Video Production/Direction for *The Adding Machine*
written by Elmer Rice, produced at Ball State University, November, 1997.

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)
by
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July, 1998

Expected Graduation
Abstract

The use of expressionism in drama allows the audience to view the twisted world of the protagonist caught in a hopeless life. The glimpse into Mr. Zero's life in Elmer Rice's, The Adding Machine, is enhanced by the use of video and graphics in the Department of Theatre and Dance's 1997 production. These graphics, influenced by the expressionistic style, convey Mr. Zero's thoughts, dreams, and nightmares as well as those forces that control his life. The use of new technologies in this production ironically help convey Zero's dehumanization due to technology. Resistant to change, the technology leads and overcomes zero's life. Through research, studio taping, graphic rendering, digital editing and special effects, the video production enhances the themes, imagery, symbols, and inner thoughts and feelings of the show.

Purpose of Thesis

In this experience I wanted to experiment with different media and technologies for use in theatre. Theatre has long been competing with film for the entertainment audience, and the way theatre tries to catch up is with newer technologies. There is no question in my mind that the art of live performance has a very powerful effect on communicating the message of a show. In university theatre environments most students and faculty members fail to integrate newer technologies available to enhance how a show is presented. The director was aware of my experience in audio/visual design and asked me to serve as the visual media designer, or video producer for this show. I hope that in this process, the entire production staff was able to enhance this play and make its message more powerful and meaningful to the audience.
Table of Contents

Explanation of Project ................................................................. 4
Examples ..................................................................................... 7
Appendix A: Director's notes ...................................................... 20
Appendix B: Video Sequence Descriptions .............................. 25
Appendix C: Video Design Schematic ....................................... 27
Appendix D: Equipment ............................................................... 29
Appendix E: Blocking Notes ....................................................... 33
Appendix F: Tape Inventory ....................................................... 35
Appendix G: Final Cut Sheet ......................................................... 39
Appendix H: Crew Information .................................................... 42
Appendix I: Script Notes Example .............................................. 46
In Elmer Rice's, *The Adding Machine*, produced by the Ball State University Department of Theatre and Dance in 1997, video was used to enhance and clarify the expressionistic style of the show. Representing symbols, themes, inner-thoughts and dreams, the audience could more fully understand Mr. Zero's life through the video.

The production process for the show started months before any rehearsals. The director of the show developed his concept and goals for the production as well as assembled a design team. The Designers, scenic, lighting, and costume, also participated in this process giving input and helping to sort the overall themes and purpose for the show. Along with these designers, a video designer was also able to help translate the director's concepts and goals into visual representations and reality.

The process of design started with researching the 1920's expressionistic style. In this style a main character, usually the protagonist, goes through a journey. In this play Zero is fighting against himself, technology, and the powers that control us all. An expressionistic show usually provides a first person account of the action providing the audience a glimpse into the perceptions of the main character; see appendix A. The use of video allowed the production to better communicate Zero's inner thoughts and dreams. The video also represented the conflict of zero verses those that control him by offering a foreboding presence that always watched him.

The director and designers decided to use video to represent some of the inner monologues through taped sequences. The stage was surrounded with 3 cameras that broadcasted live views of those watching over him and controlling him. Slides were also combined to create distorted images of scenery and time.

After deciding on the uses of the video technology within the show, specific places were noted within the script where the video, slides, and live action camera's would be used; see appendix B. From the requirements of the show and the set design, the video producer completed a video design; see appendix C. This schematic was used to search out the equipment and resources required to produce the visual media; see appendix D. After
all the video sequences were determined and planned, the scenes were rehearsed by the actors in preparation for the taping. During this rehearsal the video producer blocked the actors and designed the camera angles and types of shots used. Lighting and props were also experimented with in preparation for the taping session. Appendix E shows rough sketches and notes taken by the producer during this rehearsal.

These notes and the actors were then taken to the Ball Communications television studio. Adapting from theatre to television was a challenge for most of the thespians: makeup had to be adapted by the makeup designer, lighting was created that would work well with the cameras, costumes were changed to accommodate the shooting requirements, and the actors had to lower their volume and lessen their expressiveness. After 8 hours of taping, all sequences were on video in rough format.

The video was first cataloged by the producer, noting all scenes, takes, cuts, and details; see appendix F. These cut sheets were then used by the producer to know which ones to select for editing and to create a final cut sheet; see appendix G. The video for this production was edited at the Media Lab in the Ball Communication's building using the AVID nonlinear digital editor.

The first step in the process was to record all of the scenes that were going to be used onto the computer. After all of the scenes were downloaded, the producer could tell the computer where to start, stop and in what order each scene should take place. When the scenes were arranged, the producer added effects such as flashes, black and white color stripping, sepia toning, zooming, and inverting. Place titles and color bars were also added for use by the tape operator during the performance.

The production required the use of slides to show location, enhance the set, and convey meaning. Images were found or created and then warped and rendered using Adobe® PhotoShop®. Filters such as texturize and wave were used in combination with color stripping and sepia tone filters to match the video. These slides were taken to the Video Information Systems office and recorded to a video floppy disk, an analog storage
format.

While the video was being produced, all the equipment was rented and received. The producer supervised its setup and calibration. TV’s and the projector were mounted, the video booth was set up with the tape machine, video floppy player, switcher, and monitors, and the cable was run. A duty list was set up for the video crew for during the show and the producer cataloged all of the slides and video tape sequences; see appendix H. Using his script and notes created during technical and dress rehearsals for the show the producer sat in the rear seats of the house and called the live camera shots during every show; see appendix I. The camera, switcher, and tape operators were all connected to the producer and the stage manager with headsets. From the rear of the house, the producer could see all of the outputs and told the switcher which of the five inputs to put on which of the four outputs.

The Department of Theatre and Dance was surprised that many students really enjoyed the show. Although labeled as a strange, twisted look into someone’s life, the production was well received. The criticism of the video design was in the use of the live camera’s and LCD projector. People mentioned they would liked to have seen more of a presence with the live cameras, more “in your face” type shots. People also commented on the lack of brightness in the main LCD projector. These were caused by the limited zoom of the camera lenses and the LCD equipment available by Ball State University. If the producer had it to do over, he would fix the camera and projector problems as well as work towards integrating the use of the video more with the rest of the production. It seemed as if the newer technology scared the director and other designers, so most were trepidatious about pushing it too far. The hesitation with the technology caused the product to be not as effective.
Examples
This sequence represents Zero's dream about Judy, a girl who lives next door. Figures 1-4 show the different camera perspectives, close-ups, and focuses to help create Zero's sultry and lurid fantasy. Figure 5 shows the post-production image with a sepia toned look to represent Zero's dream world.
This sequence is Zero's dream of how we would like to kill his wife. The video producer planned the different shots to show a grotesque perspective the one with the pillow. Mrs. Zero's mouth is the focus as she is talks incessantly on stage during the production. Different angles and close-ups were combined to show the dream from Zero's delightful perspective.
In this scene between Zero and Daisy, the video is used to communicate the characters' inner thoughts and feelings during a normal conversation. Figures 10 and 11 are the raw video footage of the two characters filmed simultaneously. Figure 12 shows the two images combined during editing as they transition from one character to the other. Figure 13 (opposing page) shows the final production view with the video sequence.
Fig. 13. Production Shot: Page 14, Zero and Daisy.
Zero's breakdown after being fired from his job is shown in this sequence. Images of the Boss repeating his termination words are flashed and distorted as pulses of red glow on the screen. Figures 14-15 show a progression of shots getting more intense as the Boss shouts, "Business, business, business." Figure 16 shows the post production image with color removed and the shadows enhanced. Figure 18 represents the video images seen within the context of the production. Zero is preparing the bill file as a murder weapon, the boss is shouting Zero's expendability, and the video is displaying a montage of images representing Zero's dissension into madness.
The final sequence proved to be one of the most complicated technically and the most powerful thematically and dramatically. The Boss and Zero were shot independently, shown in figures 19-21. Figures 22-23 show the Boss' laugh and Zero's scream were combined using a sequential morphing program that caused their faces to grow from one character to the other; figure 22. Thematically this ended the show and conveyed that it was Zero, not the Boss, causing his own downfall.
Figure 24, page 16 shows a scene in the jail after Zero's conviction. Tourists are captured on the screens using the live cameras. These camera created voyeurs represent the "they" who control and keep Zero repressed.

Figure 25, page 17 again shows the "they" looking on as Zero and Mrs. Zero argue in the jail cell.

Figure 26, page 18 shows Zero's execution led by the Boss. Set up to represent a game show, the crowd cheers on as Zero counts down to his death. The cameras in this scene were brought on-stage to represent a TV broadcast. The video was switched often to help create a fast-paced situation, ending with all the screens showing Zero's electrocution.

In Figure 27, page 19 the video is used to create the location. As Zero exists in his heaven, the stage is covered with gentle clouds and accompanied by soft music.
Fig. 24. Production Shot: Jail Scene, Zero and Tourists.
Fig. 25. Production Shot: Jail Scene, Zero and Wife.
Fig. 27. Production Shot: Pleasant Place, Zero, Schrudlu and others.
Appendix A

Director’s Notes
The Adding Machine
Discussion Notes

I. General Notes and Ideas

Themes:
1. Dehumanization of man due to Industrial Revolution and the repetitive, uncreative regimentation of modern life.
2. The "Zeros" of the world have always been and always will be zeros.
3. Masters and Slaves
   A. There are forces (Masters) who do not allow the "Zeros" to become anything more than zeros.
   B. The Masters control technology and the social order.
   C. Play offers no solution -- does not clearly frame the conflict.

Themes #1 & #3 seem contradictory. Can they be reconciled? Rice attempted to do this by not defining the Masters. If Expressionism is seeing the world through the eyes of the protagonist -- this seeming contradiction is not a contradiction. Zero does not see or even suspect the existence or non-existence of any "Masters."

Primary Theme: Masters (Controllers) and Slaves
How to approach the portrayal of Masters? To be consistent with Rice, they need to be ambiguous since he never defines them.

Masters have always existed--Greek & Roman gods to today's CEOs of major companies.

Can we be timeless? Set play in 1923 but introduce past-present-and future elements. For example: The Time: 1923, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Action of Masters is seen in the manipulation of characters by the masters -- Boss, Charles, The Fixer, The Judge.

II. Production and Scene Notes

Playing Space:
Main area -- most scenes occur here
Upper (Above) Level -- inhabited by Masters (Controllers)
Upstage of Mail Level -- maybe raised, D.S. end covered by scrim?
Chorus -- use of masks
  portray: friends, jurors, visitors, mourners, heavenly hosts
Masks -- use different ones for each “character”
  i.e., friends mask, jurors mask, visitor’s mask, mourner’s mask
  All have fixed expression

ACT I

Scene 1 — Zero’s Bedroom
  Wife haranguing Zero who is lying in bed
  Zero tunes her out -- Scene seen behind scrim
  Zero dreams of Judy O’Grady, the prostitute -- she appears behind scrim,
  possibly doing a seductive dance--striptease??
  Music begins and ends each scene and dream sequence

Scene 2 — Office
  Zero’s daydreaming could be seen behind scrim
  Look for various images -- Judy, his wife, Daisy??
  Scene ends as Zero is about to kill his Boss

Scene 3 — Zero’s Dining Room
  Use of Images behind scrim
    **Boss’ grotesque & horrific image appears at various times with a
      gigantic bill file in his anatomy.
    Use stop-and-go action during scene (when images appear, action stops)
    As scene progresses, Zero’s guilt increases--shirt gets redder or he puts on gloves

Scene 4 — Court of Justice
  Judge -- overwhelming presence -- mechanical puppet??
  Only moves to smash gavel down at “Guilty”
  Red gloves on Zero
  Need to edit long speech
  Jurors -- chorus

Scene 5 — Jail Cell
  Zero in cage
  Circus Side-Show or zoo environment from on-lookers
  During scene -- man strings power cable to large switch in alcove
  Fixer -- has angel wings--first seems to be Zero’s savior but he is the Angel of Death
“Fixer” addresses audience when time to execute Zero -- asks for a volunteer.
Plant in audience throws power switch
Satirize our America’s interest in Capital Punishment
Large Electric Chair appears
Ritual preparation for Zero’s execution
Zero is executed to sound and lighting effects
After execution blackout -- only Zero’s gloves are left on chair
Or -- Grim Reaper appears and takes Zero with him--all others frozen
Visitors -- chorus

ACT II

Scene 6 -- Graveyard
Funeral -- opens act
Tableau ?? Or actual procession??
Mourners (chorus) use black umbrellas -- maybe oversize?
Cardboard mourners ??
Coffin -- cheap pine box with adding machine headstone
Others present: Boss with bill file through anatomy, Daisy

Scene 7 -- Heaven
Zero’s idea of Heaven
Old time movie version?? See Green Pastures
Pearly Gates with St. Peter (Charles)
Heavenly Hosts
Blend of chorus and character cutouts
Perfect, gorgeous nude bodies
Daisy is now voluptuous -- dressed in towel??
Zero -- fully clothed

Scene 8 -- Office -- Zero’s Real Heaven
Zero’s real idea of heaven is an office where he can do a meaningless task through all eternity
Works at a giant adding machine
Same office as Scene 2, except more white
Use film to emphasize history of slaves (Zero)
Use computer generated film if possible

Scene 9 - Zero’s Balcony
Wide is grotesque - more another level down but in a middle or future time.
Mark and I met yesterday and we discussed the "Controllers" at length. We now question keeping the Controllers ambiguous throughout the show. In trying to define the Controllers we came up with three representatives of who could be defined as rulers throughout history—government, church, and commerce or money. We could represent these three pillars of society as: a Cardinal, a Queen (a la Queen Elizabeth) and a Modern Businessman in a suit. Representing these controllers through "types" would be consistent with Expressionistic techniques. We would need to decide if they should always appear or whether we should reveal later in the show who the controllers are.

I would like to discuss these ideas with everyone after I return from Connecticut. Maybe we could meet during the week before classes start since the first week of classes are a crazy time. Plus I have to cast on the weekend of August 22-24. Please think about our suggestions on the controllers and making them more specific—still symbols but more specific.

I leave for Connecticut tomorrow (Friday) and return late on August 13. I can be reached at home after the 13th. I return to the office on August 18.
Appendix B

Video Sequence Descriptions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>~Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>Fast Forward</td>
<td>Taped Video</td>
<td>Fast Forward with Freezed Clips</td>
<td>20 Sec.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act I</td>
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<td>Taped Video</td>
<td>Stylized Killing of Wife</td>
<td>5 Sec</td>
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<td>Dream 1-Zero and Wife</td>
<td>Taped Video</td>
<td>Stylized Killing of Wife</td>
<td>5 Sec</td>
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<td>Pg 5</td>
<td>Dream 2- Zero and Wife</td>
<td>Taped Video</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>50% Overlapping Split Screen</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pg 28-29</td>
<td>Montage 1 Pulsing</td>
<td>Taped Video</td>
<td>Going Mad- Boss Clips, Movement</td>
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<td>Act III</td>
<td>Boss Replay</td>
<td>Live Offstage</td>
<td>&quot;I wanted to have a talk with you...&quot;</td>
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<td>Live Offstage</td>
<td>&quot;Now of course I'm sorry...&quot;</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Live Offstage</td>
<td>&quot;Downsize, Mechanize, Business...&quot;</td>
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<td>Live Offstage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Act IV</td>
<td>Judge Cam</td>
<td>Live Offstage</td>
<td>Judge Half Body</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Live Onstage 3 Cam on Zero</td>
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<td>Pg 55</td>
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<td>Video Floppy</td>
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<td>Act V</td>
<td>Coffin Cam</td>
<td>Live Onstage 3 Cam on Zero</td>
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<td>Schrudu Flashback</td>
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<td>Boss- Mother wig, Turn to see.</td>
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<td>Taped from Scene Machine</td>
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<td>Daisy Flashback</td>
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<td>Zero and Daisy</td>
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<td>Act VIII</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
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<td>Slides of Large Numbers</td>
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<td>Boss Flashback</td>
<td>Video Taped</td>
<td>Live Video Boss/Zero</td>
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Appendix C

Video Design Schematic
Appendix D

Equipment
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<td>7</td>
<td>100' Coax</td>
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<td>T-Com\Rent-A-Bit</td>
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<td>6' Coax</td>
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<td>T-Com Engineering</td>
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<td>3' Coax</td>
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Memo

To: Shawn
Booking/Equipment/Video

From: David "Kip" Shawger Jr.
Department of Theatre and Dance Performance

Subject: Video Equipment for *The Adding Machine*

Date: September 16, 1997

I would like to request the following equipment to be used in the Department’s production of *The Adding Machine* from Monday, November 10- Monday, November 24.

1 Video Floppy Player
1 Projector >500 Lumens
6 TV 25" BNC in

Brian Miller will be the video coordinator for this production and will be handling the pick-up, return, and specification of all equipment.

Thank you,

David "Kip" Shawger Jr.
Department of Theatre and Dance Performance
Memo

To: Mary Sipes

Media Lab

From: David "Kip" Shawger Jr.

Department of Theatre and Dance Performance

Subject: Video Equipment for *The Adding Machine*

Date: September 16, 1997

I would like to request the following equipment to be used in the Department’s production of *The Adding Machine* from Monday, November 10 - Monday, November 24.

- 3 Camera
- RCA/BNC Video out
- 1 Deck
- Panasonic SVHS w Shuttle
- 5 Preview Monitor
- 8" BNC in

Brian Miller will be the video coordinator for this production and will be handling the pick-up, return, and specification of all equipment.

Thank you,

David "Kip" Shawger Jr.

Department of Theatre and Dance Performance
Appendix E

Blocking Notes
Boom Mic: Spin Adapters to Cords

1) Begin - wide
   Realize - Face
   Back to wide
   Cross Legs
   Close up to stooling
   Back to wide

2) Walk to est pillem
   Open eyes
   Close up piller to
   Back to

6) Approach
   Cut
   Turn
   Smile

Maybe Light Change
Appendix F

Tape Inventory
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Video Operations
Deptartment of Theatre and Dance
Ball State University

The Adding Machine
SHVS-1
Tape Inventory

25:01 Take 4 *
PG 5 Mouth
✓ 25:20 Takes
PG 5 Pillow Close-up
25:55 Take 1
26:05 Take 2
26:16 Take 3
26:26 Take 4

PG 35
26:30 Take 1
26:59 Take 2
27:23 Take 3 *

PG 48
27:54 Take 1
28:21 Take 2 cut out
28:48 Take 3 *

EPILOGUE Boss
29:26 Take 1
29:53 Take 2
30:42 Take 3
31:21 Take 4
31:57 Take 5 *

EPILOGUE Zero
32:36 Take 1
32:51 Take 2
33:12 Take 3 Moving Light
33:28 Take 4

Brian Miller
Video Director
10/27/97
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Appendix G

Final Cut Sheet
Title 00:10

Pg 3 00:30
00:32 00:02 Pre-Roll
00:34 00:02 Wide Shot of Judy on Bed
00:38 00:04 Close-up on Eyes Looking Up and Smiling
00:44 00:06 Wide Shot- Judy Crossing Legs, Start to Pull down Stocking
00:51 00:07 Close-up on Stockings- Follow down

Pg 5 01:20
01:22 00:02 Pre-Roll
01:24 00:02 Wide Shot- Wife on Bed
01:26 00:02 Close-Up- Mouth
01:32 00:06 Wide-Shot- Coming Closer, eyes open, start to move in
01:35 00:03 Close-Up- Pillow moving towards
01:38 00:03 Wide-Shot- Smothering and struggle

Pg 11-28 02:10
02:12 00:02 Pre-Roll
02:14 00:02 Wide Shot- Wife on Bed
02:16 00:02 Close-Up- Pillow moving towards
02:18 00:03 Close-Up- Pillow moving towards
02:20 00:03 Wide-Shot- Smothering and struggle

Pg 29 10:50
10:52 00:02 Pre-Roll
11:07 00:55 Montage
Red Pulses- 0,7,19,29,38,48

Pg 34 12:20
12:22 00:02 Pre-Roll
12:24 00:15 Flash Back

Pg 35 13:00
13:02 00:02 Pre-Roll
13:12 00:30 Flash Back

Pg 48 14:00
14:02 00:02 Pre-Roll
14:27 00:25 Flash Back

Pg 78 15:00
15:02 00:02 Pre-Roll
15:22 00:20 Flash Back

Page 1 of 2
Video Operations
Department of Theatre and Dance
Ball State University

The Adding Machine
Final Cut Sheet

Brian Miller
Video Director
10/27/97

Pg 101

16:00
16:02 00:02 Pre-Roll
16:27 00:25 Flash Back

Epilogue 17:00
17:02 00:02 Pre-Roll
17:06 00:04 Boss
17:10 00:04 Zero

---

Red Pulse
increasing in
intensity

3 sec lose
2 sec efficiency
9 sec recommendation
6 sec cauned
3 sec sorry
3 sec alternative
3 sec old employee
3 sec efficiency
1.5 sec economy
1.5 sec business "cut" then
3 sec Red - Solid - Cut out

Page 2 of 2
Appendix H

Crew Information
Video Operations
Department of Theatre and Dance
Ball State University

The Adding Machine
Crew Duty List

At Crew Call
Power Up Video Booth
  Insert Video Floppy (Act I)
  Insert Tape in Deck
  Switcher All-5
Turn on TV's, SR, SL
Power Up Projector
Camera 1
  Power-Up
Camera 2, 3
  Bring Out Camera
  Hook Up to Power Pack
  Turn On
  Bring Out Tripod and Set-up
Check all Inputs and Outputs
Cameras to Standby

Before House Opens
Slide 3

At 5 Min. to Curtain
Cameras Off Standby
At Places with Headsets on
  Cue Tape to Pg 3.
Switcher All-4
Eject and Reinset Slide
Switcher All-5

Intermission
Eject Act I Slide/Insert Act II Slide

Post Show
Camera 1
  Power Down
  Lock-Up
Camera 2,3
  Power Down
  Unhook Camera
  Put Away Camera and Tripod
  Coil Cable and Hang-Up
Video Booth
  Eject Slide
  Eject Tape
  Power Down Video Booth
  Cover-Up Equipment
  Power Down TV's

Joy
Joy
Joy
Casey
Casey
Eric/Put in scrim
Kevin
Eric/Carl
Joy
Kevin/Carl/Eric
All Crew
Joy
Casey
Joy
Casey
Joy
Casey

Created by Brian Miller
Subject to Change
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# The Adding Machine

**Department of Theatre and Dance**  
**Ball State University**

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Created by Brian Miller  
Subject to Change
Appendix I

Script Notes Example
It’s very difficult on account of the bone. And when there’s gravy in the dish there’s danger of spilling it. So Mother always used to hold the dish for me. She leaned forward, just as she always did, and I could see the gold locket around her neck. It had my picture in it and one of my baby curls. Well, I raised my knife to carve the leg of lamb—and instead I cut my mother’s throat! [He sobs.]

You must ‘a’ been crazy!

[raising his head, vehemently]: No! Don’t try to justify me. I wasn’t crazy. They tried to prove at the trial that I was crazy. But Dr. Amaranth saw the truth! He saw it from the first! He knew that it was my sinful nature—and he told me what was in store for me.

[trying to be comforting]: Well, your troubles are over now.

[His voice rising]: Over! Do you think this is the end?

Sure. What more can they do to us?

[His tones growing shriller and shriller]: Do you think there can ever be any peace for such as we are—murderers, sinners? Don’t you know what awaits us—flames, eternal flames!

[Nervously]: Keep your shirt on, Buddy—they wouldn’t do that to us.

There’s no escape—no escape for us, I tell you. We’re doomed! We’re doomed to suffer unspeakable torments through all eternity. [His voice rises higher and higher.]

[A grave opens suddenly and a head appears.]

Hey, you birds! Can’t you shut up and let a guy sleep?

[Zero scrambles painfully to his feet.]

[To Sherdu]: Hey, put on the soft pedal.