

Outline

WHERE TWO PATHS CROSS:

The Death of Agent Amber

A secret agent/detective story using
the interactive capabilities of the
videodisk.

by Robert Lafore

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Synopsis.

You are an investigator for the Special Intelligence Committee, the top-secret United States spy agency. You are dispatched to the Republic of Arawak, an island in the Carribean, where an S.I.C. agent, working under cover at the U.S. embassy, has just died in the flaming wreckage of his speed-boat, the victim of an assassin's bomb. Your job is to find out who killed him and why.

You do this through interviews of embassy personel, study of the information contained in various files, and other clues which come your way.

Notes:

1. The "you" referred to throughout is the viewer/operator of the videodisk. He (or she) is the protagonist of the story, but he does not appear on the disk and his voice is never heard. This technique permits you--the viewer--no matter what your sex, race, age, etc., to imagine yourself at the center of the drama.
2. Most of the disk space is used for ordinary moving-picture video scenes. These will be called "movie scenes."
In addition, several thousand frames (out of 54,000) are reserved for still frames.
3. This story occupies one side of a disk. There can be a different story on the other side.
4. Since the way the story is structured on the disk is as important as the "plot" of the story, this outline will describe the structure along with the story.
The initial scenes will be described in some detail to give the flavor of the action.
5. The frame numbers referred to are estimates, included for clarity.

Part I. The Introduction.

When you start the disk at the beginning there is a short movie-scene leader that says (in block letters in the picture and on both audio channels): "Stop! Classified Material! Freeze frame #500 to read instructions. This disk will sel-destruct if you do not follow instructions."

Frame #500, when you freeze it, says in block letters, "The left-hand audio channel is used for telephone intercepts. These will not be meaningful until later. Please turn down the volume on the left-hand channel, then start play at frame #550. The left-hand channel will start with a tone: turn down this channel."

The movie-scene which begins at frame #550 shows a driver's-eye view of a car (Jaguar XK-120) being driven through the streets of Washington D.C. There are views of the Capital, the Washington Monument, etc. It has snowed, there is slush in the gutters, pedestrians are bundled up. The car moves fast on the slippery streets. Abruptly it turns down a ramp into a parking garage. A huge steel-mesh door opens automatically to let it through. We don't see the driver, and his (or her) hands, glimpsed briefly on the steering wheel, are gloved.

Inside the building there are stringent security measures: guards check your I.D., there are automatic finger-print scanners. You pass through a final glass door emblazoned with the seal of the Special Intelligence Committee.

As you enter your office a secretary hands you a note: "Call me." The letterhead reads "Chief of Operations."

(Credits can be superimposed over the following scene)
You pick up the phone and push a button. A voice says "Yes? . . . You're five minutes late. As usual. . . Well, you can't use the snow as an excuse where you're going: Republic of Arawak. Harry Royce has been killed. I want you at the airport in half-an-hour. (resignedly) All right, as hour. Miami Station will pass you the report when you change planes."

Your side of this conversation is not audible. As he speaks the camera (your eyes) watch the pedestrians on the street six stories below.

Fade to interior of the Miami airport: flight announcement boards, signs to "baggage claim," view of the window of people in shirt-sleeves, etc. A man crosses ahead of you and drops a crumpled pack of cigarettes. He vanishes in the crowd. You pick up the package, pull out a locker key. Cut to opening the locker, extracting a large manilla envelope with a wax seal.

Fade to interior of a small commercial airplane. You are looking out the window at the ocean below. You glance at your seat companion, a large middle-aged West-Indian lady. You open the envelope and extract the report. On the cover is written: "Stop!! To read this report freeze frame #10,000."

Frame #10,000 is an official S.I.C. report marked "Classified, clearance IV or above," etc. There are various cryptic markings stamped here and there.

The first part of the report describes the death of Harry Royce (Agent Amber) an S.I.C. clandestine operative working under the cover of Naval Attaché, killed when his speed-boat was blown up, apparently by a bomb, while he was towing a water-skier off Fandango Beach, a popular week-end resort for the embassy staff.

The second part of the report is a brief description of the Republic of Arawak: population, imports, exports, principle cities, government organization, etc.

The last frame of the report says "Set to frame #10,100 and play."

The movie-scene beginning at frame #10,100 shows you being driven in an official embassy car through the streets of a poor but colorful tropical town. Crowds of West-Indians jam the sidewalks and there are open markets displaying a profusion of exotic tropical fruit.

Your driver, a friendly young man with a West-Indian accent, says over his shoulder, "You must be here to find out what happened to Mr Royce. . . Well, it's pretty obvious. . . he was killed yesterday, and here you are today, looking like someone who can take care of yourself, if you don't mind my saying so . . ."

Freezing any of these frames will show a more detailed list: Embassy Personel by name and position, detailed maps of the island with close-ups of towns on subsequesnt frames, close-ups of newspaper articles, etc.

At the end of the list is the notation "To continue, play frame #28,000."

Part III. The Interviews.

Beginning at frame #28,000 are a series of movie-scenes which amount to vignettes of a dozen or so members of the embassy staff. Some you meet in the embassy, some in bars after work, some at home. They offer you their opinions on who killed Harry Royce, and various other observations of life in Arawak.

One of them gives you a film of the explosion: he happenned to be filming the water-skiers when the boat blew up. Another one (a secretary called Rita) drops her diary by accident: you quickly pocket it. Both the film and the diary have reference frame numbers: you can watch the film and read the diary.

While all the personel will be given equal time in these interviews (and in their personel records), and will come across as unique and sometimes colorful characters, only four people are central to the plot:

1. Harry Royce
2. The Ambassador
3. Shawna, Harry Royce's wife. She has a cold blond sort of beauty, and is either mysteriously reserved or not too bright; it's hard to tell which.
4. Bobby Rose, the yound second secretary, a saturnine slightly alcoholic man, whom you soon find out was a good friend of Harry Royce.

Part IV. The Clues.

The clues hidden in the above material are arranged in varying levels of obviousness. You the viewer, noticing the more obvious clues first, will put together an initial hypothesis about what happened; but it will turn out not to be correct. You will then look deeper, and, with more research, discover the true circumstances of the crime.

The most obvious explanation, offered by the Ambassador and one or two other staff members, is that the Russians killed Royce because they knew he worked for the S.I.C. But Royce's own files disprove this by mentioning that intelligence services almost never kill their opposite members operating under diplomatic cover, and never in so spectacular a manner.

The second hypothesis is that Royce was killed by his friend Bobby Rose. The evidence for this is:

1. Royce's "Reports to Office Seven (Washington)" shows that he was recommending the "termination with extreme prejudice" of Egil Amin, the leader of the "Buccaneers of the Cross," the terrorist religious group whose demonstration you have already seen.
2. Royce's notes show that he mentioned this idea to Bobby Rose.
3. Examination of Bobby's hand when he lights a cigarette show that he's wearing a ring with the emblem of the Buccaneers on it. You have seen this emblem in the demonstration and in newspaper clippings in Royce's files.
4. Bobby Rose's personnel file shows he served in the Phillipines at the same time Egil Amin was establishing his reputation there.
5. When you talk to Bobby Rose he seems almost too upset by Royce's death. He could be acting.
6. Someone mentions that Bobby gave a large bait-bucket to Royce before the ill-fated boat ride, and this can be verified by carefully watching the movie of the water skiing.

You can infer from this that Bobby Rose is a secret member of the Buccaneers, and has gotten rid of Royce to protect Egil Amin.

However, a more thorough analysis of the clues invalidates this hypothesis. You discover that:

1. Slow-motion examination of the boat blowing up shows that the explosion starts in the bow of the boat, while the bait-bucket is seen being loaded in the stern.
2. A high school class picture in Bobby Rose's office shows, upon close examination, that the school flag carries an emblem identical to that on Rose's ring, while the Buccaneer's emblem is somewhat different.

One can then conclude that Rose has no connection with the "Buccaneers," and therefore no reason to kill Royce.

You then come across the following clues:

1. Personnel records show that Mr and Mrs Royce were transferred from their last post to Arawak at the same time as the Ambassador, as per his recommendation.
2. Shawna Royce wears a piece of expensive jewelry from a country that the Ambassador (but not Harry) once served in.
3. Analysis of Shawna's weekly schedule, and the Ambassador's, and examination of a map of the island, reveal that their paths cross at a motel in the remote interior of the island twice a week.
4. Someone mentions in passing, in a list of similar gossip, that the Ambassador is rumored to have a lady somewhere. Someone else mentions that Shawna Rose might have a lover.
5. The Ambassador and Shawna are each seen, on close examination of the "interview" scenes, to be lighting cigarettes with matchbooks from the motel at the crossroads.

6. They can also be seen (if you look very carefully) casting intense glances at one another in the background of an embassy party.
7. The Ambassador's wife has recently died (under somewhat mysterious circumstances).

From the above you can conclude that the Ambassador and Shawna Royce were having an affair, and therefore have a motive for getting rid of Royce.

Additional clues are:

1. Harry Royce is known to be (a) a dangerous man who knows a lot about almost everyone that they probably wouldn't want revealed, and (b) very jealous of his wife.
2. The Ambassador was a demolition expert in the Navy in WW II. This fact is buried in his personel record.
3. The Ambassador gave a radio to Harry Royce as a gift at the annual staff party (mentioned in Rita's diary with moderate surprise).
4. The film of the accident shows Royce putting the radio into the bow of his boat. Slow-motion examination shows the boat blowing up bow-first.
5. There is a similar radio, and a pair of binoculars, in the Ambassador's office when you interview him. (The radios are the kind with long telescoping antennas).
6. The Ambassador is seen in the background at a party wearing a yachting cap.
7. When the boat blows up there is an indistinct figure in the background on shore wearing a yachting cap, carrying a radio with the antenna extended, and watching the event through binoculars.
8. Frame-by-frame analysis of the explosion shows that, just before the boat blows up, Shawna Royce, who is being towed on water skis behind the boat, falls--for no apparant reason--off the skis and dives under water.

From the above you can conclude that the Ambassador and Shawna conspired to kill Harry so they could more openly pursue their illicit relationship.

Part V. Verification.

Verifying the correctness of this hypothesis (or the incorrectness of the various other mistaken hypotheses) could be accomplished in several ways.

1. There could be a sealed envelope containing the solution included with the disk.
2. You could write to the manufacturer (enclosing, say \$2.00) and have the solution sent to you.
3. The information could be encoded on the disk itself, in such a way that only someone who had correctly figured out the crime could find the verification. This would be done by sandwiching single frames into long action sequences. The single frames would be invisible when viewed at normal speed, but their frame numbers could be derived using the name of the murderer, the motive, and other information.

Further Notes:

The arrangement of the material on the disk (the bulk of the introductory movie-scene material first, the list of files in the middle), minimizes search time. Most of the material can be found in less than a second, starting from the file list, and no search takes longer than ten seconds.

You will get to know the Republic of Arawak and the U.S. embassy there very well before you solve the crime. This total immersion in a different world should turn out to be one of the compelling attractions of this format.

The other side of the disk could contain a different story using the same setting and many of the same personalities-- Volume 2 of the Arawak files, taking place perhaps a year later, with a new mystery. This would ~~minimize~~ production costs.

The Master-Class Series on Photography

By Alfred Blaker and Robert Stein

The Master-Class Series on Photography

The following is an introduction to the proposal for "The Master Class Series on Photography" designed principally for the laser optical videodisc. For those who may not be aware of the unique capabilities of this new technology, the introduction begins with a brief discussion of the "Laserdisc" and how it differs from other videodisc systems and other educational media.

The Laserdisc

There are now two videodisc systems available to the consumer, the RCA capacitance system, known as "Selectavision," and the laser optical or Laserdisc system.

RCA's Selectavision works much like a phonograph record. The information on the disc is read by a diamond stylus and plays through from beginning to end. It is a fine medium for movies or any linear program intended to be played through without stopping.

The Laserdisc, which derives its name from the fact that the images on the disc are read by an optical laser, starts where the capacitance system leaves off. Each 30-minute side of a Laserdisc consists of 54,000 frames. These frames can be played in a linear, straight-through fashion, like a movie, but that is only the beginning. Each frame is encoded with a numerical address and with a simple keypad, the user can call up any frame at any location on the disc. This capacity for random access is particularly valuable because the laser technology permits discrete information to be displayed on individual frames. Photographs, graphic or textual material (or a combination of all three) can exist as still frames. The picture is rock steady and can be kept on the screen indefinitely without any loss of picture quality.

Because the Laserdisc gives the ability to intersperse motion sequences, live or animated, and still frames in the same program and to access any segment or frame at will, it combines the best aspects of all the various educational media. The Laserdisc makes it possible, for the first time, for the user to interact with the content of a sophisticated, "multi-media" presentation, accessing material in the sequence and at the pace that suits him best. Books have random access and "still frames" but lack the teaching power of motion and sound. Traditional audio-visual based instruction, such as movies or instructional TV, has motion and sound but no user interaction, while slides and filmstrips have some random access and interactivity but no motion.

Computer-aided-instruction has a high degree of interactivity but (to this point) has relatively limited graphic or visual capability. The laser disc presents an unparalleled opportunity to take advantage of the educational value of motion and sound without losing the interactive, self-pacing capacity which is so important to the learning process.

Some of the other relevant technical features of the Laserdisc system are summarized briefly:

- * Slow and Fast Motion - sequences can be played in slow motion; the speed is variable from the normal speed of 30 frames per second to as slow as a single frame every five seconds. Normal video playback can also be speeded up to three times the normal speed. Both these modes are available in either forward or reverse direction.
- * Audio - the Laserdisc has two completely distinct audio tracks. The second track can be used to add stereophonic sound, to present additional information, or even to provide a second language.

What the Laserdisc Can Do for Photography

The optical videodisc offers several significant advantages over any previous medium used to teach photography. First and foremost is pictures, pictures, and pictures. Anyone who has ever tried to put together a book of photographs, particularly in color, has had to face the painful reality of the cost of production, which makes it necessary to severely limit the number of photos. With the videodisc, however, there is no need for expensive color separation, nor does each extra photo require extra plate-making or additional paper cost. With the videodisc we will be able to provide many more photos than we could in a book, with the only appreciable additional cost being that of acquiring the photos. Aside from making the whole instructional sequence visually richer, it will be possible to present many examples of the "same" shot under different circumstances. These "what if" sequences -- what if you change filters, lighting, lenses, shutter speed, f-stop, film, paper, etc. -- will make a big difference in helping to train the viewer's understanding of the whole range of photographic technique.

(A note on picture quality. While the quality of photographs on a videodisc will not be as good as you can

get in the finest books, it will be surprisingly good. The Laserdisc delivers a higher resolution picture than home videotape units or broadcast signals, ensuring a crisp, clear picture with high contrast and vivid colors. Also, because the laser never comes in contact with the disc, there is none of the background "noise" associated with either videotape or broadcast signals."

The videodisc format makes it possible in a real sense to study "with" an expert photographer. With a book, the author is limited to words, diagrams, and photos, making it impossible to demonstrate in any dynamic way what he sees or does in a given situation. The Laserdisc overcomes this limitation as it enables the instructor to present much of the key material "live" and from his literal "point of view." With nature photography, for example, the instructor will be able to "take you into the field" with him and explain precisely how to go about this work. The videodisc does not permit the user to ask questions, however, he will be able to study a sequence over and over until he has absorbed the material as fully as possible.

The Strategy and Structure of the Series

Our goal is to develop an instructional sequence that on the one hand will be entirely accessible to the complete beginner with no prior knowledge, and on the other hand, because of its comprehensive and encyclopedic approach, will become a standard reference work for the advanced, even professional photographer. This broad range, virtually impossible with any other format, can be approached with the Laserdisc because of its unique ability to mix several levels of information for access at the user's discretion. For example, let's take the segment on the use of filters. The advanced amateur may not be interested in some of the basic material, although even for him it should be an excellent review, but he may be very interested in the virtual catalog of the various effects obtainable with different filters and the explanation of how each is achieved.

The Master-Class Series has been divided into two parts. The first part, comprising 7 discs, is basically a "how-to" of the craft of photography. Dealing with the technical, practical, and aesthetic aspects of photography, these discs will prepare the user to handle practically any photographic situation with skill and confidence. Each disc (or set of 2) treats a particular topic and can stand alone, allowing the use of any disc without dependence upon any others. The first two discs, "Cameras, Lenses and Films" and "Making Pictures" can function as a basic introduction for the beginner.

The second part, The Art of Photography, includes five discs, each offering a pair of interviews. These presentations will provide an in-depth examination of ten individual photographers and their work. A sixth disc, introducing the section, will cover some advanced concepts relating mainly to aesthetic principles. The interviews will be marked by a probing, analytical approach, which avoids personality-related issues (eg. what was it like to photograph "whomever"?) and concentrates on the images themselves. Accompanied by frequent cuts to particular images, the artists will be queried as to how they made these pictures, and how they reflect their creative leanings. Many of the interviews will follow the artist "into the field" as he/she explains the considerations behind various creative decisions.

Each pair of interviews will compare and contrast the images of people who work in superficially similar veins, but will point up the genuinely unique character of the individual photographer. The artists will be interviewed and presented separately, with the very pairing providing the contrast and comparison. Taken together the five pairings will present a broad overview of the trends in photography today. Of course each photographer named could be replaced by a number of others, if the particular people named were not available -- in photography's house there are many mansions. This second section has the potential of becoming a continuing series which would comprise an invaluable record of contemporary photography as it develops.

Marketing Considerations

We can identify three markets for the Master-Class Series on Photography. The consumer market for individuals who have videodisc players at home, educational institutions for which the series would become an important component of their photography curriculum and photo stores and public darkroom operations which may have use for on-site instruction.

While it is true that the small number of players limits these markets at present, the following considerations should be taken into account. The availability of high quality programs like the one being proposed here will spur the sale of the players; and since this series will not become outdated in the foreseeable future, it would become a solid part of an active videodisc backlist as soon as the mass market is established.

Also, with some thought and possibly a little extra footage, an entire series of linear programs could be

produced, particularly from the interview segments, for broadcast via cable or Public TV and for distribution via videotape, or even the RCA capacitance videodisc. For a relatively small extra cost, this will provide a way to recoup some of the production costs at an earlier point than could be expected, relying on the videodisc market alone. Further, it is quite reasonable to assume that the interviews would form the basis for an excellent book or series of books.

It is strongly suggested that the two parts of the series be developed and produced simultaneously, with one disc from each being issued at the same time. The two parts complement each other and issuing them in this way will emphasize and maximize the perceived value of the entire series.

Alfred Blaker

It is proposed here that Alfred Blaker be the overall adviser to the series as well as the actual instructor/interviewer to appear on the programs. Mr. Blaker possesses a singularly broad and deep knowledge of photographic technique as well as a profound appreciation of photography as both art and craft. His teaching manner is very clear and relies heavily on the importance of sharp visual examples. He addresses both simple and complex issues without being condescending to his audience.

Mr. Blaker has served as the Head of the Laboratory and Principal Photographer for the Scientific Laboratory of the University of California, Berkeley, and has taught numerous courses in photography to students of diverse experience and interests. He is the author of the outdoor photography book, Field Photography: Beginning and Advanced Techniques (W.H. Freeman and Co., 1976); the laboratory oriented, Handbook for Scientific Photography (W.H. Freeman and Co., 1977); and the basic photography text, Photography: Art and Technique (W.H. Freeman and Co., 1980). His forthcoming books, Close-up Photography and Photomacrography and Anthropological Photography are to be published by HP Books and W.H. Freeman and Co. respectively.

The Master-Class Series on Photography

Part I

The Craft of Photography

Videodisc 1 & 2*
(issued as a set)

Cameras, Lenses and Films

- camera components
- types of cameras - single-lens reflex, twin-lens reflex, rangefinder, press and view cameras
- types of lenses - normal, telephoto, wideangle, macro, zoom, macro-zoom, etc.
- choosing the right camera and lens for the job
- types of films - black and white, color negative, color slide, rapid-access films
- general film characteristics - speed, contrast, grain, color sensitivity
- film formats

Making Pictures

- basic camera handling with 35 mm and other roll-film cameras, handheld photography, tripod
- depth of field and shutter speed
- viewing and focusing
- correct exposure, standards of exposure accuracy, estimating exposure
- types of light meters and how to use them
- exposure systems, Ansel Adams Zone System
- introduction to the use of the view camera

Videodisc 3

Light, Filters, Lights and Lighting

- wavelength, color, and the use of filters with black and white, and color film
- natural lighting
- existing light photography
- applied lighting, continuous and flash

Videodisc 4 & 5
(issued as a set)

Film Processing and Printing

- darkroom set-up and equipment
- film processing
- types of printing paper
- black and white printing
- color printing, direct-positive, and positive negative
- corrective printing techniques
- mounting prints

* Each videodisc is a 2-sided optical laser videodisc, consisting of 30 minutes linear playing time or 54,000 individual frames per side.

- Videodisc 6 Action and People in Photography
people in action, methods of "stopping" or otherwise
controlling the effects of motion
photography of people in daily life, on the street,
at work, social reportage, war, sports
photographing children
formal and informal portraiture
- Videodisc 7 Photographing Nature and the Small World
landscape photography
"in the field"
animals
closeup photography
photo-macrography
- Part II The Art of Photography
- Videodisc 1 Seeing Photographically; Composition
Seeing Photographically: learning how to adapt your
understanding of vision to the terms of photography;
the "decisive moment" for exposure; the effects of
changing from 3 dimensions to 2 and from a color
perception to a black and white or color image;
the compression of visual contrast, especially in
black and white, the question of literalness vs.
abstraction in images; previsualization
Composition of Images: a summary of the conventional
ideas of image composition; the frame of reference,
"the golden mean" of proportions, lines of movement,
and the placement of objects within the picture
space; the role of "rules," and when to forsake
them; the concept of conventional rules vs. that of
"guides."
- Videodisc 2 Documenting Today's Society
Bill Owens: an interview with the exponent of the
concept of contemporary anthropology; author of
Suburbia, Our Kind of People, and Working: I Do
It for the Money, as well as the how-to text,
Documentary Photography
Henri Cartier-Bresson: the classic master of
"Decisive-moment" photography, and the chronicler
of the affairs of ordinary people in many
countries, working from the 1930's to the present;
author of The Decisive Moment

Videodisc 3 The Woman's Eye

Judy Dater: one of today's most significant woman photographers, Dater has a strong concern for the feelings of women; she was a close friend of Imogen Cunningham; author with Jack Welpott of Women and Other Visions

Joanne Leonard: a somewhat less well-known but very significant photographer with deep and widespread social concerns, Leonard has perceptively portrayed the lives of American Blacks, especially in her "West Oakland" picture series.

Videodisc 4 The Landscape

Philip Hyde: a leading light among the Sierra Club's excellent landscape photographers; his work has been featured in a number of the Sierra Club exhibit format books

Paul Caponigro: where Hyde is a relatively literal landscape photographer, Caponigro, though still straight-forward in his presentations, has a fine way of introducing ambiguity and other less obvious aspects of artistry into his work

Videodisc 5 Lyric Still-Life, in Color

Olivia Parker: although a relative newcomer, Parker has already established herself as the creator of a body of unusually beautiful, evocative, and haunting color photographs in the still-life vein, quite unlike any previously seen

Marie Cosindas: the unquestioned maestro of the color-Polaroid image; Cosindas has published a book of her images, divided between still-lives and portraits. Although her portraits are important work, it is in her still-lives that she presents her most characteristic form

Videodisc 6 Time and the Camera

Duane Michals: his forte is the production of photographic series -- related pictures that carry one along into his own ambiguous and disconcerting concept of the world

Alex Kayser: following Michals' lead, Kayser has explored the development of ideas through the presentation of sequences that follow an act through to conclusion; but where Michal's conclusions are likely to be foreboding and disturbing, those of Kayser can be deftly amusing and wryly humorous.

"A Watched Pot"

An Idea
by
Peggy Goldman

"A Watched Pot Never Boils!" Is that good or bad? We may not answer that question, but we will answer every other question that a cook--any cook--might have about preparing the following six meals. Each will be served up in the course of a vignette; one actress will star in all. Even if you don't care what you eat, grab some popcorn and enjoy the show.

The Candlelit French Dinner

The boss kept you overtime, the bus is ten minutes late, it's raining and you've only got an hour before Aunt Sophie's friend's grandson whom you haven't seen since you were 12 (but who could be Prince Charming) arrives for that wonderful French Dinner you promised him.

The Chinese Dinner For Six

You wanted that beautiful, soft, mauve, English cashmere sweater for Christmas and instead he gave you the deluxe wok set with the cookbook and the fifteen implements. By New Years he understood your hostility and resolved to help you prepare a small Chinese Banquet for four of your closest friends on January 19th, Superbowl Sunday.

Sunday Morning Brunch

You had a great time last night and you want to make him a wonderful brunch, but it's his kitchen and you don't know where anything is.

The Obligatory First Meal for the Inlaws

It's Italian and they're not.

Midsummer Night's Barbecue

Her kitchen is straight out of Town and Country. She's got every appliance known to humankind and a built-in custom barbecue out by the pool. She doesn't know how to use any of them. Fortunately, our heroine, Florence the maid, does.

Thanksgiving for the WHOLE Family

It's a messy job, but somebody has to do it.

Each sketch will follow the meal from recipes and marketing lists (including substitution suggestions) through preparation, to the well-set table.

A live-action plus still-frame glossary will be included to cover basic information and techniques.

"It slices, it dices, it entertains and educates. You'll slice, you'll dice, you'll do it all -- thanks to 'A Watched Pot'"