BECTU History Project

Interview no: 380

Interviewee: Julia Cave

Interviewer: Norman Swallow

No of tapes: 3

Duration: 247:11 Minutes

NB: The time codes given here are estimates based on readings from the original cassette recording.

Transcriber's note: the second of the two interviewers was not introduced and the questions from one in particular were hard to hear. This made it hard to attribute their questions accurately. All questions are therefore transcribed in the same italic font, with no distinction between the two interviewers.

Tape 1 Side A.

Begin, right, begin. Right, we're off are we?

Yes.

Right, okay

Yes.

Right.

So.

Yes.

Julia Cave, television producer, for a long, long time, and brilliantly. Okay Julia, let's go back to square one. Born when and where?

Oh right, I was...

Education and family, your father, mother and the lot.

Fine, alright. I was born on the 1st of June 1937 in The Forest of Dean, in Gloucestershire. My father was a mining engineer, and there was a colliery nearby. My mother had been in early films, in fact she played several parts in, in early films, and her name was Marjorie Lorring for those films.

Is that L-O-R-I-N-G?

L-O double R-I-N-G.

Double R?

And we left there when I was about two. My father then, War broke out shortly.

Ah.

Well when I was three I guess. And my father joined the Admiralty, so we, from then on, for the rest of my life, the rest of my childhood, moved around frequently, either every second or third year. So we started off in Scotland. My first, my first school was in Scotland, at a place called Beith, about sixteen miles outside Glasgow. I learned to read very early because my mother taught me, she believed in that. But after that my education was pretty chequered, having been to ten different schools. Shortly, immediately after the War, we moved. My father was sent out to India, where he was in charge of The Bombay Dockyard, and we went out on the first ship, *The Capetown Castle*, which went through The Suez Canal, and it was the very first time that I'd seen a banana because of course I'd been a wartime baby and I'd never seen anything like that before so, quite thrilled. At that stage I was reading Agatha Christie, I was really on to, sort of, grown up books fairly young, I think. And I really enjoyed those

thrillers on the boat out. Anyway we, we arrived in Bombay and I spent the next three years of my life there. Starting off at The Bombay High School, where I think I was probably the only European. Which was kind of interesting because it was the time of the Royal Indian Navy Mutiny, and the time of all the riots, before partition, and it was quite dangerous, we were in buses which were turned over and burnt on various occasions, and quite often we ended up sort of with guns around and my father had a gun. Anyway, so I was in The Bombay High School, and my parents decided that I shouldn't stay there in view of the unrest and possible racial tensions. I felt none of that, I must say, as a child. I didn't find, find that I was being victimised at all. So however, I was moved then to the, the sort of Army school, which was a much rougher place altogether, because it contained both sexes and, also it was the time when there was a lot of inter-marriage between the...

Yes.

Indians and British Service people. And there were a lot of Anglo Indian children at this school, and they were very disturbed because if they happened to have come out rather darker than some of the whites they were victimised quite definitely by the Army kids. And I remember being in a playground and having to fight the battle on behalf of a rather darker child who claimed to be Welsh. These kids obviously wanted to come back to England and be accepted as British. And so it was a time, very early on in my life of, I think, huge racial tensions, which I really had to come to understand. I don't know if that kind of thing is at all interesting.

[05:03]

Very interesting.

It is, yes, it is, I mean it follows on what you were...

Yes, because...

Saying...

Yes. I mean did, did you ever refer to it in your work, television work?

Probably not, only in an indirect way I suppose.

Yes, yes.

But I, I think, having been brought up in India was very formative, and I always liked, very much, working in The Far East, and in The East and...

Yes.

Once written up on the board in the manager's office was 'Julia Cave gone East'. I'd been back for quite a while but I think they'd failed to notice.

You'd gone, you'd gone back home?

Gone back.

Yes. Sorry, continue, chronologically then.

Then, then, after the Army school.

And then what, yes?

After the Army school we came back and we went to Northern Ireland, where I was the only Protestant in a Catholic convent because the convent happened to be dead opposite to where we lived in a little place called Ballynahinch about twelve miles outside Belfast. And that's very interesting too, it was a terribly good school, and I really enjoyed that. But, I was saying the Rosary by the end of that stint, and almost became a Catholic. Then we, then we went to Portsmouth and another school. I'm skipping some of the schools.

Yes.

It gets really rather boring.

Yes.

And after that to Bath where I went to The Bath, City of Bath Girls' School it was, a rather boring place, which made you walk down one side of the corridor and you weren't allowed to speak. And, so, anyway, at that stage I particularly wanted to read English at Cambridge and that was really the way I was intending to go, but my father didn't really believe very strongly in education for girls, I think so he rather vetoed this idea. My mother, because she cared very much about the theatre, and, and, and films and so on, had given me elocution lessons, so I did rather well at those and got a few gold medals and things, and thought that I wanted to be an actress. But there was clearly no way that that was going to happen immediately. So, anyway, I said to my parents that I really wanted to go and get a job, and so I went to do a secretarial course. So I actually got trained in shorthand and typing, which I still do rather badly, and bookkeeping.

Oh well.

Which I do even worse.

I was going to say which you do very well.

At that time my mother who had worked for Helena Glyn, and The Tiger Skin, which is how she ended up in films. Her daughter was Juliet Rhys-Williams, who was in fact a, a liberal member of parliament, and she was a governor of the BBC, at the time. And I went to see her and she gave me one of those rather wonderful white five pound notes, which have disappeared, and asked me what I wanted to do with my life. And I said, 'Well, I'm quite keen on being an actress'. I was quite keen on this and that, I liked literature and so on and she said, 'My dear you should join the BBC'. So I said, 'Oh, alright, well that seems to be reasonably close to the kind of ideas I have'. And she said, 'Well I'm a governor of the BBC, you get a form and I'll fill it in as a recommendation'. So she did. And so I went for my interview, wearing a hat, because I, because of the days in which you wore hats, these interviews.

At the BBC especially?

For the BBC, especially.

Do you remember who you saw?

I don't, but I remember it was somewhere like Egton House, I think, it was somewhere around Broadcasting House.

Is that the one with the dragons?

It was a dragon person.

Yes.

Certainly, but I, I wouldn't remember the name.

Yes.

You've come across these before?

Yes. Yvonne Littlewood.

She would have been to the same one, very likely.

Yes.

Very likely. Anyway, it was a dragon type, and we had our hats. Anyway I got in and they sent me off to an engineering department in radio. And, of course, I was pretty flummoxed.

Is that at Broadcasting House?

It was, no it was Egton or somewhere, it was one of those...

Yes, yes, yes, round the corner.

Beside.

Yes, just round the corner.

It was, yes it was one of them. And I hated it. I didn't understand what was going on, everything was done by initials, and, you know, 'Will you please send a memo to HEB2 something'. And you thought who are they talking about. I don't understand this jargon. And then you had to try and touch type, touch typing figures is very difficult.

[10:00]

Yes.

But it was all the engineering stuff, you see. And I was, I couldn't do this very well. And I was really quite deeply unhappy. Then I was sent off to another department, and I was sending memos, there were two men across the desk from each other, and I was sitting in the middle, and I was sending a memo from this one to that one. And I didn't think it was very sensible. And also, you know, I didn't think their grammar was very good either, so I corrected one of their memos.

Oh, oh very brave.

And they didn't like that either.

What, what departments, still in engineering was it?

It was something like engineering. And they had terrible yellow carbons you had to do for everything as well. It was pretty fiendish.

Could I interrupt by asking what, what year it is?

Well it must be ’55.

Yes. Okay. It's always useful to know, you know, year by year.

Close on ’56, because I can tell you why from… So anyway I went to whoever the dragon was and I said that really I hadn't come to the BBC, it was pretty arrogant stuff, I hadn't come to the BBC to be put in a backwater like this. I'd come to do broadcasting, that's what I was here for. I wasn't interested in yellow carbons and engineering and people sending memos across desks. Can you imagine? So she said, ‘Oh I see, bolshie are you’? So I said ‘Well I'm just not enjoying it very much’.

Yes.

I'm sure I was extremely polite. And she said ‘Right, I know where we’ll send you, we’ll send you to Arabic Music’. She said ‘There's a man there that nobody stays with for more than a week, Lionel Basri’.

Oh.

‘If you want to work in broadcasting, you go and try that’. So I said, ‘Thank you very much’, and off I went, and this was when the Arabic Service was at Oxford Street.

Yes, on the North side?

Yes.

Yes.

And I think they were on the second floor. And the rooms all had partitions, they didn't go up to the ceiling, so if you had a row or anything it was very, very public. And Lionel Basri was a rather volatile Iraqi Jew, who played the oud, which is an Arab...

Yes.

Guitar.

Yes.

Oh.

And he was a wonderful man, I liked him at once. Extremely temperamental, he shouted at me, quite immediately, but then I managed to shout back. So we did alright. But what happened was there was an absolutely enchanting man who tried, who, who wanted to be a doctor and had left Iraq, Iraq wasn't a very place to be for intellectuals, even then. And he was running the Arabic Music bit, which had all the cards filed, in alphabetical order, written in Arabic with, phonetically in English on the right hand side. So you had people like Abdal Wahhab and Um cum Sum [ph 13:11] and Farid al-Atrash, and Feruse, and Asmahan, and, and so on, and the names of the songs in phonetic English. And there was a woman called Miss Skelton, who actually had the records in their cases, in the little music library.

Yes.

Anyway I think I didn't do very well to start with, but, because I was frequently late in the morning, and that used to drive Mr Basri mad because he was frequently early. We used to have terrible rows, and he threw a typewriter at me once, and I threw a bottle of ink at him. But, then Miss Skelton left, and they asked me if I'd like to take over actually dishing out the records. So I said, yes please. And I'd learnt some of these names by heart, and I knew the record numbers, Caraphone HPC13 would have something like Farid al Atrash Alcabi [ph 13:59], which means the heart. And by this time, because I'd been brought up in India, I was quite conversant with quartertones and the music, I really enjoyed the music. So I'd been there about three months when came the crisis at The Suez Canal, 1956. And so most of the Arabic Service actually had to leave, and go home to Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Oh.

Because, otherwise they would have been considered to be traitors. So at this point, at the same point as that, the BBC decided to step up their Arabic Service broadcasts, because it was really important to get as much news across to the Arab world as possible. So they tripled the hours at the time when most of the staff had left. So it ended up with Lionel Basri, myself and Nyeem, not Nyeem, the, the other music section man, I'll remember his name anyway in a moment, and one or two others who'd stayed on, trying to run the whole Arabic Service so we were up night and day. And I learnt a lot, very quickly, because I learnt, I mean at that stage we were having to copy actual discs, they were actually using big discs for sound and I had to learn the technical side of this very quickly. And Lionel Basri was very good at teaching me, he was absolutely wonderful, we became great friends, and he taught me everything. And started me off in, in this way, he taught me all the technical side of it, taught me about microphones, taught me how to do everything, taught me what was going on, taught me about the music. He was the most amazing and wonderful, benefactor, really.

[10:49]

Did the programmes come from Bush House by this time?

By this time, no, we, for the, for The Suez Crisis, we were still in Oxford Street.

Oxford Street, oh.

I think we were. We could check that, because it's my, I recall we were still...

We, we might.

In Oxford Street, and shortly after that we moved to Bush House. So that's really what gave me a start, because I was thrown in at the deep end during this time. And I really had to learn quite quickly what to do.

On a personal level where, where did you live at this time? Which area of London?

Oh, yes, I was living in Highgate.

Ah, ha.

With three other girls in a flat.

Not BBC girls?

Well one, one turned out to be a BBC girl, and she's now living in Chicago, we've remained friends all our lives. She's a musician. We had a pretty wild time in this flat, but...

No comment.

Oh extremely untidy and wild time, but, but fun.

Miss Leonard was the, was the...

Do you know that does ring a bell, I think it was Miss Leonard.

She's the dragon, yes.

That sounds right to me.

Yes. Miss Leonard.

It definitely sounds right, yes.

Anyway.

Yes , sorry, after The Suez crisis, you were still there?

After The Suez crisis we were still there, and then we moved, I think, to Bush House. And the Service expanded a bit more, and then it seemed to me that it should be time to kind of move on a bit, and I thought, the thing that what I thought I wanted to be was a studio manager. Because I'd been doing all this, I mean in the studio, and handing them discs and, and fiddling around with microphones and levels and things. So I applied, and I was given an interview in which, in those days you had, if you were going to be a studio manager in the Overseas Service, you had to read weather forecasts and megacycles and all those at endless length. So they gave me a huge reading...

Yes.

Test. And I don't think I did very well, anyway I didn't get it, to cut a long story short. And, about that time I met a man, and he, I was doing extra work to make, make some extra money in the news room at Bush House. You could go in in the evenings, because I was only paid six pounds a week, you know, for this. And, I'd forgotten about all that.

Yes. Yes, go on.

I started off, at the beginning of this, I was in a flat in Moor Street, behind Peter Jones, in a basement flat with an old friend of my aunt's, who was a deb., and she always had lots of money, and I was trying to live on six pounds, twelve and sixpence a week. And the rent was two pounds, ten. And so it really counted if you walked a bus stop, you know, because you could save a penny.

Yes.

I never had any money for lunch so I used to go to The Lyons Corner House for something which cost ninepence, and I remember fainting once, coming down the stairs carrying some records because I really was very short of food. I mean it was boiled eggs and, and the odd meat pie, I think it was, that I ate at The Lyons Corner House, very, very short of money indeed. So I went to earn some extra money in the

news room. And there I met a guy called Brian Robbins who later went into television, and he encouraged me, said this was the up and coming thing.

Yes. What was his job at the time?

Well, I'm trying to remember what Brian was doing then, he ended up at Alexander Palace.

Yes.

I think you may have known him.

I know the name, yes.

In, in News.

Ah, yes. Yes, yes. Right.

[20:00]

Anyway, what happened about a year after The Suez crisis, I went to live with Brian in Camden Town, and moved out of the Highgate place. And he encouraged me to go into television, and so I applied for a job in television. And I got a job as, what was then, the production secretary, it was called. And my first job was working on *This Is Your Life* with T. Leslie Jackson.

Oh yes.

Who died about six months ago, I think. A lovely man. And we worked in Hammersmith Grove.

Yes, I remember that I think.

And Jacko always had chips for lunch, he always had chips on his desk for lunch.

He was lucky to have lived so long.

Yes. Anyway we did *This Is Your Life*, with Eamonn Andrews, at The Television Theatre. And, of course, I was completely ignorant of everything, but I was very lucky again, because I was thrown in at the deep end, in the gallery and so on. But once I was asked to order, on the prop list. Leslie Jackson always had jokes with me, and he explained to me that on a prop list, if you had something that was practical it meant, really, it was kind of, looked like it.

Looked like it, yes.

If it was fully practical, it was sort of useable.

Yes.

But looked like it. And if it was fully, fully practical, it was the real thing. So anyway he asked me to order a fully, fully practical camel, and I said 'Do you really mean this'? And he said, 'Yes'. So I got a fully, fully practical camel. I rang the London Zoo and after a great deal of fiddling around we ended up leading a camel into The Television Theatre.

This is 'This Is Your Life', whose life was it?

It was one of the Goons.

Ah. That explains the camel.

I think it was Spike Milligan.

Yes. Sorry, can I go again and say what year are we in because...?

Well you see I'm very bad at years.

Ah.

So we're going to have to work this out. I should think...

We're in the late '50s are we?

We're in the late '50s.

Yes. I think this is The Light Entertainment Department, presumably?

It was The Light Entertainment Department, absolutely. So after the *This Is Your Life* experience then I went to work for Barry Lupino in Light Entertainment. Which was big musical things, with Eric Robinson's Orchestra and The Tiller Girls. And we did a George, the last George Formby show ever. We did two huge ones, I can't remember what they were, but they were live you see. And of course in those days the camera scripts were very perfunctory, if indeed there were any.

Yes.

And I was doing the gallery, and the way it was done that you just had pages for camera script, but you marked down your full cameras, but you, the way I did it was that when Barry chose a camera in the final camera rehearsal I wrote it down so that became the camera script. Do you remember that?

Yes. The timing must have been difficult?

It was quite nerve-wracking.

You know, I was going to ask you that, because you obviously got a schedule, I mean you got a, you start at such a time at night, you finish at such a time.

Oh absolutely.

And with all these, you know, the kind of ad hoc aspects.

It was very, very...

Very difficult...

Nerve-wracking.

For you to get it right, wasn't it?

Very.

You know, why didn't you overrun ten minutes every, every night, or whenever?

Well, of course, you know, this, this was another problem. But the, the first thing was that they expect, Barry expected me to, Lupino, expected me to know everything. He was pretty vague about things. So he said, 'Book the orchestra'. And I said, 'Well, how many'? And he said, 'Oh the same as usual'. So I rang up the booking clerk and I said 'Well what should I do, and what is the same as usual'? How many violins and so on, you see. Anyway so I booked the same as usual but what I didn't realise I'd booked them for the whole day. And I didn't realise you only had, on the rehearsal day you had a band call in the morning.

[25: 06]

Yes.

And Eric Robinson came up to me in the gallery, he said, 'Look darling, do you really mean us to be here all day'? And I said, 'Well I just did the same as usual'. And he said, 'We don't normally do this, you know, and you've booked us for the whole day'. So I felt really appalled that I'd made this mistake, I didn't do it again, it was a rather expensive mistake.

Did you get a screen credit in those days?

No, no.

No, no way?

Oh God no.

You would...

Absolutely…

You would now.

Out of the question, oh you would now. Oh, no, definitely not. You were definitely a minion.

Yes, yes.

And it was, so, I mean I, it was very, it was a very good way of learning.

Oh yes.

I mean you.

The best department to learn in really.

A very practical way isn't it?

Oh yes, and of course it was great fun really because, although it was nerve-racking, you met a lot of stars and so on, it's quite glamorous in its way. And, oh yes, I enjoyed it, immensely. So then what happened to me? How did I end up? I ended up working on *What's My Line?*, in this department.

Light Entertainment?

Yes, it was, it came under Light Entertainment, the quizzes must have done. There was something I did before that. *Ask Me Another*, I think it was *Ask Me Another*. It was just, but anyway...

Maybe, yes , never mind.

Just before the *What's My Line*? And I mean *What's My Line*? was also quite glamorous, all done in the Television Theatre, and with Barbara Kelly and Gilbert Harding, Isobel Barnett and Cyril… I think...

Fletcher?

Fletcher, at that stage. Anyway, at about that time, I met Willie Cave and, the story of my marriage to Willie Cave is something else, and I don't know if you really want to go into that but...

No, not really.

I wouldn't have thought so. So, anyway, I married him, and I decided at that time that I would leave the BBC and go to drama school. So I went to The Central School of Speech and Drama.

Oh, good. Did you like it?

Well I went as a mature student, you see I was twenty-one and I'd been through quite a lot. And although some of the others were almost my age I was sort of the oldest and the most, so it was kind of a, a slightly tricky situation, but it worked out fine in the end. Yes, I did enjoy it, immensely. And when I came out, having meant to work in the theatre, I did the Stage Management course, I didn't do, well what I did was, because I was a mature student, I did a bit of everything.

Yes, yes.

I did a bit of acting, I did a bit of the teaching course, I did a bit of stage management. So I, they sort of did a course specially for me, which was really very, very good of them. And it was very good indeed.

How long were you there? A couple of years?

Yes, a couple of years. And I'd sort of planned to work in the theatre when I came out, but it wasn't, there wasn't much work around and about that time John Warrington, who I'd worked with on...

Oh yes. Yes.

On this, on *What's My Line?* came to me and said 'What we really need is somebody like you on *What's My Line?*, who'll do research. Can you find the challengers for the jobs, and can you find the celebrities for us'? So I thought, okay, I'll go and do this. So back I came and, I think at that stage we were in Woodstock Grove, I'm pretty sure we were in Woodstock Grove.

Yes.

Yes, because The Television Centre was in the process of being built, absolutely. And don't ask me the year, must have been 60…, golly.

It was completed by the '60s, wasn't it Alan?

Yes.

Television Centre?

Sixty-one, Sixty-two.

Yes, I first had an, an office there myself.

Well I moved there fairly quickly into Scenery Block.

In the 1950's, because it was only an office, there were no studios then.

Right.

They came later.

There was, the Scenery Block was done.

Yes.

And the round bit wasn't, if I remember rightly.

I think that's right, yes.

Anyway, so I think it was Woodstock Grove and we were, anyway, so *What's My Line?* So I started finding the challengers and the celebrities.

Well tell us about that, I mean I wouldn't know, how the hell would you start finding them?

Well I was rather..

You had a few contacts?

[30:00]

I had a few contacts, of course you were inundated.

Oh yes.

By calls, from all the public relationships people.

Oh yes.

You know, Colgate toothpaste, for instance, can you get a toothpaste tube squeezer on. Or, but it was endless, you know, every company, you know, from toys to car makers. You know this man puts a gasket into a, anything for publicity. And of course I fell into this trap to begin with.

Well who wouldn't?

Of meeting the public relations, and being taken to really, really expensive lunches. You know, The Savoy, and, you know, do have a gin and tonic before and have a brandy after. Those were the days when you were allowed to drink at lunch time. You soon learned you couldn't though, I mean I did, I went through that for a bit and then I found it wasn't really working out. And of course what I had was Maurice Winnick.

Oh yes, yes.

Now Maurice Winnick was a great entrepreneur, and he owned the rights to *This Is Your Life* and *What's My Line?*

Oh.

And Maurice Winnick used to take me out to these very expensive lunches and try and find out what's going on. Actually, I rather liked Maurice. He was a great character.

I knew him as a band leader.

Did you?

Yes.

Well I never knew.

Gosh, by the time, he was a band leader.

Yes.

And he just left, stopped being a band leader when he sort of, somehow he got the rights for these quiz shows you see. Because they started off in America, both those shows.

That's right, yes. Goodman.

That's right.

Bound to be.

I'm sure it was Goodman.

What wasn't?

Yes.

Anyway, so there was Winnick on the side, and he always used to ring me up and try and glean who the challengers were this week to see if he approved of who the celebrity was you see. Part of this came about because John Warrington, it has to be said, spent a lot of time sailing around the Isle of Wight and not a great deal of time in the office.

That's right, yes.

So I did end up virtually having to run the show. And at that stage John Warrington was directing it, but I was finding all the challengers and the celebrities. And, okay, so, then we got a director, and I was doing all the, finding of challengers. Gilbert Harding died, and we did his obituary, film. That was the time of course, when it was all this rather huge Ampex tape.

Yes.

I think it was two inch with cement joins. And so I learnt about that and joined all that, it took ages editing things then.

Yes, yes.

My goodness. So we did his obituary and, and carried on with *What's My Line?* for a bit.

Let me stop you, let us stop you a second, on the Ampex was it difficult to, to start learning that? because there was nothing, nothing to see?

Oh no, there wasn't.

They did, they did...

I'm trying to remember what I'd done, you see, I...

Well didn't they have some, didn't they have a powder, where, where you could, something, and it was, put some powder on or something?

Yes, just hang about. They marked the cut with something.

Yes.

And then played it through, but very often it would jump. I'm just trying to remember what we, kind of been, yes. I just remember sitting for hours in the big Ampex thing looking at these and seeing, always they had to go back over the cuts to see if they'd worked. There may have been powder, somebody technical could tell you that, I can't remember exactly. But anyway we did all that on, on, on tape, the Gilbert Harding obituary. It was kind of sad. We were very fond of him.

Well he was certainly a character wasn't he?

He was certainly a character. I remember once doing a terrible thing to poor Gilbert, who liked to have a tot of whisky before going on. And there was always hospitality in the dressing rooms at, at The Television Theatre. And I had to open a bottle of whisky, and unfortunately I opened it by the cork and the whisky smashed on to the floor and went absolutely in rivers round Gilbert's feet, and he was very, very cross indeed. So we had to send the call boy out and buy another.

Get another one?

Bottle, quickly from The Bush Pub. But Gilbert was, Gilbert was interesting.

You did this for how long?

[35:00]

Oh then, I haven't quite finished with that.

Sorry, I beg your pardon.

Because then the, then the director, his name was Richard Evans.

Oh yes, yes, I remember Richard.

Well he did a lot of things with Disney.

Oh.

He did all the Disney programmes for Christmas. Was ill, and so they asked, John said 'Go and direct it', and I said 'I can't, I wouldn't have enough nerve'. And he said, 'This is your opportunity, if you don't take it I'll never forgive you'. So I did direct it and didn't make too big a mess of it. And from then on I directed *What's My Line?* so that was my first studio direction, studio directing job.

I hope you got paid for directing?

Oh I don't think so at all.

No? Not much, even now?

Well I was paid as a researcher.

Not paid as an acting director?

I don't think I was.

Dear me.

No.

No, no, you wouldn't.

But you didn't mind, because it was all good experience, you know.

Yes, that's right. Yes. Training.

It didn't seem to me to be...

Well you might have got a slight increase in your annual increment.

I might have done, but I was on contract.

Oh, well you wouldn't.

You see, from leaving the BBC...

Yes, that's right.

When I went to drama school I came back on contract.

Ah, ha.

So I was freelance. So, anyway, I directed that. And then I was offered a job by Brian Robbins, the man that I had lived with for a couple of years.

Yes.

Who was then working for children's programmes at Threshold House, and he was working on a series, he was producing a series for older children called *What's New?*

Oh yes, I remember that.

And *What's New?* was a weekly, half hour, magazine programme, done from the studio, with David Dimbleby and Polly Toynbee introducing it. And I think it was one of David Dimbleby's first jobs. Polly was married to Peter Dimmock then. And, why I wanted to do that was I that I thought I could get some film directing experience. Because that's what I hadn't done, I'd done all studio stuff up till now. And, on the principle you should only stay two years in whatever you're doing really at that stage and move on and learn something new, I joined *What's New?* And it was jolly interesting, because they had new, the Ford Cortina coming off the production line, they were new scientific things mostly but they could be almost anything. So I learnt a lot then. And I started to use film for the first time, 35 millimetre film it was.

Oh yes.

Of course.

Quite short reels, Alan? How long?

It depends, well it...

Ten minutes. I'm trying to remember now.

Is it really ten minutes?

No, no, no. Yes, it would be ten minutes, yes.

They were ten minutes.

I'm sorry, yes.

Yes. Curiously enough, the year before last I worked on 35mm again, because I was about the only person who knew how to do it.

Ah, ha.

35mm, yes.

And we were allowed, I remember making the most frightful mistakes, needless to say. We were allowed, Brian Robbins said, 'Go and film the chef at The Carlton House Hotel, making a Christmas cake'. A huge, because he was, made the biggest Christmas cake in England or something, or something. And 'I want a ten minute item, and you've got two reels of film'. Well you can imagine that wasn't very easy.

No, no. I should imagine, no..

Because the continuity keeps changing when you're mixing Christmas cake, and there's lots of ingredients to go in. Anyway, I went to see Mr. Eels, his name was Mr. Eels and he worked in the kitchen there, and I said I was coming on Wednesday, which was the day, 'What day do you mix your cake'? And he said 'Wednesday'. So 'Okay, we'll come in at nine o'clock in the morning and we'll film you between nine and twelve when you mix and that will be fine. And I want to know exactly what you do so I can think about how to do this, because I haven't got very much film to do it on'. So he sort of showed me roughly what he was going to do. So I arrived with the camera crew on the Wednesday morning at nine o'clock with the lights, and the camera crew and the camera and the two rolls of film and everything, and I said 'Right Mr. Eels, get ready to film this', and he said 'Oh I mixed the cake yesterday'.

[40:00]

[Laughter]

So I said ‘Well, oh dear, we’d better, we’d better simulate mixing another one, you better get all these ingredients out again and we’ll make a smaller one and then I’ll show the big one in that vat over there where it is and then you can bake that you see’, all with two reels of film, two rolls of film I should say. Anyway, finally he did put out all these little dishes of, of currants and sultanas and orange peel and all the things that go into a Christmas cake. He did it, it became extremely erratic because at about this point he opened his cabinet where the, all the little liqueurs are and handed round little glasses of liqueurs to the camera crew and tipped a few back himself. And I tried to stop this happening, all to no avail. Things got slightly wild in there and, trying to get the continuity right was very difficult. And by, by twelve o'clock Mr. Eels said ‘I've got to stop now, because I've got to serve the Rib Room, it's puddings and desserts’. And I said ‘You can't, you can't stop now, in the middle of this, I said ‘I’ll go and get the lighting man to serve the Rib Room’.

Pretty good.

So the Rib Room were getting their puddings served up by the lighting man of a BBC camera crew. Anyway, finally we, we got all that and managed to get home and I edited this, really very difficult things, it had masses of jump cuts in it, which I suppose, in those days, one noticed rather less than, than now. But it was a pretty fair lesson on how not to make films. Anyway, I did it.

It's the best way to learn.

Well, I suppose so, yes.

Do you remember who the crew were?

I'm afraid I don't.

No, right, anyway. I'm going to stop you there and make a note.

[End of Tape 1 Side A 0:41:57]

NB: The time codes given here are estimates based on readings from the original cassette recording.

Tape 1 Side B.

Julia, Julia Cave, Side Two.

Okay.

Okay, so I did about a year of working on *What's New?* and thoroughly enjoyed it, and learned a lot about film, which is what I'd set out to do. And about studio as well, and about scientists and so on, and about that time Tony Essex...

Yes.

Came and asked me if I would work on a series about The First World War, and my job was to be finding the veterans who'd fought in that War, for interview. There were to be twenty-six parts and I said why did he want me to do that, and he said he thought that I was probably good with people because I'd worked on *What's My Line?* which had been all sorts of different kinds of people from all over the place so, he thought perhaps I could find these First World War veterans. So I thought that sounded like a very exciting project and agreed that, yes I would. So I left *What's New?* to, to do that.

Is it the same department? Or was it Talks?

It was Talks.

Yes.

Under Graysford and Golding, yes.

Graysford and Golding, yes.

Who's he?

And, of course, this was to be a *Tonight* production, so it was Gordon Watkins, was in charge of it and… No Gordon Watkins and Tony Essex were in charge of The Great War bit, and Alistair Milne...

Yes.

Was, at that stage, the head of those sort of projects, and Graysford and Golding the heads of the department. I think you must have been there, Norman, at the time?

Yes.

However this, unfortunately, coincided with the break-up of my marriage to Willie Cave, so I was in a very distressed state of mind and I started out in this very distressed state of mind reading the letters from these First World War veterans. So the combination of this wasn't very good for me. But what had happened was that Tony Essex had advertised, or Tony and Gordon had advertised, for men and women who'd had to do with The First World War for any veterans to write in. So by the time I came on board there were three huge sacks of mail. And this was again back in Hammersmith Grove, my old stomping ground from *This Is Your Life*. So I opened the door on the first floor and saw these huge sacks of mail. Nobody had read them, nobody had unpacked these sacks, they'd come directly there. Now, the awful thing was that all these old boys had sent in their medals, they'd sent in their diaries, they'd sent in little things, little tobacco tins that had been given by, they'd sent in all, everything with these letters. And there was absolute horror that I saw this, and thought what are we going to do? And the first thing I did was I said, 'Okay we put a notice, "do not enter this room", and we sort this out'. And we try and sort it out, they were all jumbled up you see. We sort it out alphabetically and who has got everything, at least we acknowledge them and send back these things to begin with. And it was a huge job, let alone reading them and finding out who was *compos mentis* and so on, and whether they should be interviewed.

Yes.

And I mean at this stage, all I'd read was a couple of books on The First World War, you know, Barbara Tuchman's *Guns of August*, I think was one of the books I'd read. And I'm not an historian, and I was terrified, absolutely terrified. Anyway, we just sorted these out, we sat there and sorted it out, and I got an assistant, and the assistant was, and since has become famous in television too, Anne Paul.

Yes.

She's called Anne Paul now, but she was Anne Broadway. And together we managed to sort all these out, send back things. And then I decided the only one way, I couldn't possibly find out how to interview these people unless I spoke to them on the telephone first. Because you couldn't find out how they were going to be, it was pointless dragging them all the way up to London.

Yes.

So we sorted out the fields of war, whether it was The Somme, or Ypres, or Gallipoli, Passchendaele, whatever it was, whichever theatre of war it was. And went by, to some extent, the best handwriting, the most comprehensive accounts that we could think of and I picked out a batch of those on a fairly wide range of ranks and theatres of war and experience and sent them all letters asking them to telephone so that I could speak to each one on the phone and see how they sounded before bringing them up for an interview. So we did that, and it was fairly chaotic trying to talk to all these people on the telephone.

[05:23]

Did you have a sort of transmission date in advance? Or not?

I think we knew then that we were going to be the programme that would open BBC Two.

Ah.

Because we were.

So you had a date, therefore?

Yes, we had eighteen months, I think, from start to finish, to make these twenty-six films, which wasn't very long.

No.

So we all worked really very, very hard indeed. And I think Tony Essex would say to me at about nine o'clock at night 'Taking the day off'? if I went home then, and we worked all the weekends as well. Of course we were never paid overtime in those days either. But you never begrudged that.

No, no.

But I think that we all felt that we had a mission on that, on that programme, and that, you know, it wasn't about the hours you worked, it was about trying to represent what happened there, as best as we could, and as accurately as we could. So we, you know, we weren't there for the money, we were very committed. And, anyway I had my first batch of people up to interview them in S8 at Lime Grove. And I, I attempted to interview something like fifteen a day.

Oh God.

Tony Essex said I could do one every half hour. And I said, in the end, I said 'I think you'd better try this because I can't. I really can't do it'. And, I had Generals, and I had other ranks and then, you know, some of them were very old and didn't know how to get here and how to get back again, and it was, it was a mammoth job, it really was, and a quite distressing one. And I mean I had people who chased me round the room with imaginary bayonets and all kinds of very curious things went on. Anyway, Tony finally agreed that it was impossible. He tried it and he couldn't manage it either so we cut it down to...

Would you talk a little bit about...

Eight a day.

Would you talk a little bit about Tony?

Tony Essex?

Tony Essex? Yes, of course.

He was not an easy man.

He was a driven man.

Very.

He was a brilliant film editor on the, on the *Tonight* programme I think. And I learned a very great deal about him, from him, in the cutting room...

Yes.

Later, when I got to that stage, I can talk more about Tony Essex than I can here. At this point Tony Essex really didn't know what he wanted from these interviews. And he planned to interview them himself.

Ah, ha.

On film. I was doing the research and I was doing the, the bit in the, in the interview room before it got on to the filmed interviews, you see. So I was just finding them for him. It was, Tony was a very driven man, of course, he was a very strong Roman Catholic, and I think this showed in his work too. It was Tony Essex, I have to say really who, who drove that series through because he understood about the film side of it. Gordon Watkins was in charge of the scripts. Gordon really never comprehended

the film side of, of, of what was going on there at all. He dealt with the writers. And thereby hangs a lot of tales, really. There was a lot of unrest, and nobody really quite knew what they were doing and sort of nervous breakdowns every five minutes, yes. Gordon always meant extremely well but ended up sometimes confusing issues I think. I hope I'm not being cruel to Gordon.

No. Not at all.

And I loved Gordon.

It's understandable, yes, exactly. A very difficult assignment.

A very difficult assignment.

In fact the whole series was difficult, wasn't it?

Yes it was, most.

Not just your part in it?

Oh, no, no, oh no, the whole thing, and I don't think the, I mean the BBC had never made a major series of this kind before, anyway, had they?

No.

No.

I mean I think it was the first of this kind...

I think so.

Of series ever made for television. So it was, it was a one, you know, a, a first, so everybody was finding their way on it, and it was hugely difficult to do. I respect

Tony immensely for putting that series, but I respect Gordon as well, but I think it was Tony that drove it.

[10:04]

Yes.

Up to its...

Yes.

Ultimate conclusion.

Which was a good one, wasn't it?

Which was a good one, highly acclaimed.

He, he couldn't take no.

No. Anyway I continued interviewing these, these old boys. And then Tony did a session interviewing them in the studio for, for a bit. Oh what we did is we had a stage at Ealing, and I was to interview, Tony started off doing it and then sort of gave up on it and handed it to me, interview on film, eight a day, on film for two weeks.

Yes.

So we had a stage at Ealing and we had back projection, in which we blew up a big photo of wherever it was, be it Gallipoli or be it The Somme or Passchendaele, or whatever it was, an appropriate picture behind the interviewee. And I sat in complete darkness and asked the questions. And we filmed that on 16mm and blew it up to thirty-five, so it would have that grainy look that the rest of the films would have. All the archive being on 35mm, that it would fit in better. And we lit it very much from the front, with very little back lighting, so that it would stand out less.

Yes.

From the rest of the archive footage.

Very important breakthrough.

Yes.

Isn't it, really, in many ways.

Yes, it is, yes.

Well of course, you realise that the thirty-five millimetre footage then, because it had been filmed on a clockwork Caro was running at all sorts of different speeds.

And some of it all wasn't even clockwork.

Yes, some of it wasn't even clockwork, so I mean it had to go to Kay's, it was Kays' labs who had to step print it, you know, every second frame again, or whatever it was. And of course it was erratic, so I mean...

Yes.

It still came out, but by trying to slow it down I think it was also a very excellent thing, and I think there's no excuse now, when I see archive footage running at the wrong speed.

Yes.

It's lazy.

Yes. It is, yes.

Because all you've got to do now is put it on to variable speed, telecine, and put it on to tape, and it's, it's a piece of cake.

Yes. That's right, yes.

But what we had to do then was really difficult.

Yes, oh yes.

Yes.

That's right, yes. It was a film job.

A major film job. So anyway the interviews were done on sixteen and blown up to fit in as best it could be and we did eight a day. And then I had to meet, in the evening, the eight that were being filmed the next day to work out their questions. So it was quite tough.

Yes. Did you have somebody, did you have a secretary to work with you on that? Or did you have to do all your own notes?

I did my own notes.

Really?

Yes. I did my own questions the night before after I'd done the dinner with them.

Yes.

And then got up early and then went in and did four in the morning and four in the afternoon.

Yes.

I mean, yes, from that point of view, the fewer people from the BBC, they meet and talk to the...

Yes.

Yes. The better.

I tell you the...

Where they'd be, wouldn't they?

Very interesting.

More relaxed.

I used, then I worked out that it was very good to have, say, if, if you were doing your eighth dinner at night, I would get a very big variety of people, but definitely a couple of officers.

Yes.

And it was all generally the Generals who sorted things out over the dinner. I mean it was very funny. But they took command of dinner usually which, it suited me just fine, because I had other things to do. And, actually it was a wonderful time. It really was a terrific time, it was extremely interesting and they were enchanting people, they were just lovely, with wonderful manners.

But where did you...?

And they were very nice to me.

Where did you have the dinner?

We had the dinner in this hotel, opposite the studios at Ealing.

What, The Red Lion?

No, not The Red Lion, that was a pub you see.

Yes.

There was a hotel, on the Green.

Oh yes, I remember, yes.

Now what was it called?

Oh I've forgotten, I know where you mean now.

It's still, it, it's expanded hugely, at that stage it was only a tiny hotel, we used to put them up there for the night.

Yes.

Have dinner with them.

Yes.

And then it was easy to get them across to studios in the morning.

Okay.

So mostly they stayed there overnight.

Yes, yes.

Very good. Fascinating, and then, as we say.

[15:00]

And then, next, after *The Great War*?

Well yes.

Or do you want me to go on a bit about *The Great War*?

Well...

As you wish, no, as you wish.

As you wish.

Well I didn't just film in England for *The Great War*, it was Germany and, and, and America. France.

Ah, ha.

All these old boys.

The first time you filmed abroad? Probably?

I think it was, yes.

Did you take a BBC crew, or were you picking up crews?

No, picked up crews. Had a German crew in Germany, a French in France and American in, in New York, yes.

Very good.

So about *The Great War,* I mean I'm sure there are other people who can tell you, there's probably, I don't know, probably a lot of people are dead, but.

I think they probably are.

Well, of course, one, various things happened in *The Great War*, I mean things got to be a bit panic station-ey, because we were editing right up to the last minute.

Yes.

And, of course, when you were dubbing, there was no rock and roll.

No, no.

So you had to get through ten minutes without a mistake.

Or go back after the dubbing again.

Or go back to the top, so it was very nerve-wracking as you got towards the end of your ten minutes. And if you look at *The Great War* now you will see that the effects became less and less, towards the end of the series, because things were getting backed up in such a way there was hardly any time to lay...

Yes.

Effects. So you'll find there's really rather more music towards the end, because there wasn't time for the effects and that definitely happened, and we couldn't just keep up with it very much. Well then I, I actually wrote and produced episode, I think it was Twenty-three, which was about Mesopotamia and Palestine. Or I was more involved in that one, I did research for the film and I virtually produced that particular episode of *The Great War*. Which was to have repercussions later because I got very interested in T.E. Lawrence.

Oh yes.

Yes.

Then. And although he played a very small part in that film I did, eventually, an hour and an half documentary for *Omnibus* on him and, and co-author a book with Malcolm Brown on T.E. Lawrence so that's when my interest started there. Anyway *The Great War* was my, sort of, seminal experience because I learnt a great deal in the cutting room, from Tony Essex, and from everybody there, and from the excellent editors. And the whole, the whole thing was a great experience for me. And of course we won, as a team, the BAFTA award.

Which year? Sorry, again the usual question.

Well, yes, I can't do years, you see...

Which year did you get the BAFTA award?

Well it, it, it's, it's on...

It's whatever year…

It's on, it's on the record anyway.

Whatever year BBC Two opened, ’64, ’65?

Yes.

Yes.

Was it ’65?

I think it was ’65.

Well it's, if, it's easily found.

Well it's ’64, ’65, I think.

Yes.

Yes.

Okay, so after the end of *The Great War* series I wanted to continue in Talks Department. So I had to go for a board, for a production, a P.A.

Mm, mm. Yes. P.A., yes.

Which I did get the job.

So I should think so.

I should think so too, after, after what you'd done already. It's a bit of a pre-motion, isn't it?

Yes. So that's really, and then I started doing other things, and one of the other things was that...

No, but...

Paul Johnstone.

Did you, did you go on to establishment then? Did, did you become a BBC staff?

No, I was still...

Freelance?

Freelance.

Okay.

No?

Yes, I was, I...

Even, even, sorry, even though you went through the procedure of a BBC board for...?

Well that's what confusing me mildly...

What looks like a permanent...

Now.

A permanent job, doesn't it?

Because I think I came on the staff when I got pregnant, thinking I better do something about this. I think I must have still been on contract, but it does sound curious, if I was a P.A.

[20:04]

Yes, it does, yes.

But to have a board, like that, and then be, and be on contract, it's surprising.

I was certainly on contract all through *The Great War*.

Yes , yes.

Oh yes, but after that, I mean.

Then, then, to go on to a board, which was going to be a permanent job.

Yes. I would have thought that one of the conditions of, would be if you won, if you won...

Anyway, I must...

You would be on the...

I think I must...

You'd be put on the staff.

Have been.

Yes.

Yes.

Anyway, various things to, to go through this reasonably quickly, is that Paul, oh good Lord, no. All those things I did with Paul Bonner, who was a great, great studio things with Paul Bonner, and, part, who edited *The Daily Mail* for a while, whose daughter is in radio?

Hardcastle?

Yes, absolutely. Well done, Hardcastle. We did some sort of issueD programmes with Hardcastle, I directed, studio directed.

This is before you meet, went to the board?

No, it's after the board.

After it, yes. Ah, ha.

So I worked with Paul Bonner, and I, I can't remember what the series was called now.

Right.

There are about eight of them. And Dennis Potter did one of them.

Oh.

I think it was one of the first television things he did. He wrote a script for one and that one, the subject of that one was satellite broadcasting or something. It was to do with the time when we were taking things from Telstar and stuff. But none of that's on here because it's...

No, no.

You know.

Yes.

Anyway, I worked with Dennis Potter. And we were told to water it down, because he was very critical of how that kind of international television would be used, and were we really doing it for the story, or are you doing it because it was there, and all sorts of things. And I remember it went up to the controllers and they asked us to water it down. Anyway, that was my meeting with Dennis Potter, who was about to, to, he was, he was, about the time when he was very, writing V*ote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton*, because he was trying to be a labour MP for Ealing, and he was living in Ealing. So I did studio direction and anything else that cropped up on those. Then Paul Johnstone came into my life, and that was very good. And I worked on *The Sky At Night*, with Patrick Moore.

Yes.

And I directed *The Sky At Night* in the studio. And generally sort of handled Patrick. I don't know if, you know, want any stories about that.

Well if…

Well, yes.

It's an interesting...

It would, yes , it, you'd have ,...

Nobody else has documented it.

On the whole you'd have enjoyed it, didn't you?

Oh yes, of course.

Well, exactly.

Nobody else has ever...

No, tell us something.

Well Patrick was a, is an extreme eccentric.

Oh yes.

So we had some very, very funny times with Patrick, and one of the funnier ones was he was living in Selsey, and *The Sky At Night* was live at this time, which was, I mean inconceivable today,because of the things that could go wrong. And we used to have a rehearsal with Patrick, and this was at Lime Grove, and Patrick would, you know, it was very difficult because it's, unless you really know what you're doing with astronomy you don't recognise exactly which way up a galaxy might be until Patrick comes in, although you might have arrows on the caption. So sometimes we'd have them the wrong way up and Patrick would come in and say 'You've got that the wrong way up', and he'd put it the right way up, and so on. Anyway, on this particular occasion we hadn't had a rehearsal with Patrick because he was late. And we couldn't find him anywhere.

Gosh.

And so it was going pretty nerve-wracking about, we'd done line up and everything else, and about half an hour before transmission Patrick, with his hair flowing and his eyebrows, and, and his eyebrows twitching, roared into the studio and said 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry', he said 'I'm terribly sorry'. And I said 'Okay Patrick, what happened'? He said 'My compass broke'. I said 'Patrick, what do you mean, your compass broke'? He said, 'I couldn't find my way, my compass broke'. I said 'But you've been driving from Selsey to Lime Grove for years'. He said, 'I've always come by compass'.

[25:00]

Oh no. Marvellous. Anyway, he made it.

He made it.

Very good.

So we had a few adventures, we really did, with Patrick. And scripts from Patrick were always immensely long, and once he sent a particularly long one and I said, 'Patrick, you're really going to have to cut this down'. And he said 'Don't worry, there's no need, I'll speak twice as fast'. And I said, 'Patrick, you already speak twice as fast as anybody else, you've really got to cut this down'.

Very good.

Anyway, he took a, after Patrick. Paul Johnstone was asked by David Attenborough, to start an archaeological programme called *Chronicle*. And I was around at the time.

David Attenborough was Controller Two?

David Attenborough was Controller Two by then, and, of course, Paul Johnstone had done some archaeological programmes, *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral,* with Mortimer Wheeler and Glyn Daniel and so Paul was asked to start these *Chronicle* programmes and he asked me if, if, if I would like to work on them. And I said I'd be delighted, but I knew absolutely nothing about archaeology. And he said, 'Don't worry, that's probably a good thing'. So I was, worked on the very first of these. So we had Glyn Daniel as our advisor. And the first one was about The Vikings, and The Vinland Map in fact. And, it was a studio based programme with Glyn Daniel, and Magnus Magnusson was one of the contributors to that. And I directed that in studio, and I did some filming for it. Paul and I went off to Scandinavia and did something to do with The Vinland Map, and, hence, started the archaeological programmes.

Was that the first 'Chronicle' ever?

Yes.

Oh.

It was.

It was a pioneering thing. You can say it, tell us a lot about 'Chronicle', but you may want to do it, bit by bit, as you go along?

Well I worked on *Chronicle* then...

I know you did, for a long time.

For the next ten years, really.

Well absolutely, yes.

So I mean, you know, there is, if you want things on *Chronicle,* there's probably quite a lot to be said. I've just briefly listed them there, but I have...

Yes.

Got another note, I've got some more here.

It's alright, no.

Again, nobody really has talked much about Paul Johnstone.

Ah, okay, right.

So, you tell us.

Well Paul Johnstone, I, I think I've had two real mentors in my life, one was Lionel Basri, in The Arabic Section, the other was Paul Johnstone. Actually I had, I had John Warrington on *What's My Line?* as well, so, I've been very lucky. I mean one of these, one of the things I would like to say is that the, that kind of bringing people on, encouragement, is something that, and, and teaching people what to do and letting you follow in their footsteps is something that was incredibly important in those days. And that I really don't think happens now. And I think people are thrown into the deep end without any training whatsoever. And I've been extremely lucky with, with the people I've worked for, they've always encouraged and helped me on. And I do kind of try and do that now myself, but it's been a great loss. Anyway, Paul taught me a great deal, and was very patient with me. He was an extremely sound and totally honest man. And after all he's had a, he was very important to television. He discovered some of these amazing characters and invented so many things, he, he started *The Sky At Night*, and discovered Patrick Moore. He started archaeology on television with *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*, and discovered Mortimer Wheeler, and Glyn Daniel and all those great names that we now think about. Paul was a very, very important figure in, in early Talks programmes. And it was sad that he died so young.

Yes.

But he was a great figure in that. I'm a huge admirer of Paul Johnstone's.

Yes. He was a dear.

Well especially 'Chronicle', of course.

And especially *Chronicle.*

And we associate the word 'Chronicle' with Paul Johnstone, vice versa, don't we?

Yes, of course.

Really?

Absolutely, yes, we do. So whilst I, I don't know how much you'd like me to talk about *Chronicle*, but I can talk about some of the early days.

[30:00]

Well it's an important series.

It is an important series.

In the history of television, isn't it? Well you've got a list of, here, of places.

Oh yes.

Egypt, Greece, Italy, Jordan, The Far East.

Well the early, early *Chronicles* we started off as being rather magazine'y, because none of us was sort of qualified as fifty minute film makers, really, I think. And gradually it came down to being more of a one subject programme. And, of course, those were the days of black and white.

Yes.

The first complete documentary I think, fifty minute documentary in, in the *Chronicle* series was one I did, with great trepidation, and it was about Heinrich Schliemann.

Oh.

Oh yes, yes.

And the treasure of Troy, and what had happened to it, because it disappeared in 1945 when the Russians entered Berlin. And I did this with Magnus Magnusson. And it was very interesting. It was done on a very low budget, so I had a Greek cameraman in Greece, Fasal Maros, and, recommended by Stephen Hurst.

Who, I think...

Still..

I think we know him, probably.

I don't, but you might know him.

Yes.

Fasal Maros.

Yes, Fasal Maros, M-A-R-O-S.

Yes.

Correct.

And I filmed in Berlin with, with Magnus, and we tried to find out what had happened to the treasure. And we got quite a long way down that line, in fact we were right all the way along, because it's just emerged that it was in fact taken by the Russians and has been hidden in The Pushkin Museum in Moscow ever since then. That's just

emerged again. So we did a sort of a detective story on that, and we filmed in Greece, and, it was rather a success.

Yes.

Although I didn't really understand very much about film making, and I didn't understand about neg cutting at all. And I remember we got, we were night and day editing in Soho and then the editor said 'We've got to get this neg cut', and I said, 'What's that'? And we were working on an old Moviola, you know those upright things?

Yes, yes.

Yes.

That would be near here wouldn't it?

It was, it was just across the road.

Ah.

Who was your editor? Do you remember?

Yes, across the road?

No.

No.

You mean Wardour Street?

It was across the road, Wardour Street, where I edited, yes. I've done a lot of editing off Wardour Street.

Probably, yes.

Anyway, so we, we rushed it to neg cutting and somehow we, somehow, got it on the air. And I remember it was just finished and I carried it with my hands to Telecine, like carrying a baby.

Yes.

And it did rather well, it, it got written up in the, in *The Mirror,* which was a major achievement, as a documentary.

I think 'Chronicle' was a marvellous series.

I think it was a marvellous series.

Yes.

And we had a lot of freedom, you see. We had a lot of freedom to do what we wanted if we came up with ideas.

Yes.

There weren't, it wasn't nearly so restrictive as it is now. I mean by the time it's been through about ten different people.

Yes.

To get permission to do something, the story is over.

Yes.

Who did you work to? Or rather, who did Paul work to?

David Attenborough.

Yes. Direct, yes.

Directly?

Direct yes.

Directly?

I think it was directly to David Attenborough.

Good.

And that worked very well, because there was a lot of support from David Attenborough.

Well they had a lot, a lot in common, those two.

Absolutely. Yes. Then we started doing single subject ones, and then very shortly after *Chronicle* came on the air we went into colour. And we did a, we were given a major colour exercise to do, which I directed the studio half at Lime Grove, and we had Judith Chalmers presenting that.

Yes.

Ah, ha

Yes.

And we had to have eye tests to see if we were colour blind or anything.

Really?

Yes.

Oh.

We did. And then, of course, we, when we started to work in colour, we were only allowed to print ten percent of it in colour.

Yes, yes.

So it was quite difficult to edit it then because of course you were meant, and you sort of tried to put the colour shots in, which was wrong, because you judged things wrongly, you know. But it was quite interesting. We had, by this time we'd got Ken Shepherd making films.

[35:00]

Yes.

Particularly history films. And he was working with John Julius Norwich.

Mm, mm. Two great names again.

Yes, absolutely. And I've got a feeling that their very first one, well amongst their films they did, they did one in South America. Ken did one in South America on the Mayas I think. They did films in Sicily, they did quite a few in Italy, and they did Constantinople.

Did you, you knew the studio side of it did you? Or is it or...?

Well I, I, at that stage I did most, whenever there was a magazine one I generally directed it, until David Collison came along and then he did some directing.

Oh yes , another name.

Another name. But I was the studio director and film maker.

Yes.

Of that one. There was Ray Sutcliffe, we had Ray Sutcliffe.

Yes.

On a series then and, anyway, so I did about ten years of making films and, oh, and one of the major series we did just after we got into colour was *Tutankhamun's Egypt.*

Oh yes.

To coincide with the exhibition, The Tutankhamun Exhibition at The British Museum. And we did thirteen, twenty part, twenty minute films on that, of which I did four. Paul Jordan did quite a lot of the others. And so I spent a lot of time in Egypt, one way and another, which was terrific, great. And then, in the end, I, I've made thirteen films in Egypt altogether. So *Chronicle* over the years, well there's such a lot to say about it I don't really know where to begin. And, we worked a lot in, we did quite a few story breaking ones, including one I did with Magnus, called *The Legend of Atlantis,* which was about, and I did also *The Last Days of Minos* with Crete, and the civilisation on Crete, and how it was probably destroyed by a tidal wave. Once, we discovered this new excavation on Santorini, that was a, a really interesting one, but we did a lot of ground breaking stories on, on *Chronicle*. And there's still a lot of people who can tell you about *Chronicle* because there's David Collison, of course is still around, and Ray Sutcliffe, who I think would be jolly interesting to talk to, and Paul Jordan.

Why not?

And unfortunately Paul Johnstone died.

Yes.

Had a heart attack, just at the time when I was actually moving over to work on *Omnibus*. Although I did go back later and do some other *Chronicles* for the subsequent editor, Bruce Norman.

Yes, well I was in the department at that time of course.

You were? So you can remember all this for me now.

Arts Features.

It was...

Yes , well I, yes, I mean I ran 'Omnibus' for three years, and then became head of the department for two and a half.

That's right.

Right. Okay.

Okay.

So Magnus Magnusson then?

Well it's, it's, it's about Magnus, and the film we were making about *The Legend of Atlantis*. And we were on the Isle of Santorini, which is a remote island in the Cyclades. I was three months pregnant by this time, and the only way up the, to the town at the top, the town called Fira at the top of the hill, is by donkey and steps. So we went up on that. Anyhow, we had a fairly hectic shooting schedule and we had to get off to Crete because we had to do some filming there, and Magnus had to get back to London, well sorry, to wherever he was going to, to do a live edition of *Mastermind*. So we were trying desperately to find a ship that would get us off. It was long before there were any, any aeroplanes going to Santorini. And we tried everything, including the local Greek millionaire, and asked if we could borrow his

yacht. What we didn't know was his yacht was a minor liner and when it came in the next day we were kind of ashamed when we saw this three funnel job in the harbour.

Right.

So we gave up on that and we, anyway, so we decided that we had to take the ferry, which was to come in at midnight. So Magnus and I went down on to the, on to the jetty at the front to wait for this ferry to come in, and it arrived very late. There was a Greek wedding going, taking place, at the time. And we were invited in to have a few ouzos, and everything got a bit wild, and we had a few ouzos. I didn't have very many because I was in fact pregnant.

[40:19]

Yes.

And, anyway, the ferry comes alongside and three rather elderly ladies come off, on a boat, and we're supposed to get on to their boat. Magnus, feeling a bit happy at this stage, takes their hats off their heads and throws them into the sea.

Oh dear.

And they're not frightfully amused by this. However we managed to get Magnus on board this, this boat, and the camera crew said, 'Well we don't want to sleep with Magnus, because he's obviously going to snore all night'. And I said, 'Well you've got to sleep with Magnus, I'm terribly sorry, because there's no other cabins, and I'll try and get Magnus a cup of coffee'. And Magnus said, yes, he wanted a cup of coffee. Well everybody had gone to bed on the ship, so I thought the only person to try and get this from is the Captain. So I knocked on the Captain's cabin door and I said, 'Can I, I hate to bother you, but is there any chance of a cup of coffee'? And he said 'Yes, I'll make you one'.

Ah.

And he did a wonderful Greek coffee.

Oh, right.

And I went back to Magnus with this wonderful Greek coffee and Magnus said, 'I only drink Nescafe'. I could have killed him. So anyway we got him into his cabin and on to his bunk, and I went to mine and we slept, and we got, end up at, in the morning at Crete and got him off and into a small car, and drove off to Heraklion, by which time Magnus looked pretty crumpled.

Yes.

But he only had one suit. And what we had to do that night was we had to film in the throne room at Knossos, and Magnus had to sit on a throne. And we had to run cables all the way from the street to this throne room. And so, finally, I managed to extract Magnus' only clothes from him to get them ironed, because I said 'You cannot sit on King Minos' throne in a crushed suit Magnus'.

Very good.

I think we'll stop there.

[End of Tape 1 Side B 0:42:32]

NB: The time codes given here are estimates based on readings from the original cassette recording.

Tape 2 Side A.

Julia Cave, Side Three.

Carry on chronologically.

Right ho.

Roughly.

Roughly? So that, that was quite a successful film, because it had some jolly exciting stories in it and Magnus was on peak form really. I mean Magnus was always extremely professional, he always did turn in a very good performance and always wrote very interestingly about what he was doing. Ah, there was one occasion where Magnus and I fell out very badly, and this was in Egypt. Neither of us had ever been to Egypt before and we were to do the opening of The Abu Simbel Temples, which had just been saved from the waters that had flooded the valley when the Aswan Dam was built. And Magnus and I set off for Egypt, we sent the camera crew on ahead, because this was an UNESCO project, and there's only small aeroplane that could go up The Nile and that was, wouldn't, wouldn't have been able to carry the heavy, the heavy camera gear. So the camera crew set off earlier with firm instructions that they were not to go into Cairo, but they were to stay overnight in the hotel at the airport, and then they had to fly to Aswan and they had to...

Yes.

Take a boat the next morning, which would get them to Abu Simbel, with their gear. So they were supposed to get there ahead of us. Magnus and I flew in and we were met by the UNESCO man off the plane at Cairo Airport and he said 'I'm very sorry to have to tell you but your crew is still here'. And I said, 'Oh dear, what happened'?

And he said, ‘Well your camera crew did not remain at the airport hotel, but went into Cairo’.

Oh.

They left their gear at the airport, having taken it through Customs and the next morning, when they came back, there was no Customs officers to check it back into Egypt again, so they missed their flight to Aswan and consequently missed the boat. There is no other boat therefore, they can't get to Abu Simbel. Now we were hurrying to do this Abu Simbel film because we only had to bring it back, edit it very quickly and get it on the air very quickly.

You had a transmission date?

We had a transmission date. So this was kind of nerve-wracking. So we checked out if there was anything else that could get the camera crew to Abu Simbel in time, and there was one sort of cattle boat, it was a camel boat really that was going up the river. So we managed to see them off on to the plane… No we, sorry, we all flew to Aswan. I saw them off on this frightful thing with one cabin, quite literally for every passenger, and everything had to take place in this one cabin, and they were going to be on it for forty-eight hours. We were not very conversant with the kind of heat you get in that part of the world. I bought them, asked me to buy them bars of chocolate, and I didn't think this was incredibly wise, however I did, and lots of water. So off they set. So Magnus and I waited for the small UNESCO plane, which was a one seat in front and a one behind. And the pilot of that looked at us with our luggage and said, ‘No chance’, he said ‘toothbrushes and change of clothing and that's it, that's all we can take’. So we set off for Abu Simbel. At that time it wasn't quite finished and this Egyptian pilot thought it would be amusing to me, Magnus was in the back, and Magnus always manages to sleep through absolutely everything, so he was sitting in the back asleep. And the pilot decided to show off to me. And he flew very low down the camel train to Wadi Halfa, and then shrieked up into the air again. And I was quite frightened but I had learned quickly that the only way to combat this was A: not to react and B: to look straight along the nose of the plane which looked higher than There were tips of the wings which were so close to the ground that it was tiresome.

Anyway, we arrived at Abu Simbel, he turned sharply left round, it missing the edge of The Temple by about an inch, I should think, and said 'My brakes are pulling to the left, don't worry about it', and landed in the sand. So we got out slightly shaken and find where we were going to sleep for the night, which was in, in my case, an archaeologist's hut, and in Magnus' case, another archaeologist's hut, where they'd put five beds, the camera crew would be coming there eventually. Magnus and I had to sort of write the script of what was going on, it was incredibly hot, it was 120 in the shade.

And, anyway, to cut a long story short, the crew arrived, very weary, very cross, very hot. We tried to get them a drip of water to, to wash themselves in, and we managed to get a little bit and we got something to eat and then we had to film very early the next morning.

[05:12]

*Mm, mm.*Magnus and I were fairly fraught by this time, because we were hot, it was very uncomfortable, we had very little water, and so on. We set off at five o'clock the next morning, stood in front of The Temple to do our piece to camera and so on, and the, the noise was horrendous because they had every drill going, they had tractors, they had everything because they hadn't finished, they were behind schedule, and we couldn't do pieces to camera with this racket going on. So every time we were going to do a piece to camera, I had to run around everybody trying to stop them, in Arabic, which was an absolute nightmare, because they were behind as well. Anyway, in the middle of all this, we'd done a couple of bits to camera and we'd done some shooting, and it was getting hotter and hotter. And I was in quite distress because I had camera tape over my nose and it was no good trying to wear a hat because there was, there was a breeze off the river and it just, you know, everything blew in every direction as well. In the middle of all this the UNESCO people came to us and said 'You've only got until two o'clock this afternoon, this is the last UNESCO flight to leave and if you're not on it you won't get out'. So we had to finish by two, we'd thought we'd have another night there so we really had to belt on. The camera got so hot we had a little white umbrella, but the sand just blew up so we couldn't do any more sync

shooting so we had to do a post sync idea, and put Magnus, so you couldn't see where his...

Yes.

Where he was speaking from. At this stage Magnus blew his top, and I, had a row with me about what he was supposed to say.

Right.

And I had a row with him. So we finished this, somehow or another, professionally, not speaking to each other. Got into this small aircraft, still not speaking to each other.

No.

Burnt to a frazzle, peeling and everything else, swollen legs, ankles, blisters in every direction. Got to Aswan, still not speaking to each other. I have a huge nosebleed, come back dripping blood, and Magnus is still not going to speak to me. Get to Cairo, where of course, we haven't got anywhere to stay because we weren't expecting to be back that night, and Cairo is always full, at least it was then. So finally I decided the only possible thing to do was to apologise to Magnus. I said 'Magnus, I'm terribly sorry, I shouldn't have shouted at you'. 'Oh it's, it's perfectly alright darling, don't worry'. Anyway, we did manage to find somewhere to stay but, and we did manage to get back with the film by the skin of our teeth, literally.

Yes.

And the crew had to wait for another slow boat to Aswan.

Who was the crew, by the way?

He was an ex-RAF pilot by the name of MacMillan, not, no, no.

Oh, not that one.

Not that one.

Oh, don't know very much on the other one.

No.

It's okay I know, I know him.

Old school, white gloves.

It sounds like Dave Prosser actually.

Well it wasn't, it was, it was, very similar to Prosser, because I can, I remember Dave Prosser from living in Corsica. Wonderful. Love Dave, really. 'Bread curls up in the Med, you know, we can't have a picnic here'.

Yes. I mean, looking back as a, as a, as a viewer, the quality of the photography et cetera in, in those programmes was, was really excellent.

Oh yes, it was.

Yes.

It was very good. Absolutely.

It probably still is if you look at it now.

On the whole I think it is.

Yes.

Yes.

That was 16 was it, or 35?

Oh no, that was 16 by then.

Yes.

Yes, yes, yes.

It was colour 16, oh we'd have had hell's own trying to taking a 35 millimetre camera up The Nile in that. You'd have, you couldn't have done it.

Yes.

Actually, you could not have done it.

Yes. Anyway.

With sound and everything, no.

So where do we go from here?

'Omnibus' now.

Is it?

Yes, isn't it Julia?

I think...

Well, well, sorry, always asking you this question, what, what year are we? Where, where are we?

I think that the Abu Simbel was '67 or '69.

I see, so we're, yes.

Yes.

But that's going… I mean I can look those up for you.

No, no, no, it's alright.

It doesn't matter really because they, you know, those are findable, findable.

Oh yes. Anyway, go on.

Okay. Well I think I'd done about ten years on *Chronicle*, so I'd seen a large amount of the world.

I assume you're on the staff by now?

I am on the staff.

Yes.

Oh good Lord, my personal life in the meantime, while I was on *Chronicle*, I married a doctor, of medicine, David Cooper, and had two children, during the course of all this. And, so I was on the staff then, certainly, as a staff producer.

[10:14]

Ah, ha, yes.

I became a staff producer at the age of twenty-nine. But you see that's why I think I wasn't on the staff because when I became pregnant with my eldest child, Miranda, I was twenty-nine and I applied for my own job as a producer then, and got taken on. I'd been producing *Chronicle*, oh thereby hangs a tale, I'd quite forgotten, and that is that, I wanted to come on the staff then so I wasn't on the staff, right?

Yes.

I wanted to come on the staff, I thought it was safer when I had, was going to have a child and so on. And I had been producing *Chronicles* for a number of years.

Yes.

Quite successfully. But I had to apply for my own job so I did. And I wrote the usual blurb about what I'd been doing and so on, and so on. Gordon Watkins was head of department then.

Oh, really?

And other people applied, naturally, it was advertised, as it has to be in the newspapers and so on, so I applied. Nothing happened and nothing happened. And eventually Gordon Watkins came to me and said 'I'm calling you in to tell you that you haven't got a board because this memo has come to me and it says a Mr. J. Cave, also applied for this job, but we did not think his qualifications were adequate'. Now I think that's actually quite important in this story.

Yes.

They hadn't recognised A: that I was a woman, or B: that I'd been doing this for a length of time. So actually Gordon vetoed that and said 'She has to have a board'. I had a Board and I got the job, and that's how I came on the staff, and I was twenty-nine years old when I was made a staff producer.

Okay.

So, sorry about the confusion earlier, I was trying to think...

No, no, no, no, no, no.

How I had a P.A. Board and not for the staff.

It's alright.

Somehow or other it, it was so.

Yes.

Yes. Interesting, yes, yes.

Anyway, so...

Yes.

Back to programme making.

Back to programme making. So I'd been on the staff and I'd worked on *Chronicle* for about ten years when I thought I should really get some kind of a change. And, in fact, what I was doing, working on at that time was a film with Kenneth Griffith.

Oh yes.

And I can tell you when this was, it was 1976, because it was about The War of Independence, and it was the 200th anniversary, 1776, and I was doing a film with Kenneth Griffith, the famous Griffith, who plays all the parts himself.

Yes.

And I was filming with… A famous cameraman.

Tubby Englander?

No, Tubby was pretty well retired by then. Tubby had done *Civilisation* a bit before that.

Not Ken, it wouldn't have been Ken Higgins, no, no, because he's features, features by then.

Philip Bonham-Carter.

Oh yes , yes.

Ah, ha.

And we did that together, and it was a sort of drama doc. And that gave, gave me another kind of interest, and it was very disciplined that, completely scripted, and it was very good for me because you had to think of absolutely every shot. I mean if, if he turned right at the end of a shot and you had to get him turning left, they all had to edit together. He walked out of one in one way, and into the other and another one.

Yes, yes.

So it was really disciplined film directing, in a way, which is, been most useful for me, afterwards.

Do you remember what it was called? The actual, the actual title of the film?

I think it was *1776*. No it wasn't, it was called, it was a quote from a Declaration of Independence.

Ah.

It was something, give me..., in the, it was *The Pursuit of Happiness*.

Oh dear.

Why not? Okay, and then?

[15:00]

Well on the back of that film, we ended up in New York for some filming with Kenneth Griffith, and Philip Bonham-Carter and I were walking through Central Park, and we looked at each other and we thought, there's a film here. And so, these were the days when you had an awful lot more freedom, and we decided that we'd do a couple of weekends shooting what was going on, all the amazing events that took place there, just off the cuff, and see what happened with it. It was in our free time, so we made this film *Central Park*, which was a huge success on *Omnibus*. Barry Gavin was the editor of *Omnibus* then. And it was one of those, just, no commentary, letting things happen, which I then eventually did a number of. Sort of the days before Molly Dineen really. We did *Central Park* and we did *Watching My Name Go By*, which was graffiti on the subway trains. And we just ran around everywhere with the camera, and I interviewed everybody, and we used that as voice over, you see, these little interviews.

Yes, yes, yes.

Off, off screen?

Oh, sometimes on and sometimes off. Yes.

Yes, yes, yes.

Yes.

Yes.

So we, and then I started to do quite a lot of those little films, which were great fun, and I did them directly for Controller One. I did *Oscars* in this country, and *Fairground* and...

Who was Controller One then? Do you remember?

Yes, it was the time of the guy who was in the Sports Department.

Brian Wenham?

No, after him, or before him, before him. He was only there briefly.

Okay.

Very briefly.

Right. You don't mean Dimmock, no?

Well I, I started off doing those for *Omnibus* and I did several of those little films.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

For *Omnibus,* which were, which were quite good fun. And then I, and I was doing them directly for the Controller, as well as doing other things.

Yes.

Because they were, sort of...

Yes.

Ones you knocked off cheaply, really, but were fun.

Fillers?

Oh a bit better than fillers.

Yes, yes.

But…

Yes.

Yes. Yes, and I can't remember his name, I'm so sorry.

It doesn't matter. I wasn't...

Oh, yes, I know

I wasn't with the BBC at the time, so I wouldn't know.

Red hair, red hair and a red hair in place.

No, it wasn't Ginger.

No, no, no, not Ginger, no.

You're thinking of Ginger.

Yes. No, anyway, sorry.

So I, I was doing all sorts of different things by now, but mostly it was *Omnibus's* I suppose. And of course, Paul Johnstone had died and, oh God, I'm having a day of forgetting names now, aren't I?

I mean, who took over from him?

Bruce Norman, it was Bruce Norman, took over from Paul Johnstone.

Yes, yes.

Ah, ha.

To continue with '*Chronicles'*a nd I did the odd one for him. I did *Mahindra Dari* [ph 18:33] with Colin Renfrew, for instance in Pakistan. And I did various things for him, I did *Omm Sety* in Egypt which was very popular, which was the old lady who believed that was in, reincarnated from the time of Sety the first, and lived in a temple, up the Nile. I did various things like that. And then another *Omnibus* I did was *Figaro in Peking*, which was two members of Glyndebourne, who went to teach the Chinese to sing *Figaro*, to sing Mozart. That was 1984. And that was incredibly interesting, just at the time when China was just beginning to open up.

That was good, you'd have enjoyed that?

Figaro in Peking? That was terrific.

Yes.

A month in Peking, it was...

I remember seeing it, I wondered if you liked it, doing it I mean?

Oh it was terrific, yes.

I'm sure.

Well it was so interesting, China then, I mean we, it was Peking in January and it was freezing cold, there were absolutely no tourists there in those days. And we stayed in The Hotel Peking, or Beijing as it now is.

Yes.

And we had two camera crews, and lights and we were working in the, in the Chinese Opera School, and the kids were so wonderful, they had such concentration of what

they were doing, and it was a terrific, terrifically exciting project that. And, of course, we were allowed to go into The Forbidden City when it was closed to the public.

[20:02]

Yes.

And film there, and it was completely empty, so that was, that was very exciting. That was, that was really good.

Was it an English camera crew? Or...?

Oh yes, no, we took, we took two English crews from Ealing, actually two and a, one and a half really, in a sense, we had two crews, one lighting man, two sound recordists. Because it was music...

Yes.

And it's very, it's impossible to edit music if you've only got one camera you see.

Right.

So we had an orchestra and, a Chinese orchestra to do. And of course, we had two people teaching in different directions, so we sometimes had two crews running at the same time in different rooms.

Yes, yes, yes.

As well.

Yes.

And I was running between them.

How long was the programme in the end? That one?

It was an hour I think.

Lovely.

Ah, ha. So we're now in, sort of '92 you said? 1992'ish.

No, that was 1984.

Oh sorry, oh.

The Peking one.

Ah, it was as long, oh sorry, as long ago as that?

I'm afraid so, we've got some way to go yet, that, that's...

No, no, I'm sorry, I just, my memory sort of made me think it was nearer than that, not, not, not worried about how far you've go to go.

No that, that, that was '84, the Peking one.

Oh.

And, yes, so, later on… Oh there's masses of things in between, which I've forgotten, of course but you probably don't.

Well, no, oh well, again thank you.

I'm sorry, I get very bored talking about these things, it has to be said. I'm not very good at going through my career.

Course you are.

Right. So ’84 was the...

‘The Figaro in Peking’.

The Figaro in Peking. And then I did some more work with Bruce Norman. He wanted, he was doing a series of… No, that's not right. I must have carried on *Chronicle*, with *Omnibus*. I was very keen on doing a film about T.E. Lawrence. Because, as I said earlier, I was interested in him because of working on *The Great War* series, earlier. And, I had been out in Jordan, making a film for *Chronicle* about the Roman archaeological site at Jerash. And while I was working on that some of the Embassy people took me out on picnic into the desert, and they, we went from Amman Railway Station, and we went in a very old train, which was lying around in the sidings. And they said, ‘Do you realise this is the same rolling stock that T.E. Lawrence used when he was fighting against the Turks in the First War’? And I said, ‘Good heavens, is it’? And so we rolled out into the desert for our picnic and stopped in the middle of nowhere and, and ate our food. And I suddenly thought, here I am, sitting on this train, and imaging the Turks coming over the hill, just as in David Lean’s film. And I think, I bet there's an anniversary of T.E. Lawrence coming up, why don't I put up this idea to do Lawrence to, to *Omnibus?* So I came back and I put it up and nobody’s actually, I have to say, terribly interested, then I found there was an anniversary and I jumped up and down for ages about it. And finally, Alan Yentob, was our head of department by this time. And finally Alan, Alan agreed, providing I could get money for a co-production out of the, out of the Arabs in Jordan. Now, I was in a very good way with the Arabs, because they loved the Jerash film and they'd shown it. And The Queen had visited Jordan, and they'd shown it there, and so they were rather well disposed to me. This was a very innocent film about their archaeological past, and they were very happy with that. They were never very keen on doing T.E. Lawrence, because his, his place in the Arab world is ambiguous. I mean, you know, he, in their eyes, had taken the credit for the Arab revolt, and so on. So, however I talked Jordan television into giving us, allowing us to A: make the film, and B: giving us some help with it, not in terms of cash, but in terms of providing free hotels and sport facilities.

Yes. I'm sure they did.

Facilities. And Jordan Airlines would fly us there.

Oh, well.

And we'd get transport, we'd get an interpreter, a fixer, and we'd get our hotels free, which was absolutely fine, that suited us down to the ground.

Sorted with the money.

Providing we presented the Arab view, which was fine because we had to do an interview with an excellent historian, Mr. Mousa, who had written a book about the Arab revolt, from the Arab view. And so we were going to do, in any case do a long interview with him, and we were looking for archive footage and photos from them. So it was great. So we set off to make this film and it was very exciting because we were in Aqaba we were in Wadi Rum, which is the, the great area that T.E. describes in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, and we drove through that. I had *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* on my knee with all my, the passages annotated, checking his descriptions so we could manage to film them to match the quotes from the book. And that was terrific, and we had some real adventures. And Abu Tayi, who is the Arab chieftain who appears in *Seven Pillars* his, it's not Abu Tayi, it's...

[26:01]

Oh well.

The chap played in the David Lean film by Omar Sharif.

Oh, oh my. Yes, I remember, I remember the film and the part, but I can't remember the name yet.

You will.

Yes, yes.

I can't remember the name.

This wonderful leader, you see.

Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Of the revolt.

I know who you mean, but I just can't get the name right.

Yes.

Anyway.

Anyway, his son was still alive, and we managed to achieve an interview with him. And we went to his Bedouin tent in the desert, which was really more, still...

Yes.

Shaped, completely as a tent, with these huge throne like chairs around it. I had a wonderful time, with a real Arab feast there.

Yes.

Sheep's eyes, and everything.

That figures, yes.

And got this really excellent interview with him. So we had a very interesting time in the desert, making that film. But I did come to the conclusion, on the way through this, that Lawrence had had rather more to do with the Arab revolt and the organisation than perhaps the Arabs thought or wished to believe.

Right.

So it became a rather…

Right.

Difficult situation...

Yes.

As to how one was, in fact, to present Lawrence, in the end. And I think that both sides of the case are true really, that both the Arabs and T.E. Lawrence had a fairly equal standing in this. But T.E. was definitely extremely influential in what went on. So, after, and I had enlisted Malcolm Brown's help making this film, because he'd made a very, an earlier film about T.E. Lawrence, which is mostly not the time in the desert but the time at home at Clouds Hill. So Malcolm came along to hold my hand, and was a really brilliant help. Then we were both asked to, by, by J.M. Dent, if we would write a short illustrated biography of T.E. Lawrence, so we did. So we then co-operated on this little book *A Touch of Genius*.

A very enjoyable book, if I dare say so.

Have you read it?

Mm.

Oh good.

It's selling well, or was, I mean?

It did terribly well.

Yes.

It sold ten thousand in...

Yes. Well..

Hardback and then it went into paperback.

Paperback, yes.

So that did pretty well.

However, continue your television career?

Ah well, television career? After, after that, that, I think probably the next thing I did was *Underwater Discoveries*, which Bruce Norman was doing, as a kind of archaeological series, as an offshoot from *Chronicle*. *Discoveries Underwater* it was called. And there were eight of those I think.

Ah.

And I did the one which was the treasure salvors in Key West in Florida. An excavation of a Spanish galleon, which was thirty miles out to sea.

Mm, mm.

And which contained gold and emeralds. It had been sunk in a hurricane and it was on its way back to Spain from, from Columbia. And the treasure salvors were kind of pirates who were excavating all this gold and silver, and it was quite an adventure story, and that was great fun, we were thirty miles out to sea, on bumpy roads, and I managed to dive, did some underwater swimming and diving, and came back with that, that story.

[30:08]

So after that, then I had a really interesting time doing an *Omnibus* in Moscow, which was *avant garde* artists, it was just about the time of the, of *Glasnost.* And the *avant garde* artists were just about being allowed an exhibition. So I went off to, to Moscow to make a film with them, that was extremely interesting, and they wonderful because they asked us to their homes, and I learnt a lot about that. And it was just really before the real sort of freedom started. It was very hard work and it was very difficult because there was practically no food. You've been to Russia.

Yes.

And it was at the time when...

It's the late '80s, or 18, or 1990, maybe, Glasnost.

It must have been.

Yes. About that time.

Yes.

'90, I think.

Yes, about '90

I think about '90.

Because I, yes, I last was there in '88 and it hadn't started then.

Right. So it was about, it was the beginnings of it really.

Yes.

So it was neither...

Yes.

One thing or the other.

No.

Quite. And the artists didn't quite know which way they were going to be going at all. And I had an interpreter who was really kind of unhelpful because she thought these people were really dirty and didn't really want to find them for me. So I had to, kind of, go out and do that. Yes. So, can I stop for a minute.

Yes.

I think, I'm sure there are other people who can do that.

Right, well.

Right. We're, you're going back to 'Chronicle', where are you going?

I'm going back to *Chronicle* because a part, during the time when I was making these films all over the world, like in, in Italy, Greece, Turkey and Egypt in particular, I became aware that there were a lot of undercurrent things going on in the archaeological world. There was a lot of smuggling and faking and so on. And I decided, at least Paul Johnstone encouraged me really, to try and do some films about that, some sort of undercover films. And, so I was really looking at the art market, and at how things got bought and sold and faked and smuggled and stolen and illegally excavated. And this became something that I continued doing throughout several years of working on *Chronicle*, because whenever I was in Egypt, I may have been doing a different story, but I would always manage to get an undercover story done on something else. And so I was always doing two things at the same time, or almost everywhere. They were not things that you could have gone, perhaps, openly into that country and done. But because you were there anyway, under the auspices of UNESCO maybe, or what the, whatever it was, you could manage to pick up another story that was going on and film that story on the way. And this, I think, perhaps, is

what I've enjoyed doing most, because I've done quite a lot of that later in life, quite a lot of art market stories and, and so on, and later I did two *Omnibus's* called *For Love or Money*, which grew directly out of these. So I was filming in Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Italy and The Far East for these undercover plunderers things, at the same time as I was doing the others. And I came across all kinds of extraordinary stories, one of them was the Euphronios Vase, which had been illegally excavated in, in Italy, smuggled out of the country, it was bought by The Metropolitan Museum in New York, and was put on display. And we did, I think, manage to find out where it had come from, which was presently being used as a wild boar farm, and filmed pieces there. But during the whole of that time I was doing these rather interesting stories with archaeologists and tomb robbers and going to sale rooms and finding out what was going on, and doing real exposé stories. And they were called *The Plunderers*.

You got away with it, to the extent there were no serious complaints, formal complaints, were there? And was the BBC in trouble?

[35:00]

Well, there was one occasion where Norton Simon, who was a famous collector, he's recently died, millionaire collector in Los Angeles, did an injunction about a story we were doing about the Nataraja, which was an Indian statue, which had been smuggled from a temple in India and which he, Norton Simon, had bought, I think knowing that it had been illegally smuggled out. And we couldn't use that story, and it later came out of course, it was illegally, but it was *sub judice*, that one. And I had followed it through the courts, and I hadn't quite realised that, well Norton Simon's lawyers are very smart. Oh, we had one or two very amazing things happen, and particularly with an, a half Egyptian dealer, who I saw two pictures on his, on his mantelpiece and they had indeed been illegally smuggled from a tomb, cut out of the tomb in Egypt, bought by him and he was trying to sell them at Christies and Christies discovered they were illegal. Anyway, a long story involved and we had them withdrawn from the sale. There were lots of very, quite dangerous things happened to us. And we had, for instance, three break-ins in, in Italy, and tapes were taken. And the most dramatic one really was we were filming tombs at a place called Cerveteri north of Rome, which

has Etruscan tombs and the Etruscan stuff was being illegally excavated by tomb robbers. And we had talked to the police around that.

Yes.

That *Carabinieri.*

Yes.

Into lending us their helicopter, police helicopter, to film over the scene and so on, and we were interviewing the police about what went on at Chevetari and so on. And the police and our camera car and our sound car, were all drawn up at a restaurant, at a place called Civitavecchia and when we came out we found that our camera material had been robbed from the boot of the car, both the sound and the cameras had been taken, then, of course, the police went berserk, because there we were at lunch with the police with the police car parked in the middle of us and we'd still been robbed. And it was perfectly clear to us that they, the *tombaroli* were really quite disturbed about what we were finding out because three break-ins on this story was too many. And the things they had taken, like the tapes, was too many. In fact the really major interview was not in the car, it was under my pillow in the hotel.

Good.

So they didn't get it. But we, we still managed, we got more cameras the next day, they were found thrown in a ditch by the way.

Yes, yes.

Oh.

And we got them back, somebody cycled by and found our carriers, they didn't want to steal that, they were just looking for the film and the tape.

Yes, yes, yes.

So we had a fair few encounters.

Yes.

Which were quite adventurous, on these stories.

So?

So, *The Plunderers* were. Okay, I think, so during the course of the *Chronicle* time I'd done a film with Magnus about The Elgin Marbles.

Yes.

And later on, during the time of *Omnibus*, in which they were doing magazine programmes again, and the editor of that was Christopher Martin, and Melina Mercouri was asking for the Marbles, the Parthenon Marbles as they are called by the Greeks, to go back to, to Greece. So Christopher suggested that I go and do an interview with Melina Mercouri, and that was a very amusing time. So Melina Mercouri is very cautious about how she's filmed with diffused light and so on. And of course, her husband being Jules Dassin, refers everything to him. Anyway, I flew out to, to Athens, and I was invited to dinner by Melina, and we had to do the filming the next morning with a cameraman, who she had suggested, who knew how to light her, I guess.

A Greek?

Greek. So I would just have the one night there and fly back and the next afternoon with the film. So, anyway, I arrived in Athens, I was supposed to be met by her secretary, wasn't at the airport, so I went to the hotel, and then there was a frantic phone call from the secretary saying 'Where are, you'? And I said, 'I'm here'. She said 'Miss Mercouri is expecting you for dinner, I'm sorry I wasn't there to meet you' and so on. I said, 'It's quite fine, I'll take a taxi to Melina's place'. So I went off there and when I arrived half the Greek Government was sitting round.

[40:20]

[Laughter]

In this huge apartment, overlooking the Lycabettus Hill. And, and Jules Dassin said ‘Hello’, and ‘how do you do’, he's a most charming man. And then Melina Mercouri came down the winding staircase with bare feet, and said ‘Hello darling, I am Melina Mercouri’. And I said, ‘How do you do, I'm Julia Cave’. And so we sat down, and she said, ‘How are we going to do this’? She said ‘My English is not so good’, and she wanted to do it in Greek, you see, which wasn't actually going to be much use to *Omnibus* or to me, it's kind of difficult for me to ask questions...

Yes.

In Greek. So first of all I had to persuade her that really it would be best done in English. And then she wanted to know precisely what the questions were and what the answers were, and she decided we had to write it all down.

Oh.

And that we had to completely rehearse the answers. And then she said what she wanted was auto-cue. So I thought, my God, the whole idea of doing this interview in her apartment, if she wants auto-cue, has gone completely out of the window. So I said, ‘Well that causes a little bit of a problem’, and I, I said, ‘so where do we get auto-cue’? And she said, ‘Here, we have auto-cue right here’, and she waved at the girl, it was all set up. And the auto-cue girl arrived, and the only place we could do it, in fact, was the news studio in the television building.

Yes.

So it was obvious we were going to have to do the interview there, which wasn't quite what I'd planned on doing, because I'd planned on doing Melina Mercouri talking...

At home?

At home, fairly off the cuff, which was completely blown. So we had to talk to the Greek Government about exactly what we were going to do, and then, then I said, 'So what is, what is the studio like that we're going to do this film in'? So they punched a button on their TV set, which came up with a black and white picture and they said, 'This is the studio', which was just aside from the news studio, you see, so, 'Fine, thank you very much, I, really, really clear on that'. Anyway, half the Greek Government sort of disappeared and Melina and I sat down for dinner, with Jules Dassin and we decided that, and, and, and the auto-cue girls sat in the corner, and we quite literally sat down and wrote the script of what she was going to say about the Parthenon Marbles. Luckily, I knew the story well enough, from having done the film with Magnus Magnusson on The Marbles, to be able to correct her, quite literally, on things that were inaccurate. Thank God I really knew what the argument was, because I didn't want her to look wrong either.

Right, stop.

[End of Tape 2 Side A 43:05]

NB: The time codes given here are estimates based on readings from the original cassette recording.

Tape 2 Side B.

Side, Julia Cave, Side Four.

Side Four, already? Yes, so, Melina Mercouri, Jules Dassin and I sat up half the night trying to write the script on The Elgin Marbles that, so that it could be put on auto-cue overnight and that we would film her in the morning at the news studio in Athens. So, rather tired and rather late I went to bed about five o'clock in the morning, got up again at eight, went round to the studio, nobody could find the key so it was absolute pandemonium. Finally we found the news studio, what's it got a scratch blue site. So I say to the cameraman, 'Okay, let's see if we can find something in your props room, we can't just do her behind this, with, with this behind, we've really got to find something'. Eventually we find a sort of blow up of the Parthenon, we found a table, a chair, and so we set up the whole thing, and finally she arrives, but she has to go into make-up for an hour. And we're all set up with our diffused lighting and all the rest of it and of course, she smokes like a chimney so every time the cigarette's stubbed out, get rid of the smoke in the air, and all the rest of it. Jules Dassin was sitting on my right. I mean can you imagine, having to try and deal with an interview with the, with Melina Mercouri with one of the great film directors in the world sitting on your right hand side. But he was terribly supportive, he was very good.

So he behaved himself, he didn't take over from you?

No, he was really good.

Oh good.

He was wonderful, and the auto-cue and all the rest of it. So we managed to get through it, and Melina was only allowed to be shot in mid-shot, you see, and so on. In the middle of this interview, a wild Greek woman burst into the studio and said, 'I am woman, you are woman, you help me'. And I said, 'But I'm just doing an interview

with Miss Mercouri'. And she said, 'I am news', so I said, 'Oh good', and she said, 'I want you on news'. I said, 'Okay, look, just stand in the corner there while I finish this interview with Melina Mercouri and I'll do an interview with you when I've finished here'. Anyway, we carried on with this interview, and Melina was really quite good. But every time she came to a note she said 'How was that Julia? And I would prod him and say, 'She's got to do it again, we've got to do it again'. '*C*an you do it again darling'? So we finally got to the end of this, and she was very good. And this wild woman came up to me, and she said, 'You have to go in the studio now and do this interview'. And Melina said to me, 'Darling, you can't go there looking like that, you need make-up, I'll lend you my make-up man'. So I said, Melina, I haven't got time for make-up, just, you know, okay put some rouge if I look this pale, I'm not surprised I'm pale'.

Yes.

So I was rushed into the Athens news studio to do an interview about the Parthenon Marbles, and what the British felt about it.

Okay, oh.

But I only had five minutes, because I had to get Melina up to the Acropolis before it closed. So then we rushed off in the car through Athens streets with Melina being stopped absolutely everywhere. And, you know, bowed, and her hand kissed, and so on, and we were rushing up to, to the Acropolis, because I wanted some film of her walking around.

Yes.

In her flowing clothes. So we got up there and, and she said to Jules, 'This is just like *Never on Sunday'*. So that was an *Omnibus* interview, which was done in something of a hurry and so I rushed back home and we edited that, and it was very good.

Yes. I remember enjoying it.

Because Melina was excellent.

I remember enjoying it.

Well she's so good.

Yes. I'll enjoy it more now after what you've just said. It looked so relaxed, to me.

Well...

There you are, you see.

She was relaxed.

Yes. Anyway.

So that's the history of the Marbles.

So thanks for that?

By Julia Cave.

And then?

In the meantime, for *Omnibus*, of course I'd done the, the continuation of *The Plunderers*, which was *For Love or Money*, which was...

Yes.

An exposé of the old master paintings market, and the contemporary art market, which I did with John Percival. So we did a lot of salerooms, and quite a lot of interesting exposé stories on, with Sotheby's and Christies. And I think those, those sort of started me, in a sense, on many of the ones I've done later, exposé stories, which I did for *The Late Show*.

What we used to call investigative journalism.

Investigative journalism, which, it's very difficult to do now. The reason why it was possible to do it then was that you were able to do two things at the same time. In other words, when I was working on *Chronicle*, when I was in those countries, I could do those stories at the same time without anybody interfering. Now, it would be virtually impossible by the way that the BBC is run, to be running two stories at the same time. And to be given that long to do it in.

[05:15]

Yes. Well because the, the Chronicle was your cover.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

Okay.

Yes. But I mean if you, if you want to, in fact I'm in the process of selling an art exposé story at the moment. And, of course, they want to know exactly what date, exactly how much money, exactly how much are they.

What? For the BBC?

Yes. And I can't do it that way.

No.

I cannot do it that way, they've either got to trust you and say, ‘Okay, it will be ready when it's ready’, because you're following all sorts of things around the place.

Yes.

Or you can't do it. But if they insist on this kind of behaviour, I mean I think true investigative journalism doesn't exist any more.

Yes.

I really don't think it does. And I think that's something we could come back to later about…

Yes.

What I, what I now feel about the state of the...

Yes. Sure, yes.

BBC and television.

Please.

Anyway, we'll, we'll, we'll, we'll skip that. And then, of course, I started doing quite a lot of, of architectural films, and that was because I did an *Arena,* with Richard Rogers, which Alan Yentob asked me to do for *Arena*, and it was a time when Alan Yentob was editor of Arena Films, and I got to know Richard Rogers through that, and we did the, it was called *Building for Change*.

Yes.

And, it was an early film about contemporary architecture really, which was the forerunner, I suppose, of the one I did later, called *Visions of...,* one of *The Visions of Britain,* which was Richard Rogers' answer to Prince Charles. We weren't to know what Prince Charles said, but we had to just do it from Richard's view, the question of modern work as opposed to looking to the past.

He was good to work with, Richard?

Richard is an absolutely enchanting man to work with, he is however dyslexic.

Oh really?

Which makes it kind of difficult. It's very hard for him, and he can't really string too many words together at the same time. And even recording commentary with him is very difficult, if you can get to the end of a sentence it's pretty good.

That's interesting, because as a, you know, as a mere viewer, I would never have thought that.

Well that's our job isn't it?

So he must, he must have, yes, conquered it.

Well we had to do it, yes. But you have to do it quite slowly with, and, and edit a great deal.

Sure, yes.

But, no, he's a delightful man, very interesting man to work with altogether. And we went back to Florence for *Visions of Britain*, and where he was born, he's got an Italian mother, and was very much influenced by Brunelleschi, the Florentine architect. So it was amazing, he's a classical architect in the contemporary sense, if you see what I mean.

Yes.

Good.

Any questions you want to ask about, oh, architecture?

I don't think so.

Probably not.

No, not really, I mean it's...

No.

It's difficult for us, you know, us to, to say, you know.

Carry on with your epic story, of yourself I mean, of your career.

Oh my career?

And what happened next?

Could we stop now?

Yes. We're running, right.

After doing *Visions of Britain,* it came time really for the opening of the Liverpool Tate Gallery, and I was asked to choose five of thirteen sculptors who were exhibiting there, British sculptors. And this was very interesting for me because I didn't really know anything at all about what was going on in British art at that time. I really didn't, hadn't heard of any British sculptors, apart from Henry Moore and so and, looked at the thirteen and chose five, and curiously enough four of those has since won The Turner Prize.

Ah.

So I must have put my pin in the right place. But it was very interesting, and I think, in a sense, it started me working really in a slightly different direction, away from

archaeology and, and history and architecture and looking more at what was going on in art at the moment.

[10:08]

Though, I've forgotten to tell you that Barry Gavin and I did a series of films on seven artists, seven contemporary artists and we did Lichtenstein and Rosenberg and so on, a bit earlier, so I'd got quite interested. And, anyway, I, I directed two of these films and, and series produced the five, and we did them quite quickly and The Liverpool Tate opened and it's, it's, you know, set me on a slightly different track, which ended up, I suppose, with me working on *The Late Show*.

Could we ask again, what year we're in?

I cannot do years. I mean it's a waste of breath for me to, dates and times, and, and years mean nothing.

Ah.

I'm just no use at it. I can just about tell you when I was born, I cannot tell you when my children were born. Believe it or not, I don't know their birth dates. I'm slightly dyslexic myself and I cannot do dates. So, I'll have a guess.

Ish, ish.

Ninety...

Five?

No, earlier.

Oh no. Early Nineties.

'93, '94, it is, I think.

No, it's earlier than that.

Is it?

Two, well.

It would be about ’92.

Okay.

’91, something like that. So I’ll have to look these up.

That's a right session.

So, I don't know, maybe I should leave *The Late S*how and all the things that happened around *The Late Show* and the new technology, as far as I was concerned, to a bit later. But I did work, for a time, on *Review*, which was the music and arts programme edited by John Archer, who is now in charge of Scotland, Glasgow. And, at that time I hadn't worked on tape, I'd only worked on film, and in the studio of course. So Beta, I had done an exercise...

Yes.

With Beta, and sort of vaguely knew how it, how it worked, and went in the deep end at it, really, because, of course, this is linear editing.

Yes.

So you have to think completely differently, but that's also, you know, that's gone in five years, the linear thinking. But I don't know if you really understand what I'm talking about here?

I know I don't, and I'm sure a lot of people listening to this won't know what you're talking about probably.

You don't either? Alright, well I might as well explain this then. With film, as you know, you divide it up into shots and so on, and you put it on a shelf or however you decide to break it down and edit it, so that you can join it up in any order. And then you can change that order around exactly as you wish.

Yes.

When you're filming on tape you cannot do this because the process of editing it is electronic, and it will not edit in a different order. So, short of changing your tape, you can only edit in one order. So you have to think exactly what shot you're going to put beside exactly which shot and get to the end of it...

Yes.

Before you start messing around with the middle.

Yes.

And then in order to mess around with the middle, you had to put it on to another tape...

Yes.

And start again.

Yes.

Each time you put it on to another tape you lose...

You degrade.

A grade. So you had to start thinking in a completely different way. Instead of thinking of stories in sequences, you've got to change your mind into thinking of it in, why it's called linear.

Yes.

And non-linear, because this is a linear thinking, and you can't change that thinking in your mind. So that became a completely different process of thinking. And I started doing that on *Late Review*, and it was very interesting, and the very first one I did, it was immensely complex, because it was one of my kind of exposing art story things, and it was The British Rail Pension Fund Sale at Sotheby's. I did have two cameras, but I couldn't change around what I was doing, I had to get it on the air that night and linear. So it actually had a major shake-up effect on me, like, you no longer had any time to think, you actually had to think out ahead of time exactly what you were going to do and go in there and do it. And I think that linear editing had an absolutely major impact on television - major. And lost, through, through this lost a lot of people who had been rather slow.

[15:08]

Yes.

And I don't mean slow, because it wasn't good. I mean that you had to think very fast and very differently.

Yes, yes.

Into compartments. And that, if you couldn't do that, you'd lost you, you know, it, it, it, it was a, it was a watershed.

Yes.

Actually.

I can see, yes, yes. I can understand that. I mean you make your mind and that's it, if you, if you don't make your mind up...

Fifty...

You've lost it.

Anyway, that's almost certainly over now, because within five years of that...

Yes, digital.

They now have, they now have different means of editing it. Not necessarily digital, that's, that's another matter, and that's not quite here yet. But you have things called Avid and Lightworks.

Yes.

Which are non linear. So that you can load it in, and you can move it around.

Yes.

In the way that you do film.

Yes.

But you don't actually physically come into contact with the film...

No, no.

So it's a whole different process again.

Yes.

But you can do it in your thinking way, in the way that you worked with film.

You only get the one degradation, really if you...

You don't get any.

Well, you must have something?

No, you don't get any, because if you go back to your original film...

Yes.

You're not getting a...

Oh, I see what you mean, yes.

A degrade. If your film, if you're shooting it on film...

Yes.

And then you load it into your Lightworks.

Yes.

The film remains exactly where it is in the lab...

Yes.

What you're loading is a picture...

Yes.

Which has been copied on to tape, into that. That's where you make your decisions.

Yes.

And then it, you'll go back to your original neg...

I see.

So it shouldn't have a degrade, a degrade...

I see, yes I see.

At all.

I see, I'm with you now, yes.

So it's, it's, it's another different structure thing, but, and you can think of it as you think of film. So all these things happen, and they happen so fast as, sort of, PCs, computers, happened so fast, and the amount of information coming at you is so fast that either you are going to be able to handle this in, in, in the world of television, or you weren't. And I think a lot of people just simply fell by the wayside, including editors who simply couldn't keep up with this at all.

Yes.

Because when you're editing now, you're not physically touching the film, you're working with a computer basically. And a lot of people find this deeply distressing.

Yes.

And I still find it quite deeply distressing, because I think that film is quite physical.

Yes.

But you, you just start to think in a different kind of a way.

It's a different mind, actually, really or, if, if....

Well, the difficulty is, what you want to do is retain the same mind and do it a different way.

Yes. That's right, yes. Makes it difficult.

Which is where it becomes a problem, because...

Schizophrenic.

What you're trying to do is achieve the same result in a different way.

Yes.

And the way in which you do it is sometimes, can be confusing. I'm not actually convinced that it's, that it's doing it any better, because what's actually happening is that films are coming out looking as if they've been cut on Lightworks.

Yes.

I mean I can look on the screen now and I can tell you whether it was cut in a cutting room, or on Lightworks.

Yes, yes.

Without a shadow of a doubt, I can tell you.

Yes. It's not really a clean cut, not really.

No, it's not to do with that, if you'll forgive me.

Well, well, not, I don't mean the clean cut, there is a proper cut.

Ah, no, because it's changing the rules. It's changing the grammar of what you're looking at.

Yes.

It's much more fundamental.

Yes.

What's happening is everything is faster.

Yes.

And, but there are very many more mixes because they're much easier to do.

Yes.

If you physically have to take out your film...

Yes.

And you're going to, you're going to edit it in such a way that you want to mix...

Yes.

And you count your frames in and out, it takes a while.

Yes.

Whereas, on a Lightworks machine, you just say I'll have a mix, and you do it. So what's happening is that people are a good deal quicker in their cuts, and lazier in their application. It's a whole different way of putting films together because it's a non-physical way. So the result is looking different. So when I say it's changing it, it's changing the way you are looking at it, it's changing the grammar of film.

Yes.

So it's fundamental.

Yes.

To how you would think a film should be. It's that much of a difference, it's, the technology is changing the product, which I actually think is really important because technology should be made to work for us, not the other way round.

Right. Yes.

[20:00]

But what it's doing, in television in particular, is that it's teaching, as your kids learn to work computers and learn to work their VHS, their, their video recorder very, very fast, this new generation is looking at the product in a different way, and we're making it in a different way. So that consequently what we have in the past looks incredibly old fashioned and became to look very old fashioned very, very, very quickly. So, with the new technology, which has really basically been the last five years, it's changed the face of television monumentally and very fast.

Yes. What you're saying...

I'm saying it's a total revolution.

Yes, yes. I think we, yes, we might, in fact, be interpreting it in an old fashioned way, some of us.

Yes. Yes, yes, I think so.

In other words we can't really say that's not really how I would have liked to have done it.

No.

But we should really say this is a revolution, it's quite different.

It is a revolution.

Therefore what, yes , the way I'm looking at it is perhaps wrong.

Well, absolutely, the revolution has taken place. The revolution happened in so many ways. And it happened, it literally has taken place in five years. And I think I was lucky to go to *The Late Show* at the time of this technological change, because I could look at things differently. And one of the first revolutions was really in graphics, and how it was shot, so that all, everything looks different, the way you're looking at something. I mean if you look at something that's even seven years ago you can see. The whole look, the whole image on the box is different now in that short space of time. So it's been an amazingly interesting time, and I think it's working itself out very well now, because I think we can, I think everybody can sort of handle it now. But it kind of, I think it kind of got rid of a lot of people who couldn't handle it. Not that I think I can handle it particularly well, but because I was lucky enough to go to *The Late Show*, it happened to me a little more gradually than it did to some.

But is the ultimate product on the screen any better for it?

I can't answer that.

Who can?

Yes, yes. Yes.

Probably not.

I mean this, and it...

I mean it depends what you think television should be doing doesn't it?

Yes, yes.

Is television for the viewers, or for you?

Or, yes, yes.

As practitioner in it.

Yes, yes.

You know, I mean my view of this is that most, most of the viewers prefer very old fashioned films because they've caught up with the, in their eyes, and we do something that we think, oh wow, that's just brilliant, you know. And all our colleagues will think, wow that's just brilliant, and it's not very successful as far as the viewers are concerned.

Is that certain, is there evidence of that?

I...

I mean that the viewer, in other words, is, has got front of the...

Is behind the times, yes, actually they are.

What with?

I mean don't you think they're bound to be?

Yes. But...

Well yes, I mean...

I mean if we're in, in, in making these things, it's, it's like art, isn't it?

Yes. Sure.

It's like anything, it's *avant garde*.

Yes.

It's going to take a hell of a long time to filter down. So I think that in the forefront of, of modern technology in television is not necessarily helpful to the viewers.

Right.

But they will catch up.

But, yes, but I mean this is...

Maybe?

There's, there's a new rate now coming on, you, you know, on, on ratios and things like this.

How do you mean ratios?

Well it's, yes the letterbox thing coming.

Oh that sort of ratio, as opposed to shooting ratio?

Yes.

Well that's, that's in. I mean, I, I think there's no question or shadow of a doubt that by the year 2000 everything will be in letterbox.

Yes.

Because that's high definition television isn't it? High definition can't be done any other way. The question is whether it will be on film or on Beta. Now if you read the Sony book on this, Morita Sony, you know, he is completely convinced that by the year 2000 there won't be any film left, because he says that you're going to be able to project tape, but you should speak to somebody else than me on this, this area.

Well yes, I was just wondering....

I was just studying something on Japan and I, I looked at this, and I wondered, the letterbox is going to be there to stay, for sure. I...

Do you find as, sorry, do you find as a programme maker that this worries you?

No, because my eyes already in.

And you're, you're going, exactly. but you're going...

In fact, yes.

You're going along with it.

Oh yes, definitely. I mean I've, I'm already seeing everything in that shape.

Well what do you do with the bit at the top and the bit at the bottom?

It's black, isn't it? But it's very useful for subtitles.

Yes.

That's, that's serious, subtitles and captions are perfect there.

[25:01]

Yes, yes.

But you have to think of everything in a different shape.

Yes.

But my mind's already gone to that, so I was consequently very frustrated by having to do *American Visions* in Super 6, in 16, instead of Super 16.

Yes, yes, yes. Yes.

And I, I see it like that now. Because I go to the cinema and I see it and I see things…

Sure.

That shape, and not square, you see.

Yes.

I think it's quite difficult for art, because they don't always come that shape, and so you do have a lot at the side. It's not what's at the top and the bottom, it's what's going to be at the sides that's the worry, I think.

Well it's, it's also what are you going to lose, on the sides? I mean...

Well are you going to lose anything on the sides?

Well you, when, well when you are in the, the top...

No, if...

I mean if you, if you do that to the classics, and start using the classics, what, what's going?

Are you talking about full Academy?

Yes, yes, yes. Any, you're going to lose an awful lot basically.

Well I, I don't see why you should lose anything at the top, or the bottom, because if you're going put it into that shape it's the sides you're going to lose some because you're making it longer.

Yes. Well yes, but...

You shouldn't lose any at the top.

It is, it well, if you use the Academy width...?

Yes.

The width of the letterbox, what's happened to the top and the bottom?

Well, they're going to be in the frame, aren't they? But you're going to have a lot at the sides, that's black.

Yes.

Anyway they fiddle about with this.

This is one of the troubles.

Yes. But I mean it's, it's here, and so we learnt to live with it.

Oh well.

We, we must cope.

We move on.

We've got to cope.

Yes, we'll argue about this for a long time.

Yes. Sorry, no.

Well I don't think there's an argument to be had.

Okay.

No.

It's happened.

Yes, it's happened.

Well, yes.

To be truthful.

Yes. Is, is it affecting your, your work? Creative...

Well no you see I haven't…

Creatively?

Right. I haven't worked in it yet and I would like to work in it. And so the next thing that I do, I plan to use digital Beta.

Right.

Digital Beta.

Yes.

Is the letterbox shape. It's also very fine quality.

Yes.

Do you want me to talk about tape and film at all?

Yes, yes.

Because it is interesting how it is changed my view.

Yes, yes.

Go on then.

And in that sense it's interesting.

Yes, yes.

Go on then.

Sure. Yes.

Please, please do.

It's important.

Well what I found when I went to *The Late Show* and it was all tape and I was used to working on film, was, that I thought oh God, what am I doing here. And I don't, because it was a linear editing...

Yes, yes.

I found it very difficult to put my mind into that. Also the cameras wouldn't do what I wanted them to do, because they're heavier and they're less well balanced...

Yes.

For hand holding in particular. And they seemed frightfully slow, because they've got the umbilical cord to the sound.

Yes.

So I found this deeply frustrating. The pluses of that were that if you were doing an interview where with film you knew that you had ten minutes…

Yes.

To do this in, and that it was costing you like £200 every ten minute roll of film. And you used to sit there with a sort of time and money clock going around in your head, at least with the Beta you had thirty-five minutes on that.

Yes.

So you didn't have to keep changing and interrupting people who are talking, which as, as you know, is kind of difficult in an interview...

Yes. Yes.

Especially in the middle of something and you have to stop. You had the advantage of thirty-five minutes on there, and it wasn't costing you anything more than twenty quid to do that in. Therefore, you had the benefit of doing interviews which were unrestricted, and cost less, really.

Yes.

You had, on the minus side, the fact that you had to wade through three times much more material and transcribe three times much more and make more decisions. But, it was much cheaper, there was no question about that. So for interviews, it seemed to me to be a major plus, without question. The disadvantage was the camera itself, and the fact that you're joined to the sound recordist when you want to go and be free and do something else. Now, the cameras are getting smaller, and better balanced, that's going to go away. They are going to find a way, and indeed it can be done, if you want, to separate the sound.

Yes.

From the camera, so that's not impossible. Then came the editing problem, the linear problem.

Yes.

That's now been resolved, because you edit your tape now in the same way that you edit your film, on a Lightworks or an Avid.

Yes.

So you're doing a non linear process putting that together, so you, that's resolved.

Yes.

Right. So you're left with why shoot on film? Sorry, and all.

Yes, yes, yes.

You're left with this major dilemma, okay it looks different.

[30:01]

Yes.

Yes it does.

Yes.

But on your television screen there you're going through electronic process anyway.

That's right.

I can find very little argument for film remaining on television, I'm sorry, because I'm a film person, but I can no longer find an argument to...

Yes, yes, yes.

Retain that.

Yes, yes.

Sure.

Yes, it, it looks, more or less, the same. More or less.

Well it looks better, now.

You could tell and I could tell but the public certainly couldn't.

Yes, that's right.

This is snobbism, beyond belief...

Yes. Yes.

So we are learning to work with this, with this, with tape. And I, I see very little reason to, to, to return to film. About the letterbox, I think we, our eyes will become

accustomed to it, and I'm sorry if it doesn't seem quite right to you, and it certainly didn't seem quite right to me to begin with either but I think...

Yes. Yes.

You know, digital Beta, the camera's smaller, and we're going to have to use it, and that's where we are.

We're stuck with it, as they say.

Yes.

That's what we're doing.

Yes, we're, again this is the, you know, the, the manufacturers wagging the, the dog.

It's not just that, it's the money wagging the dog.

For sure, that's right. Yes...

It's also...

It's all money in, in a sense.

It's, but I don't think it's as simple as that. I mean, yes, you could say that tape is obviously going to fight the film industry, yes.

Oh no, I wasn't thinking of that, no, I wasn't thinking of that. No, it's the, they, they need to get rid of, sell lots more sets, and this is the...

Oh you mean change, yes.

Yes. Very good reason for a change.

But high definition...

It's happening.

And, and digital is, is, is presenting this possibility as well.

Yes.

Yes.

So you have a double edged thing here.

For sure, yes.

Plus of course, the fact that you're getting rid of a lot of human beings.

Yes, yes.

I'm afraid.

Yes, yes.

Like you don't need an assistant cameraman, because nobody's got to load the camera for you so you've lost one of those. You need, of course, a lot less light.

Oh yes.

You don't need the laboratory. So, sadly, what you're actually doing is cutting a huge amount of staff, which is money in another direction.

Yes.

So on one hand you have the manufacturers who, who are making things, and they want to keep changing it, which is making money for them. On the other hand, you have the industry, television industry, which is trying to lose people.

Yes.

And both are coinciding in the middle.

And of course the budget is, is cheaper now, isn't it? Presumably?

We have less money, you mean?

No, I mean, sorry, making programmes the way you're talking about, tape or whatever, as against film is cheaper.

Well it will be cheaper, when they've really ironed that out, yes, of course.

Yes.

Because you don't need...

Must be?

To print it.

No.

And you don't need to process it.

No, that's right, no.

And you don't need to neg cut it.

That's right.

Yes.

I made, the first programme I ever made on tape, not the way you're talking, was in 1964, I remember, with my shooting ratio a hundred to one. And, of course, by the time it finished, gone, shooting ratio was almost one to one.

Yes.

And that's, yes , I'm going back thirty-two years.

Yes.

That was for Granada, not the BBC.

Anyway.

But that revolution has changed the way everybody thinks about everything.

Yes.

Now, what's actually happening, at the moment, is that not only do we work with tape and in a cutting room which is all with little screens...

Yes.

If you like, as opposed to, but I've much less time to think and less, much less staff. But we're about to be asked, and in fact it's coming in, to use our own cameras as well.

Ah, ha.

That's already started. I mean it started all, a couple of years ago on a couple of new channels which were the news gathering channels, so they...

Yes, yes, yes.

They sent, yes, but you present it, write it, interview it, and shoot it yourself.

Yes, yes.

And then you come back and edit it, so you're a sort of a one man band, rather like being a newspaper writer.

Yes.

Yes.

That's, that's it, you present it in the same way. Well that's beginning to happen also, not just in news gathering but in documentary film making. Two or three in music and arts have been asked to use their own cameras.

Really?

Yes.

Like what? I mean can you name one or two as a matter of...

Yes.

Historical interest?

There's a series called *One Foot in the Past*.

Yes.

Which is a sort of magazine programme. One or two of the directors on that are using their own cameras.

Every man is his own flair team.

[35:00]

Beta cameras. So it's, it's, it's getting to that point now.

As I said, every man his own flair team.

Oh that they were that talented, so...

Some may be.

Well you can't tell, but there's no training for them, you see.

None?

No.

No.

No, no.

You mean if you're a young up and coming director you're, you're thrown into it?

Yes.

That's right. Yes.

Dear me.

Yes, I can see it, we'll be seeing a lot of hose piping.

Well what they, you see, various things have happened, one is that the, on the magazine programmes, which are the ones that sort of train people in any way, because the turnover is so fast that people can go through this.

Yes.

It's like learning to be a film maker on *Tonight*.

Yes.

Which brought up Kevin Billington and John Schlesinger and Jack Gold, for instance, it was the same kind of set up. I mean you could equate, in a sense, the *Tonight* with *The Late Show*, where they'd brought people in to, you know, who are basically journalists or wherever they came from but they could do a story if you like. And they sort of learnt the techniques and came up through that. And I think *The Late Show* is rather good at that.

Yes, very good.

And it may well turn in some people who are, who are good, if you can call them film makers any more, or tape makers, or whatever you want to call them, anyway, let's call them documentary makers. So they came in and they were given a cameraman with a camera, with tape. Now, because it doesn't cost more than £20 to shoot off thirty-five minutes of it, there was no discipline.

Yes, that's right.

So they could go out with the cameraman, they could shoot endless amount of stuff. This endless amount of stuff, okay, takes a while to edit in the cutting room, but it is edited electronically and you sort of hope for the best. They had no training, and the other thing, of course, that with tape, you can freeze it.

Yes.

You can run it backwards, you can make it longer, you can make it shorter. You can run it at double speed, you can slow it down. So the discipline of film making, where you had to get your shot right...

Has gone.

Has gone. So the grammar, consequently, has gone. So why you're looking at different pictures on television now is because the grammar has changed, so that when you find that instead of a shot starting at the beginning and panning right and ending at the shot…

Yes.

You've mixed into the middle of it. That's partly because you may have found it doesn't fit what you want and you've speeded the shot up and mixed...

Right.

Into the middle of it. You can do all this kind of thing.

Yes, yes.

So it's changed absolutely immensely.

Are you enjoying it? Or is that not a fair question? You're learning to enjoy it?

I want warning of that.

Come back and tell us in a couple of years?

Yes, no I've done enough to know where I am on it now. I'm enjoying some of it, but I'm not, because I'm a bit classically minded as far as film making is concerned I don't like the lack of discipline.

Yes.

No. It makes them lazier, really.

And it's lazy you see.

And it's wasteful.

Well is it?

Not in money, not in money terms.

Well it has to be in the end, because the more you shoot the more you put into the edit so therefore the more time it takes, so in the end, it still wasteful.

Yes. And the human effort is wasteful.

Yes. But it's inevitable if there's no training.

Yes.

I mean what are you going to do when it doesn't cost you anything…

Yes, yes.

To shoot the extra tape?

Yes.

What it really means is presumably as a director you have, so less in your mind when you're beginning to shoot, than you did before.

It's less worked out.

Yes, exactly, yes.

That's right.

Shambolic sort of, maybe, maybe.

That's right, yes.

Could be?

Could be.

It is shambolic.

And so instead of working out what your interview is going to be...

Well there's nothing else.

Although there are occasions where you desperately want to go because you see the person is going to do better if they go on longer.

Yes, yes.

And you've had to stop before you can get to that.

Yes.

You know, you're not thinking through what you're trying to ask, you see.

I wasn't…

It, it becomes lazy.

Yes. I wasn't thinking entirely of interviews either. I was thinking of visual sequences.

Absolutely.

You know, which...

Oh no, you think well I can fix that.

You used to think of them...

In the end.

You used to think of them in advance.

Absolutely.

That's right.

And obviously your, your shooting ratio is not one to one, but it wouldn't be a hundred to one, like whatever it may be now, and you'd just do it now and then think afterwards.

Yes.

Which I am not sure is a good idea. But then I am biased.

Yes, yes.

Well we were brought up with this kind of discipline.

[40:02]

Well, yes.

Which, as I say, doesn't exist any more.

Yes. Right. I mean you'll shoot everything and say, 'Well that might be useful, and that might be useful'.

Yes. And, therefore, they give the cameraman a very hard time because they're not disciplined into the hours, and there's no unions, of course, anymore either.

No.

And people are so afraid of losing their jobs that they will go on with these young...

Yes.

Kids who don't know what they're doing, shoot this, shoot that, shoot the other thing.

Yes.

With no kind of discipline involved. And the cameramen bitterly resent this.

Yes.

But that's how it is, I guess.

And will be.

It can only get worse, in the sense that if they're asking directors to be their own cameramen as well. But it's a question of what you want from television. I mean if you're going to end up with a multitude of channels...

Yes.

Anything goes.

Yes.

Anything will go.

True.

I'm going to stop you on that one.

Oh.

[End of Tape 2 Side B 41:02]

NB: The time codes given here are estimates based on readings from the original cassette recording.

Tape 3 Side A

We're going, Julia, it's now five months since we did our last session. This is the 23rd of October. Much has happened.

Well we've had summer holidays.

Apart from that?

Right. Well just to begin with, there were a couple of names that I had, and that had slipped my memory on the last occasion, and I'd like to just put them down for the record. And one was a cameraman that was filming with Magnus Magnusson and myself at Abu Simbel, in 1967, I think it was, and his name was Ken Willicombe.

Oh yes.

I'm sure you remember him Alan?

Oh yes, I do, yes.

It was Ken, anyway. And, of course, the Controller of programmes, the Controller of BBC 1, whose name I forgot, because he wasn't one for very, very long, was Alan Hart.

Yes.

And we were all busily searching for that, and of course it came to me in the middle of the night, as these things do. Right, so five months on, well I've just completed a series, which is to start in November, with Robert Hughes, the Australian Art Critic, who lives in America, whose last major series was *Shock of the New*, for BBC in

1980. And, so I've been coming and going for about eighteen months between The States and, and the UK, and it's been a very, very interesting time. Anyway, I'll just continue for the time being from where I left off really, which is about what's going on.

Yes.

At the moment as I see it in the BBC, in the documentary section. I can't really talk about drama and light entertainment, but… I finished off last time by talking about the fact that some of the P.A.s, directors, researchers, whoever they may be, because what I also omitted to say is that they're definitely using cheap labour in the sense that if they can get a researcher and not pay them a director's fee to go out and do some work then they'll happily do so. And since I last spoke about it, this idea of sending out P.A.s, producers, whoever they may be, to work with small, portable, video, Sony cameras, has increased. And it seems to be relatively normal now, several programmes are being made in music and arts department, magazine type programmes still, yes, with this method. Now occasionally, if they've got a more serious thing to do they do put a cameraman in and give him this small portable camera.

Just a second, what about the sound?

Ah, the sound is very much in dispute. I'll just tell you a story of...

Yes, please.

What happened to me and my, my own simple knowledge of this, this is quite recent in that I went to go and look round at The Press Show of The Giacometti Exhibition at The Royal Academy. And there were various video cameras, no film cameras, of course, there, for various people. The smallest one there was a Sony, very small camera, and I can't remember its, its, its name but it is, costs about five thousand pounds.

Oh.

And I discovered then that it was a BBC camera and it was *The Late Show* , because in their late review on Thursday nights they were going to do an item on Giacometti. So I then said to the director, who is actually a researcher being used as a director, 'Can you tell me all about this'? And the chap who was using the camera at that stage was a BBC trainee. And he told me what he could do with this camera and what he couldn't do with the camera. It has a shortage of lenses, and so on. But, instead of dolly and tracks, they have, to fit this, they have a special steady cam attachment, which enables you to walk round with it and steadies it up a bit.

Yes

Because it's not a good shoulder camera.

No.

It's not got enough balance to be on a shoulder camera, so they put the steady cam bit on, and stick it on the shoulder. So this is obviously normal training now for trainees coming into the BBC. So he was doing a recce for the next day's shot, where they were actually going to use Tony Bragg, as a cameraman on this, but with this camera. So I asked about the sound. There seems to be a dispute about the sound.

Oh.

Now I said, 'Presumably you're not going to do the sound with the, with the microphone that's on the camera'. And they said, well no, on this occasion what they were planning to do was to have a separate sound recordist who would plug into this. But that Ealing had said that the sound that was on top of this camera, the microphone on top of this camera would be perfectly adequate. And I said, 'But that's a very wide angle microphone', which is basically what it is, you know, so you get everything that's going on.

[05:15]

Yes.

And that's what it's designed for.

And they make big sounds.

Anyway the, so the question that is in dispute at the moment is what is going to happen about the sound, basically, and I can't answer that yet.

You will.

I'll answer it in another five months' time, but I'm suspicious about the quality of the sound.

But that also follows over on to radio, doesn't it, as well?

Well, I think that, you see what they're trying to do is to make one man do all the jobs, and it's perfectly clear that you can't actually have a separate sound recordist, a separate cameraman and a separate interviewer if they've got three separate machines.

Yes.

So, basically, we're going to lose quality, I cannot see a way around this.

What, well I mean we know that staff is being chopped down, isn't it, in numbers?

Yes.

Almost every week or two.

Yes.

We hear about that.

Absolutely. I had lunch with a cameraman yesterday who I'll be working with next week who, we had this very discussion. And yet more people have been asked to leave. Film editors, of course, are sitting around not working, because with this portable camera situation it's also expected that the director will go back and edit it on a desktop editing machine. So we're now thinking of losing an assistant cameraman, a sound recordist, possibly a cameraman and a film editor. So that for this particular kind of programme you're going to have a one man band. I mean I, I say that this isn't happening consistently, all over the place, at the moment but it's obviously happening in news gathering type situations. So, I mean, a memo came round from Will Wyatt, about six months ago, saying that things had to get cheaper and that he was looking for ideas, which wouldn't of course, change the quality or anything of the production, but he was thinking of things being shot in people's offices. And also they are trying to use, for drama sets and so on, virtual reality. In other words, instead of building the set, you're going to use the virtual reality studios to do it with. At the moment that costs as much, I'm told...

Sure.

As building sets, but supposing it will get cheaper. I mean this is, this is a revolution in the sense that it happened so fast that nobody really understands quite what hit them. And it's been, since the introduction, really, of video recorders and tape cameras everything has moved so incredibly fast that I think that it's technology driven now, and not ideas driven, really.

Yes, the equipment manufacturers are a driving machine.

Well, to some extent they are. And I hear that with this particular Sony camera, which only cost five thousand, Sony is very cross because they made a sort of professional one at fifteen thousand but nobody wants to bother with it so this one's good enough. In fact, looking at it, the quality is very good. Of course it's a much smaller screen.

Yes.

But nevertheless, I mean if you don't take it down too many generations, and anyway it's digital you see, it's digital.

Yes.

Which means you don't take it down generations. In effect you will get quite a good result from it. And it's sad to say it but I think, I think a lot of the processes that we were used to in television on film and so on, simply be abandoned. Have been abandoned.

What ultimately matters, of course, is the end quality, isn't it?

What matters is the end.

I, I see personally, as a mere viewer, no great improvement lately.

There's a...

On the contrary.

Yes, I think if you look down the, the evening's viewing...

Yes.

On most nights, you won't find anything that's too unmissable.

No.

But then, I mean, I, I actually, I'm afraid that what I have to say is, and this may sound pessimistic or it may just mean that the world has changed so dramatically in the last ten years as far as technology is concerned, that television is no longer of great importance in our lives. That it's there. That we can tune into it when we want. Public service broadcasting, I consider, to be dead. I think that it's very difficult to define what public service, service broadcasting is, or was. But I think it went out of the

window when, when video recorders came in, because you could change the planned evening's viewing. It was no longer that you had no sex and swearing until after nine or any violence until after eleven, or whatever the rules were. But, now that you could video tape it, you could put it on at any time of the day or night and, you know, you could make your own programming. And when that happened, to a large extent, public service broadcasting was in any case over, I think.

[10:39]

It's also the competition isn't it?

The competition...

There are a number of channels you can switch on to, a lot of people can switch on to, not everybody, every night.

Yes, absolutely. Well there's, there will be five that everybody can switch on to by the end of March. And there will be something like three or four hundred by the end of the year.

Yes.

If you want to tune into cable or satellite.

And this does, inevitably, affect quality, doesn't it? Programme quality? It should not, maybe, but it does.

I think it's inevitable that it, that it does, yes.

But isn't it inevitable, and no matter, if you like, what the quality of the image is like, you cannot find sufficient new material to produce, put, put out.

Well you see...

There's a saturation point.

I think that's absolutely true Alan, and I think that when we started out we were incredibly lucky because we could do anything.

Yes, that's right.

Because nothing had been done. So I mean it was a wonderful field, an open field for us to absolutely do anything we wanted to in, and now we've, we've seen all that before.

Yes.

The trouble is we have seen it all before. And, I mean how you make it new, I mean I always think the national history programmes, somehow or other, they're always wonderful because...

Yes.

Although it may not be new, there are still bits and pieces, and ways of doing it.

And more, more, I get the impression, more and more of them now?

Yes.

On the main channels.

Yes. But they are absolutely wonderful and...

Yes.

New technology has helped them enormously, hasn't it?

Yes.

I mean that's benefitted immensely, you know, because you have infrared cameras, and you have...

Yes.

All kind of things that can...

Yes.

Go underwater. And tiny little lenses.

Yes.

And very long distance lenses, so new technology has actually made that part, I think, a whole pile better and easier for everybody.

Yes.

There are pluses, as well as minuses in this.

Yes.

And I just think that our whole way of life will be changed by the end of the century. And, you know, if, if, if you really actually think that you're going to have, in the end, one great control room in which everything will come through which...

It's already there.

You know, we, we, we, I guess we have to learn to think differently. As far as the BBC is concerned, I mean, I think it's valid to recognise that digital television is going to make a huge difference.

Yes.

And that something has to be done about that. That if we can't compete in that era we might as well be dead. However, I think that the difficulty is how to compete in it. Is it to have more, or is it to have less that are a quality? And I, I don't know what the answer is going to be on this in the end.

Who does?

Well it, it, yes , that's, well it's something to, you know, something to do with conservating a, a, an audience with, for want of a better word, with better values, or better taste for programmes. That's a silly way of putting it, but, it's...

Yes, but people are doing other things, you see.

Yes.

They're, they're working on their computers, they're on the net.

Yes.

Television isn't necessarily what a lot of them are doing.

No, no.

And young people don't watch television the same way they used to.

Yes, yes.

Old people watch television a lot, because they don't understand the new technology and the computers and so on. And the other things to go on your lap. The old people are the people who are watching it.

Yes.

Yes.

And I greatly suspect the young people go further and further away from it.

Yes. Yes.

True.

Also, with the revival of the cinema.

Yes.

People are going out more. I think our whole, our whole culture is changing in this sense.

Yes.

That's, that's actually my view. I don't think that the BBC will ever have enough money, although it looks like Birt will get the hundred pound licence fee, to compete with Sky ever again, as far as sport is concerned.

No.

And I think, you know, that if you can't contribute a huge amount of what the majority of the public want…

Yes.

Yes.

Then I don't see how we can continue for very much longer in this highly competitive field, although, I mean, you know, the, we are pretty competitive I guess.

[15:01]

So far.

So far. So I don't know what the future holds, the thing I think that has changed, as well as the culture, is the way that, I don't think I can call them staff anymore at the BBC, I'll say the people who work for the BBC think about it. I think what's really happened, there's a great deal of misery and unhappiness, and there's no doubt that there was a complete witch hunt for the last five years, so people who were going to argue with the new BBC were deliberately targeted, and got rid of. There's absolutely no doubt in my mind, whatsoever, that this has been very positive thinking. If you didn't go along with the new ideas you were thought to be a moaning Minnie and you just weren't given the work. Because you weren't given the work your morale declined to such an extent that, if you didn't resign, which was of course, the ideal solution because you hadn't had to get paid to leave. And I'm sorry, I really do believe this happened very positively, then, you know, you were persuaded to take redundancy. So what was left was a hard core of people who decided to fight that, and very few did, or those who just disappeared and did other things. A lot of them haven't worked again, some of them have worked for other companies. There's deep resentment in the BBC about this.

What about the effect of all this on programme quality?

Well, it's very difficult for me to judge programme quality in the sense that some things I think, have got better.

Like?

Like, like what?

I've seen some jolly good documentaries, as well as some jolly bad ones.

Yes.

And I mean I don't know if I should be talking across the board, or just about the BBC.

Well generally, really.

No, yes, in general terms?

What I, what I really would like to say, apart from, I'm not sure that I want to talk about quality because I'm not really quite…

Ah.

Sure what quality means.

Right. Yes.

What I would like to say, is that there an encroaching dishonesty.

Yes.

And that's what I don't like. I think what has actually happened is a loss of integrity, and a loss of, what I think is, the word *'*honour*'*. I think that the new BBC lacks both those qualities.

Yes.

Consequently in the programme making I'm sometimes worried by what I can see as a cheap and easy way of doing something. Or a misconstruction of something I can see is wrong, or in misinterpretation by deliberately mis-editing what some, somebody has said. And I'm afraid I think this is endemic, and I think it's endemic because people who didn't come up with the background, and I believe there was integrity and honesty and honour in the BBC, in the old BBC, have not had that training. They come in, they have short-term contracts, and they have to make their mark fast. They think that by making their mark fast they can skate through all those things that I think

matter in the integrity of making a programme. They treat people abominably. There is a shortage of staff so, of course, nobody writes letters of thank you anymore. Nobody even bothers to tell anybody when their programme's going to be shown. Nobody bothers...

Really?

To tell them if they've been left out, this doesn't happen anymore. So I think the relationship with the BBC and the public has to decline because of this. I also think that the honesty, which the BBC used to be able to emanate if you like, caused a certain kind of belief in politicians and anybody else that they would be fairly treated. Now I think the BBC is lumped with the rest of the media. And nothing special is given to the BBC anymore. Consequently, I think we're getting the same old stories that everybody else is, and that we're not trusted any more than any other medium. Any more than the tabloids, if you like.

But isn't, because, again a lot of this kind of political interference, not within the BBC, but without the BBC, outside the BBC?

[20:03]

Well...

I mean on, on the, the governors I mean.

I don't know, I'm not high enough up to answer exactly what goes on with the Board of Governors. There's always been political interference in a sense, hasn't there?

Yes.

Yes, yes.

Because I mean..

Oh yes.

Wilson interfered in the same way that, and I've met, you know, political appointment is Chairman of the Board of Governors, yes, and obviously Hussey was brought in to create, to do Margaret Thatcher's will which he had managed to do quite neatly I think. And that was endemic in the country anyway, I mean it was happening all over the country, wasn't it? She wanted to break this kind of, this kind of organisation, because she thought it was...

Subversive?

Sometimes.

Sometimes subversive. But then, you know, Wilson would have said exactly the same.

Yes.

About *Yesterday's Men*.

Well he did, he did.

If you remember and..

He, and, you know, very famous.

Angela Pope's on *Yesterday's Men*.

Yes.

Have you interviewed Angela Pope?

No.

Just a thought. She's got a feature film just starting at the moment.

Oh lovely. Point taken.

Anyway, I mean that kind of, that kind of accusation has taken place in politicians throughout the history of the BBC I think. And so I don't think that one can say that's worse now than it was then.

Yes.

Probably. I think what is worse, is Birt's interference, probably, although this is not for me to say with The World Service, although I did work for The World Service, so I suppose it is valid for me to discuss. And that is that, you know, he does not, it's not the BBC licence payer that pays for The World Service, it's independent.

Yes.

Therefore, I think what he's doing to it is, is, you know, kind of out of order.

Yes, yes.

So, sorry.

His politics in that are clearly..

Yes.

That he wants to achieve the hundred pounds licence, he's there to look to be saving money.

Yes.

In, by, but saving money isn't everything. I mean I, nobody has yet shown figures where it actually does save money.

Yes.

To change The World Service in this way, but I think we'll keep off that and stay with...

Yes. Well...

What I feel is now the lack of integrity.

Yes.

Endemic in the BBC, which means that it will lose the trust of the people who, who matter. Lose the trust of the public.

Yes.

So, some of the people I, you and I both know and work with, are still around in high office, aren't they. I mean I'm thinking, for example Will Wyatt and Alan Yentob, are two obvious people. I mean, you know, I certainly worked with both of them, and there they are, but, so what, apparently?

Terrible.

Both in positions of extremely high authority. And yet, dot, dot, dot.

If you work in a climate of fear it's extremely difficult to, to keep your integrity, it seems to me. I mean many people have failed to do so in times of war and in all kinds of times.

Yes.

And I really do see this as a situation of war in the BBC.

Oh. You mean a civil war?

Well it has been like The Civil War, I guess, you can say Birt has won.

Yes, yes. Yes. There's this, what was it with the, The Guardian said Birt Broadcasting Service.

Yes.

Corporation, rather.

Or company?

Yes, the Birt.

And a man, as a man of integrity, you know, he doesn't stand up very well, does he?

No, not really.

Apparently not.

Not really.

No, I knew him years ago as a researcher, he was at Granada, young Birt.

Yes but was he, what was he like then?

Well a promising young researcher I would say, yes. I wouldn't have said he would necessarily have got all that high. But I was wrong.

Well, you know, one, it's, the nicest people very often don't get to the top.

That's right.

And the other thing, you know, yes. Well obviously, you know, important to what, what we're talking about is, Julia is how all this has effected your own creative work? Because you're still working, indirectly perhaps, for the BBC. Your latest epic is going to be shown on the BBC, any day now.

Well how it's affected me is that, on matters that I don't really care too much about, if it's a transient thing I will probably give in.

Oh.

Well it's not worth the fight.

No, no. No, no. No.

I can quite often disagree artistically, because I have my particular kind of style, and very often, you know, it's overruled. Well if that happens and it's a short item, it's not the end of the world. If it's something on which my name is going to be...

[25:19]

Yes.

For some considerable time of the shelf life, I get slightly more positive about it. So I still fight, in fact I've just had a fight, so.

Did you win?

I won and lost, I've taken my name off it.

Oh dear.

Yes.

That's happened before mind you.

Yes.

Not necessarily with you but I can think of many cases, including myself once or twice.

Well, I'm afraid that's, that's what happened. So it was kind of quite traumatic.

Yes.

But it's very difficult, you see, when, when, when you're living, as I say, and it is a climate of fear, because everybody is on short term contracts and if they argue with the boss they do not get employed again.

Yes.

It's as simple as that. You have to be nice to everybody, you have to, 'Oh yes, jolly good idea', and do it. Because the whole ethos of this is not to have individuals making programmes, it's to commission what they want, done in their way.

Yes.

So if you are an individual director and you want to do it your way then you're not terribly popular. You're employed if you're easy to get along with, that's how it is. So that's the effect it's had. And that's how it will be.

Yes.

And I, I think that's how it will be in the future, because you're making a product now, it's a product, it has to come in at such and such a cost, in such and such a time. It has to employ so many hours, and, by the way, you're expected to work all the hours you're bought at anyway. That means you can work night and day for the amount of time that you're being paid for. The unions have no power anymore, as I said earlier.

And I don't see, if you're being, if you're being asked to deliver a product, and that is what it is…

Yes.

How it can be any different, you make the product the way the person who commissions it wants it. And also because you're dependent to a large extent on co-production money, it's how somebody else wants it as well. So you've got a lot of fingers in the pie. So, you know, individual programme making, I think, is virtually dead.

Maybe for some time, I don't know. Do you think this is a new development or what?

No, it's been getting worse...

Going back a long time?

For a long time, yes.

Well, I mean I...

Yes.

Speaking personally, I mean I left the BBC a long, long largely because the people in command changed and I really lost faith. I mean Paul Fox left BBC 1 at that time. David Attenborough was Two, he left that, and so on. And round about the same time, coincidentally, and I'd worked with Granada before, Denis Forman, the boss of Granada then, and not quite now, asked me if I'd go back and, and do certain things. And I went back, and I stayed away for many, many years after that, and I never felt, really, the urge to go back to the BBC. Although I kept in contact with them, and, you know, as a freelance, I did, later on, one or two individual documentaries for the BBC. But I never regretted, to be honest, leaving, despite all the years I'd been there. So, it's terrible, really.

Well I, I, you have talked to David Attenborough, haven't you?

Yes, we have.

Yes.

And I mean I know what his views are.

Yes.

Yes.

We talked to Paul Fox too.

Yes. And his views are...

Yes, oh yes.

Similar, aren't they?

Oh yes.

Yes.

But I mean I think the loss of integrity is the most serious matter.

Yes, yes.

I really do deeply feel this, that you can't trust anybody.

Yes.

And that, you can't blame the kids who come into this, they've never known anything different.

No.

And they came from the *'*me*'* generation anyway. And they're there with no commitment to broadcasting, they're there to make their careers. Somehow or another when we came into it we believed we were doing something important.

Yes.

We believed we were pioneers, we believed that it really mattered that we were honest with the public didn't we?

Yes.

We were, I mean the amount of times one checks facts and all the rest of it. You know, I mean, it was just part of how we were brought up. I do honestly, I, I fear that that has gone.

Well it, well we did also enjoy our work, didn't we?

Well I think we trusted each other.

We certainly did.

But now everybody's at each other's throats.

Yes, what I was going to, I shouldn't really call it better, you know what I mean, creative atmosphere, existed.

[30:00]

Yes. And people swapped ideas with each other.

It's very important.

Not because that they...

It's very important.

Thought that the ideas would be stolen.

No.

Because they thought people might be able to contribute something that you would work together on something...

Yes.

To make it better.

Yes.

For everyone, not because it was your idea.

Yes.

I, I strongly think that departments work together, teams work together, people work together for the good of the programme. But now it's for the good of the individual who is making it, not for the good of the programme itself and for the public who have to watch it.

Yes.

And I think that's a tragedy.

That's right. I mean you look, I mean on that line, I mean you look back to the, the way Monitor's first started, that was a matter of a wonderful team.

Absolutely.

They were committed to popularising the arts.

Yes.

To making the arts accessible. And I remember the first, when I decided that I, what I really wanted to do was to work in arts television was when I saw *Monitor*.

True.

That's actually where I came from, in the sense that I watched it every Sunday night, religiously, and I thought this is wonderful, and that's where I want to be. And in a sense that's where I ended up, because I ended up doing *Omnibus* which was the later.

Yes, successor…

Successor.

To Monitor.

To, to *Monitor*. And that's what it was, it was...

And on, on the...

Pioneering and it was wonderful.

And on the main channel too.

And on the main channel, also.

Yes. Never BBC 2.

No.

One.

Absolutely. But then, of course, when *Monitor* started there wasn't a BBC 2.

No, no, no indeed.

Monitor was before...

You're correct.

BBC 2.

No, no, no, no, yes.

To be fair there.

Yes, yes, yes.

And *Omnibus* is in fact on BBC 1...

Yes.

Although they've put it...

Yes.

To Tuesday night, and very late...

Yes.

So you can see where it's going.

Yes, I remember that.

Going, going, gone.

Yes I remember, sorry, I remember personally, I mean going back for days when, as you know I was in charge of 'Omnibus' for several years. And I remember, again, Paul Fox, Controller of One.

Yes.

*Was very generous towards, towards me and 'Omnibus' at that time. And we were, I remember forty- nine 'Omnibus' programmes in a, in a year, forty-*nine.

Yes.

Out of fifty-two.

That's amazing isn't it?

You know I…

Yes.

That's a real commitment to the arts.

I also, I mean if I say this as a personal thing, it is, Paul Fox used to speak to me personally, between Paul Fox and myself there was a, a hierarchy, and Aubrey Singer was Controller of the group, Stephen Hurst. And then Jon Culshaw was music, they were separate at that time. And I remember that, that Paul Fox got rather fed up, we had a meeting in his office once, all, all the people I've mentioned, including myself. And Paul got rather fed up with it, all these, you know, little, nit picking around the table. He finally got rid of us out of the, out of the room, got rid of us, all went. And then he rang me the next morning and said, 'What I'd like to do in future', he said, 'Norman, about every three or four weeks, we'll have a, a quiet lunch together in a little restaurant, you know, down Kensington Church Street, if that's alright'. And he

said, 'You know, please make sure your secretary doesn't tell anybody', et cetera, et cetera. And that actually is what happened, thereafter, for a year or two, or more. And, and that's what happened. I mean I, Paul Fox and I had, had these lunches regularly, decisions were taken, and the people between me and him knew nothing about it. And that's, that's, that's actually how it worked. And this was quite interesting really.

I suppose one could say that might be a little undemocratic.

Yes, but it worked.

But in fact, I...

I think I'm biased.

I actually think that's exactly what's wrong with what happens now. And that is the decisions are made in an arbitrary way, and there's far too many fingers in the pie.

Yes.

And everybody wants something different. Only one person can make a programme in the end.

Yes.

That's right, yes.

And it's then made by committees.

Yes. I know.

And people are so afraid of doing the wrong thing as well, nobody will take a risk either.

No. I do remember one particular example of what I've just been saying, after one of our lunches, Paul Fox and I, in this restaurant. One of my problems at that time was that Ken Russell's film on Richard Strauss, you remember, 'Dance of the Seven Veils', had, had been banned by, you know, Aubrey Singer, and whoever, between me and Paul. And on the work back from our, in a taxi, presumably Paul or the BBC paid for the taxi, he used to drop me off at, you know, Shirlington House, or nearby. And just before we got there, I said, 'Paul, by the way, what about this thing of Ken Russell's, 'Dance of the Seven Veils', you know, I think it's really, it's interesting, it's controversial but, you know, you know Ken, it's, it's worth showing I think. I don't quite understand'. He said, 'Oh, put out the fucking thing'. End of conversation.
I went straight to my office, changed the billing in The Radio Times, at once, so it couldn't be altered after that, it went out.

Very good Norman, I wish it was like that now. But in fact everything is planned so far ahead that if you come up with a good story, which is recent, it's impossible to get it on the air, except in a magazine programme.

[35:12]

Yes.

So the, you know, it's changed. The structure of everything is built in so far ahead that there's no sense of freedom or experimentation or possibility to change things. It's very formulate, now, I think basically it has to be because there's no sort of, no chance of changing anything. And the money is so organised as well, and there's so many...

Yes.

Forms to fill in. I mean the bureaucracy is unbelievable. I mean it, it, the paperwork, in spite of them having thought they would get rid of paperwork, it's absolute nonsense.

Yes. It's, is its worse than ever?

Oh yes, you go through three people instead of, at least three instead of the one that you would have had before.

Yes. You used to have just the organiser, really.

Well, I mean, there's all sorts of people from, they're, they're all management structure...

Yes.

Of a kind.

Have you programmed backgrounds with them?

Very, very likely not. But that's also deliberate in my view.

Yes.

Because it's...

No, yes.

Dealt with on an accountancy basis, not on a programme making basis.

How, and I'm not an expert on this anymore, but I mean how are appointments now made? I remember the old and ancient system I referred to it briefly just now. But how are, how do people get jobs now?

Mm...

I mean the important jobs, like creating important programmes? What happens? How do they get there?

I can't answer the question.

I mean nobody can.

It varies, obviously.

Well there are important strands, as we used to call them, aren't there still?

Yes.

And there must be...

There are still boards programmes.

People, there must be maybe one, one or two people in charge of them.

Yes. there are still boards of programmes. And they're still advertised outside the BBC, and they have to be because there's so few people in the BBC.

Yes.

At the moment, in music and arts, they aren't taking anybody on, on, on contract anyway, because they're going to have to lose some more so.

Yes.

I don't think you would have got a job if you had, if you'd happened to be me, on a contract on a freelance. Long term contracts are, don't, they might have taken people, but I mean there's very few people on the staff anyway anymore.

What's the length of your contract?

When I did the *American Visions*?

Yes.

Yes.

I had a year and then it was renewed again. So I had them in six months batches.

Okay.

But normally it's six weeks.

Yes. Oh really?

Or something like that, if it was *The Late Show* it was for an item. You're employed...

Yes.

For the story you're doing. They're trying to get people to, you know, work, just on that particular product. So employed, you're given that amount of time to do that product in, and the day you finish that product you go. As for clearing it up, well...

Not writing any letters?

Not writing your thank you letters or anything like that.

Yes.

You're not on the books for that. I mean this is sheer accountancy.

Yes.

But that's how it all is now. I mean it's not just the BBC, it's ITV, it's, it's everything.

A very depressing thought.

Well so if you're given a sort of, a contract to do that particular job...

Yes.

You tend to feel, or you might feel that when that job is over that's, you go away and wash your hands of it. You see we used to have continuity.

That's right, yes. Yes.

Yes.

And we used to have contacts and address books, and people that we kept in touch with.

Absolutely.

And knew, and found out what was coming up from, and treated decently, and all those things. And we talked to each other about that.

Yes.

Now, of course, all that is over. There is no continuity.

Ah. How did your, how did your present series, the one you're talking about, actually, therefore, under the circumstances, get off the ground in the first place? I mean can you go back to how it began?

American Visions?

How did it begin? Yes.

As far as I can make out, at the end of *Shock of the New*, in 1980, the BBC was keen to have, or do, Robert Hughes, do another series. But he felt at that time that he wasn't too keen to work with the BBC again.

[40:05]

Yes.

Because he'd had a quarrel and, I think partly through Reiner Moritz, who was the co-producer, had taken some rights that Bob thought should have belonged to him.

Yes.

Therefore he thought he hadn't made enough money out of it, so. This series *American Visions*, which is the history of American art, and the time of the *conquistadores* and the puritans, through to the present day, had been suggested right back as far as then. But it had been hanging around for a long time because Rob didn't really want to work with the BBC. And somehow or other it got into the hands of Bob Geldof and Planet 24. And he bought some rights on it, and I don't exactly know the history of this, but that, it ended up with Planet 24 having it, and then going, bringing it to the BBC.

Ah, that way round?

Yes. And Alan Yentob was very keen to have Bob back working for the BBC, and rightly so, because he is a major figure.

Yes., yes.

And we need them, we haven't got many. And, so they did a deal with Planet 24, so you will see Planet 24 credits on the end of this series.

Ah.

However, Planet 24, then had absolutely nothing. I think they did a couple of recces, or something, Bob Geldof, and flew over on Concorde to see, you know, The United States. Bob's not frightfully polite about this. And the, then sort of dropped out of it, but has got a credit. So, about three years ago it ended up with music and arts

department. And Nick Rossiter was appointed to be executive producer of it. Nick Rossiter was had come in as a history graduate and, on the general trainee scheme, and had worked in news, current affairs, religion, and ended up in the music and arts department, where he directed some of Prince Charles' film, American, *Visions of Britain*.

Yes. Really?

Which Christopher Martin produced. Anyway, he'd done a couple, two or three other films in the design classics series and so on, and he was given this job, so he spent about a year going around The United States with Bob Hughes and working out how they were going to deal with these eight hours of prospective television. And then came back and got a team together. I came into the team towards the end, they'd already shot four of the programmes by the time I was on board, they started off shooting programme, programmes one, two, three, four, and eight. And then I came to do five and seven. So, those team of researchers and various, the copyright was immensely complex, I mean to see it's, it's really complex. So we had one girl who worked on the copyright, alone, all the way through. And I was implanted director of the films. Including other bits and pieces.

Stop you there.

[End of Tape 3 Side A 43:35]

NB: The time codes given here are estimates based on readings from the original cassette recording.

Tape 3 Side B.

Julia Cave, Side 6.

Could I just have a bit more coffee?

Yes. I'll pour. Right, we're going.

So *American Visions* was a big budget, big profile series for Robert Hughes. And, well it was filmed all over American, literally.

With a proper crew?

Absolutely, 16 millimetre.

Yes.

Not Super 16, because, as it's American co-production, Americans don't like wide-screen at the moment. Which I think is a shame because I think it's going to have a long shelf life, and it's clearly going to, it's here to stay. So HD TV is here and that shape screen is here, so we ought to be doing it, but anyway. Yes, it was definitely shot with proper camera crew, dolly tracks, lights. There wasn't enough money for that really, there wasn't enough time given in the schedules for that kind of shooting, but somehow we did manage to do that.

Yes.

And yes, in principle it was, it was properly shot, proper sound recording, you know.

Yes.

DAT sound. And, yes, it was a proper, high production, high profile...

Yes.

Documentary film series, of the kind that we used to make. And, you know, I wonder if there will be another. Although there is planned to be a series on the Renaissance Art, which Andrew Graham Dixon is going to front. So that may be of that kind of calibre.

Will you be involved in that?

No, I think not.

Oh well, it will be nice if it happens anyway.

Yes, it would.

Yes, yes.

But, so, yes it was a, it was a seriously...

Mounted?

Mounted, yes, programme to work on. And I think has very high production values. Bob Hughes is, of course, an absolute amazingly erudite and outspoken presenter and writes brilliantly so I mean the, the force of these programmes comes really from him. I mean the directors, although we had to direct it well, and deal with Bob well, I mean it's, it's his show.

Yes.

It's not, they're not directors' films.

Yes.

Although, of course, we had to be able to direct, to get them to work. But they are from him.

Yes.

You know, without him there would be nothing, frankly.

And he's happy?

He is now.

Well, we're talking about the quality of the picture, not other matters.

Yes, I think he is pleased with them. Although we've been through our ups and downs, and temperaments and problems and all the rest of it, but that, I suppose happens on any documentary series.

Yes, that's not, not unusual is it?

Not unusual at all.

No.

But on, you know, I've have enjoyed, I mean I enjoyed immensely filming in America. It was nice to be away. But, then we edited on, on Lightworks.

Oh yes. Yes, yes.

Which...

Is wonderful really.

Is, is very good. Well it does have its pluses and it's minuses. In that it takes a very long time to, everything has got to be digitised in.

Yes.

In real time, so every single shot that you want to use has got to go in the real time, so it's very slow in some ways. It's quite fast once you've got it in. You also don't have an assistant so it's done away with the assistant film editor job, and there are times when, my goodness, we wanted an assistant. For instance, you have to digitise all your music tracks, all your sound tracks in separately, it's plus and minus, and there's a lot of film editors, it doesn't take any less time. It doesn't cost any less.

But it's interesting you should say that because my son has worked, and how, and this is I think the third film he's worked on, and he said it's an absolute Godsend, and it's so much easier, it's so much quicker, because he can transpose anywhere you like and you, you don't have to physically cut anything.

What, what does your son do?

Feature film editor.

Oh he's a feature film editor, but feature films have been cut on that for years.

Well he, he hasn't been doing it for much, and I think he...

Oh really?

He's on his third. Yes.

Yes, well it's, Avid, Avid and, and Lightworks were, have been used in the feature film industry for a long time. It probably is, from his point of view. But then he's dealing with drama.

Yes.

Which is scripted.

Yes, that's right.

So, therefore, you know what take you're going to have to digitise in. If you're dealing with a documentary...

[05:00]

Yes.

You're in a whole different ball game.

Yes.

And I think, but also I was talking to a drama editor, Claire Douglas, the other day.

Yes.

Who edited all the Dennis Potter things, and she and I had this discussion about Lightworks and Avid, and she finds herself no faster either.

Oh really?

Yes.

I...

But, yes, because, yes, because, yes.

There's pluses and minuses to this.

Yes.

And it depends what you're working on. But with documentaries, we're not very convinced.

Well I suppose rather...

However it's here to stay.

Yes, sure. Sure.

And seeing as the, with film now, what you don't do is, I think there's no need to neg cut anymore. Feature films, yes.

Yes.

But documentaries, no. And when we came to the end of this production, well how we edit this, how we edited this is that we copied all our rushes, they were printed, sorry, they were, they were not printed.

Yes.

They were developed.

Yes.

And then they were copied directly on to tape, you know, the sort of print?

Yes.

Did you ever...

And, and reverse phased on to, through telecine on to...

Yes.

Beta.

Yes.

And then you cut on the Beta, okay. However, you're never quite sure what the quality is that you're looking at because it's been through that process, so what the original exactly looks like is sometimes very problematical. That's one of the disadvantages, you never actually see the material you're working with. You then edit on Lightworks and you then, if you want to get it neg cut, it is neg cut. But it's not neg cut in the way that it's neg cut used to be. It's not joined up like that.

Yes.

It's taken frame to frame, right? So it's a whole different ball game.

Yes.

Completely different ball game. Telecine and, and, and the engineers have got so good now at grading it on Beta that it's almost, and for, for, for television it's, in my view, negated the need to go back to the film again, ever, and to neg cut it. In feature film you're dealing with a different thing, it's projected. Which ours isn't, and can never be, because it's gone through the whole of the process that ends up on tape anyway.

Yes, yes.

But, so it's cut out another whole, a whole piece of film, although I greatly suspect that hardly anything else will be shot on film, anyway, in the future. Yes, I mean, in a sense I have now quite grown to like Lightworks, but certain reservations on that, altogether. And of course, the sound quality and the visual quality you get while you're editing it, abysmal, really horrible. And I don't like that, and it's very hard on your eyes. And it's very, very hard on you because you're working in a small confined

space, looking at screens all the time, and listening and it's very concentrated, and you never get a break. From a director's point of view, you have to be in there, because the decisions are made instantaneously once it's in there. So from a director's point of view it's very, very much harder. It may be easier for a film editor, once he's got used to...

Yes.

Using things digitally and being manually dextrous in a different kind of a way than, than film, but from a director's point of view, you never get a break.

Maybe what it means, therefore, sadly, is that for the word director, it means somebody who has quite different qualities and experience and so on than used to. I mean it's not just a director in the sense that I would have, have used the phrase in the past. You, you do a lot of other things.

Yes.

And all the new technology.

Yes.

So maybe the actual directing seems to be pushed down the list.

Are, are you rationed with...

Or not?

With the amount of Lightworks you can use?

You must be joking?

Not exactly.

It's extremely expensive.

Yes.

You are rationed absolute down to five minutes.

Oh.

Really?

I am absolutely serious. And what's more, you are supposed to do a ten hour day at it, five days a week, without a break.

God.

I'll tell you, coming in at ten o'clock in the morning, leaving at eight at night, on your ten hour day. If you get a break it's for a sandwich. It's very tiring, because that whole process is decision making, because your machinery is so expensive that you have to use it all the time. Your manpower is cheap, but your machinery is expensive.

Where did you actually edit, by the way?

We actually edited...

This respect?

In the East tower of the Television Centre.

Ah.

And they have converted a lot cutting rooms there into, into Lightworks and Avid cutting rooms. In fact there are only, I believe, three Steenbeck cutting rooms left in the BBC.

[10:06]

Oh.

And they're in documentaries. And they apparently said that they want, you know, they didn't want to work on this system and they, there are literally about three Stenbecks left. Otherwise everything is turned into...

Good. It's better than nothing.

Everything is turned into either Avid or Lightworks.And I can't believe that those Steenbecks will last much longer.

Spare parts.

Probably, not. Yes.

Spare parts.

Yes, but you see I'm afraid, well it's just not done that way anymore.

Yes, and maintenance staff, get rid of the Steenbecks, you get rid of the, the people that make those.

Yes, you do, but you have awful things going wrong with your Lightworks...

Oh yes.

I can tell you.

Oh yes.

Also the other thing is very often they haven’t got enough memory.

Really?

Oh, well we, we didn't have enough memory. So it means that you've got to delete stuff if you're putting new stuff in. This won't apply to your son because he's got a finite amount of stuff on his drama, but if we get new stuff in and then we have to keep digitising all our archive footage in, and you've used up your fifteen hours of memory, then you have to go back and take stuff out, and put new stuff in. And because they were saving money, this is always, this always the, the reason for everything, there wasn't enough memory, and you have to pay about a five hundred pounds a week for extra memory.

Oh dear.

It's all very interesting.

Very, yes.

But there's no doubt about it, it's here to stay. There won't be any Steenbecks, there will be, everything will be edited, edited, digitally, on either Lightworks or Avid. It will all be on tape. Probably on small cameras, apart from the big drama series, I suspect, which may still remain on, on Beta SP, or digital Beta, which is the wide-screen.

Yes.

Which is going to be favourite, or Super 16 occasionally. But everything else I think is going to be on this...

Yes.

Small camera, probably, and edited digitally. But I mean it's, it's there, it's happening and everything is being moved very fast in that direction.

Oh. Now, but you're not making this, am I right, directly for the BBC, I mean your, your company, et cetera, et cetera.

What I'm working on now?

Yes.

Well, no, the thing you're talking about, the American thing?

American Visions was made for the BBC.

American Visions.

I was employed by the BBC to make this.

Ah, by the BBC direct, yes, sorry.

Absolutely. But it's a co-production with Time Warner.

Yes. Well we had many of those, of course.

We did indeed.

In the past.

Yes, in the past.

Absolutely.

Yes.

And, of course, Bob is the Art Critic for Time Magazine.

Yes.

Yes.

And it's going to be shown next year in May, on PBS. It's been shown already in Australia.

Oh.

Ah, good?

Yes.

Good reviews I mean, good response?

Yes, very. Yes.

Ah.

This will get very good reviews because there's nothing like it on television at the moment.

Yes. Right.

Have...

And so anything that's halfway decent...

Have you had any...

You're so amazed to see it.

Any previews yet? Has the press seen it yet? They must have done?

Oh the press is raving about it so.

Oh well.

You're sure are you?

Oh yes.

Yes.

But then I, I, you know, if I, if you can't tell a good thing when you see it, yes, it's very good.

The 'Guardian' had a very good piece, actually, in the, in the supplement.

It sounds well.

That was written by Bob.

But of course I, I faxed that to Bob on Sunday and Bob says 'I didn't write that piece, and what the hell is going on'?

Yes.

In fact what they did is sub it from his script of Film Eight. So he's quite cross.

Oh, really?

As it happens.

Yes.

It's the story of *The Guardian* piece on Saturday.

As it happened, yes. Right.

You know I'll, I'll write him on Sunday and said...

Yes. Now, I mean going on, and you must have other projects in mind. And if so, I won't say what they are, they might be a deep secret but, but, but how do you start selling them now?

It's extremely difficult.

How do you begin, and where?

Okay.

Very important.

Yes, well you have an idea, and you have to know roughly where you think you can market it. Now, first of all, unless you're going to be employed as a director by the BBC, you can go to them with an idea and they can take you on to do it. But that happens very rarely. So I had worked for *The Late Show* and they, I used to ring them up with ideas, or fax them with ideas, and then they'd employ me for six weeks, or three months or whatever it is, to make these things. But as they're not taking anybody on, on that basis anymore, the answer is that what you have to do is present your idea through an independent company. So what I did with my various ideas, because I have known David Collison, who is one of the directors of Third Eye Productions. I took my ideas to David. And I said, I've got these, and I think where we could put them are the following places. So then we write a letter, and we write a treatment.

[15:12]

On his notepaper?

On his notepaper. And we bang them off to these people we hope will be interested, like Melvyn Bragg on, and Channel 4, and I would send to BBC 2, the works on like pool series which took over from *The Late Show*. That's for arts programmes, and you

just do that. It's a very expensive thing, because you're not earning any money while you're doing this it costs you a good deal of money to get all this together, and send it out.

Is this Third Eye money?

Well, yes and no. Third Eye...

Yes. Yes, I know Third Eye, I mean, I mean David must, he decided, presumably, personally, to go ahead on this. And therefore he must have agreed to spend a bit of money on it.

He hasn't got any money to spend.

Well it's really...

Right.

Facilities is it, his facilities?

Well, until, I don't think I should discuss Third Eye, because...

Okay.

It's probably not...

Okay.

Not, not, not fair, and I'll...

No.

I'll talk off the record about that afterwards. But a lot of small production companies, who were doing incredibly well before, are now doing incredibly badly. There are

masses and masses of them. And what's tended to happen is that the companies like, the commissioning companies are working more and more with the big companies and not the small. So a lot of them have got very few facilities, they can't keep their heads above water at all, they don't have any facilities.

Yes.

I mean remember that they're paying out of their own pockets for the office they work from. They can't afford to employ staff, and they're working with a computer by themselves, is, is, is what's really going on. And it's not easy, it's really very, very tough. So you take your idea to the company and, in theory, they say well I think I can sell that, or I can't sell that. In the case of the one that I have got, what's called development money for, I took this to David and I was extremely sure that it's a very good idea, and, an unarguably good idea, because it's an art exposé story. There are few and far between of this quality.

Yes.

And also I have a good, good track in this, because I did *For Love of Money*, and, and, and, and *The Plunderers*, and all those art exposes in the seventies. And so, and I've done a lot since, so I have good record on that. And I'm working with Geraldine Norman, who has an absolutely unmatched record on that. So, we came in as two quite strong hands on this. And I suggested that we went straight to Channel 4, because they have a new Commissioning Editor, Janie Walker, and I happen to know her, and I thought she might be looking for new ideas because she'd only been there two weeks so we got in very, very quickly, long before other people sort of caught on. And she was, she liked the idea and basically she said, I'll give you some money.

Oh.

To develop it. So that's what we're doing, so with Third Eye, and Geraldine, I'm developing this idea, so I'm going to Paris to do some filming next week. And we have to present to her a whole, you know, massive treatment for this, including the budget and everything else, by the end of November. And then she says, go ahead, or

don't go ahead. If she says don't go ahead then, of course, we've wasted three months, for which we haven't had any money at all. And have had, indeed considerable expense and we've lost everything. So it's a very, very hard, nerve-wracking, difficult thing.

You said you were filming next week?

I am, because I've got enough development money.

Oh.

To do this bit, because it happens to be an exhibition which is coming off, before we would get...

Yes.

Our commission. So if we don't do it now, we've lost it. So I insisted and wrote in that we needed to do this, and she's just given us enough money to cover that bit of filming.

Ah, ha.

I don't think they'll say no, at the end of this, I mean, but it is kind of nerve-wracking. And the other thing that's nerve-wracking is if somebody broke the story before us, then we'd lost it too. So, but sitting on a bit of a, a hot story and, what Janie has got, and I think it shows tremendous commitment to the arts, and good for her, and why I want to go along with what she is doing on Channel 4, is she's got Sunday nights at nine o'clock for an hour, which is more commitment than anybody else has got for the arts at the moment. Because the Melvyn Bragg show is on at 11.15...

[20:17]

Yes.

Which is much too late on a Sunday night.

Sad that.

Omnibus is Tuesday night, so it's copped out. So this, you know, if, if ours goes ahead, will be for the new series for September next year, on Channel 4, at nine.

It's a one off is it?

There will be a, this one is a one off.

Yes.

But there will be a series. I think she's trying to compete with, well I think she will do *Omnibus*. Story, there's to be story leads arts programmes.

Right. Good luck.

So that's inside information.

Fine.

So the, the, the future's, well.

The future is, it's extremely difficult for directors.

Iffy, iffy.

Because you have to go, you have to have, keep abreast of everything.

Yes, yes.

On your own time and money. You spend all your own money on doing this, it's quite, it's quite disillusioning to be sort of stuck at home thinking nobody's answering

and, and, and I'm not getting anywhere with this, and what shall I turn to next, and all the rest of it. It's all so very lonely. You know, where we were used to always being with, coming into the office and talking to people, I mean I think, the fact, the thing that I find most difficult is always battling on on my own. And coming up with ideas and constantly going at it and, and, and having nobody to, to talk to about it. I, it's quite hard.

Yes.

Now if, if this, this does happen, and I'm hope, hope and sure it will, where do you, where do you operate from in that case? And where do, where, how does it work?

Okay.

In practical terms, what will happen?

Well if we get it.

Yes.

Then Third Eye will get a, a commissioning sum of money, which will allow them to continue with their office and a P.A. and so on. We have to budget absolutely everything in. And then I will work, partially from home, where I've got my study, but partially from the Third Eye offices. Basically that's, that's what you do, you go into the office when you need to go into the office.

Can you edit from where?

Well you can choose where to edit from.

Yes, yes.

You can choose who your camera crew is, I've already chosen mine really.

Good.

We'll probably edit on, on Avid or Lightworks, and there happens to be a very good editing suite, which happens to be in the building where Third Eye operates, which is Camelot, at the top end.

Yes.

And, you know it?

Yes.

Well they've got, there's a good company there so we'll probably edit there, is what I would think. And so that's what will happen. And I'm also on another story which I've sent around, but we may get Arts Council money for it, we may even get The Lottery money for it. So I'm fighting another little, little one, in a completely different area, which is Patrick Heron.

Oh.

And a big work of art that is going to be constructed to make a wind shield at, in Victoria, and it's going to be the biggest work of art in, in Europe. And it's an amazing, amazing construction. And so I, I hope to be making a film about that. So Patrick Heron's got a...

Oh.

Retrospective at The Tate Gallery next year. So we're looking, we have to put budgets into the Arts Council and things like that. So quite honestly, you have to focus on anybody who you think will give you any money to do what you want to do.

Yes.

So you have to try and keep up with what's going on really.

Yes. I mean, are you taking an accountancy course?

No, but you see over the last few years we've had to do total costing at the BBC anyway.

Yes.

And I am quite used to doing budgets, and I can tell you, in my head, what a film's going to cost, and you just tell me where you're going.

Yes, yes.

Roughly.

Yes.

So you have a vague idea of what you're going to need, sure. No, the answer is, I am not taking an accountancy course, and we do have an accountant. We have to have an accountant.

Sure.

We have, Third Eye hires in an accountant and you pay that off the budget.

Yes.

For doing all these sums, you see. But you, you have to say what you want and they break it down into…

[25:00]

Yes, yes.

You'd say fifteen days of filming at approximately a cameraman costs you, you could look at six hundred pounds a day for a cameraman and gear, and you know how much it is, your sound recordist, two hundred extra, et cetera So you've got a pretty fair rule of thumb what it's going to cost you...

Yes.

The fifteen day shoot and all the rest of it. So you have to know these kind of things, but you don't actually do the adding up.

Yes.

You might have to, if you can't afford the accountant. You know, it's swings and roundabouts, if you want, if you can't afford the accountant you do it yourself because you want another extra day's shoot so.

Yes.

Yes. But I mean your personal and professional reputation counts for a lot in all this doesn't it? I mean, yes, it does.

I think, probably.

Oh yes.

Yes.

If I can go back for a moment to the, talking about David Collison that the film that he and I made with Johnny Speight in Canning Town, all about Alf Garnett, we were loaded with, with bad language, for example. I think we, we had two fucks and four bloody's for example in, in, in the thing. And, and between David and me and, you know, up the hierarchy, they were all shaking and trembling with fear and pushing it on, in, in those days Paul Fox was then, for the time being, managing director, or whatever it was called. And eventually it went up to him, you know, and I shouldn't

say this, but I know Paul Fox because I heard the story indirectly, Paul Fox said,'If it's alright with Norman Swallow it's bloody well alright with me', he said. And that's the same with you, you know, I mean. And that, it went out, with a, you know, and a slight warning at the front. You may find some of this offensive, something like that.

Yes.

But it was shown at a peak hour.

Yes, yes.

Yes, well that kind of trust, I mean there is a kind of...

8.30 or something like that, in the evening.

Reputations do matter, but very often it's not on a, well actually, quite a lot of it's done on a personal basis. Yes, that is true, yes. But I mean the whole thing is incredibly erratic, because there were so many different companies and they will advertise at different times for different kinds of directors, or P.A.s or production managers, or cameramen, or something, you just have to keep your eyes on everything. It's a very fluid kind of situation, which nobody expects to be fully employed. If you get a six months contract you think that's fantastic, you see.

Are the days gone when they, they come to you and say 'We've got this programme we'd like you to do'?

It happens occasionally.

What rare?

Very rare, because..

Well...

Most of the ideas come from the people who are selling them, like me, you see.

Yes, yes, yes.

But aren't, there must be sometimes people come along with an idea, I mean outside the business, if you like, but a very good idea. If the idea catches on, then whoever's thought it was a good idea would then think of someone like you or whoever and that is...

Yes, absolutely.

To say yes, do you like this?

No, it's done...

Does that happen?

Yes, it can happen. Yes, absolutely. But I mean it's, it's...

Why not?

It's, it's a kind of whole melting pot of people who are just looking for work, so it's a buyer's market too because, you know, there's too many people for the jobs. Although I wonder what will happen when there's so many more channels.

Yes.

But then if you don't have to have any particular skills for it, you see. I mean it's the skills, I mean, I, I fear that what's really happening is that the people who are incredibly skilled like brilliant cameramen and sound recordists and film editors and so on, all those people and people in the film labs and all the rest of it, life is not going to be at all good for them.

No, no. No, no.

because it's been, going to be a one man band situation. Director, producer, interviewer, cameraman, sound recordist, editor, all rolled into one. For the run of the mill stuff, that's how it's going to be.

They're gonna need a...

And the big productions, well that's still going to need the skilled people.

Yes. Yes.

But as, you know, they're going to have to fill an awful lot of air space, with very little, very cheap ideas. I think that's how the majority of television will be dealt with, don't you?

Yes, I'm sure.

So I think the standards of, not necessarily the technical standards, may be less important in the end than the actual amount of rubbish that will...

Right.

Hit the air.

Yes. I mean one of the problems I assume is, is that with all these channels and even the way things are now, obviously a lot of tiny little companies, starting from scratch, must all say mysteriously and mistakenly, 'Oh gosh, it's going to be marvellous for us. All these, these opportunities'.

[30:12]

Yes. Greater challenge...

And all these, all these ideas must be thrown around, millions of them, surely.

Absolutely. Well what you should do, in fact, if you want another interview is David Collison because he spent...

Good idea.

I mean he left the BBC what, nearly fifteen, fifteen years ago or something. And he's watched what's happened in the independent companies and he says that when he started there were something like twenty and now there's something like three thousand.

God.

He talks about this for example..

Three thousand?

Well I may have my figures wrong, don't...

No, no, no, I mean..

Quote me on this, but it's something as, as mammoth as that.

Oh you've only got to look in the...

You see I could set up my own company, but I didn't want to, and then I would be an independent production company.

Yes.

Yes. You've only got to look at the statement screen and see that the number of companies being, being blacked.

I know.

You've never even heard of.

But these companies have a terribly difficult time. because they have to think ahead, I mean if they pay, they decide to take a lease, for instance, on an, on an office place, or a space, for how long?

Yes, yes.

I mean think about it? It's incredibly tough. But I think talking to David would be a jolly good idea on the independent companies front, because he's seen all sides of it.

Yes.

Will do.

Yes.

If you could start again, would you have found something that, would you prefer to have done something completely different?

No.

Ah, but if you were to start again, now, as against then. Ah.

Well, no, yes. It's, no, but I mean I think it's the, it's the, when you started?

If, I would not regret ever having worked for the BBC, I've had the most incredible time. I've travelled all over the world. I've met the most fascinating people. I've been given opportunities I could never have had anywhere else. I think it's been absolutely wonderful. And the people I've met, it's been like a university, the whole of my life.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes, yes.

And I've, I cannot say how good it has been. However, I don't think that I would like to be working for the BBC now. I don't like the atmosphere there. I don't like the lack of integrity. And I don't really think I want to work in what television has become, which is a kind of massive free for all, where the product counts, the people don't count. It's got, it's got a lack of humanity about it. I can't see myself, maybe I'm being an old fogy, maybe I'm just being sad about the past. I think I had a wonderful time. I can't imagine having had a better life. Stressful as it was on times, and there's always been ups and downs, but, no I wouldn't like to work in television now, and I don't think it's because of my age.

No, no. No, no.

I think it's actually because I don't like the atmosphere there anymore and I don't really like what's going on, it, I think it's just another product. It's nothing special anymore. I mean, I think we were lucky to work through the special years of television.

Yes.

Great.

Depressing.

No great, yes, great it is.

Just honest.

Yes.

I mean..

Yes. Absolutely. Quite right, too.

Many thanks.

A great pleasure.

Stop there.

[End of Tape 3 Side B 34:00]

Transcription Queries – Julia Cave

Page/Time		Query
Tape 1 Side A		
9	13:11	'Um Cum Sun'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – Arabic Music/musician
9	13:59	'Farid al Alrash Alcabi'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – Arabic Music/musician
Tape 2 Side A		
75	18:33	'Mahindra Dan'? Spelling/Doubtful word – Chronicle item