

Bond Pre-credit Sequences

The Bond film series have a short pre-credit sequence at the beginning of each film that is used to introduce the characters and keep the viewer watching, to keep them interested in the film. More importantly the pre-credit sequence communicates the type of film genre to the viewer, and similarities between each film's sequences allows the film makers to 'brand' or 'tag' each film so viewers can see at once it is a Bond film they are watching, and hopefully keep watching.

Over the years the production techniques, as well as the actors, have changed. Technology has moved on a great deal and with every Bond film there is a high expectation to see new and exciting technology, and people aren't disappointed.

'Goldfinger' released in 1964, was considered to have very modern, even futuristic surroundings when the public first saw it. But when compared to today's effects it is very unrealistic. The only real special effects in 'Goldfinger' are an explosion, which is fairly realistic but only lasts about 3 seconds and only the fire is seen: not the actual building being destroyed, and an electrocution effect which extremely unrealistic because the water turned red for some reason!

'Goldfinger' has little stunt work in it, only a fight, which suggests a small budget, and another thing pointing to a low budget is the lack of extras.

When put in comparison with 'The Spy Who Loved Me', 1977, it is easy to see how technology has developed over the years, and how budgets have increased due to the extra profit being made with each film. In this film, back projection is used to apply the image of Bond skiing on to the background image of a large mountain slope. The effect would, once again be very modern at its time but is crude when compared with how sophisticated it is today.

Other technology in the film includes a ticker tape watch and a music box communicator. Both of these have also lost their futuristic value and are seen simply as novelty gimmicks of Bond rather than possible items of the future. More extras are used in this film, indicating a rise in budget, as well as the amount of stunts done in the ski scene.

1977 sees even more technological development with 'Tomorrow Never Dies', in which the pre-credit sequence is action packed and full of weapons technology, it being at an arms bazaar. The MI5 office is shown in this sequence and the technology is fairly hi-tech with many complicated

computer systems. The explosion in this film is a lot more advanced and shows everything actually getting blown up. This type of special affect would cost a lot of money, and the rise in extras and stunt men also points toward a larger budget.

Although the technology in each film have changed dramatically over the years, Bond himself remains constant throughout; despite the many different actors playing him, he has maintained his unique style and sense of humor. He proves himself brave and self assured as well as ruthless in 'Goldfinger'; by so quickly and stealthily attacking the heroin plant and any people posing a danger, or just an inconvenience to him.

In 'Tomorrow Never Dies' Bond is still portrayed like this, stealthily and efficiently attacking the arms bazaar with total self-assurance and success.

Bond's sense of humour is a large part of the entertaining value of Bond films. Bond has a very dry sense of humour and appears to have a rather comical view of everything in life, which is amusing. He has humour not only in what he says but in his movements also. One example of his comic side, which doesn't involve dialogue, is in 'Goldfinger' when Bond surfaces from the water in a high-tech dry suit with a fake pigeon attached to his head. It is not highly funny, merely amusing, as many of his lines, but it still adds a bit of humour to what, otherwise would simply be an action and 'romance' (if you can call sex that) film.

Bond is very witty and likes to play around with words to use them to create the best comical effect. For example when talking about drugs he refers to them as 'heroin flavored bananas' which was appropriate to the context as the owner of the heroin plant, the Mexican government had claimed to have financing revolution with profit from selling bananas; not the drugs.

Bonds character remains witty throughout all the films, and remains active at all times also; especially in bed it seems!

Although Bond does not spend any time with women in 'Tomorrow Never Dies' it is easy to his attitude towards them from the other two films. He treats them as though they are merely objects, 'instruments of pleasure' as such made purely for his enjoyment.

In 'Goldfinger', when he sees an assassin in the girl's eye he swings her around so she takes the blow to the head. To be fair, she was in league with the assassin but bond may have dealt with the situation differently; just pushing her to one side rather than forcing her to take the blow.

Another example of his disrespect for women was simply getting up and leaving a girl with no explanation to his leaving with total dismissal of

her feelings, proving he did not care for her, despite their intimate relations at point in time.

Surprising as it is to the rest of females in the human race, women in Bond films simply are at his feet. Perhaps that has something to do with his ego. Anyhow the women shown in all the Bond pre-credit sequences appear to find Bond very charming and entertaining. Despite any plans to kill him, they appear extremely willing to spend any time they do have left with him in bed (with the exception of 'Tomorrow Never Dies' in which the opportunity to display their willingness, or unwillingness to spend time in bed with Bond never arises.) For example, in 'The Spy Who Loved Me', although the woman is leading Bond in to a trap, she still wishes to spend more time with him before he walks in to the trap, and tries to persuade Bond to stay by saying 'I need you'. It didn't work.

Other than Bonds actual time with women, there is much sexual innuendo also. In every credit sequence there are naked women's bodies and a female singer's voice. As well as naked women's bodies there are many phallic symbols, such as the guns the women are performing gymnastics on in 'The Spy Who Loved Me' and the bullets the women are playing with in 'Tomorrow Never Dies'. Another thing in the 'Tomorrow Never Dies' credit sequence is where naked whitish women's bodies are wriggling over a white background, looking like sperm. It is strange to see such images in the 'Tomorrow Never Dies' sequence because before those images women are portrayed in a completely different manner.

These images fit well with the way women are presented in 'Goldfinger', as in 'Goldfinger' the only women character is a woman who dances in a sexual way to please men; an indicator women are for the enjoyment of men and not really much good for anything else other than pleasing men in a sexual manner. Later in the sequence, during the credits, the women are golden statues. They are the focal point and are used to project images on to. The fact they are being used this way signifies women are there to be used, and the fact they are naked also signifies they are there to be used in a sexual manner. Another the golden statues portray the women as ornaments to be seen and look pretty but not do anything much else.

13 years on and 'The Spy Who Loved Me' is different. One woman in this sequence is Russia's top secret agent; implying women are more useful than just for sex. However the woman still looks and acts like a 'Bond' girl; she is very beautiful and young and is in bed with a man pleading him to stay when she is first introduced- showing a weakness (for affection and caring is often seen as a weakness and always portrayed as one in Bond films).

What's interesting about the women in 'The Spy Who Loved Me' is, despite one has been 'promoted' to having a real role, the other is almost exactly the same as the one from 'Goldfinger', even betraying Bond in the same way to his planned death.

M from 'Tomorrow Never Dies' is completely different from all the other Bond women. She is older, and is not his lover but his boss. She is the head of MI5, much like the Stella Rimmington, and wears a white suit to make her stand out. Her role in the sequence is one of a leader and although over ruled at one point by a man, is proved to make the best decisions as his was wrong.

Therefore M's a character that's a lot closer to home to how women are treated today and is shown as a sort of hero character for women.

So from technology to women, the bond films have seen many changes over the past decades. What will come in the future? I can't even guess.