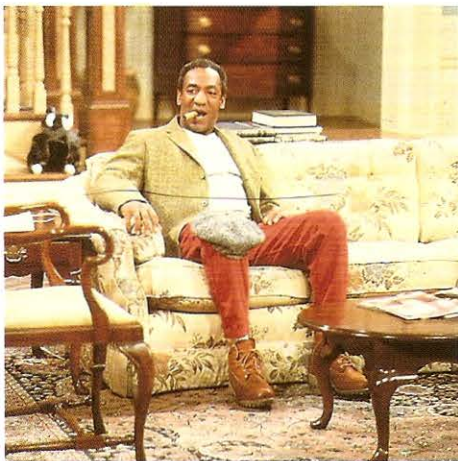


**A TV CABLE NETWORK RUN FOR A SPECIALIST AMERICAN AUDIENCE HAS DISCOVERED THAT...**

# BLACK IS GOLDEN

**W**hen you consider that the highest paid entertainment stars in the United States are black (Bill Cosby, Oprah Winfrey, Eddie Murphy, Michael Jackson), then it seems only natural that a TV station run exclusively to cater for America's 28 million black consumers should be a runaway success.



■ **Bill Cosby...**the most popular and highest-paid man on American TV. Black entertainers attract the biggest audiences and revenue.

And that is exactly what has happened to Black Entertainment Television, founded in 1980 by entrepreneur Robert Johnson as the USA's only black-owned cable TV network.

Since then he has gone from strength to strength, the more so since he very wisely decided to equip his new \$10 million Washington DC studios with Strand Quartzcolour lighting.

The new studios have been made viable following BET's progression from showing an almost exclusive diet of music videos and B-movies to the happy position where the company is now able to afford chat-shows, soap operas, dramas, sports and current events programmes.



Photos: Retna Pictures

## LIGHTING DARKER SKINTONES

*With darker skins some aspects of face lighting become more difficult while others become easier. Character projection in a theatre, dependent upon clear visibility of eyes and teeth, is helped considerably by their contrast with darker skin. But strong contrast between light clothing and dark skin can lose faces.*

*Light absorbed rather than reflected by darker faces may seem a problem but absorbed light brings the bonus of an enriched quality to the skin and underlying bone structure. Maximising gains and minimising losses requires considerable liaison with costume and scene designers, and particular care with angles, textures and diffusion.*

*But the major area for care is filter choice. Blue is dangerous and green lethal, turning black skin to an unbecoming putty. Greens can be avoided but a palette without blue can be very limiting.*

*The technique is to avoid green-blues and opt for those with high red content, eg Chromoid 161, 86, 163 and 93 or Cinelux 461, 465 and 474. Blue toning is injected through heavy backlighting and careful sidelighting, with face neutrals selected from pale warm tints which can with advantage be stronger than is usual for white actors. Consequently with mixed casting a slight warming-up of white actors make-up is usually necessary.*

Francis Reid