

ZOOM

What does it look like?

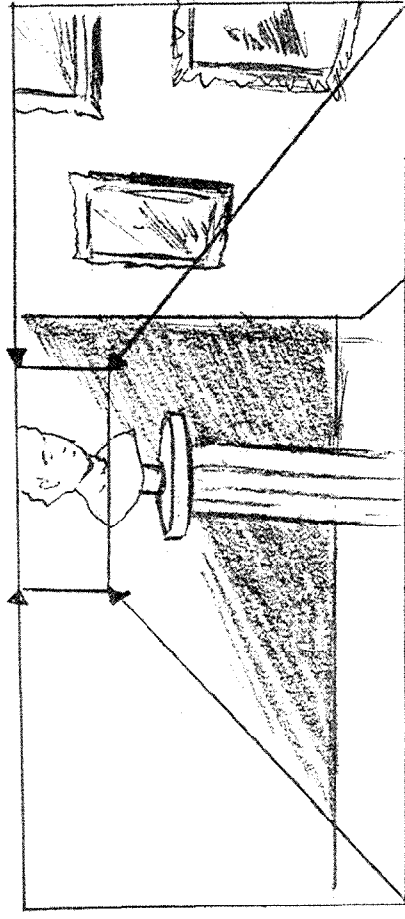
The focal length of a camera lens determines the distance that the camera can “see.” Zoom lenses allow the focal length to be gradually changed. With a *Zoom*, the frame may transition from a wide shot to a close-up without ever moving the camera.

The *Zoom* is considered an unnatural technique because our eyes aren’t able to incrementally change their focal length. Because of this, *Zooms* are often used for effect.

A very slow *Zoom* can be a subtle alternative to a dolly movement in locations where there is no room to rig a dolly and track. A very fast *Zoom*—a whip zoom—can be used to draw attention to objects in a scene.

Where can I see it?

The *Color of Money* uses both fast and slow zooms in many scenes. The *Wild Bunch* showcases many different kinds of zooms—slow, fast, short, extended, zoom in, and zoom out.



ZOOM IN TO OBJECT



Zoom

CHARACTER DOLLY

What does it look like?

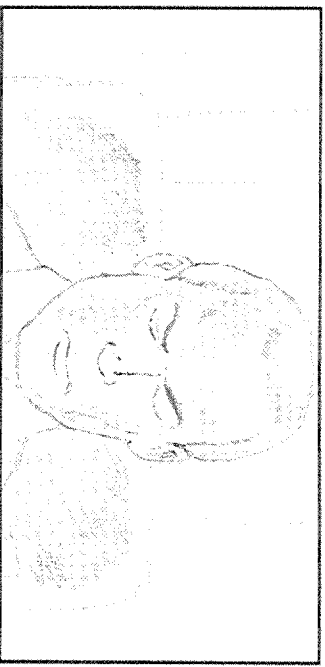
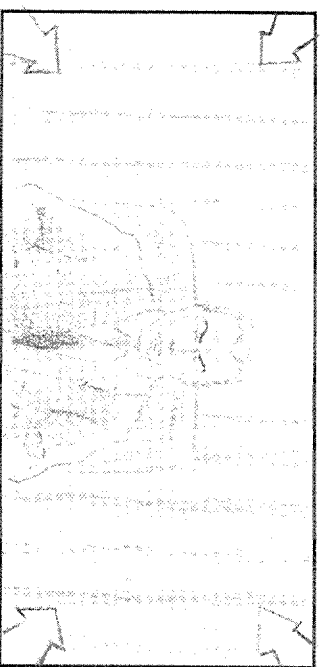
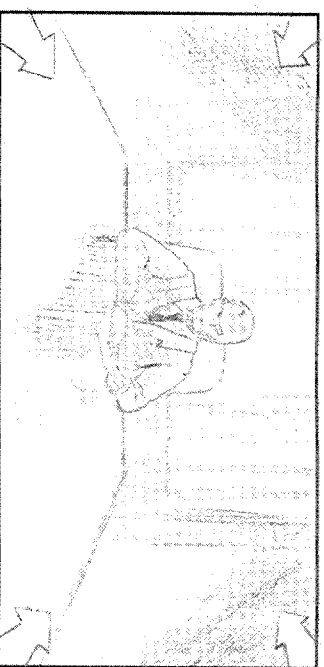
A *Character Dolly* is a forward camera movement that focuses on one or more characters in a scene. It is commonly noted in screenplays as “Push In.”

The camera starts out with a wide shot of an actor and is pushed forward, reaching for the actor’s close-up and beyond. This cinematic technique adds tension to the scene, acting like a magnifying glass on the character’s emotional state. The actor doesn’t have to be saying anything for the *Character Dolly* to be effective.

The speed of camera movement can greatly alter the emotional effect of this technique. A very slow *Character Dolly* will subtly highlight the scene’s emotional qualities. More flamboyant films use a faster version for a comic or exciting effect.

Where can I see it?

Perhaps the most recognizable personification of the *Character Dolly* is in The Godfather: Part II. To end the film, Coppola simply moves the camera slowly towards a contemplative Michael Corleone, leaving the audience with a lasting impression of the character. Steven Spielberg uses this technique in many of his films.



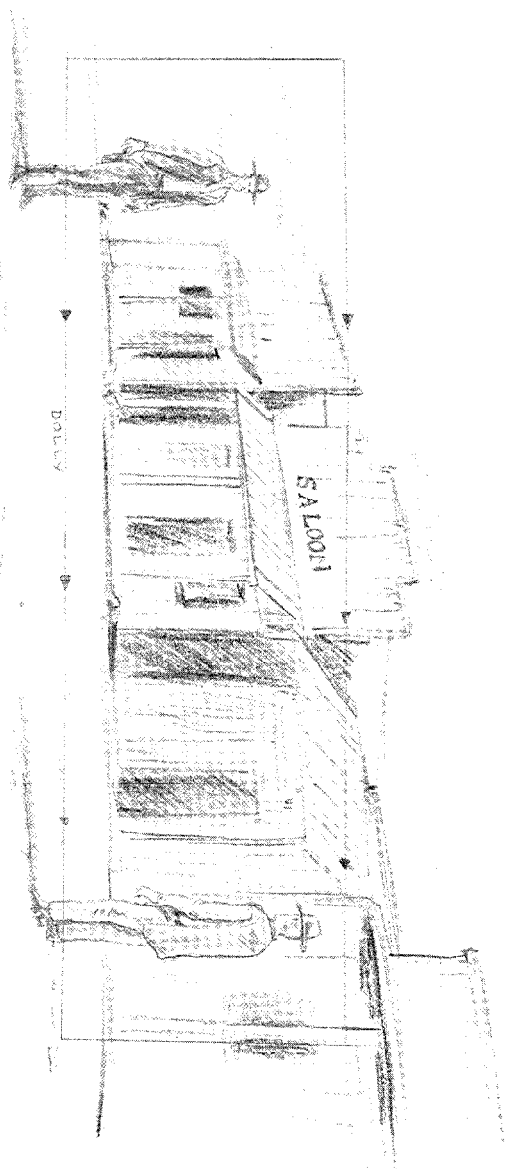
Character Dolly

DOLLY

What does it look like?

Dolly is a very natural technique—the camera simply moves horizontally through space. The energy of this technique is similar to a person walking or riding on a moving platform—a wheelchair, for example. To conceptualize a *Dolly*, turn your head toward what you are interested in. Then walk forward and watch the world go by. This is how a *Dolly* movement looks to an audience.

Dolly movements may or may not use an actual dolly. Generally some kind of platform with wheels, the dolly moves along tracks that determine the direction of movement. Tracks must be used because pushing the platform over uneven ground results in shaky and erratic camera movement. The Steadicam™ is an alternative device that allows a camera to be carried, without experiencing the bumps and jiggles usually associated with handheld camera work. This makes the camera appear to be “floating” through the air. If a camera operator has a steady grip, handheld cameras can create dolly-like movements as well.



Dolly

DRAMATIC ANGLE, EXTREME ANGLE, BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

What does it look like?

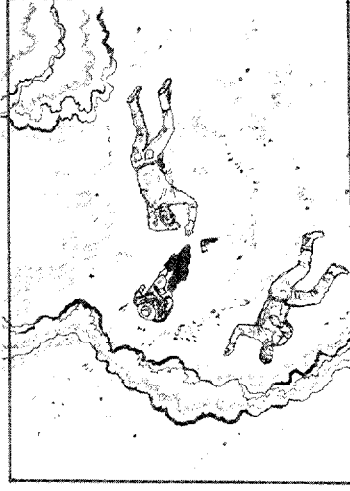
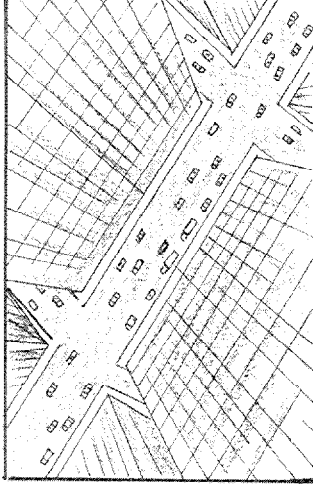
A *Dramatic Angle* adds to the emotional impact of a scene. A low camera angle makes characters and objects seem tall and powerful. A high camera angle gives the characters a diminished feel—as if the audience is looking down on them.

An *Extreme Angle* is a magnified version of a *Dramatic Angle*. An extreme low angle might start below the feet of a subject, staring up into the sky. An extreme high angle could be the view from the top of a tall office building, looking down on the insignificance of humanity.

A *Bird's-Eye View* is an *Extreme Angle* in which the camera is positioned directly above a scene, facing straight down.

Where can I see it?

The Crow uses many *Extreme Angles* to achieve the aesthetic of a comic book, a medium which commonly exaggerates angles and perspective. In Terminator 2: Judgment Day, many of the sequences with the Terminator are shot from a low angle. This technique enhances his image of strength.



Dramatic Angles

EXTREME CLOSE-UP

What does it look like?

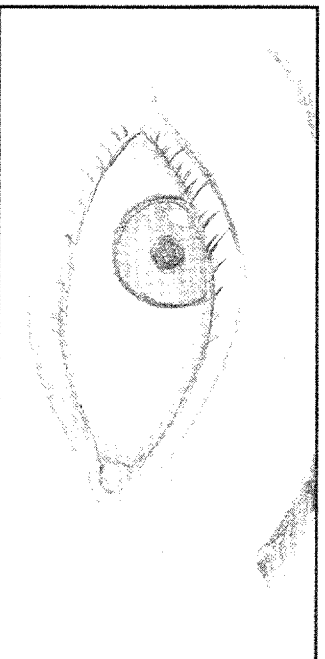
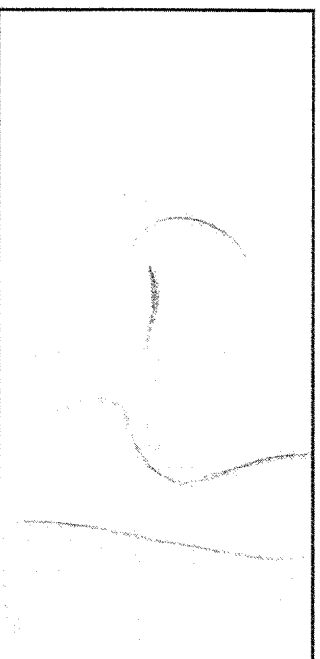
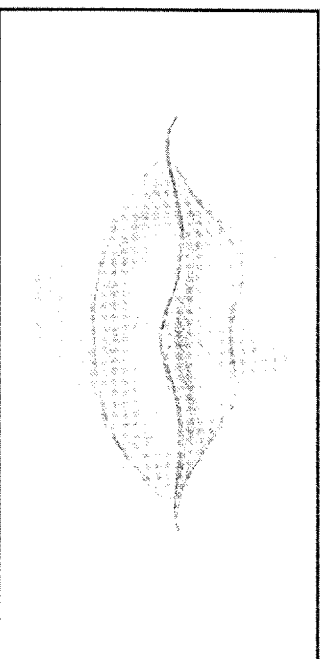
An *Extreme Close-Up* is simply a magnified view of a small object, causing it to fill the entire frame.

Extreme Close-Ups are effective because we are not used to seeing an abnormally magnified level of detail. By filling the frame with a singular feature, the audience's attention is drawn to that subject, to the exclusion of everything else.

Extreme Close-Ups can be used to emphasize a particular scene or a sequence of dialogue. For example: if a character is nervous, the director might cut to an *Extreme Close-Up* of the actor wringing his hands or shifting her eyes.

Where can I see it?

In U Turn, *Extreme Close-Ups* are frequently cut in at odd intervals with the action and dialogue. In The Fifth Element, we see an *Extreme Close-Up* of Leeloo's eye opening as she discovers the horrors of war.



Extreme Close-Ups

PULL FOCUS

What does it look like?

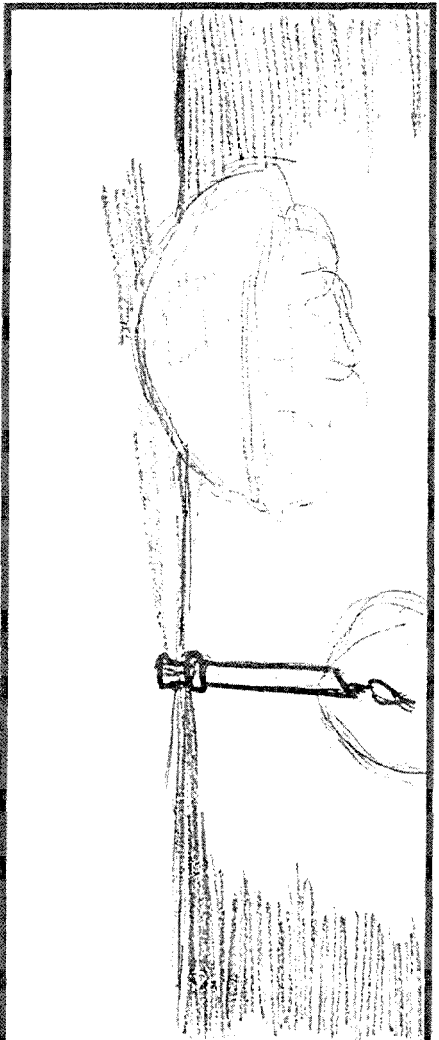
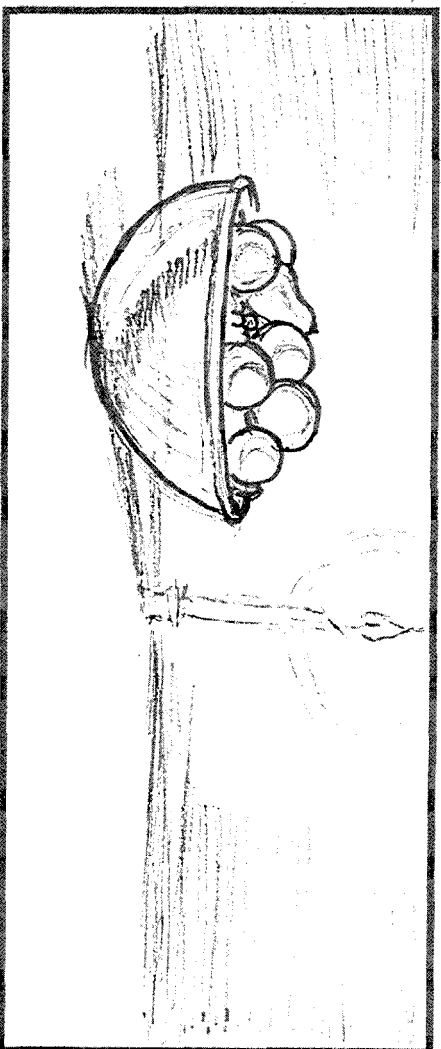
Pulling Focus is a considered a natural camera technique. Like our eyes, which pull focus whenever we look at objects that are at different distances in our field of vision, it changes our focus.

We can either be focused on something close up or on something far away. Since we don't have the ability to focus on both at the same time, our eyes must *Pull Focus* to compensate.

When making a film, *Pulling Focus* is often necessary because most camera lenses don't keep the entire scene in focus. As the camera moves around, a crew member called a "focus puller" will adjust the focus to match whatever the camera is looking at.

To conceptualize this technique, consciously focus on objects at different depths as you look around.

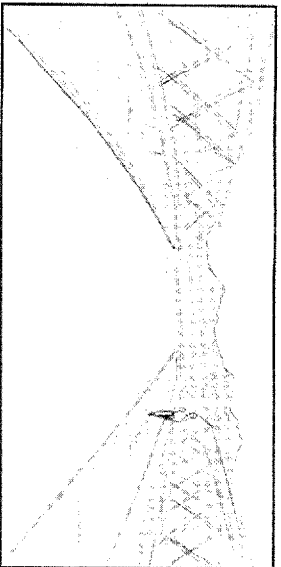
6 Basic Cinematic Techniques



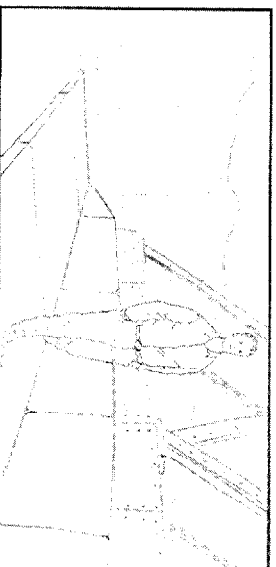
Pull Focus

FRAMING TERMS

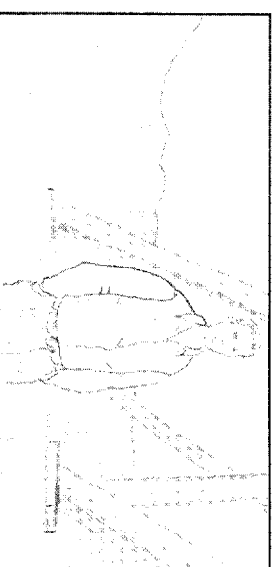
Common terms used to frame objects within a scene are generally applied to actors, but can refer to inanimate objects as well. Examples are: a close-up of a phone or an extreme close-up of a coin slot. A director will often capture a collection of master shots, medium shots, and close-ups to provide a variety of footage during editing.



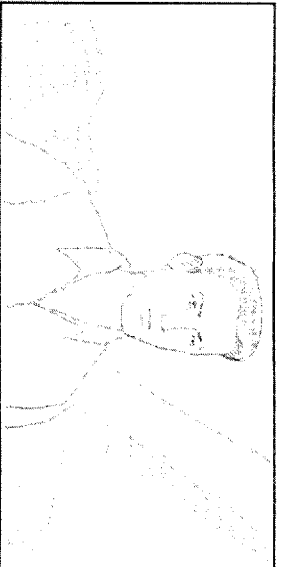
Master /Establishing Shot



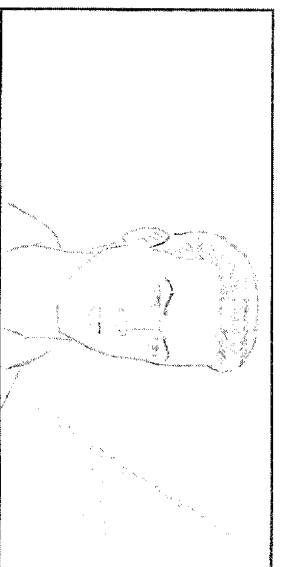
Full Shot



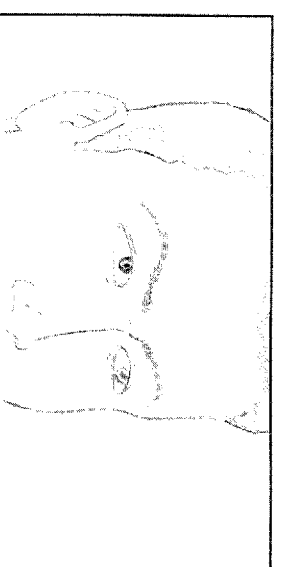
Medium Shot



Medium Close-up



Close-up



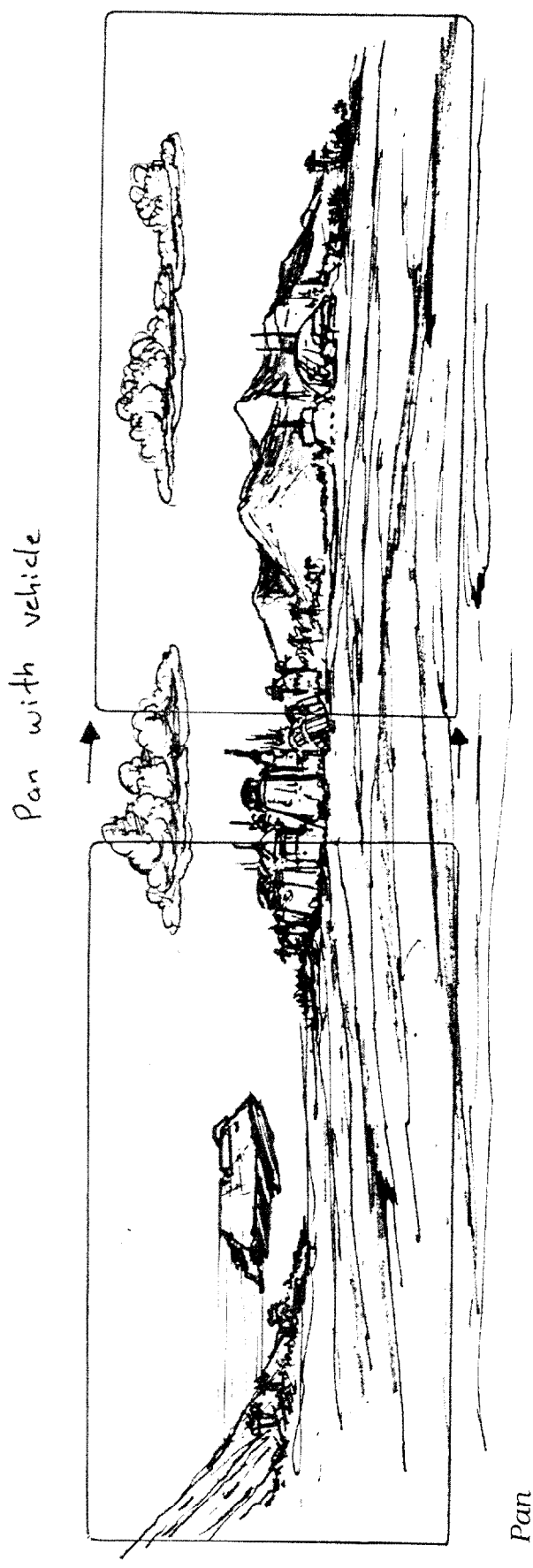
Extreme Close-up

PAN

What does it look like?

Pan is the horizontal axis of camera movement. When the camera pans, it turns left and right. To conceptualize a *Pan*, stare straight ahead and turn your head to the left and to the right.

Panning is commonly used to look across a very wide panorama that doesn't fit within the camera frame—a landscape, for example. This technique can be used to follow characters or vehicles as they move around. This is known as re-framing the shot.



POV

What does it look like?

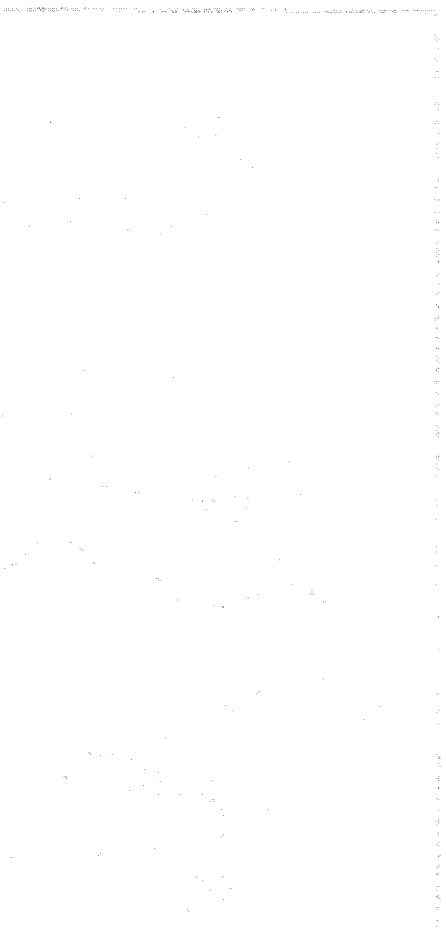
POV stands for “point of view,” meaning that the audience sees exactly what a character in a film sees.

POV can be used to increase the audience’s emotional attachment to the characters onscreen.

Where can I see it?

In *Jaws* there are sequences projected from the shark’s *POV*. *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* shows a computerized *POV* when looking through the eyes of the Terminator. In *Natural Born Killers*, a very intense *POV* is achieved by assuming the perspective of Mallory when she slams her head against the prison walls.

Strange Days uses many *POV* shots in its virtual reality sequences. *The Evil Dead* series uses *POV* to show the movement of an evil presence through the woods. In *The Exorcist*, we see Father Karras’ *POV* when he falls down the stairs.



POV

SPIN AROUND

What does it look like?

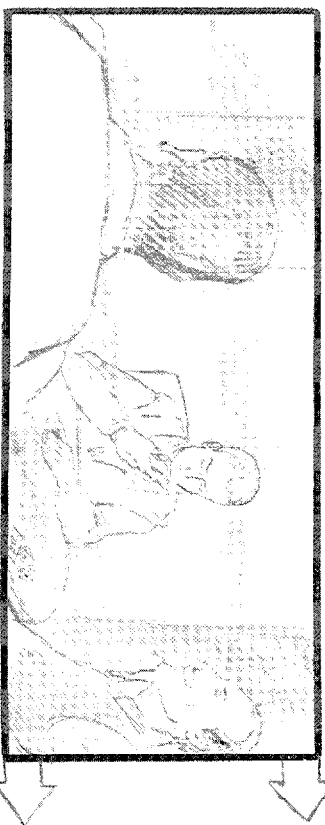
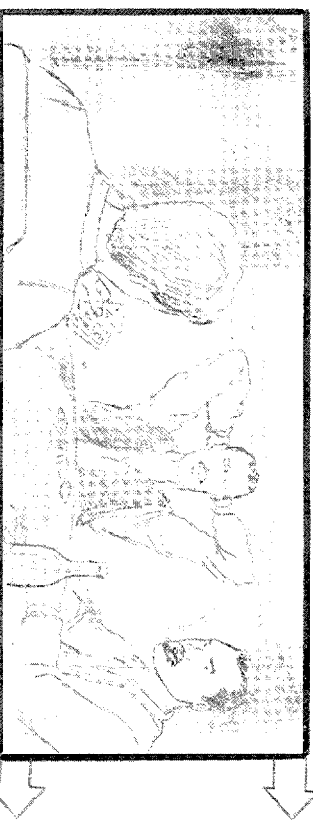
Spin Around involves circling the camera around the scene in progress, creating a dizzying kinetic effect. You might also hear this referred to as a “360° Dolly.”

Spin Around is simple, and it adds positive motion and energy to a scene. The camera doesn't have to move very fast for this to be effective.

Where can I see it?

In *The Untouchables*, the camera *Spins Around* the characters at dinner after their first successful raid. In *The Color of Money*, the camera *Spins Around* the pool table as the characters compete.

In *The Matrix*, the camera *Spins Around* a telephone as the characters are transported into their virtual existence. You can also see this in *The Crow*, when Sarah talks to Eric in his apartment after he's been resurrected.



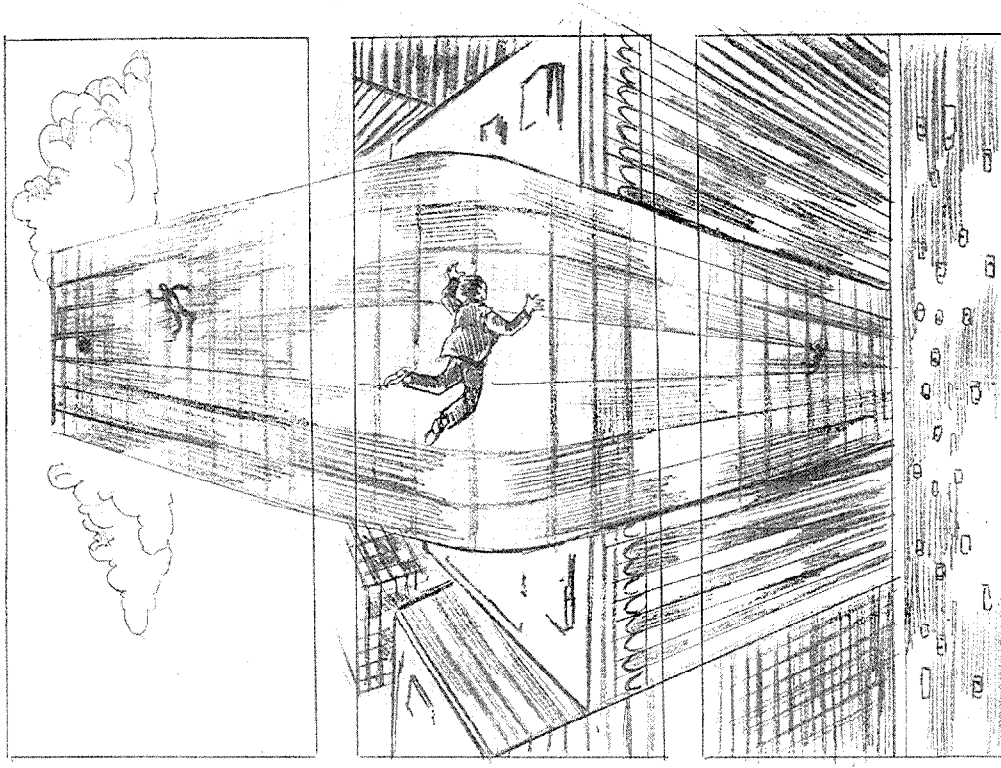
Spin Around

TILT

What does it look like?

Tilt is the vertical axis of camera movement. When the camera tilts, it pivots up and down. *Tilting* is commonly used to look over tall objects such as a cathedral or an office building.

To conceptualize a *Tilt*, stare straight ahead and pivot your head to look up and down. Like the Pan, this technique is used within a scene to follow characters in motion—known as re-framing the shot.



Tilt

TILTED HORIZON

What does it look like?

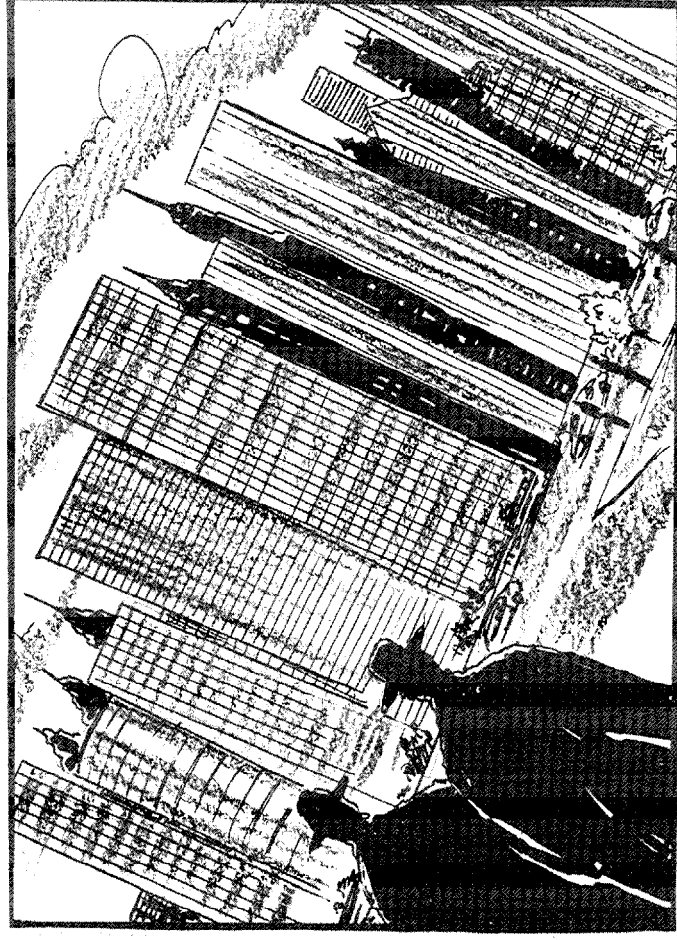
Tilted Horizon simply involves tipping the camera slightly to the side in order to increase the tension in a scene.

Also known as a Dutch angle or a canted shot, this technique is most effective when there are strong horizontal and vertical lines that the non-uniform camera angle enhances.

Because our eyes are used to seeing everything straight up and down, the diagonals that result from *Tilted Horizon* tend to attract our attention.

Where can I see it?

Tilted Horizon is used extensively throughout The Third Man.



Tilted Horizon

CAMERA HEIGHT

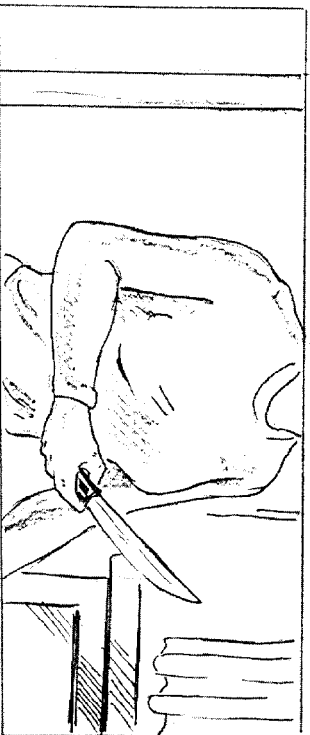
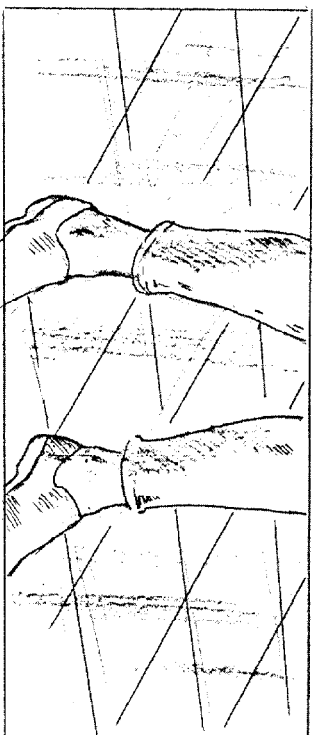
What does it look like?

The height of the camera has a considerable effect on the meaning of a shot.

If you only show a person's feet, there is a mystery— who are they? This is a very common technique. If you show their upper body but not their face, you discover more about them (they might be doing something with their hands), but you still don't really know who they are. Finally, when the camera is brought up to eye level with the actor, the mystery is resolved and the character is revealed.

Where can I see it?

Rosemary's Baby—near the end, in the scene where Rosemary is carrying a knife. The camera alternates *Camera Heights* to show different aspects of her emotional state. Her feet, the knife in her hands, and a close-up of her fear and anxiety all heighten the effect of the scene.



Camera Heights