

Martin Scorsese--May 22, 1967

The film I am proposing to make will be no longer than five and a half minutes to six minutes in length and will be in black and white since the subject matter is such that color would tend to sensationalize the material. I feel that since a certain amount of special effects are required for the film, the amount of stock required should not exceed 1,500 feet and not less than 1,000 feet of Black and White Gevaert-Agfa reversible film.

SCRIPT

BLACK SCREEN. SILENCE. TITLE FADES IN:

TITLE: I CAN'T GET STARTED WITH YOU--1967

CUT directly ^{To} WHITE bathroom tile.

ZOOM OUT QUICKLY to reveal a typical, upper-middle-class, slightly well-to-do, suburbanite American Bathroom.

The bathroom has all the necessary conveniences: Tub, shower, shower-curtain, basin and sink, mirror, hamper, toilet, tiles and medicine chest. As we view the room and its inanimate objects-- in total silence--it becomes almost luminescent in its whiteness.

Everything is white--if not white, then shining metallic such as the water faucets and the shower faucets. An unnatural whiteness/begins to prevail producing a slightly uneasy feeling.

White as the color of terror--the strange feeling one sometimes gets upon seeing the eerie whiteness of an iceberg, Antarctica, a butcher shop or an embalming chamber reminiscent of a torture chamber, or as Melville would have it, "the whiteness of the whale."

The feeling lasts only a few seconds and is then quickly dissipated by the entrance of a typical-looking, white-faced, ashen-haired, anglo-saxon, young american man with the peculiar air of "normality" about him which tends to put people at ease.

One can see from a first glance that he is a well-respected, successful young american businessman with a wife and children

living in a comfortable home in the suburbs of some great American metropolis. In short, he is a pillar of the American community. He is clad in an undershirt and shorts--both white. It is obvious that he has just awakened and as we watch his actions we begin to realize that we are about to witness the commonplace, daily ritual of a young man shaving. He prepares his utensils--razor, shaving cream, after-shave lotion, towel--and begins to wash his face.

Here, I feel it is necessary to break from the narrative description to give a detailed account of the soundtrack which will accompany the greatest part of this film. This soundtrack will consist basically of one song--a recording--lasting not more than 5 minutes. It begins as the young man enters the bathroom. There will be no realistic sound effects. The opening shots of the bathroom are played over complete silence.

The song is an old 1936 recording of Bunny Berrigan singing and playing on his trumpet, a song, which, at that time, he had made famous, entitled: I Can't Get Started With You. It consists of an elaborate trumpet solo at the opening,, then a brief trumpet solo stating the main theme, after which follows a vocal arrangement of the lyrics sung by Berrigan himself in a 1930-ish, crooner, warbling style, and then finally ending with another brief trumpet solo rendition of the main theme. This was one of Berrigan's last songs before he died of alcoholism.

The strange lilting and wistful quality of his trumpet, his arrangement, his orchestra, combining with his odd, untrained voice almost stating the lyrics rather than singing them, and above all, the lyrics themselves, ~~They~~ reflect and remind one of a sentiment, a nostalgia, a sense of loss, an innocence, an unawareness, a strange

depression, that when put together spells: America of the thirties. America during the Spanish Civil War, the depression, FDR and the New Deal. America before the Second World War.

As the young man places his gleaming razor under the running water coming from the opened faucet, the opening trumpet solo has ended and we already begin to hear the main theme of the song. As he shaves, the main theme is stated briefly and the lyrics begin to be heard:

"I've flown around the world in a plane,

I've settled revolutions in Spain,

And the North Pole I have charted,

Still I can't get started with you,

On the golf course, I'm under par,

Metro-Goldwyn have asked me to star,

I've got a house, a showplace,

Still I can't get noplac with you,

'Cause you're so supreme,

Lyrics I write of you,

I dream--dream day and night of you,

And I scheme just for the sight of you,

Baby, what good does it do?

I've been consulted by Franklin D.,

Greta Garbo has had me to tea,

Still I'm broken-hearted,

'Cayse I can't get started with you,"

As the song reaches its chorus ("'Cause you're so supreme, etc."), the young man, who has been shaving quite efficiently up till now, appears suddenly to have nicked himself on his left cheek, right below his ear. He doesn't seem to notice this at all however, and simply continues to shave as the lyrics go on and the song continues.

He is now shaving his mustache--or upper lip--and as he whips the razor across his right upper lip, it leaves a trace of fresh blood indicating that he has cut himself a second time. But once again, he takes absolutely no notice of this and instead continues to shave as if nothing has happened. His cold blue eyes staring straight into the mirror, concentrate on every detail of his razor's blade slicing away the layers of lather, then the soap, and finally the one-day's growth of hair on his face.

Blood has begun to trickle down his neck from the wound he received under his left ear. His entire upper lip is beginning to be bloodied as a result of the second wound. The song goes on, and he shaves on.

Now, as the trumpet stating the main theme is heard for the last time, he slashes away at his face unknowingly removing much more than the soap, the lather and the beard. Blood follows the trail of his razor everywhere it slides.

He rinses his razor under the faucet and blood flows from it. Bringing it back to his face he continues to calmly "shave". The commonplace, daily ritual of shaving is transformed into a very different "ritual." As the song ends, the young american is "shaving" his neck, blood is pouring off of his face and into the sink's basin. He lifts his head in order to shave it better and

as the song reaches its creseendo, unwittingly begins to slit his throat from ear to ear. The blood pours into the basin of the sink. Through this entire ordeal the young american dosen't seem to know what he is doing to himself and acts accordingly--he doesn't bat an eyelash.

As he finishes slitting his throat, the song ends and suddenly there is a quick progression of four shots--actually the same on a loop repeated four times--with a piece of new soundtrack--also repeated four times along with the picture. The shot: A firing squad executing a prisoner (possibly taken from real newsreel footage). As they fire, the victim's hat flies into the air with the bullets' impact giving one the impression at first that it might have been his head.

The sound that accompanies these images is a line from an old rock and roll song entitled: I Shot Mister Lee by the Bopettes. It is very rythmic and plainly states:

"I shot him in the head, uh-oh, boom, boom;
I shot him in the head, uh-oh, boom, boom,
I shot him in the head, uh-oh, boom, boom,
I shot him in the head, uh-oh, Boom! Boom!"

CUT back to the young American in complete silence. We now see him with face bloodied and cut, throat slashed, dressed in his three-piece suit, striped tie and carrying an attache case as he leaves his home to get to his office.

CUT to RED leader film.

I feel that the intent of the film is evident in the script. However, I would like to state that I hope the film will express my sad feelings concerning the present general moral condition of my young country and a sentiment^(reflected in the song)-- a personal one --of an America I never knew.