

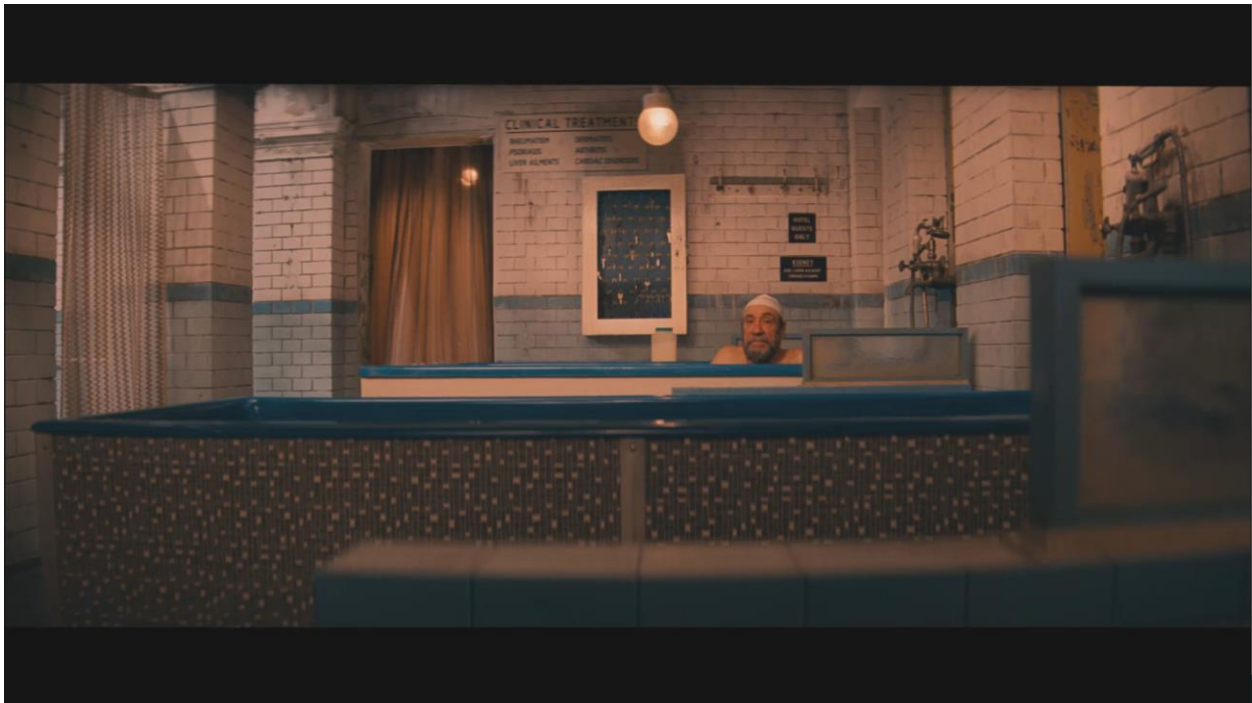
Aaliyah Mickle

Dr. Watkins

ANGD 3315 VNC

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Shot Analysis: The Grand Budapest Hotel



1. This is a medium-full clean single shot at subtly low angle. This is also a point of view shot from the Author's perspective. By centering in on Zero in the bath we are just far enough to see both his expression and body language within the surrounding environment but still feel emotionally detached from him at this point. Here Zero feels mysterious and subdued, with a contemplative demeanor, as if he is lost in thought or resigned to a state of isolation even as he speaks to the Author. The shot is asymmetrical, unlike a lot of Anderson's shots, but it still feels balanced. This shot, though we are far away from the character, is like a portrait within the frame. He falls on the Rule of Thirds hotspots on the right 1/3 of the frame and his eyeline on the lower 3rd of the frame. This shot captures a sense of stagnancy, as Zero sits, confined by the surrounding geometric shapes of the tiled walls and tubs. The signs on the walls, reading "Hotel Guests Only" and "Clinical Treatment," emphasize this sense of restriction and exclusivity, even though ironically this is where he first connects with the Author. The use of layers in the foreground and background

creates that shape within a frame effect that further reinforces his isolation from the Author's point of view. The lighting here is soft and diffused, like much of the lighting in the film, casting a warm yet dim glow everywhere. This lighting reinforces a sense of faded grandeur, making the hotel's bath feel like a relic of the past. The muted warmth contrasts with the cool blues in the frame, especially the bathtub blue, drawing our attention toward his face. Here we have a shallow depth of field with a f-stop around f5 but a shorter focal length at around 20mm. That's how we blur the foreground but still focus on the character's face while getting this almost fisheye lens warping. It creates this estranged effect for the Author and audience as we don't know anything about Zero at this point really. The perception of him is warped, cold, and lonely until the Author starts to hear his story.



2. This is another POV shot from an overhead angle as we look down at the desk from where Jopling would be looking. This shot lays out the story of the crime for us quite plainly, as if the desk is a narrator itself. The stillness as Jopling is on the phone creates a tension within the frame, as if the camera itself were scrutinizing the evidence alongside the viewer. The high angle flattens the objects allowing us to unfold the danger of events past and yet to come for Madame D, Serge X, his sister, and our protagonists. The objects in frame are carefully organized, yet cluttered, with each item contributing to a sense of mystery and character insight. The placement of objects (gun, poison bottle, photographs, and old telephone) creates a frame-within-a-frame effect, naturally drawing the eye to Gustave's mugshot in the center. The vignette around the shot also frames the photograph well drawing

our attention to the center but being subtle enough to see the other objects still. The choice of warm lighting again casts an almost sepia tone over everything, echoing the film's nostalgic view of the past. This lighting draws attention to the photograph's white borders, making it stand out against the darker hues of the surrounding items and desk. The light diffusion is particularly effective in highlighting the gun and poison, which, though static, carry an implied threat that surrounds Serge's portrait. There is a shallow depth of field that focuses on the immediate items in the center, though unlike the bath seen the view isn't warped by the focal length. This shot has a f-stop at around f5 but a focal length at 35mm to mimic the perspective of Jopling looking down at the desk. This effect adds to the feeling of restricted vision, conveying how Serge's identity is boxed in by the profile Jopling has on him. The meticulous composition and limited color palette of warm browns, faded greens, and off-whites establish a tone of quiet suspense, very different from that of Grand Budapest's sweet pastels.



3. This is a medium-close clean single shot taken from a slightly lower angle, focused on Agatha as she emerges from a hatch on the rooftop. The framing isolates her against the night sky, accentuating her vulnerability and the quiet manner. This peeking out that shows just her head is a misleading foreshadowing into the next scene where we learn a young woman's head had been cut off, later revealed to be Serge's sister not Agatha. The low horizon line and the vast amount of sky give the impression that she is swallowed by the cold, indifferent environment, that makes

the audience concerned for her safety in the rising tension. The dark, cool tones and soft, diffused lighting evoke the quiet stillness of night, with faint illumination highlighting her face and giving it a soft, ethereal quality. The soft and warm innocence they color her with is still maintained here as it is throughout the movie. That also informs us of how Zero thinks of Agatha as he recounts his story. The story through texture here of snow on the rooftop adds a tactile element, making the scene feel harsh and unwelcoming. The lighting subtly contrasts Agatha's warmth with the cold, bluish surroundings, emphasizing her courage and resilience. The symmetrical framing of Agatha within the hatch, alongside the Rule of Thirds placement, reinforces her position as the focal point, yet she appears small and overwhelmed by the mass of blue that is her surroundings. For this shot, we still get a shallow depth of field slightly blurring the foreground of the roof at around f5. This separates Agatha from the background while maintaining enough clarity in the night scene to capture the rooftop's details. The focal length here is around 50mm to compress the background, making the night sky and surrounding elements feel closer to Agatha. The combination of this focal length and f-stop emphasizes her as the central figure without completely isolating her from the environment.



4. This is a wide shot of the prison exterior that is too far away to see any faces, but we do see three characters scaling the prison wall. The frame is dominated by the snowy landscape, with the prison positioned in the left third, creating an asymmetrical but balanced composition, a skill of Anderson's as an auteur. This shot

emphasizes the cold, harsh environment Gustave wishes to escape to that would still be an improvement over prison. The color palette is primarily cool, dominated by deep blues and grays with the prison itself being the only break in color with its warm browns. It separates the prison and the snowy landscape into their own worlds. The cliff's edge and snowy trees enclose the frame, creating a "trap" or "border" around the prison, symbolizing confinement and danger. But on the other side, we see no prison, making the chasm between both cliffs a threshold of freedom. By pulling back to this distant, lower-angled perspective, the shot distances the audience emotionally from Gustave and the others. It adds to the sneaky fast-moving energy as the characters make their ambitious escape. The atmosphere feels both serene and ominous, capturing the beauty of the snowy scenery while reminding us of the danger that the characters face. This scene was shot with a telephoto lens at a length of 150mm and an f-stop at around f8. It lets us clearly see the surrounding environment much like a landscape painting. Without much area for rest except the prison wall it creates an overwhelming feeling compared to the small characters in the distance. It emphasizes the enormity of their task as they escape. Here, nature is wild and unstructured, a shift from the rigid, human-made environments inside. This contrast may symbolize the chaotic freedom of the outside world versus the structured confinement of the prison.



5. This is a medium-full shot of Kovacs shot from a lower angle. I wouldn't consider this a clean single though as we don't actually see his face. He stands in front of this

large window, placing him at the center of the frame while keeping his features obscured. The grid of the windowpanes creates an almost prison-like framework around him, symbolizing entrapment and vulnerability. Though centered, the shot doesn't follow Anderson's usual symmetrical style perfectly; instead, it feels slightly off-kilter with Kovacs' asymmetrical silhouette, adding an uneasy atmosphere to the moment. Kovacs' silhouette with his glasses highlighted adds a surreal and ominous tone, immediately drawing attention to his isolation and the impending danger. It's a very intentional choice as it adds a very dramatic, almost film noir or even anime feel with the glint of the glasses. The lighting here is starkly backlit, making Kovacs a black silhouette against the blue-lit background. This decision emphasizes mystery and tension, as his identity is erased, making him appear as an anonymous, vulnerable figure. The floating glasses isolate his eyes and evokes a sense of paranoia as he is followed by Jopling who stays just out of sight. The cool blue tones dominating the scene evoke a sense of dread, contrasting with the warmer that is seen throughout. The shallow depth of field places emphasis on Kovacs, keeping him sharp against a slightly blurred background. This depth choice creates a "tunnel vision" effect that narrows the viewer's focus, heightening the tension by isolating him visually from his surroundings likely with an f-stop of f5 again. The 80mm focal length creates a clear, slightly compressed image of Kovacs with a blurred background. This longer focal length enhances the sense of distance between him and his surroundings, conveying his vulnerability.



6. This is a medium crowd shot shot from a lower angle. In the film, this is where the story comes to a point with the reading of the second copy of the second will. All the worlds, plot lines, and characters collide here in the ballroom of the Grand Budapest. The color coding throughout the film has identified each party's interest in this conflict. Saturated colors and pastels usually represent the interests of our protagonists as seen on them, Agatha, and the hotel in general. The greys and browns usually represent a neutral party like Albert, Kovacs, the inmates, even the Author. And black is the opposing force which wishes to see the downfall of the protagonists. In this shot, we get all of those colors mingled together to settle the matter of the will. All backdropped by the consistent mural in the back. By framing Albert at the center of the table, the shot uses his character as an anchor amidst the various factions present. The low angle lends a sense of authority to Albert, elevating him as a central, almost impartial figure among the chaotic assembly. This positioning makes him the "referee" of the unfolding conflict, highlighting his role as a neutral party presiding over the reading of the will. Again, we see the mastery of balance here through character, color, and composition. This shot has a soft and even lighting that shows that no one faction dominates another in this moment. It just feels like the moment we've all been waiting for, and it carries that soft warmth with it as we can anticipate Gustave exoneration. The choice to arrange everyone around a table evokes a sense of finality and justice, as if this is the film's "courtroom" moment, unlike the actual courtroom scene which sways in Gustave's favor after all. Each character is given equal visual weight, signaling that everyone's interests are represented, and each viewpoint must be acknowledged before the matter of the will is settled. The focal length here is around 45mm to give us this mass of a crowd. The f-stop sits at around f9 in conjunction with the focal length to further reinforce this idea of the crowd's interest in the will, not just the individuals.



7. This is an establishing shot from a high angle. It feels like the POV of someone sitting on top of the train, but it establishes the environment and changes in idea as Zero moves on to this part of the story. The cut to this scene though is striking and heavily contrasted to the rest of the film we've just watched. It's foreboding and unwelcoming as our protagonists' chug along to what is ultimately their demise. After this we learn of Gustave's execution and Agatha's untimely death. This shot signifies the beginning of the end. Where Zero should be the happiest, we have this black and white shot. Even in previous shots where the snowy landscape is soft pinks and icy blues, we see now the color has left this world; Zero's world. The train itself even seems to move slower as we approach what we can all assume is the lowest point in the story. Previously, all the vehicles gave this whiplash effect train, cars, bikes, included. Now we see the train slowly lumbering along with this soft billowing steam as if the train doesn't want to go where this story ends. There is also no change in direction here which gives this sense of inevitable doom as it moves forward on this straight track. The depth of field here is relatively wide with everything in focus. We're looking at a focal length of around 25mm to give that riding on top of the train effect. The f-stop is higher than previously (the shutter speed is probably faster than before too) at around f10 minimizing the blur and bringing everything into focus. It draws out the moment, taking away all that fast-moving energy and forces us to sit with the story as the end unfolds. It's solemn and

tragic, but it's real in how it bears no semblance to the whimsical fun and adventure of life at the Grand Budapest Hotel.

On a separate note, this whole black and white sequence makes me wonder if Anderson uses this moment to break his own style and show the gravity of Gustave's death in the story. Have we been watching through the mystified eyes of Zero the whole time? Was the Grand Budapest really as grand as it seemed, or does Zero just remember it that way? I mean the building's shape completely changes in 1965, and how beautiful can a world really be during wartime? We see the present day with soft neutrals as the girl reads the Author's book. As we go back into the 60s when Zero is telling the story, we have these funky sickly warm colors. And in the 30s where the story takes place, we see the most saturated and appealing of colors. For the life of an immigrant lobby boy whose already had his family taken from him before, I wonder if this whole time Agatha and Gustave were what brought those colors into the world as they are shown to us.