

A Darker Side is a half-hour dramatic film dealing with the South Africa. Williams uses what might be considered an unmarked topic, yet applies a slightly different angle than most. What it tries to get across is that the South African government uses its arm of oppression across its own national borders. As has been demonstrated in several instances, agents have been hired to intimidate, and to cause injury (sometime fatal) to political activists who oppose the apartheid regime. Primary targets are members of the African National Congress, the self-declared government in exile and the largest anti-apartheid party in South Africa. Williams points out that although he had wanted to do a film on South Africa for a while, this script was really born when a noted ANC member, Dulcie September, who was working out of Paris, France, was assassinated last year. She had repeatedly reported being followed by the Parisian police, but was not granted any protection. Williams' screenplay looks at a young, black South African woman (Josephine), an ANC member who is lecturing in a small Canadian university, having removed herself from a more active and high-profile political life for a period of "lying low". She is trying to put together a book of photographs to illustrate the life of black women in South African townships, and for this purpose, tries to enlist the help of a black Canadian (Michael), a fashion photographer. Initially, he refuses to help, but because of his personal interest in her, and himself being drawn into her world, and inevitably, his social and political consciousness is raised to the point where he realizes it is his duty to take part in the struggle. Their friendship grows, even though she is wary of her intense attitude towards her work, and at the end, Michael carries on with the book, even though Josephine is gone. For the film, probably guessed, Josephine is found and followed, and finally, in a brutal climax, is shot - and killed.

A Darker Side, Williams' second film, was done in association with the N B Filmmaker's Co-op. Funding, hopefully, will come through from various grant applications to the Canada Council, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, the National Film Board, the Canada Arts Foundation and the Province of New Brunswick. The locations used were all around Fredericton - UNB classrooms, buildings and grounds, apartments on Albert and Gibson streets (vandalized by the crew from hell), and the Nashwaksis River. The film is now being processed and should be ready for viewing in the early spring. Hopefully, it will be sold to Canadian networks, and it will undoubtedly cause some controversy.

ACTRESS LYNNE WANYEKI DISCUSSES HER EXPERIENCES IN THE FILM A DARK SIDE

Sunday night, the shooting of the film **A Darker Side** ended, heralded by the fireworks display at STU. The cast and crew took this as a final ending and beginning to be a benediction, a blessing from the gods that had been.

Towards the end of the school year, Errol Williams, the writer and director of the film, asked me if I'd be interested in playing the part of Josephine, the female leading role. Act in a film? - an offer I couldn't refuse. The screenplay itself interested me, being as I am from an African country, well-aware of the attitudes Canadians, both white and black, have towards issues which, like apartheid, are very close to home for me. I also know the fact that Michael, the male leading role, was a black Canadian, and that he represented these attitudes, which made a change from the usual Hollywood movie.

We started rehearsals during the summer. Errol Williams and Kwame (the 2nd director) usually gave Peter Marshall (who played Michael) and I the situation and the points each of us were meant to get across and let us "ad lib" our way through the scene. This gave us both a "feel" for our characters and their motivations. Gradually, we reached the point where our lines could be fixed, and yet still maintain the depth and meaning they were meant to carry.

Finally, we began actual filming or "shooting" to use filmmaker's jargon. All of my illusions about the supposed glamour of being a movie star were promptly destroyed on the very first day on the set. A very sobering and awakening too, I might add. Film is very different from theatre. We

were allowed minimal variation of position - ie. when we walked from point A to point B, we had to walk from a fixed spot to another fixed spot to maintain what is known as "continuity". We were filming by location, which meant that all the scenes at one particular spot were shot in succession, and then we'd move to the next location. This effectively ensured that we could not follow the actual story line while filming (that's all part of post-production). It made it very difficult to act too, because instead of building up feeling from the beginning to the climax, as in theatre, we had to produce emotion on the spot, as each scene required.

The biggest point of contention I had, however, was the fact that each scene was further broken down into a series of "shots", each shot consisting of a particular camera angle for a small number of lines. After this "master shot" was filmed, we'd repeat the shot for close-ups and medium shots known as "cut-aways". These would be used in post-production when editing the film to give a sense of the surroundings, or to show our facial or body expressions for vital lines. This meant that for maybe 3 or 4 lines, we'd have to do 4 or 5 shots for the various camera angles. Of course, we inevitably would make mistakes here and there, or move out of the camera frame, or not project the right mood, meaning that for one shot we'd sometimes have to do up to 6 "takes" - that's when tempers started to flare - and I grew to completely understand the reputation movie actors and actresses have for being temperamental.

Actually, the crew we had, all volunteers from the N B Filmmakers Do-op, were so nice and full of humour that in situations like that, we tended to get ridiculous and play the fool, rather than get angry.

On the set, the crew ruled. They did all the work, moving the equipment (camera, sound and lighting) from position to position, solving all the little technical problems, such as where to place the microphone, keeping it well out of frame, and how to "cheat" shots to obtain certain angles etc. My respect for them, their skills and, most importantly, their patience, quickly

grew as I realized that they really are the people who make any movie what it is. Of course, without us, they wouldn't be able to make the movie, so it's a curiously symbiotic relationship.

It wasn't all work on the set. There were many funny moments - Kwame breaking into an elaborate Charades game just as we were ready to "do a take", Barry Minshell's problems with the clapper (how difficult can it be to bang two pieces of wood together?) and just general tomfoolery in-between takes - there's an interminable amount of waiting around, waiting and waiting and waiting, on location as the equipment is moved around and set up again. A wonderful camaraderie grew up among the cast and crew, and in-house jokes, and teasing and general talk abounded.

The hardest bit of acting I had to do was die. I was being shot, and so had to jerk back forcibly, and let that jerk carry me through to the ground. The crew was in fits of laughter as Kwame repeated again and again "Jerk, Lynne, jerk! You're flowing to the ground. Dying is not a graceful dance!" I was starting to get extremely frustrated, not to mention sore from flinging myself onto the ground so many times. For that particular scene, we had borrowed a Vietnam veteran's \$4000 gun - the real thing. This man is (or should I say was) a professional sniper, and I finally got the jerk right when Tim Porter (my un-named assassin) walked over to me and said, with a deadpan face: "One more time Lynne - and then we get out the bullet-proof vest and the ketchup explosives". I did actually believe him for an instant (gullible!) and got it right instantly.

So, although we were all extremely exhilarated when the shooting was over, we were all sorry too that it was all done. It was a real experience for me - I find I watch television differently now, knowing all the tricks and the terminology involved in the technical side of it all. It was a learning experience really.

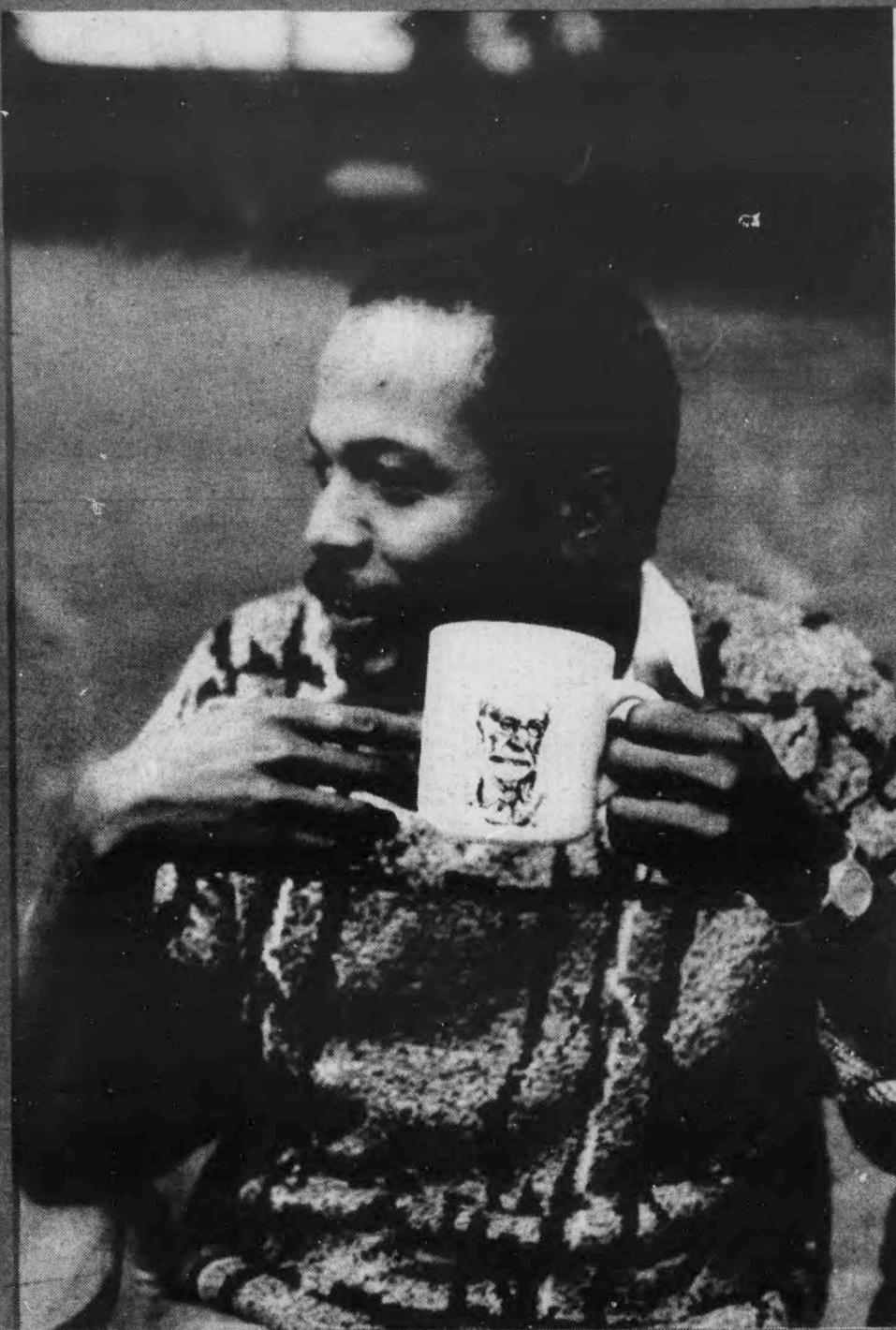


Photo by Della Smith

ERROL WILLIAMS

The film **A Darker Side** is Errol Williams' second film - his first film **Driftwood**, about the identity problems faced by an immigrant, is currently entered in the Atlantic Film Festival, where it is expected to do extremely well. Both of these productions were done in conjunction with the N B Filmmaker's Co-op. Williams has also produced an educational video **A Rising Tide**, which deals with the problems of adult illiteracy. This was produced for Lauback Literacy New Brunswick and the Department of Advanced Education and Training. Williams is a graduate of UNB.

