Tess Diduch
Assignment 10

Momento is essentially a linear story rearranged to be non-linear. The last several minutes of the story are shown, then it jumps back and shows a prior segment, which ends where the last begins. And so on, jumping backwards in time. The intent is to mimic the life of the main character, by forcing the viewer's attention on a time span roughly equal to what one would experience if limited to short term memory alone. The viewer, of course, has a longer term memory, but all that is available is what happens next, not what happens before, so that during each time the narrative jumps backwards, it does recreate the experience of being lost in time, with nothing to go on but the present. The story thus evolves ironically, since it is memory of what comes next that allows the viewer to piece together the linear narrative. Conversely, in linear narratives the viewer is less actively aware of the role of memory, since it is quite natural to passively follow along.

One of the 'pleasures' of the film is the procedural nature. The linear story is disrupted in a fixed way, and the viewer quickly (or not so quickly- I don't think my dad ever quite figured out what was going on) catches on to this. After realizing that there are going to be jumps backwards in time (and the viewer knows beforehand that a jump will occur, when they recognize that the events are leading into the segment they saw just previously) the viewer is able to play their participiatory role in piecing together the story. Watching the movie straight through without thought will result in a very jumbled impression, as the effects of an action come before the action itself. It's almost like a mystery, in itself, doling out clues to the actual series of events. The main action of the story, murder, reinforces this. The question being more what led to the event than whodunnit.