

I am legend analysis narrative



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The film 'I am legend' is a science fiction/ horror and action film which was directed by Francis Lawrence and originally based on the novel written by Richard Matheson.

The film is about a doctor, called Robert Neville, who is played by Will Smith, who is one of the only survivors of a man made virus caused by a substance that was supposed to cure cancer. The opening scene is shocking and effective as it unfolds first with the news, which shows the journalist interviewing the doctor Alice Krippen. The journalist asks the doctor if they have cured cancer and the doctor responds by saying "yes". After she claims this, the scene moves on, telling the audience that the part of the scene following is demonstrating what happens three years after the news report. An empty New York City is then revealed, suggesting that the cure has affected the population in a negative way and wiped out the human race. In the opening scene, a lot of media techniques are used including long shot, aerial view, close up, colour, composition, sounds, lightning and medium shot, which make the scene a lot more effective and intense.

The film opens, showing a news report with Alice Krippen and the journalist, discussing the fact that a cure for cancer may have been discovered. The Lighting in the background is blue, which is not a threatening colour but the blue is quite dark, so it may seem a bit more mysterious which suggests that something unpleasant might happen. A medium shot is used, which shows roughly half of the doctor's and the journalist's body. This shot does not show all body language but it is easy to identify the awkwardness in the doctor's face when asked the question if she has cured people of cancer. For this part of the news report, a close up is used which makes all the doctors

expressions really easy to identify. When the audience sees how uncomfortable the doctor is about answering that question, it makes them think that maybe there is something wrong with the cure.

The mise-en-scene shows both people equally which suggests that the doctor is not better than the journalist, which may mean that she hasn't actually created a cure for cancer. Also, artificial lighting is used. After the news report finishes, there is a bang, which shows change. After the bang, it says in white text " Three years later...

which suggests that something has probably happened during these 3 years. After the audience is told that the next part is set 3 years later, an empty New York is shown. This immediately affects the audience and shocks them as New York is never empty so it suggests that something devastating has happened and it elicits the idea that it is probably linked to the cancer cure because of the news report shown. There are absolutely no people in sight at first, but then Will Smith is shown, and that creates more questions for the audience, like for example why there is only one person in an empty New York.

When Will Smith is first shown, a medium shot is used as it doesn't reveal all his body and doesn't show all the surroundings, you can only identify Will and his upper body so it does not explain anything about why he is the only human or if he is with anyone. After this, an aerial view is used to track a red car driving through a part of the city. Using this shot really intensifies the fact that New York is empty, as you can see all the skyscrapers and empty roads which look really lonely and abandoned. The skyscrapers are a dull

gray and most of the objects and roads around them are also dull, depressing colours which might give the audience the idea that, again, something bad has happened and it also makes it seem more abandoned and alone. After this, the aerial view is replaced by a long shot, which tracks a red car speeding through the empty streets which are overgrown with weeds and grass, which again makes the audience realise all over again that the city is empty and shows that it must have been like this for quite a while in order for all the grass to grow on the roads.

The red car, surrounded by all the grey buildings and roads, looks intense as it stands out a lot. Red shows danger or blood which might bring across the message that Will Smith might be in danger or that the humans who have been wiped out may have suffered a horrible death. The car is tracked whilst driving through New York and at one point a poster with a butterfly on it is shown, which wouldn't have a meaning to the audience at this point in the film, but throughout the film butterflies are shown at certain points. This may represent the butterfly effect, meaning that one small thing can have a big impact; meaning the cure wiped out the whole population.

After tracking the car for a while, a long shot is used which shows a large group of deer running in front of the car and the car racing after them. Will Smith is in the car and tries to shoot one, but doesn't succeed. He drives through forest to try and catch them, this has affect on the audience, as there isn't really any forest in central New York, making it seem abnormal and abandoned. The racing of the car creates a loud diegetic accelerating noise, which is unnerving to the audience; you can also hear the deer running across the roads which also makes it unnerving. The lighting used in

this part of the scene is natural and not very bright which makes it all seem natural, although it is not.

After chasing the deer for a bit, the car stops and Will Smith gets out. Then he sees a deer and he tries to get closer to it without making much noise; the only sound you can hear clearly is the singing of the birds. The peaceful sound is interrupted when a lion jumps out. This makes the audience jump but it also seems strange because there aren't normally wild animals in the middle of a city which is normally really busy, this makes the audience think that the animals have probably escaped from the zoo, showing that there is chaos. The lion kills the deer; a long shot is used for this to show in detail what is happening which makes it more affective, as it is fully visual and audible.

After the deer is killed, Will Smith's watch goes off as it is getting dark and at night the night seekers come out. So he has to get back to his house as soon as possible. Overall, 'I am Legend' has a very effective and also shocking opening. A lot of media devices are used very effectively to make some parts more startling, for example the aerial view when New York is shown, which makes it seem more realistic and also shocks the audience more. The colours used are also very effective; for example the red car surrounded by the grey buildings which makes the red stand out a lot and brings across a message.

The scene does foreshadow the plot quite a lot, for example when the whole city is empty, which gives a clue that the whole population probably got wiped out by the cancer cure. The opening scene of this film really does

make the audience want to keep watching to see what happens as the opening creates a lot of questions about why there is only one person in New York and what happened to the whole population. Some of the parts in the opening create tension and it keeps the audience alert. The opening scene uses a good variety of shots and good lighting and it is a very good and affective opening that foreshadows the plot a bit but still leaves questions, it definitely makes the audience want to watch the rest of the film.