

Bourne ultimatum essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The clip from The Bourne Ultimatum tells the story of Jason Bourne trying to help a journalist escape a group who want to kill him to prevent him from passing on his information to Bourne. The narrative follows on from two previous films and this sequence consists of three narrative threads; 1-Jason Bourne's attempts to discover his identity and expose the conspiracy, 2-the attempts of the American organisation trying to capture and possibly kill Ross, 3-the journey of the unnamed assassin ('asset') to kill Ross and Bourne.

The three strands are intercut to make a coherent narrative and they come together at the end of the narrative in a crescendo, namely, the death of Ross. The early use of iconography such as red buses, black cabs, the London underground, an establishing shot and even a glimpse of the Evening Standard make it clear that the scene is set in London. These famous icons make it clear to the audience where it is set and draw on their personal experiences of this particular place, thus possibly making it feel more 'real' to them. The music and the editing create a tense and fast-paced feel to the clip as the shaky camera work and whip pans give it a documentary type feel. This method is often used in this genre of films in order to make the viewer feel like they are there, which is only a new technique as not too long ago if the camera work was shaky this was seen as a fault. There are also very quick changes between clips, as each part lasts only a few seconds before moving on to add to the pace of the sequence.

Also, there are some point of view shots to show us the situation through Bourne's eyes. It is significant that the shaky camera work is only employed when Bourne and Ross are on screen, which emphasises that he is 'real',

which is in sharp contrast to the rigid, formal and somewhat robotic camerawork in scenes containing CIA operatives. This emphasises that they are official and arguably false. In addition to this, throughout the sequence there is use of compression editing which keeps the sequence moving without us having to watch unnecessary clips which would make the sequence drag on. Furthermore, the use of cross-cutting adds to the pace and shows us Bourne and his journalist friend trying to escape Waterloo using only their intelligence and some luck, as well as the organisation trying to track them down using high tech surveillance equipment.

The use of fast editing, cross cutting, compression editing combined with tense, fast music makes the sequence move fast and so it becomes more exciting to watch. This sequence does in many ways follow the conventional idea of this genre of film, however it could be argued that there are some elements of this film that fit into the sci-fi genre as well as the action genre. For example, it doesn't go straight into the action and instead leads us away from it using the scene with the henchman on the phone. Also, this man and his colleagues are arguably robots which are always on the end of a mobile phone ready to take orders from the men in charge. Also, it is unconventional as the hero spends the entire sequence trying to avoid confrontation rather than take on his enemies head on, thus contradicting the normal actions of a hero such as James Bond.

Furthermore, with reference to representation, Jason Bourne is arguably not a traditional hero figure according to Propp; he does possess strength and intelligence, when other characters only possess one or the other, but he seems more human than a conventional hero as he has a moral code not to

kill. This is similar to the character of Batman who also refuses to kill, and Batman is famous for being a superhero with no powers which emphasises his, and Jason Bourne's, status as being more human and so more easy to relate to for the audience. Unlike Batman, Bourne is able to blend into the background in rush hour and manages to disappear from right under his enemies noses. The narrative of this sequence first shows a man receiving a phone call and then going out to, we are led to believe, find Jason Bourne and the journalist.

This is not conventional to it's genre as it leads us away from the action briefly. However the action does follow soon with lots of radio and background chatter going on between Bourne and his journalist friend as well as the surveillance team trying to catch them. The use of a huge surveillance team watching their every move installs a sense of fear in the audience as we know this kind of technology is real and if it were to fall into the wrong hands, anyone could be watching our every move, this is made worse by the fact that it is set in a place that many people will know and have been to. Throughout the confusion and mayhem of this scene Bourne keeps his head and at the end his dialogue pulls it all together, which gives us faith in our hero. We, as the audience, are omniscient as we are in a position of voyeurism, so we are able to see all the characters whereabouts at all times, so this adds to the dramatic irony of the sequence as we are constantly aware of the journalist's whereabouts while his enemies try frantically to find him.

Also, as the journalist waits behind a door to escape, we are aware that a sniper has his gun pointed at the door waiting for him to come out, Bourne is

also aware that something is not right and the journalist gets shot as he exits against Bourne's advice. Overall, this sequence uses fast and effective editing to create a fast paced scene which is helped by the dramatic music. It does not fit perfectly into the generic idea of an action film as it has some elements of other genres, however Bourne's character, despite having some differing qualities to a generic hero, convinces us of the films 'action film' status.