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Digital Filmmaking: Methods and Practices for The Production of the Library and Traffic Signals

James M. Martin

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**DIGITAL FILMMAKING:
METHODS AND PRACTICES FOR
THE PRODUCTION OF *THE LIBRARY* AND *TRAFFIC SIGNALS***

James M. Martin, B.A.

An Abstract Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Lindenwood University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Communication

2006

ABSTRACT

The focus of this culminating project was to produce a short film on digital video using the skills and theories learned during the graduate Communication LCIE course of study. This project also utilized specialized equipment introduced during senior level Cinematography, Lighting for Film and Video, and Location Sound courses. The main goal was to have a completed work that held to the traditions of film while also taking advantage of the inherent benefits and dealing with the limitations of digital video.

Since the introduction of digital editing and digital video image acquisition, a debate has persisted within the video and film production industries about the value and artistic merit of film-style works produced on a digital medium. In fact many film industry purists insist that any narrative work that did not originate on celluloid cannot be considered a film in the strictest sense.

While others, amateurs as well as well known industry professionals, see the advent of digital video as a way to broaden the field. The lower price point of digital video cameras, digital video tape and editing equipment allows for many people who would otherwise be priced out of filmmaking pursuits to achieve their artistic visions. This allows creators to focus less on the technical aspects and more on storytelling.

For similar reasons, many educational institutions have also chosen to have student filmmakers work in the digital realm. Without the added expense of purchasing, storing and developing large amounts of traditional, celluloid film stock a broader range of students has been able to pursue film as their chosen field. This has led to mutual benefits for students and schools alike.

During the course of this project, three short film scripts were developed for production. Two of the scripts were taken from conception to completed production. The first work, *The Library*, clearly shows the inherit qualities of digital video can sometimes be a stumbling block. The other, *Traffic Signals*, demonstrates that even with the current limits of digital technology, digital filmmakers can produce high quality works with excellent production values. With the financial and technical barriers somewhat lifted the focus returns to the more important storytelling aspects such as writing, directing and editing.

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* NOTE: All scripts are formatted to screenwriting industry standards

DIGITAL FILMMAKING: PROCESS ANALYSIS OF
THE LIBRARY AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this culminating project was to plan and complete a short film demonstrating a comprehensive knowledge and mastery of the skills gained throughout the LCIE Graduate Communications program. A secondary goal of the project was to explore the benefits and limitations of using a digital medium as opposed to traditional celluloid based film.

I found the results of this project were favorable. Two short films titled: *The Library* and *Traffic Signals*, were completed within the time allotted. And while the first production did suffer from a few problems, it proved to be a worthy initial effort. It also served as a testing ground for the next production, allowing for a far more streamlined effort and higher quality second short film.

Planning for this culminating project began in February of 2006. Having completed the advanced production classes I chose to enroll in classes that would enhance my production skill set by focusing on the techniques and theories used in traditional film. These classes, Cinematography, Lighting for Film and Video and Location Sound, all focused on the history, processes and equipment used in high end television and film production.

Once to a satisfactory level in the academic study of these areas, practical exercises were commenced to reinforce learned academic skills.

These exercises began with simple lessons in exposure, basic sound recording and latitude. Things then progressed to camera and lighting setups and more complex sound design and recording. Additional exercises focused on pre-production. One of the main lessons of this stage was script breakdown. This process took the text and basic instructions of the writer (in this case myself) and added details for the camera and crew that would allow a more thorough idea of how the shooting phase of production would progress and provide a finer visualization of the completed project prior to entering the editing stage. Copies of the documentation created in this stage can be found in the appendices. The original script generated a result of this cluster of classes and scheduled for use as a final project was titled, *Anatomy of Attraction*.

The script blended comedic and dramatic elements from both a television and film production perspective into a complete narrative whole. The script included general shooting, interviews, voice overs and basic narrative shooting. By focusing on such a multi-layered approach, I found that I would be able to utilize my previous video production background and ease slowly into "film style" production gradually. Thus the move to more complex production would have been approached at the end of the project with the bulk of the production already completed.

However, logistical and scheduling problems facilitated the need to reluctantly abandon a more complex, lengthy production.

The time constraints involved resulted in a move to a less involved, shorter production that could be completed without the recruitment of a large cast and crew. For these reasons, *Anatomy of Attraction* was put on hiatus. Two shorter films, *The Library* and *Traffic Signals* were scheduled for production in its place.

PROCESS ANALYSIS: *THE LIBRARY*

The production process for *The Library* began with development of a script that was short enough to put into production in a minimum of time but contained enough unique production elements to demonstrate a mastery of lighting, directing, production sound and cinematography. The post production process would then address such editing issues as pacing, proper cutting and continuity.

Once a satisfactory script was developed, reviewed and re-written for corrections the pre-production phase commenced. The initial focus was the casting of the two acting roles and the recruitment of production crew members. In both instances Lindenwood graduate students performed key roles.

When cast and crew were put in place, the primary pre-production phase began. The script was evaluated to determine what equipment would be necessary to complete principle shooting and sound acquisition with proper lighting and composition. Recording media determinations were made (in this case mini-DV) and locations were evaluated and secured.

The next stage of pre-production began with lighting tests of both location and cast as well as line and blocking rehearsals. This phase also included on camera tests of clothing, hairstyles and makeup.

Due to scheduling conflicts with cast and crew this phase was shortened resulting in only two complete rehearsals with full cast and crew before principal shooting commenced.

The next step of the process was primary production (also referred to as principle shooting) where picture and sound are acquired with lighting and effects. During this phase, most elements ran smoothly with only minor interruptions. Most of these interruptions were directly related to the lack of additional pre-production time (i.e., rehearsal and blocking time) and the inherent limitations of shooting in a public place. These limitations became even more apparent during the post production phase where editing of the project began.

While editing the project it was discovered that certain images were darker than expected and the audio, while clear, was not as full and well rounded as would normally be desired. There were also additional issues with continuity, where the cast performances were not repeated in the same manner from one camera angle to another. However, the amount of coverage executed during principal shooting greatly lessened the impact of this problem.

Upon completion, the overall production quality of *The Library* was fairly standard. There were no major mistakes or oversights but the quality of the finished film could have met a higher standard under better circumstances.

However, as a practical exercise and a learning experience, the process of completing *The Library* was invaluable. Each of the lessons learned was put into practice during the production of the final short film of the culminating project: *Traffic Signals*.

PROCESS ANALYSIS: *TRAFFIC SIGNALS*

The production process for *Traffic Signals* began in a similar manner to *The Library*. However, each phase progressed at a more gradual pace which allowed for more fine tuning which in turn resulted in a more polished final product.

Once again, the project began with the writing and revision of a suitable script. Subject matter, time constraints, available equipment and locations as well as casting issues were all addressed during this time and issues were resolved as they occurred. The only true issue in need of consideration in this stage was the separation of the lead role so that it could be filled by two actresses; one for on-camera work and one for voice overs.

The pre-production stage then began with casting. Because of travel and scheduling complications, the lead role was cast and then re-cast. However, time for such changes was built into the production schedule so no delays were necessary. With the roles cast, script evaluation began. Equipment, wardrobe, prop and location needs were all evaluated and rehearsal schedules were planned. Tests for hairstyles, makeup and wardrobe were also completed during this phase.

During the second phase of post production, rehearsals with the leads commenced. With a broader schedule and more time devoted to the production

the rehearsals were more in depth and character development was much better addressed. This allowed more complex camera rehearsals to be completed. This in turn led to the opportunity to perform a complete "pre-visualization" shoot where the script could be performed on camera from start to finish and then recorded for evaluation.

With the use of pre-visualization and extensive camera tests at the desired shooting locations, problems with lighting, filters and logistics were discovered long before initial shooting commenced. The issues were discussed with cast and crew and decisions were made that would make the production phase run more smoothly while holding to the planned creative content of the script.

As a result, the time investment put forth in pre-production allowed the production phase to run quickly and efficiently. In fact, twice as much shooting was accomplished on *Traffic Signals* in a production time period that was significantly shorter than *The Library*. This efficient pacing also yielded footage that was of superior quality. And while this was partly due to the use of professional grade recording media, the decision to use such media was made during the pre-production phase.

Another result of extensive pre-production and efficient production phases was a quick and uncomplicated post production phase. Because all major issues had been addressed prior to the start of editing, the actual editing process was equally efficient.

This allowed more time for editing overall as well as more latitude for creative changes and additions that would enhance the project. The resulting finished work was a true comprehensive demonstration of advanced film and video techniques and an entertaining artistic work.

CONCLUSION

Upon completion, the overall production of *Traffic Signals* was not only well executed but also enjoyable. And while this second project was much better than its predecessor, *Traffic Signals* would not have been completed as well without the mistakes learned during production of *The Library*.

In conclusion, this project has not only reinforced the collaborative nature of filmmaking, it has also reinforced the need for careful and thoughtful planning throughout the filmmaking process. Small oversights can become larger issues if left unattended. More time spent preventing problems will grant more time to achieve a creator's artistic vision. And despite the problems that came before it, I believe the completion of *Traffic Signals* is the achievement of my own unique artistic vision. One that could not have been made a reality without the assistance of the cast and crew.

PROJECT SCRIPTS

THE LIBRARY

FADE IN:

EXT. WIDE ESTABLISHING SHOT OF LIBRARY BUILDING -- AFTERNOON

INT. SLOW PAN OF DARK BOOKSHELVES -- MOMENTS LATER

INT. LIBRARY STUDY AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

Two STUDENTS sit at the table in the study area. Textbooks, reference books and notebooks are on the table. There is also a laptop. One student gets up from the table to look for something on a nearby shelf. Soft whisper is heard.

STUDENT A

What are you doing?

STUDENT B

What?

STUDENT A

Are you making that noise?

STUDENT B

What noise?

STUDENT A

Fine. Pretend it wasn't you.

STUDENT B moves back to the table with a book from the shelf. The noise stops.

STUDENT B

That's easy. It wasn't.

STUDENT A

Whatever.

The students study again in silence. Student B puts on headphones. The noise begins again.

STUDENT A (CONT'D)

Did you leave that on before?

STUDENT B

No. Why?

STUDENT A

That could have been what I heard.

STUDENT B

Not hardly. It was turned off.

The noise whisper grows slightly louder. Almost as if calling a name.

STUDENT A
There it is again. Listen.

STUDENT B
I don't hear anything.

STUDENT A
You're telling me you don't hear that?

STUDENT B takes off the headphones and goes over to the shelves again.

STUDENT B
Maybe you should lay off the caffeine.

STUDENT A stands up to face STUDENT B.

STUDENT A
And maybe you're deaf. You're seriously saying you don't hear anything?

STUDENT B pauses to listen.

STUDENT B
No. I don't.

STUDENT A
Well it stopped again. Just wait a second.

STUDENT B
I'm going downstairs to the copy machine. You want to go with me or stay here with your imaginary friends?

STUDENT A
Forget it. Just go.

STUDENT B walks off past the shelves. Footsteps are heard going down a flight of stairs. STUDENT A listens intently; hears nothing and sits. The sound begins again.

STUDENT A (CONT'D)
Okay, this stopped being funny a long time ago.

A book falls from a nearby shelf causing STUDENT A to jump.

STUDENT A (CONT'D)
Real cute.

STUDENT A stands up and retrieves the book then looks down the aisle. The whispering continues, growing louder.

STUDENT A (CONT'D)

You can come out now.

A chair slides past the shelf. STUDENT A starts to reveal a small amount of panic.

STUDENT A (CONT'D)

That's it. Joke's over. Stop it!

The only response is the whisper.

STUDENT A (CONT'D)

Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!

STUDENT A moves over to the table and gathers up some belongings. STUDENT A quickly but cautiously moves down one of the dark aisles

P.O.V. STUDENT A DOWN THE AISLE -- CONTINUOUS

Over STUDENT A's shoulder the exit sign can be seen.

INT. SLOW PAN OF DARK BOOKSHELVES -- CONTINUOUS

STUDENT A can be seen through the rows of books.

INT. LOW ANGLE OF AISLE -- CONTINUOUS

STUDENT A moves cautiously down the aisle still close to panic.

P.O.V. STUDENT A DOWN THE AISLE -- CONTINUOUS

From behind STUDENT A something moves closer. As the view grows close enough to touch STUDENT A turns.

EXT. WIDE ESTABLISHING SHOT OF LIBRARY BUILDING --
CONTINUOUS

From outside the building a scream is heard.

FADE OUT

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSECTION -- DAY

Vehicles roll through the intersection; slowing as the light turns yellow then red. A car driven by a college age girl stops at the light.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

After fidgeting with the stereo, the **GIRL IN THE CAR**, notices a **GUY AT THE CORNER**.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

I am so beyond late. Hey, he's kinda' cute.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- CONTINUOUS

The **GUY AT THE CORNER** pushes the button for the walk signal and waits. He glances at the **GIRL IN THE CAR**.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

I think he's in my history class. He sits behind that really trashy girl from - where the hell is she from anyway?

The **GUY** notices the **GIRL** gazing at him. He responds with a smile and a slight nod.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Yeah. I see you. You think I'm checking you out. Maybe I am. Maybe I'm not.

INT. ANGLE ON GIRL -- CONTINUOUS

From inside the car the **GIRL** glance in the **GUY**'s direction.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

I might be checking to see if the intersection's clear. But I wonder if he's dating anybody.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The **GIRL** starts to daydream a bit as she waits for the light.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

I could drop a few hints in class tomorrow. Check out the situation. See what's what.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- CONTINUOUS

The WALK signal changes. The GUY begins to cross. He glances in the direction of the car.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

There he goes. Nice walk. I wonder if I could get him to ask me out.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The GIRL carefully watches the GUY cross the intersection.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

Go to the movies a few times. Have dinner a few times. After a couple of months, seriously rock his world! If things go well that is. Then you just know we'll have our first big fight. But after we make up he could visit for the weekend. Of course, Dad would think he wasn't good enough for me. And Mom would ask whatever-happened-to-that-nice-Alan-boy.

INT. ANGLE ON GIRL -- CONTINUOUS

The GIRL continues to watch the GUY while riding a roller coaster of emotion.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

Things would get all serious because he's trying to win them over. And then we'd start fighting over whose parents we're going to spend Christmas and New Years with. I'd say mine because I love the snow.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The GIRL has stopped watching the GUY. She is lost in her own thoughts.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

And he'd say his because that's how it's always been. Then I'm all "is this how you're going to act when we get married? And he's all "who the hell said we'd ever get married?" He says I'm smothering him when all I want is to know where we're headed. Then BANG! Suddenly he's out the door and I'm a wreck because he can't commit. You all want a way out. Don't you! DON'T YOU!

EXT. PUSH IN -- CONTINUOUS

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

After graduation we meet at some dinner party and I'm looking all hot because I've got a great job and access to the company gym. He says "wow you look great." Of course I look great! After a few drinks it's "I never stopped thinking about you" That's right biggest mistake of your life. He's all "maybe we could go somewhere and talk" and I'm like I really have to go. And he's all "but I still love you." We start dating again and I make him wait forever before he even gets near me this time. And just when it looks like things are starting to cool off again he proposes during our vacation to Maui.

INT. ANGLE ON GIRL -- CONTINUOUS

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Church wedding of course. But when my promotion comes through it's the big "what about our plans to have children?" Discussion. There is no way I'm giving up a vice president position. And who says I even want children. That's when it starts. First the late meetings. Then the weekend business trips. The mystery phone calls. Things get better after Chloe and Emerson are born. But it doesn't last! Even when I find the credit card receipts he won't admit it! Not until I catch him in the act!

EXT. INTERSECTION -- CONTINUOUS

The GUY has finally made it to the opposite corner of the intersection.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The GIRL continues to fume as she glares at the GUY.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

What do you mean, we're not the same people anymore? Who the hell are we then! How can you do this to me! What am I supposed to tell our children!

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The GIRL is livid. Her face is contorted with silent rage.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

That's right. Act like you didn't do anything wrong you heartless, cheating, bastard! My father was right! You son of a bitch! You never-

EXT. INTERSECTION -- CONTINUOUS

A loud honk from behind causes the girl to jump, breaking her out of her daydreams.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- CONTINUOUS

A CLOSE SHOT of the traffic signal shows the light is green.

INT. ANGLE ON GIRL -- CONTINUOUS

From inside the car the girl glances in her rearview mirror.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

All right. All right. I'm going.
Man. Don't go all psycho.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- CONTINUOUS

A wide shot shows the GIRL's car driving away.

GIRL IN THE CAR (V.O.)

You know. Maybe that wasn't the guy from my class. What is his name?

FADE OUT

PROJECT SHOT LISTS

LCIE Culminating Project
Graduate Short Film: *The Library*
SHOT LIST

1. WIDE SHOT- Exterior shot of a library from below windows.
(Low Angle)
2. WIDE SHOT- Slow pan or dolly across a row of books on shelf.
3. WIDE SHOT - Of Student A and Student B at a table studying. Student B stands and moves to bookshelf.
4. MEDIUM SHOT - Student A hears noise and questions Student B.
5. WIDE SHOT - Student B crosses back to table and sits down.
6. MEDIUM SHOT - 2 shot of both students continuing conversation.
7. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - Student A insists that someone or something is making strange noises.
8. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - Student B responds and listens but doesn't hear any noises.
9. WIDE SHOT - Student B stands up to leave.
10. MEDIUM SHOT - Student B responds to comment and follows Student A to nearby bookshelves.
11. WIDE SHOT - Student A and Student B continue conversation.
12. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - Student B is still insistent there are noises.
13. WIDE SHOT - Student B is about to leave.
14. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - Asks if Student A wants to tag along or stay at table alone.

LCIE Culminating Project
Graduate Short Film: *The Library*
SHOT LIST (continued)

15. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - Student A decides to stay behind.
16. MEDIUM SHOT - Student B exits. Student A looks around cautiously then turns back in the direction of the table.
17. WIDE SHOT - Student A moves back to the table and sits.
18. CLOSE UP - Student A hears noises again and grows frustrated.
19. CLOSE UP - Insert shot of book falling from shelf.
20. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - Student A is startled but still angry and defiant.
21. MEDIUM SHOT - Student A stands and moves to the shelves. Retrieves book from the floor.
22. WIDE SHOT - Student A searches for the guilty party and listens as the noises grow louder.
23. WIDE SHOT - A chair slides past the end of the row further startling Student A. Things have suddenly turned serious.
24. MEDIUM SHOT - Student A angrily calls out for an end to the joke.
25. CLOSE UP - Student A continues to grow angry and worried.
26. WIDE SHOT - Student A hurriedly emerges from the shelves and gathers belongings. Exits down another row.
27. MEDIUM SHOT - Student A cautiously moves down the aisle between the shelves.
28. WIDE SHOT - (Student POV) Student A moves toward the exit. (with illuminated sign above door.)

LCIE Culminating Project
Graduate Short Film: *The Library*
SHOT LIST (continued)

29. CLOSE UP - Student A can be seen between the rows of books from the opposite side of the shelf.
30. CLOSE UP - Something follows closely behind Student A.
31. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - (zoom in) toward Student A who turns with a frightened realization and opens mouth to scream.
32. WIDE SHOT - Exterior shot of a library from below windows.
(Low Angle).

LCIE Culminating Project
Graduate Short Film: *Traffic Signals*
SHOT LIST

1. WIDE SHOT- Cars approaching an intersection with crosswalks and crossing signals. (High angle)
2. WIDE SHOT- Single car approaches and stops at the light. (GIRL is inside) (Level angle)
3. MEDIUM SHOT - GIRL fumbles with stereo. Then notices GUY outside at corner.
4. WIDE SHOT - GUY pushes button for crossing signal and waits. He notices GIRL.
5. MEDIUM SHOT - GIRL stares thoughtfully ahead with occasional glances at GUY.
6. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - GUY smiles and nods at GIRL who is now staring.
7. MEDIUM SHOT - GIRL tries to look casual as she returns the gesture.
8. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - (inside car POV) GIRL studies GUY casually.
9. MEDIUM SHOT - GIRL daydreams. Looks at nothing in particular. Thoughtful.
10. WIDE SHOT - GUY starts across street. GIRL watches him walk.
11. MEDIUM SHOT - GIRL continues to watch him with renewed interest.
12. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - Repeat of shot 11.
13. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - (inside car POV) GIRL drifts off into her own thoughts again.
14. MEDIUM SHOT - GIRL looks gradually frustrated. Expression turns suddenly angry.

LCIE Culminating Project
Graduate Short Film: *Traffic Signals*
SHOT LIST (continued)

15. MEDIUM SHOT - (slow push in) Smug, vindictive expression; moves to joy.
16. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - (inside car POV) (slow push in) Joyful expression turns to anger.
17. MEDIUM SHOT - GIRL is completely enraged. Glares in the direction of GUY
18. CLOSE UP - Repeat of shot 17.
19. WIDE SHOT - cars honk, startling GIRL.
20. INSERT SHOT - Traffic signal. Green light.
21. MEDIUM CLOSE UP - (inside car POV) GIRL glances in rearview mirror.
22. WIDE SHOT - GIRL drives away from the intersection.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ANATOMY OF ATTRACTION

FADE IN:

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS -- DAY

Wide establishing shot of students walking across campus. As the scene shifts to other exterior shots a **FEMALE NARRATOR's** voice cuts in.

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

College. It's not just a place. It isn't just a bunch of classrooms, dorms and labs. It's a collection of memories, thoughts and experiences. It's a whole way of life.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS -- CONTINUOUS

Closer shots of students moving into and out of buildings. Other shots show students getting into and out of cars.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Some say the college years are the best time of your life. That's not always the case. Stuff happens. But the whole college game can be pretty cool... if you know how to play it.

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Right around that age is also where you start to really tailor your relationship criteria. Because let's face it... a lot of those memories, thoughts and experiences have a whole lot more to do with the opposite sex than textbooks.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

We want them. They want us. The rest is all about them trying to keep us from knowing that. And how we keep them from finding out that most of us already do.

FULL SCREEN GRAPHIC -- THE SETUP

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS -- AFTERNOON

The Female Narrator sits on the steps in front of one of the buildings. She addresses the camera as **MEREDITH** and other people pass by on the sidewalk.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Statistics have shown that the average male thinks about sex about every ten minutes.

INT. DORM ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Medium shot of the Male Narrator is busy gazing at a television, computer screen, etc.,

MALE NARRATOR

Huh? Yeah, yeah...whatever.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS -- AFTERNOON

The Female Narrator continues.

FEMALE NARRATOR

But here's a little secret. Most women think about sex just as much as men. Our brains are just able to continue focusing on other things.

INT. DORM ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Close up of the Male Narrator, still distracted for a moment before addressing the camera. **MIKE** passes through the background of the shot.

MALE NARRATOR

Sweet mother of... Look the thing about women is that they're a lot like men. With certain obvious, soft, really fun exceptions.

EXT. COLLEGE LIBRARY -- DAY

FEMALE NARRATOR

It's easy to see we're not that far apart. Women aren't that complex once you understand the differences.

INT. DORM -- AFTERNOON

Male narrator leaves the room and steps into the hallway.

MALE NARRATOR

They're still the most complicated creatures to ever walk the earth. It's amazing that anyone ever gets together.

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY -- DAY

Mike enters the library carrying a backpack. He stops near the doorway to speak with a **MALE FRIEND** before moving on.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)
And that's just it. Regardless of
how emotional or high strung they
can be -

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY -- DAY

Meredith, also carrying a book bag, walks casually through the library to a lounge area. She stops and talks to a couple of **FEMALE FRIENDS** as she moves towards a sofa.

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)
No matter how stubborn or closed off
they might get. Or how frustrating
they become-

INSERT

Mike and Meredith move past each other on the their way to opposite parts of the building. They notice one another.

NARRATORS UNISION (V.O.)
We just can't seem to stay away from
each other.

BACK TO SCENE

Mike moves to a study area. He takes out a cellphone as he begins to organize his materials.

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)
The sad thing is that if you do find
time for a social life, the typical
college relationship lasts less than
three months.

Not too far away Meredith sits and begins to unpack her books and notes.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)
But if you're not careful the fallout
can last for years.

FULL SCREEN GRAPHIC: THE APPROACH

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

Mike attempts to concentrate on studying while sneaking glances at Meredith. He dials a number on his phone again.

MIKE
Dude. What's up? It's Mike. I
just ran into that hot girl from my
Biology class. Yeah. I'm looking
at her right now.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

A lot of relationships fail before they even begin. Usually in the first two minutes.

Across the room Meredith smiles politely then tries very hard not to notice that Mike is still watching her.

MEREDITH

Yes. Hi. Starting to get on the bus to creepy town now.

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Now ladies, you don't want to judge people but you do want to learn how to spot potential stalkers quickly. Preferably from a distance.

Mike continues his conversation while failing terribly at looking nonchalant.

MIKE

What? No. I haven't said anything to her. No, what would you do if you were here. Really? And who would bail you out of jail?

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

One reason why relationships fail so quickly, guys? Simple. Your friends...are idiots. Your bro's, your homies, your boys... morons. Take as little of their advice as possible. Why? They don't know anymore about women than you do. If they did there wouldn't be so many guys sitting at home playing Madden on a Friday night.

From her vantage point, Meredith begins to watch Mike during his conversation. She gives a faint smile.

MEREDITH

Hmm. He is kinda' cute. I wonder..maybe he'll decide to walk over here. The way his eyes kind of- Oh, no. No! No! Ignore him!

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Yep. Every now and then it can happen just that fast. Bang! Instant connection. And that's when you can get into the most trouble.

Back on the other side of the room Mike finishes his conversation.

MIKE

Okay. I'm hanging up now. I'm not a coward, I'm just playing it cool. Yeah, yeah... bite me.

As he hangs up the phone Mike busies himself with his books.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Now. Just relax. Don't even look in that direction. Don't even think about her.

Mike pauses.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What are you doing? You're thinking about her.

Mike glances up and sees Meredith looking back at him as she answers her cell phone.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Oh, come on! You're looking at her again! Great! She's probably calling security. Now you'll have to go over and explain you're not a serial killer. Idiot!

Mike begins to clumsily gather his belongings.

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

Meredith has gone back to studying but looks up to see Mike packing up.

MEREDITH

Now? I don't know. It looks like he's leaving. Yeah, right. Just ask him to move over and sit by me. That's not desperate at all.

Meredith glances off into the distance. Her eyes widen slightly.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Look, I'm going to have to call you back. Because he's walking over here that's why! No you can't listen. Goodbye.

Mike starts across the room as Meredith hangs up her phone and starts to put it away.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Here's the thing about that walk across the room.

(MORE)

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

No matter where it happens, it's long. Might only be a few feet but it feels like a mile. And you've got all the ways things could go wrong screaming inside your head. Here's what you do about that. You man up! You fight through it! She could be the girl of your dreams. She could kick you in the junk. You're never going to know until you take a chance. But remember. You can't spot crazy from across the room. So always have an exit strategy.

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Getting up the nerve to walk up to a woman you don't know is a tough burden for men. It's always a roll of the dice. Is she approachable? Does she want to be left alone? Is she here with somebody? And to make matters worse, while you're racking your brains trying to figure out how things are going to play out...usually we already know. Sometimes before you've even said a single word. You could get shot down and never know why. It sucks. But you don't get cramps. So deal with it.

Mike stops next to where Meredith is sitting. He pauses for a second before saying anything.

MIKE

Uhm. Hi.

MEREDITH

Hi.

MIKE

(rambling)

I wanted to let you know why I was staring - I mean I didn't want you to think I was staring, it's just that I saw you and-

MEREDITH

(rambling)

It's okay. Well, not the staring part but if that's not what you were- but it's okay because I was just-

Meredith shifts in her seat and drops one of her books. Mike attempts to help her and drops many of the contents of his bag. They both quickly retrieve their belongings.

MIKE

Okay. Wow. So I'm...I'm just going to go now. See ya'.

MEREDITH

Wait.

MIKE

I think I've done enough damage for today.

MEREDITH

Why don't we start over. Hi, I'm Meredith.

MIKE

Mike.

MEREDITH

You sit across from me in Biology, right?

FULL SCREEN GRAPHIC: THE EXCHANGE

INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP -- DAY

The Male Narrator leans on a counter in front of the book racks.

MALE NARRATOR

Let's say you survive those first two minutes and manage to somehow stumble your way into a first date. This is where things get a little more dicey. This is where past experiences, expectations and preconceived notions all start smacking you in the face.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM/APARTMENT -- DAY

The Female Narrator addresses the camera while an information search screen runs on the computer in the background.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Try not to be too judgmental. While there are certain constants, every dating experience is different. Let this particular guy earn his nice guy or jerk status on his own merits. But just in case; always have access to another ride home.

INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP -- DAY

The Male Narrator continues.

MALE NARRATOR

Things to note before a first date. Go out of your way to be prompt and polite. Be a perfect old fashioned gentleman. Even if it's not your bag. Because trust me, if she has any friends at all, by the time you pick her up your background will have undergone a search that could only be rivaled by the F.B.I.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM/APARTMENT -- DAY

The Female Narrator continues.

FEMALE NARRATOR

No one's suggesting you live your life in a state of fear. But be sensible. Everybody knows somebody who knows somebody. Find out everything you can. Because psychotic freaks sometimes look just like everyone else.

EXT. RESTAURANT -- EVENING

Mike and Meredith approach the door of the restaurant. Mike holds it open for Meredith to enter.

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

If you've made up your mind that he isn't some sort of whack job then you could be in for a nice evening. If you use a little common sense.

INT. RESTAURANT -- CONTINUOUS

Mike and Meredith wait near the entrance to be seated.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

Location on a first date conveys a lot. Movies say you'd much rather stare at a screen in a dark room than talk to her. Women like to communicate. A restaurant is a much better choice. She gets a chance to talk and find out what you're all about. And you get to see how much she eats.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM/APARTMENT -- DAY

FEMALE NARRATOR

Most guys these days aren't fooled by the whole I'll-just-have-a-salad routine. It's lame. Don't do it.

(MORE)

FEMALE NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But don't go crazy and eat like it's your last meal, either. That's just tacky.

INT. RESTAURANT -- EVENING

Mike and Meredith are now seated and are deep in conversation. They seem to have moved past any initial hesitation and seem to be genuinely enjoying each other's company.

MIKE

Well, I just explained that if I didn't acknowledge the existence of the exam that I didn't have to take it.

MEREDITH

Did that actually work?

MIKE

Only because my Philosophy professor was about the coolest teacher I've ever had.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This is good. Keep it light. Just go with the flow.

MEREDITH

That's really bold. I'd never have the nerve to try something like that.

MEREDITH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So far, so good. He seems really nice. But is he second date material?

There is a brief pause. Meredith looks at Mike and smiles.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

So tell me something about yourself, Mike.

MIKE

Uh...what?

INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP -- DAY

The Male Narrator frowns thoughtfully.

MALE NARRATOR

This is no problem. Women are emotional beings. They like to get inside our heads. There's a simple way to handle this.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM/APARTMENT -- DAY

FEMALE NARRATOR

Hey, if he can't keep your interest over dinner, odds are he can't keep your interest over the course of a relationship.

INT. RESTAURANT -- EVENING

There is an awkward pause as Mike struggles for something to say. Meredith watches him carefully.

MIKE (V.O.)

Think! Think! Think!

MEREDITH (V.O.)

I think I can actually hear the gears grinding.

INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP -- DAY

MALE NARRATOR

It doesn't matter what you say as long as you avoid three things. Ex-girlfriends. Stupid things you did on a bet. And anything she does that reminds you of your mother.

INT. RESTAURANT -- EVENING

MIKE

Something about me? Well, I sort of didn't tell you the whole truth the other day.

MEREDITH (V.O.)

Say what?

MIKE

While it's true that I normally don't stare at women in the library. I just couldn't take my eyes off you.

MEREDITH

So should I be flattered or creeped out?

MIKE

Depends on your point of view. I've had a crush on you since the beginning of the semester. I just never got up the nerve to ask you out.

MIKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Did I just say crush? Crush? This isn't middle school!

MEREDITH

So what kept you? I can't be that unapproachable.

MIKE

Well, I have this thing. I tend to get a little flustered around intelligent, beautiful women.

Meredith smiles almost self-consciously; suddenly embarrassed by the comment.

INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP -- DAY

The male narrator urges things on much like a baseball coach.

MALE NARRATOR

Nice. Now bring it home.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM/APARTMENT -- DAY

The female narrator is distracted with trying very hard not to look emotional.

FEMALE NARRATOR

That's so sweet... Hold on. Hold on. Let's not get carried away.

INT. RESTAURANT -- CONTINUOUS

Meredith studies Mike with a somewhat questioning expression but still manages a slight grin.

MEREDITH

Does that line actually work?

MIKE

No. But it's never really been true before.

INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP -- DAY

MALE NARRATOR

Wait for it...

INT. GIRL'S ROOM/APARTMENT -- DAY

FEMALE NARRATOR

Ohhh. He's good.

INT. RESTAURANT -- CONTINUOUS

Meredith smiles again. Mike relaxes. The underlying attraction slowly becomes more apparent.

MEREDITH

So you're saying you like me?

MIKE
That's what I'm saying.

FULL SCREEN GRAPHIC: THE PAYOFF

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX -- NIGHT

Mike escorts Meredith to the door of an apartment building.
All of their previous awkwardness now seems forgotten.

MEREDITH
This is me. So I'll see you in class
next week?

MIKE
Wouldn't miss it.

MEREDITH
I had a really nice time tonight,
Mike.

MIKE
It was a pretty good night, wasn't
it?

MEREDITH
You almost sound surprised.

MIKE
It's not that exactly. More like
slightly disappointed.

MEREDITH
Really? About what?

MIKE (V.O.)
Steady...

MIKE (CONT'D)
That I waited so long to ask you
out.

MEREDITH (V.O.)
Oh, he's really good.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
I don't know. I'd say your timing's
pretty good.

INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP -- DAY

The Male Narrator takes slightly less of a lecturing tone.

MALE NARRATOR
Its the end of the date and all that's
left is the kiss good-night.
(MORE)

MALE NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Here's where you have to play it smooth. Too slow and you miss your shot. Too eager and you end up on her do not call list.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM/APARTMENT -- DAY

The Female Narrator sits looking very thoughtful.

FEMALE NARRATOR

This part is always tricky because you can tell a lot from that first kiss. The average girl wants the guy to make the first move but only after she gives the signal.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX -- NIGHT

Meredith and Mike continue to gaze at one another. The romantic mood creeps back toward awkward.

MIKE

So I guess this is-

Meredith leans in and kisses Mike before he can finish his statement. They kiss for a decent length moment.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM/APARTMENT -- DAY

The Female Narrator's sarcasm finally subsides. She smirks.

FEMALE NARRATOR

Of course, it never hurts to keep them on their toes. With any luck he won't try to suck your face off. Remember, drool is not an aphrodisiac.

INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP -- DAY

The Male Narrator celebrates with pure masculine style. He sounds very much like a South American soccer announcer.

MALE NARRATOR

GOAL!

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX -- NIGHT

Meredith and Mike part. Meredith steps back and looks at him with a wicked (in a good way) expression.

MEREDITH

Good night, Mike.

MIKE

Good night, Meredith. I'll call you later.

MEREDITH

You better.

Mike watches Meredith enter the building and disappear inside. He turns and walks toward the parking lot with a bit more self-assurance in his step.

FEMALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

And there you have it. Sometimes a connection is made just that fast. Some people say it's youth. Some say it's hormones. But every now and then, it's the real deal. All you have to do to find it is keep your eyes open. And then try not to screw it up.

In the background, Meredith is visible in the window as Mike takes a cell phone from his pocket.

MALE NARRATOR (V.O.)

The rest is pretty much up to you. Try not to second guess too many things. If you're lucky you could be on your way to something. And if you've still got that stupid grin on your face by the time you get home, don't wait too long to call her.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX -- MOMENTS LATER

Mike dials a number on his cellphone. A faint ringing can be heard in the distance. In the background Meredith takes out her cellphone as Mike puts his own phone to his ear.

MEREDITH

(on phone)
Hello.

MIKE

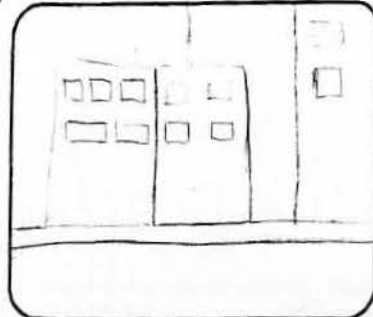
Technically its later.

FADE OUT:

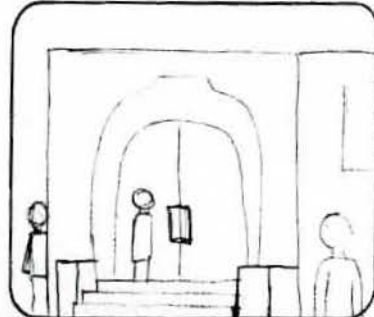
APPENDIX A
Anatomy of Attraction Storyboards

TITLE Anatomy of Attraction
DIRECTOR James M. Martin

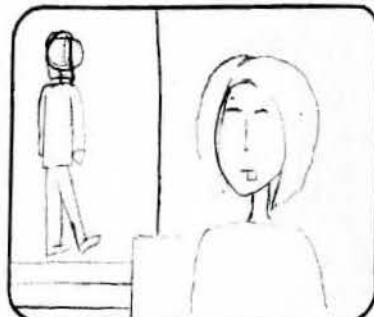
PRODUCTION NO. _____
PAGE NO. 1-3



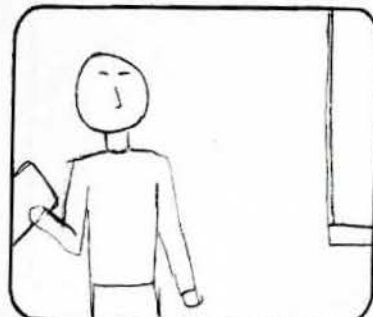
Initial FN VO "Est. Shot"
"College. It's not just a place..."



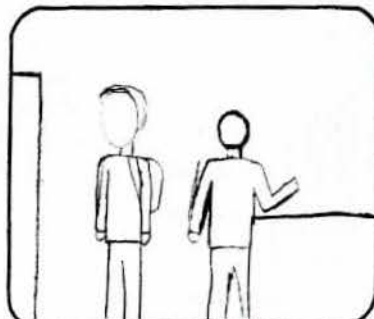
MID Shots - Page One FN + MN
VOs "Right around" + "We want them"



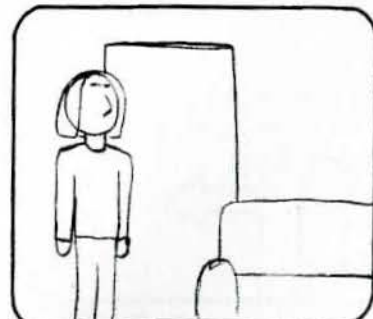
MCU of F.N. in library steps
- Meredith enters in BKG -
"Statistics have shown..."



MS of M.N. in Dorm/Campus Setting
"Sweet mother" - "They're still the most..."



WS of MIKE entering main library
"And that's just it..."

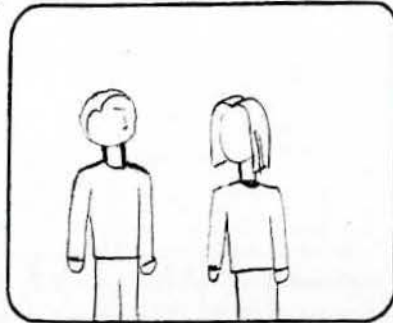


MWS of MEREDITH entering main
library. F.N. VO "No matter..."

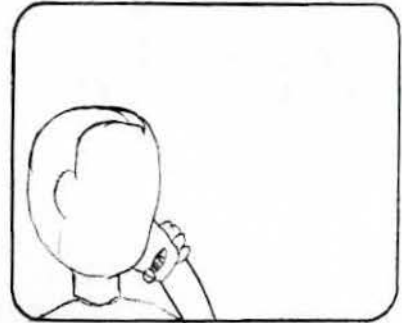
APPENDIX A
Anatomy of Attraction Storyboards

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PAGE NO. 4-8



MIKE + MEREDITH move past each other (take notice) MS



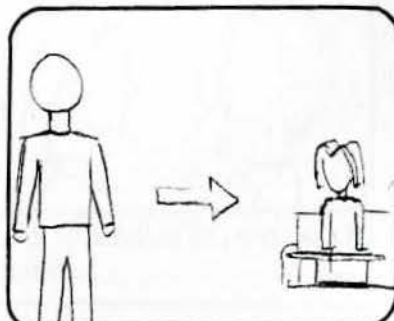
MCU of MIKE phoning for advice "Dude"



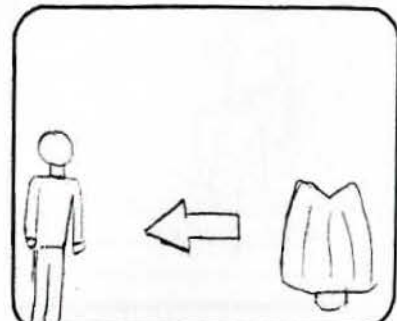
MCU of MEREDITH feeling uneasy



MCU of MIKE thinking "She's probably calling security"



M, N, VO "Here's the thing."

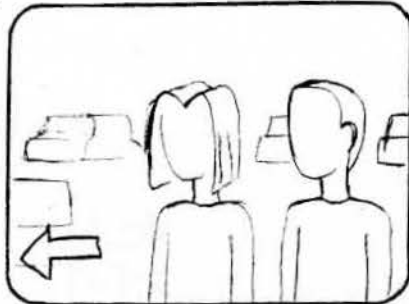


F, N, VO "Getting up the nerve"

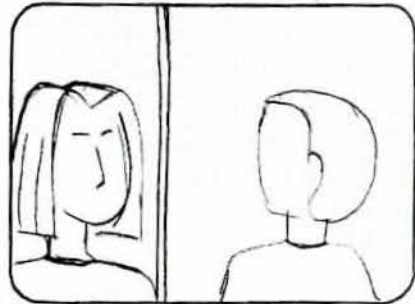
APPENDIX A
Anatomy of Attraction Storyboards

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DIRECTOR James M. Martin

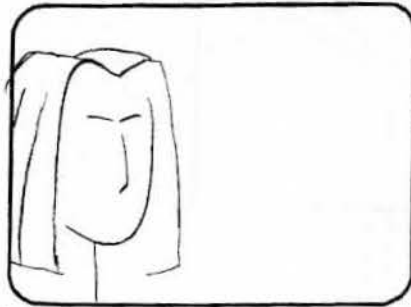
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PAGE NO. 12 to 15



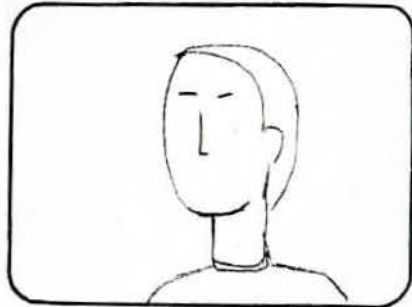
MS of MIKE and MEREDITH moving
from parking lot to building



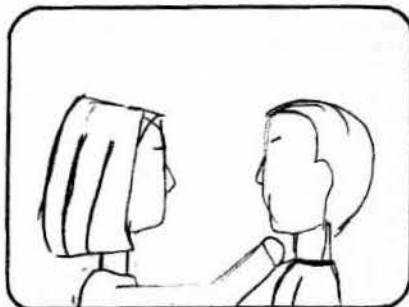
MCU of M + M making pre-kiss
small talk



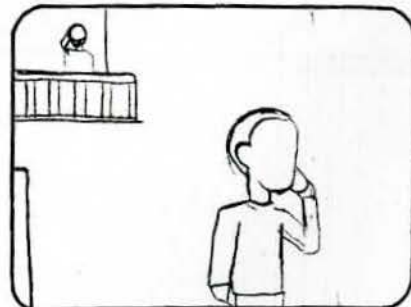
CU of MEREDITH reacting
"Really? About what?"



CU of MIKE explaining "waited
too long"

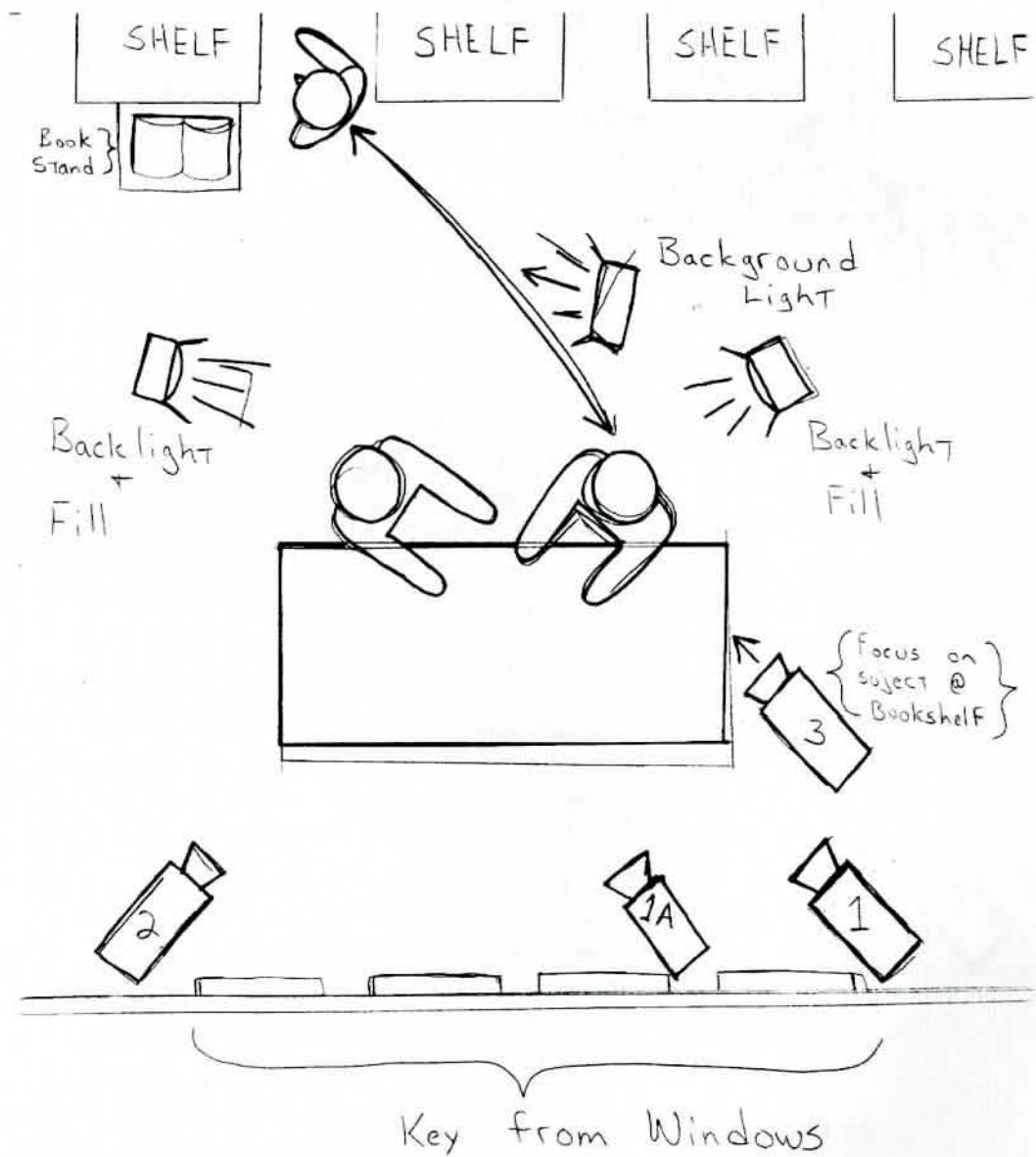


MCU of MEREDITH making the
first move.



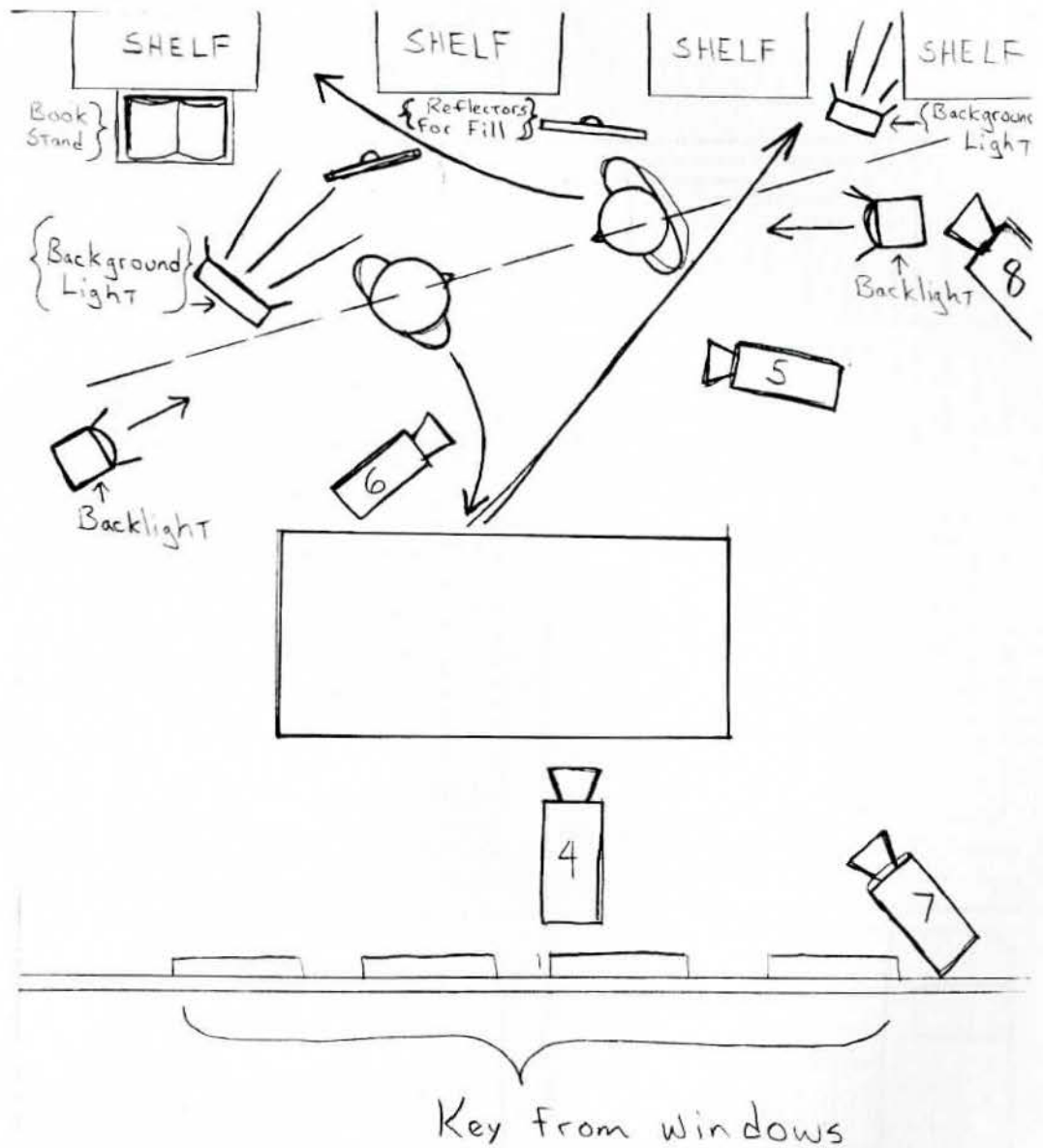
WS of MIKE "calling later"

APPENDIX B
The Library Overhead Diagram (Light and Camera Positions)



①

APPENDIX B
The Library Overhead Diagram (Light and Camera Positions)

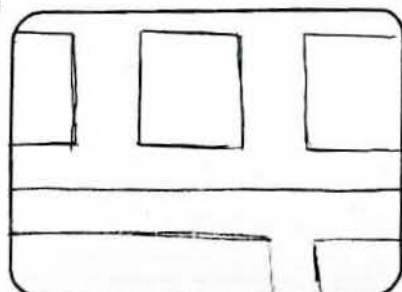


② "The Library" Overhead
 - Blocking
 - Lighting Plot

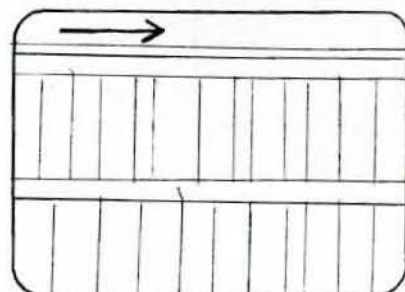
APPENDIX B
The Library Storyboards

TITLE "The Library"
DIRECTOR James M. Martin

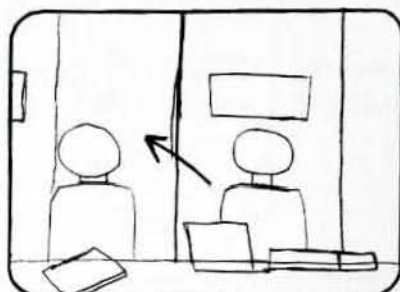
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PAGE NO. 1



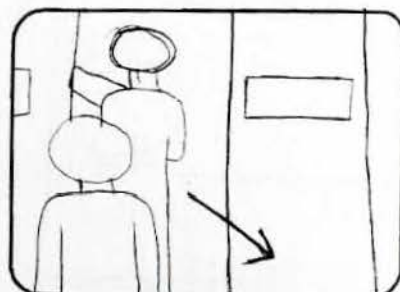
① WS - Establishing Shot
outside library



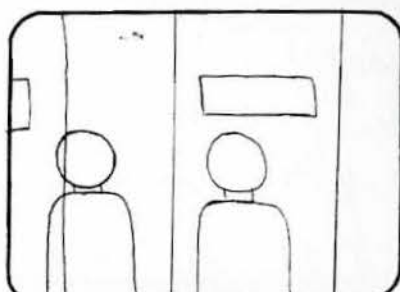
② PAN Across shelves
of books.



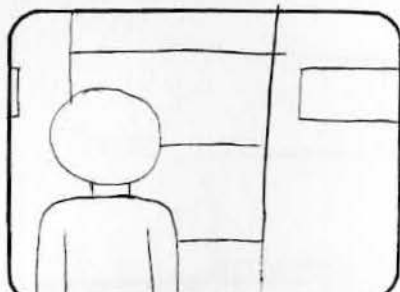
③ WS of both students
at table. (STUDENT B gets up)



④ MS of STUDENT B at
bookshelf - moves back



⑤ MS of both at table.

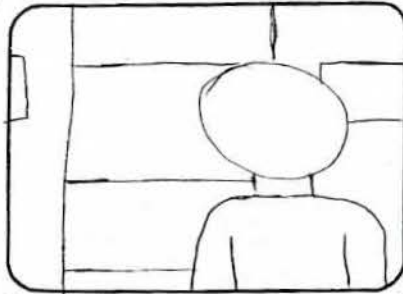


⑥ MS of student A listening
to noise

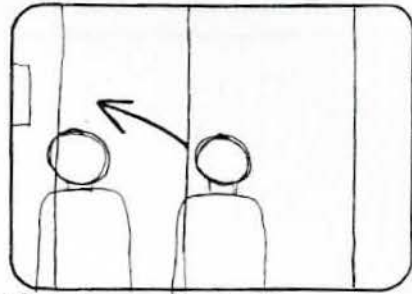
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DIRECTOR James M. Martin

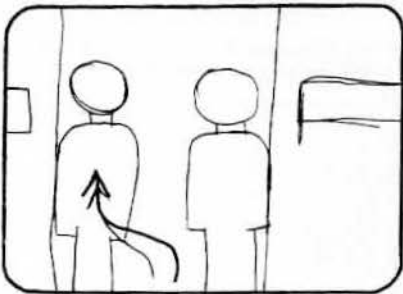
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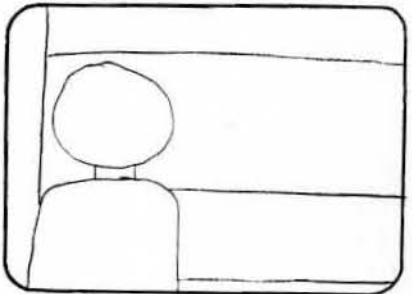
7 MS of student B responding



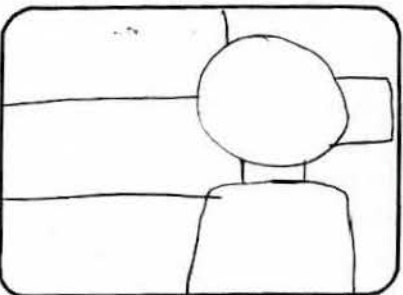
8 WS of both : B gets up / goes to shelf.



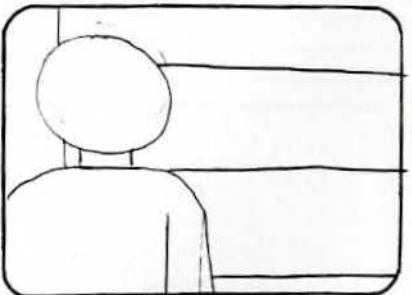
9 MS of A standing to face B



10 MCU of A "... maybe you're deaf"



11 MCU of B
"No I don't"

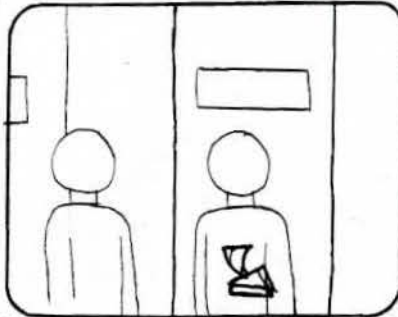


12 MCU of A responding
"Well, it stopped ... a second"

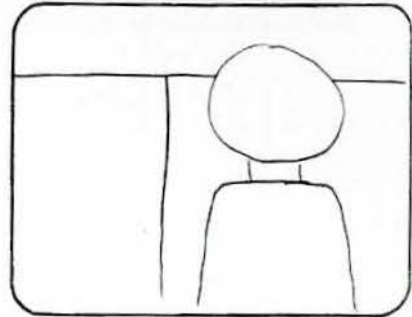
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The Library Storyboards

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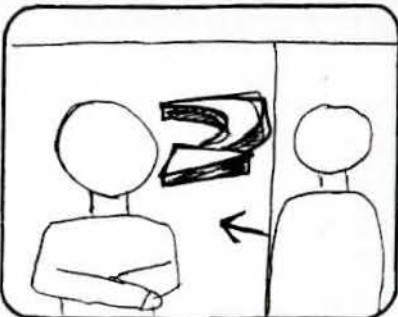
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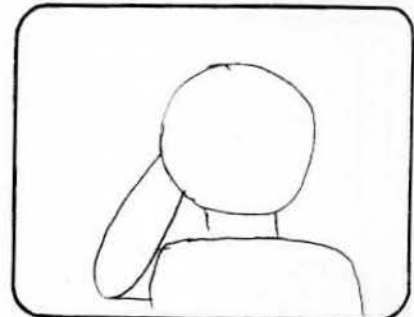
13 WS - Two shot: "I'm going downstairs... (B to Table)"



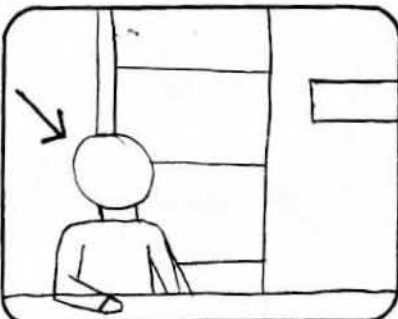
14 MCU - B "You want to stay here... friends."



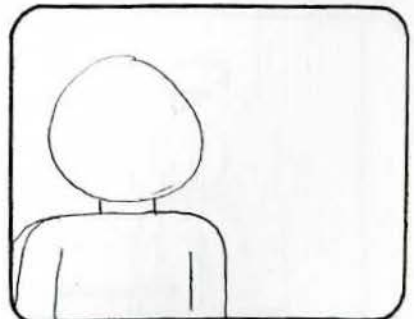
15 MCU - A "Forget it. Just go."



16 CU - A: reacting and listening



17 WS - A sitting again - noise starts up (reaction)

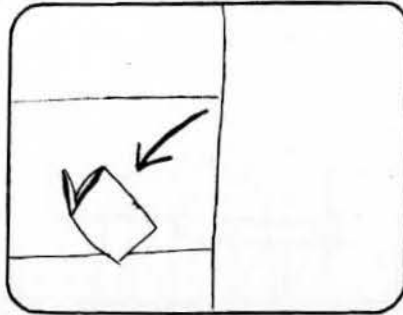


18 MCU-A- "Okay this stopped being funny..."

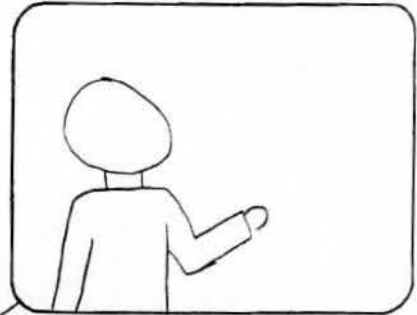
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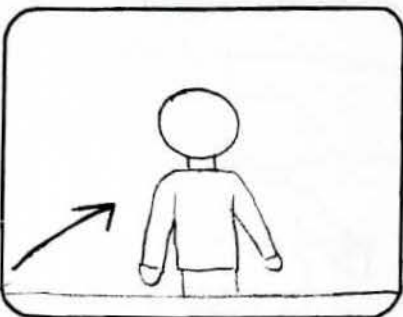
PRODUCTION NO. 1
PAGE NO. 4



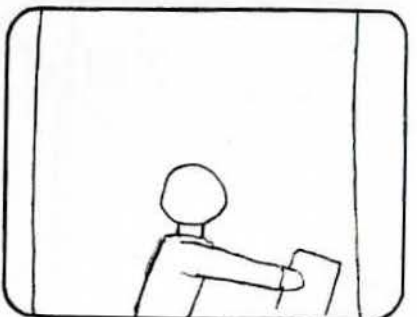
19 Insert of book Falling



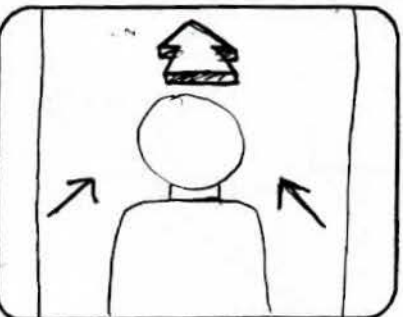
20 MCU: A "Cute. Real cute" (gets up)



21 WS - A goes to pick up book.



22 MCU of A retrieving book from floor -



23 MCU - "You can come out now."

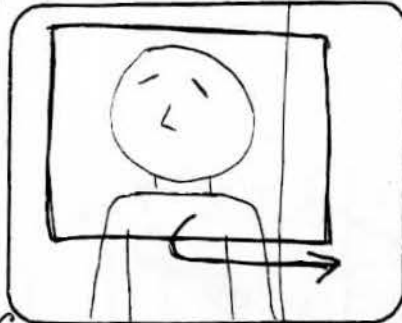


24 MS (chair slides)
- creepy & frightened reaction -

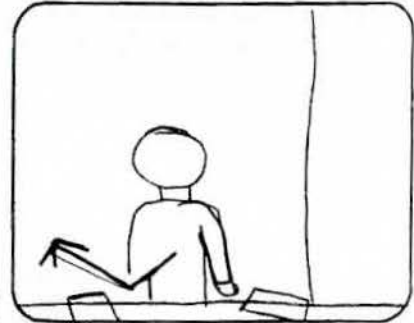
APPENDIX B
The Library Storyboards

TITLE "The Library"
DIRECTOR James M. Martin

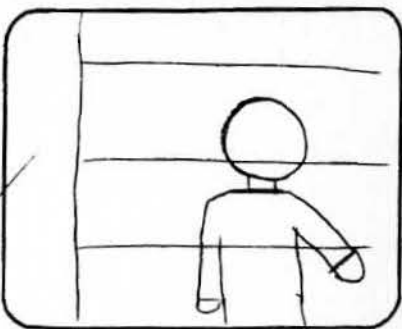
PRODUCTION NO. 1
PAGE NO. 5



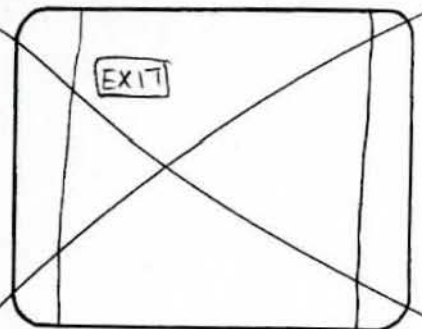
~~25~~ CU : "Stop IT!"
move out of frame



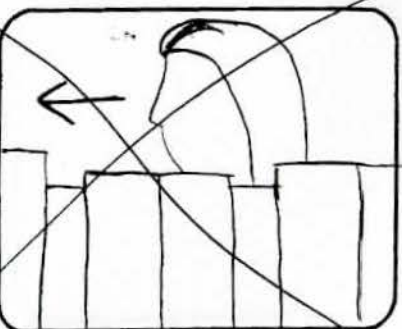
~~26~~ WS - Student A goes
back to table - leaves



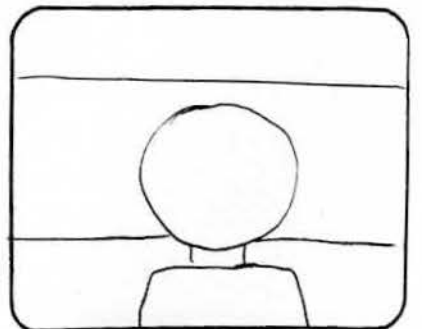
~~27~~ MCU - moving down
the aisle



~~28~~ POV - moving toward
exit -



~~29~~ PAN - between shelves.

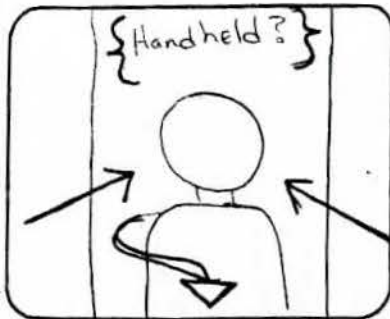


~~30~~ CU - LOW ANGLE moving
down the aisle continued -

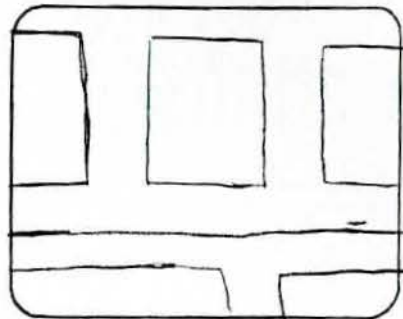
APPENDIX B
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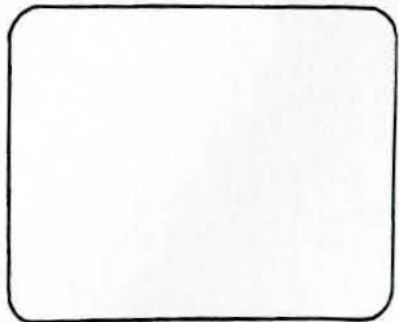
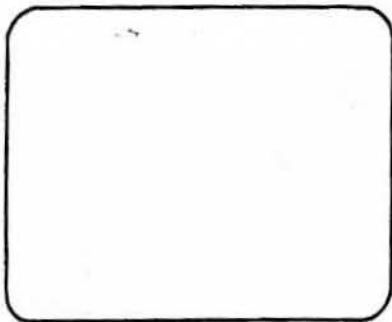
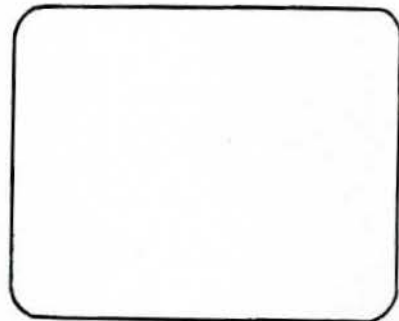
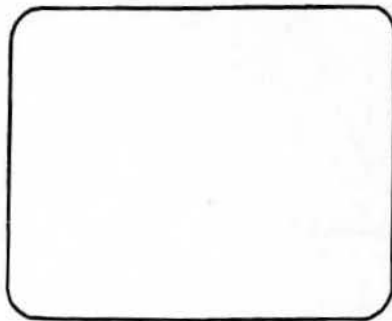
PRODUCTION NO. 1
PAGE NO. 6



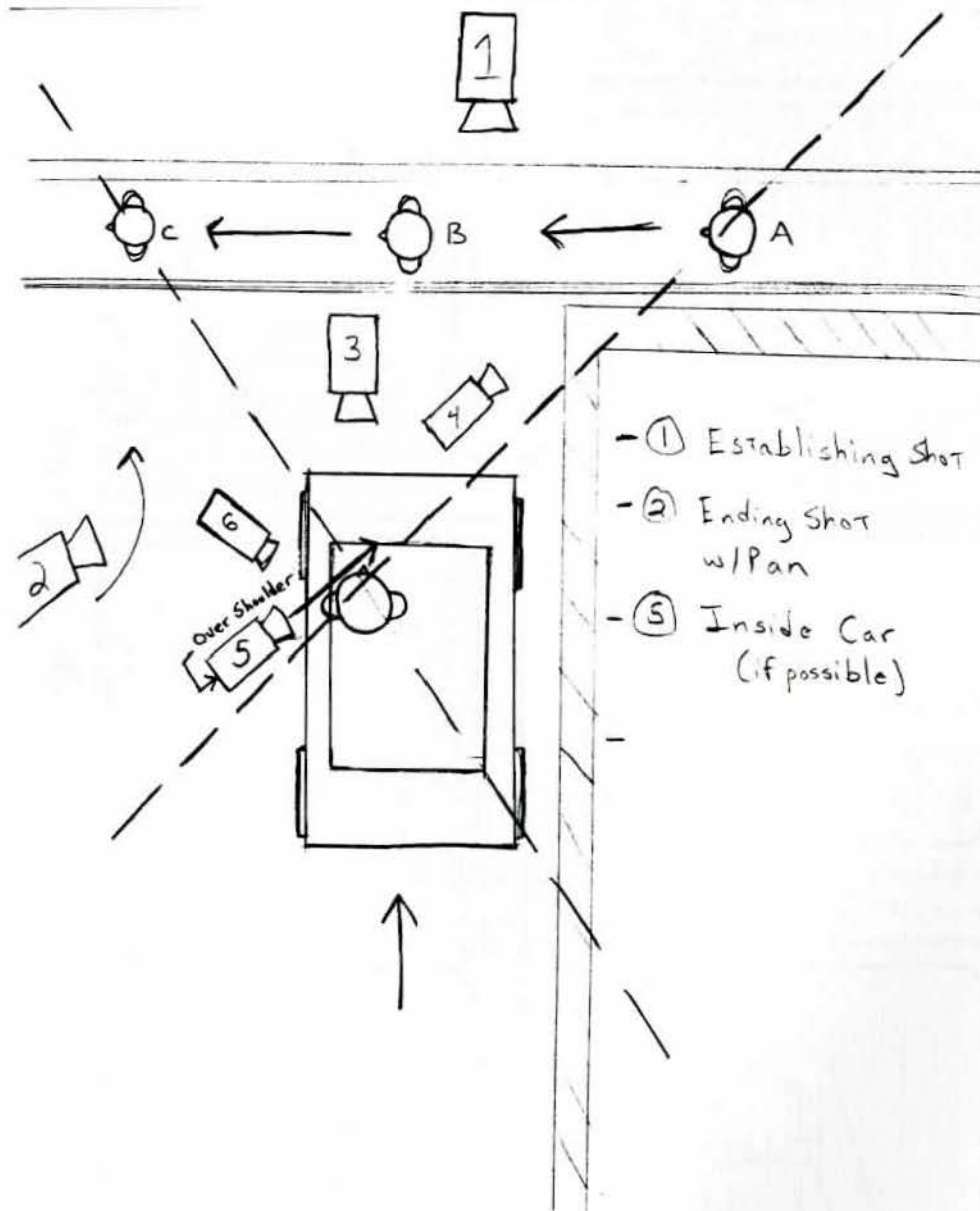
31 MS - Rear POV
- something approaches (turn)



32 WS - EXT
with scream -



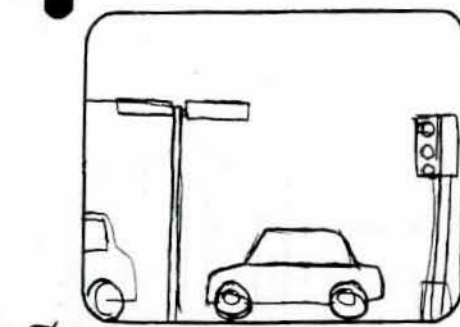
APPENDIX C
Traffic Signals Overhead Diagram (Light and Camera Positions)



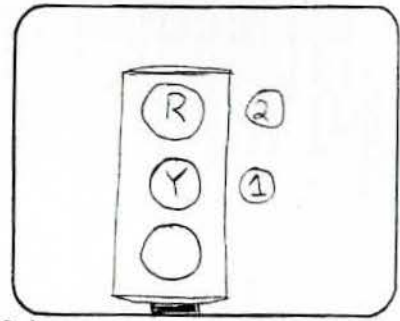
APPENDIX C
Traffic Signals Storyboards

TITLE "Traffic Signals"
DIRECTOR James M. Martin

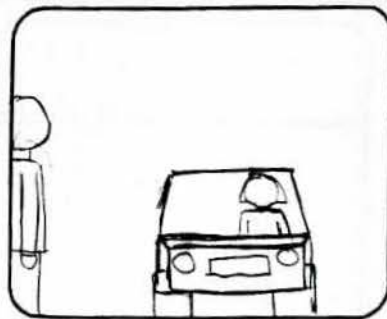
PRODUCTION NO. 2
PAGE NO. 1



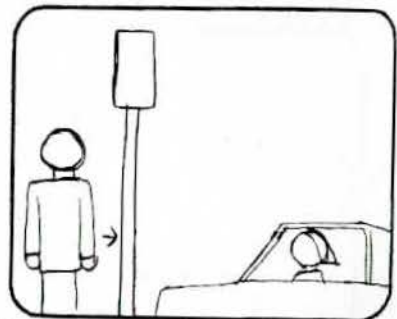
WS of Intersection
- Cars move through



CU of light changing from
YELLOW to RED



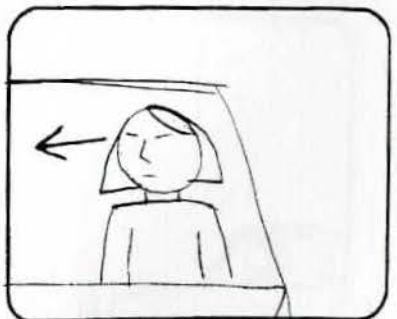
Car approaches intersection



Car comes to a stop
Guy pushes button



"I am so beyond late"
- MS outside of car -

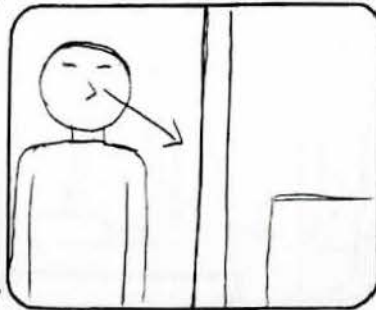


"I think he's in my
history class..."

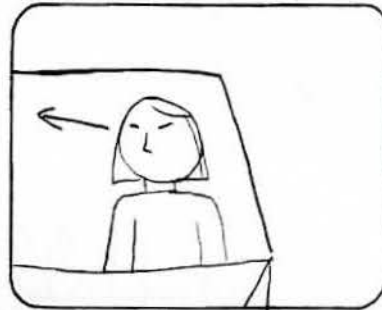
APPENDIX C
Traffic Signals Storyboards

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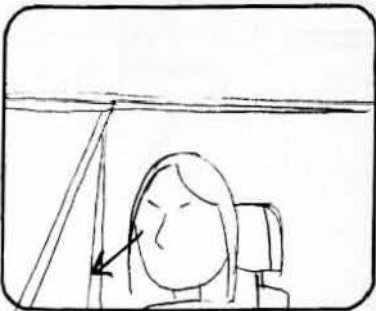
PRODUCTION NO. 2
PAGE NO. 2



~~1~~ GUY notices GIRL
- smile and nod -



~~2~~ MCU of GIRL watching
"Yeah. I See You..."



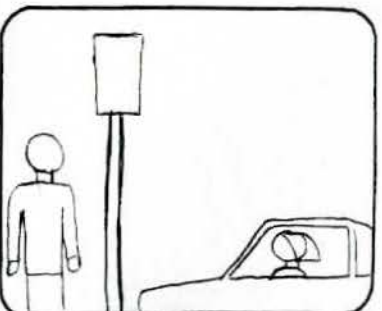
~~3~~ CU "checking to see..."
"I wonder if he's dating anybody"



~~4~~ MS (Daydreaming) "I could
drop a few hints"



~~5~~ Pedestrian sign changes
TO WALK

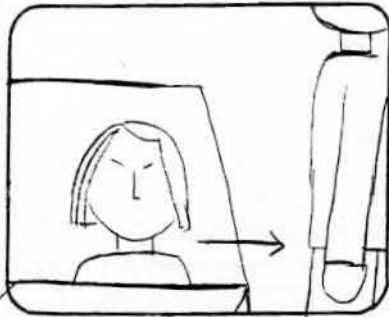


~~6~~ WS of guy starting to cross
"There he goes"

APPENDIX C
Traffic Signals Storyboards

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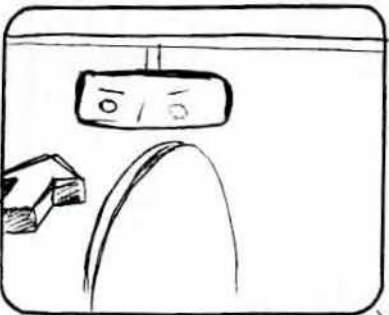
PRODUCTION NO. 2
PAGE NO. 3



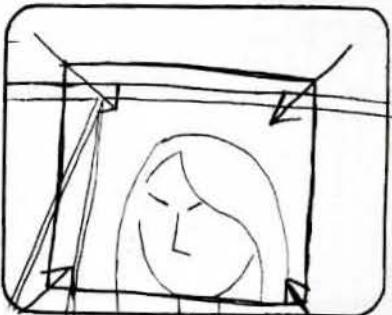
13 MS GIRL watches GUY cross
"Go to the movies... First big fight"



14 MCU "But after... nice
Alan boy"



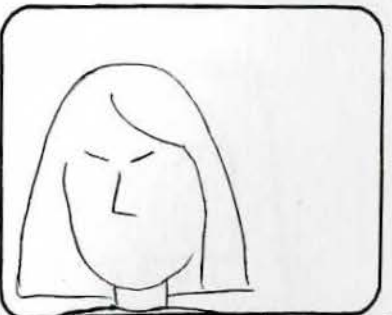
15 INT (rear view mirror POV)
"Things would get all serious"



16 MS (push in) And then
we'd start... I love the snow...



17 MS "And he'd say...
when we get married?"

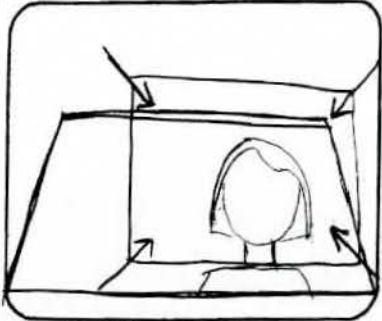

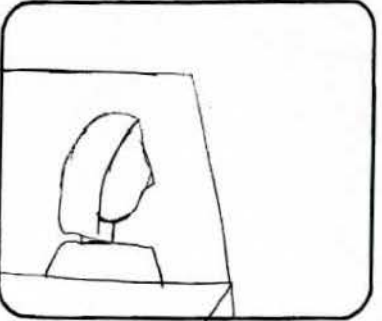

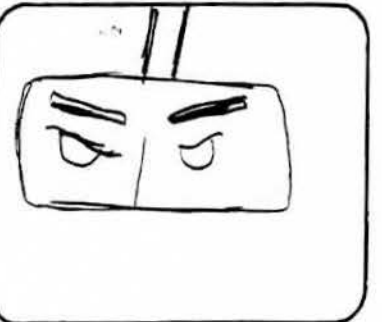
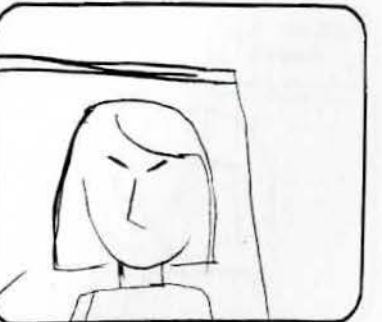


18 CU "And he's all... DON'T YOU"
(continuation of SHOT #17)

APPENDIX C
Traffic Signals Storyboards

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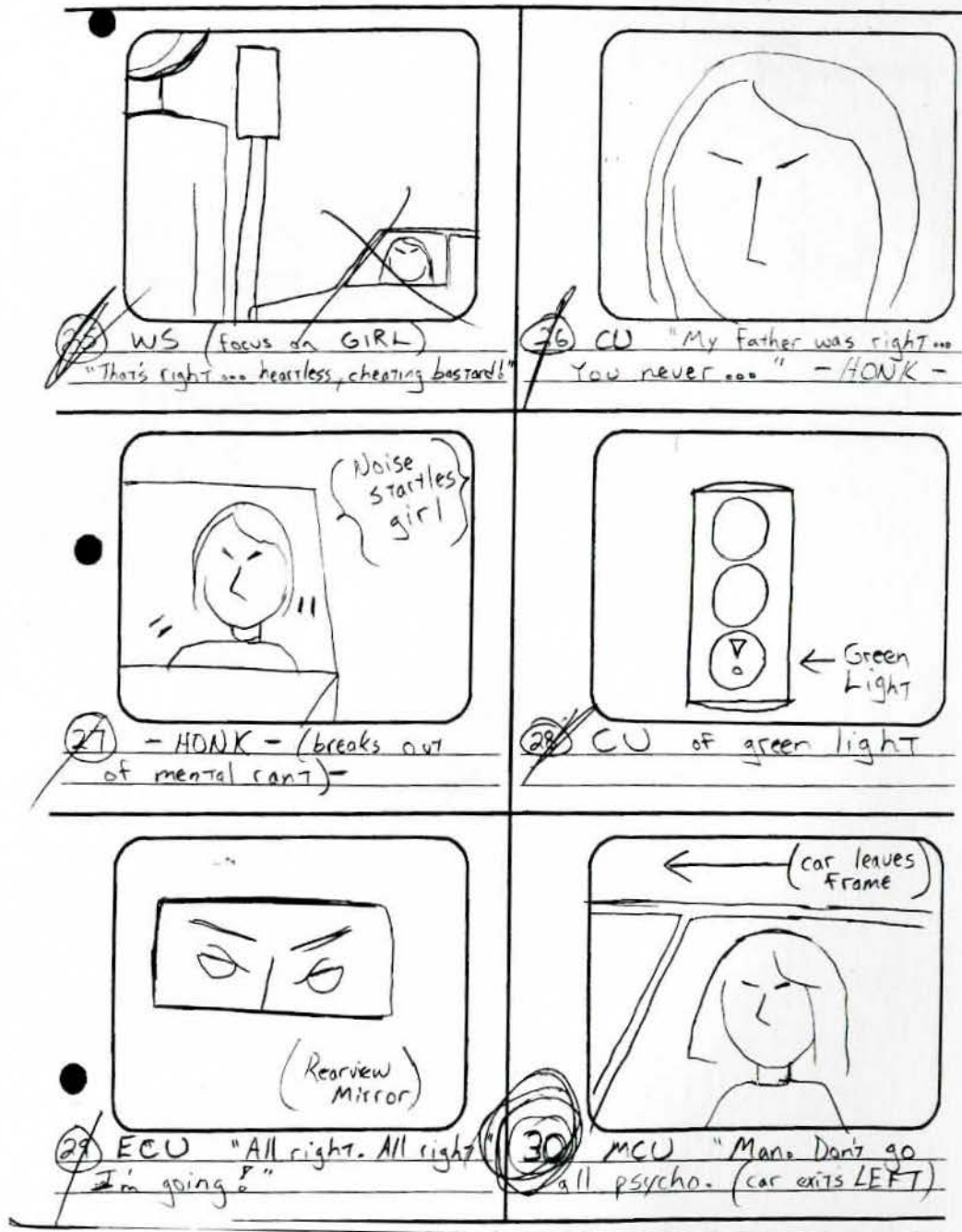
PRODUCTION NO. 2
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 <p>19 MS TO PUSH IN "after graduation we meet... vacation to Maui"</p>	 <p>20 CU "Church wedding... even want children"</p>
 <p>21 MS "That's when it starts... Christ + Emerson are born..."</p>	 <p>22 CU "But it doesn't last... catch him in the act!"</p>
 <p>23 ECU "What do you mean we're not the same people anymore?"</p>	 <p>24 MCU "How can you do this to me... supposed to tell our children!"</p>

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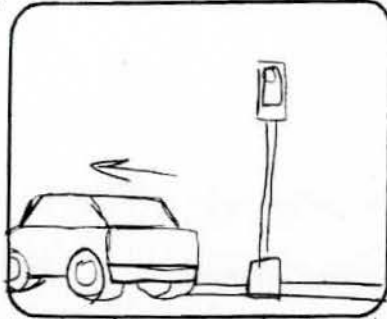
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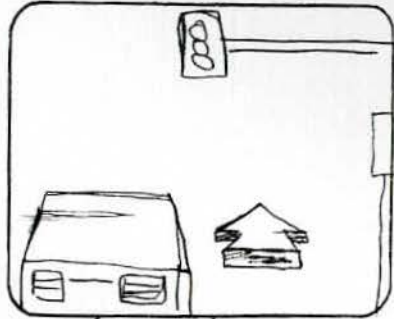
APPENDIX C
Traffic Signals Storyboards

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~~3/~~ WS (drives away) "You know
too what is his name?"



~~3/~~ WS (Alternate) car
drives off into distance

