

Paul Cripps has been a production designer for over 30 years, in which he has worked on over 50 films and television shows. He grew up in Woodstock where he watched many films be created, cementing his passion for filmmaking. Before *Ted Lasso*, Cripps has been noted for his work on films such as *Never Let Me Go* (2010) and *Dredd* (2012). He has been nominated for five awards all of which are for *Ted Lasso* episodes.

Ted Lasso is an award winning television show that follows two American football coaches, Ted Lasso and Coach Beard, who move to England to coach an English soccer team. Ted Lasso leads AFC Richmond with his determination and optimism which surprises the whole team. Ted Lasso has been nominated for over sixty Emmys and won thirteen over its three series run.

In this essay I will focus on the colour and open spaces used in three different sets from *Ted Lasso* and how it helps to tell the story. Paul Cripps uses many different colours to tell a story about each of the characters and even the places. As discussed in the book *If it's purple, someone's gonna die: the power of colour in visual storytelling*, "It is the true master who goes further and uses colour as well to capture the inner life of the characters and mirror the subtle intricacies of the story." (Bellantoni, 2005, p.33) which is something I believe that Paul Cripps has accomplished throughout the series.

Figure 1- AFC Richmond Locker Room



Figure 2- Believe Sign



Figure 3- Coaches office connected to the Locker Room



Figure 4- Locker room before a match



Figure 5- Locker Room on an off day



Figure 6- Leicester City Locker Room



The locker room is the heart of AFC Richmond. The locker room is used on game days, practices, and any day they are at the stadium. Paul Cripps discussed that when he was creating the stadium he wanted a very open feel which would fit with the script whilst fitting with the storyline. Following this idea, Paul allows for the coaches offices to have a direct view into the locker room so within all the shots you can see events occurring in the background.

In this scene seen in Figure 1, the locker room is empty except for Keeley and Roy as there is a football match in play. Roy ran into the locker room after he walked off the pitch due to an injury which signified to his fans and team that he was retiring. Roy is sat in front of his empty locker which provides stark contrast to the lockers surrounding him to further symbolise his departure.

Throughout pre-production, Paul Cripps visited many different Premier League football locker rooms to get an idea for what he wanted Richmond's to look like. The locker room he drew the most inspiration from was Leicester City. As Cripps states, Leicester is similarly an underdog team you would not expect to see succeeding but ended up winning the Premier League. Leicester City's locker room which can be seen in Figure 6, had many slogans around their room which you can see recreated in Figure 1. Richmond's slogan is "Believe" which Ted tapes up in the locker room the day he arrives and will go on to become a major part of the show.

Additionally, the colours of AFC Richmond are reflected in the coaching staff and the team. The colour red can often reflect anger and violence but "red can activate whatever latent passions you might bring to the table, or the movie." (Bellantoni, 2005, P.2) so in the case of Ted Lasso it signifies passion to the full extent. The blue used in Richmond symbolises loyalty and unity upon which the team is built. When Ted and Beard arrived at Richmond the team was very divided and would turn on each other in the blink of an eye, but throughout the show they gained the trust and support from the team and Richmond. Blue is also seen as a dependable colour "...we can depend on the sky being blue; therefore blue is synonymous with loyalty and dependability." (Bellantoni, 2005, p.82). Ted and Beard become dependable not so much for winning but to be a trusted person for the team to confide in. The final of the three colours is yellow which signifies the hope and optimism the coaching staff has for the team, but majorly the emotions the viewer begins to feel as the show develops and they connect with the characters.

Figures 4 and 5 show the multiple purposes of the AFC Richmond locker room. In Figure 4, the team is meditating before they have a match. Zava is in the middle of the room leading the session on an elevated surface, which adds to his character. The table in the middle of the room is used for many announcements or even a special haircut. When Zava arrived at Richmond, he was placed on a pedestal, which you can tell by the fact that he was given his corner in the locker room and four lockers for himself. In Figure 5, the team has a serious conversation after training over their privacy. When each player sits at their locker, you get a small insight into their lives that the viewer is not always privy to. The story follows quite a few of the player's lives outside of the team; however, you do not always get to hear all of their voices, so having their lockers and the conversations gives a great insight into what they have going on in their lives.

Figure 7- Keeley's office



Figure 8- Keeley's office wide shot



Figure 9- Keeley's office



Figure 10- Keeley's home



Keeley is a larger than life character who brings a lot of joy and honesty to the Richmond team. At the beginning of the show, Keeley is a model and dates one of the team members but after breaking up with her boyfriend she has a career change. She was asked to do PR for the team which then progressed to her having her own PR company called KJPR.

The offices of KJPR are very corporate looking which is exactly what Paul wanted. He wanted a very boring office, with Keeley being the thing to liven it up. Her office is a pink metallic wonderland. Pink follows Keeley around constantly which we see in her house and then in her professional life. The pinks in her office shows her playful and feminine side which is a huge part of her character.

Keeley's playfulness can be seen in all of the things in Keeley's office such as the cheetah statue and pens with fluffy tops. She has plants surrounding the room and even some that are gold. The gold seen in her office brings forward her extravagance and the prosperity she and her company have.

As seen in figure 8 Keeley's office is a very open space similar to the stadium. Paul discussed how the script calls for open spaces to allow for conversations on the move.

In figure 9, Keeley and her partner – Jack – are having a serious conversation about their relationship. The pink of Keeley's office helps to bring forward the love between the two of them. They could have had this conversation anywhere but the team made the deliberate choice to have the scene in a specific place where there are many symbols for both Keeley and Jack.

Figure 10 is in Keeley's house, which shows how her personality is reflected in her office. This is clearly a deliberate choice as you would not expect to see this in a professional environment. This also continues the idea that pink follows Keeley around as her home is decked out in pink, and Phoebe is wearing pink while drinking a pink drink. Roy, dressed in all black, is further away from the camera, putting the darkness away from her.

Figure 11- Boat House Amsterdam



Figure 12- Rebecca in Boat House



Figure 13- Exterior house boat



When Rebecca spends an afternoon wandering around Amsterdam, she ends up falling in the canal. A stranger jumps in after watching her fall in, and offers for her to come into his house boat to warm up and get dry clothes.

Paul and his team found a houseboat in Amsterdam to use for the exterior shots which is seen in figure 13 and built a set in London for the interior. They went on many different reccees of houseboats when they were filming on location in Amsterdam. Paul wanted the houseboat to be as believable as possible so they went to antique shops in Amsterdam and London to fill the space. They wanted the house to feel comfortable, homely, and vintage. Paul wanted Rebecca to feel safe even though she is in a complete strangers house. In this scene, Rebecca wears a pink dress, which is out of character as she often wears power suits in dark colours. The pink she is wearing pulls on the happiness and comfort she is feeling. Rebecca has a different side of herself during this episode, she is no longer the football club owner but someone who lives a mysterious life that can have an enjoyable evening with the stranger.

The interior of the space is created out of wood from the walls down to the chairs that they are sat on. The wood throughout the house adds to the vintage and cosy feel of the house and makes the house feel warmed and lived in. Wood is known as the “material that imposes simplicity and efficiency,” (Decathlon sustainability, 2024). The life that this stranger lives definitely runs along the lines of simplicity. He lives by himself in a houseboat and is willing to throw his phone away for someone he just met.

Paul Cripps’ production design for Ted Lasso is truly spectacular. The sets are fun and truly showing off each character in one way or another. The open spaces throughout the whole series brings together the idea of the openness of the team and what they really mean to one another. Paul Cripps and his team have worked so hard to create a place that Ted Lasso viewers would fall in love with and want to visit.

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