

Brian Ruehr

Bradley Pierce

Intro to Motion Pictures 2306

2-16-24

## The Filmmaking Process Behind Godzilla Minus One

### **Introduction**

“Godzilla Minus One” was directed by Takashi Yamazaki who is a Japanese filmmaker and special effects supervisor. The main cast includes Ryunosuke Kamiki (Koichi Skikishima), Minami Hamabe (Norkiko Oishi), Sakura Ando (Sumiko Ota), and Munetaka Aoki (Sosaku Tachibana). “Godzilla Minus One” tells the story of a people trying to survive the rampage of the monstrous Godzilla post World War II and how they come together to deal with the trauma of war and move forward.

### **Pre-Production**

“Godzilla Minus One” begins at the tail end of World War II and in the years following. A lot of the costume and set designs focus on a country and people that have been devastated by war. The three-act structure is used well in this film. The first act takes place at the end of World War II where we are introduced to our lead character Koichi. Koichi is a kamikaze pilot in the Japanese air force but pretends to have plane trouble and lands on Oto island for repairs. We are also introduced to mechanic Tachibana who suspects Koichi faked engine trouble so as not to die a martyr. While on this island Godzilla attacks and all are killed except for Koichi and Tachibana. Koichi had an opportunity to use his planes guns on the monster but he froze. This is inciting incident of the movie and something that Koichi will have to deal with for the rest of the movie. The first act ends with when Koichi returns home and finds out from Sumiko that his

parents had been killed in the bombing as well as her children. He also meets Norikiko who is caring for a child who is not hers and Koichi takes them in. In the second act you see Koichi still ravaged by guilt having failed as a kamikaze bomber and failed to shoot Godzilla on Oto Island. He has taken in Norkiku and the child she cares for out of guilt. As things begin to get better, he has a good job clearing mines in the waters around Japan, Godzilla appears to wreak havoc. In the attack Norkiku is presumed to be killed and Koichi is again stricken with more guilt. In the third act Koichi and Tachibana as well as a group of citizens devise a plan to defeat Godzilla. In the dramatic climax Koichi flies a plane loaded with explosives into Godzilla's mouth and you watch the monster fall into the depths of the ocean. You then see a parachute as Koichi had ejected right before impact. After the battle Koichi receives word that Norkiku is not dead and she is being treated in a hospital. Koichi has finally resolved the guilt he had and is ready to move on with his life.

### **Principal Cinematography**

“Godzilla Minus One” was made with a relatively low budget when compared to the average Hollywood movie. Yamazaki not only directed the movie but was also in charge of the special effects. There are a number of scenes of Godzilla in the water where you can basically only see Godzilla's head. This is a very effective, similar to the way Spielberg wasn't able to use the mechanical shark while filming “Jaws” as much as he wanted to because it wouldn't work. During the scenes at Koichi and Norkiku's house you only see small house and narrow streets full of rubble, this showcases what little people had left after the war. A lot of the second half of the movie takes place on the ocean featuring wide camera angles to showcase the vastness of the Pacific Ocean and when Godzilla arrives in town you get some wider angles to show just how

massive he is. Another great scene is a throwback to the original Godzilla (1954) is when you see Norkiku riding in a train that Godzilla attacks during his attack.

### **Postproduction**

Since “Godzilla Minus One” is a movie about a giant monster who was awakened and transformed by radiation from nuclear weapon testing there is quite a bit of work done with special effects. The CGI used to create Godzilla was done really well considering the budget they had to work with. This movie also uses a mix of the classic music from the Godzilla franchise as well as original pieces. Hearing the classic Godzilla theme start playing when he shows up to destroy the city should make all fans of the franchise smile. The movie also updates the classic roar of Godzilla into an even more terrifying sound than ever before. The effects produced to showcase Godzilla’s atomic breath are a highlight of the movie and showcase the sheer destructive force caused by this menace since this is the first time in a long time that Godzilla is truly that “bad guy” of the movie.

## Works Cited

- “The 16 Types of Camera Shots & Angles: Boords.” *Boords.Com*, 1 Nov. 2023, [boords.com/blog/16-types-of-camera-shots-and-angles-with-gifs](https://boords.com/blog/16-types-of-camera-shots-and-angles-with-gifs).
- “The Three-Act Structure: The King of Story Structures.” *Reedsy*, Reedsy, 19 July 2022, [blog.reedsy.com/guide/story-structure/three-act-structure/](https://blog.reedsy.com/guide/story-structure/three-act-structure/).