

TRUE STORY FILM NOTES

Themes:

- Second chance
- Truth
- Lies
- Power
- Family
- Crime
- Journalism

Obvious Production & Story Elements employed by the Director:

- Camera
- Sound
- Lighting
- Motifs & Colours
- Acting
- Characters
- Multiple Storylines
- Opening / Development & Resolution

Opening

High Angle, slow motion camera technique. Teddy Bear falling into suitcase with a small child inside. Non-diegetic sound plays – slow piano.

Autopsy – Doctor unzips the yellow suitcase. Cut to shock face on Doctor.

Cut to Michael Finkel (Jonah Hill) conducting an interview in an African country.

Cut to Mexico. Christian meets young German girl. Hotel room. Arrest scene. Violin diegetic sound intensifies.

FADE TO BLACK. Opening closes with Title – TRUE STORY. (white on black text)

Mike wears glasses, navy grandpa jumper, average shirt. Representing a middle class academic man.

10 Covers in 3 years. “Exceptional Journalist”

Girlfriend lives outside the city. We know this from initial phone call made within the opening sequence. Evident they don't see one another a lot. (Cause & Effect)

When Mike walks out after getting fired – Sound. Upbeat violin with piano volume increases and intensifies for the audience. This reveals Mike will move onto something much bigger than the New York Times. Also something powerful is about to happen to this character.

Location change – Mike takes a plane to a new location. The audience understand he has moved to where his girlfriend lives. He is now poor and left his New York apartment. This new place is WHITE. Snow ridden and cold. Perhaps summing up Mike's new position in life.

The frustrated back and forth phone calls. Lighting low key. Dark room. Cold environment. His life is bleak. He is not his creativity self.

Sound drops out just before the phone call that changes Mike's status. The audience anticipate growth for this character. This is the turning point of the narrative – the beginning of the Development.

Lighting starts to change –

The colour ORANGE only comes in when he meets Christian Longo for the first time. This colour represents warmth. Life is taking a positive turn for Jonah's character.

Close-ups – the first meeting between Mike & Christian.

How does the Director build the relationship between the two leading males?

- Sound & Images. Narration (like Christian is talking directly to Mike) Reading his letters and drawings. "WRONG TURNS"
- Quotes by both Christian and Mike.
- Mike, "Everybody deserves to have their story heard"
- Write a book together
- Teaching one another
- Games they play together – Writing games

Family names:

Mary-Jane (MJ – Wife)

Zachary

Madison

Sadey

Flashbacks are constantly employed to reveal the loving, happy family. This has the audience question his innocence or guilt.

“Mastery of words” (Christian wants this taught to him by Mike). This line foreshadows future events in the narrative’s resolution where the audience see Christian has used lines from Mike when he is on the stand.

Silhouettes are employed constantly by the Director. Black on white jail cell. Represents uncertainty. Did he do it. Two tones. Two sides etc.

QUOTES employed by the Director. A clever way to link to the themes within the text.

“Not everyone can relate to a man who kills 4 people, but everyone can relate to a child needing new toys” (Mike speaking to Christian)

“Lost my obligation to the truth”

“Almost like the Teddy Bear died when she died” (Christian on the stand)

“Double negative” (Christian on the stand)

“Longo has a calm about him” (The Detective)

“Look out for the lies” (Mike to Christian in the final scene)

Within this text Audience reception is very important. This is a TRUE STORY, therefore the audience will have a previous understanding of the crimes committed and perhaps have an idea what is happening to Christian Longo at this present time.

WINK (Motif)

Shortstop (Motif) – Dedication. When a writer puts in a secret message.

In the courtroom almost everyone is wearing Navy Blue. Does this have meaning?

The chairs are also navy blue.

Book reading – Mike was asked a final question – “Do you ever regret contacting him? What might have you lost?” This was the Director’s way to end the narrative. Revealing that Mike also lost his relationship with his partner and career. A major theme within the text.