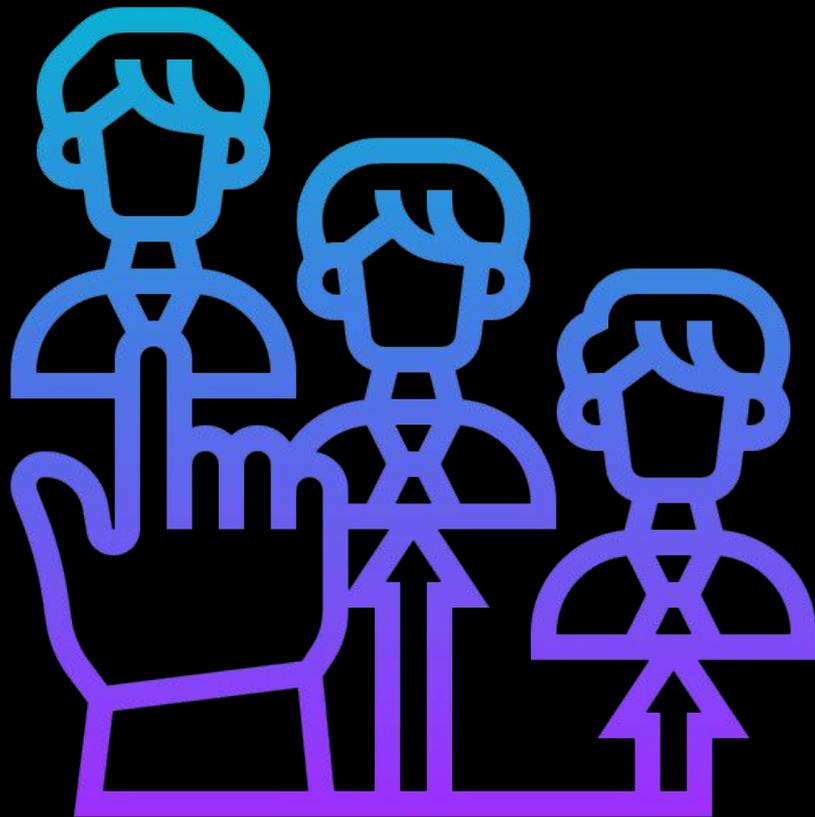
SEV-1

SEV-2

SEV-3

SEV-4

SEV-5



Incident Communication

Datadog Incidents 

incident-1135 SEV-1 Resolved — Add Item requests are failing

All unread

Threads

All DMs

Mentions & reactions

Saved items

More

Current

Channels

- # alerts-security-demo
- # general
- # incident-1135**
- # incident-881
- # incidents
- # random
- # slack-bot
- + Add channels

Direct messages

Datadog APP 10:41
joined #incident-1135. October 1st, 2021

Datadog APP 10:41
set the channel topic: SEV-1 Active — Add Item requests are failing
Commander: @Mark

Datadog APP 10:41
👋 Use this channel to manage Incident #1135
👮 Incident Commander: @Mark

Mark 10:41
was added to #incident-1135 by Datadog, along with Sacha

Datadog APP 15:43
✎ @Mark changed Detection_Method to employee

✎ @Mark changed State to Stable

Datadog APP 15:46
set the channel topic: SEV-1 Stable — Add Item requests are failing
Commander: @Mark

Datadog APP 15:49
✎ @Mark changed State to Active

Datadog APP 15:49
set the channel topic: SEV-1 Active — Add Item requests are failing

Postmortems

DATADOG

Incidents > IR-1135: Add Item requests are failing

RESOLVED SEV-1 (Critical) Slack Channel Add Video Call Create Jira Issue Postmortem

6 hours to resolution 5 hours of customer impact

Overview **Timeline** Remediation Responders BETA Notifications

Write a note, link or code block. Press Shift + Return to submit

Hide Controls 10 entries Oldest First ↓

FILTERS

- Content Type**
 - Incident Update 7
 - Integration Update 1
 - Graph 1
 - Responder Note 2
 - Notification Sent 1
- Important**
 - Yes 5
 - No 5
- Responder**

Oct 01 2021 10:41 am EDT Incident declared **ACTIVE** by Mark

IR-1135: Add Item requests are failing

Severity **SEV-1**

Slack [#incident-1135](#)

Incident Commander Mark

Mark

Web Store Add Item Request Average Latency per Availability Zone

SNAPSHOT /s/rklUvX/u9h-7ah-nyh | Oct 1, 9:08 am - 10:08 am

Postmortems

The screenshot shows a Datadog interface with a sidebar on the left containing navigation options like Watchdog, Events, Dashboards, Infrastructure, Monitors, Metrics, Integrations, APM, CI, Notebooks, Logs, Security, UX Monitoring, Contact Support, and Help. The main content area is titled "Postmortem IR-1135: Add Item requests are failing" and includes sections for "What Happened?", "Impact on Customers", "Why Did it Happen?", and "Timeline".

What Happened?

Impact on Customers

Customers unable to add items to their cart.
This lasted for 5 hours, beginning at 10:41 am .

Why Did it Happen?

Root Cause

Unexpected heavy traffic overloading our systems

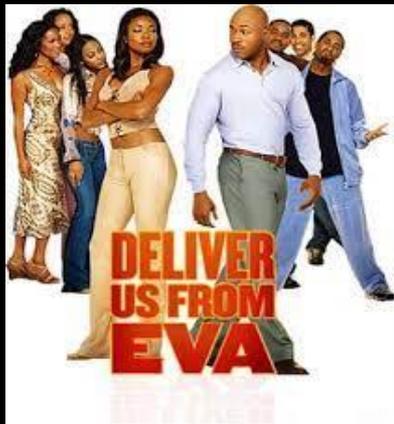
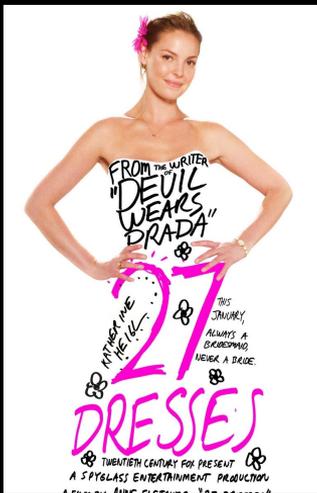
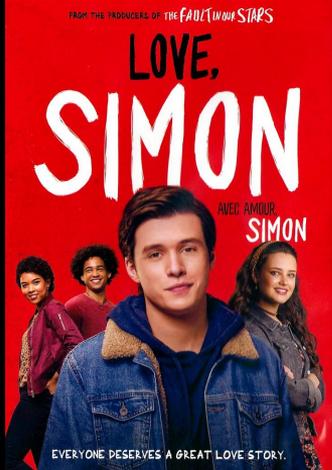
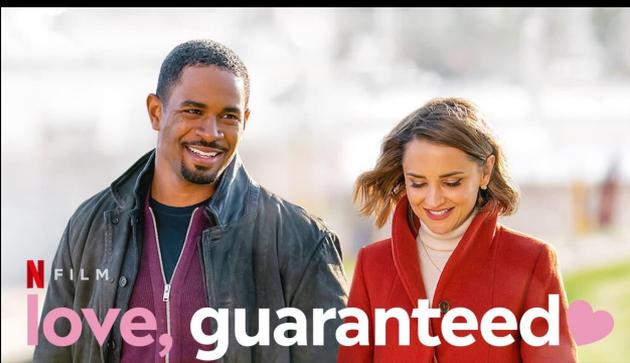
Timeline

Oct 1, 2021 at 10:41 am

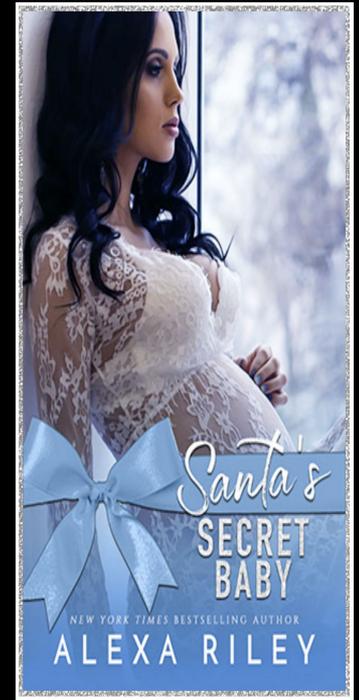
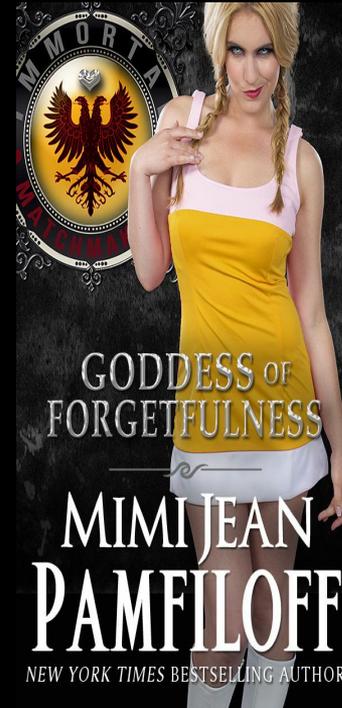
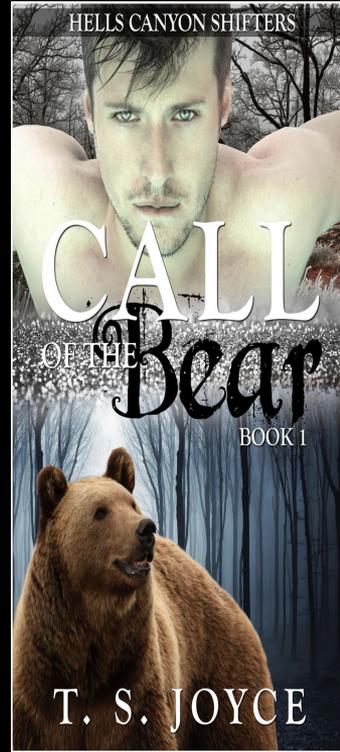
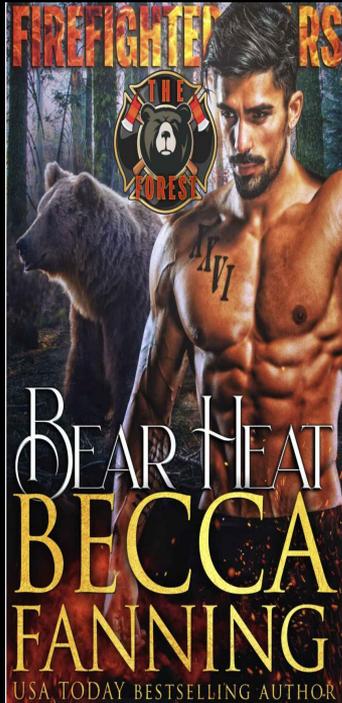
Mark

Web Store Add_Item Request Average Latency per Availability Zone 1h Oct 1, 9:08 am – Oct 1, 10:08 am

Time	Latency (ms)
09:10	~5
09:15	~5
09:20	~50
09:25	~5
09:30	~30
09:35	~10
09:40	~10
09:45	~10
09:50	~10
09:55	~10
10:00	~10
10:05	~10



Sometimes you can judge a book by it's cover





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