

Shot-by-Shot Scene Analysis of *Everything Everywhere All At Once* | Erin Miller



This is the first shot in the sequence of shots showing Evelyn Wang's first successful "verse jump" where she accesses kung fu skills from another alternative universe to fight off Diedre—minion to villain Jobu Tupacky.

The camera is positioned at a low angle looking up at the long shot of Diedre careening towards Evelyn below. There is no intimate connection here, just passive audience observation. The focus is deep, which allows the viewer to survey the dim, eerie dark greenish stairwell environment.

Both Evelyn and Waymond (Evelyn's husband) are in the shadows looking up at Diedre. This puts them out of visual range so that Diedre becomes the main visual focus in this shot. Their line of sight parallels the stair railing that provides a central diagonal from which viewers can follow the motion of Diedre falling from left to right, and it also provides a leading line right towards Evelyn and Waymond to the lower right of the frame. In this shot, Diedre is moving in slow motion, which emphasizes the threatening pose and adds tension to the scene. The light is dim but balanced by the positioning of the two horizontal tube lights on either side of Diedre. This also cloaks Diedre in shadow making her an ominous and menacing figure. There is no music in the background at this point. This is an establishing shot of the action that will come later on.



This shot is an obliquely angled, medium close-up of Waymond to emphasize his terrified facial expressions, which is aided by the extremely slow pace of the shot. The source of light emanating from his upper left side casts the lower half of his face and the right side of his face in shadow. This creates an unnatural look to match the suspenseful diegesis of the film. The shot also dips into archetypal horror film themes where characters are often murdered or harmed in dark, isolated places (like stairwells).

The composition of the shot adds additional meaning to indicate that Waymond is essentially cornered and helpless. The oblique angle allows the viewer to see the literal corner to his right, and the brown wooden post behind his head acts as a ceiling as if to box him into the space below. He has nowhere to go.



This is a medium-long shot of Diedre descending as seen from Evelyn's point of view at the bottom of the staircase. The low angle of the camera heightens Diedre's dominance as she is towering over the viewer. The viewer is at a distance from her eyeline, but the first person POV provides a slight level of intimacy that the viewer did not experience from the previous shots.

Like the first shot, this is a deep focus where we can see the character, the dark background, and the top of the stairwell. The viewer can make out the murderous facial expression, an expression made more terrifying by the deep shadows on her face and body. Additionally, the stairwell railing is clearly leading the viewer to the opening at the top of the stairwell (hope of escape) but also helps draw our attention to Diedre.



This is a medium reverse shot of Evelyn on her knees as seen from Diedre's point of view. The high angled shot puts Evelyn in a submissive position where she must profess her love to Diedre in order to access the verse jumping pad that will launch her to another universe. This part of the plot is aided by the background music that is composed of a simple set of notes with a singer repeatedly singing, "I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you."

Even though the lighting is dim, it allows most of Evelyn's face to be seen. The direct eyeline match creates a feeling of deep sincerity and emotional intimacy. This sense is enhanced by the darker background contrasts, which contrasts with her lighter face. Waymond's position half-way off screen and in the shadows indicates his relative unimportance to this shot.



In this reverse shot, the camera is again at a low angle looking up at the subject. I think this shot is between a medium close-up and close-up of Diedre coming in slow motion for the kill. Her shoulders are still within the frame, yet we can clearly see the angry, menacing facial expression. Her body forms a triangle in the center of the frame making her the obvious central figure.

There is a balance of light and dark on her face with the right side (viewer perspective) of her face in the light whereas the left side of her face is in the dark. The overwhelming black background placed Diedre in the forefront. Darkness symbolizes danger. Diedre is literally coming out of the darkness to kill Evelyn. The "I love you" background music continues from the last shot.



This is a close-up of Evelyn with Diedre's knee about to collide with Evelyn's face. The green light on Evelyn's earpiece indicates the jumping pad has been accepted. The rule of thirds is used in this shot. I added a grid to show how Evelyn takes up the right third of the frame with her head intersecting the upper and lower right crosshairs. Diedre's knee is just above the upper left crosshair, which gives it an additional focal point. There is an eyeline match leading from Evelyn's eyes up to the tip of Diedre's knee. This is a moment of suspense as this shot is in extreme slow motion with Evelyn's hand starting to rise to press the button.

There is also a diagonal provided by the railing just below Diedre's knee which also directs a viewer's eye up to her knee. The horizontal portion of the railing also leads directly to Evelyn's face highlighting what is presumed to be an impending collision between knee and face. The lighting still assumes a darker tone with the predominance of shadows on Evelyn's face and Diedre's knee. The most important features of Evelyn's face are lit; notably, the eyes. A quick "blip" sound is heard when the green light is activated on the earpiece. The same "I love you" music plays in the background.



This is a quick, slow motion shot with the camera at a medium distance to the subject. The camera is level with Evelyn's head, and we see the same eyeline match from the previous shot. Here we can see Evelyn pressing the green button on her earpiece to initiate a verse jump. She maintains the eye-line match with Diedre's knee.

As with the previous shots, shadows hide part of Evelyn's face and body giving an overall consistency across the shots. From this angle, we can see that Evelyn's body forms a triangle that is centered in the middle of the frame. This highlights her importance in the shot. This also creates a second triangle to the left that is shaped from Diedre's leg pose.



This is a medium close-up of Evelyn being whisk-ed to another universe. The background is blurry to indicate movement. The blurry objects create lines that converge behind Evelyn and stretch towards the viewer indicating Evelyn's backward motion. Her hand is outstretched to the viewer adding to this backward motion effect.

The bright and colorful scenes whizzing by contrast with Evelyn's dark figure which creates an opposing light balance. This is the start of a continuously fast-moving shot which is meant to convey a sense of instantaneousness as she travels from her current universe to another. Everything in the frame contributes to the particular mise-en-scene in the shot and is consistent with the science fiction nature of the film.



This is a medium close-up of Evelyn after she has arrived in the kung fu universe. The composition of the shot indicates that this iteration of Evelyn is a famous or important person. She is wearing an expensive dress and is sitting in the back seat of some sort of vehicle. There is a visible barrier that separates her from the photographers surrounding the vehicle.

The contrast in lighting is used to emphasize her importance and high status. The bright lights coming from the right of the frame and the door light above her head generate a literal spotlight that is shining on her. The lighting also highlights her confused facial expression as she is trying to figure out where she is and what is happening around her.



This is a medium shot with reflection symmetry. A crack splits the shot into two mirror images. The different composition on either side emphasizes this split. The left half is similar to a scene from earlier in the movie where we learn that Evelyn went with Waymond to the U.S. when they were young. The use of the traditionally gendered colors of pink and blue on the characters' clothes also subtly hint at their young ages, but we do not know exactly what age they are.

The reflection symmetry allows the viewer to see the different moods of the characters. In the right half we see Evelyn is making a different choice by not going with Waymond. Viewers see this from the counterbalanced movements as young Evelyn is moving towards Waymond in the left side of the frame while she is moving away from him in the right side of the frame. Lastly, the frame is narrower than previous shots, so we do not see the full surroundings, only the characters. This eliminates extraneous details and allows the audience to focus on what is happening within the frame. Evelyn's choice to not go with Waymond sets her on a new path where she learns kung fu, which the other Evelyn will use to fight Diedre.