



*Dream of  
Travel Writing*

# Article Nuts and Bolts: Putting Together an As-Told-To Feature

by Gabi Logan, founder of Dream of Travel Writing

A blurred background image of a coffee shop setting. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the left, a smartphone is visible. In the background, there is a vase of purple flowers and a white napkin. The text "Today, we're going to talk about..." is overlaid in the center.

Today, we're going to  
talk about...

1. Why we've saved these pieces for last

2. How these pieces are fundamentally different than anything else you will write

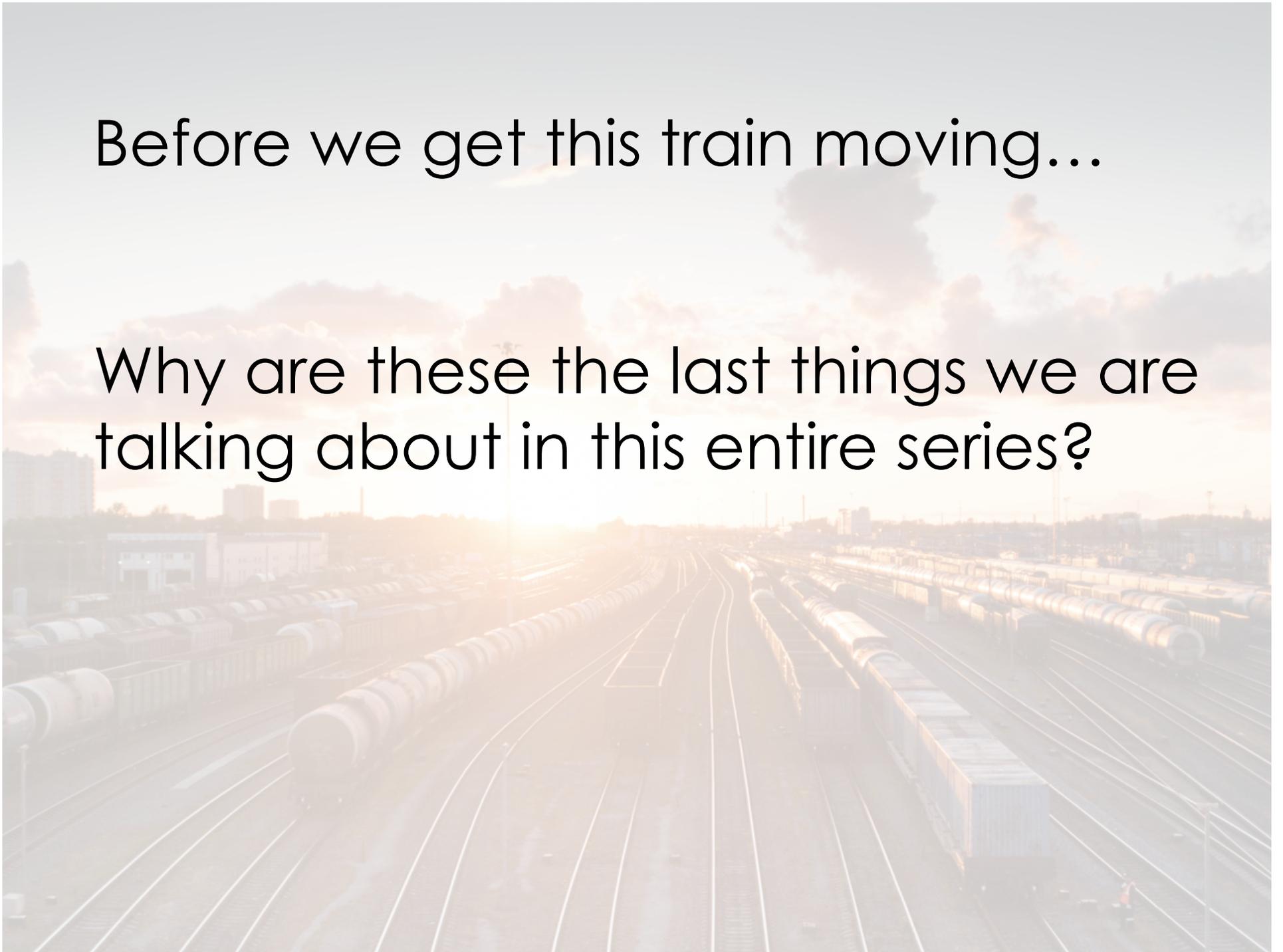
3. Breaking down real-world examples

4. Pitching FAQ



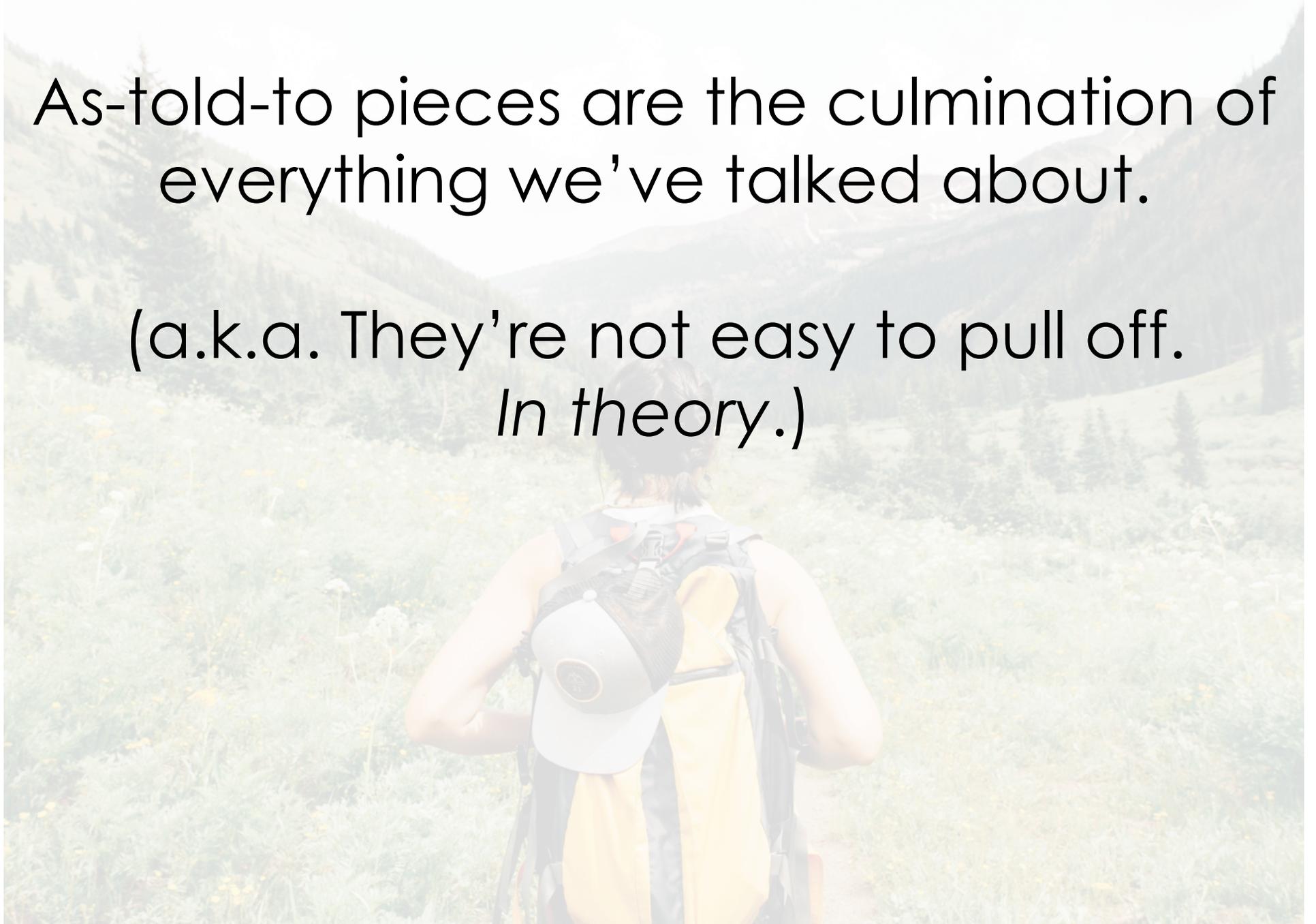
Before we get this train moving...

Why are these the last things we are talking about in this entire series?



As-told-to pieces are the culmination of everything we've talked about.

(a.k.a. They're not easy to pull off.  
*In theory.*)



“focus on “as told to”  
articles in the belief that  
using only the subject's  
words and phrases will  
make the article accurate  
and truthful”



# What Makes Something an As-Told-To Piece?

- There needs to be emotional weight that makes the story need the first-person rather than third-person
- It's good to think of it like a destination feature: when would you write such a thing in first- rather than third-person?
  - NOTE: if your default is to write everything in first-person because you have been primarily writing for your own audience rather than editorial outlets, I recommend doing some reading to get a better grasp on this

# What Makes Something an As-Told-To Piece? – Part 2

- You need to refrain from interjecting your own opinions
  - ...this can also include outside background or reporting
  - You really only include what the person knows
  - In this way, it becomes very much more like a personal essay than a first-person feature
- You need to edit more heavily than an interview—more like a profile

# What Makes Something an As-Told-To Piece? – Part 3

- It's your job to take all of the things the source tells you and make them be chronological and impactful
- Chronology plays a much bigger roll in as-told-to pieces
- Important to remember that this isn't quite journalism as giving a voice, and that that translates in both the text and the style

A woman with long hair is seen in profile, sitting at a desk and typing on a laptop. The scene is brightly lit, likely by natural light from a window in the background. The image has a soft, slightly blurred quality, and the text is overlaid in the center.

Let's take a look at  
some full pieces to see  
how this plays out...

A person is seen from behind, wearing a blue backpack and a grey jacket. A travel guidebook titled "Lonely Planet Eastern USA" is tucked into the top of the backpack. The person is standing on a dirt trail, and the background is a soft-focus landscape of hills and trees. Another person with long blonde hair and a red backpack is partially visible to the right. The overall scene is bright and hazy, suggesting a sunny day in a natural setting.

What did we  
experience here?

# Pitching FAQ

- More than any other piece we've discussed, these need pre-pitch permission
- As well as post-writing permission, which is very unusual and only appears in this genre
- When pitching these, you need to give the editor both a strong narrative arc as well as evidence it needs to be written in first person—add quotes to your pitch, but don't write it in first-person
- Be clear what you're offering and make sure the magazine even publishes those kind of pieces

Thanks so much  
for joining us today!

It was a pleasure chatting  
travel writing with you 😊

Have a follow up question on this webinar? Email [questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com](mailto:questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com) and we'll cover it in an upcoming webinar or in our Monday reader mailbag post on the Six-Figure Travel Writer blog.

