

## 2. Deconstructing Hitchcock: The Psycho Exercise

**One of the key areas which tends to keep student work at level 3 or below is lazy editing and framing, particularly apparent in unconvincing fight scenes. Cinema does provide numerous examples of reasons to have long unbroken shots. In Gus Van Sant's 'Elephant', we follow high school students in long dream-like tracking shots, which emphasise the calm regularity of the school day (about to be broken forever) and creating a conceptual map of the building from different character's viewpoints.**

**However, a general rule is that an action sequence should be broken up into considered, framed shots in order to interest an audience. This exercise should ensure that your students remember this.**

First, capture Hitchcock's famous shower scene into your editing software. In class, give students a blank storyboard. Now in groups, students move the playhead and gradually draw the storyboard for all two minutes, ending with the eye/vortex image bridge. As students draw the storyboard, naming each shot type (ECU, MS, etc.) they count the number of shots. Above each frame note for how long that shot is on screen.

For homework/classwork, students storyboard and film their own action sequence. You can choose from below or create your own. As usual students should think first about what they personally have access to in terms of props/actors/locations. The final cut should be of similar length to the Hitchcock scene, feature a similar number, length and variety of shots.

- A table set for dinner crashes to the floor
- A murder
- Falling out of bed
- A fight scene
- Stealing a car