

PROJECT REPORT

Project I : Summer Internship



White Light Moving Picture Company P.Ltd.

Famous Studios, Mahalaxmi, Mumbai

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PRELUDE

When I learnt that we are supposed to intern for a month, I wanted to take the opportunity to get exposed to whatever interested me. Feature Films fascinated me. But then since the internship was just for a month, I thought against trying to assist a feature film director. It either had to be short films or Advertisement films then. Over the years that I have seen and observed the various Advertisement films (TVCs), I felt that AD film makers had an eye for details. They have this acumen to make the films visually appealing. And moreover within a short period, I could get a fair deal of exposure too. So I narrowed down my search to a reputed Advertisement Film production house. A director friend of mine suggested White Light, Highlight, and Apocalypso as the prime ones. I was keen on knowing what goes behind making a beautiful and interesting TV commercial. A story bundled in a short span of 30 sec. was an interesting thought. I looked up for the TVCs made by these production houses. And most of the advertisements that I had loved watching over the years were made by White Light. The one speciality of this production house I thought was the way they handled human relationships. I always felt that portrayal of human relationships was a phenomenal task. Adding to that a time constraint of 30/45 sec. is like a task more difficult. I was thrilled with my findings and decided to approach White Light. Thus I set sail on an interesting and curious voyage.

WHITE LIGHT MOVING PICTURE COMPANY P. LTD.

White Light Moving Picture Company Private Limited was incorporated on 4th May, 1987 as a Private Limited Company. The registered office and its Head Office is in Kolkata, West Bengal. Its business operations are carried out from its Mumbai branch office situated in Famous Studios in Mahalaxmi.

The company's Chairperson and Managing Director Ms. Namita Roy Ghose and its Director Mr. Subir Chatterjee are both based in Mumbai. They are also the co-directors of all commercials produced by White Light. The Finance Director Mr. Ujjal Ghosh is based in the Head Office at Kolkata. The company engages around fifteen more personnel to undertake the key activities relating to film production, administration and business development.

White Light is an advertising film production company that engages in producing television commercials for various national and international advertising agencies. White Light's production activities cover the whole gamut from scripting and creative to pre and post production. It has in-house production personnel specializing in casting, location sourcing and management, styling, production design and art direction. It also can out source any specialized talent like stunt direction, special effects, cameramen, art directors, choreographers, animal trainers, food

designers, etc, as the scripts demands. It has a very large base of acting talent on archive and is able to cast from anywhere in the country as required.

White Light's clients include advertising agencies like J. Walter Thompson, Ogilvy & Mather, Mudra Communications, Rediffusion D Y&R, R. K. Swamy/BBDO, Ambience Publicis, Capital Advertising, Bates India Limited, Contract Advertising, Dhar & Hoon, Enterprise Nexus, Everest Advertising, Euro RSCG, FCB Ulka, Grey Worldwide, Lowe Lintas & partners, Mc Cann Erickson, Network Advertising, SSC&B, TBWA Anthem, Triton Communications, Vyas Gianetti, Saatchi and Saatchi and many others.

JFW Advertising, UK, Admerasia Incorporated, New York, Lintas Gulf, Ogilvy & Mather New York, McCann Erickson New York, Y & R Hong Kong have also been our clients.

White Light has produced over 1000 television commercials for around 100 or more corporate houses as well as a few public service campaigns. Some of the big corporate houses whose products or services have been advertised through commercials produced by us include Unilever Inc., Indian Tobacco Company (ITC), Cadbury's India Limited, Philips India Limited, Johnson & Johnson, different companies under the Tata Group of companies, Maruti Udyog Limited, Nestle India Limited, Kodak India Limited, Hero Motors India Limited, Bata India Limited,

Britannia Industries Limited, Banking companies like UTI, Bank of America, ICICI, ANZ Grindlays, Hong Kong Bank, Standard Chartered, Parle Industries Limited, Reynolds, Gillette , Axion Liquid Soap, Aptech, Mafatlal Industries, Raymonds, Godrej, Allwyn, PAL Peugeot, Westar Watches, BPL Electronics Limited, Jenson & Nicholson, Dhara Health Foods Limited, Coca Cola, NECC, Times of India, Suzuki India Limited, Ananda Bazaar Patrika, Cosmolitan Magazines, Femina, Parker, De Beers, Samsung India Limited, Panasonic India Limited, L G, Himalaya Drug Co., Cipla India Limited, Department of Electronics - Govt of India, Duncans Industries Limited, Asian Paints and many more.

White Light has won numerous awards including the A&M Gold for Best Film Director of the Year, the IAAFA awards for the Advertising Film of the Year, the A&M Advertising Bests campaign, the IAAFA Production House of the Year award three times, the Advertising Club Bangalore Film Production House of the Year, the London International Awards and many more national awards in Kolkata, Chennai.

White Light had also forayed into the production of music videos. It had produced the Pretty Child Music Video for the Indus Creed band in 1993 which won the MTV Best Video in Asia Award for that year.

White Light is the vision of two creative professionals, Namita Roy Ghose & Subir Chatterjee. They believe that every aspiring film maker must keep thinking on the lines of “What if”. According to Namita to be open for ideas and thoughts is another important step. “Write drunk, revise sober” is Subir’s take on writing for films. Both of them believe that film is about life. If you don’t derive and desire life you will atrophy yourself, is another view point of theirs. Both of them stress on the fact that to successfully convey the message in the script and captivate the audience is still a challenge. To keep one’s sources updated is crucial. Subir says that there are ideas and thoughts within everyone. The mind is like a well. You need to drop a stone and then and only then shall there be ripples. They believe that to be a film maker, a passion for people & places is a must.

AT WHITE LIGHT

Advertisements have always been of keen interest to me. I have always admired the way these short tales are narrated in a shorter time frame and with such impact. During my stint with White Light, I had the opportunity to work on the following TV commercials. I was fortunate to shoulder some responsible decisions. The work was exciting, chaotic, and full of zeal.

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance

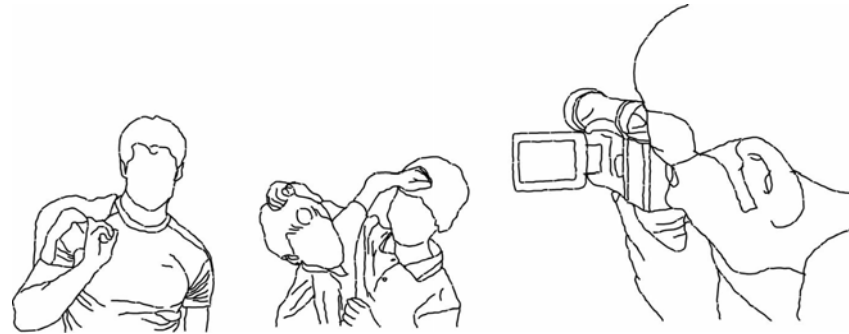
VICKS Cough Drops – Asli Tulsi

MARICO's Silk N Shine

ICICI PRUDENTIAL LIFE INSURANCE (TVC, 30SEC.)

The film was about a family holidaying in Bangkok where they are visiting a Natural History Museum. The plot has a father and a kid as the central characters.

- **Casting**



I always thought casting is the stage which also decides to some extent the success of your film. And how right was I. “A 35 year old father, good looking, tall and fair, of course capability to act was a must. “was the brief given to us for the character of the father. “ A cute looking kid, resembling the father, and capable of acting” was the one for the kid. So we set the camera rolling. Models, models, kids, models, they kept coming and on and on we went on telling them what the script was and what we wanted them to do. We made them enact some scenes from the plot. At the end of the auditions, we used to make our shortlist, along with the Assistant director. The final call was of course that of the directors’. The challenge was to

audition kids. The script called for lean kids, under 4 feet of height. To make the act was yet another experience in itself. Once the kid and the father were finalised, we hunted for a mother, so that on screen they looked like one family.

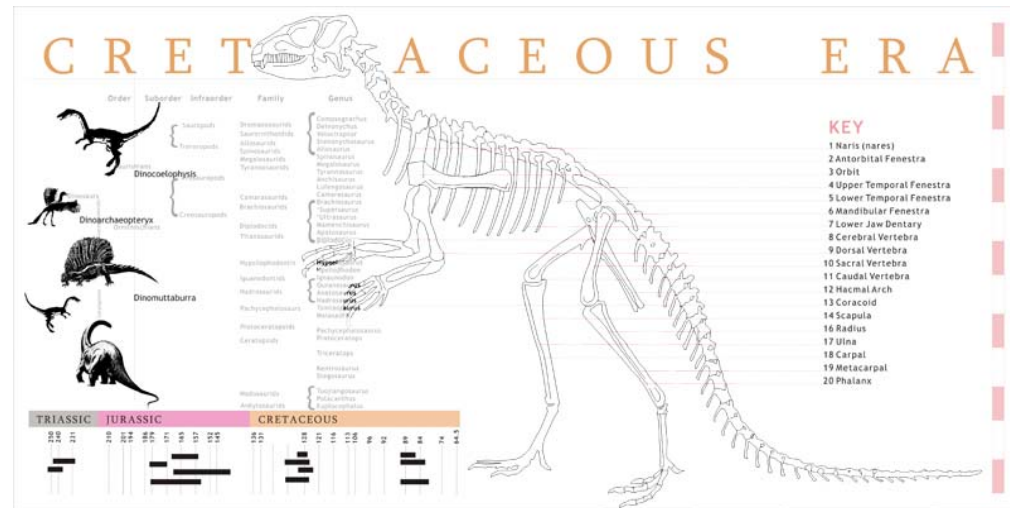
- **Costumes**

Once the cast was finalised, we had to think of the costumes for them. We used to be briefed about the look of the film, and also a mention of the colours they would have in the frames. So depending on these directions, we had to select and pick options of costumes for the actors. It was a lot of fun and a lot more of responsibility. We had to ensure that we had two or more of the same costumes. We had to figure out every accessory that they would wear depending on the situation. This entailed taking care of basics like a wedding ring, wrist watch, glasses etc.

- **Props**

The film opens with the camera behind a glass panel, looking at the family through it. The panel was supposed to have diagrams and charts of dinosaurs. The brief given was that the graphic on the panel must look attractive but uninteresting. The kid was supposed to find the chart boring. So I started working on the panel and came out with a graphic. It was a blend of charts and diagrams, with some text in the background. To make the colours see through was also a challenge that I

overcame by using closely spaced lines instead of fills. It was printed on transparent Vinyl and stuck on glass. To go to the printers and get such a massive print out (8 feet X 4 feet) was yet another experience.



- **CG – referencing**

The film had a great deal of animation. There was a sequence shot against chroma screen in the film, The animation was basically a lot of transformations. For instance, an abacus transforming into a DNA Helix model which then transforms into a turbine. I was given the responsibility to think up similar transformations based on educational objects. Some of them were statistical graphs transforming

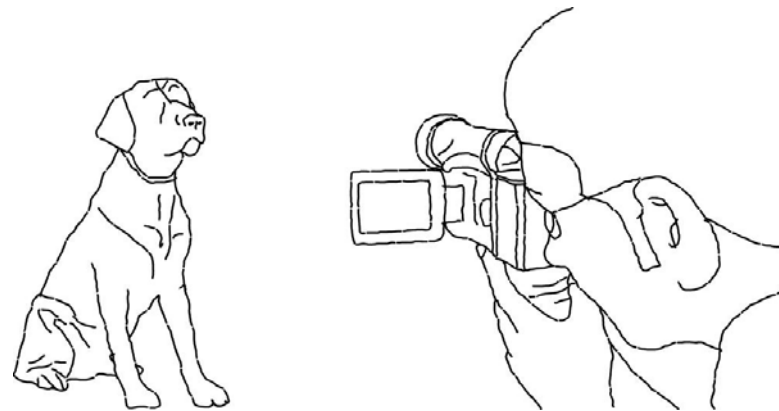
into mountains, microscopes to robots. The ideas were then approved by the director and handed over to the animators.

The film was shot in Bangkok. There was one sequence that they shot against a chroma screen. The scene was the one that would have animation composite with it. This particular scene was shot at Navrang (Lower Parel). Matching the lights and the camera match was all another learning altogether.

VICKS COUGH DROPS – ASLI TULSI (TVC, 30 sec.)

The script for this particular TVC was a comedy centric one. A person with throat irritation, a tulsi plant in a courtyard, and a guard dog form the core elements of the script.

- **Casting**



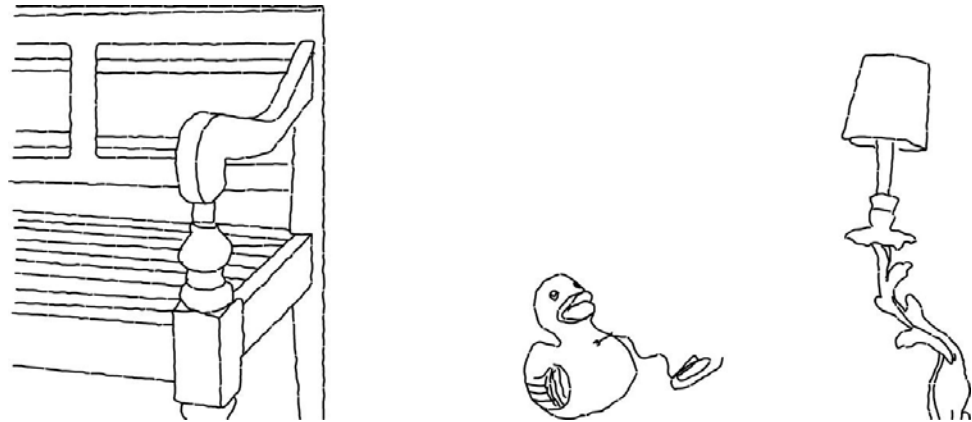
Now that I was experienced at casting, I was better off this time with the process. The brief this time round was interesting “A comic looking, expressive, animated face capable of acting”. The script was a plethora of funny events, revolving around a dog and a man. Casting the man was no big deal. But then when I had to go and hunt for trained stray dogs, I was a little apprehensive. But then that turned out to be one of the most memorable ones. I was bowled over by the kind of intelligence

that these dogs had. Thankfully I never got bitten, even though I had to do a lot of actions to irritate the dog, so as to see how it looked when it barked or growled.

- **Costumes**

Now that the cast was in place, we had to again look for costumes depending on the brief that we were given. The male character had two sets of costumes. One was a dull combination, while the other was a bright one. Each one to reflect his state of mind. No. There was no costume for the dog. Oh! Just a dog collar.

- **Props**



This time around prop referencing and arranging for props was fun. Since the shoot was going to be on a set in a studio, everything ranging from an old wooden bench, an arm chair, to an old fiat car, an old letter box, a lamp, and lots of plants, needed to be arranged. Chor bazaar really came in handy then. Then again we worked on

the look of the props to suit the colour scheme of the set. Lots of decisions were taken by us in this regard. We had to make some props ourselves, like the “beware of dog” signage, and a fake tree bark. We shouldered the responsibility to lay out the props on the set.

- **Set – referencing**

Since monsoon was setting in, the shoot was scheduled to be done in a studio. Kamala City (Lower Parel), was the chosen one. The set was basically an old house, with a lot of wood work, and a tulsi pot in the courtyard. I was given the responsibility to give loads of set references from old movies and or any other source. Once the references were in place, the set was erected. And during the process, I got my hands dirty with weathering the set to make it look authentic. Minute details like roughening the edges of bricks, and dry fallen leaves, were taken care of. I worked around the set and overlooked everything, ranging from laying out floor times, to placing fake trees, and setting up blowers to fake breeze. It was a great experience for me.

- **During the shoot**

It was exciting to be on this chaotic set with lights all around. The place was filled with spot boys and people from the set builders. I had to ensure that every prop was in place and the set was ready for shoot. It was a lot of running around. At

times we had to get some portions of the set touched up. The props had to be replaced in case they were dirty. Continuity was yet another important concern, since the shoot extended for three days. It was wonderful to see how the dog acted the scenes with such ease. He was a master at the art. We used to be with the directors looking into the screens to see if anything on the set was out of place. Even the blow of the fan had to be regulated to give a sense of slight movement. Moreover, set alignment was another point we had to focus on. It was fascinating to see the Jimmy JIB camera at work.

MARICO'S SILK N SHINE (TV, 30sec.)

The script revolved around Katrina Kaif flaunting her silky shiny hair, and this egotistical salon stylist.

- **Casting**

The script had Katrina Kaif and a salon expert as the lead characters. The brief once again “ A suave, elegant, and authoritative character”. We were looking for a model to play the role of an established and arrogant Salon stylist. My role once again was to tell them what to enact. For their ease, we even had props in place so that they could speak as well as use their hands. Apart from the brief we had to put our thought depending on the script as to what would be required.

- **Location Hunting**

Another first time experience for me. We were looking for a stylish, modern day salon. Going to different places and seeing whether the place fitted the bill was fun. We had to take care of a lot of aspects like the colour scheme of the salon, the windows, the lights and similar. We had to even check if the seats were movable or fixed. And at the end of it we had to convey all the details to the director, along with a video of the place.

I couldn't work on the shoot since it was scheduled way after my internship ended.

Apart from the aforesaid, I even got to see what Tele-cine was (often referred to as offline). Digital upgrade was yet another experience for me. I had the opportunity to sit for the editing sessions too.

CONCLUSION

During this short spell with White Light, I learnt a lot. I must say it was truly a learning experience. May it be casting, or location hunting, I have absorbed what I had to. Right from the time the production house receives the first draft of the script from the agency to the time the film is complete, I got to see it all. And most importantly I got to be an integral part of it. Through my experiences I realised the importance of emphasising on details. To be a part of the chaotic and crucial production work was another experience. The other interesting thing about White Light is that there are two directors, who work together. One of them focuses on the details and colours. While the other one takes care of the framing, and actors' performance. It was amazing to see these two greats work in sync. Even with two heads working on the same film, there was no conflict whatsoever. During this period I also got familiarised to terms like cue-sheet, rekee, NG (Not Good), Treatment note etc. At the shoot I was amazed at the lights being set up. "So many lights to feign day light", I thought. I even got to look at what makes a shot right and what makes it wrong. The sense of composition that the directors had was simply stupendous. To be patient is one utmost important trait that one needs to build up so as to become a film maker. That is yet another aspect I noticed. I happened to meet a lot of eminent television personalities and taking their audition was yet

another unforgettable experience. It was work and fun, a beautiful blend which gave me an illusion of a learning vacation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would thank IDC for granting me an opportunity to enjoy learning at White Light. I wish to extend my gratefulness to Namita Roy Ghose & Subir Chatterjee, the directors and founders of White Light. Then of course each and everyone at White Light, Sanjay Bhatia (General Manager) , Siddhartha Khaitan (Asst. Director), Avadhoot Desai (Production Controller), Ravi, Praveen, Andrew, Ganesh, Ashita, have been of utmost help and inspiration beyond words. I would also thank my fellow interns, Nupur Joshi & Ava Viccajee for all the help and co-operation.