### Three Ss and three Cs: Bowling for Columbine (Simon Wächter)

Source for the film sequence: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtnX1fq8Zl0>

Scene before: 0:00 – 1:45

Main scene: 1:45 – 3:33

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| **Story**   * What story does the film tell? * What happened before this scene? * What will happen after this scene? | “Bowling for Columbine” is a 2002 made documentary film by Michael Moore that is reflecting the Columbine school mass shooting in 1999 with 15 students killed. The film is structured in sequences – each one focusing on a specific problem like the gunmen behind the shooting, gun enthusiasm, the clime of crime related fear or international homicide statistics and racial profiling.  The film starts with a short teaser about the daily life in the US (Minute 0:50 – 1:45): Doing some farm work, delivering the milk and bombing a foreign country with an unpronounceable name. Also, some important people of the film are shown.  At 1:45 the most famous scene of the movie begins: Michael More is going to open a bank account to get a free rifle in return – spotted in an ad in the local newspaper. The whole scene with doing some paper work, selecting the rifle and issuing it is done within the bank – a secure place.  After that initial scene, the official intro credits are rolling and the next sequence starts. |
| **Setting**   * Where does the action take place? * How quickly can we establish where the story takes place? * Does the setting lead to certain expectations? | As seen in minute 1:46, the scene takes place in a North Country bank. The location can be established within a few seconds.  Normally a bank is a professional institute, secured by several security systems and security guards – so in general it should be a safe place. |
| **Sound**   * Is there any music? * Does the music create an atmosphere? * How do the characters speak? | The scene starts with some country whistling music, relatable to the music in Lucky Luke when he is traveling around in the wild west while whistling on a grass in his mouth.  Besides that, there is no other music and the scene is focused on people talking to each other, explaining contract details and asking questions.  All in all, the conversations are formal, but some bank employees are trying to be a bit more natural and “buddy like” – like regular small talk (Minute 3:10: “There you go Mike / I have one personally / It’s a straight shooter”) |
| **Characters**   * What do we learn about the characters through what they say? * What do we learn about the characters through what they do? * What do we learn about the characters through visual clues? | In the main scene there are four important people:   1. Michael More as himself 2. Blonde female employee at the reception desk 3. Dark haired female employee presenting the rifles and doing the paper work 4. Male employee issuing the rifle   The employees all act in a professional and serious way, but Michael More always tries to trick them: Is it Caucasian or white / Is Caucasian spelled correctly / Is it safe to issue a rifle in a bank etc.?  They don’t follow these tricks, but answer them once in an interesting way (Oh I don’t think that’s the part they are worried about 🡪 Oh you are not black, so we don’t care about it)  For the female employees the situation feels tense, but it’s debatable why (Presence of the film crew/being filmed or due the gun). On the other hand, they are proud to tell that they store 500 rifles in their vault. The male employee is more relaxed and doing some small talk.  The whole scene left some strange impressions. An ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) registered weapon dealer that is allowed to do some background checks – all in a bank. Why not? Because it’s possible! |
| **Color**   * What colors are used in the scene? * Are the colors warm or cold? * How do the colors make you feel? | Compared to other scenes in the film, for example the comic animated history of the US (52:40), no special colors or animation effects are used.  The bank serves as a normal location with a lot of wooden furniture (Look at the reception or the bureau office where they are doing the paperwork), so a warm atmosphere is created. For me the bank looks like the local trustworthy bank with people I know from my rural neighborhood – except they sell weapons (In the film) |
| **Camera**   * Note down any close-up, medium and wide shots in the scene. Why were these shots used? * If there are any close-up shots, what emptins do they represent? * Can you think of adjectives or phrases to describe these emotions? | These camera shoots are used:   * Initial camera slide/move up to show and name the bank location (Minute 1:40). * Several close up/over the left/right shoulder camera perspectives to show the conversation between Michael and the employees. The short distance makes the conversation more realistic and the viewer has the feeling of being part of the conversation and participating in it * Several close camera perspectives to show Michael More tricking other people (Minutes 2:40, 2:50). They are followed by a camera move to the employee to show their reaction (Oh race isn’t the part they are worried about) * Medium shot between Mike and the male employee, used to show the handover of the rifle in a more relaxed environment (Michael is called Mike) – followed by the famous security question “Is it safe to hand out weapons in a bank” * One medium shoot (2:19) through a window to show that the team bus is driving around the bank (Personal guess, open for a discussion). Maybe the camera man was also just distracted by the passing bus |

**Personal Notes, interesting to read:**

The bank scene might be/is staged: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling_for_Columbine#Free_gun_for_opening_a_bank_account>