

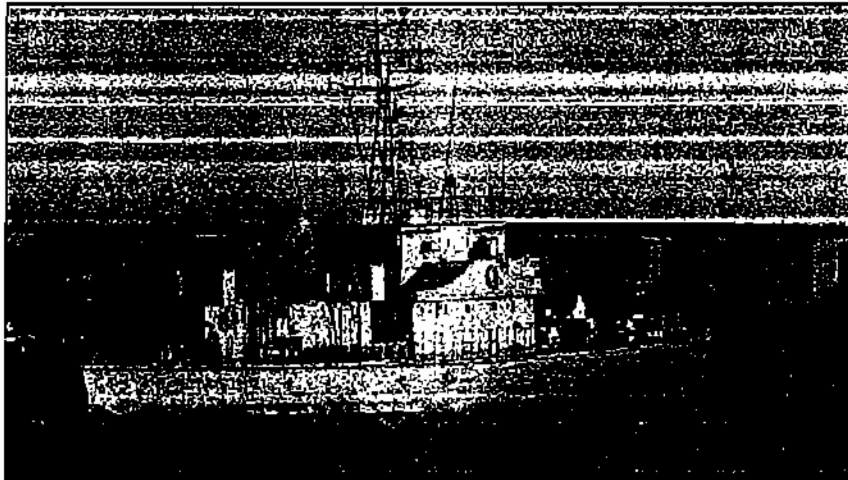
The Dancer Upstairs
Directed by: John Malkovich

Scene 27
"Harsh Sentence"
9 shots
Aspect ratio: 1.85:1 widescreen

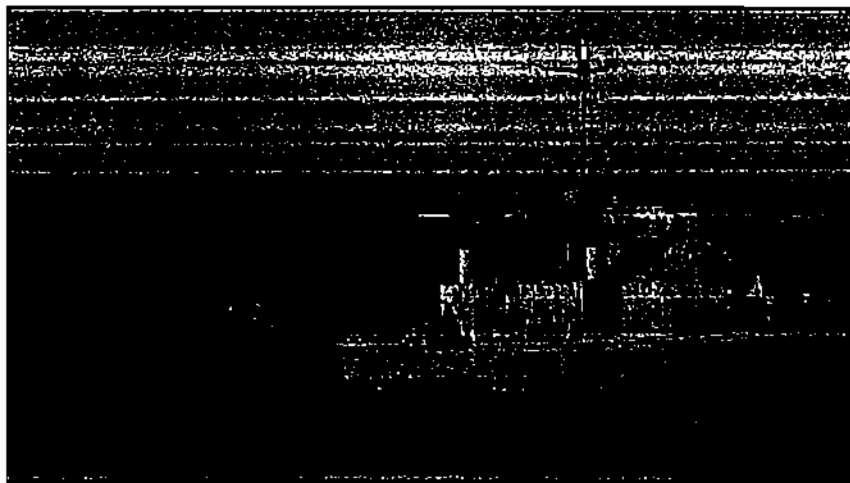
Rayne Betts
12.6.04
Final Analysis

Film Summary: This film is about a police officer (Agustin) in South America who is trying to catch the leader of a terrorist movement. He then falls in love and starts having an affair with his daughters ballet teacher (Yolanda), who doesn't know who he is trying to catch. When Agustin finally arrests the guerilla leader, he discovers that Yolanda was involved all along. In the scene I am discussing, Yolanda has just been arrested and is faced with life imprisonment, and Agustin has to face that the woman he loved is his greatest enemy.

Shot 1
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 3 seconds, 6 frames

Shot Size: landscape of the ship

Sound: The sound is the only thing of importance in this shot. It is a voice over of a male newscaster saying "the military court today sentenced former ballerina..." It then leads into the next shot. In this scene, there is piano music in the background and the ambient sounds of the ship and gulls.

Grid: The ship takes up most of the frame.

Contrast Dominants: The point of greatest light is sunlight reflecting off of the ship. The point of greatest dark is the sea below and around the ship. Our eye is directed to the ship immediately.

Character Movement: The ship is carrying a man referred to as "Ezequiel," who is the leader of the guerilla group. He was arrested when Yolanda was arrested, and the ship is taking him to an island prison, where he won't have any contact with anyone. Because we can't see his character from this perspective, the ship's movement from the left of the frame to the right of the frame shows Ezequiel leaving. Also, it is interesting that the only movement Ezequiel has now is by a machine driven by the government: the metaphor for what Ezequiel was trying to break down in the first place.

Character Proxemics: There is a lot of distance between Ezequiel and the rest of the world because they are separated by land and sea as well as dissidence and compliance with the government.

Camera Movement: The camera moves to the right with the ship with a slight pan. The movement is not noticeable.

Camera Angle: We are eye level with the ship, but seeing it from a distance. It is a POV of Agustin on land that was established earlier in the scene.

Lens Used: A wide angle lens was probably used because the ship is so big.

*you need
telephoto*

Depth of Field: The ship is in focus and the background is not. This is because the background has no real significance in the shot.

Lighting: The only light in the scene is coming from the sun and reflecting off of the ship.

*you need
telephoto*

Color Usage: Only neutral colors are used in this frame. This is to show, metaphorically, the governments control over the people. The guerilla group was fighting to preserve freedoms they thought were being taken away. In this shot, Ezequiel is being taken away, wearing black and white, on a gray ship.

Composition: The only thing in the frame is the ship, so the graphics are, of course, heaviest there. The ship covered in railings and bars, and on top of the ship near the back, is the cage Ezequiel is in. So not only is he in a literal cage, he is surrounded by other cage-like elements. The frame stays mostly the same for the duration of the shot.

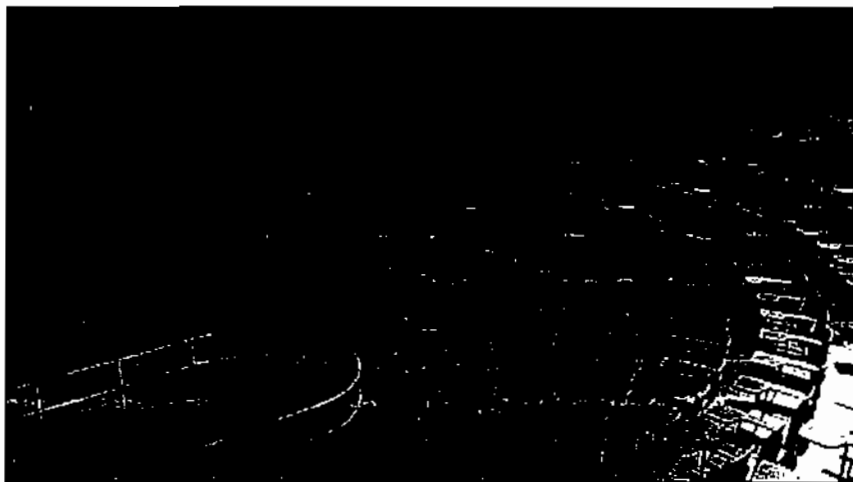
Editing Style: The transitions between this shot and the ones before and after are straight cuts. This shot is part of a

montage of different sections of the ship and different people. It is an A-roll shot because it is the master shot of the scene.

Time: In relation to the previous shots, time could either be real or deleted. Because the shots before it were a montage, but with no establishment of time, it is hard to say. We are in the present tense with the main character Agustin, but the voice-over talks about this shot being in the recent past.

Subtext: The government's reaction to capturing the guerilla leader and the lengths they went to to shut down the political opposition are the main focus of this scene. Ezequiel fought against the government for his freedoms, and from this point on, will be living the rest of his life on a island prison. The music makes the scene more emotional because the piano is faint and fragile sounding. Although, the emotions in this scene could go either way. The audience can feel regret for Ezequiel's capture and pride for his cause, or relief that the terrorist is no longer free to target innocent people.

Shot 2
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 21 seconds and 3 frames

Shot size: Starts with a master shot, then pulls out to reveal Agustin, medium full shot, in the foreground.

Sound: There is very little sound during this shot. It continues with the voice over saying "...Yolanda Celandin. As Comrade Isabel, she is believed to have run the section of operative support. The most damning evidence, a mention in her notebook of the cafe destroyed by the Miraflores bomb. Passing sentence, the judge agreed to a symbolic punishment, in addition to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole." The soundtrack of slow, sad music in the background is playing.

Grid: Yolanda is in the lower left of the frame (G7), very small, and the camera pulls back to reveal Agustin on the right side of the frame (G6, G9). When the camera pulls back, Yolanda is moved to nearly the middle of the frame (G8), and the government officials are then in the lower left of the frame (G7).

Contrast Dominants: There is light coming from the bottom right of the screen and reflecting off of the desks. All of those desks are empty, while the six that have people sitting in them are completely dark. Yolanda is in a light gray sweater near the bottom of the frame, sitting in a chair that is on a light gray concrete surface. Around Yolanda are metal rails caging her in, and separating her from the empty seats. The camera pulls back to reveal Agustin in a dark suit, standing against a white pillar. The pillar he is by is now blocking the light that was originally so bright in the lower left part of the screen. The pull-back also reveals more concrete in front of Yolanda. At the end of the shot, the only light amidst dark, is the concrete surrounding Yolanda,. This is used to show how alone she is, with no one to fight for her, even though she was fighting for the whole country. The appearance of Agustin against a white wall draws much attention to his presence and also, the contrast in this shot shows the battle he has fought himself, light against dark, good against evil.

Character Movement: There is no movement of characters within the frame, only the movement of the camera to reveal the characters.

Character Proxemics: The camera movement itself, placing Agustin where it does, shows him looking over Yolanda, as he had done for the entire film without knowing it. This shot shows Yolanda as being very small and alone, which is a direct result of her participation in the rebel group. We see Yolanda from the side,

but we see no expression because she is so small in the frame, and we see Agustin from the back, not needing to see an expression because we can already know what he is thinking (as a result from the preceding scene).

Camera Movement: The camera starting on the whole scene, with Yolanda in the middle, shows us how small she is. The pull-back then shows us the government officials she is facing, making not only Yolanda small, but making the cause she was fighting for small as well in the face of the government. The pull-back also reveals Agustin looking over her, as the man who put her where she is, but also as a man betrayed by the woman he loved.

Camera Angle: The camera doesn't show the scene from Agustin's point of view, but from the same angle that he is. We are above Yolanda and the men she faces, and in the last frame, even slightly above Agustin. Emotionally, this exaggerates how small Yolanda is in the face of the government she tried so desperately to destroy, and, in the very last frame, how Agustin has even been reduced by what has happened.

Lens Used: A normal lens seems to be used. Space is not compressed and the depth of the scene is not accentuated, nor does it need to be. The location chosen shows enough space as it is and using a normal lens makes the building seem even more large and empty because we are seeing it just as it is.

Depth of Field: We in deep focus the whole time. It doesn't change when the camera pulls back.

Lighting: The primary lighting seems to be coming from the lower left side of the screen, as we see in the first frame. This light is depicted as the sun through the windows, making it afternoon. There is also a light coming from behind Yolanda, because her shadow is huge in front of her. Agustin is not very lit at all, and doesn't need to be because of the contrast of his dark suit on the white pillar. The lighting is very minimal because of the contrast of the location and what is placed in it (example: Yolanda in the dark chair on the light concrete surface).

Color Usage: The dominant colors used in the frame are brown, black, gray, and white. When the camera pulls out, we see the government officials in red chairs with a blue curtain behind them. Because we are seeing them from the side, the blue and red is not overly accentuated, but it does become so later in the scene. All of the dark colors are together, except on the main characters. Yolanda is wearing a black shirt and black pants, but a light sweater; Agustin, a dark suit. Yolanda is being compared to the gray concrete surrounded by dark chairs. Agustin is simply against a white pillar.

Composition: The composition of the shot is very simple. In the first frame, everything is very small, but there is a sea of very dark, mostly empty desks, making the right side of the frame very heavy, and the left (where Yolanda is), very light. The camera

then pulls back to reveal Agustin on the right (heavy) side of the frame, and Yolanda near the middle of the frame. The left side in the last frame is still light, but now there is the big brown desk that the officials are seated at. The balance in the frame is very emotional. Yolanda is helpless, therefore, doesn't carry much weight. Agustin, on the other hand, has just put the woman he loves away for life, even though he was looking for someone else all along. It makes a lot of sense for his side of the frame to be much heavier than anywhere else. The stadium setup of the location and the pattern of the desks, as well as the colors used, are to draw our eye to where Yolanda is sitting. She is separated from the seating behind her by the railings around her, as if she is in a cage. The empty seats behind her could represent the rest of the country, the people supporting her cause, or the people in opposition to her ideology. The only way Yolanda can look is forward, towards the government, but when they are revealed, our eye is mainly focused on Agustin, on the opposite side of the screen. Having both of these revealed at the same time also helps us with Agustin's position. Over the course of the film, he has been forced to choose between his government, his lover, and his own safety. In this frame, he is faced with all three, going across the screen from left to right.

Editing Style: The frame preceding this is a shot of the boat that is carrying away the guerilla leader Agustin arrested. The shot after this is over the shoulder of Yolanda towards the

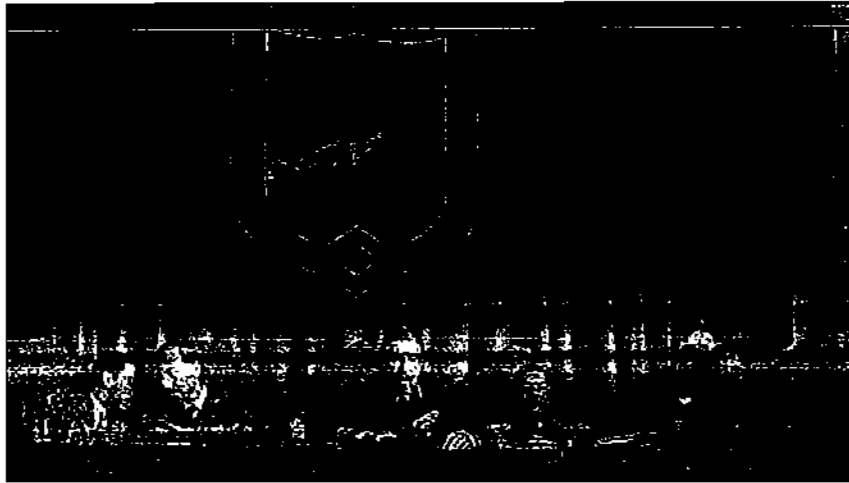
government officials. All of the cuts surrounding this shot are straight cuts. This shot is part of a longer take sequence. This is an A-roll shot consisting primarily of the government officials speaking and Yolanda's reactions to hearing her fate. There is an insert of the banging gavel, but it doesn't call away from the scene at all. The editing rhythm is very much action and reaction with longer takes. This rhythm keeps the audience in the story, instead of pulling us away to something we don't need to see. At this point in the film, the main element is the emotions of the characters, and any quick cuts would pull the audience away from that.

Time: This shot is shown in real time. There is no need to expand time or compress time, as it would only confuse the audience. Also, showing the trial in real time shows how much Yolanda's fate was sealed before even entering the room.

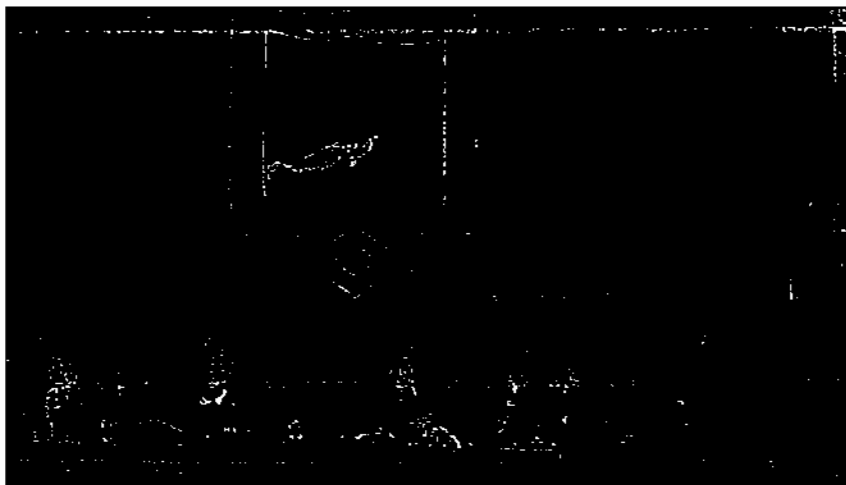
Subtext: The primary reason for the decisions made in this shot, is the emotions of Agustin. All three elements of his conflicts from the whole film are there: his country's government, his affair with Yolanda, and his own safety and morals. Looking at the composition from left to right, we see his government on the far left, himself very heavy on the far right, and Yolanda, completely alone, in between them. The layout of the shot seems very intentional and is very effective in the emotions it conveys to the audience. The composition and balance in the frame, as well as where we start (on Yolanda, objectively) and where we end

up (on all three, still objectively) is the most effective influence of emotion. The entire conflict of the film can be seen in the last frame of this one shot.

Shot 3
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 4 seconds and 5 frames

Shot Size: This is a wide shot of the government officials at their table.

Sound: The official in the middle in blue says "will you stand?" His voice echoes in the building. He states it simply and more as a comment than a question. The music is still playing.

Grid: The men at the table take up the bottom row of the screen, while Yolanda's figure is on the very far right of the frame (G6 and G9). The top of the frame is devoted to the blue curtain and shield.

Contrast Dominants: The point of greatest light in this shot is the light on the curtain right above the officials, drawing our eye to them. The point of greatest dark is the right side of the frame, where Yolanda sits. It is very easy to miss seeing her altogether because she is so dark.

Character Movement: None, except the official in blue taking off his glasses and the man to the left of him picking up his water glass. The men to the right of the official in blue are talking at the start of the shot, and stop as soon as he asks her to stand.

Character Proxemics: Yolanda has her back to us and is shoved almost completely out of frame. She is facing the officials, who are all facing her. We see how defensive and powerful they are from her perspective, sitting alone in front of this table and these five men.

Camera Movement: None

Camera Angle: We are slightly lower than eye level with the officials and can see them from where Yolanda sees them.

Lens Used: The lens used could be a telephoto lens because the space between Yolanda and the officials is compressed. In this shot, she doesn't look nearly as far away as she did in shot 2. This lens was probably used to be able to get the officials and Yolanda in the shot without anything else.

Depth of Field: This shot is shallow focus. The officials are in focus, while Yolanda is not.

Lighting: The light is coming from the right side of the frame and shining on the men at the table, as shown by their shadows. Above the officials on the curtain there is much less light and there is very little light on Yolanda.

Color Usage: The only real colors in this scene are the red chairs and blue curtain, but even they seem like regulated and neutral colors. The shield above the officials mimics the colors in the frame. There is a red star at the bottom and blue sky. In that blue sky is a black eagle. Symbolically, that eagle represents Yolanda.

Composition: The most weight in the frame is carried by the men at the table. They take up most of the shot and since nothing changes in the shot, our eyes aren't led anywhere. Yolanda is very light in this frame because she is in the shadows and almost completely out of frame. This is a very simple shot of the officials from Yolanda's perspective.

Editing Style: The transitions coming in and out of this shot are straight cuts. The characters are already in frame and stay in

frame. This is an A-roll shot of the officials and the line "will you stand?"

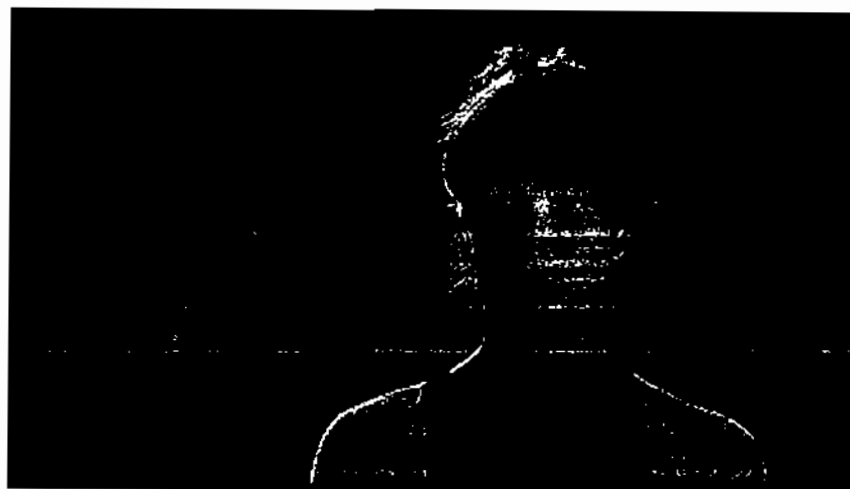
Time: same as shot 2.

Subtext: Yolanda is represented in this shot symbolically as the eagle on the shield. She fought for freedom for herself and her country and, like the eagle, she is now being used as a symbol for the government; as an example of what happens to rebels.

Shot 4
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 9 seconds and 4 frames

Shot Size: A close shot of Yolanda.

Sound: The shot starts with the gentle, haunting, music. The government official then says (off screen) "you will be condemned to a cell without light." He says it in the same official voice as before.

Grid: At the end of the shot, Yolanda takes up a little less than half the frame, offset to the right.

Contrast Dominants: In the empty frame in the start of this shot, the only light is the bar going across the screen. As Yolanda enters the frame, she adds her face and sweater as points of contrast, but the bar in the background, her cage, is still evident. The seats behind the bar are completely dark.

Character Movement: Yolanda enters the frame vertically and stays there for the remainder of the scene. She stands because she is commanded to.

Character Proxemics: There are no other characters in frame, emphasizing how alone and on display Yolanda is. She is facing us directly, with her eyes focused on the officials.

Camera Movement: None

Camera Angle: We are eye level with Yolanda, making her an equal to us.

Lens Used: A normal lens is used here. There is no need to accentuate anything. They might have used a telephoto lens to compress Yolanda and her background, but because there is only

one prominent graphic in the background (the bar), it is hard to tell.

Depth of Field: Yolanda is in focus, but her background is not. Because the bar behind her is so light, it is fine to leave it out of focus.

Lighting: There is a light coming from above Yolanda's right side that is reflecting off of her hair and right shoulder. There is another light coming from behind her, illuminating her silhouette. The right side of her face is mostly in shadow, but not enough that we can't see her; just enough to make it darker.

Color Usage: The only colors in this scene are neutral; black, white, brown, and gray. This shows how everything was stripped from her. There is no color in her life anymore and because she is going to be imprisoned, there's no one to fight for that color anymore.

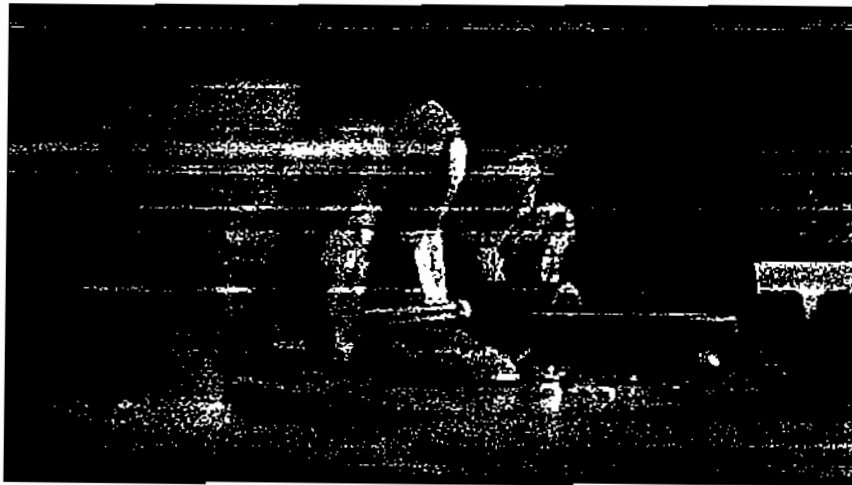
Composition: Starting as an empty frame, our eyes are drawn directly to the bar in the frame. As Yolanda enters frame, she enters her cage. The point with the greatest weight in the frame is Yolanda. The movement of our eyes at first horizontal with the bar, then vertical when Yolanda enters the frame, against the horizontal bar. The composition of the shot is very simple.

Editing Style: There are straight cuts coming in and out of the shot. At first, we cut to an empty frame that Yolanda then enters. This is B-roll footage of Yolanda's reaction as the official states her sentence.

Time: Same as shot 2.

Subtext: This scene is important because it shows Yolanda's reaction to her symbolic sentence of life imprisonment in a cell without light. But even after being told this, Yolanda's expression doesn't change. She is still defiant and strong, even though she knows there is no hope. She is proud of the cause she fought for and going to prison is something she was willing to risk all along.

Shot 5
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 3 seconds and 15 frames

Shot Size: This is a close up of the row of hats, with the gavel in the middle.

Sound: The music is still playing and the only other sound heard in this shot is the bang of the gavel, which echoes loudly in the building.

Grid: The official who has been speaking's hat is in the very middle of the frame with the gavel next to it, off to the right of the frame. The official's hand enters the very middle of the frame.

Contrast Dominants: The official's blue hat with white embroidery is the point of greatest light because all the other hats are green with gold. The background is completely dark, with a faint human figure. When the gavel is hit, it becomes the greatest point of light because of the light shining off of it. When the official's hand enters the frame, it then becomes lightest.

Character Movement: None

Character Proxemics: None

Camera Movement: None

Camera Angle: We are on the desk, eye level with the hats and gavel. Being at this level makes the banging of the gavel dominant in the shot and shows the finality of the sentencing.

Lens Used: A normal lens is used here. The spacing of the hats along the z-axis is enough to accentuate it, without needing help from a lens.

Depth of Field: We are in shallow focus on the gavel. The hats on either side are mostly in focus, and the hats next to them are out of focus. The focus draws our attention to the gavel in the center of the frame.

Lighting: The shadows on the hats tell us that the light is coming from in front of the desk and off to the right. There is also a light off to the left of the desk that is reflecting on the gavel.

Color Usage: The only colors used in this shot are green, blue, brown, and gold. Once again, neutral colors that represent the government.

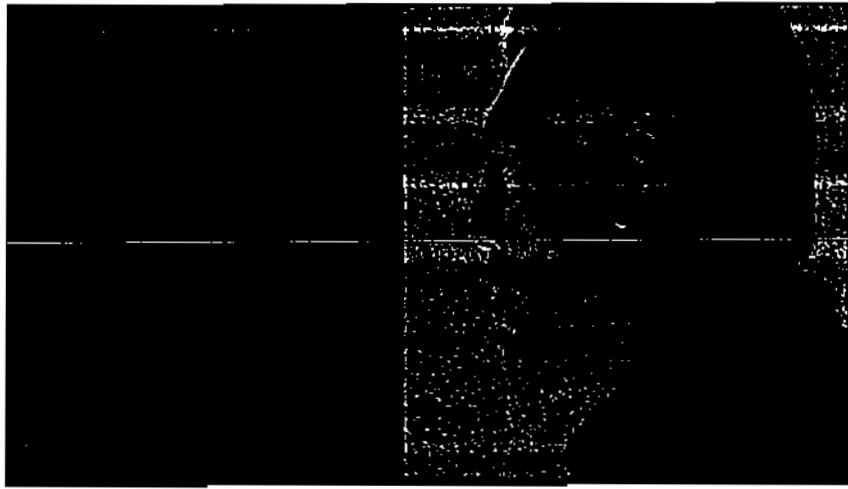
Composition: Because it is a close up, the row of hats carry the weight of the frame. They also lead to and away from the gavel in the middle. When the official picks up the gavel, raises it, and slams it down, our eye follows those movements.

Editing Style: Straight cuts in and out. This is B-roll footage; a cut in to just the action of the banging gavel.

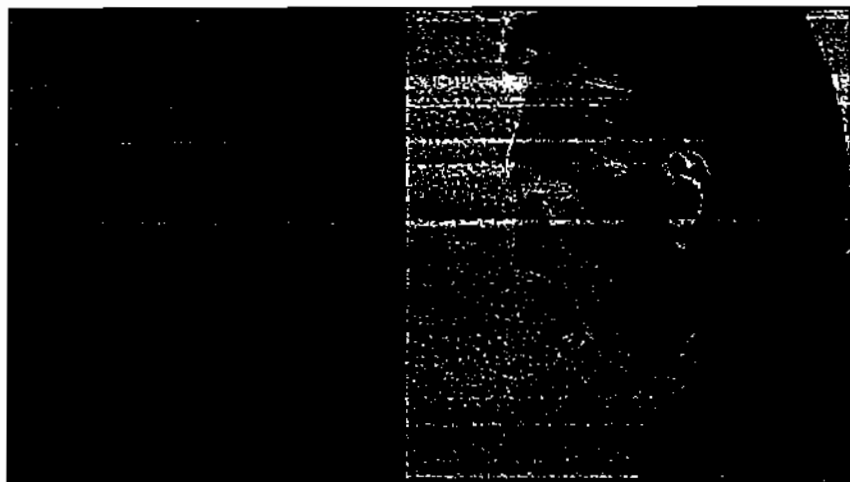
Time: same as shot 2.

Subtext: The image of the banging gavel is symbolic of the finality of the sentencing. At this moment, Yolanda's fate is sealed.

Shot 6
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 2 seconds and 14 frames

Shot Size: A full close-up of Agustin.

Sound: The only sound in this shot is the music.

Grid: Agustin takes up the right hand side of the frame.

Contrast Dominants: The point of greatest light is the white pillar Agustin is against. The points of greatest dark are the

whole left side of the frame and Agustin on the right of the frame. The white pillar separates Agustin from the dark of the rest of the building.

Character Movement: None

Character Proxemics: There are no other characters in the shot, but we know from shot 2, that he is above Yolanda, looking down. No one is around him.

Camera Movement: None

Camera Angle: We are eye level with Agustin, but seeing him from the side. Even though he arrested Yolanda, he is not bigger than the situation or reduced by it.

Lens Used: A normal lens is being used here.

Depth of Field: We are shallow focus on Agustin, with the background out of focus. There is nothing else in the frame that would need to be in focus.

Lighting: The light is coming directly onto Agustin's face. There is no light coming from the side to illuminate what we are seeing. There is also a light in front and above him.

Color Usage: Once again, only neutral colors.

Composition: The only weight in the frame is Agustin. The white pillar makes a vertical line separating Agustin from the rest of the room. This is just a very simple shot of Agustin's reaction to hearing Yolanda's fate.

Editing Style: Straight cuts coming in and out. Agustin is in the frame when we cut to him, and he stays there. This is B-roll footage as a cutaway to Agustin's reaction.

Time: Same as shot 2.

Subtext: At this moment, Agustin is not a hero, he is simply human, watching the government sentence his lover to life imprisonment in a cell without light. He is also faced with the knowledge that he put Yolanda there and there's nothing he can do about it now.

Shot 7
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 7 seconds and 9 frames

Shot Size: A medium full shot of Yolanda

Sound: The music and towards the end of the shot, Yolanda says "viva el presidente Ezequiel," the slogan of the guerilla campaign. Her voice is strong and loud.

Grid: Yolanda takes up the middle of the frame, offset slightly to the right.

Contrast Dominants: Yolanda is still the point of greatest light, but in this shot, the rails around her and very dominant. The background is primarily dark.

Character Movement: There is no real character movement within the frame. Right before Yolanda speaks, she looks down at her bound hands, and then looks directly at the government officials.

Character Proxemics: Same as shot 4, but now, there are two men sitting behind her in the audience. There is no reference in the scene to them, but they are separated from us by the railing.

Camera Movement: none

Camera Angle: We are eye level with Yolanda.

Lens Used: A normal lens is being used.

Depth of Field: We are in shallow focus on Yolanda. The men in the background are out of focus.

Lighting: Same as shot 4, but we can now see that the light is coming from behind and off to the left of Yolanda. It looks as

though it is coming through very high windows. There is no light coming from the right side of the frame.

Color Usage: same as shot 4

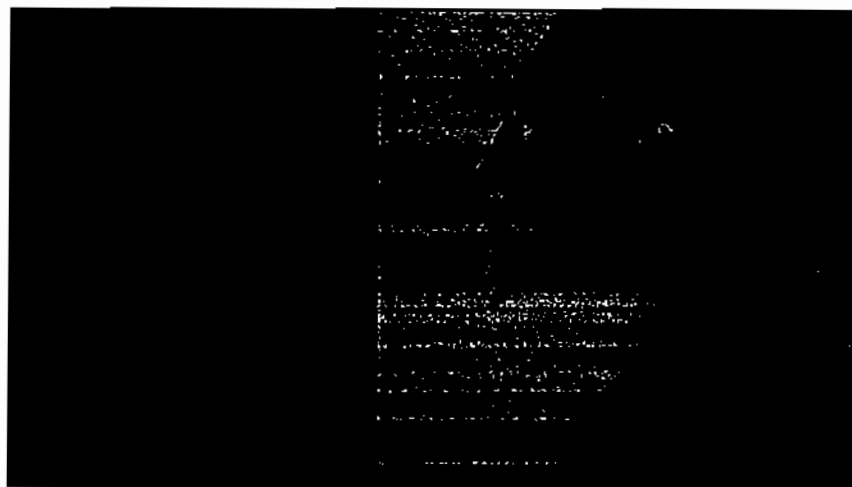
Composition: Yolanda is the focus of the frame in the very center, and therefore, carries the most weight. The rails behind her are now more obviously her cage.

Editing Style: Straight cuts in and out. Yolanda is in frame when we cut to her. This is A-roll footage of Yolanda's defiance.

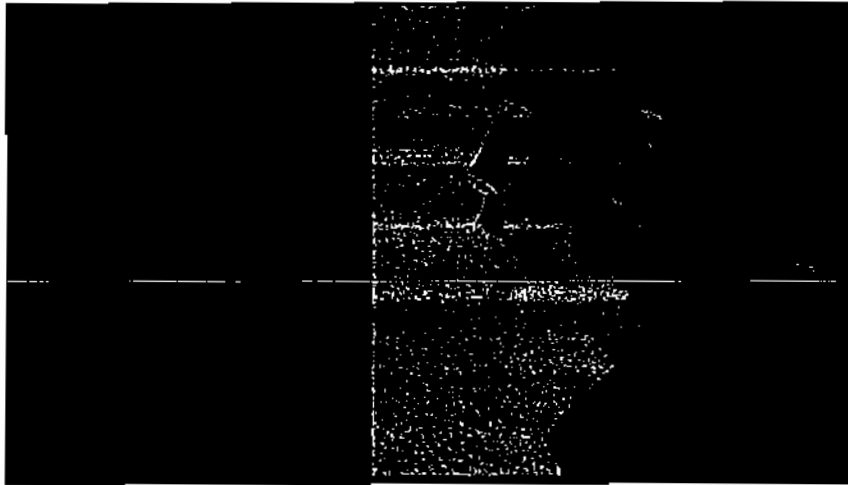
Time: same as shot 2

Subtext: This scene is very important because it shows Yolanda, even after being sentenced, isolated, and caged in, still defiant and still proud of her cause. When she shows her support for "rebel" ideology for probably the last time, she is more divided from society than ever.

Shot 8
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 4 seconds and 21 frames

Grid, Contrast Dominants, Character Proxemics, Camera Movement, Camera Angle, Lens Used, Depth of Field, Lighting, Color Usage, Composition, Editing Style, and Time: all same as shot 6

Shot Size: same as shot 6

Sound: The music continues over this shot. After he hears what Yolanda said, Agustin sighs.

Character Movement: There isn't really any character movement here, but in this shot, Agustin is standing up straight. He is no longer regretful for putting Yolanda away, because she is not regretful of what she did while involved in the guerilla group.

Subtext: In this scene, Agustin is faced for the first time with the fact that he never really knew who this woman was. He realizes that she *did* know what she was doing while involved in the terrorist movement. After she declares her allegiance to her leader, Agustin sees her for who she really is. He also realizes

what a mistake it was to have an affair with her and that no matter what, he can't save her, or change her beliefs.

Shot 9
Start Frame



End Frame



Duration: 6 seconds and 1 frame

Shot Size, Grid, Contrast Dominants, Character Proxemics, Camera Movement, Camera Angle, Lens Used, Depth of Field, Lighting,

Color Usage, Composition, Editing Style, and Time: all same as the last frame of shot 4.

Character Movement: There is no real character movement here, but at the end of the shot, Yolanda puts her head down. This is the only sign of sadness and fear that we see.

Subtext: In this scene, we see Yolanda defiantly facing the opposition after just declaring her allegiance to her cause. There is no regret, even now. She knows that there is no hope and she knows that she will be imprisoned for the rest of her life, but she wanted to let them all know that no matter what, she still believed what she believed. As probably her last act, she simply stated the slogan that had been hanging over the countries head for months.

Shot Lengths

