

YELLOW = Animated parts (for Eddie to do)

GREEN = Clip/Cutaway with audio

ORANGE = Visual clip/material only

While I was rewatching Shang-Chi, I especially enjoyed the bus fight scene. And it reminded me a lot of the action comedy of Jackie Chan.

[Shang-Chi using coat to fight alongside Rumble In The Bronx coat fight scene 19min]

This is probably not all that surprising given Jackie Chan's Stunt Team worked on the film.

[there's some bts footage of the bus scene here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rqn_9Fc4iU4]

Growing up, I had such a nostalgic attachment for the comedy action movies of Jackie Chan, I recall my dad showing me First Strike and it was the stepladder scene. [1] And in that moment, I was instantly a fan. I even tried to make my own Jackie Chan style fights. [2] Look, I never said they were good. [3]

But how does Jackie Chan do a fight scene? Let's dive in.

[1 First Strike from 52:40]

[2 Bob Star (also yes, you may laugh at 18-year-old bleach-blond Eddie) 0:21 to 0:32]

[3 Bob Star the fall from tree scream at 0:39]

CLARITY

First of all it's important to make clear the stakes. Typically Jackie is framed as righteous, there's a reason why he's often a cop of somekind [1], the real world is a bit more complicated than that, so let's take it with a grain of salt. And he's up usually against organised crime or religious zealots or pirates? Ok. [2] A nice clean good versus evil and it's usually down to Jackie to deal with, either alone or with a small team. [3]

[1 Police Story 1 pen flip at 1:07:47]

[2 Organised Crime = Battle Creek Brawl 8:13 / Religious Zealots = Armour Of God 1:11:50 / Pirates = Project A 1:36:23]

[3 Alone = Who Am I 1:26:04 / Team = Shanghai Noon 54:55 "I don't know karate but I know crazy"]

This is to frame Jackie as the underdog:

[Police Story BTS 3:47 "making movies I will act like underdog" to "just got lucky"]

He's either out of his element, or he's greatly outnumbered and so we root for him. And this can come through in the fight scenes where he's usually doesn't want trouble. [1][2]

[Mr Nice Guy 11:25 with the stop gesture]

[Rush Hour 33:11 "I don't want trouble" / Project A 6:10 "don't want trouble"]

Which is also in Shang-Chi.

[Also Shang-Chi "I don't want any trouble" near start]

This is a subversion to the typical gung-ho action heroes, [1] because while we know Jackie can fight, he doesn't normally want to, and only does in self defense.

[1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6fsl-qTGOs>]

And unlike other machismo action heroes, he often gets hurt. Either by other fighters.

[Project A 10:35 chair break to pain]

Or the environment.

The environment is important in a fight because we need context for where everything and everyone is. Is it indoor, outdoors, open space, cramped? Unlike Hollywood movies, the camera's position will be often wider, sometimes even including people's feet, so we can

read the fight properly and cuts are used to make it more impactful. Too many cuts means the audience has to constantly readjust what they're focusing on, and they lose clarity.

[Jackie Chan Editing.mp4 1:49 "they know there's a fight going on" to "what's going on"]

The only time it utilises really fast cuts, is the occasional shot that's repeated multiple times in multiple angles.

It wants us to be able to take in the scene and appreciate the choreography. It positions us as the audience as spectators of a stunt show, because we know these are real people doing real martial arts. We watch these moments with a more meta viewpoint.

Tell me you didn't feel that.

[Miracles 33:55]

1998's Rush Hour, there's a fight sequence that requires a gun to be thrown out the window

[Rush Hour from 1:03:20].

Jackie choreographs this sequence but it's suggested his character purposely throws the gun away.

[Rush Hour BTS.mp4 2:44 "I think you throw the gun" to "you don't want to shoot" skip to "I'm the cop" to "doesn't make sense"]

Jackie is considering the internal logic, what people would and would not do. And as we've established, it's usually very uncomplicated, so there's no reason why his character, a cop, voluntarily discards a gun during a fight. It has to be kept straightforward so it ensures that no matter how busy a fight can get, the audience always knows what's going on.

[Rush Hour BTS.mp4 3:49 "ok, if we're talk about gun, then gun"]

[Rush Hour BTS.mp4 3:54 "I kick the gun" [Alongside how it happens in Rush Hour from 1:03:27] to "he falling down" skip to "then I pick up the gun" to "the gun goes"]

[Rush Hour BTS.mp4 7:12 "but is this your gun" "I don't care"]

But wait, why does Jackie not care whose gun this is? A moment ago, he cared about the logic of his character but not the logic of where this gun came from?

This is because of semantics.

In a fight scene, you shouldn't muddy it with too much information. Yes, we later realise this is the gun of Chris Tucker's character and people will probably recognise it during the scene just from the handle, but in the heat of the moment, there's no need to stop and establish this as it would potentially complicate the scene.

Basically provide the audience with the bare minimum amount of vital information. Who is the good guy, who is the bad guy, where are they - and then, you can get creative.