

Bachelor thesis in Television and Multimedia Production

What Makes a Plot Twist in a Whodunit Work?

Mikael Brønmo Hansen

Student nr.: 256508

No. Pages: 20

Universitetet i Stavanger



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Theory.....	4
The definition of Whodunit	4
The definition of a plot twist.....	6
Method.....	7
Analysis.....	7
Knives out (2019)	7
Synopsis	7
A cast of characters and suspects	8
Red herrings	11
The big reveal	12
Undercover (2022)	13
Synopsis	13
A cast of characters and suspects	14
Red herrings	15
The big reveal	17
Conclusion	19
References.....	20

Introduction

The murder mystery film genre has been around since the silent era but didn't truly flourish before the mid-20s before it went on to have its Golden age in the 30s and 40s. With the popularity of Agatha Christie's murder mystery books around that time, it's not hard to see why the film genre became so popular. After its golden age, it has since continued to be a notable genre, often receiving both critical and commercial success, with movies like "Rear window" (1954), "Murder on the orient express" (1974), "Who framed Roger Rabbit" (1988), Memento (2000) and most recently "Knives out" (2019).

One of the main attractors and a key aspect of murder mysteries is that even when they stray and diverge in styles their formula remains consistent and the source of interest and engagement for many audiences. And in the case of this genre, it tends to be a list of elements that structure the story in a typical fashion. Of all these elements, the reveal, also overlapping with the concept of a plot twist, is not only essential to the effectiveness of the whole plot but also to the audience's engagement. An effective reveal can narratively tie up the plot points in a logical sense and also help create the tension that drives the story.

This thesis will focus on spotlighting and exploring the necessary traits which have aided successful plot twists. The aim is to provide a framework to make and then compare my bachelor's film production to the film, titled Undercover, is a murder mystery in the style of a procedural cop drama. It centres around building towards a plot twist reveal so the whole process of making the film is aided by this thesis, pre-, during, and post-production. Firstly, the research into the topic of an example film will give inspiration for the script, filming, and editing process. And lastly, an analysis of the example inspiration versus the final bachelor production will show

the results of the research on the development of the bachelor film to indicate how it affected the result, especially the plot twist.

Problem/question: What makes a plot twist effective in a murder mystery film?

Theory

The definition of Whodunit

A murder mystery movie or a “Whodunit” (who’s done it) is often described as a story about a crime and the attempt to discover who committed it (Cambridge dictionary, n.d).

Whodunits often follow certain formulas and narrative trends. These include the setup of the murder, introduction of the diverse cast of characters/suspects, investigation, basic reveals, and climatic lead up to the main reveal of who the murderer is (predominantly, but may also be what the weapon was or the method, motive, the location of a key object or subject, etc) followed by the characters’ arc conclusions. Each element serves its specific and to various extents crucial role in the overall story. The crime setup often includes an isolated crime scene with a clear spatial layout that provides many and sometimes most of the crucial information later to become vital to tying up the story. It is also often a point the characters can return to for a full circle and final climatic reveal and/or action scene. The victims are typically, but not always, disliked and/or rich enough to be a cause of conflict and resentment amongst the characters. There can also be a second or more victims. They may at first be introduced as random, but are eventually connected back to the crime. They are often an eyewitness to the crime or someone involved in it in some way and who holds key to vital information that may reveal the culprit’s affairs. In some cases, second or more victims can even be used as red herrings where the victim is someone unforeseen to drive attention away from a suspect. And in other cases, would-be victims get the

upper hand over the murderers (Herbert, 2003, p. 201). The cast of characters (and suspects) serve as not only entertainment for their various clashing and often eccentric personalities, but also as intentionally misleading distractions, especially if they are not part of the final solution or are not the culprit. They may still be used as red herrings, a term explained later under the concept of plot twist. Basic reveals can also be red herrings or another block in the chain that leads to the overall story. Narratively they also help create a sense of rhythm so that the story can be paced out and not reveal too much at once so the audience can follow along and even try to deduce the mystery themselves. And finally, the ultimate reveal to the final solution that is revealed towards or as the very end. Depending on the setup the reveal may either be complex and heavily layered by multiple story beats and variables (such as other characters' contributions and perspectives) or surprisingly simple as a catch. Regardless this plot point is what the entire plot builds up to and if set up effectively can and should tie up most if not all loose ends (Rubin. M, 1999, p. 12, 25, 187-188, 201-204).

The most effective type of storytelling more often than not creates stronger imagery and has sharper dialogue than others (McKee, 2010, 19). The same can be said for murder mysteries as they mainly rely on a heavy relay of information and exploration of characters, events, and their details, whether they connect or not. And it is the detective or investigative character stand-in's role to sort through this information for the audience. However, an expectation many can have of the genre is that the format and layout (this includes the writing, pacing, rhythm, and number of details) allow the audience a level of participation. Famous author Edgar Allan Poe's writing style/psychology is described by Michael Holquist as following the mentality that 'there are no mysteries, only incorrect reasoning'. He claims this became an influence on the development of the mystery genre as a whole as many focused on the idea of logical deduction

filling in the gaps for missing information. This is seen in the most archetypal examples of this genre throughout history: the novels and screen adaptations of Sherlock Holmes (Holquist. M, 1971, p. 141). Even if the story is intricate and the intention is to delay reveals according to appropriate timing, there should still be a logical solution. And for effectiveness, this should be presented with a balance of distraction and transparency to the audience. After, the whodunit narrative's goal is primarily to make the audience engaged and notice inconsistencies in the information laid out so that they may try to put the pieces together before the inevitable plot twist. Keeping them in the dark for the sake of mystery can risk decreasing that immersion (Berliner. T, 2017, p. 63).

The definition of a plot twist

A plot twist is an unexpected development in the plot. It takes the story sideways and using it correctly, captivates the audience and leaves them thinking about the events of the movie, now wanting to see it again to catch all the hints. And especially in murder mysteries, the writer wants to fool the audience. They are built on misdirection using red herrings. A red herring is the term for a plot device, be that a character, event, or object, which is presented as an important clue or even vital piece to the final solution of the crime, but is in fact an irrelevance. It is placed there to distract the audience from the more obvious leads to the solution and prolong the content as they are forced to filter through information both true and false and distinguish which is which (Symons, 2020, 43). Often the biggest red herrings are the surprise reveal of the murderer (Cleland. J, 2018, p. 4-10). *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974) is considered one of Agatha Christie's best and most famous works. A lot of that comes from the twist at the end of the movie which is that everyone is the murderer. Throughout the movie, one is led to believe

that there are two murderers. But once the twist is revealed, the audience connects all the dots and understands both the why and the how. In turn, it recontextualizes the entire movie (Alexander. M, 2009, p. 19-26). However, this cannot come at the sacrifice of continuity, as stated above. According to crime fiction author P.D. James, a plot twist shouldn't require "twisting a character out of authenticity". In other words, characters, events, and details should not only be logical but also consistent (Herbert, 2003, 107).

Method

To answer the thesis' question, the film *Knives Out* will be analysed for its use of the typical murder mystery traits and then compared to my bachelor film's approach to incorporating these. The analysis will take into consideration the use of the elements as seen in the theory sources, including *Knives Out*, and eventually my use of: a cast of characters and suspects, red herrings, clues in the dialogue, and the setup for the big reveal.

Analysis

Knives out (2019)

Synopsis

Knives Out is a movie written and directed by Rian Johnson. It is about a wealthy crime novelist Harlan Thromby who invites his family to his mansion for his 85th birthday party, but by the next morning is found dead by his housekeeper with his throat slit. The cops rule it out as a suicide, but an anonymous party pays private investigator Benoit Blanc to investigate a possible murder. Although the whole family is slowly revealed to have second intentions about their relationships with Harlan it is Marta, his private nurse and the film's protagonist who becomes

the main suspect. In an attempt to keep her immigrant family safe, she tries to protect herself and the vital information she knows. As more secrets are revealed the family turns on each other and Marta has to figure out how to get out of this situation.

A cast of characters and suspects

Marta Cabrera	The movie's protagonist. Marta lives with her mother and sister while working as Harlan's nurse, with whom she is very close friends. She has a medical condition that causes her to vomit when lying.
Harlan Thromby	The believed murder victim of the movie and the owner of the mansion, where most of the movie's runtime takes place. Harlan was a famous mystery writer. He wrote all of his family members out of his will just a few days before his death, so that they could all build something for themselves from the ground up. He left everything he owned to Marta.
Hugh Ransom Drysdale	The murderer of the movie and Harlan's oldest grandson. Son of Richard and Linda. He thought he managed to kill Harlan by swapping the labels of his medicine and morphine, but as it is revealed towards the end of the movie, he is only responsible for the murder of the housekeeper Fran
Benoit Blanc	The detective in the movie. Not much is revealed about his backstory, and he is described as "The last of the gentlemen Sleuths." He quickly figures out that Marta has something to do with Harlan's murder, but believes she is innocent and investigates further to figure out what really happened.
Linda Drysdale	One of the suspects in the murder of Harlan. Mother of Ransom, Richard's wife, and Harlan's eldest child.
Richard Drysdale	One of the suspects in the murder of Harlan. Father of Ransom, Linda's husband, and Harlan's son-in-law. He's having an affair, which Linda finds out about at the end of the movie.
Walt Thromby	One of the suspects in the murder of Harlan. Father of Jacob and Harlan's youngest son. He used to be the CEO of Harlan's publishing company, but Harlan fires him during his party.

Joni Thromby	One of the suspects in the murder of Harlan. Mother of Meg and Harlan's daughter-in-law. She's been stealing money from Harlan through her daughter's tuition money.
Lieutenant Elliott	He's a calm, no-nonsense police officer who takes his job seriously. Throughout the movie, he questions Blanc on whether or not there has been a murder.
Meg Thromby	Joni's daughter and Harlan's second youngest granddaughter.
Jacob Thromby	The youngest member of the Thromby family. He's described as an "alt-right Nazi" by the family members outside of his parents.
Fran	Harlan's housekeeper and the real murder victim of the movie. Fran is the person who discovers Harlan's dead body.
Great nana Wanetta	Harlan's mother who no one knows the age of. She's mostly seen wandering around and no one seems to take her seriously, except for Blanc.

For starters, *Knives Out* is a film that largely sells itself on its cast. Not only is it comprised of some of the most famous current actors, but also, they bring in a range of diverse, eccentric performances. As typical of a whodunit, this cast, revolving around the rich victim, Harlan, is made up of those associated with him as relatives or otherwise, meaning they all have a connection to the case. All aside from the two main detective characters who form a duo of contrasting investigative techniques, one is probing and the other thinks outside the box. Something that, like the rest of the cast's different personalities, brings dynamic to the interactions onscreen. It also provides many possibilities as they each tell their information and story from their biased perspective, which the detectives and the audience have to pick apart the more they find out about each character and what their intentions are. To set this up, each character's association with Harlan, main occupation, and basic personality traits are revealed early into the film through a series of interrogations. This is done in many murder mysteries as it

was typical of old crime novels like the Agatha Christie style. It is meant to establish the basic layout of the plot connections and also create excitement. Like a puzzle box being flipped over and as its pieces fall on the table, some flip over to reveal themselves, giving a hint of the final big picture to come.

The characters that get the least amount of attention are Great nana Wanetta and Jacob. But even so, they are two of the characters that give the audience the biggest clues as to who the killer is. Jacob tells the family in one scene about how he heard Ransom's argument with Harlan during the party, but as he is seen as an untrustworthy character by the rest of the cast, the audience doesn't take what he says seriously. On top of that, it has been revealed much earlier that multiple characters argued with Harlan that day, so it isn't seen as any new relevant information. Great nana Wanetta is seen in the window when Marta climbs down the wall of the house after trying to improve her alibi by first leaving the house and sneaking in afterward and pretending to be Harlan, still alive. Here Wanetta says "Ransom are you back again already?" Again, something the audience doesn't pay much attention to, as it is played off as a joke, considering how old she is. But the wording of the question, raises the question of why would Ransom be back again, as in, it's the second time he comes back after leaving?

Lieutenant Elliott's role in the story is to be the character that questions everything the detective does, to make the audience question themselves as they are edging closer to solving the mystery along with the detective. The rest of the family serves as red herrings to mislead the audience into the wrong conclusions up until the reveal that happens at the end of the first act.

Red herrings

The whole first act of *Knives Out* is all about a classic whodunit. They are trying to find Harlan Thromby's killer. But at the end of the first act, when Marta is interviewed by Blanc and Elliott, it is revealed that Marta believes she is the killer. All of a sudden, with the flip of a coin, the movie has changed into a "how-is-she-going-to-get-away-with-this." thriller that forces the audience to journey through the perspective of an assumed killer.

Up until this point in the movie, Marta has been presented as nothing but a thoroughly kind and attentive person that the audience is meant to root for to succeed. And this has now become the red herring of the movie. The audience is focused on how Marta will get away with the "murder" of Harlan, instead of focusing on the clues that are laid out after this point that when looked upon in retrospect, will make it seem obvious that Ransom was the killer. The killer is seemingly already revealed, so there is no more mystery. This is also emphasized through a scene that happens shortly after this reveal, where it is shown that Marta has a drop of blood on her shoe from the night of the murder.

During the first act when all the family members are interviewed, they all reveal that they have some sort of motive to get rid of Harlan, but no one really sticks out as a clear suspect. Instead, they act in a way that makes the audience dislike them for their selfish wishes. So, the audience is just left waiting for more clues as to what happened that night. The important detail here is that Ransom isn't introduced on-screen until after it is revealed that Marta thinks she's the killer. Hence throwing any suspicion of him out the window. He just acts like a character that wants to see his family suffer while also getting his share of the inheritance. And given how the audience now has seen the true side of the family, it's easy for them to relate to how Ransom is feeling.

However, the predominant trope of a whodunit is that the detective always realises when something is not right and figures out the real culprit. And so as Blanc reviews each new piece of information and judges their characters he starts to notice the red herrings and what the clues are actually revealing.

The big reveal

Towards the end of every whodunit, there's always a scene where the detective either gathers all the suspects or like in *Knives out*, only the relevant people for the scene, and explains to the characters and the audience the how and the why the victim was killed, but more importantly, who killed them.

In *Knives out* the big reveal happens as Martha is about to tell the entire family that she killed Harlan. However, she is stopped by Blanc who read the autopsy report Fran had hidden, which revealed that Martha in fact didn't kill Harlan. Blanc shuns the family for trying to "steal back a fortune that they lost and she deserves." He concludes that Harlan committed suicide and brings Martha back to the room where they held the interrogations, where he then also brings in Ransom, whom he claims is the one who hired him in the first place. During the party, as mentioned earlier, Jacob overheard the fight between Harlan and Ransom, where the words "My will" and "I'm warning you" were heard. Blanc deduces that Harlan told Ransom that he was giving everything to Martha and that Ransom then came up with the plan of switching the vials so that Martha would be found guilty of killing Harlan and thus activating the slayer rule so that Ransom would get his share. The problem and what ultimately is what led to Ransom's demise was the fact that Martha was a good nurse. Even with the vials switched and the antidote stolen. Martha could tell by the slightest difference in texture the difference between the two without

looking at the labels. And after realising that Fran the housekeeper saw him switch the vials and tried to blackmail him, he forwarded the blackmail to Martha. Ransom then tried to kill Fran but again, Martha even though she was sure Fran would expose her as the killer, still tried to save her life because she was a good person. Even though she later died, Ransom believed she survived long enough to confess and try to kill Martha as he realised, he had lost, but again he makes one final crucial mistake. Like Harlan told Martha in the first act when talking about Ransom; “There’s so much of me in that boy...playing life like a game, until you can’t tell the difference between a stage prop and a real knife.”

Undercover (2022)

Synopsis

My bachelor film Undercover follows the story of detective Jane Davis as she tries to figure out who stabbed and killed her former friend from the police academy, Arin Walker. Right as she starts investigating, she finds out Walker was in charge of an undercover operation to bust a drug cartel with two other cops. Those two along with a cartel dealer who was previously arrested at the scene all become the main suspects. As Davis tries to pry the full story out of the biased retellings of each character while reflecting upon what happened between her and Walker, she slowly starts to piece together not just what happened but who Walker truly was.

A cast of characters and suspects

Jane Davis	The movie's protagonist. She's a fresh out of the academy detective, who's been put on her first homicide case, the murder of her former friend from the academy, Arin Walker.
Arin Walker	The murder victim of the movie. He distanced himself from Jane during their days at the academy, to investigate Dan Evans and Phillip Marston whom he had suspected would turn out to become corrupt cops.
Anderson	Jane's partner who helps her throughout the movie.
Dan Evans	The killer of the movie. At first, he seems to act helpful towards Jane, because he wants to find the one that killed his partner. But in reality, he only does this to make himself less of a suspect in the eyes of Jane.
Phillip Marston	Phillip Marston is the third police officer that took part in the undercover operation. During the night that Walker was killed, he stole drugs for himself to sell on the side.
Coyote	Coyote or Simon Ray is the drug dealer that was present at the warehouse during the night of the murder.

Undercover opens directly by establishing the central characters: the detective Davis and the victim Walker. Inciting incidents sometimes come after a few scenes or even by the end of an act, but other times they feature early on. Here it was in order to create a sense of urgency and focus on setting up the plot and the protagonist right away. During this first, the audience is introduced to not just who the victim is and how they were killed, but also their close connection to the detective all through dialogue. The intention was to keep the exposition as subtle as possible so as to feel natural but also feed the viewer information without the need for immersion-breaking flashbacks. The secondary detective and supporting character Anderson is also introduced to provide dynamic in the investigative side like in *Knives Out*. In a similar

fashion, the secondary detective is more straightforward and headstrong and the primary is more reflective and is more attuned to details and clues caught in the setting or dialogue.

Soon after the rest of the characters are introduced in the span of two scenes. Inspired not only by *Knives Out* but by many other crime mystery formats such as *Criminal UK* (2019-), an interrogation-only focused show *Undercover* takes a halt to delve into the typical interrogation sequence. Here it goes into a carefully edited montage of the interrogations of all 3 suspects: the two cops Evans and Marston and the drug dealer Coyote. Making this a montage that intercuts back and forth between the 3 suspects makes the flow not only more dynamic, but also allows the audience to catch the connection between the information each character is providing. This way they can follow along, and get a comprehensive idea of the layout of the night of the crime and its background context. Although in every scene of the film at least one important piece of information or clue is revealed, here is where it is most informative and demands some attention from the viewers. This is also where the contrasting personalities of the 4 characters, the 3 suspects versus Davis, provide entertainment but also a change in pacing and rhythm to avoid predictability. And it is where the red herrings start.

Red herrings

Each character serves a purpose in the plot. Davis is the audience's filter of information as well as the emotional gravity centre of the film. Anderson is her support source. And each of the 3 suspects provides information and entertainment. But even more than that, each is written and directed in a way to misdirect the audience.

Coyote, being the rowdiest and hard-boiled personality is taken as the obvious direction to point towards when it comes to the question of who could have committed a violent act. He is

already a criminal, being a drug dealer for the cartel. Besides, he has a strong implicit motive: he could have found out Walker was an undercover narc and killed him to protect himself and the cartel. But as Davis points out in an attempt to counter Coyote's aggressiveness, he's "just the cartel's little dog". The script reinforces how little he actually has to do with anything by having Davis repeatedly comment on how Coyote doesn't seem to know enough to be involved. As the voice of reason in the film, she quickly uncovers him as the too-obvious choice.

Marston on the other hand functions as the main red herring character. He starts out similarly aggressively like Coyote, being defensive and thwarting every remark Davis makes. However, he concedes enough information that Davis manages to catch onto an inconsistency in his account; That he at first claimed Walker was the one who made them split up before he got murdered when in fact it was him. This suddenly places a target on Marston as he now admits to having contributed to Walker ending up alone, a condition the killer would need. On top of that, he also reveals he lost his knife, which he claims everyone in the cartel had, but coincidentally he's the only one missing one, and Walker's was found with him, clean of blood. By probing Marston about these dots that don't seem to connect, Davis starts to make Marston unravel. As he does, he gets clearly more nervous and tries to make it up, claiming poor memory. Even as she reveals he was caught with drugs from the cartel's warehouse in his sole possession he tries to claim it as collecting evidence when it clearly isn't, as none of the others were found with any. So even though Marston gives a justification for every inconsistency by the end of the interrogation he has already established the impression of being untrustworthy. Not only that, he unintentionally revealed what is going to become the ultimate motive for why Walker was killed: covering up drug theft and corruption. However, though Davis catches on to this, she eventually deduces it is not Marston who had this motive, but Evans.

Evans is presented as by far the most stable and reasonable of the 3 suspects. He responds to questions respectfully and appears to try to help with extra information as he was just the backup and never went undercover himself. However, it is really only him trying to throw Marston under suspicion. The important thing to note though is that to make Evans work as the unlikely but logical killer reveals it is essential that he has dimension. He could not be solely presented as the good cop-out of the duo since it would not only just make him seem more suspicious for more astute audiences, but it would also be unnatural. As pointed out in the theory a plot twist cannot twist the authenticity of the character. And the truth is that Evans is introduced right from the start as not fully trustworthy or nice. In his first interaction with Davis, he storms into the office shouting at her about touching Walker's things as if he's being protective of his partner, but especially after knowing the reveal, this can easily be read as him not being protective but rather defensive. After all, as Davis figures, he was there to clean up after any evidence Walker might have left behind during his own corruption investigation. Additionally, both he and Marston mentions how they used to tease Davis in the academy days, calling her Nancy Drew and tampering with her assignments. Meaning that Evans also used to be antagonistic towards her despite his mostly friendly appearance. And on top of that never really shows remorse over it, still finds it funny. These seemingly throwaway lines of dialogue were used, like in *Knives Out*, as ways to hint to the audience about the characters' real personalities and intentions and build up to the final reveal.

The big reveal

After managing to figure out how to unlock Walker's phone, Davis and Anderson find an unsent e-mail in it that reveals Walker's mission was to bust cop corruption in his department.

But before he could finish it and expose who he was investigating the e-mail is cut off suggesting he got killed. This is presented as another dead-end lead until Davis, in classic mystery fashion, notices a small detail about the e-mail. Before she can explain what, she realised she takes Anderson down to the supposed crime scene but instead heads down to the basement under where his body was found. This gives a moment of tension but also a break for the audience to try to think and catch up with Davis, challenging themselves to figure out what was the vital clue she found in the e-mail.

In the basement, she finds Marston's missing knife, covered in blood. Before she can do anything, Evans shows up claiming to have realised alongside her that Walker was actually killed where he went to find Coyote, not outside, explaining why there is no blood where he was found as first pointed out by Davis. This reveal scene is shot in red lighting and keeps Evans in the shadows at times when he speaks to symbolise that this is the moment he finally reveals himself. Davis rebukes his attempts at lying to appear innocent immediately and in style of whodunits lays out all the inconsistencies and clues that led her to realise who the culprit was catching him (quite literally here) "red-handed". It is here she reveals she realised the e-mail said Walker had no service to communicate with at the basement but in the interrogation, Evans only claims he lost contact with Walker after already hearing about them splitting up. Now knowing he and Marston were in cahoots about it from before, it would make sense that he didn't need to hear from them to know it would happen, meaning they both lied. But while Marston was lying to cover up his theft, Evans must have been lying to cover up murder since he was never found with drugs on him. Once realising he's caught Evans drops his act at last and confirms his motive of trying to protect himself from being exposed by Walker. He tries to kill Davis, but Anderson shows up just in time to save her. As Evans is being arrested, he claims there is no evidence

against him to which Davis makes a final vital reveal in the film: she was wearing a microphone this whole time, knowing she might encounter him coming to clean up evidence just like he tried to do in the office.

The entire build-up to the reveal is laid out in a way that ties into all the setups. Davis' thoughtful and smart approach, Evans' dwindling personality, the details that didn't match such as Marston's missing knife and Walker's clean knife, the lack of blood around his body, and the e-mail. All of it leads to an arc that comes full circle, like in *Knives Out*.

Conclusion

The research and analysis of *Knives Out* found that it makes use of all the formulaic traits most characteristic to classic whodunits in a way that is effective and ties up the arcs that it sets up. These were mainly the use of a large cast of characters with diverse personalities for entertainment but also misdirection and red herrings that helped pace out the timing of each reveal until the final main climatic reveal of the culprit. Additionally, it included a detective lead that heavily contributes to the story both for deduction as well as emotional development. Inspired by this, my bachelor film set out to make similar use of these traits. Although the setting was instead a cop-focused story with the topic of friendship rather than family, the end result still followed the same formula with a gained understanding of what made these plot devices work in *Knives Out*.

References

- Wilson, G. (2006). Transparency and twist in narrative fiction film. *The Journal of aesthetics and art criticism*.
- Beigi, M., Callahan, J., & Michaelson, C. (2019). A critical plot twist: Changing characters and foreshadowing the future of organizational storytelling. *International Journal of Management Reviews*.
- Pérez, H. J. (2020). The plot twist in TV serial narratives. *Projections*.
- Brüttsch, M. (2014). From ironic distance to unexpected plot twists: Unreliable narration in literature and film. In *Beyond Classical Narration*.
- Brown, B. (2016). *Cinematography theory & practice* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- McKee, R. (2010). *Story: substance, structure, style, and the principles of screenwriting*. (1st ed.). New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.
- Cambridge university press. (n.d). Whodunit. In *Cambridge dictionary*. Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/whodunit>
- Holquist, M. (1971). Whodunit and Other Questions: Metaphysical Detective Stories in Post-War Fiction. *New Literary History*, 3(1), 135–156. <https://doi.org/10.2307/468384>
- Cleland, J. K. (2018). *Mastering Plot Twists: How to Use Suspense, Targeted Storytelling Strategies, and Structure to Captivate Your Readers*. Writer's Digest Books.
- Alexander, M. (2009). Rhetorical structure and reader manipulation in Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express. *Miscelanea: A Journal of English and American Philology*, 39, 13-27.
- Symons, M. (2020). *Why is a Red Herring Red?* (1st ed.). Boldwood Books Ltd.
- Herbert, R. (2003). *Whodunit?* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, R. (Director). (2019). *Knives Out* [Motion Picture].