

# **THE SHOTS**

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The shots are defined by the amount of subject matter that's included within the frame of the screen.

## **The extreme long shot**

Taken from a great distance (sometimes  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile), usually an exterior shot, & shows much of the locale. Sometimes called an establishing shot.

# The long shot

About the same distance as an audience to a stage in a live theatre.



*Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*

## **The full shot**

Just barely includes the human body in full.

## **The medium shot**

Contains the figure from the knees or waist up.  
Often used for dialogue scenes.



*Two-shot*: two figures from the waist up. Our focus is split between the two equally important subjects who are sharing the same intimate space. Often used in



romantic comedies & buddy pictures, where both characters are equally important.

*Before Sunset*

*Three-shot*: three figures from the waist up.  
Beyond three, the shot usually becomes a full  
shot.

*Over-the-shoulder shot:* usually two figures, one with part of his or her back to the camera, the other facing the camera.



*The Graduate*





## The close-up shot

Concentrates on a relatively small object, such as the human face.

Because this shot magnifies the size of an object, it tends to elevate the importance of things, often suggesting a symbolic significance.



*The Passion of Joan of Arc*

## **The extreme close-up shot**

Instead of a face, this shot may be of a person's eyes or mouth.

## **The deep-focus shot**

Usually a long shot consisting of a number of focal distances & photographed in depth. Also, called a wide-angle shot, it captures objects at close, medium, & long ranges simultaneously, all of them in sharp focus. This leads the viewer's eyes from the close range to the medium to the long.



The repetition of visual motifs into infinity allows Spielberg to suggest that Jews all over Europe were being herded in a similar manner.



*Schindler's  
List*

# **THE ANGLES**

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The angle from which an object is photographed can often serve as an authorial commentary on the subject matter.

## **The bird's-eye view**

Disorienting angle that involves photographing a scene from directly overhead. Makes the subject matter seem unrecognizable & abstract. Permits the viewer to hover over a scene like an all-powerful god & makes the subject seem antlike & insignificant.

# **The high angle**

Not as extreme as the bird's-eye view. Gives the viewer a general overview, reduce the height of the objects photographed, & usually include the ground or floor as background. From this angle, movement is slowed down & often suggests tediousness. The importance of setting or environment is increased because the locale seems to swallow people. Also, reduces the importance of a subject, making a person seem harmless & insignificant. This angle is also effective for conveying a character's self-contempt or suggesting entrapment & powerlessness.



## The high angle



*Bonnie & Clyde*



## **The eye-level angle**

The camera is placed roughly 5-6 feet off the ground—approximately the way an actual observer would view the scene. This angle permits us to make up our own minds about what kind of people are being presented & discourages us from viewing the subjects either condescendingly or sentimentally. Thus, the camera remains neutral & dispassionate.

## **The low angle**

These angles increase height & speedup motion. This is particularly effective in scenes of violence because the low angle captures a sense of confusion. Environment is usually minimized & the sky or ceiling is the only background. Low angles heighten the importance of a subject. The figure looms threateningly over the spectator, who is made to feel insecure & dominated. A person photographed from below inspires fear, awe, & respect.

## The low angle



*Halloween*



In the film *12 Angry Men*, the director begins with a high angle.

This angle makes the characters seem insignificant, which is how they feel about their roles as jurors.







**As the film progresses, the camera moves down until it is a low angle.**

**By the end of the film, the characters realize the importance of their roles as jurors.**



# The oblique angle

Involves a lateral tilt of the camera, tilting the horizon. Often used for point-of-view shots—to suggest the imbalance of a drunk, for example.



*Shallow  
Grave*

These angles also suggest tension, transition, & impending movement. Also, effective in violent scenes because they create a sense of visual anxiety.

*Kill  
Bill*



# **LIGHT & DARK**

The style of lighting is geared to the theme & mood of a film, as well as its genre.



## **High key**

Consists of bright, even illumination & few shadows. Most often used in comedies & musicals.

## **High contrast**

Consists of harsh shafts of light & dramatic streaks of blackness. Most often used in crime films, melodramas, thrillers, & mysteries.



**High contrast**

*Double Indemnity*



High contrast



*Kafka*



## **Low key**

Consists of diffused shadows & atmospheric pools of light. Most often used in mysteries & thrillers.



# **LIGHTING EFFECTS**

Examples:

A face lighted below almost always appears sinister, even if the actor assumes a neutral expression.

An obstruction placed in front of a light source can be frightening because it threatens the viewer's sense of safety.

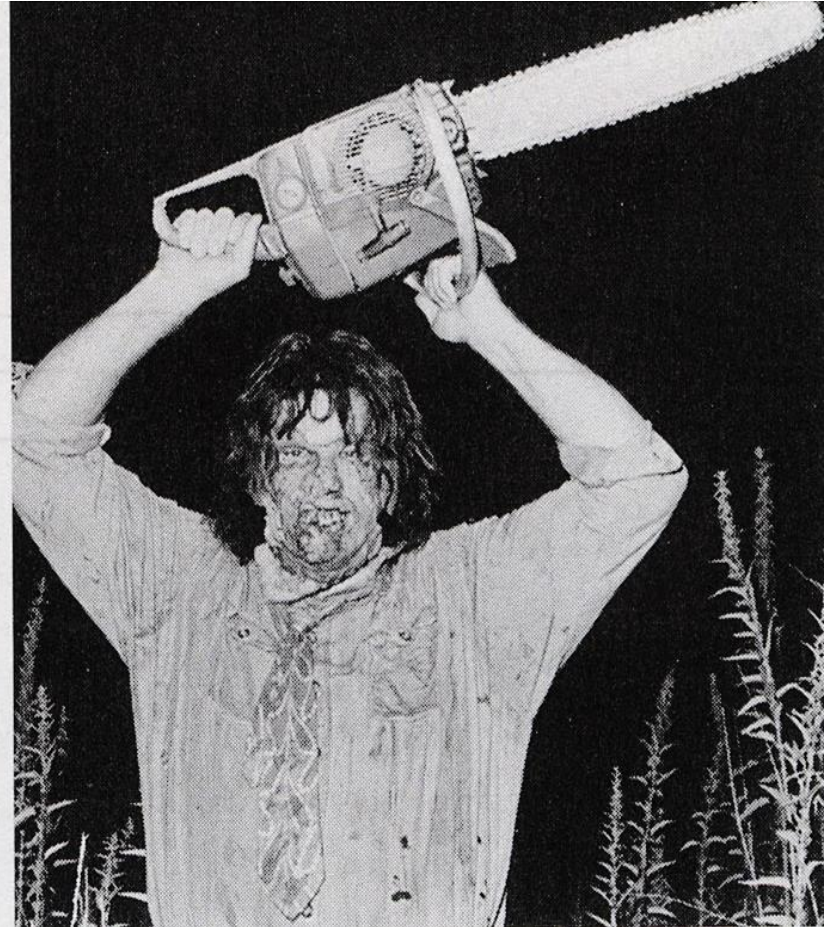
On the other hand, an exterior shot with a silhouette effect can appear soft & romantic. For example, a couple in a boat on a lake, back lit by the sun.

A face lit from above gives the subject an angelic *halo effect*. Backlighting, which is a kind of semi-silhouetting, is soft & ethereal. Often used in love scenes to give the lovers a romantic aura.



*Starman*

Backlighting, combined with low key lighting, can also be used to create a sense of fear of the unknown.



*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*

# **COLOR**

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**Cool colors** (blue, green, violet) suggest tranquility, aloofness, & serenity. They tend to recede in an image.

**Warm colors** (red, yellow, orange) suggest aggressiveness, violence, & stimulation. They tend to come forward in most images.



Use of bright colors, the colors of the imagination, not reality.

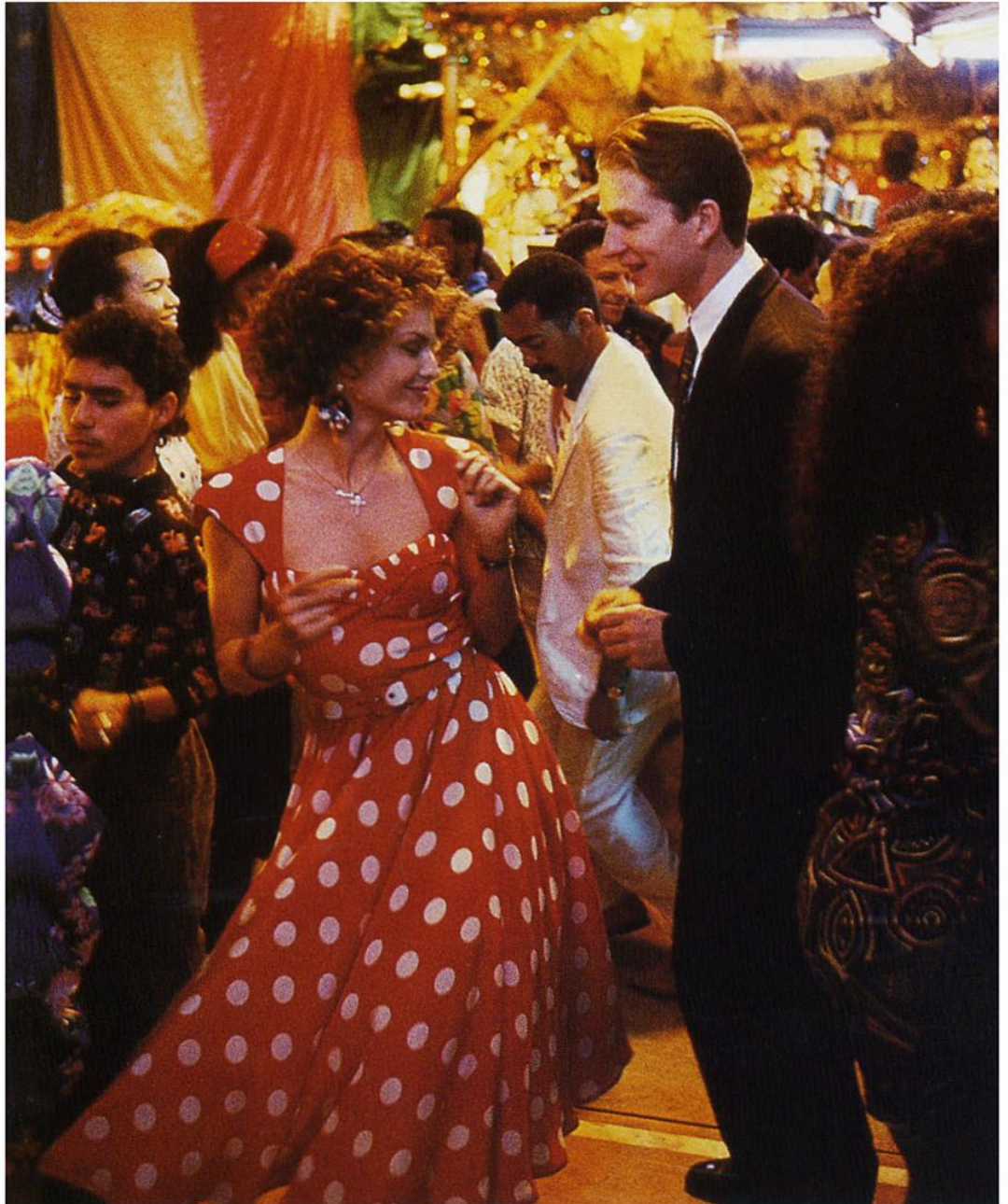


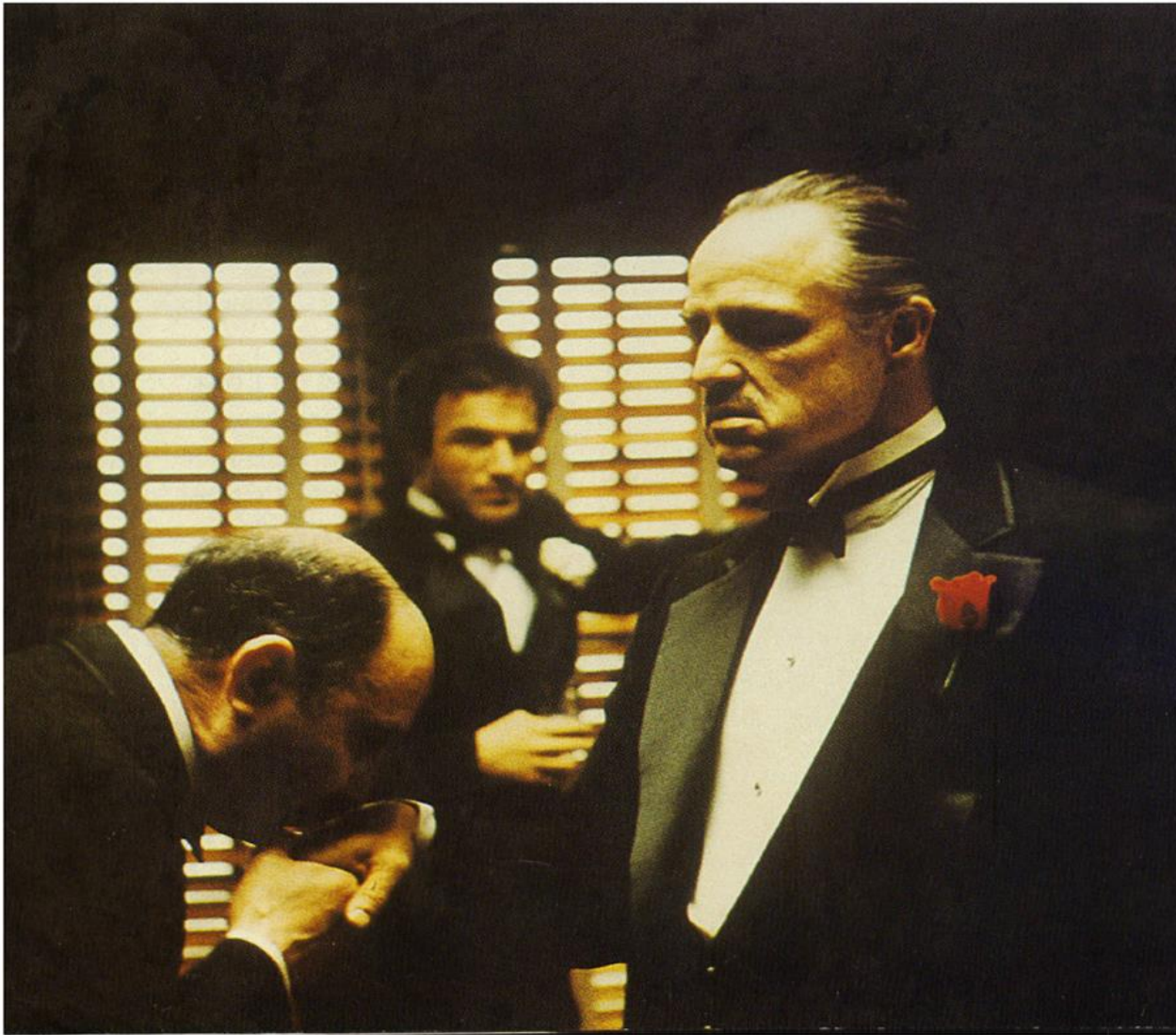
*Edward Scissorhands*



The film is a cartoon version of organized crime; therefore, the colors are flashy.

*Married to the Mob*





A more realistic treatment of organized crime. The colors are subdued.

*The Godfather*

# **ADDITIONAL EFFECTS**



## ***Selective lighting***

The light on Lorre's face produces an accusatory effect & a sense of entrapment.



*Crime  
&  
Punishment*

## ***Blurry effect***

*King of the Hill*: Father has just told the son that he'll be home alone for several weeks. The boy's anxiety & fear are intensified by his sharp focus, whereas the father's remoteness is intensified by his blurred presentation. If the director had wanted to emphasize the father's emotions, then he would have been in sharp focus & the boy blurred. If the director wanted to emphasize both their emotions, then they would both be in focus.



## ***Blurry effect***



The soldiers, plane, etc. & the high angle all contribute to a feeling of entrapment.



*Midnight Express*



**Prison Imagery:** the gates foreshadow doom for both characters.

*The Maltese Falcon*  
&  
*Out of the Past*





The heroine appears trapped—by the other actors & all the props.



*Notorious*

*The Grifters*: the placement of the characters tells us of their relationship. In this film, the two characters are in an almost constant struggle for dominance. In a predominantly light field, the darker figure dominates. The standing figure towers over the seated figure.



*The Grifters*



The image is asymmetrical, off balance, because of the empty space on the right. Use of “negative space” to suggest something is missing or unsaid. In this case, the pregnant protagonist has just been dumped by her lover.



*Women on the  
Verge of a  
Nervous Breakdown*



*The Emigrants*: the stone wall is dominant & symbolizes conflict & exclusion.



*The  
Emigrants*



*The Third Man*: visual repetition of theme of isolation.





*The Third Man*

