

An analysis of the opening scenes of thrillers

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



I am going to analyse two clips/trailers for the thrillers the original 'Cape Fear' starring Robert Mitchum as Cady and 'Malice' starring Nicole Kidman as the duplicitous wife. I will consider; shot types and framing, camera angles and lens movements, editing, lighting, dialogue, voice over, sound effects, music, visual effects, location and costume. My aim is to find out which of these, influences us most and which clip/trailer uses them to their dramatic effect. We get information from visual sources like posters, adverts, television and film. When we watch television and films we use two senses at once, our sight and hearing.

What we see and hear affects our emotional response Particularly in modern films, for example 'Speed' an exciting action thriller or 'The Matrix' a high tech thriller, our senses work over time. There is constant action, both visual and aural. There are many exciting action scenes in 'Speed' but when action is not taking place and the camera homes in on Sandra Bullock driving the bus a repetitive piece of music is used to heighten the tension. Without the interlinking of sound and vision the film has less emotional impact. We watched the clips/trailers with and without sound.

When there was no sound to 'Cliffhanger' I noticed the credits however when there was music I did not. My emotional response was stronger than my logical response. This shows that choosing the correct music and dialogue is vital, as our sight is more dominant than our hearing. The first clip I looked at was the opening scene of 'Cape Fear'. It was filmed using tracking shots; this is when the camera moves along a track enabling the shot to be smooth and controlled. The follow shot is used to keep the subject, Cady in view, tracking the man as he casually walks, suggesting he will be central to the film.

<https://assignbuster.com/an-analysis-of-the-opening-scenes-of-thrillers/>

The eye level shot is then used, this suggests that the man is no higher or lower in status than any other person and makes him more real and easier to relate to. The individual scenes are quite long; the jump cut is effectively used to get from shot to shot. There are large and prominent buildings in the background, which cast shadows. Natural sunlight is used outside with shadows giving an effective contrast. The building Cady enters at the end of the clip is brightly lit. Cady speaks for the first time in the clip when he is inside the building, he speaks in a questioning voice, almost threatening.

He addresses a cleaner forcefully and other noises are more pronounced than they should be, echoing footsteps on the stairs add to the suspense. The music plays a key role in the clip, giving it purpose; it is eerie and dramatic and differentiates the clip from a happy or romantic scene. The filming is in black and white making the dominant contrast between black and white noticeable. The clip is set in what looks like an ordinary town in the forties or early fifties, you can tell this from the way people are dressed.

The main character Cady appears almost like a gangster, he is surly, and when he knocks a lady's books, he carelessly carries on walking up the stairs. The second trailer I watched was for *Malice*, the director uses jump cuts to flick unevenly from shot to shot, short clips of different scenes of the film using montage. Portraits are used in close up on the actor's faces. The sound is parallel with the picture. Eye level shots are used; they bring the audience closer to the characters and action, the camera lens moves dramatically during the shots creating tension.

Some shots fade out quickly where as others are short and sharp, this gives a good contrast, little camera movement and then abrupt movements. There is just blank screen between the shots. This is tremendously effective. The titles are large and red on a black background, red symbolising blood and murder and the black background could represent evil and darkness, it makes the red stand out and the flashing between names is successfully used to establish tension. The lighting has been used in interesting ways. The trailer shows different clips from the movie, shadow and light are used; the characters seem to be hiding in the shadows.

The voices are low and malevolent, the dialogue is happy at first but then the tension builds and the pace increases, the voice over ends with 'Malice, some things in life you don't see coming' this intrigues people and makes them want to see the film. Loud voices and prominent drums play, to add to the suspense. When the word 'murder' is said, the music becomes powerful and menacing. The shots build to a climax, the music to a crescendo. The lighting becomes darker and more mysterious, and the black half shots look evil and indicate betrayal, blood and murder.

The costume and location are not important factors. The first clip did not hold my interest at all; I did not enjoy watching it with or without sound. I did not find this clip dramatic or frightening, I enjoy watching thrillers but this did not impress me in the slightest. I would not be inclined to watch the full version of the film, as the first impression was not good. This may be because the film is about fifty years old and films now are more technically

advanced and we as audiences are more sophisticated and expect more. However the trailer for Malice was for me by far the better of the two.

It was gripping and intense. Each element of the film was crafted with precision. There were a range of shot types and the different cuts presented variation to the absorbed audience. Even when I watched the trailer without sound it held my interest. There was a variety of colours and length of shots and action. The colours used, add to the intensity of the individual scenes, an excellent trailer, using the elements I looked at to their full potential. This was definitely my favourite clip/trailer and I would like to see the film. This shows the trailer was effective.