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SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY

MEDIA STUDIES STUDENTS

OCCASIONAL PAPERS



SPRING 1998

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TERRI WILLIAMS

MEDIATING AIDS CRIMINALIZATION

An epidemic begins when a person with a disease transmits it to an uninfected person. That person, in turn, infects others. Each of these, then, infects more people; causing the infected population to increase exponentially, and forming a web that stretches far and wide. Think of an inverted pyramid — each level covers more ground than the first. Such is the case with AIDS. Its modes of transmission are similar to those of any sexually transmitted disease. So why with AIDS do we encounter this stigma, this shame, this blame, this *wall* that separates Them and Us? Obtaining this answer requires digging, mindfully combing through the tangled web our thoughts and experiences of AIDS have woven.

The most powerful and lingering contributions to our collective cultural experience of AIDS have come from the mass media. The news media have served as gatekeepers who have selectively filtered into mainstream consciousness both information, and often misinformation, about AIDS. This generation remembers when the solace of childhood was jarred by the discovery of AIDS. We remember when the nightly news spread panic, questioning the safety of sharing bathrooms, water fountains, food, and swimming pools. But most of all, we remember the fear. This fear, for all generations who experienced the birth of this epidemic, was our first cultural reaction to AIDS. Upon this ground we have grown, lived, loved, and learned. We learned how to buffer ourselves from the blows of this fear by placing blame, becoming activists, or withdrawing in defeat. The initial fear faded proportionately to the amount of information that emerged about transmission, treatment, and prevention. While AIDS remains a permanent aspect of our culture, the once-raging dialogue about the epidemic has quieted with time. Late last year, however, this dialogue found new force.

In September of 1997, the mass media accused Nushawn Williams of knowingly exposing dozens of teenage girls to the AIDS virus. The issues raised by the media's reactive treatment of the Williams case, public disclosure and media responsibility (or lack thereof), are intensely relevant to and indicative of our current cultural responses to AIDS. As related by Richard Goldstein in the November 11, 1997, issue of the *Village Voice*, "The Chautauqua [County, NY] shock-horror was a clarion call to those who have long urged repression as a response to HIV." The "story" gave the mainstream a long-awaited excuse to launch a new dialogue about AIDS, to have an opinion on a matter that the uninfected, or unaffected, population has long pushed squeamishly beneath the frosts of denial.

Nushawn Williams is an "HIV-infected," "crack-addicted," "black" man from New York City who moved upstate. I imported the words to describe Nushawn directly from Fox's Ten O'clock News. Read the first sentence again, and think of how loaded the words *infected*, *addicted* and *black* can be. The first two imply a weakness of body and mind. The last, "black," implies nothing until we are shown the "victims" by the news producers. They are all white. Due to the pressure placed on the news media to appear objective, as well as politically correct, this fact is left unarticulated in the news report. Goldstein also addressed this issue: "Though the racial aspect of this story went unspoken, the pictures said it all. They gave the tabloid epithet of 'HIV Monster' a special zing." Housing Works in New York City took issue with the media's racist treatment of the case in their editorial response, "Abstinence-Only + Racism = The Nushawn Williams Infection Panic":

And news photographs and television coverage emphasize that many of the young women [Williams] knew were white. The outrage evoked by this story reflects deeply embedded archetypes in many white communities of sexually voracious Black men who

“prey” on vulnerable white girls. Media discussion of the unusually high percentage of women infected through contact with this man described him as a “super-secretor,” further evoking racist stereotypes of super-potency. The articulation of racism through metaphors of contagion is common throughout modern western history. In this case . . . the expression of those racist fears is allowed to rage unconstrained (4).

In short, the dialogue about AIDS has resurfaced solely because of the intense media coverage this situation has received. I have several concerns about the media attention. My first question is, “Why are the girls exempt from sexual responsibility?” Referring back to the news reports I viewed that dealt with this case, each stated that the girls had sex with Williams, but not one mentioned the word “unprotected.” This oversight led me to become concerned about where the mainstream media stand as advocates of condom use. I fear that the underlying concept here is that sex equals *unprotected* sex in the media. If this is true, then the media is being criminally irresponsible. Apparently, I am not alone in this view.

ACT-UP, an AIDS rights advocacy group responsible for the organization of countless resistance movements against AIDS discrimination and ignorance, cites several newspaper reports guilty of this oversight on its web page. Among these, on October, 28 1997, *The New York Times* published an article in which James Barron wrote, “County officials believe the virus was transmitted through heterosexual sex” (A1). Not mentioned by ACT-UP was a report published on the same date by the *Washington Post* in which Blaine Harden wrote, “Nushawn Williams . . . had sexual contact with at least 28 young people” (A01).

The second question I feel is relevant is, “Why is this case getting any media attention at all?” Have we forgotten, or do we simply ignore, that this is the typical scenario that builds the epidemic pyramid? From the start of this epidemic,

there have been people with AIDS, and there have been "clusters," groups of people infected by the same person. In this light, Williams and his partners merely elucidate the concept of an archetypal cluster. This is where the issue of race comes into play. Nushawn Williams is black, but he was also the typical menace of suburbia. He moved in from the city, sold drugs by the high school, was homeless at times, and had a reputation for domestic violence. He was, in one man, the embodiment of every characteristic from which parents try to protect their white, teenage, suburban daughters. He lived as a deviant in every sense of the word. Remember that AIDS has a long history with the "deviant" label. Racism and the connection of deviance to sexually transmitted diseases are the two reasons Williams' case quickly escalated into a present-day AIDS scare.

The media and the law seem to want to make an example out of Williams and his "cluster." This has been helpful to reopen a forum for discourse about the epidemic for those who must label people with AIDS *criminals* and *victims*. But I think the real issue here is for teenage girls to think about: How ignorant do we have to pretend to be, and for how long? Ignoring the risks of having unprotected sex, especially with an older, sometimes homeless man who sells crack across the street from school, does not eliminate the possibility of contracting AIDS.

We, as responsible members of society, need to encourage our younger sisters, daughters, and friends to be smarter, stronger, and more assertive than we may have been if we want to see them live as long and well as we know they deserve to. Whether or not we hold them responsible for their actions exhibits the degree to which we trust in their ability to act with mindfulness. This is not to say that a mistake should never be forgiven, but that it should not be forgotten only to be repeated. These girls are as human as the rest of us, as has been painfully displayed in the media coverage of their situation. Hopefully, more of them will come forward to help strengthen and enlighten their generation's women.

While legality tries to mimic morality in most cases, it often falls short. This fact is what gives rise to much of the drama in this case. Legally, it seems that this man should only be held responsible for the cases in which a statutory rape was committed. The age of consent is 18 in New York State. It seems that when a girl reaches that age, there is the assumption that she is to be sexually responsible. This responsibility involves choosing the person with whom one has intercourse, and making the decision to either avoid or expect the possibilities of engaging in a sexual relationship: moral concerns, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. If these women were of age when they were exposed to the virus, is it entirely Williams' fault that they were infected? I don't believe it is. If they had been assertive about having regular safer sex, most would be free of these very adult worries today. ~

Morally speaking, this man is guilty. This is where arguments about this case get their heat. It is not morally correct to be deceitful, or to knowingly threaten the well-being of those who love us. It is upsetting to think that Williams did not care about his partners enough to protect them from a disease he knew he carried. But it is more troubling to think that he did care about transmitting the virus. It speaks volumes about which people with AIDS get treatment, and which do not. Perhaps if this man had received good treatment, therapy, and education, these young women would not be infected today. This might be the tip of the iceberg of a larger moral dilemma here. Are health organizations biased when it comes to treating people with AIDS? Do we give precedence to drug-free, white men over those of non-European descent, addicts, and women? Of the opinions I have read on this matter, several people, particularly in ACT-UP's book *Women, AIDS, and Activism*, seem to believe that bias is a hindrance to AIDS treatment. It's something to think about.

The last issue I want to address is the overwhelming editorial response to the Nushawn Williams case. According to Goldstein's article in the *Voice* this week, a *New York Post* columnist, William F. Buckley, is again pushing to publicize

the names of those who have tested HIV-positive in New York. This is the same man who once came up with the idea of *tattooing the genitalia* of positive people. Geraldo Rivera explored this suggestion with his guest, Ann Coulter, on a particularly heinous telecast.

Rivera: I cannot believe you even laughingly suggest tattoos on the genitalia of people HIV infected.

Coulter: No, actually I haven't. But Buckley has . . . and later apologized. Though, I think, other than peoples' fears of homosexuality and homophobia . . . um . . . and of course the *Nazi associations* . . . in a way it actually deals with a lot of the concerns: having your employers know, having your friends know, having your family know . . . um . . . really the only person who knows is the one point of contact where you can transmit a deadly disease and considering the sort of . . . um . . . totalitarian government we have in the area of "*truth in advertising*" . . . um . . . there are *labels on mattresses, on hamburger meat, on cigarettes* . . . Um . . . I'm just saying that this actually deals with the public health crisis and concerns actually being raised. But as long as this is out of the question, it seems that you're not being honest saying, "Let's go after Nushawn Williams." (*italics mine*)

Ann Coulter, the woman who made the above statement on a national, prime-time, cable news network broadcast, is employed by the *Center for Individual Rights* as a "constitutional" lawyer. I have read her comment countless times and, with each reading, have tried to see her logic and reasoning empathetically. I cannot.

We are asked to ignore the Nazi associations with tattooing a population in the interest of segregation? But this

association, we must remember, is made for a reason. When the Nazis tattooed people in concentration camps, the act symbolized not only a death sentence, but absolute tyrannical control, the abrogation of *individual rights*, and the reduction of human beings to government property. It is impossible to ignore the "Nazi associations," because the thinly veiled reasoning behind tattooing people with AIDS is indistinguishable from that of the Nazis. Further, Coulter assimilates the idea of "labeling" people with AIDS to an issue of "truth in advertising," referring to the placement of labels "on mattresses, on hamburger meat, [and] cigarettes." Coulter's statement, as a result of her distasteful and flagrant comparisons, sets a chilling example that a scarlet letter mentality remains a very real threat to AIDS confidentiality.

All of this considered, the Nushawn Williams drama allowed many issues about AIDS, which normally simmer just beneath the surface of mainstream consciousness, to resurface for debate. It has shaken the mainstream with the message, "AIDS is not over." An ongoing dialogue about AIDS is important for dealing with the epidemic within cultural consciousness. Now that the initial panic has subsided, we have the opportunity, and responsibility, to explore the real cultural magnitude of the AIDS epidemic. We need to make an effort to constantly reform and maintain this dialogue before we can ever hope to convince our children and politicians that the epidemic must be taken as seriously now as it was in 1981.

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BRIAN YOUNG

TOGETHER

AIDS is something everyone hears about but no one likes to talk about. To address this contradiction, the media studies department offered a course on the representations of AIDS. The class gave students the chance to probe their own feelings about the topic, as well as explore the mass media's role in shaping those feelings. After examining different media and types of discussions concerning AIDS, we were asked to add our own interpretation to the AIDS discourse.

This piece is an attempt to investigate the relationship between two best friends. one of whom is a person living with AIDS (PWA). In the forefront is the evolution of the friendship as two friends adjust to the implications of having AIDS become a component of their friendship. More importantly, though, the reader is allowed to accompany the narrator as he/she tries to deal with her/his own needs and reservations and reconcile them with his/her friend's needs and fears. It is just one restricted look into the myriad of feelings and emotions that PWAs and their families and friends experience every day.

How did your LSAT go my friend asked me as we sat
down for lunch
I explained all the tension I had felt — the sweaty palms
the indecision the
sense of impending doom
But I shrugged it off by saying Well I can always take it
again to get a
better score if I want
His eyes seemed to glaze over as mind fixated on the past

He slanted his head and looked at me sideways as if he
desperately wanted
what I said to be true
But for him not me

What was it like when I told you he asked rather out of
 nowhere I thought
 What do you mean I answered his question with one of
 my own

You know when I told you

My best friend whom I've known since high school has
 AIDS
 He almost never talks about it with me which makes me
 wonder if its
 because it makes him uncomfortable or if its because he
 knows it makes me
 uncomfortable which is possible because even though I've
 never said it
 does we've been friends for so long
 he just knows

Sol said what I thought would be the best thing to say and he said
 you're just saying
 what you think is
 the best thing to say and I told him I don't know what I'm supposed
 to say and he said
 just say what you feel

I gave up trying to choose my words carefully and spoke
 from the hip
 He just listened as I told him how I was scared for myself
 and that I knew
 that it was selfish but I couldn't help it and that I used to
 come up with any
 excuse not to hang out with him early on and that I finally
 woke up and
 remembered that he was the one that was sick and not me
 By trying to distance myself I was leaving you alone
 because I was afraid
 and I didn't even think if you were afraid and isn't a
 friend supposed to
 be there even when things suck?

You are my best friend after all so I guess you always
knew I'd come
around
My answer didn't satisfy and he pressed the point But
what do you think of
me
I wanted to know how he got it as if that was what
mattered and as
if that could possibly solve anything and then I blamed
him for making my
life more difficult
Making my life more difficult
I'm worried about where I'm going to law school and you
get to worry
about that and your own mortality if your going to get sick
if and when you
have to tell your boss and will your insurance policy cover
you and if so for
how long and God there's no cure and it all is too much
and too soon and
too unfair and all too real and I'm thinking all this and I
know this isn't
what he wants to know because what he wants to know is
What do you think when you look at me and I am not
ready to talk about
that so I say whatever comes to mind to get myself out of
a sticky situation

He nods letting me off the hook he knows it and he knows
that I know it
Thankfully we would save this important conversation for
another day
Because I can't hide that when it comes right down to it —
yeah — I did look
at him differently when I found out
I wish I hadn't but there it is
And anyone else he tells they'll look at him differently too
How am I supposed to say that

Oh I know that this could have just as easily happened to me but it
didn't
it happened to you and not me so that makes it different and I'm
sorry but you just aren't
the same person
anymore

So yes I can take the LSAT again and change my score and
no he can't
take his HIV test over and change the results and yes some
things you can
effectively go back and change and some things just stay
the way they are
and we have to move on from there and hope our friends
will be there for
us to lean on

If he's brave enough to face this I hope that I will be brave
enough to not
make him face it

alone.

LAURIE FREDDINO

BERNARD HERRMANN: FILM-MAKER

It is well known that scores for films are written in very little time. Many directors do not even consider the score of their film to be important. Orson Welles is an exception. Welles and Bernard Herrmann worked together before on the radio in Mercury Theater Productions. Many of Herrmann's techniques are distinctly drawn from radio (I will talk about them more later). Because Welles was musically gifted and because *Citizen Kane* was Herrmann's first film, Welles, in a sense, "spoiled" Bernard Herrmann by giving him complete creative control (and twelve weeks) in the areas of content, orchestration, and sound levels as well as the dynamic of the finished product teamed with the finished film (this and the fact that control was taken away and the music chopped up during the editing of the *Magnificent Ambersons* seems to be the foundation of Herrmann's extreme demands on how he worked with a director in later films). Together, Welles and Herrmann, built the film and the music with the other in mind, resulting in a masterpiece for both of them.

Initially, it must be noted that Bernard Herrmann's style of music differs from the classical Hollywood approach to film scoring. "The main features [of classical Hollywood films] are full symphonic scoring, lush orchestration, the use of melodies as leitmotifs, and the underscoring of the dramatic action by the music" (Carringer 106). Classic Hollywood scoring would have Kane's boyhood scenes spouting with emotions from a full orchestra, but Herrmann uses simple musical accompaniment which sounds like only a few instruments. He felt that the motion picture-soundtrack was a sensitive medium where simple skillful instruments are highly more effective than "a hundred musicians playing away" (Herrmann 6).

An explanation for Herrmann's lack of underscoring may be addressed by his previous radio career. In radio, music behind dialogue is very distracting. Herrmann felt music

behind a scene in a film that contained dialogue would be equally distracting. Therefore, by sticking to a simple tune, it would not be. In a 1973 symposium, Herrmann said, "Music for a film should no more be noticed than the camera work" (Herrman 5). This means that he wants the music to be heard naturally, with the audience not realizing that they are hearing it (after all, the audience doesn't notice the camera). If there were an orchestra performing booming music behind young Charlie, the effect would not have been the same. In addition to this, Herrmann uses musical interludes to represent the passage of time. This is another radio technique used in film. One more radio technique that Herrmann adapted to film is the idea of "radio scoring." Herrmann felt that the edits between scenes in *Kane* were similar to those of a radio show. In radio, there must be some type of trigger music to let the listener know that the scene is shifting (Herrmann 6). Scenes in *Kane* end so abruptly (photographic contrasts were sharp and sudden) that Herrmann felt "radio scoring" was needed here also. Welles depended so much on Herrmann to pick up on this type of concept that Herrmann actually built the music per scene, in actuality, making the film audibly as it was being made visually.

Excellent examples of Bernard Herrmann's film making can be seen in any montage sequence. Herrmann says, "Music is a kind of binding veneer that holds a film together, and hence is particularly valuable in the use of montage. It's really the only thing that seals a montage into one coherent effect" (4). It has to be known and realized that in some of these sequences, Welles gave Herrmann soundless scenes and Herrmann created the music to go around them. This is illustrated in the famous "breakfast montage." In this montage, Welles actually cut the sequences to match the length of Herrmann's pieces. Herrmann explains that he basically started off with a popular music of the times that corresponded to the scenes, a romantic waltz. The romance of this fits the romance of the newlyweds in the opening of the montage. Slowly as the montage visually reveals the

breakdown of their affection into silence, Herrmann uses variations of the waltz to match the discord. Every change in the visual mood is paralleled by a change of mood in the waltz. Herrmann states that the series of waltz variations is classic and because he uses them throughout the montage they tie the whole thing together, making it whole.

The music of a second montage, the "suicide montage," is very accurately described by Carringer as Susan Alexander "drowning in quicksand" (108). Herrmann wrote the music for this closely resembling Ernest Reyer's French-Oriental Opera, *Salambo* (Carringer 107). Herrmann's *Salaambo* differed from the authentic in rewriting the opera to high out of range for the singer. The opera singer who dubbed Susan was not a bad one, she was simply struggling with her voice to reach higher than she could actually go (trying to get out of the quicksand). This is one rare moment where Herrmann uses a big orchestra. It plays while everyone is fussing over Susan and then abandons her as her weak voice takes over at the beginning of the performance. This is done so well that the effect is the audience can "feel" the quicksand. Herrmann says he did not particularly like writing an opera sequence like this, but *Kane* demanded it. Welles and Herrmann needed to convey Susan's fright to the audience. Another radio technique is used here as the montage tension rises. Herrmann blends sound effects. Susan's high singing voice mixed with a rhythmical musical motif represents her hysteria.

Besides musical montages, Herrmann creates musical motifs. In addition to the musical motif of Susan's suicide attempt, Herrmann uses musical motifs to represent characters. The two main motifs represent Kane. The first is called "power." Herrmann explains that it is a simple four note figure in brass (Carringer 109). The second is called "rosebud," which is a solo on vibraphone (Carringer 109). This represents the more innocent childlike side of Kane and depicts where he came from. These motifs "embody the contradiction of Kane — the clash between the romantic ideal of childhood innocence and the corrupting influences of adulthood" (Carringer 108). Herrmann actually uses

"rosebud" to expose the secret very early in the film. He was worried that it would give it away. But because he is a master of making music "natural," it is not picked up by the audience until pointed out. At the conclusion of the film, when rosebud is revealed visually, both motifs are played together to conclude the film audibly.

There are more musical character motifs in *Kane*. Horns represent Thatcher. They begin in the library when his statue is on screen and continue later when we again see him. Emily is represented by some form of waltz, as seen in the "breakfast montage." Other than opera scenes, Susan is represented by jazz. Jazz is heard during the picnic at the end of the film and especially in the night club scenes.

In conclusion, in the specific instance of *Citizen Kane*, writing a score for a film equals that of making a film. Many *Kane* critics say that the music made *Citizen Kane* and if this is true then Bernard Herrmann is a film maker. Herrmann, however gives credit to Welles. He says, "Welles is a man of great musical culture." Because of Welles' talent, he was able to see the need for an involved score to parallel the script. Welles showed Herrmann what the world of cinema scores was like and because Herrmann never had the opportunity to work with another director that equaled Welles' talent, was disappointed after that. He demanded the right to have complete control of all music and has produced more famous works since, but that is the subject of another paper. Bernard Herrmann's score for *Citizen Kane* went on to be nominated for an Academy Award, but was beaten by the score from *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, ironically also written by Herrmann.

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MATT FORTNEY

THE WELLESIAN CHARACTER

Widely regarded as one of the most influential directors in American film history, Orson Welles was considered everything from a genius to a failure. The early success of his productions of *War of the Worlds* (1938) and *Citizen Kane* (1941) was tempered by the disappointments of *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) and *Macbeth* (1948). But whether he was involved in a groundbreaking production or a monumental flop, Welles always managed to draw attention to himself. The same was true for his acting. He often dominated story lines, even when he wasn't the main character. Welles seemed to have a prototypical character that he excelled at portraying. This character appeared in *Citizen Kane*, *Othello* (1952), *Mr. Arkadin* (1955) and *Touch Of Evil* (1958), among other films. Why was Welles attracted to this dominant type of role and what made them so memorable?

Welles was drawn to "powerful, egotistical men who lived outside or above the law and society" (Doll 906). Operating by their own rules, these men were giants in society, both admired and hated at the same time. Never inherently evil, they nonetheless exhibited many villainous traits. Their villainy stemmed from the complexity of their character. But it was also their complexity which generated sympathy among audiences and even Welles himself. Yes, the characters were bad, but according to Welles, "it's always possible to feel sympathy for a son of a bitch" (quoted in Comito 204). He further argued "sympathy is a human thing, after all. Hence my soft spot for men for whom I in no way hide my repugnance. And this sentiment does not come from the fact they're more gifted but from the fact they're human beings" (204). Although his character may have lied, cheated and murdered, in the end the audience feels sorry for him. They see a man with the world at his fingertips felled by a human flaw.

This tragic antihero seems to be the victim of his own lost innocence. Try as he might to regain some of that innocence, it always leads to his downfall. The antihero attempts to balance the hands of fate through his actions, but it only results in his destruction. The audience can't help but feel sympathetic towards a man with everything whose world collapses because he isn't satisfied with his possessions.

The most famous of Welles' characters is by far Charles Foster Kane, the lead character from *Citizen Kane*. Sent away by his mother at a young age to live a better life, Kane grows up a millionaire playboy. As an adult, he sets his sights on running a newspaper and later running for political office. Failing at both, Kane retires as a wealthy recluse, surrounding himself with his money. His dying word is "rosebud," the one great mystery that was thought to explain Kane's entire life. The audience discovers at the end of the movie that rosebud was in fact a sled, the symbol of his lost childhood, or more accurately, the loss of innocence.

The young Kane is shown as a carefree, normal child playing in the snow with his sled. For Kane, this was the last time he was innocent and loved. He moves on to life with his guardian Thatcher, who tries to replace Kane's Rosebud sled with a fancier Crusader model. Kane's rejection of the sled is the beginning of his quest to regain the remnants of his childhood and more specifically, love. He is determined never again to be betrayed by love the way his mother betrayed him when she sent him away. Therefore, love has to be "on his terms." He must win the love of everyone, but at the same time retain total control. First is the newspaper, where Kane hoped to win the love of the everyday person. This attempt to relate to the underclass "of whom he is a self-appointed champion, is paternalistic" (Carroll 258). He claimed people would think "what I tell them to think."

After the failure of his paper, Kane turned to politics, once again in an effort to make everyone love him. The results were the same, but his relationship with Susan Alexander also started during his political campaign. Perhaps the second most important character in *Kane*, she is both the

public and Kane's lost family at the same time. To Noël Carroll, Susan represents Kane's ultimate attempt to recreate the lost love of his family:

The psychological structure, here, seems to be that Kane attempts to recover the loss of his relation to his mother by reinstating a mothering relation with Susan, one in which he will carry out the project [opera singing] that Susan's mother — against Susan's better judgment — elected for Susan. . . . Kane's failure is an attempt to re-establish a family, which is something he is bound to botch since he was torn from his own family. (260)

James Naremore feels Susan "becomes a symbol for his treatment of the society at large. As Jed Leland [Kane's closest friend] tells us, she represents for Kane a cross-section of the American public" (Naremore 73). He tries to manipulate her and force her to love him not for the person he is, but for the things he does and possesses.

Kane generates sympathy at the end of his life, when we see all his failed tries at getting back the missing piece of his life. Although he fires his best friend and becomes an obsessive, domineering husband with Susan, we still feel sorry for him just by witnessing all of his pathetic attempts at love. We are led to believe he is the richest and most powerful man in the world, yet he is also the poorest and weakest and dies as such.

Given his penchant for tortured antiheroes, it comes as no surprise that Welles was also attracted to Shakespeare. In fact, much of his work was influenced by Shakespeare, a point Welles never disputed (Bazin 217). In *Othello*, he played the lead character, a great general who comes back to Venice and takes a bride, only to be tricked into killing her by one of his conniving soldiers, Iago. *Othello's* world collapses when he realizes he has been tricked into killing his wife, resulting in his own suicide. Much like Kane, *Othello* dies

never having been able to love someone unconditionally. To Othello, his suspicion of an affair between his wife, Desdemona, and his lieutenant, Cassio, results in an unhappy marriage. Also much like *Kane*, *Othello* begins with the funeral scene, indicating the doomed nature of the character.

According to Welles, Othello's downfall was a result of "his simplicity, not his weakness. He really was the archetype of the simple man, and has never understood the complexity of the world or of human beings. He's a soldier; he's never known women" (quoted in Thomson 306). Iago exploited this simplicity, setting up Cassio and convincing the easily impressionable Othello that his wife was committing adultery. Iago's motivation in the movie (Welles changed it from the play) is his hatred of life because he is impotent (Naremore 179). This hostility, while never actually stated, is directed at Desdemona and Othello's initially happy marriage.

As in *Kane*, all the power and acclaim Othello can acquire is not enough to cover his deficiencies. Othello's basic weakness, his inability to understand women, leads to his downfall. It is ironic that a man who was able to triumph over the greatest of enemies could not overcome the enemy inside himself. Othello's final speech is a testament to his defeat as he mutters "of one, that loved not wisely, but too well; of one, not easily jealous, but, being wrought, perplexed in the extreme." A man who could not be defeated from the outside was destroyed by something from inside. Iago's and Othello's physical appearance exemplifies this understanding. Othello is a much larger presence than Iago in size. Since Othello is tall and large and Iago is short and skinny, his only opportunity to destroy Othello would come from inside.

Othello's loss of innocence doesn't occur until the moment when he murders his wife. At that instant, he is transformed from a jealous husband to a villain. With his position in Venetian society as a well-respected general and with the prevailing attitude of female subservience, it appears as though Othello will not suffer for his crime. He has

become the villain. However, the audience still feels sympathy for him because he was the naive dupe in Iago's twisted scheme. The character of Othello doesn't change; he is just manipulated by Iago into becoming a detestably jealous person. Welles explained "jealousy is detestable, not Othello. But in so far as he becomes obsessed by jealousy as to be the personification of it, he's detestable" (quoted in Bazin 206). After we recover from the initial horror of his actions, our pity for Othello is furthered by his own realization that he has murdered his wife over absolutely nothing. While still the man responsible for killing his wife, everyone except Iago feels sorry for him. Even the characters in the movie display sympathy towards the tragic antihero by laying him to rest with his wife.

Welles followed *Othello* with yet another film where the tragic antagonist was the main character. Similar to *Kane* and *Othello*, *Mr. Arkadin* begins at the end of the story and works as a flashback. A man named Guy Van Stratten is hired by the powerful and wealthy Mr. Arkadin to "investigate" his past. As Van Stratten keeps uncovering clues, his witnesses keep dying. Arkadin has, in reality, hired Van Stratten to find all the links to his past so he can eliminate them and prevent his daughter Raina from finding out about his sordid origins. When he is tricked into believing his daughter knows his secrets, Arkadin kills himself to avoid having to face her.

In *Arkadin*, "Welles was playing a man who was meant to be infinitely rich and powerful, and inescapably guilty or suspicious" (Thomson 321). Despite all his power, Arkadin could not erase where he came from. Arkadin believed he could control the past in the same way he controlled money and people. His inability to do this is best exemplified by the scene at the airport, where Arkadin desperately tries to board a booked airplane to reach his daughter before Van Stratten tells her the truth. He first tries to muscle his way on, announcing he is Gregory Arkadin and demanding a seat on the flight. Realizing that his power means nothing, Arkadin offers to pay for a seat on the flight. This effort likewise proves futile. Arkadin is left standing at the airport, screaming

like the desperate man he is, while Van Stratten boards the plane. The two things Arkadin possessed, money and power, could not prevent the past from catching up to him.

Similar to Kane, Arkadin's wealth and position are secondary to his need for someone to love him. Of all his possessions, the one thing Arkadin needs most is his daughter's love. This love is jeopardized by the discovery that he was a white slave trader in Poland. It is once again a non-material thing that destroys the tragic antihero. Arkadin's loss of innocence catches up with him the same way it caught up with Kane and Othello. It is not the actual event which leads to his downfall, but the emotional consequences that result from it.

It is his torn emotions of love versus respect and power which generate sympathy for Arkadin. He is a businessman of apparently so little emotion that he is almost a beast. Yet no human can be totally devoid of desires. Arkadin's one overwhelming passion, to be loved by his daughter, makes him obsessive to the point of being pathetic. That point is where the audience can sympathize with him. Naremore observed, "he is almost a mythical creature, a man of animal ruthlessness and lusty appetite, made quirky by his obsessive love for his daughter" (Naremore 192). Welles knew, despite Arkadin's villainous past experiences and recent murders, that Arkadin would not be a thoroughly detestable man. He explained, "it's only Arkadin's ideology which is detestable, but not his mind, because he's courageous, passionate, and I think it's really impossible to detest a passionate man" (quoted in Bazin 223).

Perhaps the last great Wellesian character was Hank Quinlan in *Touch of Evil*. The film is set in a town on the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Quinlan, as captain of the American police force, is sent to investigate the murder of an influential American businessman. He encounters Mike Vargas, a Mexican narcotics agent, who exposes Quinlan's dirty habit of bending the law to get his man. Quinlan is ultimately killed by his loyal partner, Menzies, who has finally realized the error of their ways. Similar to the other

films, *Evil* presents Quinlan as a well-known and respected man who can operate outside of the law and commit injustices. In this setting, though, Quinlan is the law and can therefore bend the rules to suit his own purposes, a practice he has engaged in for years.

Quinlan's motivation for all of his villainous acts was the murder of his wife at the hands of some "half breed" many years ago. It explains his blatantly racist attitude and habit of finding a Mexican to pin crimes on. His loss of innocence began with his quest for revenge against the Mexican who killed his wife. This unholy quest mutated into full blown hatred as the years dragged on. His goal became not so much to "bring the guilty to justice as to murder them in the name of the law" (Bazin 205). By setting up a Mexican, Quinlan would have the opportunity to murder someone under the cover of the law and move closer to fulfilling his thirst for revenge. Much like Arkadin, to have the past uncovered would certainly lead to his downfall. So he falls back on his reputation as a respectable, upstanding crime fighter to try and overcome his impending doom. He is convinced that people will believe him over the Mexican Vargas, whose opinion would be lessened because he was "coming to the defense of a countryman." But as Kane, Othello and Arkadin learned, despite their best efforts, the past is not theirs to manipulate. Quinlan is powerless when fate knocks on the door.

The best representation of Quinlan's past comes in the form of Tanya, the Mexican prostitute whose relationship with him dates back to the old days. Upon first recognizing him, she comments on how he's let himself go, indicating that he wasn't always a bloated, worn out cop. She also is Mexican, a strange occurrence considering Quinlan's hatred of Mexicans. This is yet another indication that he wasn't always vile. Quinlan views Tanya as the remnants of his past, a time in which he was much happier. He repeatedly visits her in "a pathetic attempt to return to pre-adolescence" and a time when "things weren't so degraded" (Naremore 153). This turns Quinlan's existence into a circular loop, almost like a dog chasing its own tail. As he attempts

to grab a part of his past, his past is quickly approaching to bite him in the rear. He is ruining himself by "self-pity and . . . a combination of self-love and self-loathing" (Thomson 343). It leaves Tanya to note that his "future is all used up." He is no longer moving forward, but running in circles, only moving closer to his ruination.

Perhaps this sad condition is what gives Quinlan a sympathetic appeal, despite his abuse of the law. We realize the futility of his existence and the fact that he was once a good man who lost his way. Traces of humanity are still found in his friend Menzies, who idolizes him, and in the fact that he has never profited from his corruption (Naremore 152). Welles explained Quinlan is sympathetic "because of his humanity, not his ideals . . . because he has a certain breadth of ideas, because he has a heart, you can't stop yourself feeling a certain sympathy for him; in spite of everything, he's human" (quoted in Bazin 203). The fact that Quinlan was still human is punctuated by Vargas and his fledgling career. When Vargas' wife is kidnapped, he acts "as a husband, not a cop," abandoning police procedure and throwing Mexicans around like rag dolls. His rage offers a glimpse of what Quinlan suffered through, as we realize that the noble Vargas may just be a mirror image of a younger Quinlan.

The similarities between the four characters Welles played is striking. First and foremost is the inescapable destruction each character experiences. Despite their wealth and power, they all are dead by the movies' end, "haunted by an innocence they have lost" (Doll 906). The harder they have tried to regain their innocence, the further it slips away from them. Kane's overzealous attempts to make everyone love him only alienated him from the ones who truly loved and respected him. His first wife Emily Norton, Jed Leland, and Susan Alexander all walked out on him. Othello's feeble reasoning for killing his wife only made him look even more foolish, especially when he learns Iago has tricked him. Arkadin tried to cover up his monstrous path by killing everyone who knew about it. Instead he made himself look even more like a desperate monster, reinforced by his wild,

pathetic pleas at the airport. Quinlan tried to relive the good old days by finding alcohol and Tanya, while at the same time setting up Vargas like the crooked cop he really was.

Another similarity is the ever present foil, who discovers the weakness in the power figure's armor. This character, whether knowingly or not, pursues the antihero and initiates his downfall. In *Othello*, *Mr. Arkadin* and *Touch Of Evil*, the characters who bring down the antihero were in part, a creation of the antiheroes' nature. Iago's desire to bring down Othello is seemingly generated from his jealousy of Othello's success on the battlefield, which has led to his success with women. He appears disenfranchised because though he shares Othello's success, he can't share in the rewards, due to his impotence.

Van Stratten is a direct creation of Arkadin. Initially just a blackmailer, Arkadin turns him into an investigator to uncover his past. But Van Stratten's competence and determination, as well as Raina's love for him, make him a threat to Arkadin's desire to keep his past hidden from his daughter. Arkadin's underestimation of Van Stratten's ability helps topple him. This is the same basic scenario present in *Touch Of Evil*. Vargas' quest to discover the truth about Quinlan's past was a direct result of Quinlan's behavior. Quinlan's racist behavior towards him and the suspect initiated Vargas' quest. Similar to Arkadin, Quinlan also did not count on the influence of the person closest to him, in this case his partner Menzies. Menzies role in taking down Quinlan was just as important as Vargas'.

Kane's approach is slightly different. The downfall of Kane is illustrated by the investigations of a reporter and the reminiscences of his friends, after Kane's death. This method allows us greater understanding of the character and of ourselves, where a traditional narrative form could not give us the experience of the character's foremost desires and frustrations (Cardullo 250). The antihero's life is still exposed by a stranger, but to understand that Kane's inability to love was his downfall requires the viewing experience we can only gain from a third person retelling.

Lastly, the one great commonality between all four characters is their inability to handle love. Love is at the heart of all the character's downfalls. Kane is forever scarred by love when his mother "abandons" him at a young age. His lifelong attempt to be loved only dooms him to loneliness. Othello's inexperience at love are at the heart of his destruction. His jealousy was born out of him not understanding that part of loving someone means trusting in them. Arkadin killed himself rather than lose the one thing that meant more to him than money or power: the love of his daughter. The racist attitude and corruptness of Quinlan has its roots in the murder of the love of his life, his wife. The lesson to be learned by these characters is that there are things more influential and important than money or power, things that have a far more important bearing on life.

In his films, Welles played a series of egoists, something he greatly detested (Bazin 208). His performances were so compelling and powerful, they dominated the pictures they were in. By putting forward the best arguments each egoist had and still having them destroyed in the end, Welles was demonstrating the ultimate failure of egoism and the shallowness of money and power. By seeing the pathetic results of their lifestyles, Welles hoped the audience would learn from the antiheroes. He believed it was "impossible for a man to be great unless he acknowledges something greater than himself" (quoted in Bazin 208). If repetition is the truest form of learning, then Welles managed to school his audiences on the greatness of man.

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SHARON NAGY

WHEN 1000 WORDS AND PICTURES DON'T MATCH

The camera has brought a new dimension to the way we perceive the world and the way we interpret the pictures taken with this invention are always changing. The camera and photography have affected the media and news in such a way that events are relived for generations after the initial event. However, the way that these events are interpreted vary from generation to generation, from person to person. Even photos taken yesterday are interpreted and reinterpreted according to the person looking at the photo; the viewer may have a completely different interpretation of the photo than the photographer intended. These are further reinterpreted by newspaper editors, reporters, and distributors. How can one insure that the true meaning, as seen by the person presenting the picture, is brought across to the viewer? Captions. Captions are used to tell the meaning of the picture. The caption presents the viewer with what the picture means, or what the person in charge of editing of the paper feels it should mean. There are times, though, that the caption doesn't thoroughly describe the picture and there is still room for interpretation. A few times the caption isn't readily associated with the picture. Then the interpretation falls more on the viewer to see the picture as the caption meant it to be seen. But we all see the picture with the learning and ideals we have already in us, and that is how we interpret it.

In the *Connecticut Post*, on Wednesday February 21, the front page had a color photograph of presidential candidate Pat Buchanan the night of his victory in the New Hampshire presidential primary. The picture shows a man with his arms up and his mouth open. His eyes are set looking straight ahead. But his head is tilted slightly up, and his shoulders

are set back somewhat, making his neck look constricted as it comes out of his white shirt. His face shows the look of a man concerned or angry. He is standing on a podium with a microphone atop it. The man is wearing a dark colored suit and a tie with colored shapes on a dark background. The podium, itself a symbol of authority, is of wood, natural and earthy, a bit of grounding and solidity for the candidate. A communications professor once told me that the podium is like protection from the gazes of onlookers; one doesn't feel as vulnerable behind a podium. Is the candidate protecting himself from the crowd or critics by being behind a podium of solid footing? The camera is at an angle that seems to be looking up at the man. This angle gives the man a towering look, an air of importance; it is the distinct pose of someone deserving the position of president of the United States of America. This man could be anybody; a man in a debate, a preacher on his pulpit, or an executive giving a troublesome speech. If this picture were of a man in a debate, he might be arguing a particularly trying topic. If this were a picture of a preacher, he might be in the middle of an impassioned speech on destruction and sin. If this were a picture of an executive, he might be giving a speech to motivate lax workers or to impress shareholders into buying more stock. The overall impression of the picture is dark and demanding; it's as if the picture speaks in a booming voice about a powerful topic.

The caption reads "Republican presidential hopeful Pat Buchanan speaks during his post-primary victory party Tuesday night in Manchester, N.H. after narrowly edging out Bob Dole." Without seeing the picture one can imagine a party with balloons and banners of red, white, and blue, people holding signs and wearing hats with his name on it, surrounding a happy candidate with a large smile. Because it is a victory party there would be an air of jubilation and celebration. The candidate would be making a speech, perhaps thanking all the voters and his campaign supporters. The podium he would be speaking behind would have a campaign sign or a red, white, and blue banner, and the

The impression that this view would give is one of a candidate that is close to the people and confident with the results and campaign.

Why would these images come to mind? The colors red, white, and blue are the colors of the American flag, and they carry over to show patriotism. A candidate that surrounds himself with these colors show that he is patriotic and supports the country and its citizens, who is faithful to the morals represented by "old faithful." The flag is a well-known symbol of our country and the notions of freedom and equality for all. By showing that, the candidate says, without needing to specify it in words, that he supports these notions. The supporters give their support to this candidate because he shows concern for their "type" of citizen; a middle-class worker, a left or right oriented group, a party affiliated individual, or a person who shares the same ideals as the candidate. His victory is a type of victory for them, a victory of their ideals, a voice for their concerns.

The media's presence represents the importance of this candidate or of the election itself. They show that this event is important enough to be covered, or the candidate is important enough to document the stages in his campaign. By being there, the media grants the event more importance: the media there shows that it should be brought to the attention of all the people. The thought that it is a victory party and should be happy is an ideal that most people share. A party is almost always a cheerful time and the attendees are usually gay. That is the nature of a party, the celebration of something. Banners and balloons give a festive atmosphere. The fact that it is a victory party grants more of a positive feel to the party's celebrants. There is confidence and hope in all

those there. They can go on in the campaign with a more positive gait, an optimistic and lively attitude.

This scene described is what I think of when there is a mention of a political victory party. These ideas are presented, and are representative of the American political system. The media also shows these images and they are reinforced in our minds, and we interpret all subsequent pictures, stories, or reports to fit this mold. Where these images originally came from is hard to know because they are now an integral part of our institutions. Somewhere someone used these tactics and was successful. Someone else saw the original's success and copied that formula. And so candidates saw success and used the now institutionalized formula. Perhaps the candidate purposely uses these images because it is what we are used to. It would go against the grain of our ideals to show a political candidate, involved in this country's government, showing no sense of patriotism. Therefore the colors red, white, and blue are shown in any way that they can. It would be outright detrimental to the candidate's campaign to not thank those to whom the victory is owed, to not show the "little people's" involvement. It would make sense to the candidate to show these symbols since they hold so much importance to us.

Therefore, there can be confusion when we consider our expectations after reading the caption and actually seeing this picture of Pat Buchanan. If one reads the caption first and then sees the picture, one doesn't get that sense of happiness or patriotism or even a political victory. None of what we expect is represented. It is more difficult to make the correlation between the caption and picture. When we do finally make the correlation, we have yet another interpretation of what a political victory party is. It doesn't fit our previous expectations, but we associate it in our mind with the picture so that the image, the picture and caption together, is understandable. But the new interpretation we have may not be what the photographer, editor, or even the candidate intended. The picture gives me the impression of a typical Republican, celebrating a victory in a "Republican"

way. The images in the media and what I have been exposed to is that a Republican is a business-like, older, middle- to upper-class male whose political ideas are conservative and possibly affected by religious ideals and good old-fashioned family values. This may or may not be the image the candidate wishes to represent. If it is, then the picture fits the caption. If this is not the image the candidate wishes to represent, then voters who are less informed will see the picture and receive the impression that he fits the stereotype of a Republican. This image can be used by conservative, or "political right" papers to show the best example of a candidate for their party or faction. The image can be used by liberal, or "political left" papers to represent the opposite, the "others," the "enemy" of what their ideals are.

The purpose of most captions is to tell the viewer what a picture represents. But determining what the picture means is out of the caption's scope. That is left to the reader. Although I tried to describe the picture and caption as objectively as possible, I know that the impression I gave is tainted with my own experiences and impressions and, most of all, my own interpretation of this picture. My own description may bias the reader of this paper to notice the things that I noticed. It may even persuade him/her to see the picture as I see it and mold their ideas on this picture to encompass mine, much like what the editors want to do with the reader of the newspaper. The caption is a guide to what the meaning of a picture should be, not an all-encompassing definition of the photo.



FREED TO KILL

During an analysis of the news media, I came across an interesting story on the television news magazine *Dateline* (February 25, 1997). It was about a man who, nearly twenty years ago, sexually assaulted and mutilated a fifteen-year old girl, leaving her for dead. He was convicted of the crime, served a reduced sentence for good behavior and was freed from prison. Now he is confessing to the murder of another young woman in a different state.

At the beginning of every show, *Dateline* runs a synopsis of each news story they intend to cover during the hour-long program. This week after clips on a book written by John Gotti's daughter and a hidden camera investigation on a diet guru, they ran a short *Dateline* graphic with sweeping, urgent music as a precursor to the above story. This lends a sense of importance to the upcoming narrative and images we're about to witness.

The narrator comes in immediately with "He committed a crime so horrible, we couldn't forget," and the camera pans down the body of a seated young woman to the prosthetic limbs and hooks in her lap. The image quickly dissolves to a poster that reads, "DROP DEAD." To follow is a current shot of the elderly man being led in handcuffs by police, then to a chanting crowd, whose message is somewhat muffled. This quickly leads into a black-and-white film of a much younger version of the man being led away once again by police, with a still photo of his young victim by a microphone, ostensibly speaking to the press. During these scenes, the narrator continues to describe the crime which took place nearly twenty years ago, careful to never mention the name of the man in the video.

This lead-in, which takes much longer to describe than to watch, is very obviously designed to entice the viewer into staying tuned and wanting to know more about the man and

the crimes he has committed. By never mentioning the man by name, an aura of mystery is created that helps to build tension. The opening shot, which is very quick and a bit stilted of the young woman with the prosthetic limbs is shocking and very effective especially in conjunction with the narration "mutilated his young victim." This disturbing image is almost immediately dissolved into the "DROP DEAD" poster so as not to overly offend more sensitive viewers and also to create an impression of scandal and tension.

The next, more current scene in which the still unnamed man is being led away by police, and then again twenty years earlier, adds a sense of drama to the story because now the viewer is under the impression that there is a history here. In between is a still shot of his first victim, who appears very young, and who immediately captures our sympathy, due to her youth and therefore, presumed innocence. The chanting crowd further casts tension upon the viewer because it is now believed that there is cause for outrage. If there is a crowd chanting, then they must have assembled for a good reason. Interestingly though, their chanting is muffled and never once is a clear connection made between the crowd and the unnamed man. Still, all of the elements used thus far have been carefully edited together in a highly effective fashion. The viewer's interest is piqued by the mystery of the unnamed man, is sympathetic toward the disfigured young victim, and feels outraged because of the poster and the chanting crowd. And all of these emotions are stirred up in less than fifteen seconds.

Finally during the scene in which the elderly man is being led away by police, the narrator identifies him as Lawrence Singleton, a man who has now confessed to murder, which is punctuated by a quick still shot of his most recent young victim. The voice over is then cut and, as Singleton is ushered to a waiting police car, we hear him professing his innocence to the assault he was convicted of nearly twenty years ago, in response to a reporter's question.

The scene is swiftly switched to an office where the journalist reporting on the story for *Dateline* is interviewing

a man, now raising the question that is evidently the focus of this story. He asks, "Why did the system fail?" and the man's response is whittled down to, "I think failure is probably an understatement." It's obvious that his answer was lengthier, but it is being used here as a teaser to keep the viewer tuned in to hear the rest of what he had to say. After the narrator announces the name of the journalist and pronounces his story a "report on crime and punishment," a brilliant blue graphic with swishing music engulfs the screen drawing the lead-in to a close.

The editing here is quite typical of the way in which these news magazines lead-in to a story. All of the elements are carefully arranged so as to keep the viewer interested and watching for the story. They use the compelling image of a young girl with prosthetic limbs to open the segment, and then proceed to use all of the ingredients viewers have become accustomed to: the criminal being led away by police, chanting crowds, posters, still shots of the victim prior to the crime, sound bites from the criminal professing his innocence, and abbreviated responses to the reporter's very pointed questions. All of the imagery is then complimented with narration to build and provide tension. For example, in this instance the viewer is kept guessing as to the man's identity a full fifteen seconds into the spot.

The graphic and swishing music used at the end neatly ties up the lead-in like a package with a bow, providing a segue into the next story; which, very interestingly is about JonBenet Ramsey. It is no accident that they chose this story to follow the Singleton story due to the similarity of the incidents, and the outrage that has been produced by this terrible tragedy. Actually it was quite a stroke of genius to run the Ramsey spot directly after the Singleton story, as it helps to trade up the older story, and ties it to the more current event, which has very similar sensational and scandalous elements to it.

The Singleton story appears first on the agenda after a series of ads directed at middle-income viewers. The camera pans down from high above the studio to a close-up of Jane

Pauley, who introduces the segment in her usual, officious manner. The theme of the piece, which runs like a fine thread throughout, is about the failure of the justice system to keep criminals like Singleton behind bars in order to protect society from repeat offenses. The opening lines are carefully orchestrated so that the questions posed lead right into the story, which begins with the opening graphics, and title of the story, "Freed to Kill," with a voice dubbed in of a little girl. The little girl is the daughter of the latest murder victim, who is reading a letter she wrote about her mother. *Dateline* expertly opens the segment with the image of the innocent little girl in order to parallel the victim of Singleton's first crime, who was also young and vulnerable.

The piece itself is unremarkable in that it does not use any spectacular or unusual components to tell the story. It is the typical compilation of highly edited sound bites, images and video footage that all the news organizations use; which, in themselves, bear significant weight in telling their story. Here is a sampling of the bits used: footage of the criminal led away by police, court footage, shots of the crime scene, his neighborhood, the jail, a hospital, interviews with police, psychiatrists, Singleton and neighbors. Certain elements, such as the little girl reading the letter about her slain mother, work better than others. Often producers will work these types of heartfelt, touching pieces into their stories to pull in the viewers. Once the emotions of the viewer have been aroused, the narrator must now establish the base for the story.

Here, they begin by telling the story in reverse chronological order, with the most recent murder of the young girl's mother. Again the typical units come into play: Singleton's mug shot cuts quickly into a still shot of the young mother before the murder. The previous hand-held video shots of Singleton being led away by police, with overdubbing from the static-filled 911 call to police on the night of the murder, give the story the *reality* base it's searching for; and, all the while the narrator is continually reminding us of its *failed justice* theme with copy that is tightly written. The drama

continues to unfold with original footage from the courtroom where the camera dwells on Lawrence Singleton, and then briskly cuts to his 15-year-old victim, and the crime scene in California. Now the story is steeped in history, which is precisely what the producer wants to accomplish with this segment of the piece.

The mid-section of this piece is sterile at best, and certainly not atypical of the types of footage and rhetoric used by news agencies to contain the viewers within the story. Footage of the interior of a prison is shown, along with short interviews with disgruntled neighbors, an exterior shot of Singleton's home in Florida, and then a staged signing of the Megan's Law bill with President Clinton and company, along with several other related images. The accompanying narration continues on uninterrupted leading the viewer to a foregone conclusion about the justice system in this case, and its ultimate failure.

Some time earlier, after being arrested on shoplifting charges, Singleton attempted suicide in his Tampa home, but was rescued by his neighbor, much to her regret. To follow are some interesting graphics that the news shows have been using for some time. An apparent suicide note left by Singleton is displayed on the screen with an excerpt from the letter lifted out and superimposed over the graphic of the note. *Dateline* has decided that *this* is the important part of the note that deserves further scrutiny by their viewers. The rest of the note is blurred in the background and is all but impossible to read. Here it is very clear that *NBC* is deciding for us what is news; what we should be reading and hearing. Just a few seconds after this graphic, a letter from the hospital psychiatrist is displayed on the screen, with two excerpts brought out and superimposed over the blurred letter. Naturally in both cases, these excerpts serve to reinforce their failed justice theme, and Singleton's guilt. To further underscore their theme, and the importance of the excerpts from the psychiatrist's letter, the reporter is filmed outside the hospital explaining how Singleton slipped through the system again when he was released despite their

obvious misgivings about his mental stability. To the news agency, the official letter from the hospital coupled with the reporter's narrative supply the story with much needed credibility.

At this point, *Dateline* is now ready to begin wrapping up its story. They have reviewed the history of the case from twenty years ago to the present, interviewed the appropriate authorities, i.e., the police and psychiatrist, along with interviews with several neighbors, and have managed to convince the viewers of Singleton's culpability regarding the two victims. They have laid out their theme of failed justice in a precise, often plodding fashion. They decide now to concentrate on the more recent murder of the young mother, who was apparently a prostitute who went over to Singleton's home at his request.

The story takes an interesting turn here because on the night of the murder, a man who was doing some work at Singleton's home, walked in on Singleton beating the woman. Being a good citizen, he went and called the police to inform them of the assault. *Dateline* decides to use the very common graphic of a reel-to-reel tape player, with the 911 call dubbed in and subtitles. Viewers see this all the time on shows such as *Hard Copy* and *60 Minutes*. It is so commonly used because, once again, the impression of credibility and real life are indisputably left with the viewer. The disturbing part of this particular story is that it took the police nearly thirty minutes to respond to an eye-witness report of a beating. If *Dateline* were looking for something substantial to emphasize the failure of the system, they had it right here with the dismal response time of the Tampa Police Department. Unfortunately, when the police finally arrived, the young woman was dead, stabbed several times. The narrator jumps on this golden opportunity when he very simply states, "Once again, the system failed to protect society from Lawrence Singleton."

In order to provide this piece with closure, they bring back the footage of the woman's eleven-year old daughter reading the end of her letter. In many good literary works,

films and news stories, the resurrection of a beginning line or image is very common, and usually works very well by helping to bring the story full circle. While this may seem obvious, if you recall earlier I discussed the effectiveness of showing the little girl reading her letter to arouse emotion, and it is no less effective here at the end of the segment. Further, because her mother was a prostitute and perhaps not as susceptible a victim as the young teen in California, *Dateline* cleverly uses the image of her young, innocent daughter to provoke sympathy and compassion in their viewers.

So, the shot of the little girl's face bent intently over her letter dissolves into the image of Jane Pauley, seated inside the studio. Now the theme so fiercely advocated throughout the length of the segment must be put to rest. The viewer must once again feel safe from the likes of the Lawrence Singletons in the world, and Jane Pauley, a veteran journalist, does just that. She goes on to tell us that the laws in California have been changed, and that if charged today, Singleton would have served 41 years in prison as opposed to the 8 years he spent for assaulting and mutilating that young girl nearly twenty years ago.

Certainly the question raised in this piece is a valid one, and one that deserves attention and investigation, but there are a myriad of other complex issues that could have been explored here. For example, what about the young girl from California, who is now an adult. How has she handled life after the terrible trauma she experienced? Also, there is the young mother who was murdered: why was she out at night prostituting herself and how could we as a society have prevented her death? How are her three children dealing with her death? Why did it take over thirty minutes for the police to respond to the 911 call, and what can we do to avoid situations like this in the future?

It would be difficult not to feel compassion for the young girl in California who was disfigured for life, or for the children left behind because of their mother's untimely death; and, as such, this was a very safe piece for *Dateline* to

air. There are probably few to none who would advocate the rights of a molester and killer like Lawrence Singleton, and thus, the values presented here are perfectly in line with the average viewer. However, it also preys on the fears of the average viewer because criminals like Lawrence Singleton strike terror in most people due to their obvious disregard for the sanctity of human life. So, by airing this story, *Dateline* can have its cake and eat it too, with a safe piece of journalism which still manages to sell its own brand of fear, all wrapped up in a neat little package, just like a Devil Dog. It may not be very good for you, but you'll buy it anyway because it goes down easy.

