

The untouchables: mise-en-scene analysis



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The Untouchables: Mise-En-Scene Analysis Elliot Ness, a treasury agent, has been trying to stop alcohol from being smuggled into the United States. He feels that the key to putting an end to the alcohol distribution is to put gangster, Al Capone, behind bars. But there is a small problem, Ness can't seem to be able to link the incoming alcohol, or any other crime to Capone. Until, Oscar Wallace, the uptight, "dorky", government official, entered the picture to help Ness fight his battle for prohibition, and ultimately, against Capone. Wallace discovered that Capone hasn't paid his taxes for several years, but the only way to prove it is to get to Capone's book keeper. Ness discovers that the book keeper will be going to the train station, so he along with colleague George Stone intend to be there to pick him up when he arrives. The scene starts in the train station. The setting is the main lobby. The floors, pillars, and stairs are of a light gray color. There is a clock that is directly above the big, dark, wooden doors that are continuously reverted back to during the scene. The costumes of the main characters in this scene are the same as throughout the movie. Ness wears a light gray colored suit, hat, trench coat and tie. Stone is wearing a little darker colored, more casual, clothing with a tie and light colored hat. Capone's men were dressed similarly with trench coats and hats of light colors. Also, the innocent bystanders in this scene are the sailors in their suits, the woman, with the baby in her innocent raggy clothes, and all the other people in the scene who look as though they might be Capone's men. The lighting in this scene is a little bit dull, but gets darker when Capone shoots his gun at certain points of the scene. The figure movement and expressions in this scene are normally paced, excluding the woman desperately struggling to get her baby carriage up the stairs, until the gunfire starts. The scene turns into slow motion and

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panic arises as the shooting begins and the baby carriage is released and slowly starts descending down the stairs. The mother's face is panicked and you can see her mouthing the words " My Baby". Then you see the innocent face of the baby and then the carriage plummeting to the bottom of the stairs. The expressions on Capone's men are uncaring and crazy looking whereas the expressions of the cops were determined looking. Also, the bookkeeper's face is very frightened. The movement and expressions of the bystanders are panicked with sailors trying to grab the baby and getting shot. I feel that the slow motion in this scene was for added suspense and the baby carriage was to give a feeling of panic. I feel that the clock was deliberately in the picture to let the viewer feel Ness's impatience. I feel that the sailors along with the baby carriage were images of innocence to make the viewer more frightened. I also feel that they had bystanders, looking like they could be Capone's men, enter the picture to make the viewer more suspense filled.