

shows, you eventually have that 'driving down the road' scene that must be done in the studio," he says. "Total control of spill light, quality and direction of effect light are crucial.

"You have four cameras crowded tightly around a small compact car, leaving practically no room for light stands, least of all large fixtures. The leko is small, shapeable, and intense. Additionally, various moving effects can be attached to the instrument to suggest that the car is moving."

Walker has often been called "The Prince of Darkness." "Even when I do have lights on my sets, there is barely any heat to speak of. I don't feel it is necessary to blast light into a set when it isn't needed.

"I remember the first day that Wallace



CREW

WHAT ABOUT JOAN?

D.P.: Alan Keath Walker

Operators: Faires Anderson, Paul Sommers

Assistants: Dean Simmon, John Pingry,

Peter Kuttner, Michelle Mann, Colin Slaby,

Makiko Watanabe

Film Loader: Chris Harper

Still Photographer: Dean Williams

Langford walked into a rehearsal," says Walker. "He looked around the set. 'This is it? That's all the lights?' he said with concern. Pilot director Michael Lembeck nodded. We heard, 'oh, sh--, we're in trouble.' Until the cameras started running and then we see the dailies. Then, 'that's phenomenal.' They loved what they saw.

"On *The John Larroquette Show*, dark was the mandate from creator/producer Don Reo," he adds. The first shot in the series was a slow pull out from a plaque on a wall that read 'This is a Dark Ride.' All was well, until the second season, when another mandate came down from the network that the 'ride was too dark,' therefore not funny! Go figure? The dilemma, obviously is finding and maintaining focus with little edge reference."

Occasionally, Walker would plan an 'up look' to set focus, then return to show level. "Dimming makes all this possible, in the 'live show' world," he says.

Walker's crew has become used to the darkness. "Production and our directors also like to have dialog in total darkness.

"In the pilot of this series, the opening scene takes place in an upscale restaurant," he continues. "This was Joan Cusack's first entrance in the first show." Walker thought it would have more impact if she walked from the back of the set through sketchy areas, to emerge at her table in the warm glow of candle and indirect light. "It was stunning," he says.

"Yes, near or total darkness can be hard on the crew. But, we did it. In situations like this, you have to pre-set the cameras. It is difficult on the board man, but the shots are worth it. Of course, there is that inevitable mad dash for a little tweaking, when lights go back on for a second – but the crews love it.

"Because we work at that T2.8/4 split, and key at about a T2.8, the light lets the 79 stock do it's thing. It is a wonderful stock, by the way. We tape the iris down and it never changes.

"When we get to the transfer, Rose Calabress, the film to tape transfer artist at LaserPacific in Los Angeles never has to deal with exposure.

"I can't transfer, because it is done in Los Angeles and not Chicago," he explains. "Talk about trust. This is the way it is.

"When I met with Rose for the first time, love bloomed. All is well. We are on the same page. Now all we have to do is talk on the phone. But, rarely is there a problem. And, if there is, it isn't about our exposure, which remains consistent from scene to scene and show to show. All that is left is interpretation. We see the show with one eye." Calabress is also his tape to tape artist, which is the final finish on an episode.

Since Walker started his career as a portrait photographer, his mantra is shoot with the print in mind. "Ansel Adams taught this method," he says. Along with this idea, he relies on the Weston Zone System, developed by Edward Weston, for exposure control. "Therefore, a portion of the original shot concept is with the tape to tape in mind," he says.

"This can be directly compared with planning the timing for a theatrical release print in the feature world," he explains. "During the tape to tape, the visual can be literally shaded and shaped. And, now, with the digital age, pretty much anything is possible.

"By diminishing the background, the subject gains 'visibility.' (Incidentally, one of the 'functions' of light). Color can be enhanced or muted to again re-render the image.

"Then with your colorist, another set of 'artist' eyes can be brought to bear.

"I love collaboration," he admits. "Stop learning – you die!" •

Walker (in foreground, holding slate) refers to his co-workers as a "dream" lighting crew with an astounding depth of experience.

