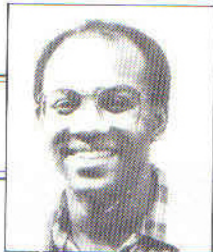


LIGHT SOURCE

Society of Television Lighting Directors

by Bentley Miller



Lighting -- The Teaching of a Discipline

Imagination is the energy that fuels the creative process of any human endeavour. As such, a good imagination is our greatest asset when we begin any project.

But it was the very thing that the students I was working with felt was in short supply in the script that they had to transform into a half-hour drama. The consensus among the six groups that were producing the same drama was that they didn't like the script; they believed it to be dull and uninspired. In all fairness to the writers, it is important to realize that what the script needed was an imaginative interpretation to bring it life.

A script like this one presented the production units with a great opportunity to mould and shape the story within the boundaries set by the story line; to say anything that they wanted it to say if they give themselves the licence to do so and the imagination to try.

This is a brief synopsis of the story.

The scene is set with a typical guest speaker (from the students' perspective) arriving on campus to speak to the aspiring broadcasters of tomorrow about the industry and the places that they hope to assume when they graduate. The guest speaker is an overbearing, self-important type who proceeds down the hallway to the lecture theatre surrounded by a throng of hopeful job seekers.

In swift fashion he proceeds to dash the hopes of the students present at the lecture. He vilifies them as a group, relishing the opportunity to deflect any pertinent inquiries as just so much wild-eyed students' nonsense. A confrontation ensues with a student when the speaker denies that he promised a job to the student upon graduation. Callously, in front of her peers, he accuses her of lying to further her career aspirations. Incensed, she walks away vowing some sort of retribution for her

humiliation. After the lecture a group of students is seen talking in an aside as the overbearing guest speaker is surrounded by an adoring throng of starry-eyed students. The students declare that the guest had come to give them information and to lecture, not to castigate them and accuse them of being fools and liars.

Thus the scene is set for the guest's murder on campus. The death is mysterious; there are no witnesses, but there are a number of people with the motive of revenge. The story proceeds from that point to its eventual conclusion where the murderer gives himself away during an interrogation by the two police detectives who, at times, appeared less than astute.

After some deliberation the students did not fail themselves and took the first steps to turning out a first rate product. The proof of this fact is the final product.

The two Friday production teams which I was associated with produced two different productions from the same script. One group's approach was to make their production very campy while maintaining the barest thread that kept the story from being completely overdone. The second group's production was more restrained in its approach to the material, aiming for a story production that had elements of camp but tended to be somewhat more serious.

In both cases I was impressed by the ingenuity and the imaginative use of both subtle and not so subtle wordplay and voice inflection and intonation, lighting and camera work. Their imaginings didn't stop at the production stage, but extended into the post-production stage of the project. The students wrote and recorded their own music which served to underscore the entire production. The execution was exceptional.

Lighting, the Learning Process

As mentioned in the previous installment of this column, I was responsible for conducting lighting seminars to acquaint the students with the effective use of the portable lighting kits. The lighting kits were the industry standard set of redheads with the usual com-

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