

Film: Kill Bill: Vol. 2

Straight cuts

00:26:00 – 00:26:02

This first one actually contains two fast consecutive cuts showing Beatrix Kiddo storming into Budd's Trailer and him shooting her as soon as she enters.

Tarantino's choice of using straight cuts here is pretty straightforward: to show a continuous action. Had he used fades or wipes, it would have seemed like there was a passage of time between each action, or at the very least, it would have slowed down the overall action, removing this passage's rapid feel.

00:54:41 – 00:55:40

The second example is actually a collection of cuts, 17 in one minute to be exact. They show a montage of Beatrix being trained by Pai Mei. However, here, I will concentrate on the two cuts from 00:54:57 to 00:55:08, where we see Beatrix punching wood, cutting to her training in martial arts, and then back to her punching wood.

The cuts in the whole minute-long sequence are part of a montage, and even though Tarantino could have used dissolves, like in a lot of other montages, he uses straight cuts. This is to show that the period shown by the montage was a relentless one, full of energy. The straight cuts make way for fast action, and even seem to resemble the punches that Beatrix throws, therefore even being part of the action. The two cuts I mentioned earlier are important as they portray a passage of time, as they cut from one action to another, and then back to the first. This shows the repetitiveness of the training, as well as introducing the passage of time without a dissolve.

Dissolves

00:57:39 – 00:57:48

These two dissolves happen upon returning to the grave where Beatrix is buried alive. They connect a shot of the tombstone, with a shot of the dirt, with the dark inside the coffin.

These dissolves serve multiple functions. The first is to establish that we are back to present time, after the flashback of her training with Pai Mei. They give a sense of passage of time, but rather than showing a passage from present to present, it goes from flashback to present; i.e. the viewer, rather than being at the present time on both sides of the dissolve, is in the past and transitions into the present. They act as a kind of return journey to the now. Their second function is to show the movement of our attention into the action (the coffin) after the establishing shot (the tombstone), almost passing through the dirt and entering the coffin. Had they been straight cuts, it would have seemed like three separate establishing shots, but with dissolves, they instead feel like movement from one shot to the next.

01:04:25 – 01:05:15

Here we have a sequence of Beatrix walking through the desert from the graveyard to Budd's trailer, lasting about 50 seconds and being separated by 6 cuts, all of which are dissolves.

This last example shows a more traditional usage of dissolves, i.e. the journey of a character over a long amount of time. They allow the camera to showcase various seemingly unimportant moments of that journey for the sole reason of creating steps in the advance of the character, instead of showing either the whole journey or only the beginning and end. The dissolves represent the parts of the journey that aren't filmed, showing that the action isn't edited continuously.