

# The Grapes of Wrath

Commentary by Carolina 8C

## **Describe the opening shot.**

At the beginning of the film there is a little description that tells us a bit about the film, and about how a small farmer's family that was driving from there fields for economical and natural disasters and were looking for peace, security and a new home. After this, we could see an empty road, and in this empty road, after a while you could see a person walking alone, and hearing only the chirping of the birds. After a bit that he was walking you hear some music that came from a small town. This person saw a truck and its owner. He asked if he could have a lift, but the owner said that there are no riders allowed in his truck, so the walking man asked him again, and without showing no one he was letting a rider in, the owner told the walking man to grab on the truck so when they turned no one would see the owner giving s lift to s rider.

## **What does the tuck driver notice about Tom when he sits beside him in the truck, which makes him suspicious?**

The thing that the truck driver notices about Tom when he is sitting down, and makes the truck driver suspicious is something that is on Toms hands, and because when the truck driver asks Tom about work and stuff, every time Tom becomes more mad and mad.

## **Who does Tom encounter after getting out of the truck?**

The only person that Tom meets right after getting down from the truck is the preacher. At first Tom did not know it was him, because he was all dressed with old clothing, and old shoes, then when the preacher asked Tom, if he was the son of old Tom and so Tom said yes. When the preacher heard that yes, he was all happy and said that he was the one that baptized him, so Tom looked at the man more closely, and then he asked him if he was the preacher, but the preacher said that he **used to be** the preacher, know he is not anymore. He said he lost the call/the spirit. He used to have it, but not any more.

## **Why did Tom only get 7 years jail?**

Tom got only seven years of jail, even though he killed a guy, because, yeah, he killed a person, but that person had a knife, and the knife was in him. The

jail gave Tom only seven instead of more, because he killed a person just because he wanted to defend himself from that drunk person with a knife.

**Why does Casy say he ‘lost the spirit’?**

Casy said he lost the spirit, because now he didn’t have it anymore. Now he couldn’t help anymore. Now he couldn’t listen to God anymore.

**Why are Tom’s eyes ‘bewildered’ when going through his family’s old cabin?**

When Tom goes in the cabin he calls out **pa** and **ma (dad and mom)** and no one responds. He thinks to himself that something happened. He said that they were or all gone or all dead.

**What items belonging to his family does he pick up off the floor?**

At first Tom arrives in the cabin and sees that nobody was there anymore. The first item that he picks up off the floor was a shoe that his mother had for a lot of years, and the second item he picks up is an old hat of his that he had given it to his grandfather before going away.

**Who is hiding in the cabin and what does he tell Tom and Casy?**

The person that is hiding in the cabin was an old friend of Tom, Muley. Muley tells them that the Tom’s parents were gone away two weeks away to live at his uncle John’s, but they can’t stay there either because John’s got his business to think about.

**Ford’s use of flashback gives more insight. How do scenes contrast with what Tom sees?**

Well, before the flashbacks there is a little room were Muley, Casy and Tom are sitting down and it’s all dark and you could see only the faces of each person that is talking thanks to the lighter Tom had. Then after this scene you see light, you see day light. This light is the light of the day the tractors come and destroy the houses and the land. In this flashback you see Muley and his family in their land, and they are fighting for their rights. The contrast between the flashback and what Tom sees is the light and the dark. First you see the dark, three men sitting down in a room, and there is a small lighter to lighten up a bit. Then after there is light and a house full of people, and to darken this light up there were tractors breaking every house in every land they could find.

**Why is Muley surprised when the tractor driver takes off his goggles?**

Muley is surprised when the tractor driver takes off his goggles because he (Muley) sees that the tractor driver was Joe Davis's boy.

**What do Tom and Casy find when they arrive at Uncle John's cabin?**

The thing that Tom and Casy find when they arrive at Uncle John's cabin is Tom's family. As soon as they arrive all the family is so happy, and everyone thinks that Tom is a hero, because they think that he bust out of jail, and they repeat it, over and over again. Tom repeats that he did not bust out of jail but he has the papers that made him get out of jail.

**Describe the first meeting between Tom and Ma.**

The first meeting between Tom and Ma is so touching. As soon as they see each other they are so happy. They talk about going away, and then Ma asks Tom if he escaped from jail, but Tom said no, and that he got his papers and he doesn't have to hide from no one. After Ma asks him if they hurt him and made him a mad or mean man, but Tom says that they didn't no more, and Ma says that some times they do hurt people and make them mad or mean, but Tom says that they didn't hurt him or make him mad or mean.

**What is the family's general response to Tom's homecoming?**

The family's general response to Tom homecoming is good. They are all happy when they see him. When Tom and Ma were talking about if he got hurt or became mad or mean, Pa came out of the door and saw Tom, so he was repeating every time Tom, Tom, Tom, Tom is back. Inside of the house the two kids were so happy that they started jumping up and down saying "Tom is out of jail, Tom is out of jail..." and so on.

**Inside the cabin, Ma prepares to leave her home. How does John Ford capture the mood without words?**

John Ford captures the mood in the scene were Ma is inside preparing to leave the house, one because there is this sad music, and that makes a mood of sadness, another one is Ma's face. Her face is so sad, and you can see she doesn't want to leave but she has to, and by the way she looked all around the room and almost started crying. The last thing maybe are the objects that she takes out of a little box and looks at them, if they're paper and stuff she doesn't need she throws them in the fire, but if it a 3D object like that little porcelain dog or those earrings she put in front of her ears and looked in the mirror she keeps them.

**Why does Grandpa refuse to go with them?**

Grandpa refuses to go with them and leave the house because he says he lived there for a long, long time and he was too old to move in another place. He said the dirt was his, the land was his, the house was his, and he couldn't live it.

**As the truck moves along the highway the scene dissolves into a montage. What are some of the images which are superimposed?**

As the truck was moving along the highway these are some of the scenes that were superimposed. First there is a huge vineyard then it becomes Ma, Pa, and Al in their truck. Ma talks about how they will go on forever, and then this image becomes a beautiful sunset with lots of trucks on the road and a big tree that unfortunately blocks the sunset, but you can see it anyway.