

Dave Jenson-Opening Scene, Shot by Shot Analysis

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION

Shot #1: This scene begins with a long shot of a cabin, apparently in the woods, from right in front of the driveway. The cabin can be seen with the porch light on, it's night time, and surrounded by trees. Other sources of light are on either side of the driveway and a fence extends off in both directions. There is a song playing in the background and crickets can also be heard. The camera pulls, pans right, and lifts showing a car parked in front of the driveway and a person in the driver seat. It then pushes and pans right some more giving a 2-button side shot of the man (Andy). The lighting on Andy is low and in front of him appearing to come from the dash. Andy hesitates slightly and then leans and reaches toward the glove box. The camera pans tracking his arm and keeping his face in the frame and--cut.

Shot #2: Close-up, from Andy's perspective, of Andy's forearm and then hand holding something wrapped in a rag as he withdraws it from the glove box. The object is tracked as he sets it on his lap with a loud clink. The same background noises fade to barely audible as he unwraps a revolver and loose bullets. The lighting is still from the dash shining right on the gun and bullets. There is a slight pause, a heavy sigh, and then, as a slight tense music begins, Andy pulls a bottle of booze from his jacket pocket, removes the cap, begins to raise the bottle. Cut.

Shot#3: Front Close-up of Andy behind the steering wheel, he takes a drink, and there is a low, barely audible, rumble (sound effect), a man begins speaking, and--cut. (The lighting and background sounds are the same)

Shot #4: Close-up of Andy on a witness stand and the man's voice is the prosecuting attorney questioning him about his actions regarding the murder of his wife and lover. The lighting is bright, on Andy's right side, and appears (according to all the shots within the courtroom) to be windows lighting the courtroom and the slight tense music continues throughout the shot. The shot cuts as the questioning continues.

Shot #5: Medium shot of the attorney from Andy's perspective showing the attorneys desks, the rail, and the audience in the courtroom. The lighting is the same as in shot #4 only on the attorney's left side. While he brings out incriminating evidence against Andy, the attorney walks forward, the music intensifies, and we tilt up as the he closes the distance. Dialogue continues as we--cut.

Shot #6: 2-Button shot of Andy on the stand with the same lighting and tense background music as the courtroom dialogue continues. The tense music fades and piano music arises and the questioning turns to Andy's wife's affair. Cut as dialogue continues.

Shot #7: Medium shot at eye level as Andy's wife and lover enter a room that appears to be in the cabin and shut the door. The camera pans left then right as it tracks them. They lean back

against the door kissing and etc. The lighting is outside the door as they enter and low and behind them as they shut it. The same music with slightly intensified piano music, as well as the courtroom dialogue, continues throughout the shot and cut.

Shot #8: 2-Button shot of the prosecuting attorney from Andy's perspective and we repeat the action, camera movement, and lighting as in shot #5 and the sound as in shot #7. Cut as dialogue continues.

Shot #9: 2-Button shot of Andy on the stand with the same lighting and tense background music. As the courtroom dialogue continues and we push to a close-up of Andy as he gives his side of the story. Sound and lighting remain the same and we--cut as dialogue continues.

Shot #10: Continuation from shot #3. From Andy's perspective, back inside the car, we see a close up of his hands in his lap holding the gun and shells in his lap. For sound we have the crickets and the song, playing softly on the radio, in the background. The courtroom dialogue still continues throughout and--cut.

Shot #11: Repeat perspective, sound, and lighting in shot #3 with Andy looking down at the gun in his hands. As courtroom dialogue still continues he raises his head with impassionate features and we--Cut.

Shot #12: Attorney close-up from Andy's perspective with the same lighting and a slight tense background sound as he accuses Andy of murder. Andy denies the accusation and begins an explanation as we--cut.

Shot #13: Close-up of Andy on the stand as he gives his explanation. Sound and lighting remain the same and we--cut as dialogue continues.

Shot #14: Repeat set-up in shot #12 as the attorney describes the crime scene, there is an added slight rumbling sound effect, and we--cut as dialogue continues.

Shot #15: Repeat set-up in shot #13 as the attorney continues asking questions and Andy quietly answers them as the rumbling continues and we--cut as dialogue continues.

Shot #16: Medium audience reaction shot at their eye level. Sound and lighting remain the same as dialogue continues and the camera rolls to the right catching each facial expression. Cut as dialogue continues.

Shot #17: Repeat set-up in shot #12 and then the camera tracks the attorney as he leans forward questioning the witness (Andy). Cut as dialogue continues.

Shot #18: Repeat shot #13 as we obtain Andy's reaction and--cut.

Shot #19: Continuation from shot #10 with the same set-up. He grabs the bottle of booze and begins to raise it and--cut.

Shot #20: Repeat set-up in shot #3 with Andy behind the steering wheel. He takes another drink, pauses for a moment, and turns off the key (the front light from the dash and the radio turn off but a tense sound effect arises). There is a faint bluish light from his right, presumably the moon, the dome light turns on as he opens the door, the courtroom dialogue resumes, and we--cut.

Shot #21: Repeat the opening view of the cabin but blurry and a low close-up of Andy's shoe as he steps out of the vehicle. The bottle drops and shatters loudly and then the remaining bullets fall from his lap as well. The dome light shines brightly on his shoe and the dropped objects until he skirts the door and shuts it then the slight blue lighting comes from the opposite side of the car. He continues walking towards the cabin. Throughout the shot the tense sound effect continues while the attorney reveals the evidence found at the scene of the crime and we--cut.

Shot #22: Front medium, low, shot of Andy as he walks towards the cabin. We pull back as we track him while the blue (moon) lighting remains on his right. He stops walking and we push and lift to a close-up, observe his expression, and--cut. Courtroom dialogue continues throughout the shot.

Shot #23: 2-button shot of the attorney from the courtroom audience (or jury) perspective. We track him as he addresses them. Courtroom set-up remains the same and the tense sound effect is slightly intensified. We cut as the dialogue continues.

Shot #24: Close-up reaction shot slightly to his side of Andy at his attorney's bench with his attorney and the audience in the background while the prosecuting attorney continues speaking. Lighting remains the same and the sound effect intensifies. Cut.

Shot #25: Continuation from shot #7 with the same set-up as the two lovers continue making out against the door. Lighting is from the left side, tense sound effect continues, and we--cut.

Shot #26: Extreme close-up at the lovers' waist level as they fumble with their clothing. There is a back light revealing space between them. Sound effects continue, lovers' passionate sounds rise, and we--cut.

Shot #27: Repeat #25 as passion continues to rise. Cut

Shot #28: Repeat #26 as passion rises and clothing comes off. Cut.

Shot #29: Repeat #27 with rising passion and we--cut.

Shot #30: Close-up of the Judge as he addresses the plaintiff (Andy), the camera pulls slowly, the tense sound effect intensifies, and we have the rumbling sound effect again. Lighting remains the same and we cut as the Judge continues.

Shot #31: Medium shot of Andy from the Judges perspective as he stands at his attorney's desk with the audience in the background and listens to the Judge. The tense sound effect intensifies

continually through this shot to its maximum, we push towards Andy as the Judge gives the verdict, and we stop at a close-up reaction shot as he receives his sentence. The shot and scene conclude with the loud, echoing, bang of the Judges mallet and we cut to black.

Plot: This scene gives a complete base to the story being told. The trial and sentence, portrayed in this opening scene, show the evidence that had convicted Andy and as the show continues additional evidence comes out proving his innocence. This story is about Andy's experience in prison, the bitter reality of incarceration, Andy's emotional condition at the loss of his wife, to an affair and not necessarily her death, and his eventual personal redemption from his smeared reputation.

Point of View: This scene is portrayed from the point of view of the prosecuting attorney. The representation of known facts, and these are legitimate, all point to a guilty plaintiff. The scene includes only incriminating evidence. The camera is used to magnify the shown evidences. This is easily seen as we get the close up shots of the gun and the bottle of booze. The prosecuting attorney's case is also the only one expressed. The mood created as discussed below also shows that the scene is from the prosecution's subjective perspective.

Character: When Andy is at the cabin he is depicted as someone clearly capable of committing the given crime. The state of his clothing, slightly disheveled, his possession of a gun, his actions as he sat outside the cabin. He was obviously considering committing a crime. Also, in the courtroom, Andy's unemotional reactions and soft responses lead you, and the judge, to believe that he is cold and without remorse. The scene contents make it is easy to believe that he is guilty.

Tone: In the beginning, the soft song playing on the radio, the crickets in the background, and the lighting from the dash are all unassuming. However, as we continue on and see the gun and the bottle they make the mood a little eerie. The feelings begin to tense as we expect ill intent which these effects have produced. Again, the moonlight and shadows add to this overall feeling. As we cut to the courtroom shots and hear the evidence produced understanding dawns and anxieties and expectations increase. Non-emotional reaction shots of Andy amplify these feelings.