

"The White Girl": A Breakthrough Movie

Durham, N. C. - Principal photography for "The White Girl," the first feature movie project for television producer and host Tony Brown, was recently completed. The \$2 million movie with a message about drug use and self-respect stars Troy Beyer of the prime-time soap opera "Dynasty" and Taimak who played the lead in "The Last Dragon."

"The White Girl" is a double entendre -- the street name for cocaine and the way a young Black woman sees herself.

Michael Spinks, "the people's champion," and comedian George Kirby make cameo appearances. And a group called "The Say No Rappers" perform the film's theme song, also called "The White Girl." The song, along with a music video, produced on location with a cast of 1,000, will be used to market the movie and its anti-drug message.

Behind the scenes, there is another story unfolding. "I think congratulations are in order for your efforts to find and assemble a really superb production staff and crew," veteran actor Donald Craig was moved to write after his return to Hollywood. "The organization is truly first rate. And the cast was a joy to work with."

Brown, who wrote the script and directed the film, says that Troy Beyer brings to her role as a misguided young drug addict an uncanny timing and force. Her performance, he believes, will bring her critical acclaim. Moreover, Brown notes that he was amused to hear that he could not assemble a first-rate film crew that was totally integrated.

"Just as 'Roots' established that there were hundreds of competent and talented actors and actresses in the industry who could perform if given a chance, 'The White Girl' demonstrates that there are hundreds of talented and competent film technicians waiting in the wings as well," he explains.

The technician that Brown praises the most is Black cinematographer Joseph Wilcots, the only Director of Photography (DP) of his race to ever receive an EMMY nomination. Wilcots has received this honor twice, once for the mini-series "Roots" and for "Roots: The Second Generation." Wilcots is also acclaimed as one of

the ten best in his profession. Although he regularly receives enough offers to keep him busy, he continues to be overlooked for many potential boxoffice blockbusters that promote wider recognition among the general public. With the release of "The White Girl," Wilcots feels all of that may change.

"I see this film as having the potential for gaining more critical acclaim than anything I have done since 'Roots,'" says Wilcots. "The performances by several of the leading characters and the urgency of the message that it delivers should assure that it will be a popular discussion piece."

Troy Beyer, on the other hand, cited for her role on "Dynasty" and the dramatic Showtime special "Uncle Tom's Cabin," is seeing her career skyrocket. She has been the talk of everybody on the set. Twice during filming, she received standing ovations from members of the crew, and Brown says that several of her scenes "have made veteran performers sit up and take notice."

One of those veteran performers is Donald Craig, who portrays Mr. W., a corporate-type who is covertly involved in drugs and prostitution. Craig has been seen on the wide screen in hits such as "Dagnet," "Frances" and "Network." He says that Beyer "is not only incredibly beautiful and talented -- but with this film will demonstrate to everyone that she is on the brink of national stardom."

Her performance will certainly get the attention of a large number of the members of the Motion Picture Academy.

Craig, whose television credits include several episodes of "Knots Landing," "Dallas," "Dynasty" and "Murder, She Wrote" -- says he turned down an important television role to accept the Mr. W. role in "The White Girl" because he felt the movie's anti-drug theme "was so much more important."

Taimak, who recently performed in a very popular music video with Janet Jackson and is already widely known for his martial arts skills in "The Last Dragon," will once again spellbind

his large following of fans. Not only does he have two excellent fight scenes in "The White Girl," and is credited with choreograph-

ing them as well, but Brown says that his growth as an actor will amaze many critics. "I predict that he will become the film industry's most popular Black leading man."

"This just might be the movie that the Black Stars fell on," Brown adds, referring to an all-star cast of mostly newcomers.

"Take Teresa Farley as the destructive and scheming Vanessa. Joan Collins could learn a thing or two from her. DiAnne Shaw, who plays the sweet, bubbly Debbie, brings the girl-next-door to my neighborhood," Brown asserts.

"And O. L. Duke's performance as the evil Nicky will set new film standards for insights into the psychological make-up of pimps and pushers."

Movie buffs will remember Ms. Shaw as Lynn Neal in Sidney Poitier's "One More Saturday Nite," "Time Bomb" with Billy Dee Williams and "Hard Knox" with Robert Conrad. This is Teresa Yvon Farley's sixth film. Her last two films were "Bright Lights, Big City" for MGM/UA and "Turk 182" for 20th Century Fox Pictures. But her performance as an

overly ambitious, selfish, cocaine addict should mark the beginning of many good roles in the future.

Duke has appeared in "A Soldier's Play" and "Seize the Day" with Robin Williams. "He is one of the best all-around actors in the business," Brown asserts.

Brown, who is betting \$2 million that he is correct, states that "The White Girl" is only the first of many feature films his company will produce, predicting at least one new film per year.

Although the motion picture is not expected to be released before early spring of 1988, a music video will hit the market in late December or early January. The effort, featuring music produced by Associate Producer George Martin, will mark the first time that a feature film has had a music video precede its release. The video is performed by "The Say No Rappers" and led by Rapmasters Torey Drinker and Nathan Garrett, Jr.

Jim Cannady is the producer and Sheryl Cannady is the executive producer of "The White Girl."



MOVIE BREAKTHROUGH - Stars Troy Beyer of "Dynasty" (left) and Taimak of "The Last Dragon" will lead an all-star cast of newcomers in "The White Girl," a love story with an anti-drug theme, written and directed by Tony Brown.



A KING AND HIS INTERGALACTIC COURT - Martin Luther King III pays a special visit to three unusual space travelers - Hooter (L) and the Geex (Odie and Idie) - outside the Journey into Imagination pavilion at Walt Disney World Epcot Center.

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Gospel Music Explodes On Cable

Albuquerque, NM - Time was when the phones were quiet around the corporate offices of the Gospel Music Network (GMN), a six-hour-per-day, all-Christian music satellite and cable network. Not any longer.

The deluge of calls began shortly after GMN ran a special "Stryper Triple Set": all three videos from the Christian heavy metal band, Stryper, run back-to-back after an episode of Lightmusic which featured an interview with Robert Sweet, drummer for the band.

"The day after we ran the Lightmusic show followed by the Triple Set, we must have gotten 20 or 30 calls from kids who had seen it and wanted to know when we were going to replay it," said Scott Pelking, Vice President of Programming for GMN, the Gospel Music Network, an all-gospel music video satellite and cable service. "After that, we received at least 10 calls per day from young people who heard about the show from friends and wanted to see it for themselves, but they didn't know how to get us. We'd let them know if we had a cable or broadcast affiliate in their area or how they could pick us up off the satellite."

Soon after that, several magazines featured stories about the network, and the calls haven't slackened.

"We're primarily getting calls from people who have read about us in one of the Christian music

periodicals who ran a story on us," said Pelking. "They haven't seen us, but they'd like to. They want to know what they need to do to get us onto their local cable system."

Letters have come in as well, asking about the service. The GMN staff has been busy fulfilling the requests for information. Requests come from teens ("You can have your MTV," reads one letter from an inquirer from Omaha, Nebraska, "give me my GMN!") and from parents as well. Many of the interested callers and writers are providing contacts and addresses of their local cable companies.

Response has been such that GMN is actively working on increasing its current six-hour, non-prime-time schedule to a minimum 10-hour broadcast day which includes prime-time. GMN also plans to broadcast in stereo as well.

Response from artists and record companies has also been good.

"When I came here in March, we had 86 music videos, and most of those were contemporary," comments Pelking. "Now, we have almost 300 usable videos in our library. The greatest percentage of new videos are Southern Gospel and Black Gospel music. And a lot of these videos are from companies or artists we never knew existed."

"One of the other popular points of GMN is that we are ad-supported," said GMN President William Airy. "We'd rather that our viewers support our advertisers and donate their money locally. People seem to appreciate that."

GMN is broadcast daily from SatCom 4, Transponder 3, from 1-7 p.m. EDT, Monday through Friday, and from 7 a.m. until 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
And fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

—Langston Hughes

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