

Scream essay sample



The scene opens with the title Scream accompanied by non-diegetic screams, a heartbeat and a telephone ringing which acts as a sound bridge into the first scene. This establishes that the film is going to be a scary horror straight away. A blonde girl answers the telephone. It is typical in the horror/slasher genre of blonde girls to be victims of the killer of the film. They are usually “ airheads” but Casey appears to be quite smart. The conversation is light and casual so there is no cause to worry. This is the equilibrium of the scene.

After she puts the telephone down, she starts to walk away and the telephone rings again. The conversation is again casual and Casey assumes nothing is suspicious, but the camera shooting her is at a slight angle to show a slight sense of danger from this telephone call. This is one example of dramatic irony in this film sequence, which adds tension to the scene. The camera pans from a treetop to show us a swing swinging outside her house. The director uses this as an indication that someone has been there. The shot also shows that the house is very big and isolated.

A genre requirement. We get a ‘ nasty jump’ when the cooker is switched on. The gas makes that whooshing sound. Casey now arrives in her kitchen. The telephone rings again. This time she picks up a cordless telephone and it is the same person who rang before. From this, we can tell that the telephone is going to be a main narrative device as she keeps the telephone with her at all times from now on. It is emphasised, as it is large and white. Telephones are used a lot in slasher genre films. They are supposed to be means for help and escape but their use is given a dramatic twist.

In Halloween the telephone cord is used to strangle a girl when she's talking on it. In this film, the telephone was the thing that got her into trouble. He would not have been able to speak to her. Her jumper is also white to symbolise purity and innocence in her character and to make the blood on her clothes show up more. The popcorn is also a narrative device, which causes the killer to ask what Casey is doing. She replies that she's making popcorn and getting ready to watch a scary movie, which leads to all the movie talk they are about to have. This is an example of cause and effect.

Again, the conversation is light-hearted as she plays with the knives in the kitchen when talking about another slasher film Halloween. Its ironic that she plays with the knives so freely but then uses one as a weapon later and is killed by one. The fact that they talk about scary movies and she's about to star in her own is also ironic. The popcorn starts to smoke subsequently and creates an eerie mist around the house. Mist on the swimming pool also adds apprehension. The camera follows her through a corridor to give us a better view of her surroundings.

We see that the house has many windows so that increases Casey's vulnerability. In the living room, the blue screen on the television is a real focus point. This could perhaps symbolise that her life, or these next 10 minutes, is a movie waiting to happen. The killer says, " I wanna know who I'm looking at". We hear some non-diegetic music to make it clear that the telephone call is serious. Diegetic dogs bark in the background to display that there is someone there. Casey has a sense that someone could be there so she turns on the patio light and looks out to the misty pool.

She locks the doors as a safety precaution and is very on edge. The narrative here is beginning to 'crank up' the tension for the audience. The telephone rings again while she is the unreliable safety of the dark. She gets irrate with the persistent caller the next time he telephones and tells him to "dial someone else". In the background non-diegetically, violins are accompanied with bass drums. They add tension to the scene. Casey walks through to the kitchen and is about to check on the burning popcorn, which has smoke emitting from it, when the telephone rings again.

The tone in her voice is serious, as she wants him to leave her alone but then is shocked when he turns on her. The music plays a very big part from now on to help the narrative. She runs to the front door, locking other doors on the way and looks out of the top windows. We see her point of view and there is nobody out there. The way the camera has shot her you would think the killer would come up behind her on the right hand side. A code that is used in theatre says that bad characters come on the left of the stage, cinister in Latin, and the good should come on the right, dexter.

The killer asks if she can see him and that gives us confirmation that he is there. Casey says that she is "two seconds away from calling the police" but police in these genre films never make it in time and when they do, they are useless. The killer wants to play a game with her in a tense situation. The two questions are horror film related but the third question used is to crank up the tension. A chair is thrown through the door and this causes her to run. She runs into the kitchen and trades the letter opener she picked up earlier for a knife. She walks backwards cautiously through her house and sees the killer run through the house.

She continues to back until she gets to a door, which she goes out of. The way the camera is positioned you would think that the killer would emerge from behind her. Tension is increased when a car is seen coming down the road towards Casey's house. This gives the impression that she will get out of the situation alive. She crawls underneath the window, then looks through it. The killer turns around to give us another 'nasty jump'. She uses the telephone as a weapon against him. This is the first full view that we get of the killer. He is wearing a black costume and white mask.

I think his mask was modelled on the painting "The Scream" by Edward Munch, which is a 'hook'. She runs past the swimming pool, stops and sees her dead boyfriend and reminds her that what is going on is real. We feel annoyance at her continuous stopping. Slow motion's used when Casey is being chased by the killer to prolong the action. When Casey gets up and tries to call her mother its very emotional because her mother cannot hear her. Her murder is intercut with the parents looking around the house for Casey. Casey is still hanging onto the telephone that could have saved her life, as she is being dragged.

Read next:

Practical Production