

Interviews

Gedächtnisprotokoll: Interview mit Mark G. Coleman

Interview durchgeführt von Dörte Westphal am 01.12.1999 in Accra, Ghana mit M. Coleman: editor, employed at Gama Films, also working for several private companies

How long it takes to shoot a film here in Ghana?

- Shooting a film takes 15 days; less with private producers: 7 days

How much does it cost to produce a film?

- To produce a film costs about 24.000.000 Cedis (entspricht ca. 12.000 DM bzw. ca. 6000 Euro)

How long it takes to edit a film here?

- Editing takes at Gama Films (a well established company) ca. 40-45 hours (10 days; 4 hours a day); privat: 60-65 hours (16 days, three weeks); normally they don't know what they want

What about the scripts?

- Normally scripts are sold to Gama Films, you don't have anything to do with it, you don't get any percentage

What about the filmmusic?

- After editing the filmmusic will be scored (own copyrights)

What about censorship?

- Censorship office (about 12 people from various institutions); film is watched before coming out from referend ministers, someone from the ministry of communications, educationists, local chief, filmmaker, ordinary citizens...they classify it, it's good for general public or not; they fill in questionnaires (to much sex, violence, blood, politics etc.); Mr. Coleman finds censorship okay, its necessary to regulate the kind of films that come out; mainly the sexual aspect and the violence is regulated through it (for instance to give a kiss in public is in the Ghana culture forbidden...)

How do You promote films here?

- To promote a film: we do flyers, run TV-promos, trailers, handballs, posters (you can put them at any place, you don't need to pay), announcements in local and English language (taxi, cars), advertise in newspapers is to expensive (they stopped)

What do You think about the relation between cinema and television here?

- Relation between cinema and television: people go to cinema if they don't want to wait before it's released to TV (women force their men to go to cinema...)

What do You think about the African/ Ghanaian filmic language?

- We don't have a well developed African filmic language, there is no clear defined filmic language; it's now developing

Which schools filmmakers in Ghana come from?

- Filmmakers in Ghana come mostly from NAFTI, Cuba, little from India, the older ones from Poland and France

Interview mit George Bosompim (Regisseur von "Yaaba")

Interview durchgeführt von Dörte Westphal am 09. März 2000 in Accra, Ghana mit G. Bosompim: filmdirector, employed at Gama Films (Transcription)

What comes to Your mind if You think about the mediastructure especially about the film and tv sector in Ghana?

"I think in Ghana we don't have good storywriters as it is now, because most of the stories that we see are a bit of mediocre; comparatively to some time back. When you look at the seventies and even to the early eighties we had good stories coming out when we look at our feature films. The other thing is I think people are more interested in making money than in telling stories, I mean good stories. Because most of our films, our stories are more of intellectual stories which people are not ready to look at than it comes to the commercial value of it. That's my impression about it."

What do You think about the filmmarket in Ghana or in the whole Westafrica about history and tendencies?

"For me as a filmmaker, I think it's more like the future doesn't really look bright because of the economic situation that we find ourselves in. So for instance now we are stuck at video and we can't even do celluloid and it takes a foreign company to come down here and to do celluloid and I don't see a bright future for it. And the other thing is that people are really running away from doing feature films to do adverts and things like that because that's where they can get their money easily. And I am copy that by myself, because since I have left NAFTI I have done two feature films. But my focus is not on feature films my focus is now on commercials."

Where and how do You sell Ghanaian films?

"For me it's dicy because our kind of audience here have change their mind to that kind of mediocreting and its very difficult to break through it if it comes to a station when we are really doing an intellectual thing, something which you think is very good. But then the commercial value here is another thing all together because you don't get that kind of turn out when you do something which is more of an intellectual thing or something that you think is in line with what you are supposed to do."

Where was Your film "Yaaba" shown first?

"The first place where my film was shown was NAFTI and than they have been showing it in the National Television in November 1998."

Which social environment do You come from; just start with the date of birth?

"I was born in 1967 on 21th of November in Tema. (...) I have lived in Accra for a while and then in my village in the Eastern Region of Ghana. I have two brothers and one sister (...) I attended school in the Eastern Region and then later on in the Western Region and then Greater Accra here (...) I was at a boarding school; I wasn't with my parents until I came to NAFTI. Then I was living with my parents. (...) I actually wanted to do law, that's what I had in mind and I was into acting to do as well on TV. And after a time - one day I met a filmdirector, one of the oldest filmdirectors in Ghana, his name is Mr. Attu Hiani and I had a chat with him and his book about video-film-directing. And I said I have never been thought about it, I have been already there by acting. But it took me a very long time to get into NAFTI

- because the entry - recommends and you have to do an entry-examen. I was put on waiting list for three times and at the point I have even given up before I had an entry. It took me about five years to get an entry into NAFTI."

How did the filmproject "Yaaba" start and come to an end?

" (...) The story is something that was happening just around me that I picked up and developed it into that stage. It is more of a girlfriends of mine story. It was happening in her life and than I took it, modified it and then make that kind of story out of it ."

What is the intention, the idea of this film?

"The conflict within the story - what I wanted to do was more of a cycle ... where we having conflicts coming in and out. Than what I did was to put the father - look at the story, when it came out that the thing has been sent to the court. You realize that the man, that's Mr. Dadzie - we have Mr. Dadzie and Mr. Blankson within the story. Dadzie took it to court and Blankson was by the wife all these while and I turned that character around so that sometimes there will be a conflict between him and the wife which is Yaaba. I did the same thing with the kids as well. There the two boys had the same conflict with the sister and then the same girl also turns around and there is a conflict with her aunt and her mother. So within the story we had all these conflicts growing and then at the till end of it it's like a kind of explosion where the woman have to really leave home and the girl also has to leave to go to her actual father. But then the father also had a problem because his problem is with his wife. Because the wife was controlling everything, his finances, you know so there is also a conflict between him and his wife. (...) and in all these situations, (...) everything that comes to a conflict have to be solved and that is why any other audience which look at my film want to see the film."

Were there any changes during the process of production; with regard to content or technic?

"(...) The only thing that I did within the production was to cut down my lines, I mean my dialogues for the artists. Beside that I didn't really do anything to my script. I actually had a problem producing it because NAFTI they didn't really want the story and I had to find my way to get that thing done."

Where in Your film is the relevance to the society?

"What I have trying to bring out was that there is still a mother who don't know the father of her child. That's the idea behind the story."

Why most of the Ghanaian films I have seen always show similar themes as love, marriage and family; are there no other interesting subjects?

"Because of our kind of society that we live in. We have more the closed family, where everybody even the extended family are related to each other. The sort of where we are so much concerned about what happend to the other persons (...) Basically that's the reason. The other thing is that for me I think it's more of the economic aspect too as well. If you talk about love then the women are interested and they are the majority of our population. They would come and watch it and as much as they come their boyfriends and their husbands will follow them there. That's the economic aspect of it. The other thing too is that we have a lot of things to think about we don't have time to do a lot of thinking. That's why intellectuall films flop here. So they want something that they can really relate to - they say yes - I feel that at my wifes behaviour, I feel that at my husbands behaviour, I feel that at my kids behaviour and it needs to be changed and that's another aspect. (...) the

economic factor is one and too (...) those kind of classes that they portray. I believe that it is a matter of time cause sometimes some of these stories if it is properly treated and then we have this village situations and all these traditional (...) It would have been very deny. But then who ever is producing the film is another thing all together because we have executive producer who wants a film done within ten days which is not realistically right if we are looking at the filmmaking. You know what we are talking about cause it means you are restricted and if it says these are the kind of things that I can put at my disposal I can't go beyond it. Then you are limited. There are a whole lot of limitations when it comes to that because the sales producer has a big house his brother has another big house. Thats good enough than to go to a village somewhere to go and do your locations hunt and pay money (...) I have never been paid for (...)."

For whom You produce the films?

"The audience for me I think it's the middle class people. They are the people who watch the films (...) and the lower class as well."

Why do a lot of Ghanaian films I have seen work with transitions like fades and wipes?

"Those are transitions and it's up to the director the editor to intending which transition they want to use at the time. But for me I think it's good enough to go to another scene, depending up what the director or whoever wants to say. There is nothing like a shooting script - basically there are a few people who are using a shooting script. If you would have a shooting script you would even plan the transitions very well and let them relate to the next scene that is coming in. You know but in most situations there is nothing like a shooting script and we have very little time for pre-production because of the money and the pressure. They give you a script and you have to do pre-productions in 14 days and shoot 14 days and then you are going to postproduction. The postproduction supposed to be 40 hours. That's their rules here and you better follow them. The range is between 21 and 32 Million (cedis) for a production. (...) It goes to the economic problem because (...) I think the biggest problem is that (...) the biggest and motherhood filmindustries in Ghana, that's Ghana Film Industry Cooperation, has been sold to the Malaysians. It was sold in 1997. And I think it is a very big problem because they are people who are not interested in the filmmaking. They are interested in television productions and even in that case we have not seen any improvement in any television production here and we have not seen any improvement in the filmmaking here because they are not that much interested in it. They have thrown all our celluloid films that we have made away. They have thrown all the celluloid equipment away and for me the ultimate is celluloid. And if we are really stick to video which are not even so much interested then I see a very bleak future for us because within the African continent I think we should have been a force (...) , Ghana as a country. Because they began this thing in Ghana in somewhere 1948 when they started doing it as a Gold Coast Filmunit and then gradually when we had independence in 1957 it was transfered to us and that's why we had the Ghana Film Industry Cooperation. We just supposed it to actually consign to our people and that's basically one reason why we have this mediocrity in our filmbusiness because they don't have a focus. Then the company was there. Then government commission people to do document this to really (...) consign those people and talk about traditional and indigenious practices, our kind of custom and things like that. The kind of films that people would want to see outside but not the kind of 'tea and bread films' where you have this kind of trying to remake the western world where we have big houses, machines and cars and all those things. But then the certain was more the traditional African setting. And we had

very good stories those days and some of those films even as at now our films the people would run to the theatres to see, you know and it shows the difference now. Because the gap now is just to why that we don't like good stories and we don't have people who are ready to really devote their time to do a good job. By then everything is then in a rush now because it is basically video. You wouldn't have taken that same risk of celluloid because it is expensive."

Which other problems for the film industry do you see here in Ghana?

"I think the previous problem is the fact that the producer themselves are not trained filmmakers or trained producers. All they are doing they are more like businessmen, who are putting their money into it. And they know where the money goes in they should have a profit out of it. And so they give you very little time to prepare. The other aspect that even the kind of technics and things that you learnt in school that you think you could have brought to bear onto films they are not giving a chance to do it. Because for instance most directors direct films without a shooting script which I think is very bad. You know because the shooting script is basically the visualisation of the film in the directors mind which is put on paper which is going to be transformed into the film itself on the big screen. So doing you could put in your transitions and all those things and you would even understand the film better when it comes to the cameraman, the lightening man, the soundman and all those people involved would even understand the film better and get to know what you want to do before it is really materialized onto the screen. But this is not what is done here. For instance directing a series here where pressure has been put on me for me to just go for the thing and do an episode a day or even two episodes a day which I thought for me this is (...) out of place because I would like to write a shooting script, have my shot to shot, my transitions all marked out so that I can give it to the cameraman, my lightening man, my soundman and all those people involved so that I can have a very good structured thing. But this situation where the people involved don't even understand what it is. So they are in a hurry due to a day which is not possible. But I mean cutting a dilemma - I like to do it - I love the fight. That is it."

Interview mit Kenny McCauley (Regisseur von "Without her consent")

Interview durchgeführt von Dörte Westphal am 4. April 2000 in Accra, Ghana mit K. McCauley: filmdirector, screenwriter, freelancer (Transcription)

What comes to Your mind if you think about the mediastructure especially about the film and tv sector in Ghana?

"Personally I think the mediastructure respective film and television is a little haphazard in Ghana right now because we hear so much talk about the disgraceful instruments which supposed to be past so on and so forth. You know to regulate film and television. would not say it is totally bad. There has been a start you know and that is what has made it possible for television companies like TV 3 and other perspective television companies to start work. You know in Kumasi there are about two (...) But I think that more can be done especially with the formation of the various skills, you know for example directors skills, editors skills to make sure that professional competences get at the top level. Now there are people who I think should be producers are directing films and they don't know next to nothing about the filmmaking. This is making our work very difficult because the Ghanaian mentality is that if you feeding them rubbish it takes rubbish to be the standard. And then when you start to do something which is good people sort of like becoming offended (...) like what is he trying to do, who does he think he is, you know. As far as structured in that sense you know to regulate professional work should be put in place. You know if those would have put in place I think , I mean we would have, really have a long way to go because I believe we are the leaders in filmmaking as far as technical competence is concerned. You know but it is because of these problems that people are not (...) and also I think training, training, training, training is important training, we just have one filmschool. But I think there should be more filmschools, one in Kumasi, one in the North - the more good directors, the more good soundmen, the more technical people, you know and we don't have people who have a training as producers. You know we have market women who sold tomatoes and cornedbeef for a quite long time who are trying to make film, you know, it's wrong. Or people who have been in stores for a long time and are trying to make films you know it's wrong. People should understand what it takes to make a film - business or film you know. If we have those things in place (...) and the government should try to take their hands off film getting involved in film you know right now the government is involved in GBC. And GBC for me has been a total collapse as far as creativity has concerned because they have to tell the government line. So if you are doing something which is not really in the government line then you are stuck. Okay so everybody, you find people in GBC who are 50 years old, 60 years old, who have a job and it's like their babies in the hold field. You know so it's hampering us so I think these structures should be put in place so that better productions can come out."

What do You think about the filmmarket in Ghana or in the whole Westafrica about history and tendencies?

"The filmmarket in Ghana I would say is quite in it's babyform. Because our films are done on video. Video is easily preliverated okay so we started shooting on S-VHS now we are on BETA okay. And we don't have type of projectors to be able to shoot celluloid, you know. Because number one there is nothing like that around here, you won't get the cameras, we don't have the labs or anything. So we began taking western films and preliverating it on video okay. Now we are doing our own films and

we still preliveating on video because video is the best medium. Now the market has become (...) we have a lot, a lot of film is coming from Nigeria. And the Nigerian Market is large okay. And so Nigerians don't even think of cinema - they don't. But we are thinking of cinema here. First just let's have a Western example, you know a film comes out, you have a preview and then it goes out into the theatre and before you try to systematically bring it down to video and then you know ... but the Nigerians went straight from production straight onto the market, straight onto preliveation with video okay. The Nigerians have been able to capture the West-African Subregion. I mean you can be a Nigerian becoming a millionaire without beeing a Nigerian as far as film is concerned. Because they have closed to a 120 million people which is there as a big market. And in Ghana how many people do we have? I mean latest census results were saying about 18 million people. So if you look at the people - the real market you have - you have about 18 million to about 12 million people as real market. If we are talking about purpose for preliveation of video - people are buying. If we are talking about the Video Theatres - I mean it's even minimal because again I should talk about history and tendencies, the market hasn't been large. And the tendency what kind of films do people want to watch? Now if you want to make a film which talks about issues it's very difficult to get people to watch it to get people which could be able to watch about an issue. Because number one you have the politics of Africa, the Subregion coming into play. You can't make a film on corruption because you may never see the light. So you realize the people are making films on just love, love, love, love. Boy meets girl and then there is a problem and that's it. So how should be handled films; we have the nineties and we just talk about love. Those kind of films which are coming out and which are coming to people okay and then people are laughing at that. And there was a time when there were just stories on ghost, ghost, ghost, ghost, I mean black magic and that kind of stuff. And people also lapped that up (...) this was in the late eighties, early nineties. When we started making films it was mostly on ghost and black magic (...) and people sort of like were lapping at that and at a certain point people said hey, let's hold the host, let's stop the host. I think they have seen much of this. Then they went to love. And now they have seen love, reminds love, reminds ohh it has been a long time up till now. I think the next may have to be issues. That's what I can really see. We have to tackle political issues, you know, relevant social issues, we have to go to economical issues, you know politics and so on and so forth. We have to talk about all of that. It will be difficult but I believe if we fall into a system of being able to get into proper democracy, you know. Soon the government is changing then our filmstructure how we write and make films will also begin to change. There is a fear, there is a perception of making film in a particular line on a particular way it will see the day, you know the daylight (...). I think this will happen in the next two years because there are people surely get fed up of that love and romance. Personally my own research among people (...), you know, when you watch the western type of romance and love it is very different to our type of romance and love, our cultural background and so on and so forth. You know the African will be willing to sit in the theatre and to see how people kissing and feel so happy, you know ohh what love. But when he sees two Africans kissing it's like ehh, this is tabu, it's like the cultural situation there. If people begin to become daring, beginn to see two Africans really kissing, two Africans really doing things which supposed to be romantic and so on and so forth, you know, it will take some time for people to accept it. You know so I mean, we have to move from there into other things, talk about corruption and so on and so forth. That was what I tried - talking about rape. It was difficult but (...)."

Where and how do You sell Ghanaian films?

"Ghanaian films you can sell at first in Ghana. Westafrica, now the Nigerians realized that there is the professionell competence is here to make better films - technically. And so they are coming here and they want to shoot their films here, co-productions or their own films here and send it back to Nigeria and sell it. So apart from making the films here they are also selling them there. I think the Ghanaian film also has popularity at least among the Ghanaians in Europe and among the Ghanaians in America. I think basically if we just do our films properly for the world. So let's talking about the structures, distribution. We have to have that clear structured from making the film to selling the film, how we distribute it. You know, when we went to filmschool, I mean or when I came out of filmschool ... you have television rights, you have theatre rights, you know, you have video rights, you have cable and satellite rights, you have all of this. We haven't explored those things here. So it's now time for us to get out there, find distributors, okay, people who are interested in marketing films. In the West they have reached their highest point of really creating films. Now they want to see something different, they want to see something from the other part of the world. So we have to get people who are outside, we have to find distributors, to find television stations who are interested in, we have to get in contact with studios who are interested in African products. You know, we have to get in touch with all these people. And these people must be willing to buy from us. But the bottom line it comes to this: Are we going to be able to feed them? That is it. And what are we going to feed them with, I mean and, you know, the West they have high technical standards. So can we hit that technical standard? (...) For example I have been a private producer. I produce, I make (...) sometimes the director is even the producer, so he goes around and now he is the one who is going to distribute it. So he is going from theatre to theatre, he is doing everything and then at the end of the day he comes back and he hasn't done anything. So there are people, the people who are directors should be able to be producers. The directors should be distributors. (...) So let's go back how film should be made. (...) Film is not indigenous to us. It was given to us by the West. Let's look at how the West does it. And just follow it. I mean its a simple thing. Someone has lead the way. So we just follow it. And for me that is it. I will give you an example. There is a local television programme which is going well like "Taxidriver", a comedy for television. Okay, and we found out (...) selling it in London (...) sixty pounds a serie (...) business (...) Because in America before the film is made it's sold (...)."

Where was Your film "Without her consent" shown first?

"The film is a Gama-Production, it was shown in Gama-Theatres, and then it went in a few private theatres (...) It hasn't been shown on TV yet (...) Maybe they are waiting for a certain time, you know, it's a topical issue. You know waiting for a certain time when rape becomes a topical issue and they may show it - okay, yes. But I can't say it for sure but (...)." (laughing)

Which social environment do You come from; just start with the date of birth?

"I was born in the late sixtees, 67'. I was born to really a middle-class family. I mean six children, five boys and one girl, you know, that kind of stuff. I was put up in a very straight environment cause my father was a reverend minister. (...) I was independent in my mind, yes. I went to the best schools, you know, I had the best education you know. But my father is not a Ghanaian, my father is from British Guyana. My mother is a Ghanaian. So it's like I have some crosscultural blood in me, you know. And I am really interested in history, I really read a lot about history (...) European history (...). But after school I didn't want to go to the university, so I

wanted to do film. So I waited. The enrolment to the filmschool was kind of, at a certain point it was two years and then there was a gap for another two years. So I missed the first two years, so I waited a year and a half before I went to film. But before then I always have been interested in, you know, like I was standing in front of my mirror and mimic people, you know. And in my formative years as a young boy, you know, when there were film theatres using the projectors and so on and so forth. I mean my father did a point every saturday he took us to the movies and we watched James Bond-Movies, we watched Bruce Lee-Movies, you know. So it's like film those times I was actually satiated to those things. And from my youth I always wondered how it would be like to make an African James Bond-Movie, you know, that kind of stuff. So it kept on in my mind and I tried to do little poems, you know, to do in school and so on and so forth. So when I got to the point than I could go to filmschool, I decided to go to filmschool, to NAFTI, the National Film and Television Institut. I was practically going there to do screenwriting. Because I wasn't really interested in directing. Because I believe that the raw material for anything on screen is a script. But when I went in there we were told that screenwriting and everything was bunched up to directing. So I did directing, film and television directing. And then after school I did my National Service, the one year National Service and I worked in the production department. So I did production work; actually an aspect of producing. I was kind of like having an all round idea of filmmaking. And then after that I decided that, right, I wanted to see the world. So I worked for two years at NAFTI and I left there. I went to Kumasi, I worked for a company, which was spezializing in water and sanitation. So I was producing documentations (...) and then providing instructional video, instructional aids for various communities. And I took the opportunity to look around, at sceneries and so on and so forth, you know, to put it into the background and think of film for the communities. And after two years (...) I just decided to break free and become a freelance filmmaker, so as it is now. (...) I did a few television ads, I don't like ads, I mean advertising, very much because I think that sometimes the clients are crazy, you know. They don't know what they want. So I can't deal with those kind of people. But I did a few films for people privately (...). But I do spend enough, a lot of my time, writing. And now what I am doing I am working on the television series 'Taxidriver'."

How did the filmproject "Without her consent" start and come to an end?

"Okay 'Without her consent', the original script was taking from here because they have a script bank, from Gama Films. I came here once and they said they needed directors and I have seen a chance. So I looked through the script, the original title of that story was 'Stolen somehow...'. So I took it and I read it and somehow I had a soft spot for it. But then I decided I have to work on it (...) the title was wrong and the information being given in, I think enough research wasn't done at the script level. So I went ahead and did my research level. So I considered maybe if out of ninety pages (...) after that we went into printing, we did our casting, you know, (...). I mostly look for new people, I have an aversion for stars, I don't like stars that much. I think we should bring new stars. So we did that, worked out the budget, everything (...) and then we did our location hunt. The crew basically came from here (Accra). (...) I should say it took us about a month and a half to the actual production. You know from where we started shooting to the screen (...). And the film was nominated for best film, "The First Gama Award"; but I think that's up now." (laughing)

What is the intention, the idea of this film?

"When I was doing the script, what was on my mind was in the Ghanaian culture everybody sees what is happen but keeps quiet (...) you just keep it cool and I don't like this. If you have something to say, say it. You know, so that's how I am. Okay, the guy was a 'world-to' guy and there was this little girl from somewhere and he made the mistake of touching her without her consent. And everybody was trying to say, forget it, it's past, I mean this guy is a rich guy (...) and I wanted to put it into a larger question out to the audience into the society. If somebody is touching you and you don't like it, persist to the end. Because there are laws which can, you know, which actually push such guys away (...). It's a cultural problem if like a father is in the house and maybe (...) that's a cultural problem because I would say firstly from our social point of view. You know, it's the way the whole system is. You know, the leaders, the leaders think they are god, you know at the top. However is under the leader is god over the next person. It's like that. And that's why we are talking about the political and social system. Because when a chief has been instooled there is no other chief until he dies. It has gone up into our political system. Well if you have a president you can't have any other president until he dies. It's moving in that form. You know so until that kind of change can break, you know when the chief is doing something which is wrong he can be removed (...).Then it will work up to the point when the president does something which is wrong (...)."

Do You think there will come any change and what kind of change can come?

"There will have to be a change because now we have here more rape in the newspapers, almost every day, there is not a day which passes by where an adult is raping a minor, you know or somebody is raping a pregnant woman. You know those kind of things. And soon it's going to change, you see. And you have this federation of woman lawyers also coming out, you know, trying to make their voices ahead. We have the First Lady (...). So it's now coming to a point where people in relation to rape, people are going to have to come out and talk. Whether it's the president who mishandle or anything (...). I think people should making films (...) people have to make films on issues, (...) on corrupt officials, you know, because someone who is guilty of a kind, nobody could talk against him, so you know, people have to start. It's film, it's from film. A film will change the perception of people. Until film ..., so we make stop talking about ghost and all of that rubbish and start talking about issues."

So when are You going to do this?

"I am starting in my own way, okay. I made this film. Actually I make films, you know, I like detective films, I am trying to also think of making films talking about crime, talking about how drugs, if you are not careful drugs is going to just overrun. Everything we have, you know, I am trying to make films on corruption, corrupt officials. I mean but the law must deal with them and the law is there to deal with them, okay. I am trying to make films to show that there are a few good nuts in the police who are trying to make an afford to bring down corruption or to minimize corruption. But I am just one. Everybody, every filmmaker must think of doing something. For me watching a film which has nothing to say I would get up in the middle and walk out. It must have an issue. That's what I believe. So when we have people making films on issues I think we can work things out."

Were there any changes during the process of production; with regard to content or technic?

"During the production there were just a few things which I think is normal (...). I really had the control over the script. Nobody really influenced in the script. One,

basically which I did in the script was that (...) the court room scenes, I gave it to a lawyer, to work on it. I gave him a rough idea of my dialogue and so on and so forth. And then he worked on it and he put it in the right perspective (...). So I gave it to the lawyer for about three days and he gave me the right costumes (...)."

Where in Your film is the relevance to the society?

"There are a few points which I can name. Number one is when the girl realizes who raped her and she tells her friend. And the friend is like just as the society, you see. I can't believe this one, he wouldn't do this. You know how powerful he is, okay. So another point, she is determined to go ahead with it. And she is smart. She can't talk to a lawyer without a lawyer (...). So next time when we meet it will be in presence with my lawyer. That means it is no more a childish thing. Another point is when she meets her father. Her father says, I mean, this guy is a political (...). But she is so determined. And then another point is when the father himself realizes, she is my only daughter and we are not talking politics here, we are talking about, you know, really she has been raped, and those points. And another point is when the lawyers doing it, I say aha now this is the situation and now you can really see how the man is in the corner (...) and the girl is willing to push ahead not for money, nothing but to make sure justice is done. So these are the points (...), you know, people must know how rape is prosecuted (...). I didn't even know it by myself. But you must have a lawyer (...) cause it's a criminal offence (...) people must know these things. So if you are determined this is how you do it. Go to the lawyer and prosecute the case. And this is not a case which should be worked out of court. It must be taken to court, it must be prosecuted. (...) And your lawyer is there to help you to stage the case."

In most of the films I have seen the assembling, the editing is very slow, the pictures often have only one perspective and it is a long time one picture stands and a lot of tricks, fades (black and white), wipes and this kind of things. Why?

"I was looking at it from this point of view, the type of story I am telling. I am telling that type of story to my audience and my audience is very, very, they are smart but not very smart. Because as I said filmmaking is very, the filmmaking as we know it, you know, the people here understand it as it is, from the audience perspective. Because Hollywood has been around a hundred years. In America they started from one and we are just like repeating (...) And I was selling my films in chapters. So, do you realize why I used my fades? I tell it to you in three broad chapters, the incident and it goes on with the conclusion. So I used my fades for that. Of course if I use my dissolves its just because I wanted to show the time lag or something. But when you see the thing is slow, it's slow because I want to give the effects of rape on the life of the character. So you realize that the character at a certain point the character is down, she is down. As compared to the beginning when she is lively, she is lively with her aunt and so on and so forth. So as I said when you use that to bring out, you know, the slow life because she was a young girl, look at chatting with her aunt (...) and then suddenly everything comes down. And now she is left in her world alone. You know, everybody seems to think that it's nothing wrong with her."

The audience we are talking about, I think, is very smart because they can watch any film and understand it even only by pictures without understanding the English.

"Yes, that was a perception, you see, that's why I was telling you that you can put a film down. And that's what I said in the beginning (...). You can put two white people to kiss on the screen. And everybody is cool, cool, cool, they are enjoying it. Just put two black people and nobody is going to watch the film, you see, you understand

what I mean. Okay there was also another film, where there was a scene and there was supposed to be an angel to come and you know an angel came. Now the producer and the director had a very big argument because the director wanted to use a black angel and the producer said no use a white angel. Okay, because the director was saying: I am an African, I am seeing it from my perspective so I want to see a black angel coming. I am seeing an African angel coming. And the producer said no, and they used a white angel and it worked. (...) Because that's why I am saying a hundred years of hollywood is the mind. All the images we have seen has been of white on the screen. So if now I make a film of a black James Bond people are going to say: 'Ohh man, who do you think you are?' At least we don't have secret services in Ghana. But we do have secret services in Ghana, we have people doing, I mean kind of investigations, you know, you understand what I mean. People are doing those things. But if you do this here in Africa and you give him an African name and its really African closed, he is walking on an African street, people would say: 'Oahhh look at this James Bond!', you understand what I mean. So these are some of the certain cultural gaps in the viewers mind which we have to fill. So yes, they are very smart to catch what will come from Hollywood. But somehow they just don't want to accept. He will accept what is coming from Nigeria but he just can't accept what is coming from Ghana. You understand what I mean? So we have a problem. Number two watching hollywood movies is in English. Watching Indian films is in Hindu or whatever. Fine, he is watching the pictures and understands it. Take a Ghanaian film which is purely in English: You have a very limited audience. I will take you back to my example 'Taxidriver'. The taxidriver is speaking English, pidgin-English, local language. So when he talks in the local language he makes a kind of reputation in pure English, okay, then he goes into pidgin-English, you would understand pidgin-English how he speaks pidgin-English (...). Like me when I am watching a film with common viewers I have a higher perception, yes, and I can tell what the next thing is going to happen but they (...). So those are the kind of problems. We have a lot of gaps we have to fill you know.

Why most of the Ghanaian films I have seen always show similar themes as love, marriage and family; are there no other interesting subjects?

As we said in the beginning, the other subjects which are interesting, the issues, you know. But I think people have to be brave enough to want to do it (...). You know, people have to put themselves in that position and to do it. It's like, there is this phenomen in Ghana. If somebody sells "kenkey" at the junction and he is sucessfull I can tell in the next month there will be ten people selling "kenkey" at the same place the same food. That is how it is. So if I make a film and I did a film on maybe a step-mother and her step-son and the father is going to maltreat the mother, a big box office (...) I can make sure the next 15 films will be the same thing, you understand. We have people which don't like to think and to do something better. But I think things have to be done better. Or even if you take the same topic you treat it from another angle. People are often not do looking at films and maybe is it from the director's angle or from the writers angle, is it from this character's angle, is it from that character's angel. People are not doing that. They are using, we do writing a story or whoever, we are just making a film. But you are in for a problem, okay, so if it's from a directors angle let's see it from the directors angle, if it's from a characters angle let's see it from that characters angle. Then as you say pictures will come into play. I have taken up scripts which are just dialog, dialog, dialog, dialog, dialog, dialog, no, there is nothing like we are going home and we sit down and we talk, talk, talk, talk and we get up and go, you know. But we want to see more pictures. Another thing also is that maybe the new filmmakers also are handicapped as far as budget vise, as far as equipments vise. I think we are doing pretty well for

the amount of money we have (...). So sometimes you think of, well if I am going to produce this thing I will think of my market and I am going to sell it and then to be able to pay for this equipment. So I have to do love stories because this will bring back the money. But than I think what can help us very much as filmmakers is the small box, the television. I think we should start doing more this for television. I think the big screen can wait a bit. (...) Okay, like we said it we should (...) if we are making the films for television and then we go out and then look for the external market (...) let's look for external market, make it for television, get the television stations out because after all if you can earn a few dollars, you can make another film (...). So first lets think about that. You know we have to make a name for ourselves. As it is now we havn't made a name for ourselves, as far as filmmaking is concerned. And I believe that in America the cable televisions, what they are going to say to themselves, I mean I wrote to so many television stations and all the reply I get is: Can you do it? Because when we say go you will better be ready to run the race. Don't reach half way and say: 'Ohh well, it's because of this (...). Can you do it?' That's what we have to say to ourselves. Can we do it? If we say yes than we can start producing. So I am not looking for really the local market (...). I think the local market will just be a by-product. But making to set standards for the international market. So I hope that maybe my 8th or 10th film will be produced on celluloid, which will be appropriate for that market. I think we should start fighting from this screen. Because after all people who watch more of the small screen in Ghana than on the big screen. And also the medium we are using is for the small screen. You know, you have one television in the house and 200 people are sitting behind it and watching. You know that's what they do. You know, one is free, one is easily accessible, you doesn't need to take a car to come here, so it's even economic (...). I think there will be a chance when the economic situation gets better. Because as I am saying when a man is bringing his girlfriend to the theatre he has to pay for the transport, he has to pay for the food then he has to buy drinks and so on and so forth. So it's just economics. Economics really effect us. And also people have an idea that filmmaking is concept (...). You know, people think if you are going to do filmmaking then you are not educated. You know, because we also have people who are doing a concept party, havn't been to school. They are just like jokers (...). So they have that impression, looking and fooling around and they just make us laugh. They think these are people which are not educated, who are not thinking. This is one perception. Another thing which is mitigating against film developing is that people do not realize that what is on the screen there that is a world from someones mind. It doesn't apply to real life. There is a real thin line between real life and the creativity. It's a very big problem for Africans. So somebody say: 'Ahh can you see the wife has been kissed by someone at the screen? Yes that's my wife she was acting. Oahh I will never allow my wife to go on screen and kiss (...)', you see this kind of problems."

Why the Ghanaian films I have seen always show the upper class with big houses and all comfort, big compounds and cars and, and, and? Where is the reality?

Yes, okay, sometimes it's maybe from the background of the filmmaker. Maybe that's his world and he is very confident with that world. You know he knows everything about that world. Sometimes the filmmaker may come from a very low class and to make it up he will also tell a story from that angle. And if you realize most of our filmmakers stay in the urban areas, hardly have their stays in the rural areas. That's why I was saying when I worked for this company and I actually looked really deep into parts of Ghana. And I realized these places also they have their stories. But how you can market it? (...) It's easier to market what is in the urban areas than those in the rural areas (...). Also it's because maybe sometimes the

filmmakers wants to project a better image of his country (...). Because, you see, it's a poor - big social and a cultural problem existing. You know, they have also felt that when a white man comes to shoot here he should remote areas, to tell his people that we are not developed. That's one. We also want to make films which have to show developing. We have cars here, we also ride in Audis, we also ride in Benzes, we also ride in American cars, you know. People have that assertion as one. So they haven't stick to the stories from the village. Now they talk about those things, it's always of the middle class (...). There is also the political issue of ohh, we are so tired. Every day when I go to the office, I see it every day. Like I see this educational problem, I see my boss is just hammering on my head. So sometimes I just want to watch a film, ohhh dream in a world, what love. Thats all, you know. Or what witches, kind of like the Indian type of film, you know, the girl from a lower class, you know that kind of stuff. That's what comedy is making because also after a hard days work you have to laugh and to forget about this queries. So now mention these comedies, it means that we can even use comedy to bring out educational problems, bring out crime (...). And I would accept it from you that there are more topics, we can make films of (...). And one in a million trying to do that, trying to tick issues. Take the examination situation. I mean people go and do exams and they fear not because they didn't know what they are doing like because maybe the man who was marking the papers that morning his wife made him angry and then maybe he got drunk and the first paper he saw he just gave it one marks. Yes it's a worst story. You know and that's somebody's life. And it's being happen all the time. And nobody takes it serious (...).

You know, social and cultural problems, again, someone has been taught by NAFTI. Right, now the lectures there are actually on retirement. But are they going to make way for next generation? That's a big question. It's a very big question. I have never believed that a teacher in a filmschool had no practice. I believe you have to practice because the students are going to come with real problems, real problems from the field. And if you haven't been in the field, you haven't seen what a field can put in front of you. I mean I work with students, with graduates, which coming out from NAFTI. And I am amazed (...) but I have a hope for African cinema. It will soon develop and we could be just as the power in the West. Because when the West started (...) I think that African movie has a great chance. I think in the next ten years we could get to be as powered as the West. Because we are meeting the technology. We are meeting great technology. And when video started, all people who have done studies in celluloid refused to move to video. But how else could we tell our stories if we didn't use the video? So I think if we liberate our minds, when our mind will be free, when our mind will be creative, okay. And grasp what is here and now and use it. Tell stories in our own way. You know, we have to move from the traditional way of telling stories by the fire side (...) so we left the audience to imagine. And we spoke about Kwesi Ananse. And everybody had a different idea about who Kwesi Ananse was. But now we are looking to tell the stories on film. We are going to create that kind of: that is Kwesi Ananse. And we are going to use pictures, pictures. We have to cut down from our words, use pictures to tell the story. You know so first we are using pictures, second we are using sound, okay, use it constructively before we even go to use dialog. Dialog that's the last we should transcend an idea. Okay, so we use those pictures and we are able to sit down, let the mind run free and create. First create with a pen (...) when you dream you first see pictures before you add your sound to it (...) when he dreams and he thinks of music, music to take along the sound that is a problem which we have in Ghana, very much. What kind of music can complement your picture. You watch a Ghanaian movie and they are playing Whitney Houston, Whitney Houston is not an African, she is not a Ghanaian. You must think of that. So there are pictures which we are thinking of African rhythm,

putting it onto the film. If you have picture costumed - why is that man wearing a tie and so on and so forth - there must be a reason. Otherwise put him in his local wardrobe. He is a Ghanaian (...) then the dialog (...) they are trying to speak like the Queen of England. Why? (...) I can tell you this is a joke (...) so they all speak the same way. But the South of Ghana, the way they speak is different from the North of Ghana, from the West, from the East. (...) We have to work on all of this. (...) You must think of the costume, of the location, of our music. Music is important. These things make our film, okay. There was once I had a argument with somebody, he asked me: If a white South-African makes a film, is it considered as an African film? And we really had a big argument and I said, if you take the history of a white South-African it's hardly to go for him to make an African film because an African film is perceived on African mind. So basically his mind is really bias. You see he is going to make a film from his mind and how he sees it. That's why Johannesburg looks like Europe. (...) When a Zulu makes a film, it will come from an African mind but when a white South-African it makes it's a totally other thing. (...) So these are the things and I think the Nigerians are making a head way. Because the Nigerians are making good music (...) We have a storehouse of stories to tell. Then we start telling more stories from the ground level and stop writing textbook-English and start the conversational-English from the street (...). Unfortunately maybe Africa is not one country perceive (...). But what is Ghanaian? Right now as far as film is concerned there is nothing Ghanaian. What is Ghanaian? What is a Ghanaian film? It's not there (...). When I see a German film I know this is a German film, when I see a Japanese film I know this is a Japanese film, when I see an Indian film - this is an Indian film. British films, they are humor even, you can tell: This is a British film. But what is a Ghanaian film? We don't have a Ghanaian film. We are here to establish that. Maybe next two years we will be able to find the Ghanaian film proper. But from now we don't have a Ghanaian film. Because of the reasons we just spoke about. We need to think Ghanaian, we need to visualize Ghanaian. Right now we are visualizing European, right now we are visualizing American but we need to visualize Ghanaian and stop thinking about the European market; how they look and dresses, how they look and walk. An African mind is like an oreo-cookie, black outside, white inside (...). We have a lot of that here. You know, the people are black but they think white because of education, training and everything. They try to make you like a white man. We can start to change it with film. It's so many possible with film. I mean it's there. Now music is becoming more localized but can't we do that with film, we have to (...). And when we clearly do mark it; producers remain producers, directors remain directors, scriptwriters should remain scriptwriters, distributors will remain distributors and so on. We have something what we say sort of African film. Me, I like to do it like the Americans. An American will tell you: What do you have which is different from what I have? And you show me a film and the man is practically behaving like James Bond, this is James Bond. Do you understand? So what do you have? What is different?"

Interview mit Patricia Longdon (Regisseurin von "Saturday the 14th")

Interview durchgeführt von Dörte Westphal am 29. März 2000 in Accra, Ghana mit Patricia Longdon: producer, filmdirector, actrice, private company: Patlizza Film Productions (Transcription)

What comes to Your mind if you think about the mediastructure especially about the film and tv sector in Ghana?

"If I really think of the media structure it's not so bad. Actually we are trying to pick up. It can be very good like Europeen but we are trying to come out with the best we can offer. Coming to the filmindustry it costs so much money to produce a film and it's actually to difficult but then we are still trying and we hope that we will improve very soon. That's it."

What do You think about the filmmarket in Ghana or in the whole Westafrica about history and tendencies?

"Honestly the filmmarket in Ghana is very poor. The reason why I say that is, because - beginning people didn't really like film, (...) they thought it's a concert or something, they didn't actually participate. But now we have people buying films and we have most of the Nigerian films in Ghana here, people buy the Nigerian films more than the Ghanaian films. And then sometimes we are not lucky, we have this piracy thing. You know, somebody buys your cassette and then start duplicating secretly and there is someone who brings the cassette outside the country and start to sell it. So with the filmmarket we also think one day it will be of a benefit, of a profit to us the producers so that we really don't have to waste to much money."

Where and how do You sell Ghanaian films?

"We normally sell the Ghanaian films to filmcenters. We have places like "Alexaboard", we have a place like "Hacky HM". They buy the film and then they duplicate it. And how we sell it - you sit down and then you talk to whoever wants to buy this duplication rights. And then he tells you how much he wants to offer, you tell him how much you also offer (...). "

Which social environment do You come from; just start with the date of birth?

"I was born here in Accra (...) I was born in 1968. I grew up with my mum and dad. I went to a normal school that we have to go in Ghana. That's a Primary and I went to Secondary. And I did some courses in a Commercial Bank and I worked at the Bank for some time.

After a while I went to NAFTI just for a short while and then I worked at GBC (Ghana Broadcasting Cooperation) where I met Mama Oyene and she really turned me into an actrice. She taught me how to kind of act. She also taught me how to do about things. She really taught me so many things. So I owe everything to her because she brought me into the filmindustry. And since then I have been doing marvellously well. I don't only direct but I also produce films and I am an actrice as well as a make-up artist. That's what I do. I am also in the charity, you know I organize charity-shows and then donate the money to needy and the disabled. (...)"

How did the filmproject "Saturday the 14th" start and come to an end?

" 'Saturday the 14th' started at the end of 1998. It's really a true story and (...) after editing the film - I brought it out, I had the premiere. It wasn't successful anyway because once shooten it was (...) so a lot of money was pumped into it and

afterwards there were a lot of problems here, but it's still existing, you know, (...). I had to, kind of, think of the story and I had to add some fiction so that it doesn't go with somebody's story (...). It's a bit a personal story from my family, it happened to my big sister but I had to add some fictions to it because my big sister she is still alive anyway and she wasn't too happy when I brought that film out (...). And she is now kind of regretted and she is no more in that kind of life but she was a bit hurt, okay. So it's a story from my family, it's a true story too."

What is the intention, the idea of this film?

"The intention of this film was just to caution women who have actually been flattened behind their husbands to stop and also there are some women who don't actually speak the truth. The kind of I don't have time. (...) And it's also to the man you know there are some men who are actually sick ... the only solution to what we have in 'Saturday the 14th' that still woman should have been build enough to tell the man that: Look you are not able to have children. And then they would have gone to the hospital, have a check up and maybe having some kind of drugs (...). But this woman didn't do that and the man also couldn't have all the patience to kind of understand the woman (...). What I like to bring out here is that: It cautions woman to be careful not to flat behind their husbands and it also caution woman to be very, very truthful, I mean you don't have to lie about anything and then men should also understand that it's not always woman that can't make babies, sometimes men have problems and they can't also make babies. So that is it."

Were there any changes during the process of production; with regard to content or technic?

"(...) I had to change two or three characters. Apart from that there wasn't any problem."

Why most of the Ghanaian films I have seen always show similar themes as love, marriage and family; are there no other interesting subjects?

"When you come to Ghana all right - all we really think about is love, became married, witchcraft and all that. You see we are Africans and we believe in that so much and almost everybody has a story like that in his or her home. So when it comes to filmproductions, people, the Ghanaian market, they want to see how somebody love somebody and at the end of the day there was a broken heart. How and which was able to kind of destroy a family that's all we think about most of the time. But I was trying to come out with something a bit different, you know, (...). So it's our culture, our culture makes us kind of produce the same films most of the time."

Why the Ghanaian films I have seen always show the upper class with big houses and all comfort, big compounds and cars and, and, and? Where is the reality?

"It's like that because you see nobody wants to wash his or her dirty linen in public. We can't come out with films, (...) we don't like shooting films in the villages. We don't want to show how bad our villages are, how poor our buildings are. Because coming to European films you will see the same things. You see the big, big houses, tall buildings, Porsche-cars. So we also want to give you that. We can't actually come out with a film where you can see the very, very down or let's say the low-class family where (...) they sleep on the floor. We think it can't be possible. We always want to show the best of Ghana. And it's like that everywhere. I think it's even like that in the European countries."