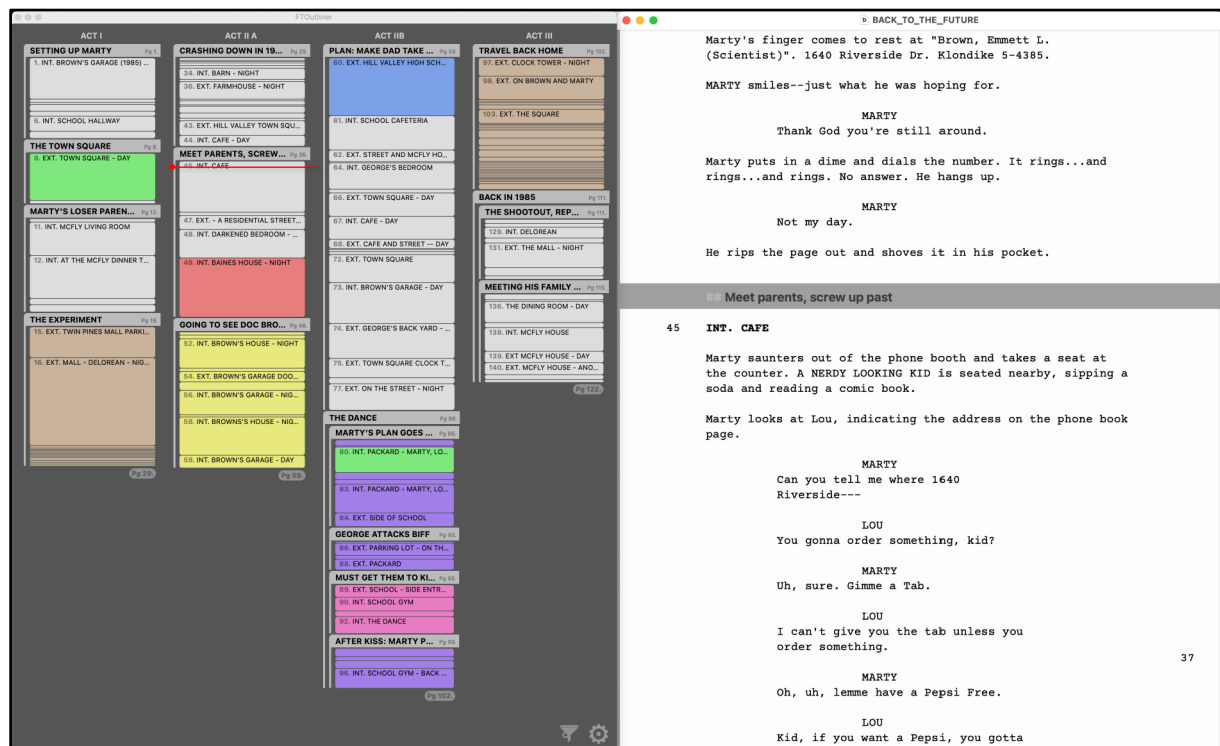


# FTOutliner v. 1.0

## A plugin for BEAT.



FTOutliner is a plugin for Beat, meant to visualize your script as (or after) you write.

Short for Flexible Time, FTOutliner will dynamically display the outline of your story, arranged in one column per act and with the height of each scene proportional to its respective length in pages (and to the length of the complete document).

### 1. The fundamental stuff to know

- Every top-level section such as `# ACT I` will start a new column.
- Every non-top-level section like `## The car chase` or `#### A montage` will act as the beginning of a sequence, with all subsequent scenes until next section mark considered part of that sequence.
- Each scene's height represents its length in proportion to the entire script.
- The red indicator shows the position where you are currently working in the Beat document. It will move as you type or whenever you position the cursor somewhere in your screenplay.

**NOTE:** for best results, always start your screenplay with an `#ACT` element. Also, any text that has no preceding scene heading — e.g. is entered directly after a `##SECTION` but before an `INT/EXT` slugline — will not be visible in the outline.

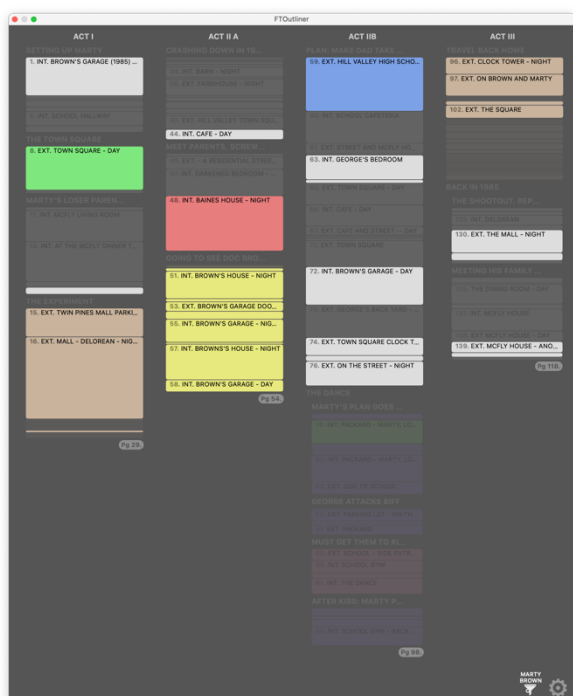
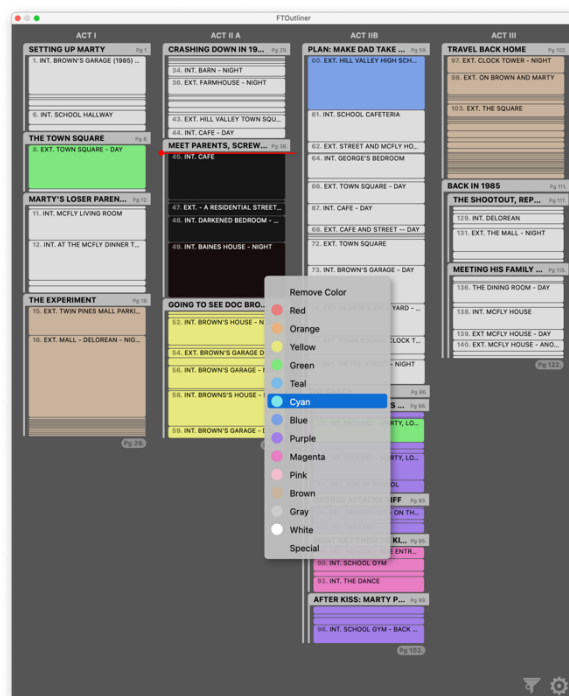
## 2. Navigating your Beat document

- To jump to a specific scene in your Beat window, click the corresponding scene or section in FTOutliner
- You can also click the page number at the bottom of each act.

**NOTE:** Because FTOutliner is a plugin, Beat's main window and FTOutliner cannot have focus at the same time. This means you may have to click one extra time when shifting between the two: Clicking on a scene in FTOutliner requires a click on the Beat window before you can start typing in that scene.

## 3. Changing the color of a scene or sequence

- Right-clicking a scene or sequence will bring up a context menu to set (or remove) its color
- You can also select a range before right-clicking in order to change the color of multiple scenes:
  - **cmd + click** on every scene you want to change.
  - **shift + click** on last scene in the range you want to change. (The scene in which your indicator currently is located will be the beginning of the range.)
  - **cmd + a** will select all scenes and sequences, while **ctrl + a** will select all scenes only.



## 4. Highlight all scenes with a specific character

- Click the funnel (or press **t** for track characters) to see a list of all characters in your document.
- Selecting a character in the list will dim all scenes where that character is not mentioned.
- Selecting two or more characters in the list will dim all scenes where not ALL of the selected characters are present. This is useful for hiding all scenes except where certain characters meet.
- SHORTCUTS: By using keys **1—9** you can directly highlight any of the nine most frequent characters in your script. (By holding shift or **cmd** while pressing **1—9** you can select multiple characters without opening the dialog.)

## 5. Other settings

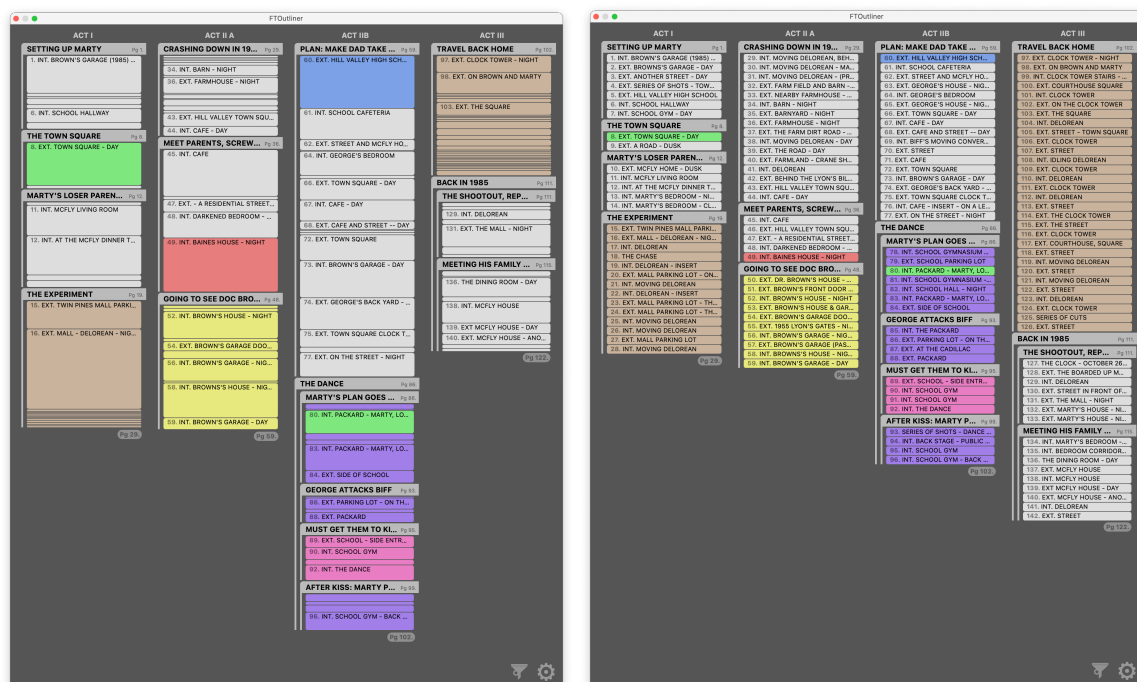
All other settings and preferences can be changed in the INFO window (invoked from the cog wheel or by pressing *i* for INFO whenever the plugin is in focus).

Specifically, you can:

- Toggle the display of scene numbers on and off
- Toggle the display of scene lengths (in 1/8 of a page) on and off
- Toggle the display of page numbers (in section dividers) on and off
- Toggle the display of scenes

Should you want to, you can also turn off the flexible height of scenes, as well as the multicolumn display. This will make FTOutliner closer to what you would see in apps like Final Draft and Movie magic Screenwriter — or even Beat. Although with the added benefit of page counts, highlighting characters and coloring ranges of scenes.

**NOTE:** Whereas the Flexible Time display will always adapt the outline's height to fit inside the current window, turning it off may require you to scroll to see all content.



Flexible Time display on.

Flexible Time display off.

**A LITTLE TIP:** While outlining, or when still early in the writing process, showing scenes proportionally to the full length may actually feel more distracting than helpful. Unchecking the FLEXIBLE TIME to display all scenes at equal heights may be more useful until there are enough written scenes that you can get a sense of your story's rhythm and dynamic.

You can easily toggle back and forth between the two modes by hitting *f* for flexible.

## 4. Some notes on performance

FTOutliner has been tested on a very recent MacBook Pro, as well as one from 2016. It behaves well on both. However, being written in JavaScript which is not the fastest language in the world, its performance may vary the longer your screenplay becomes.

If you experience lagging (especially when typing inside scene headings) you can stop FTOutliner from continuously updating as-you-type:

Use the REAL TIME checkbox in the INFO dialog (or hit *r* for real time) to toggle real-time monitoring for changes. When off, any change you make in the script will leave the outline out-of-sync, and with a diagonally striped background to remind you that what you see may differ from your script's actual contents.

**To synchronize the outline when Real Time updating is off**, click anywhere in the plugin window. As soon as FTOutliner becomes focused it will update to match your script.

## 5. Final words

FTOutliner is written by Fredrik T Olsson — that would be me — screenwriter first and coder not-at-all. This is my first foray into putting together anything beyond a simple website.

But it is also, for me personally, the visual tool I've always longed for. So when the creator of Beat opened for external plugins, I decided it was time to write it myself.

We all write in different ways, so your mileage may vary. But for me, this is a great view for keeping track of the geography of my story. As a TV writer, quickly being able to determine the lengths of my acts has proved invaluable. Scenes that are running unhealthily long are hard not to notice. And for someone like me who writes out-of-sequence, it makes jumping back and forth between different scenes a whole lot easier.

All this is to say that this plugin is written first of all for myself. But it is my hope that it may help others too, so here it is for anyone else who feel it might suit the way they work.

The usual disclaimers apply — this is provided as-is, without warranties, and by using it you agree that you do so at your own risk. The sample images in this document are made using an online version of the Back To The Future script as an educational example of how to use my plugin. Sections and acts added by me may not correspond with the writers' intentions.

Feel free to report bugs and suggest improvements, but know that I am a one-man band who probably is already about to miss the deadline of what I really should be doing right now. You can email me on [ftoutliner@eviltomato.se](mailto:ftoutliner@eviltomato.se). Be gentle, I never did this before.

Oh. And last of all. You may have noticed that the initials of this plugin's name are eerily close to those of my own. What can I say. We're all screenwriters, aren't we. And if there's anything we share it's the need to take every chance at credit we can...

Happy writing,  
Fredrik T Olsson.