**Donnie Darko - Opening Sequence**

* The opening starts on a road on a mountain side. The **lighting** is quiet dark as the only light on set appears to be coming from a sunrise from over the mountains edge as tall trees block out all other light creating a mysterious and eerie scene. The first thing we notice is something bright in the middle of the road.
* The **camera slowly pans** along the road creating tension as the audience are anticipating to find out what or who this is in the road.
* At about 30 seconds the person (Donnie) begins to sit up and we realise it is a young boy. Donnie is wearing a bright T shirt so we can clearly see him laying in the road and so he does not blend in with it.
* While this is happening a **low piano sound plays** creating a mysterious loud vibration sound. At this point the audience is curious as to why this boy was laying in the road drawing them in and wanting them to find out more.
* When we finally get a **close up** on Donnie we see he is dazed and confused and seems to be wearing pyjamas and no shoes adding to his mysteriousness. We also see a road bike opposite him making us wonder that maybe Donnie has had an accident.
* At 33 seconds a **high pitched piano sound plays** over the low vibrations playing a soothing lullaby with vocals singing harmonies over the top. Before Donnie stands up the camera pans over the mountain side creating a peaceful scene that suits the lullaby.
* When Donnie stands up with his back to the camera in a **close up shot** we are distanced from him as we cannot see he's facial expressions. When Donnie turns to face us we see his face change from dazed and confused to a smile as Donnie begins to chuckle to himself. From this point we can see that Donnie is not a normal boy. The fact that he is in this bizzare situation and is appaerntly not worried like a normal boy would be creates the questions, why is he laughing? What does Donnie know that we don't? This again creates tension between Donnie and the audience as they want to know more about him.
* At 1:13 Donnie walks out of view of the camera and the title fades in. The font itself is strange and exotic like Donnie. At the same time the title appears the **lullaby changes into more of a sinister note coinciding with the title**, giving off the impression that Donnie Darko is dangerous or disturbed.
* At 1:15 the director includes a camera effect a few seconds after the title appears. **A blinding flash** fills the screen. This flash is made to look like a sunrise. It could also be the signal for the flash created from a large explosion as if from a nuclear bomb, signifying the end of the world. This would contrast to what actually happens in the film as Donnie is told the world will end in 28 days. This could also mean a new beginning, as the sun has risen and a new day is upon Donnie. This would also contrast to what happens in the film as we find out later that Donnie is in a tangent universe that is on a constant cycle always begins again on the mountain. After this flash Donnie appears riding his bike back down the mountain. A variety of camera shots show Donnie is alone on the road as if he is a lone wanderer, a solitary figure.
* The song that plays once Donnie appears after the flash is very important to the opening as the lyrics of the song match key elements of the film and give an insight to what this film will contain. The song is **'The killing moon' by Echo and the Bunnymen**. Lyrics such as "So soon you'll take me" and "up in your arms too late to beg you" and "fate, up against your will, through the thick and thin. He will wait until you give yourself to him" correspond greatly to the films events as Donnie is forced to make a decision to give up his life and that it is fated that Donnie must die.
* Once Donnie is off the mountain we are shown a poster for a "Middlesex Halloween carnival". This gives the audience a small insight of the date and place the film is set in. As Donnie rides through a suburban neighbour-hood we can see that he lives in what appears to be a tidy well-kept area giving us the impression of a safe secure place.
* Once Donnie arrives at his house the **camera pans** away from Donnie and across the front lawn (which is very **bright and colourful** creating scene of happiness and positivity) where we first see his family.
* A man stands on the lawn tending to his garden, we presume this to be Donnie's father. When a young girl, maybe a little older than Donnie (we presume this is his older sister) crosses the lawn to speak to her father he ushers her away with a leaf blower causing the young girl to run away stropping while her father laughs to himself. These characteristics show that Donnie's family is pretty much an average family as the father thinks himself a bit of a comedian and the young girl is a stroppy teenager. However we see from Donnie's rather large well-kept house that he is also quiet fortunate.
* When the camera returns to Donnie he rides towards his garage and discards his bike desperately leaving it carelessly on the lawn.
* We then leave Donnie again to see a younger girl (presumably Donnie's younger sister) jumping and having fun on a trampoline.
* Donnie enters through he's back yard where we walks past his mother while she looks up from reading a Stephen King novel giving him a concerned yet unsurprised look, totally ignoring her as she stares after him.
* This shows the audience that everyone in this family seems to be normal except Donnie. The father, sisters and mother all appear to be doing normal day to day things except Donnie, singling him out from the rest of the family. We can tell by the way his mother does not bother to ask where he has been that Donnie and his mother do not get along and that this is not unusual and must happen quiet frequently in the Darko household.
* When Donnie enters the house the **camera follows him from the side** as he goes to the fridge.
* When he opens the door we see a white board on the door on which someone has written "Where is Donnie?". This tells us that the family are in fact worried and concerned about Donnie but are also used to this unusual behaviour as no one confronts Donnie when he returns home. The total effect of the opening gives the impression that Donnie is a problem child and not your average teenager.

<http://arronsmediablogdos.blogspot.co.nz/2011/04/analysis-opening-sequence-1-donnie.html>