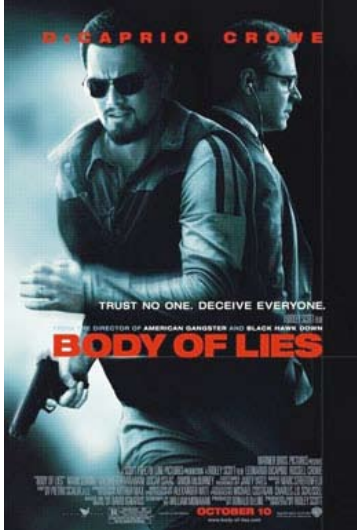

Study Guide

Body of Lies



Feature movies are a medium, an art and a business. Each of these elements plays a role. As a medium, movies represent ideas through the codes and conventions of sound and moving image. As art, they make personal and cultural statements to their audiences. As businesses, they create work for their creators and profits for their investors. This guide, which extends the ideas presented in the *Body of Lies* episode of *Beyond the Screen*, may be used by teachers as they support their students, by parents who want to discuss the movie with their children, or by serious viewers who want to think beyond the screen.

Plot Synopsis CIA operations head Ed Hoffman directs field agent Roger Ferris to go to Jordan to locate the head of an Al Qaeda cell that is bombing European cities. Ferris forms an alliance with Hani Salaam, the head of Jordanian anti-terrorism, which is tested several times. He also meets Aisha, an Iranian nurse who helps him better understand Middle Eastern culture. When Aisha is kidnapped, Roger must find a way to hostage-exchange himself for her

A. Cinematography

Ridley Scott's movies are renowned for their cinematography. Among his movies with distinctive cinematographic styles are *Matchstick Men*, *Gladiator*, *Thelma & Louise*, and *Blade Runner*.

The fast pace and extreme location shifts in *Body of Lies* could potentially confuse viewers, so cinematography is used very purposefully to help viewers understand the differences in location and time.

How did the cinematographer use colour shifts (yellow tint, blue tint, gray tint) to indicate changes in location and mood?

How did soft focus and a slight red tint help viewers feel the distinction between scenes around Washington and those in the Middle East? How did hand-held camera movements add to the excitement of action sequences? How did the flashlight-lit hallways in the building where Ferris was captive add to the feelings of mystery and danger?

B. Editing

Pietro Scalia is a two-time Oscar winning editor. Mr. Scalia had many challenges in *Body of Lies*, among them creating excitement in the action scenes, parallel editing, combining aerial and ground shots and constructing flashbacks and action to match dialogue.

1. Action editing

When Roger Ferris chases down and murders a man to prevent him from returning to his safe house, the editor builds a scene that shows Ferris pursuing the man through the streets from the market, down a back alley, over a fence and into a yard where the murder takes place. Then Ferris has to jump back over the fence while being attacked by two dogs. All of this has to appear as though it occurs continuously in real time over a few minutes. Viewers have to understand what is happening as well as feel the stress and anxiety of the murderer and his victim.

How did Mr. Scalia's choices of shots and movements make the action seem continuous? How did the lengths of the shots maintain the excitement and flow of the scene? Which shots stood out as attention-grabbing, e.g., the high-

angle shot of Ferris as he struggled to climb over the fence while two dogs attacked his legs? Where else in *Body of Lies* do you see effective action editing?

2. Parallel editing

Parallel editing occurs when different events are intercut with one another. Because viewers see parts of each event develop in alternation with the other events, they infer that the events are occurring simultaneously.

When Ferris is talking to Garland from Omar Sadiki's hotel room, the editor presents viewers with events occurring in three different places. Ferris has broken into Sadiki's hotel room and hacked into his computer. He is sending data from Sadiki's computer to Garland while talking to him on his cell phone. Sadiki is returning to his hotel room from the street.

Viewers know that Ferris is sitting in the room that Sadiki is moving toward.

How does the parallel editing help viewers understand what Ferris and Garland are doing?

How does the parallel editing add to the excitement of the movie?

Where else do you see effective use of parallel editing?

C. Music

Sometimes viewers hear a full orchestra, sometimes local music, and sometimes silence.

As the camera slowly dollies in on the body of Omar Sadiki in the dump, viewers hear low music and quiet singing.

How do these sounds help viewers understand what has happened to Sadiki?

When Ferris and Aisha's sister are discussing the war and what it has done to Arabian society, their conversation has no music behind it until the end.

What is the effect of viewers hearing the conversation without music?

What is the effect of the music beginning towards the end of their conversation?

When Ferris is left alone in the desert after climbing out of the truck, there is no music, only the sound of wind. Drums begin when the SUVs come over the horizon.

How do the wind sounds and the drums enhance the viewer's experience of this scene?

Local Arabian music is heard from within the scene only once.

How does this music help to establish the special circumstances that it accompanies?

D. Villains and Heroes and Villains Again

At one point, Roger states that Ed does not know what is really going on because he is not on the ground, but seeing the conflicts from above. This is literally true, and the movie presents several events from aerial surveillance camera points of view at CIA headquarters.

How do you think viewers will feel when seeing events from this aerial point of view as compared to seeing the action from ground-based cameras?

How does the cutting between the aerial views and the ground views help viewers understand the differences

between Ed's and Roger's points of view and responses?

Body of Lies is a major motion picture with international stars and crew. It will be seen throughout North America, Europe and the Middle East.

How might audience differences cause them to sympathize with different characters and interpret the events in *Body of Lies*? For example:

Iranians (whom the United States government and military have suggested should be invaded)?

Iraqis, who are occupied by NATO forces, among them American soldiers?

American civilians who have been asked by their government to support a war on terrorism?

Palestinians?

Jordanians?

Israelis?

American soldiers who are in battle or in military training?

The parents of living and dead American soldiers. Muslims living in America. Muslims living in Europe. American presidential candidates who are trying to find ways to end the war in Iraq?

E. Uses Of Media Communications

Body of Lies uses a variety of media communications in moving the plot. How do TV news broadcasts, both real and fictional, inform viewers and other characters of important events?

How are cell calls and email messages used to move the plot forward?

How are aerial surveillance shots used to help viewers understand differences between the American and Arabian cultures?

F. Quotable Quotes

Reflect on the following lines from *Body of Lies*.

What might they tell viewers about the characters and themes in the movie?

What additional quotes do you think viewers need to reflect on to better understand the story and its significance?

They're fighting people from the future.

You milked him and he's dry.

I didn't know the man.

Everybody screws up their marriage.

Never lie to me.

I need nailers, not hangers.

Be careful calling yourself American.

This is a part of the world where friendship matters.

I watched Poseidon.

A man is not his job.

Back from the sandbox?

*No one's innocent.
I have to take the kids to the Lion King, again!*

G. Happy Endings

The movie ends with an aerial view of Roger Ferris purchasing pastries in the market beside the hospital in which Aisha is working.

What do you think happens next?

Will Ferris attempt to re-establish his relationship with Aisha?

If Aisha was kidnapped as a result of her meeting Ferris, will she agree to re-establish the relationship or end it?

Will Ferris try to contact Bassam's family and help them survive the death of the father and wage-earner?

When Hani Salaam discovers that Ferris is still in Jordan, will he leave him alone or try to involve him in further anti-terrorist activities?

What will Ferris do to earn a living in Jordan?

Will Ed Hoffman continue to monitor Ferris' activities?

Will he attempt to get Ferris to re-enlist in the CIA?

Now that Al Saleem is in jail, will he stop leading the Al Qaeda cell that bombs European cities?

If Al Saleem is convicted and executed for terrorist killings, will the bombings stop?

Would you have ended the story the way it does? Would you have Ferris re-connect with Aisha, or would you have him leave her alone?

Why?

Would viewers feel more closure if Ed Hoffman had suffered some consequences for his actions?

Suggest an effective alternative ending for the story and explain your choices.

For more information on Body of Lies, visit <http://bodyoflies.warnerbros.com/stager/index.html>