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Interviewee: Anne V Coates
Interviewer: Roy Fowler
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The interview was conducted over five days, non-consecutive, without a tape change at the end of each session so that they run through.

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Session 3: 09.06.1992 Tracks 6-8 ends 0:16:36
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[Track 1]

I'm just checking [inaudible]. Right. And, the subject today is Anne V Coates, who is [inaudible] the doyenne of British editrices I guess one would say.

[laughs] I don't think I would go so far as to say that.

Oh I would. I would. And we're in Chelsea Park Gardens, and you can hear the bird sounds in the background. Anne, if it isn't ungallant, may I ask you where and when you were born for the record?

Yah. I was born in, on December the 12th 1925 in Reigate in Surrey.

Mhm. And was it of a family that had any connection with...

No, my...

...pictures or entertainment of any kind?

Not at all, no. My father was a chartered surveyor, and, my mother was just a housewife really, as women were in those days.

Yes. And, you as a child, what were your interests?

Riding, horses.

Ah. Right.

Al... almost to the exclusion... Oh well that's not quite true. When I was very small I did a lot of dancing, did ballet dancing, acrobatic, Greek, tap. Mainly ballet. I was quite good at ballet actually, I passed several exams. And they were considering me for the Royal Ballet School, only it was called Sadler's Wells Ballet School then or

something. And then I suddenly got into horses. You know how children change their whole lives. Once I discovered ponies I was off in another direction, and I really gave up dancing.

Was that something of the time, do you think, or, or, do, do little girls still do that today?

I think they do that today a lot. My daughter was very keen on horses; living in the centre of London, here in Chelsea, she didn't get a lot of chance, but she loves riding. And now living in California she has her own horse. So I think... I think it's very much in my family. My mother bred ponies as a kind of hobby and showed them and things. So, I think it was... But she came to it, I think, through me, I was the like, the horsey one to begin with.

[0:01:56]

Yes. What sort of education did a bright, middle-class young lady of that era receive?

I went to private school, I went to private school when I was five. I didn't have any pre-schooling. And... Called Micklefield, which was in Reigate. And then when we moved we had a very good day girls' school, well it actually had boarders, children from abroad, as far as I can remember, called High Trees, and I went there till I was thirteen.

Yes.

And that was daily, bicycling, and that sort of thing. And then of course the war came, and, my father... We didn't evacuate originally, but then my father, when we could hear, because we lived by then in Horley, in Surrey, we could hear the guns at Dunkirk, and my father got fairly panic-stricken then. And also they'd dug trenches across our fields and put – it's laughable when you think about it, they'd dug these anti-tank trenches, and put wooden poles, like Agincourt, with spikes on them, which my kid brother and I used to jump over on our ponies. And those were supposed to

stop the Germans. But, anyway, he, you know, that summer it got very unpleasant, so my father evacuated us down, took a house down in Woolacombe, in North Devon. And, we did it in a fair amount of comfort, you know. And, there was a very good girls' school evacuated there called Bartram Gables, so though I had been going to go to another school, they decided to put me in there. And so, at that age I was at boarding school. And then my mother came back.

[0:03:30]

These were more or less pre-feminist days, so what...

I think they were.

What were the influences on, on a girl then?

Well, I mean, education wasn't so terribly important. I certainly didn't take nearly as much advantage of education as I could have done or should have done. I mean I was interested in being out and about with my ponies. At the age of, when you think about it, it's really strange, I mean I wasn't really allowed to go to the cinema as a child, because they considered it infectious and amoral and not the place that children went to. We had little home movies, Mickey Mouse and Felix and things like that that my father used to run for us. But I don't remember exactly the first time I went to the cinema. But, we used to go each year to the pantomime, in London, and saw *Where the Rainbow Ends* and, *Toad of Toad Hall* and *Wind in the Willows* and all those kind of things. But we didn't go to the cinema, until I was probably, about twelve or thirteen maybe.

Not even special treats, like...

No.

...Snow White?

No.

No?

No.

Mm.

Then we, then we did, then we started going. Because when my, my parents divorced when I was about thirteen or fourteen, and then my father would take us for a treat each school holidays, and sometimes the theatre, and then he started taking us to films. I mean, the first films I kind of remember were things like *Lost Horizon*.

Yes.

And, which to me was magical.

So, in your young teens then?

Yes. Yah. And... Then I saw films like *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, fell madly in love with Olivier you know, and, suddenly, that's what really interested me in films, seeing films like that. I was reading these books in school and, you know, they were pretty stodgy and heavy and, that sort of thing, and seeing them alive on the cinema, I started becoming interested in the cinema as opposed to, just horses. Because at that time I was going to be a racehorse trainer, I was riding out for a lot of trainers, I used to go to Epsom and...

Oh.

And funnily enough, what is now Gatwick Airport used to be a racecourse, and there was a trainer there, so he was literally a bicycle ride from me, so I used to go and ride out the racehorses at six o'clock in the morning and...

Mhm.

And, then as I say, slowly, I became interested in movies, started reading up about them.

As what, a fan, or, or did you get a little more serious [inaudible]?

Well to begin with as a fan, and then how they were made. I mean, it's incredible, because I didn't know, you know when you look back on it, my children have known about film all their lives, but I mean I didn't know... It was little separate pictures until I got, read some book about it, and that it was...

[0:06:13]

Yes. What did you have at home, was it a 9.5 projector?

I guess it was, yes. Yes, it was a fair...

Yes, it was the most usual I think in those days.

Yes. Yah. And then my father had a 16mm camera that, he used to take photographs of us as kids.

Mhm.

Which I still have. And...

Will they surface at the BAFTA [inaudible]? [laughs]

I don't think so. I... I don't know where they are now. My, my problem from the BAFTA point of view actually is the fact that, I went to America on a movie, *Raw Deal* with Arnold Schwarzenegger in it, which John Irvin directed, and, we worked

for three months in Wilmington, North Carolina, in fact four in the end; then we moved to California to finish it. And that had been, what I had been waiting for really was a chance to get over there, have time to look around and see if I really wanted to live there, because I had always thought I did, and, and then stay. And as soon as I was working there, I realised, unlike England, there were union and non-union movies. So I couldn't get into the union. Paramount had been trying for some time to get me in the union there, and couldn't. But then I discovered there were quite well paid, quite interesting non-union movies. So, I was able to stay. I mean as soon as I was there, people started offering me jobs there, and I never came back, I never came back for two years.

Yes.

In the meantime, Douglas, who I was by then divorced from but we were always good friends, said to me, 'You must do up the house and rent it.' Because the kids all moved where Mum was. I mean I didn't really take them with me, they just moved, one after another, moved out there, and none of them have ever come back. But... So I had the whole house packed up by packers, and I have never yet unpacked everything. It's up in my spare room, which I don't rent. And, so a lot of the sort of middle part of my life is in boxes somewhere, which is why for BAFTA I don't have all the photographs they want and things like that.

That's a shame. That's a shame.

Yah.

Right. Well the official biography will have to go into[??] all there[??-8:15].

Unearth them somewhere along the line.

We've jumped ahead, we mustn't do that too much.

Yes. No.

[0:08:21]

So, I was really digging for the, the formative influences of your childhood and your youth, and...

You mean film-wise, or just...?

Well, no, I mean what led you into the business. It's interesting that it wasn't total happenstance, it was, was something that was based on an interest. Because one of the things one, one listens to so often is that, very often fathers didn't quite know what to do with sons...

Yes, yah.

...so they called Herbert Wilcox, you know...

Yah.

...and said, 'What do I do with my boy?' But anyway, there you were in... How old were you when you began to formalise an interest in [inaudible-9:00]?

I would say about sixteen probably.

Uh-huh. And still at school?

Still at school, yes.

Right.

And then I went for a time as a VAD, a nurse, at the, at East Grinstead plastic surgery hospital. And I remember when I went there, my mother said to me, [laughs] she

said, 'I don't think I'd tell people that you want to go into films,' she said, 'they'll think you're a bit peculiar.' And I always remember that, and it was, you know, just, it was a way of thinking of that generation. I mean my mother moved with the times more than almost any woman I know, so that, I mean she didn't, kept that view. She always swears she never said it to me, but I remember her saying it to me.

Yes. Well it was a class thing I think wasn't it.

Possibly.

The cinema was more for the village people and [inaudible-9:40].

Yah. Yah. Yah I get that was probably part of it.

Mm.

Luckily my mother managed to, as I say, move with the times and didn't feel that in the end. But... So it must have been before. And I went nursing. Because I left school and went there when I was about seventeen, and did that. Because I was, I tried to get into the industry for quite a long time, and it was not easy to get into, even though my, I had an uncle who was, you know, in distribution and stuff by then and exhibition and made movies and tings.

Yes.

But he didn't want me in the business, really.

[0:10:13]

When actually did you start to apply as it were?

I guess when I was about seventeen.

Right. So that would be, '42.

Yes, probably.

Right.

And I don't think I got in until about, '44 or '45.

How did you set about it, trying to get a job?

Well I first of all read up about jobs, that was my very first thing. I started buying books on, you know, how you made movies, and what jobs there were. And in those days there weren't that many jobs for women. I mean I didn't want to be a secretary, I didn't even want to type or anything like that. And, there seemed to be only continuity girls and editors. And of course, very early on my hero became David Lean, because at that time he was doing *Great Expectations*. I'd been, I'd been to Denham a couple of visits, I'd got taken round the studios, and I had visited *Brief Encounter* and, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, the one with Claude Rains, and things like that, you know.

Yes, I used to go down there a great deal too.

Yes. Yah. And, so, you know, I had begun to, to formulate more what I wanted to do, and editing seemed to be the most interesting job. And at that time I wanted to be a director, and I reckoned that I, you know, I was going to be God's gift to directors, that, you know how you are when you're young. But I was very confident, that's that I wanted to do and that was the, the way that I was going to do it. So unlike, you know, the people who you were talking, who just went in to films, I went in to be a director, and the best way to be a director was via editing. Because at that time there was David Lean, there was Charlie Crichton, Charlie Friend, all the Ealing people, who had come from editors and were then directing. So, that... And I have... I suppose, as you say, it was before feminism or whatever, or being brought up with

three brothers, I mean I never thought of myself in competition with men or a woman or anything; I just thought, I want, that's what I want to do and that's what I will do.

Mhm.

And I have never... And I've always remained like that actually, I've never had a great, I've never, never felt to be a woman when I'm working, I've just felt that I'm somebody doing a job you know. And it's never been... I haven't come a great, across a great deal of problems with being a woman. I'm sure there have been directors who have said 'I don't want a woman,' as there will be directors have said 'I don't want her, she only cuts those sort of films.' Or 'I don't want him because he's,' you know, this.

Mhm.

But, I don't think I've come across...

Well the ambition was to be a director. What happened there, did you abandon it, or did it abandon you?

I abandoned it really. I could have been a director. I could be a director now, I could direct now if I wanted to.

Yes.

But bringing up children, I think it was having the children really that stopped my direction in a way, because, I quickly realised that, as an editor you could spend quite a lot of time with your children; if they were ill, it wasn't the end of the world if the editor wasn't there, and things like that. As a director, you had to be there from seven in the morning regardless or the whole film came to an end. So, I very quickly... And by that time I was married to Douglas and he was, not really directing features then but he was heading that way, he was directing commercials and, that sort of thing, and

so we really concentrated on his career. Because I was working fairly solidly as an editor, and so, he, he, a lot of the time he didn't take jobs because he was, he knew where he was heading, which, he wanted to be a director. And so, he didn't take jobs... And he was able not to because I was working, so that he could head in the right direction, you know.

[0:13:43]

So, to, well, a large extent, you did renounce an ambition to fulfil the, the womanly functions, housewife and mother.

I suppose so, but I seemed to mix them quite well, yes.

Yes. But you did curtail your, your primary ambitions...

Yes.

...your early ambitions.

Yes. Yah, yah. I mean my children have always been the most important thing in my life to me, I mean far more important than movies ever have.

Mm.

Much as I love movies, you know.

Yes.

But I, I think, most of the time, I mean, the children have suffered a bit, and the movies have suffered a bit, or the movies, you know, not the movies I've been on but the movies I was able to accept. Because when they were growing up and in school I didn't do any location movies, so I turned down things like Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* and a few films like that, which was sad. But, you know, I don't have any great

feelings about it, I don't feel bitter or anything like that. Because I did interesting films, and, I spent a lot of time with my children. I spent... I mean when I say a lot of time, when I was not working I spent all my time with the children actually. We always went on holidays together, we always spent the weekends together. When I got home from work I always spent time with them. So, you know, I mean, I'm sure that they perhaps would rather that I hadn't worked, but, my daughter was asked once what she felt about my working, and she said, 'Well, I don't feel anything about it; because she always worked, I never knew any other life. It just... You know, some mothers of my friends at school worked, some didn't.'

Mm. So they were to some extent raised by nannies?

No, I had nannies, yes.

[inaudible].

Yah. Yah. But also Douglas, you see, sometimes wouldn't be working when I was working, or vice versa. And he was a terrific father, the children adored him, and he spent a lot... He spent a lot of time with them. So between, they didn't, they saw a fair amount of us really. And as I say, we always went on a holiday very year, all together, and spent time with them. So, I don't know, they've, touch wood they've all turned out pretty well, so, I don't feel it was too bad, you know.

Did you found a dynasty, a motion picture dynasty?

Yah, I, I appear to have done.

They're all working, yes, they're all working in film.

[laughs] Yes, that's right. I feel that one of them should be a doctor or a lawyer or follow in their grandfather's footsteps or something, but they're all there.

Well, we'll come on to them eventually.

Yes.

[0:16:04]

So there you are with a burning ambition to come into the film business, and not being very successful [inaudible].

Well my uncle was Arthur Rank.

Was he now?

Yah.

Oh I had no idea. I was going to say...

No, well...

...before, living in Reigate, whether you knew the Rank people. [laughs]

Well, the thing is, I don't use the connection. I don't not use it, but I don't use it very much because, when I was younger, I came into the business and tried not, for people not to know, and I managed to work there for about three months with nobody finding out, so, by that time I had kind of established myself, that I wasn't just there because of who I was or anything, that I was there to really work hard.

Mm.

And I had to actually work twice as hard as everything else to prove that. I ran everywhere and, you know, I was very... I mean I loved films, I was terribly enthusiastic when I was young, well I still am actually. But I mean, I used to run everywhere with cans of film. And then I used to be always sneaking in the back of

theatres, watching other people's rushes, which of course you shouldn't be doing, but, because I was so interested in what everybody was doing. And somebody said to me, 'If you've got a can under your arm, nobody will ever query you,' you know, so I was always, had a can under my arm. And that way I went into the theatres, I went on to everybody's set. I was always down on other people's sets when I wasn't needed and that sort of thing, watching what was happening.

Mhm. You were bitten by the bug obviously.

Yah, I think so. I mean I used to think when I drove in in the morning, how lucky I was to be working there, you know.

[0:17:29]

Can we just precise[??] the relationship. Because that's fascinating, I had no idea.

Well I thought for a record, I... As I say...

Absolutely.

Mostly I don't say it. Sydney Samuelson knows, so it'll certainly come out at BAFTA, so... But as I say, I don't. My children do more than I do. But...

Well it's a fascinating connection, because he's one of the most important figures in British film history, so...

Well you would have thought I'd have whizzed into films wouldn't you, but...

I would have done actually, yes. Yes.

No, but he didn't want me in there, he didn't want me to go in.

[inaudible].

He was trying to...

No, sorry.

I'll just tell you this. Because he was trying to kind of clean up the business, and I think he thought I just wanted to go in for the glamour and, you know, I was going to sleep around with a whole lot of attractive actors and things like that. And when I went to see him with my mother, to try and talk him into letting me get in the industry, I had a ten-page, reasons why I was going to, I mean why I was serious about it and what I was going to do for the industry and all this kind of thing, which he didn't really want to know about. He just wanted me to promise that I wouldn't, you know, behave badly and things like that, socially, that's what he was really worried about, and let down his name.

Mm.

So I promised not to drink alcohol during the day while I was working. And I didn't for years and years. So I got in the habit of not doing it, so I never did it. And I worked with some people like Robert Hamer and that sort of thing who were fairly heavy drinkers, who used to put wine in front of my nose. And I've done locations in Paris and everything and I always kept... I'm sure he wouldn't even have minded, because by then I was fairly well established. But it was just a matter of principle, that's what I promised him and that's what I did.

Mhm.

And...

Your mother was a Rank?

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

His sister?

His younger sister, yes. Yes.

Her Christian name was...?

Kathleen.

Kathleen.

Kay[ph] she was always called.

Right. Mhm. Right. How many in the family? Because one knows really the, Joseph, the – James rather.

Yes, Uncle Jimmy.

Yes.

Well there was the, Joseph was the father.

Father.

Yes. And then there was James, Uncle Jimmy, who was the oldest, who was, more of a dilettante really, but he ran the flour mills. But he also was quite a playboy, he played very hard. He wasn't bitten by the religious bug that my grandfather had, and Uncle Arthur had. And so, he, he owned a lot of racehorses. I adored my Uncle

Jimmy, because being horsey, you know, he gave me a couple of horses, racehorses, you know, to look after and things like that. And, he was very fond of us, of me and my, and my mother, he used to visit us a lot. I knew him much better than I ever knew Uncle Arthur really. Then there was another brother, Uncle Rowley[ph], who died very very young, and they, I think it was, he died of a heart attack, but, I think it was the effect of being gassed in the war or something like that. And... But he's the only one who has Rank sons actually, he has two Rank sons, one who has a son already, who's grown up. And then there were four girls. There was Auntie Hilda. No, there was Auntie Dolly, Auntie Ethel, Auntie Hilda, and my mother. So there were three boys and two girls.

Mm. How about your grandfather, did you, did you know him, was he still alive?

Yes. Yes, yes, I knew him, when I was small. He must have died when I was about, eight or nine or ten or something. Yah I remember sitting on his knee. He used to squeeze oranges, you know, like, soft like that, and put a sugar lump in, so that you could suck them. And that's my main memory of him.

Mm.

I remember when I was very ill with measles or something, my brother went and lived with him for a time with one of the nannies and stayed there, while my mother nursed me. But, yah, I remember his house. It was a Reigate Heath, and everything. The whole family lived round that area.

There are some very strong genes in that family, because, Joseph was a self-made son of a self-made father.

Yes. Yes, well I don't know that his father was so self-made, but was certainly self-made. His father was a miller.

Mm. Quite successful on the scale of the time I think.

Yes probably. But not, not... I mean only just up in Yorkshire where we come from. I, I just visited where, just last year actually, where my grandfather was born. Because it was a row of quite small cottages, and he was born in one of the cottages, and they still survive. And, the mill, his first mill still survives, which is at the side. And somebody's bought them, and this of course is very funny to us as a family, have turned it into a pub. And my grandfather was a very strict teetotaler, you know, and the fact that his house has been turned into a pub is just hilarious. Anyway, I went and visited it, and the people who owned it were very nice. I said the relationship. And they've got a photograph of him, and my grandmother, over the, the fireplace in the bar. You know, he must be whirling in his grave. And, they were very friendly and nice. I don't think they knew the sort of, cynical thing of it, [laughs] of the fact that he hated drink.

There's a comparable story, the people who founded Hollywood, the original ranch land that was bought and turned into, laid out...

Yah.

...as a suburb, or a little township, in 1888, was indeed done by Temperance people.

Oh really?

Yah, there were strict ordinances, no saloons.

Aha.

And there had to be churches, and things like that.

Oh yah.

[laughs] How disappointed they would be.

Would be now, yes, that's right.

The Wilcox family, after whom Wilcox Boulevard is named.

Oh yes. Ah yah.

Well I must say, it's absolutely fascinating, because so often people refer to Uncle Arthur in terms of great affection...

Yes, that's true, that's true.

...these days, looking back.

Yes. Yeah, Ronnie Neame and people like that, you know, always called him Uncle Arthur, it's really strange.

Mm.

But... So he was very proud of me in the end, you know, because I'd got my Oscar and this and that, and, you know, he was...

[0:23:17]

Yes. Did you actually ask him, or, or was it by implication that you wanted a job in the business?

No, I asked him.

You asked him?

Eventually, yes. Because, I very quickly got to the conclusion that most people get to, is that fact that without help from somewhere, you don't get into the business. And

you can have help from the cleaner, or you could have help from Uncle Arthur. It really wasn't much better either way. I mean you know, they couldn't get you into the union. I mean the union wouldn't want to know about me really, being his niece.

Mm. Well the union I suppose in those days was immensely concerned about him.

Yes.

Although I think in retrospect he turns out to have been a very benevolent influence.

Oh I think so. But you know, there was monopoly hanging round and all that kind of thing at that time, and, I don't know. But anyway, I mean my whole thing was, I just wanted to get in. I didn't want any help once I'd got in; I just wanted to get in the stepping-stone of getting in, you know.

Yes.

So I thought, well why bang your head against a brick wall and write round twelve million letters, when you could actually just write to Uncle Arthur. And maybe. But as I say, he didn't get me in immediately; he kept on not seeing me. Because obviously I had to go and see him and talk to him about it, with my mother. And, it took me, as I say, nearly two years to get actually in, him to give me a job, and listen where he put me: he put me in Religious Films, GHW, in where they were doing sound, with Pat Heath and everybody like that. Because he thought that I was only coming in for the glamour and that would soon stop me.

Yes.

But I, I loved it there. I mean I was actually handling film for the first time in my life, and...

Was he a sort of, what, sort of Victorian survival into the twentieth century, or...?
Because, although he does, he seems very benevolent as an individual, a man of great integrity and honesty...

Yah.

Nevertheless, he was very strict and stern, as, as one reads about him, one hears about him.

Well I think there was, really his religious convictions were. I think as a person, not particularly.

Mm.

From what I knew of him. I mean you know, he did a lot of sports and stuff like that. I don't think...

Were family gatherings at all dour, were they...?

No. Oh no. No no. But there wasn't drink.

No. No. Not even at Christmastime for example?

No. No. My family, yes, we weren't brought up at all like that. My father wasn't a teetotaler or anything. My mother was. My mother never drank, but I don't think it was particularly because she, of the way she had been brought up. She really didn't like it, and she had a, suffered with bad stomach and I think... So she didn't, she didn't really. And that's why my mother was always called Pussy, because I discovered that Pussyfoot was a person that didn't drink. And so I christened her that when I was a little girl. And she's always known to everybody as Pussy.

[0:26:09]

There was a radio programme not so long ago with, in which your cousin would have – one of J Arthur's daughters spoke about...

Oh. Oh Shelah, Shelagh wasn't it, yes.

Shelagh, yes.

Yah.

Yes. And she sounds really rather forbidding, as...

I think that they are rather forbidding, those two cousins of mine. I've never known them that well. Erky's[ph-Ursula] the more fun one, the older daughter. But I don't see much of them. And I do see quite a lot of my cousins, some of them. I was down the Sunday before last with Johnnie Rank, who's Uncle Rowley's[ph] son, was giving a little memorial thing for his mother. And, so I do see... And the Askews, who are Aunty Dolly's family, I see them a lot, and that sort of thing. But, I've never really known Ursula and Shelagh very well. And I think she is probably quite forbidding.

Well, the, the strong religious belief [inaudible].

She has that as well, does she?

Very much so, yes.

Oh yah.

[0:27:06]

A way of life. Well, is there anything more to say about J Arthur, or...?

Well not really I don't think. My uncle Jimmy, I did want to say that, but, I think that he, it was partly due to him being a flour miller that, that England wasn't rationed for bread during the war.

Yes.

Which I always think was a really nice thing to have your family responsible for.

Indeed.

Films were OK, but the fact of bread on your table is somewhat more important. And it apparently was Uncle Jimmy's foresight in stocking up wheat and stuff before the war started that enabled us to have bread, you know, un-rationed bread.

Yes.

And that's something I'm really proud about actually.

We didn't have white bread during the war as I recall either, it was a sort of murky colour that, presumably, everything went into it. You know, I don't mean extraneously.

No no no. No no. Well I tell you some... It's funny you should say that, because my mother never, until quite late on in her life, we never had brown bread, we always had white. And she said, 'Oh well, you know, the old story in the mills in the old says,' I'm talking about the real old days, 'was that all the sweepings went into the brown bread.'

Mhm. And mouse droppings. [laughs]

And the mouse droppings and stuff, all went into the brown bread. So, we, I was kind of brought up like that. I mean I, I never eat white bread now, but, except French

bread. But you know, that was the old mill thing, that you didn't eat the brown bread. And what went into it was what was given to the horses anyway, that was taken out of the, you know, and wasn't in white bread, was only what the horses got. [laughs] But I don't think there's anything like that nowadays.

[0:28:40]

No. So I, I didn't realise that there was no bread ration during the war.

No. No. Or after the war, there was never any bread rationing. And England, it was a big staple diet of England, I remember.

Oh yes.

Because I used to spend a lot of time, you know, round with the stable boys and things like that and round at their families and things, and, you know, I, I... Because we didn't eat bread to quite the extent they ate it, but I mean people would... Teatime, you know, this high tea that people used to eat, they used to have, a whole loaf would just go like that.

That's right. Yes, bread and jam and...

Yah.

...and all sorts of...

And that great thing, that... Heart-stopping.

Fish paste.

Fish paste, and what was that...? Bread and dripping.

Mhm. Oh yes, yes.

Because when I get...

[laughs] But then[??] was just seen, seen off by [inaudible].

I was going to say, that must be the heart-stopper of all time. I loved that. When I first worked at Pinewood it was the big freeze-up year, is that '47?

It would have... Yes, yes it was. I was, I was in Egypt then, so it was, I missed all that, yes.

And, I managed to get myself... Well I'll tell you how I got myself, because I worked at Religious Films.

Mm. Well take it slowly so, [inaudible].

Yes. yes. Right.

[0:29:43]

You were going to say about '47.

Yes, '47 was when I got to Pinewood, and was working in the cutting rooms, and they hadn't got adequate heating. I mean it was absolutely freezing cold. It was the coldest it had ever been ever I think. And the synchronisers, which are made of metal, your hands froze to, with the cold. It was just incredible.

Mm.

And, the only way one could keep warm was to drink tea, hot tea, which we held our hand round from the canteen. And you know British canteens, they were open from like, 10 to 10.30, and not at all again until, you know, 12 to 1 or whatever.

[inaudible].

Yes. And, and it wasn't, in those days we didn't, like now when you make your own coffee in the cutting rooms and things, you didn't do that sort of thing then. God knows why nobody thought of doing it. And we used to huddle round, these hot cups of tea, and drink these, and eat these big slabs of bread and dripping.

Was this down in the stables at Denham?

No this was at Pinewood.

Oh Pinewood. Uh-huh.

Across at the canteen.

Right.

I was in those cutting rooms, you know, that faced over, the old ones. And, we used to go across there. And we used to spend the whole half hour, we were meant to spend ten minutes, because we were so cold, holding this... But I always remember the bread and dripping and thinking, God! I mean, I don't think people eat that any more, do they?

Well I hope not.

Because it must have been... I, I was about eighteen or nineteen then, so I suppose it didn't really matter, but...

Mm. Well nobody knew in those days.

No. And it kept you warm, all that fat, really kept you warm.

I had a pleural effusion – this is an aside only, but I had a pleural effusion when I was in the Army, so they sent me back, and, the idiot doctor here said, ‘Well what you ought to do is to eat lots of fat.’

[laughs] Yes. It’s right, they didn’t...

The doctor prescribing...

Yah.

[0:31:25]

Anyway, there you were, and so finally your uncle just...

Put me into Religious Films, to, well...

How would he have gone about that? Would he have given a direct instruction, or a gentle suggestion, or...?

Do you know... A gentle suggestion, I would think, he would say, I would have thought he said something like, to... I’ve forgotten the guys who ran that now.

Was it Captain Walker?

Yes, Captain Walker. And, somebody Norman?

Well it was...

GHW. Walker. No, it must have been Norman, Norman Walker. Norman Walker.
GH... Somebody Hague was it? Can’t remember. But he had somebody in there that was a kind of friend, I think his name was Hague, the H of it. And, I think he’d have said, you know, I’ve got this niece who’s really keen to get in, but, you know, let’s...’
I guess he said, ‘Is there a place for her there? Have you got any, you know, job that

she could do?’ Because I was doing, actually I was quite busy when I got there, because I did all sorts of things, like I worked, they were doing this special sound recording there for the Sunday Thoughts and things like that, so I learnt to, I was a projectionist really. I always say this in my biographies, that I started as a projectionist. Which I did. But not in a cinema, but I worked the projector while they were doing this special sound recording. And then I used to help with the films that were being sent out to the churches in, like a library. So when they came back, I used to check them through and, and I learnt to patch them. In the old days when you didn’t have tape, you used to scrape the film with the cement and put little patches on, and, and you know, do that sort of thing. I did all sorts of odd jobs there, you know, whatever they wanted me to do, I did. So, you know. But really, the one thing I didn’t do much of was make movies really, because they weren’t... They made the odd Sunday Thought, but they were cut elsewhere really.

Did you accept that though, as a beginning, as a sort of entry[??-33:18]?

Yes, oh I loved it there.

Mm.

I adored it there, I enjoyed every minute I worked there. They came round... It was a non-union place, that was the other reason, because he said, ‘I can’t get you into one of the studios anyway because I can’t get you into the union.’ And I knew quite a lot about that situation by then. Anyway, they, after I’d been there about nine months they came round, the union organisers, and said, ‘We don’t like these pockets of people working out like this, we want you all to join the union.’ Well the people I was working with didn’t want to join the union at all, except me. I said, ‘Hand me the form.’ I filled it in and signed it. Once I was in the union, that was the only other time I, I spoke to Uncle Arthur, and I said, ‘I’m in the union now, and I’d like to go to a studio, get into the studios.’ And he got me an interview with Tom White at Pinewood Studios, and that’s the last time I ever used any family influence at all. He got me the interview. He didn’t get me the job, but he got me an interview, and they

needed a second assistant on *End of the River*. And, they said to me, 'What experience have you had?' And I have to say, I lied in my teeth. Because I had had hardly any experience. Well I wasn't going to lose the job. So, I said, 'Well...' They said, they actually asked me, they said, 'Can you splice and wind film and check this and do dailies and do, do rushes, and...?' They even asked me if I could do opticals and things like that, which you certainly don't have to do as a second. I said yes to it all. Noted it all in my mind, and went and did a crash course. Because GBI were next door to us, and I knew all the editors there.

Mm.

And I had spent quite a lot of time up in their cutting rooms, where they were making documentaries, watching them cutting and, talking to them and that sort of thing. And I rushed up there, and I said, 'I want to learn how to order opticals, lay tracks,' and do all these things they'd asked me if I could do, in one quick week. So I went well equipped to start at Pinewood Studios.

[0:35:12]

How long had you been at GHW?

Nine months.

Ah. Yes.

And, anyway, the amusing thing is that I got there my first morning, and the one thing I knew was how to splice, of course, on a hand splicer.

Yes.

So they said, 'Well there's that pile of splicing to do. The joining room is...' Joining. I've got, I get muddled. 'The joining room is just down there on the right, just take it and go and join it.' Off I set with my pile. Opened the door, and they were foot

joiners. I had never seen a foot joiner in my life. So I sat and looked at this, and of course, that was all the same. And I got them open, but I couldn't get them shut. How I didn't chop my finger off, I don't know, because I was pulling them with my foot. But there were two joiners in each room. So I was sitting at this one, and soon after I got there somebody came and sat in the one in front. So I just watched to see what they were doing. And then I just copied them. But you know, I was so full of it and so excited and everything, and I thought, oh my God! I'm going to fall down and I'm going to have to ask how to do the very first thing. Then, I had a, a trainee under me, a New Zealand guy, quite a lot older than me, who knew a great deal more than me [laughs] about it. So I had to bluff my way through him.

This would have been what, forty...

Seven.

Seven. Oh, that late?

Yah.

Ah.

Yah. This was '47.

Right. Well that's quite a gap then isn't it. Because...

Well I... '46 I must have gone... No, maybe it was '46.

Mm.

And, it was probably '46 when I went there.

It was quite a long time before you got to, to GHW then?

Yes.

I thought you were still in your teens, but not.

No. No no, I was older than that, yes.

Mm. Because it was quite different during the war I suspect, it was easier to...

Well I did my nursing for a time.

...[inaudible].

Yes.

Right.

Maybe it was during the war. You got in easily?

No no no. No, because I was looking for a job in '48, which was the time of the collapse.

Yah.

When, you know, your uncle's bank debt, it just became unmanageable.

Yah. Yah.

John Davis took over, Denham closed, the great retrenchment. Yet another collapse of the British film industry.

Industry. Yes. I've lived through so many of them. I think this must be the worst. I mean... I, I mean I didn't go to America because of the recession here or anything, because actually when I left, I'd just done *Lady Jane*, and, I remember when we, Trevor Nunn and I used to have lunch in the Pinewood restaurant, there was Alan Parker there making a film, there was Ridley Scott there making a film, I mean, the British film industry was booming at that time. I mean, about six months after I left the country, the whole thing headed downhill. It was extraordinary.

Well it's always been boom and bust, but the problem now is that the Government just doesn't care.

No. No. Well maybe, David Mellor does seem to care a bit more.

Yes.

I'm of course quite involved now, because I'm working with Richard Attenborough, I get all the inside information as to what's happening, you know.

And Sydney Samuelson too, the inside track [inaudible].

Yes. Yah.

[0:38:19]

Right. So that, I mis-perceived your entry. It's... You said Tom White. He was an independent producer at Pinewood wasn't he?

No, he... Yes, he was I suppose, yes. He was head of production wasn't he?

Um... Well, production management I would say.

Yes. Yes, yes.

Yes.

Working... And then Ernie Sss... Who was his assistant? Holdsworth? Somebody, Holdsworth?

Oh I don't know. I wasn't part of that. I knew some of the, the individual units such as, well...

Well there were four.

[inaudible-38:53].

There was Sydney Earle[??] working there.

Right.

Archers working there.

Mhm.

Lauder and Gilliat.

And, Gabriel Pascal.

Gabriel Pascal. And also... No, there was one other.

Oh yes, Ian Dalrymple.

Ian Dalrymple, that's right.

Wessex.

Yah, Wessex, yah.

And, wasn't it, was it not, and I could be wrong about this, but James Archibald as managing director?

No. Not then. I think he came in later.

Came in later.

Yes.

Right. So who would it have been, who...

Because then, a whole lot of people... When Gainsborough closed, was it Gainsborough or Shepherd's Bush or whatever it was closed, a whole lot of people from there came over and took the jobs away from the people at Pinewood. Like, Arthur Alcott came in, in Tom White's place really. And he wasn't nearly as nice as Tom White, who was a dear person, I liked him a lot. And...

I'm a little hazy, well I'm quite hazy about it, but, Independent Producers was one of the major operations there, but then that I think was, either disbanded by John Davis, or, it began to fall [inaudible-40:03] basically.

Yes. Yah. I think maybe it was disband... But they were the...

And they all went off to Korda...

Yes. Yah.

...at Shepperton. So there were two, as I remember, principal activities. One was under Sydney Box, who came in...

Yes.

...from Bush.

Yah. That's right.

And the other was under Earl St John.

Yes. Yah.

Taken over Two Cities.

Yah.

[0:40:24]

Right. So you were attached to Independent Producers [inaudible]?

I suppose so. I, well I was at Archers, yes, who...

Right. You mentioned The End of the River.

Yes.

That doesn't ring a bell.

Oh it was a film directed by Derek Twist, with Sabu and Derrick Farr, and, Derrick...
no, David Farrar, in it.

Mm.

About a little boy and, elephant and things, about, in Africa. And they did some
shooting out there. And it was edited by a guy called Brett Porter, who, I don't know

whether he's still alive, he probably is, he wouldn't have been that old. But he was, not a very experienced editor. He eventually went to Australia, I don't know what became of him then. I kept in touch with him a bit, he was very nice. But, when Micky Powell and Emeric Pressburger saw the film, they weren't that happy with it. So they decided to get their, their special editor, Reggie Mills, to recut it. Which was quite interesting for me in a way, even though I was a bit naïve at the time about those kind of things. But, because, an assistant called Dave Powell was the first assistant, and Reggie Mills didn't like Dave Powell. So, they sent me up to work with Reggie Mills, as a first assistant really, on my first movie. And, I got on fine with Reggie actually, we got... You know, I had a really tough time, I was terrified of him. He used to come in in the morning, with his little lunchbox, sit down at the, at the Moviola, and, he used not to move all day. He might go, he'd go down for rushes, and he might go onto the floor if Micky sent for him or Derek Twist or somebody sent for him, but other than that, he never moved. And of course he got fatter and fatter. I watched the rolls on his neck getting fatter, poor guy. Eventually he had a heart attack. We became quite good friends. But I remember he gave me the most terrible row once. I came back... It's unbelievable now how strict it was in those days you know. Assistants got in on time and...

Yes.

Didn't talk much unless they were talked to, and didn't fraternise that much with the editors. Not like now.

Oh, hierarchical. Well it survives I guess with the camera crew, because there still is that business of governor is there?

Yeah, that's right. Yah. Yah.

That kind of subservience.

Yah.

Mm.

But... Because I got, went off, we used to play French cricket in the lunch break you know, and I went off playing French cricket one day; came back five minutes late from lunch, rather sweaty, you know, my hair hanging down, puffing and, sort of laughing, you know. And Reggie Mills said, you know, he was furious, he lay into me, absolutely wiped the ground with me. He said, 'How dare you come back five minutes late, looking like that. I mean either you're in the industry because you want to be and want to make movies, or you're here because you want to be social and, and out playing with your friends and all that kind of thing,' you know. Really chastised me. I mean if you, I think if you laid into an assistant these days, everybody would probably get up and leave, if you spoke to them like he spoke to me. But what good training that was. I was never late back. And he said, 'You're filthy dirty. Go and wash.' [laughs] I went off and washed, and came back, you know. Terrified. And then, after that, we became, or, you know, not after that, but I mean we slowly, I think he quite, he quite liked working with me, you know, I was fairly efficient and...

[0:43:35]

You got away with your crash course then did you?

Yes.

Yes.

Nobody ever discovered. Somehow I managed to, to get by, you know. A lot of by watching and, and learning as I went, you know. And, they had a lot of, of sound. But you see, I really didn't know cutting room routine. Because though I knew a lot of other things, and I had learnt a lot of useless things, like how to order opticals and things, which I would never need for another couple of years, I didn't really know about filing away trims and, labelling up boxes and all that. But, it doesn't take you

very long to learn that. So, I picked that up quickly. I mean labelling up boxes and things like that, anybody can do.

Yes, but, you, you need to see the routine I think[??-44:17].

Yes. Yes that's right. So I watched, you know. And, and mostly, we worked in a... I think it was helpful that we worked... Al, who was my assistant, or, my trainee, and I worked in another room. So my fumbling was not noticed by the first assistant, probably. And, you know, I would give Al jobs to do that he knew how to do. So that was a help.

And you were learning from...

From him.

...a trainee.

Yes. Yes yes, yes.

[0:44:42]

This was a period I suppose of, some considerable activity at Pinewood, was it not?

Oh yes.

Had Denham folded?

No, Denham was still open then.

Right. What, what was going on at Pinewood, and, the feel of the place, the atmosphere, the studio atmosphere?

It was pretty up when I first went there. What were they doing? Oh, David was doing *Oliver Twist*. Micky was doing, I guess it was *Red Shoes*. They were doing *Esther Waters*, those people, and Launder and Gilliat were doing *The Green Light*? Something...

Green for Danger.

Green for Danger, that's right, *Green for Danger*, yah. Yah. As far as I remember, those were the pictures that were there.

Yes, well these were all major productions.

Yes, exactly. So the place was really sizzling at that time.

Mhm.

And, all that time really. They shunted me across, after I had finished on *End of the River* they shunted me across... I, I was kind of, not exactly permanent staff but, I never actually didn't work. I went from picture to picture then, and if there wasn't a main picture for me to work on, I worked on, as a help-out on something. And because I ran everywhere, I was very popular. People, you know, an old editor called John Seabourne, always, who wasn't at that time really editing pictures, he was doing some re-cutting jobs and things, and couldn't get, hadn't....

[End of Track 1]

[Track 2]

Just backtracking.

Oh yes. There wasn't...

John Seabourne.

Yes. There was an old editor called John Seabourne, at that time was doing some re-cutting on films, not actually cutting a movie. I can't remember what he was doing. But whatever it was, he didn't have an assistant. So... He was always calling to other assistants who went by, you know, 'Oi, come here, could you go and fetch this,' or do that. And most of them said, 'No no, we're doing something else,' or we're working for somebody else. And I always said, 'Yes, sure, what do you want?' And I'd rush off and I'd get it for him and I'd bring it back. And, I was happy to do it, I mean I never thought of it as ever going to help me in life, but, you know, just, I just liked it, I was happy there and I was happy to do it, you know. And, so I, I did odd jobs here and odd jobs there. They sent me over to work with an editor called Doug Myers, who was married to Thelma Connell, Thelma Myers.

Thelma Connell, yes, she was Frank and Sidney's editor.

Yes, that's right. Well Doug was cutting a film, the name of which I don't remember, at Denham, and they said, 'Oh his, his assistant is sick. They want somebody to go over there just for a few days to help him.' So, I was sent over. And, I always remember this, because, he hadn't had an assistant for like, two or three days. And he had just taken all his trims, and he had just, hadn't hung anything up. He'd just piled them all into bins, like that, on top of each other. And he said, 'Right, here's the film.' He said, 'Please, sort it out and put it away.' You've never seen such a mess all your life. And it took me, I mean, ages to do it, but I did it, I got everything back exactly into its right order and, things. And it was very good training, jobs like that, you know, being sent to do odd things and that. So I worked on *Esther Waters*, sound

side, for a bit. I can't remember who with even now. And then, John Seabourne got the chance to cut *The History of Mr Polly*, for Tony Pelissier, who was a new director at that time, and Johnny Mills producing. And, he asked me to go as his first assistant. So you see, it pays off to, to do these odd jobs for people and be nice to people, you know.

Mhm.

Anyway, actually, then, a guy called Roger Cherrill came back from the Army, and you had to give somebody coming back from the Army their job back. And he had been a first assistant. So, that job was taken away from me. You can imagine my disappointment. And Roger Cherrill was given the job as first assistant. And I was back doing, I don't even know what now, back doing something else. And, anyway, it was, I mean it was really sad, because I was very fond of Roger and grew fond of him and that sort of thing, but, he then got polio and was very ill, and had to come off the film. So they then sent for me. So there I was as first assistant on *The History of Mr Polly*. And I did most of the film in fact.

Mhm.

[0:02:58]

And that was my first job as a first assistant. And then I went from there, then I did *Rocking Horse Winner*, which Tony Pelissier did, with John Seabourne, and which I did... John was marvellous to work for, because he, a) he taught you a lot, he taught me a great deal. I don't think he was the greatest editor ever, but he had a great panache for editing, great... I mean, he would... I don't know to describe it, but he wasn't pernickety and fiddly like some of the editors I've worked with, you know, he just sort of, he went with it, a dash, and he had great ideas and... And, completely fearless in his editing. He'd try anything. And I found that very stimulating, you know, to work with somebody like that. And he also was a mad keen gardener. So, I used to take all his notes for him in screenings, and sometimes he would say to me, 'Well I must get home before dark because I have the petunias to do,' and this, that

and the other. He said, 'Just finish the sequence for me.' So I often used to finish cutting the scenes for him, which was a marvellous experience for an assistant. And more so when we got onto *Rocking Horse Winner*, because, you know, he'd got more faith in what I was doing then. Even so much so that when he went off down to direct the second unit, I cut the film while he was away, without Tony Pelissier knowing, and Tony said, 'How did that scene get shot – cut? Because John's away isn't he?' I said, 'Yes. I did it.' And he said, 'It's fantastic,' you know. [laughs] And he was very full of praise which was nice. But... And then I did several other films. I did *Chiltern Hundreds* as a first with, I can't remember the name of the editor. And then I did... And then I worked on *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*. They had four editors working on that. And I was working with Jean Barker. Ralph Kemplen was the main editor. I had, I think he had Stan Fiferman or Gerry Hambling as his assistant, or both. And then they had Gerry Thomas working as one of the editors with the crew. Jean Barker working with the crew. And they had another editor but I can't remember who it was now. And we were all cutting different scenes. And that was quite interesting actually.

Why was that, do you remember? [inaudible 5:08]?

Because there was a rush to get it... Yes, to make a date.

Mm.

And Al Lewin had shot a whole heap of film, masses of film, and, you know, stuff on bullfighting and stuff like that that went on forever.

A curious film.

Yes. Yah, a very odd film. Oh I rather liked it, rather evocative. It had great moments in it, and then it kind of, dipped a bit. I always loved the opening when they found the bodies on the beach and the bell was tolling and...

Yes. He was Louis B Mayer's one college graduate I believe at Metro in the Thirties.

Really?

Yes. Yes.

I didn't know that.

So, he had a certain licence in what he was allowed to do [inaudible].

Oh I see.

Out of that came The Picture of Dorian Gray [inaudible]...

Oh yes. Yah. Yah.

...a literary subject.

Yes. Oh and he was deaf, he had one of these little things that you wore here, and so when you were arguing with him and he didn't want to hear you, he would just...

Just turn it off.

Just switch you off, yes. [laughs]

Sensible.

Yup.

[0:06:03]

The people who were working... Going back to your entry into Pinewood and what was going on then, is it fair to say that there were two kinds of, of technicians, the old-timers who had come up during the Thirties and [inaudible-6:18] primarily, and the young Turks who were suddenly carving a career? What was the feeling of the place? Was it, was it one of excitement and, as if the British film industry suddenly were burgeoning, and, it was a brave new world?

Yes. Yes it was fairly exciting there then I think. People were very enthusiastic. I don't remember the situation being as you first mentioned it. But maybe I wouldn't come across...

People like Seabourne for example...

Yes. Yah. Yah.

...who were around for a long time at that stage.

That's true. Yah.

Or Micky Powell for example who had been directing low budget material all during the Thirties.

Yah. Yah. Well they were given, I think a lot of them bit the hand that helped them in fact. I remember there was a lot of carping about Uncle Arthur for various reasons, I can't even remember why now.

Mm.

You know, and the monopoly. I remember all the monopoly stuff, because he was trying to exhibit his own films, and, you know, he bought Odeon and all that kind of thing. I remember a lot of that going on. But... I don't... I mean, there were... They seemed to be mixing the old and the young, because, actually all the directors working

there were about the same age group weren't they. I mean David had done what, two or three films, Micky had done two or three films. I suppose Ian Dalrymple's lot were the most fringe of them, the most new. And, because, Launder and Gilliat had done a few films. But they were all much the same, and they all come from much the same, not background actually, but, they all were much the same stage in their career, let's say.

That's right, yes. And they had all come up through their respective disciplines in the Thirties.

Yah.

And it was the war I think which gave them opportunities.

And then there was, then there was Denham. So I went over and did a couple of things at Denham. Because Denham was still going then. *The Chiltern Hundreds* I did at Denham.

Yes.

And then I went...

I've forgotten who directed that. Who was that, was that the Boultings?

No. Do you know, it's an awful thing, I've forgotten who directed it too. I'll remember, but I've forgotten at the moment.

Unimportant.

Clark, Bob Clark was the editor.

Bob Clark?

Was it Bob Clark? No.

Jim Clark?

No not Jim, he wasn't around then.

*No. I was thinking... Well, there was Robert Clark[ph] who was editor[??] at[??]
the BBC[??-8:42].*

No, it wasn't... No. His name's... I can see his face but I can't remember his name.

Not to worry, because it will be a matter of record.

Yes, yah.

[0:08:53]

*We can check. I'm curious, did you ever discuss what was happening in the industry
at that time with your uncle?*

No. No, I tried to disassociate myself from them. I didn't want, which was told me later, that some of the people thought I was there as a spy for him, which I didn't know at the time, luckily. So I kept a very low profile. I wanted to be accepted as, as a worker. I didn't want to play on who I was at all.

I ask because, as you say, there was an enormous amount of criticism of him, or concern I think, worry...

Yes. Yah.

...precisely what he was up to.

Mm.

But if anything, I, I would imagine there were two greater villains involved, if villain is the right word. One certainly would be C M Woolf, although he had died hadn't he, [inaudible].

Yes. Yes.

And, the burgeoning John Davis.

John Davis, yes. Well he wasn't around at that particular time, but sort of came up during that time I suppose. Yes.

I think he took over in '48, didn't he?

I thought it was later than that. I don't remember him around until...

[inaudible] that time.

Yes, maybe.

As I say, I think the National Provincial suddenly decided enough was enough.

Yes. Yah.

[0:10:09]

I was curious whether your uncle, what his primary motivation was, whether it was one of altruism in funding, or strengthening, creating a viable British film industry, or whether it was just a, a business enterprise.

Don't know. I think it was, you know, became a genuine interest I think to make... I think he, he really wanted to make British films compete with American films, I think

that was what he really wanted to do. But not, I mean not from a money point of view except that he was, he had that kind of Rank think that they like to succeed in business, and they have a kind of, business acumen. But, I don't think it was for money. You see the problem with Rank's flour mill, which he also worked in, was the fact that it really was run by Uncle Jimmy, and my grandfather I think was still alive too, or had been. I mean he had been running it and then Uncle Jimmy ran it, and, there really wasn't that much for Uncle Arthur to do to expand, and I think he was a very expanding kind of person, and he wanted to have... So that when this presented itself to him in a very small way to begin with, just as a means of getting his Religious Films out, he then became interested in it, and I'm sure competitive, and wanted to make it succeed on that level, but not that he wanted to make money per se out of it. But he wanted... He... I think he was persuaded by whomever that British films could be as good as any in the world, and that we had film-makers who could do that, which is why he picked out which were the best film-makers. And he had, I mean he had a marvellous set-up at that time, because then he had Two Cities working at, with, under Del Giudice at Denham. And then he had Gainsborough. And then he, he had an interest in Ealing as well. So he had different sorts of, on principle...

That's right, bit by bit he, he picked up the entire British film industry.

Yes. Yah.

With the exception of ABPC.

Yah. But I don't know that he would have had that much influence creatively on what they were doing. I'm sure he didn't.

No, several people have said that they would screen finished films for him and for Davis, I suppose this came a little later, and invariably they would both walk out without saying a word, and this would be totally destroying.

[laughs] Yes.

Hamlet was one.

Really?

And, The Red Shoes was another.

Really?

Micky Powell [inaudible-12:33].

Yes.

And neither one said a word.

Said a word.

And, I've forgotten who told me the story on Hamlet. And then it turned out subsequently that, Rank said to someone that they never would comment, [inaudible].

Because they were being quoted or something.

Right.

Yah.

[0:12:52]

I suppose if anything, retrospectively, this is one of the high spots of the British film industry, and, the suspicion of him was due, what, I suppose he was the governor, the gaffer, [inaudible] inevitable, or...

I suppose so. I mean I...

Money man.

Yes. Yah, I suppose there was something like that. And then, you know, these people, when he had tried to restrict their money and things like that, then they got very up in arms. I mean looking back on it, Ronnie Neame and people like that remember it as a golden age, but I don't think they all did at the time. I mean I think though they kind of did, but they were also kicking because they weren't maybe allowed to do exactly what they wanted to do all the time, you know, like spoilt children. Because they were pretty spoilt then.

That's true. Well arrogant, yes.

Arrogant, you know, and particularly people like Micky Powell and that sort of thing, who was always arrogant anyway when...

Well I was going to say that, they didn't really...

I don't think they appreciated how good they had it actually.

I think that's true. And they, they didn't conform to systems. I'm not sure there were systems, but... Well that's not true, there were systems. People like Frank Godwin desperately tried to, to run a cost accounting off[??] independent producers.

Yah. Yah.

But they used to go massively over budget.

Mm, that's right.

They were very self-indulgent long before[??], weren't they?

Yes. Yah. Yah, very. And I think that maybe people tried to restrict them a bit on that and they got very uppity about it and things, you know.

And the union was [inaudible].

And the union, I was going to just say, the union was to me a revelation.

Yah,

Total revelation. I was absolutely, I went to union meetings. I'd never seen people talk like that before in my life. I mean, fascinating to me. I remember being out on strike, I can't remember why, outside Denham Studios, I must have been working on something there, in the pouring rain. And I said, 'Could I pop down to my cutting room to get my shoes?' which I'd left the night before. I didn't know we were going to be locked out. And they said, 'Certainly not.' [laughs] You know, you can't, you can't step onto it. And I suddenly thought, my God! this is really serious, you know, these were people who I knew. I said, 'Well can't I just nip down and get my shoes?' They said, 'No you can't step over this line. [laughs]

Denham had the famous works committee, did it not?

Yes, so you had the Batchelors.

[inaudible-14:57] Bert Batchelor, [inaudible].

Yes, that's right, Bert Batchelor. They were great speakers, those people.

Mhm.

I used to go home to, I was living at home, to my mother, who was very square Conservative, and tell her, you know, all about, all these speeches. Very impressed.

And I became quite left-wing, you know, which totally shocked – I still am – totally shocked my family. And, I think there was a lot of it. Part of it was nursing, because I met a lot of people who used to talk to me, I used to be cleaning the fluff off the beds and things and they used to talk to me about politics and things. I saw a whole other world from the one I'd grown up with. And, when I went into the industry, you know, they were all going across to Russia and things like that, you know. I think Bert Batchelor was one of the first people invited across to, to Russia, to Moscow as a delegation or something.

Yes.

And they were great speakers, I could see them sway meetings.

[0:15:50]

Mm. There's a photograph I saw recently of, it's an offset still from In Which We Serve, and it's quite extraordinary the appearance of, of the people, the workmen.

Mm.

The construction people. They are wearing caps and chokers and, no collars, that sort of thing. And they're almost like nineteenth century artisans.

Oh really?

And that's, as late as 1940.

Yes. Yah.

1942. But they were I suppose, Fred Kites to a man, weren't they, or people like Bert Batchelor were.

Yah.

If you, you know, I'm All Right Jack, the character in...

Yes. Yes.

...Peter Seller's play.

Yes. Yes.

[0:16:35]

Mm. So you got involved in, in industrial action?

Oh yes, two or three times.

Was it very frequent?

At that time there was quite a lot, yes. And one or two scares where we were nearly out, and then we didn't quite, something was saved at the last moment. I was out on, at Denham and at Pinewood and then again later on at Shepperton, and then we had, one or two kind of scares at Shepperton, and then we didn't come out.

What would they come out over?

Money, mostly.

Was it?

Yah. Yes.

Not, not demarcation disputes, or...?

Well, there were some demarcation disputes, and there were some, what do they call that, minimum crew problems, and things like that I seem to remember. Exploitation. We were all being exploited. I couldn't understand that, because it seemed to be the last thing we were, was being exploited.

Well yes, when you think, the rates of pay in the industry and the abuses.

Yah.

[0:17:35]

In fact they got away with murder. Well then, coming back to your career. As an assistant you... Are there any memorable... Well first of all I suppose we ought to talk about some of the individuals who you're meeting now at this stage, people like Micky Powell and Emeric Pressburger. Do you have memories of them?

Oh yes, Micky Powell, I have nothing but unpleasant memories of him. [laughs]

Oh really?

No, not really. But he was... It was quite interesting really because I had been told that he, you know, really wiped the floor with editing assistants and that sort of thing, and I was tough. But he certainly tried to. Two or three times in rushes he would endeavour to get me, you know, meet me down in front of the whole unit. He used to really... You know that ringing voice of his? He'd make you look a complete fool in front of people. And he loved doing that. And I went on the floor a few times and watched him. I, I watched him reduce an actor, a donkey, leading a donkey. I don't think it was really an actor, I think it was just somebody who had come with his donkey, to tears, on the set. He was a real bully, Micky.

Yes. Did you ever figure out why he was so, so...?

Insecurity I would think. I don't know. I don't know. Made him feel, gave him a kind of confidence he had to have I think to go on. I don't really know. But he used to be, as I say, sometimes he was quite nice to me, but no, I never got close to him at all. Didn't feel that I ever got really to grips with him as a person. I helped out on *Red Shoes* for a bit, for a time in the cutting room, and that sort of thing, you know. [pause] And I, I admired his work, but I didn't find him a particularly congenial person.

Pressburger was the interesting...

I liked, got on very well with Pressburger. Much better. He was much nicer. And I met him once when I was skiing in Austria and he was making a film and, he invited me to come to dinner, and that sort of thing. I found him much easier to talk to and a much... I think they were very good together, I think a lot of people spark each other off in an extremely good way and I think those two did, you know.

Yes. Yes. But the, the interesting things I think in the Archers films all stemmed from Pressburger.

Mm.

That kind of, slanted[??-19:53] view of the world.

Yes.

Mitteleuropian isn't it, it's...

Yes.

It's[??] European intellectuals [inaudible].

Yah. Yah.

The movies, and, all [inaudible-20:03] to your uncle for financing, Colonel Blimp for example...

Yes, yah.

...which I think is one of the best British films ever.

Mm.

[0:20:13]

Had you met David Lean by this time?

I had met him, yes. Yah, I hadn't really, I didn't know him very well.

No.

It happened, the same kind of thing that happened with Roger Cherrill coming back from the war, happened on *Oliver Twist* too. Because, I was going to get the job as second assistant to Jack Harris on *Oliver Twist*, which was, you know, really exciting. [laughs] And then Clive Donner came back from the war, and they took him on as second assistant, who became one of my best friends in fact.

You never got bounced[??], you, you stayed around all this time during[??] the picture?

Yes, yes. Yes, doing odd jobs here and there and, you know. Working on the sound sometimes, picture sometimes. You know, I just thought it was very important to keep busy, you know, keep being around the studios. Once I became a first assistant I went back to being a second once, just to keep in the industry, you know.

[0:21:10]

The great days of Two Cities is over[??] by this time I suppose[??], [inaudible].

No, I think they were still going. They were making *Hamlet*.

Aha. Yes.

And what else were they making over there? I think, weren't *History of Mr Polly* and things like that *Two Cities*?

They were Two Cities, yes.

I think they were. Phil Samuels was kind of, in charge of production.

Was Giudice still running?

I don't think he was running it then, no. I think he was gone then.

Because I think he was one of those whose prodigality and also dishonesty had...

Yes. Yah.

He'd gotten away with quite a lot of money.

Yah.

Who else was around then? Well there was Frank and Sidney who were...

Frank and Sidney, I, I, you know you, if you're working there, you kind of get to know these people, but you don't get to know them very well. I got to know Ian Dalrymple quite well because, John Krish, his editor, and I became quite good friends. And... So I got to know Ian, and I worked for a time on *Esther Waters*, on the sound side. Quite a long time on that actually. So I got to know Ian. But I wouldn't say I

knew these people really well, any of them really. I thought David Lean was one of the most attractive men I had met in my life. I remember him asking me to do something for him once, and, you know, my knees were knocking. He was so fascinating in those days.

Mm.

They did... They did kind of ask you to do things in those days, you know, I mean, he was just walking through the cutting room block and I was walking through and he stopped me and said, could I got and take a message for him or something. I mean I knew him, but not well.

Yes.

And I suppose you, just any runner would do, gofer or whatever I kind of was then.

[0:23:01]

Mhm. Any outstanding memories or, or recollections, anecdotes, of that time, that give us an insight into the way the industry was run, or operated, not run?

I don't know really. There was... It was extremely happy then. I think there was much...

Is that memory, or was it actually so?

I think it was actually so, because I think it was much less pressurised.

Mm.

I think people weren't nearly so frightened for their jobs as they are now.

But you say Reggie Mills gave you a very hard time at one point. Now...

But in a really stimulating, good way. I mean I didn't think there was anything wrong with what he was doing there, I mean I think that, I don't think assistants should come back late from lunch with their hair all over their faces and sweating.

Well I certainly agree with that. I mean, you shouldn't have Radio 1 blasting out all the time.

Well, and that sort of thing, you know. So... I don't think what he did was particularly wrong. And the fact that, I mean, that Micky Powell gave me a hard time really. Reggie was always very, really quite nice and respectful, but he wasn't warmly friendly. I got warmly friendly with him because I bumped into him in the south of France actually, and we went and had dinner, he was there with his wife, he and his, and I was there staying with my brother and sister-in-law. And we all went to dinner and got friendly together, and then Reggie and I were kind of, good friends from then on. But I never got that closely friendly with him at the time.

Mm.

I mean, and the cutting room assistants seemed to have much more fun with each other in those days too. I mean I had, I had a fairly rough time, when you look at it, and the fact that they, because they were always putting me in bins and rolling me into the middle of the car park and leaving me with my feet in the air and things like that. But you know, it was, it was all done in good humour, and, and fun, you know. Then they used to put me in the bin and balance me. So, I was a good sport, so that they were all, I got teased a lot, you know. They used to put me in the bin and they used to build it up on top of tables, so if I moved a tiny bit I would crash down. I'm surprised I never hurt myself. I cut my head open on a window once when they were chasing me from one room to another. But, it was much more, that seemed to be, you know, that kind of fun stuff seemed to be going on. And yet we worked very hard. We worked long hours, but not...

Schedules were longer though I suppose, weren't they?

I think so. Though they didn't, didn't seem to be the same kind of, I don't know what it is. I mean people are happy in the industry now, but, there seemed to be much more fun in those days that I remember. I used to sit along the, you know it's two-tiered, and I used to sit along the balcony of those cutting rooms which were opposite the offices, sunbathing my legs. I used to pull my skirt up to here and sunbathe my legs. And they ran seriously across from the art department – from the accounts department, wouldn't you know, and they said, would I mind covering up my legs because I was putting them all off their work. [laughs]

[inaudible].

But from a work point of view, I mean, one of the most interesting things was what I spoke earlier, was really, having a film taken over by one editor from another and watching the difference that Reggie Mills made in pulling that film together, which, you know, Brett hadn't been able to do. And that was interesting. But I was so new in the industry that I think if that had happened on, like, the second or third movie, I would have been able, appreciated it more, and understood more what he was doing in fact.

[0:26:33]

Mm. Two questions, one about the primary influences upon you, I would think one of whom must have been Reggie Mills.

Mhm.

Who were the perceived masters of editing?

Well for my mind, Jack Harris was, you know, the one that I, didn't exactly form myself on, but Jack Harris was the one I would like to be like, because I thought he was an amazingly sensitive editor. And I loved the work he did.

Mhm.

But of course he was trained by David Lean, so, you know, and David was very much involved in his own films. But, I would say Jack Harris kind of had the most influence, of anybody. And John Seabourne, had a great influence on me. Because he taught me not to be too respectful of film, you know.

Mm. What was... Can we be a little more precise about the quality that Harris had, or Seabourne had? If it's the sensitivity, how did that manifest itself in his work?

Well I just thought that he got, the way he, he handled actors' performances, that he got the very best out of... I mean I don't know what he had, but he seemed to, to always get lovely little nuances of looks, and little, little bits, the way he would cut in little shots and things like that, to help tell a story. I think he was a marvellous storytelling editor, I suppose that's it. And John Seabourne had that, but in a much more rough-and-ready way. But he did, he had that. I mean, because some editors really are storytellers, you have to be able to tell a story in pictures.

What did they have to work with, what sort of material was coming into the cutting room? Was it an enormous amount of footage?

Well it varied from film to film.

Yes.

And director to director.

Wasn't there a general kind of, well massive coverage in those days of medium shots, close shots, two shots, singles?

I don't think so.

No?

I mean I wouldn't think David Lean ever shot masses of stuff, because, he always had a fairly clear idea. I mean he'd shoot masses of stuff on a battle or, something like that, but in a dialogue scene, he'd shoot a lot of cover.

Yes. I think David Lean is atypical in almost every respect, isn't he?

I suppose so. But I don't remember on *Red Shoes*, which I was, as I say, I was an extra assistant for a few months I suppose, on it, I don't remember excessive material on that really. On *Esther Waters*, there seemed to be never ending material on that, but were always re-shooting or changing. I mean that went on for ever, and then was a disaster.

Yes.

But it went on for ever and ever. And they were always reshooting stuff on it. But how much of that, of the original material... And I don't think... And Launder and Gilliat I think were very, not sparse but I'm sure that they never over-shot material. So I don't... People like Gabby Pascal and that sort of thing, I think they shot thousands.

But Gabby was a charlatan.

Yah.

He knew absolutely nothing, and, and had no talent.

So just... No. So he just shot. And I think that... I'm trying to think of other directors who were working. I think, oddly enough, more of the directors maybe who were working at Denham were, shot on and on, and shot a lot of material. As I say, I

think Ian Dalrymple probably did on *Esther Waters*, because, it obviously was not going well so he was having to...

Do you remember, you said that he became a friend, so what were his [inaudible-30:09]?

Well not a great friend. I mean I got to know him quite well. I wouldn't call him a friend.

Well I was going to ask you what his strengths if any were. Because he's a forgotten character now isn't he.

Yes. Yah. Great...

He was both an editor and a writer.

Yes. I would say a great integrity really, I think he was a very sincere man, very kind of quiet, not at all flamboyant. Not like the others, who were all fairly flamboyant in their own ways, he was much quieter. And Derek Twist, who did, directed the first film, he was similar to that too.

Now he had been an editor[inaudible-30:37].

Yes. Yah. And... I mean what struck me, I always remember when I first went... So many of these people like those two particularly weren't at all like my idea of what a film director was like, you know.

Mm. Well, you have a recollection of what your idea of a film director was, [inaudible]?

Well David Lean, exactly, would personify a film director to me.

David Lean rather than Josef von Sternberg for example?

Yes, I think, yes, both. Both.

Cecil B DeMille[??], mm.

Yes, they were film directors too. Yah. And William Wyler and people like that. I was a great admirer of Wyler's. [pause] And of course, I, you know, certain American editors.

Yes.

Who was that, Merrill White that David always says was such a...

Merrill White was indeed supposed to be David Lean's mentor.

Yes, that's right. Yes. And then there's Bill Hornbeck.

Mm.

And, you know, people working in America. Because, I was brought up, which is why I wanted to go into Hollywood, was... I said to Sidney[??-31:38] last night, I didn't want to go to Los Angeles actually, I wanted to go to Hollywood. Then it became very unpopular to call it Hollywood, you called it Los Angeles, but I mean, it was actually Hollywood I went to. I was brought up on black and white Hollywood movies. Once I became keen on the movies I spent my life in the movies, I went, you know, two or three times a week and sat through films two or three times if I really loved them. So... And that's where it seemed to me that movies were really from. That's why I wanted to go and work in Hollywood, where I am now and where I really love it. Not because they're, they make the best movies, and they don't, and the films I've made since I've been there have not been particularly good, but, I've always been working since I was there. Which I wouldn't have been had I been here.

[0:32:31]

Well we'll, we'll talk about Hollywood I'm sure in due course. Is there more to be said do you think about the feeling of the times and the activity, the relationships, the, the personalities? Or, I should have asked you, did you have any connection with Caesar and Cleopatra, because that...?

No. I just visited it when I was at school.

That was the great white elephant.

Yes, that's right. No, I went on the set when I was at school, saw Vivien Leigh and everything. But I didn't. And I went on, as I say, on the set of *Brief Encounter*, and, a couple of other films. But that was, because of my uncle I was able to go on a couple of visits, he arranged for me.

Mm. Did you ever know Pascal?

No.

Mm.

No. I met him but I didn't know him.

[0:33:14]

Right.

I don't know, I don't rem... You know, I don't have a very good, as I warned you upfront, I don't have a particularly good memory. I mean I remember being extremely, from, you know, extremely happy, is what I remember of the, I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed meeting these people, I enjoyed being part of it. But, I mean you didn't really, I didn't know them well. I was a second assistant in the cutting

room, and being who I was, I kept myself very, not, I didn't push myself forward to get to know them.

Right. Did you take to it all like a duck to water, was it...?

Yah.

Yes.

Yes, from, yah, from day one, yah.

Right.

And I managed to work there for, as I say, about three months before anybody knew that I was related to Uncle Arthur, so I'd got, you know, I'd got friends with all the other assistants and that sort of thing, and you know, and I, luckily, make friends easily. And then one day, I was in the joining room one day when somebody said to me, 'Is it true you're related to Arthur Rank?' And I thought, well, you know, you've just got to handle it and get it out of the way, and, and you know. So for a, yah I was a five-day wonder for a bit, you know. People said they, one always wondered why I had a better car than anybody else. The only reason I had a better car was that my mother had loaned me hers actually. [laughs] I didn't own it. But, you know, and, and then people forgot it again, you know. And then I was told later that people like David Lean and, and people like that, though he never told me this, I don't know if it's true, but people in those kind of positions thought I might have been there as a spy. So there was the other reason why I kept very much to myself and just mixed with the other assistants, you know, who were Gerry Thomas and Clive Donner and people like that. We were all great friends. John Krish. I was very friendly for a time, went out with the Archbishop of Canterbury's son, Humphrey Fisher, who used to work in the thing. And...

He worked there?

He worked in the cutting rooms, yes, at Pinewood. And, so we had a, you know, a whole little set of friends that went about together and things, and they've all, all of them have done pretty well, you know.

Mm. Well indeed, they're all now very famous names.

Yes. Yah.

Gerald Thomas and...

In fact I'm hoping to see Gerry tomorrow, I'm going, planning to go to Pinewood for lunch if I can get away. So... [pause] You know, I remember those times, and meeting those kind of people, you know, going off, I used to go to sort of, film weekends at, you know, to learn about film and stuff like that. I used to go to the National Film Theatre or whatever it was, the equivalent of, that, and see all old films and things like that. I mean I was very immersed in film, which I loved. I also loved the theatre. I used to go at least once a week to the theatre, sit up in the gods or, you know, and that sort of thing.

Mhm.

I had a great crush on Olivier so I always went to see, so I saw all those early, *Oedipus* and *The Critic* and, *Richard III* and, all that kind of thing.

Yes, well there again, that was the heyday wasn't it.

Yah, I used to sleep outside the theatre to get in to the first nights and things like that, you know, and... Oh, I'm, I'm, I suppose I'm, what, an enthusiast really when I like something, I, I go after it and...

[0:36:24]

Are you consciously working toward being a director at this stage?

No, not really. I'm happy with what I'm doing.

[inaudible] formulated, has it, or, or not? I mean is it [inaudible]?

Well I've been offered jobs, and I've always turned them down.

No, I mean at that stage.

Oh at that stage.

Not now.

Oh I see, now, I'm sorry, I misunderstood you. Well I was working towards, yah, I wasn't in, really galloping towards...

But it was a conscious decision [inaudible] by this time? Yah.

Yes. Oh yes, yes certainly, yah. That's what I thought I would do.

[0:36:51]

OK. Well let's trace, then, your career forward, since we seem to have covered the period quite, quite well.

Yah. Well the next sort of up really was, came when I did *Robin Hood*, the live action *Robin Hood* for Walt Disney.

Mhm.

Which Ken Annakin directed, and a guy called Perce Pearce was the producer. And, Gordon Pilkington was editing it. And it was all very strictly storyboarded. And, Pilk

was a very good editor, but very very slow, and very painstaking, and didn't have any of that swashbuckling stuff that I admired in editors myself. He was always matching very carefully and things like that, which really aren't that important. But, I'm just getting to something, because, because he was so slow, and we had a second unit working, who was directed by, oh, Alex Thomson was it? Redheaded director. I can't remember his name. It wasn't Alex Thomson.

It wasn't Alex, no.

No. It's a name, Alex something. McDonald? No. I can't remember it. But anyway, he was shooting all the action stuff, and, Pilk was getting very far behind. So, it wasn't actually a second unit sequence, Ken Annakin said, 'Do you think you could cut a sequence?' I said, 'Yeah, sure.' He said, 'Well, I wondered if you could help Pilk, because he's way behind and I want to see this stuff. So could you...' So they gave me the sequence, you know with the things where they fight like that.

I haven't seen the film.

Well, all Robin Hoods have it, when he meets Little John and they fight on the...

Yah, with the staves.

On the... With staves. And Pilk said to me, 'Now cut it very loosely, don't cut it tight, just do an assembly,' you know, and was all of a twit about my doing it and things. He said, 'Just cut...' Well you can't cut a fight loosely, you can't have a fit twice. So you have to cut it tight, you know. And I cut it, and I showed it to Pilk – to, to... I showed it to Pilk. And then I... But anyway, I showed it to Ken, and Ken loved it, he thought it was absolutely terrific. He said, 'Did you really do that on your own?' I said, 'Yeah.' And then it... Anyway, to cut a long story short, they then decided that I would cut all the second unit material. So all the stuff that was being shot by this other director, which was all the action and all the fun stuff, I was cutting, and Pilk was just doing the first unit stuff. And it was a marvellous break. They put

me up from £10 to £15 a week, as an assembly editor. And when they gave a Christmas bonus, as they did, of your week's wages, they gave me £10 and not £15, and I always thought was very mean.

We never talked about money. Maybe in a minute we should go back to GHW and [inaudible].

Where they paid me £3 a week.

Well that was quite generous, was it not, for, first film?

Yup.

[0:39:35]

Two questions, though, about Robin Hood. One was, you said it was all storyboarded. Was that back in Burbank?

Yes. Yah.

Yes. Right. So, the film was essentially made, well[??], [inaudible] in effect [inaudible].

Yeah. And Ken Annakin followed it most of the time. The second unit didn't follow it at all, it was impossible, on horses and stuff like that, he couldn't follow it. So he didn't. So that was why my work was so much more interesting than Pilk's. And they, [laughs] I did a terrible thing to poor old Pilk once, because, they'd storyboarded a sequence, so you do when they, with diamonds when they came in and snatched the diamonds out, and they storyboarded it completely wrong, it didn't make any sense when he cut it like that. And I said, 'Well Pilk, they can't have meant you to cut it like that. Surely if you did this and this and this and this.' I got him to cut it differently from the storyboard. And when Perce Pearce saw it, he said, 'That's disgraceful, how dare you cut away from the storyboard, different from the

storyboard.’ And Pilk couldn’t say, ‘Well, my assistant suggested I did.’ [laughs] He had to take all the blame.

Mm.

So, you know, he had what I thought was the really boring stuff to do, and I had the really fun stuff to do.

[0:40:40]

How did you approach these early cutting exercises, was it instinctive, or...?

I think so, yes.

You didn’t rationalise, for example cutting that fight, did you work it out and then...?

Oh I worked it out, what I was going to do, the rhythms and that sort of thing, yes. And how, you know, I was going to use different shots and different angles. But that’s what you do anyway with editing. I mean I would have run it all through and I would have started forming in my mind roughly how I was going to cut it.

Mm.

You know, and which angle I would use for which bit. Because, it often just tells you the story really, when you’re in a particular angle, it’s obviously much better on that angle, so you build it round from various things. And then you come across problems because you don’t have matching, and, you have to alter things or something. But basically, you have an idea of how, you know, the pattern that you want it to look.

When did that first begin to make sense to you, at what stage in your work, all the way back, when you first began to see dailies, or...?

No. No, I would say, when John Seabourne left me to cut sequences and things like that, I would say it really made sense. When you did it... I mean I say this to people today, that it isn't until you're really faced with twenty-four frames to cut on, twenty-four frames a second, that you have to choose which of those twenty-four you're actually going to cut on, that, you know, you really are faced... But you can't, you can only teach so much until you actually do it.

Mm. When you first started to do it, was it a very slow, laborious process...

Not really.

... or, again, was it quite an instant [inaudible]?

Yes, I never was one of those people that, you know, did this before they made a cut. Like a very, another very famous editor, who I admired enormously, was Reggie Beck. I told him this once, about, when I was doing *Orient Express* I think it was, and he was cutting something. I didn't really know him very well when I met him. And I said, 'Oh Reggie, I'm so proud to meet you, I've been such an admirer of yours, since I was in school.' And I don't know whether that upset him, because I was inferring how old he was or something, because I then was probably forty, you know. But he, he didn't take it at all well. It seemed like he was quite insulted, and I was trying to be nice.

Mm.

So it was very curious. But anyway, he was somebody whose work I admired a lot. But I, I understand from talking to people that he had, I mean really he had a terrible time making almost every cut. Now I've never had that kind of problem. I mean you know, I may be wrong and I'll go back and, it often is wrong and you go back and you change it. But I like to cut, like you rather, you sketch, you sketch it in and you get ideas and things, and then you paint it in and you fill in and finesse and do all this sort

of thing. But I get ideas and I like to, to put them into practice and look at what I'm doing.

That was a fairly cumbersome process though in those days was it not, when you, pre-Scotch tape days and everything was...

Scraping? Yes, yes. Yah. I was pretty natty with a, patching and stuff, because I'd done all my early patching at Religious Films.

Then taking it all to pieces again and, and reassembling.

Losing... Yes.

That, that was no deterrent?

Not really, no.

[inaudible] single cut[??]?

No no, no no. You still, I still wanted to experiment and try. I loved to try things. I do now, I still, you know, if a director asks me to do anything, I always... I don't say, 'No you can't do it.' I always try to the best of my ability to, to do what it is he wants to do and see if it's going to work.

Mm.

You can surprise yourself, however experienced you are, sometimes, on every film. Every film has new problems with it, everything that you do, every director that you work with.

Yes, yes.

And, you know...

And surprises I'm sure.

And surprises, yes.

Mhm.

So I think you should always stay really very open to ideas and suggestions and things.

Absolutely.

And I, as I say, I like experimenting for myself too.

Mhm.

And so I didn't, I wasn't... I think... You see that's why I think John was such a good influence on me in that way. He never let me be precious about film; he always wanted me to be courageous about it. And so, I didn't have a lot of these hang-ups about... Reggie [inaudible] supposed[??-44:52] to walk up and down the outside of the cutting room sometimes before he'd make a cut. Well surely you get stuck sometimes and you really don't know how to do it and things, and you might... I used to just go, I'd go to the bathroom or something, but, you know, sometimes. Or, even it's quite nice if you're really stuck in something to go off and have your lunch or something and come back and do it. But, I wouldn't say that I do that very frequently.

Mm.

It isn't, I don't find that great thing about every cut. Otherwise, I couldn't do it, I'm not temperamentally like that.

It's almost like editor's block, rather like writer's block.

Yes. Yes. Yah, but, you know...

But it's there to work with.

Well sometimes you do get really stuck, because you know, it's usually continuity problems that really faze you such a lot, because you know what you want to do and you can't do it, you know. And it gets very frustrating.

Did Disney come around on Robin Hood?

I met him, yah, I met him. He was a most magical person I've ever met. I suppose...

Was he?

Yes. Not because he was.....

[End of Track 2]

[Track 3]

Anne V Coates, tape two side three. Yes, just backtracking on...

Walt Disney, yes. How I was kind of brought up on Disney, you know, and, and Felix the cat and Mickey Mouse and things like that. So that, Disney to me, I don't think I had really thought was a real person, he was like a magician really or something. So to actually be standing in Denham, outside my cutting room, shaking his hand, I can remember the exact spot, exactly doing it. And as I say, I think I was more impressed meeting him than anybody else I've ever met.

Was he ferocious to his other, you know, his more senior staff? Because you said that Perce Pearce was terrified of departing from the storyboard. Was that, was because it had been proven[??] [inaudible]?

I, I presume so, yes.

Yah.

Yah. Well I think Perce Pearce didn't want to either. I mean he worked to the storyboard. I think he wanted Pilk to cut to the storyboard, you know, he didn't want a lot of initiative brought to the film. I became very good friends with Perce Pearce, and he, he was going off to do a little film about a boy and an elephant in Africa, and he offered me the job as editor on it. Never got made in the end. I luckily hadn't bought too much equipment. But, it was a big break for me to be offered actually a job as an editor.

It was unusual though I think to be so locked off in film-making, even for the, the Hollywood companies, the American companies, in those days, was it not? I mean...

I suppose so, I don't know. They were, certainly people didn't seem to... I hadn't worked on a film that had been storyboarded like that before, I have to say.

I think Disney used to do it because that's the way they made [inaudible-1:36].

Yes. Yes, that's right, they... Yes. But quite a lot of people storyboard now.

Mm. Mm.

But they don't necessarily stick to them obviously. They, I mean Ken stuck to that, but I, I guess he was told upfront to stick to it and he fairly well stuck to it, you know.

[0:01:53]

Sounds like it. So you've done all the second unit stuff and...

Yes, so I did all the second unit on that.

From here on, are you now an...?

No. No no. So then I got this chance with Perce Pearce to do the film which then never got made. So then I went back as an assistant with Clive Donner. I think I only did the one film, *Meet Me Tonight*, with Clive, that Clive was cutting. While Clive was cutting that, he was rung up and offered *Pickwick Papers*, which he couldn't do. And Bob McNaught, who was a friend of Clive's and mine, was the producer or line, they call now line producer I suppose. Because George... Oh. Renown.

Was it Renown? George Minter.

Yes. George Minter was the producer. But anyway, Bob McNaught, as I say, was the kind of, like a line producer, and... So I said to Clive, just half joking really, I said, 'Why don't you put my name up? You know, I've cut all the second unit on that.' And Clive was a friend of mine, you know. So he said, 'OK, I'll suggest it to,' thing. And I never thought to hear any more about it. Bob McNaught rang me, and said, 'Are you really interested in cutting the film? And do you think you could do it?' and

this, that. And I said, 'Yeah, sure I could do.' And, he said, 'It's a first-time director,' and, all this sort of thing. And he said, 'Well I'll arrange a meeting with you.' Because they wanted somebody to cut it for the minimum, which was £22.10 a week. And, they wanted... They were having difficulty in getting an editor for that kind of money, because nobody worked for that sort of money in those days. So I guess they thought it was better to take a chance on a young editor than an old bad editor who's prepared to take that kind of money. So anyway, I went and had a meeting with Noel Langley. I don't know what I said to him, we had quite a long meeting, but apparently, he never could remember, but he said I said something to him during the meeting that he knew I was the person he wanted. And they offered me the picture, just like that. Amazing.

What was it you said?

I don't know.

Oh you, you can't remember. [inaudible].

I don't know what it was I said. I can't remember what it was I said. I have no idea. He couldn't remember what it was, and I always asked him what it was I'd said. Something I said right. Anyway, so they took me on with the proviso, which was a horrible thing when you think about it, with the proviso that I would, they would bring a supervisor in over me if I couldn't cope. Well the first few days, the dailies were just, the rushes were just awful, you know, because Noel Langley had never directed before, he had all this big cast of people. It was a good script, *Pickwick*. And, he was, you know, doing these tight ten shots and things like that, and you know, panning and scanning all over the place, and, expecting to cut into shots and things you know. And I was doing the best I could, but I really wasn't that experienced.

[0:04:40]

Anyway, it sort of went on for a bit, and, I don't think they were that happy with me. And we used to have drinks every evening up in his room and chats and everything.

And, one evening I, I apparently said the wrong thing. Because I made some joke about, hoped it would cut together tomorrow, meaning my cutting. And Noel Langley was so sensitive, [laughs] he thought I was criticising his cutting. So I was called into the office the next morning, and, you know, over the coals and told not to make those kind of cracks about his, his directing. I said, 'I didn't make any cracks.' I said, 'It was about my cutting.' So then I had to go and explain it to Noel, and, that kind of blew over, but it was very, thing. Then they did the courtroom scene, and I don't know, I just happened to get it right I guess, and I did a really good cut on it. And from then on I was in. From then on everything I did was great. George Minter came in the cutting room once when I was throwing a fit, you know, crashing around. He said, 'Oh I love to see that temperament and everything,' he said. And, you know, and I was really, it just, it just all worked, you know, I don't know how. Because then, Noel Langley took this great hate for Nigel Patrick, who was playing Mr Jingle, one of the main parts, so he'd do his tight ten shots with close-ups at everybody except Paddy. And I was having to go in and direct them, or pick up his close-ups later on, you know. I didn't know what I was doing. I'd never directed a piece of film in my life at that time, you know; since, and I've directed quite a lot of pieces of second units and stuff. But, it was a very interesting experience. And then they decided to put it in for the Royal Command Performance, so we were working literally day and night to get it cut and done in time. David Withers was my sound editor, I don't know whether you've ever come across him.

No I haven't, no.

Well he eventually had a nervous breakdown and a collapsed lung and, I was very nearly having a nervous breakdown. And then they didn't choose it, they chose, which was a real slap in the eye, they chose Mario Lanza in some film or another. Which, you know, *Pickwick* such an obvious film for the Queen, and it was quite a good film too.

Didn't they alternate in those days though, wasn't there a British film then an American film?

Something like that. Well maybe, but I, I don't think could have been, or they wouldn't have...

No they wouldn't have troubled...

Spent all that money like they did on it.

[0:07:00]

Mm. Noel Langley didn't do much as a director, did he?

No. No.

Sadly. Although, he was very experienced as a writer and...

Yes, wrote plays and things like that.

Yes. Well, had been...

And film scripts.

And films of course.

Yes. Yah. But he wrote a rather...

Part of The Wizard of Oz.

Yes. Yah. And he did a thing called *The Porpoise Close Behind Me*, which was quite a success on the stage.

Mm.

And, he wrote *Land of Green Ginger*, which was a children's story, which is absolutely enchanting. He was South African actually.

Was he?

Yah.

I didn't know that. Yah.

Yah. And he had had a really unhappy childhood, been very badly beaten and... He was quite a weird man really. But George Minter then, after *Pickwick*, put me under contract, so that was quite extraordinary.

Did Renown do that much? I thought...

Well not that much. But Bob McNaught was then going to direct a little movie. They put me on half salary, well they put me up to, like, £30 a week or something, and, and put me on half salary, which was quite extraordinary for a new editor. I don't think they do that these days. It actually stopped me doing a film at Ealing, because Jack Harris had noticed my work and liked it, and they offered me a film at Ealing, a boxing film actually, which was a, I mean such a compliment, to be offered a film at Ealing.

Yes.

Where Jack Harris was then...

A tight little group.

Yes. Was then in charge of the editing there. And, George Minter wouldn't, even though I wasn't doing anything, he wouldn't let me go and take it.

Oh, it sounds rather dog in the manger.

Well he had me... Yes, well it was, because he had a picture coming up, so...

Yes.

Then I did this little film called *Grand National Night* for him. And then I did *Our Girl Friday* which was Noel Langley again, and, I fell out very badly with Noel Langley and I never finished the film.

What happened?

Well it was kind of personal in a way. [laughs] But, I'd rather not really go into it actually.

OK.

But, it just didn't, it so kind of didn't work out, so we parted company. And, then, Sydney Box offered me a film to do for him. And I did a couple of films for him.

Is he now back to being an independent...?

Yes, he was at Pinewood by then.

Yes.

He offered...

Not within the Rank Organisation's [inaudible-9:21]?

Yeah, well, I think he kind of was within the Rank Organisation. I'm not sure. You see really, I never got my breaks ever through the Rank Organisation, which I was

always kind of pleased about, because Renown gave me the first one and Disney gave me one before that, so, it was never really the Rank Organ... I didn't work for Rank Organisation hardly ever, in fact. But see, I did *Forbidden Cargo* for Sydney, which was not, not a great film. And then I did... Did I do *The Truth About Women* next for him? Yes, I think so, that Muriel Box directed.

[0:09:58]

Ah, yes. Right. There are several in between on this list. It begins with Pickwick Papers, Grand National Night, Forbidden Cargo. To Paris With Love.

I think I did...

Is that chronological...

Oh I can't remember. It's awful to say that, I really can't remember.

Lost.

Lost.

Something called Mongongo[ph], which sounds like Renown.

Well no, that wasn't actually. That was a kind of semi-documentary, and I did that after *Lost*. *Lost* I did, and, at the time of *Lost* I was in... That was Guy Green. I was engaged to a boy who lived up in Cheshire, and I was going to give up the industry, which of course would never have worked, and, we were going to get married and I was going up to live in Cheshire and everything. And I did *Lost*. And then when I decided not to, we decided not to get married, it obviously wasn't going to work, I came back. I didn't immediately get back in, so I did a film for American Television called *Moganga[ph]*, which made for, it was a semi-documentary, made by a company called Smith, Kline & French, and are now called SmithKline, a pharmaceutical company. It was about a doctor, a Belgian, I always think he probably

died, probably was killed, a Belgian Congo doctor who lived with his wife and son and worked in, with lepers. About a leper colony really. But it's a kind of semi story film because it's about this doctor and his wife and how they had gone out there. And you got to know some of the patients and the operations and the children and things, you k now.

Promoting a drug, was that the purpose of the film?

No. Absolutely not.

No?

No. Smith, Kline & French made these films about interesting doctors and people like that working throughout the world, and all it had was a, I think it was Mr French did a little piece on the front of it. Not selling a particular drug, but selling drugs in general.

Right. What we used to call institutional evidence[inaudible-11:37].

Yes, yes, he did that. And then, the film was completely separate, had no advertising in it of any sort. And then it had a little piece at the end. The first time I went to America actually was to, because we were going to do this little piece with him, and we were going to shoot some narration with an American, telling the story over in America. So he took me over. And I was over there about, two months I think, living in New York, at a first-class hotel in a lovely suite.

[0:12:07]

Right. What era is this, in the Fifties some time?

Must have been. Yes. Yes, must have been.

Mm. I was in New York in the Fifties.

Oh I love New York.

It was a delightful time wasn't it?

Oh! I had a great time in New York. I had this, [laughs] which was one of the reasons, I had this guy who was, the director of the film I suppose really. No, he was more the producer. Well I'm not quite, never quite sorted out what they both did, there was two of them actually. And I became very friendly, well, one became a boyfriend for a time, and he lived in Philadelphia. And, so that was really nice, because I went down and stayed with his family in Philadelphia and he took me around to barn dances and all over the place, and I saw a lot of America that way. And Lou Hazam, who was the other guy, lived outside Washington, in Maryland. And, I went and stayed with them. So, that was really nice. And then I got to know a whole group of people in New York. I remember going to six parties in one night in New York, one of which we weren't invited to. Because we met some other people going from our party to another, going from one party to another, so we switched parties and we went. And I got enrolled as a Young Republican that night, and all sorts, which I'm sure I shouldn't have done as a British citizen. Found myself... I got paperwork from the Young Republicans for years afterwards. And I found myself at Madison Square Garden carrying a banner. [laughs]

I as a registered Democrat used to go...

Well I would have been a Democrat if I'd thought it out. It was just that...

Yes. But it's... As I say, I used to go to the Republican conventions, and thoroughly enjoyed them.

Oh yes. Oh did you? Yes, yes, well I had enjoyed this too actually.

[0:13:49]

Mm. Those movies that we've kind of glossed over, is there anything to be said about them particularly?

Which ones?

Well, Grand National Night, Forbidden Cargo.

Well *Forbidden*... *Forbidden Cargo* for instance, didn't work. It was directed by Harold French, who left to go back to the south of France, and I was left... rewrote the ending, and put a different ending on it actually, and we kept a guy alive who died in the original. Harold French wasn't involved in this at all, but Bob McNaught, strangely enough, was, who, a friend, and he kind of directed some of this. And I directed some of it. We were both directing. I was on the River Thames with a, with the police and everything, directing these shots with this, with, what's his name? Terence something, quite a well-known actor, in the water. And then we had... And we devised this thing where, the car with models and everything. We did a jump, my husband did it later with *Brannigan*, on one of those films, jumping over Tower Bridge and stuff. And reconstructed, Bob and I between us reconstructed the whole end of the film. So it was quite interesting from that point of view, we rewrote it, and Harold French had wiped his hands of the whole thing by then.

Did he just storm off?

Yeah, well he just left. I don't know how much storming was done, he just, his contract was up and he didn't want to know. He had delivered the film the way he liked it, and the fact that Sydney didn't like it and nobody liked it, it didn't work, he didn't really seem too concerned about. I never saw him again. But he was a partner in my racehorse, I owned a racehorse and I syndicated it, and he was one of the people in my syndicate.

Do you see him at all now, are you still...?

Harold French?

Yes.

No, I haven't... He's still alive, is he?

Yes. Ninety-two or something. [inaudible-15:37].

Oh yes. No, I haven't seen him. I see a lot Guy Green, who directed *Lost*. In fact I've just been stayed with him, I went over to LA for a week, and my apartment I've got people in, Doug Milsome, do you know the cameraman?

No.

He's in there with his wife. So... Which I've kind of rented, semi-rented to them. And, so I stayed with Jo and Guy Green, who are great friends of mine. And that was the first time I worked with him, was on *Lost*.

On Lost. It isn't a picture I know.

[0:16:05]

About a little child that's stolen by a deranged woman. And then, *To Paris With Love* was Robert Hamer.

Oh that's right, that rings a bell[??].

A madman.

Yes.

A mad, brilliant man.

Yes indeed, a great director.

Yes.

He had a fatal flaw.

Yes. A complete alcoholic. And we shot for two weeks in Paris, and Tony Darnborough was the producer. And Tony and I used to take it in turns, again, either, one of us stayed with Robert, to keep him upright and keep him directing and keep him from wandering off, because, in Paris the bars are open all day. And one of us was directing the second unit, we used to kind of, take it in turns, with Alec Guinness and everybody. And, you know, we had a terrible time with Robert, because... What we used to try... We had a very nice French unit of actors and people on it, and, who used to invite us out to dinner. Well then, you know, you couldn't invite us without Robert. And then, you know, he used to fall in the soup, and spoil the whole evening. So, I didn't, wasn't really involved in this, but they used to try and get him so drunk he couldn't go to the dinners, and they'd take him home and put him to bed. Then of course he used to get up at three o'clock and wander off in the streets, and come morning nobody could find him. We'd all be out scuttling around trying to find him, and you'd find him in a gutter doing camera angles and things, you know. He was such a charming man.

Yes.

But impossible, when he was drunk, impossible. Because, you know, you'd be running cut stuff and that sort of thing, and he'd be telling you to do this and this and this. You'd take the notes down and then you'd run again and he'd say, 'No, do this and this and this.' And, he'd contradict himself and contradict himself. I mean you know, you had to have the patience of a, thing. And then, he'd say, 'I think I'm going to shoot today so that you can't cut it together.' And he'd do that, he'd shoot it so that people were going out right and coming in right, and things like that. Great training for me. He used to do it on purpose so that I couldn't...

I suppose that...

Oh it was very...

You're responsible for corrective/directive[??] [inaudible] standard.

Yes. Oh yes. But I saved his life, actually, because they were going to fire him after about two weeks, and I managed to get such a good cut on his film that they didn't fire him. He never knew that.

Mm.

Because, you know, I was kind of fearless, nothing fazed me. I don't believe that anything doesn't cut together; I just believe that some things cut together better than others, but you have to make it work. You can always make something out of it, you know. And always cut away to something and get back, or do something to... You know. So I struggled with this stuff, and, I was better I guess at editing by then too. And, you know, it kind of worked. Alec Guinness loved him, Alec was in it, and Alec loved Robert. So between us we got it all, you know, we kept him going, and got the film finished. It's quite a charming film. My children saw it on, it's not a film I'd ever shown them but they saw it on television in America one day. They said, 'We didn't know you did that Mum. Really enjoyed it.

Had he been that way on, on the earlier films, such as Kind Hearts example, or...?

Not as bad.

No.

It got worse and worse.

[inaudible-19:20].

Yes. Yes.

Was it his last?

No, he did one more after *Paris With Love*.

Father Brown?

Father Brown, yes. Yes, with Alec Guinness, yes.

Yes.

And he went into a home and had a cure, and I think, according to Alec, I don't really know but Alec said, said to me once, 'You know, I had Robert to stay, and,' he said, 'it's the first time he was ever boring, was when he was sober.' He said, 'He had nothing to say.' So, I don't know. You see a lot of those Ealing guys drank didn't they.

Well I think a lot of people generally drank in those days.

Yes. Yes.

And I suppose the ones who then drank, probably take drugs now.

Yes but I think... Yah, I suppose that's probably true.

There's always some kind of [inaudible-20:06].

But I think that the Ealing guys went to that pub, I never worked at Ealing in the end, but went to that pub, and they all had to be exceptionally witty and bright, and outwit

each other and out-bright each other and out-intelligence each other all the time, to such an extent that they were doing, I think they were drinking to make themselves, be that, and be more outgoing. And somebody who was probably really shy like Robert, who was a brilliant mathematician, he could add up and divide thousands of things in his head, but, and was very intellectual in some ways. But he might have been, I didn't know him then but I imagine he might have been really shy at that time and didn't shine in company.

I've never heard that before, that, they were great piss-artists at Ealing. Sid Cole for example,[inaudible-20:54]...

No, but... Charlie Friend, Charlie Crichton. Charlie Crichton, you must know about him.

Well, yes.

And Michael Truman died of drink, as did... And they were all, they were all, though not Sid Cole, I agree with you, so much, but the others were, they all... And the others, I can't even remember who they were now, all of them. But they were all very bright, witty...

[inaudible] for example.

...people.

Mm.

And they used to go to this, they all used to go after work. Some of them weren't even directors, they were other things, you know.

Were they terrified of Mickey Balcon do you think, was...?

Maybe. Because...

Pressurised them?

Maybe it was a release, a release from Mickey Balcon.

Yes. The Academy as it was called.

Yes.

Mm. I had always assumed that it was some, chemical problem I suppose with Hamer.

I suppose so. I don't know.

[inaudible-21:46] had the same problem.

There you are, then, another one, yah. You see there were quite a few of them. Michael Ralph[ph]. I don't know. I don't know who, as I say, I don't know who they all were really, but I know there was quite a gang that went down there, and they were all very bright, intelligent, witty men, who I think spent a lot of time being bright and intelligent and witty in... And when they had a few drinks I think they became more outgoing and, and you know, I don't know, I don't know why it was but... I don't know. I'm sure that you're right, he had something that, he had to have drink.

It's a very interesting aspect, sideline. Next time I see Sid Cole I'll ask him whether it's ever occurred to him.

I don't know. Because I mean, you know... Don't say I said it.

No no, of course, I wouldn't, no. No no, but...

That's how, I don't know how I've got that...

[0:22:34]

I wonder if there were more alcoholics, or quasi alcoholics, at Ealing than, say, at Pinewood.

Well I think there were actually.

Because that's quite a few people holding up the bar [inaudible].

Well of course that's true, but they weren't David Lean, and they weren't Micky Powell, and they weren't Launder and Gilliat, and they weren't Ian Dalrymple.

Mm.

None of them drank, or were alcoholics in any way whatsoever, to my mind, I mean they all had the odd drink, but they weren't... Or, the people working at, I mean, like Olivier who was directing and people like that, and I mean he had a few drinks. But I mean, none of them were alcoholics like the ones that we just quickly went through at Ealing without hardly thinking.

Mm. Yes, that's, as I say, that's a most interesting thought.

Anyway, I don't know how I know it. I mean somebody must have put the idea into my head, because, I never worked at Ealing, so, you know. I know many people who worked at Ealing who didn't drink, so I mean, it works both ways. But there was a whole set of them that did, who were mostly editors.

Yes.

Editors do drink a lot, a lot of editors. I don't personally, but... You know, the editors were the people who were always hanging around the bars. At Twickenham where I

work now was practically kept going by editors. But they don't now very much, you know, they've all been stopped and lost their licences and things and...

Mm.

[0:23:55]

I'm, I'm going to have to go you know.

Right, OK.

So we're only going to be able to... Yes, I have to be there by lunchtime. I said I would be there.

OK.

We're just... I'm sorry about that, but...

No no no. No, [inaudible]...

We're going to have to do it in bits. [laughs]

That's fine by me.

Yah.

How long now...

I'm here till August.

Oh that's OK then.

At least. Probably September if I was honest with myself. But since I... I don't not like being here, but it's just my home's there and my kids are there, and that sort of thing you know. But I mean I've got another quarter of an hour, so...

Well let's go on, because we have to go and...

Yes.

Just after twelve.

Yah, I should go... Yes I should go at half past I think. I'm just going to go to the bathroom. I won't be a second.

[break in recording]

[0:24:39]

Well, then, great regrets about Hamer.

Yes. Yah I loved working with Robert, I have to say, you know, but, it was sad to see him like that. And I mean it was quite a fun film. It wasn't the greatest of scripts, but it was quite a fun film.

Mm.

About an older man, you know, Alec Guinness, who falls for the younger girl, and his son who falls for the older woman and things.

I was in the States then.

Oh I see.

So, a lot of these films, either didn't come over or, or for whatever reason I didn't see them. I'm not sure I've ever seen it, although I may have done on television. [pause] Right, so we've covered Lost. We've covered Mongongo[ph]. The Truth About Women, that's Muriel Box isn't it?

Yes.

Yah. Right.

Yup.

[0:25:23]

So tell us about Moo.

Moo. [laughs] Actually, generally speaking, I'm well-known for not having women in the cutting rooms, I prefer working with men. I think this may be because I have a lot of men friends and, I had brothers only and things. I just, just find that the relationship is generally speaking better, you're not allowed to be, I was going to say racist, isn't the right word, but you're not allowed to...

Sexist I suppose.

Sexist, you're not allowed to be sexist any more. But... And I actually do have Terry Clegg's daughter working with me at the moment. But basically, I've had really bad experiences when I have tried to have women in the cutting room, have always let me down. I've got nothing against women in the cutting room.

We're talking now of assistants.

Assistants, yes. But... So I wondered how I would get on working with a woman director, that's what I was kind of leading up to. But in fact, we got on very well together. She was always trying to rope me in on, you know, women's lib and all, as

it was in those days, and all that kind of thing, and I've never really been into that, because... Somebody said, 'The reason you're not is because you actually live it.' But, you know, I just didn't really want to get involved in women's movements and all those kind of things. I never expected to get paid any different from a man, and I never was, and I never expected to have, be discriminated against because I was a woman. And as far as I know, as I say, I never have been. So, I never really came across it in any way. So I didn't want to go, use a lot of energy up in something that I wasn't having any problem with.

[0:26:43]

So she used to try and stir me up along, along those lines sometimes. But, other than that, we got on really well together, you know. It was... And Laurence Harvey, I became quite good friends with Laurence Harvey, Larry Harvey, and, we had all sorts of women in it, Mia Farrow and, Julie Harris and, was it Zsa Zsa... no, Eva Gabor, and, and people. It was a very happy film really. No real problems on it that I know of. Larry Harvey helped me buy my white Jaguar.

What sort of, an X[inaudible] or...?

No, it was just a, the small, a saloon one, you know. He had a friend who was in the business so I got a kind of, you know, good deal on it.

[0:27:33]

Well, now, I'm sure there's more to be said about Muriel Box than actually we, we have. Again, curious about the extent, how it all fitted in to the period, because you're talking of women's lib. Was women's lib that active in those days, or was this a kind of, enlightened attitude on her part?

No no, I think there were quite a lot of people involved in it at that time.

I suppose there has been a steady development for some years.

Yah I think so. Yes. Yes. Yah.

It's a little more strident now if anything.

Yes. Oh it got very strident, particularly in America.

Mm.

But, I mean, I suppose because she was one of the very few women directors. I mean she wasn't a very strong director, actually. But she always had, she was married to Sydney at that time, and she always had Sydney behind her to help her. But she very much let, let actors and the cameramen do the set-ups and things, you know, and that kind of thing.

Well, so what...

Well she kind of...

What exactly was she directing in [inaudible-28:35]?

[laughs] You may well ask. [laughs] Well I mean she kind of coordinated it all. I think Reg, was Reg Wyer the cameraman on that? I just can't remember now.
[pause] But you know, they were very accomplished actors really, and, they mostly...

It just, happened.

It just happened, yes. She talked to them a bit, and, you know, about this and that, and, she, I, you know, she let me cut it more or less the way I wanted, and Sydney came in at the end, and they sort of trimmed it up a bit and cut a few lines here and there, and...

Mm.

It was, it wasn't a great big headache, the picture. I remember it as rather, you know, not a very complicated movie really.

[0:29:22]

Yes. Well why... I say why. Did she want to be a director, a dream[??]?

Yes.

Was that it, or...?

No no, she liked directing. She thought she was directing.

Right.

I mean she was putting the flowers straight and seeing the curtains hung and, that sort of thing, and the...

Dressing the set work.

Dressing the set. I always remember going on, and she was busy dressing the set, the actors were acting away in the front, you know, and that sort of thing. And...

And her cameraman was doing [inaudible]...

Cameraman was busy doing... Yes.

Putting the picture together and that was it. Yah.

Yes. Yes. So... And she, I mean I'm sure she was involved in who was in it, but, with Sydney, and she was involved in what they wore and things like that, which would have interested her. But I think...

Sounds a great electric train doesn't it.

Well there always was the story on *Simon and Laura*, which is a bit unkind to tell, where, you know, this, she used to come on the set in the morning, and the actors would act and the camera would be put there, and, you know, and then, she would say, 'Action.' And so, this was... Peter Finch was a very good friend of mine, and Kay Kendall, and, very naughty, and I can't remember who the cameraman and the operator... It was the operator who would had worked the things out and everything. And they all came on one morning and just sat down. And Muriel sort of looked, and said, 'Well right, off you go.' And they said, 'Well, what do you want us to do?'

Do something.

Yes, do something. And she'd say, 'Well what do you want us to do?' And they just played along like that, you know. Because she had no idea. Because normally they'd come in and do something. And she'd probably say, 'Well, no, not quite like that dears, just move over here a little bit,' or, move this or do that, or something like that, you know, a little bit of contribution here and there, but they would do the basic set-up, and then she would maybe change it a little bit, you know, or whatever.

Am I right in remembering that their start, both, was in amateur writing and, and production? I think...

In Australia or somewhere?

No no no. No.

Over here?

Over here.

Yah.

But...

Maybe. I don't know.

I think they were great Samuel French standbys of, one set, and, you know, 3f's and 4m's, and, amateur groups used to do their material.

Oh I see.

And I think they were [inaudible. I think that's how [inaudible].

Yes maybe, I didn't know that.

Mm.

Could, yah, could be so.

So her, her actual experience would have been very limited, I suppose.

Yes. Yah.

[0:31:36]

Well, since you have to go, and there's no sense...

I mean... No, I mean I don't think... Where do we go after that? Oh, I got married on... Did I... No I didn't get married on there. I think I met Douglas. No, I couldn't have met him then, no. Must have been after that I met him.

OK. Well, The Horse's Mouth is the next one I've got.

Yes. Well I got married on *The Horse's Mouth*.

I see.

Because it's quite fun, about, how I got married. I'll just tell you.

OK, sure.

Quickly, just while I think about it, because...

It's, we're on your time, not mine.

Yeah, right. [laughs] Well the thing was that, Ronnie Neame and John Bryan... It was, I always think that *The Horse's Mouth* was my big break, I mean, always historically people say, well historically, whatever, that it was *Lawrence of Arabia*. I always thought it was *Horse's Mouth* that put me onto a better class of movie actually, working with Ronnie Neame, who, I also have to owe thanks to Clive Donner, because he cut with Ronnie, and when he couldn't do the picture, he said to Ronnie, 'Why don't you think of Anne?' And Ronnie knew me. I'd worked on *Golden Salander* actually, I forgot that, as a sound assistant. And I knew him socially, not socially socially but I mean I knew him a bit to talk to and that sort of thing. And anyway, he saw me and, and liked me, and decided to, to use me. And... But during the conversations, he and John had always said, never employ a married woman. 'If you were married, we'd never employ you,' you know, and all this sort of thing used to go on. And we used to go drinking a lot in the evening in the bars, in the bar at Shepperton, all together. And we were good, we became good friends, you know. And, anyway, so this went on and on, and, so I thought to myself, because I met Douglas and we decided we would get married, and I thought, I know what I'm going to do, I'm going to get married and I'm not going to tell them, I'll get secretly married. That appealed to me, because this boy I was going to marry in Cheshire, we were going to have a big wedding, big white wedding, and we'd got the pages and the bridesmaid all picked out, went to see the clergyman down in St Michael's here and all that sort of thing. And then I, we called it off. So this time I thought, I'm just

going to have a small, private wedding. So we decided to have a secret wedding. And I worked for them for, three, three months before I told them that I was married. And I said to them, 'Look, now have you ever noticed any difference in my work?'

And what did they say?

And they said, 'No.' [laughs] No.

Yes.

Because it's true, I mean I knew that I could be married and, and still work, and mix the two perfectly reasonably. They said, 'Oh once you're married,' and this, that and the other, and you're always worrying. And then of course, by the time I did *Tunes of Glory* I had my eldest son.

[0:34:11]

How long had you known Dougie before you got married? In fact...

A very short time.

...how you met. You met somehow in the business?

We met out of the business. We met at a mutual friends' party, actually. It was strange, because I was out skiing in, Wengen? I think I was in Wengen. And they, the friends I was out there with had said, 'Stay on a bit, have another few days.' And I said, 'No no, I don't think I will. I think I'll, I'll get back, I've got this party to go to, and things, and I think I'll get back on the day I said I would.' So I nearly didn't meet him. And I went to this party, and it was non-film people, great, great friends of mine. She's now married to a lawyer and, still great, in fact I'm seeing them in a couple of weeks, lives in Paris. And, their son is Simon Campbell-Jones, do you know Simon at all, who does *Horizon*? He's one of the producers...

Oh I [inaudible-35:02] the name. No no no, [inaudible].

He produces for *Horizon*. And that was Janet's younger brother, and he had been working with Douglas as an assistant. So, they were basically not a film family at all, but Simon had managed to get a job as an assistant, and he had invited Douglas, who had been his first assistant, to the party. So, we got talking because we were both in movies, and, you know, and we became friends. And we were married four months later, on May the 24th. Must be any day now, mustn't it, our wedding anniversary.

Yes, yes next, yes, next week. Yes.

Yes, that's right. Yes.

[inaudible].

Yes. Over Whitsun, it was Whitsun, it was a three-day weekend, and we got married on the Saturday, my mother and his parents and my brothers and, that's just about the only people that came.

1950, what would it have been?

Fifty... '58. Because Anthony was born in '59.

Mm. Does it seem like yesterday?

Yes, absolutely like yesterday.

The Fifties to me is, is last week [inaudible].

Yes, yes, because that was when you said the middle Fifties, I thought, no no, it was later than that, and then I thought it wasn't. Because you were married at the end of the Fifties, so, you know, it couldn't have been. Yah. And, we, it was just

circumstances in a way. I mean Douglas had been wanting to get married, and I had said, you know, I don't really think so, they'll never employ me again, and all this sort of thing, and... And then, a really nice apartment in De Vere Gardens came on the market, and, just a lot of circumstances seemed to be right for us to get married.

Yes.

So we got married, you know. And we had a great time.

[0:36:38]

We should talk Dougie at greater length obviously.

Yes.

We don't have the time now.

No. No.

But, you said, his family equally had no connection with the, the film business.

No. No no. His... No, not at all. There was his stepmother, I never met his mother, his mother was dead, but his... No.

[0:36:55]

Well I'm conscious of the fact that you have to get back to the...

To work.

...the grind. Right.

Yes. Because actually, I wasn't very well on Monday, I had a very bad tummy and didn't ever go into work in the end, so, I'm like a half a day behind, where I should be.

Have they finished shooting?

Yes, oh yes. Yah. And Dickie's away at the moment, which is why I was able...
He's in...

I know he was going away.

Well he's in New York. Oh no, he's in LA now, he was in New York. They're looping the actors. I mean normally they take the editor, but... It's only costing forty million, this movie, but it's a cheap, cheap production.

[end of session]

[break in recording]

It's the... Sorry, I don't....

[break in recording]

[0:37:33]

*Right, it's the 29th of May when we resume, and, the next one on the list, it seems to me, is *The Horse's Mouth*, which is, what, Ronnie Neame.*

Yes. Yes. Well I think *The Horse's Mouth* really, I always count as, as my break up into a better class of movie. Most people think it was *Lawrence* really, and I suppose in a way it was, but, in fact, I always think it was *Horse's Mouth*, because, to work with Ronnie Neame and John Bryan who were part of Cineguild seemed like, just a fantastic thing to happen. And it was due to Clive Donner again who had helped me

get *Pickwick Papers* actually. He had been offered it and couldn't do it, and rang me and said, would I be interested? He knew that Ronnie liked me and everything. And, so I said, 'Yes, very interested,' you know. So I went round and met Ronnie, and, we got on fine, and they offered me the job. And...

Was... Sorry, I was going to ask if there were class distinctions among technicians in those days.

Class distinctions, you mean education-wise, or...?

Well, no. Status, within...

Stat... Yes, status within the industry, yah. Because I remember... I can't... It must have been before... It may have been after *Horse's Mouth*, and ringing a producer who shall be nameless, and it was...

It's always a sad thing to hear that someone should be nameless.

[laughs] Well I'll say his name. Aubrey Baring his name was actually. Anyway, because, I rang up, and you know, it always took me a lot of... You know, it's, it's tough to ring up and ask for work, you know, and it took a lot of courage and, getting myself hyped up to get on the phone and say, 'Did you need an editor?' or whatever, you know. And Aubrey Baring, who I didn't know very well... Because I think it was *Windom's Way* that he was going to do, which he, I don't think he did in the end. And he said to me, 'Oh,' you know, 'thank you for calling, but actually we're going with a top-class editor.'

Charming.

And, you know, I felt so awful, and, it was such an unkind way of saying it.

Mm.

So easy to say, Well look, we've got somebody else in mind,' or something, but to say to a young editor, you know, who had plucked up all her courage to phone, it was just like a slap in the face. Because, he was right, I wasn't a top-class editor, you know, I was...

Mm. Not perceived as such.

Not perceived as such. I mean you know, I hadn't... I think it must have been, certainly it was before I'd done *Lawrence*, I mean it was, I don't know at what stage, somewhere around maybe *Truth About Women* kind of stage, somewhere like that. When I was an established editor, but certainly not what you would call top rung editors, and I suppose, that, is that what you call class editors? Yes, there was that. There were the top editors, there are now, it's the same thing, in England, and I'm not talking about exactly now, but certainly when I left, there were a few of us that got off at the most interesting movies, and I suppose that put you in a top-class editor, as opposed to a second-class editor. Now it's very different, because many editors have been brought in from BBC and things, who in my opinion are top-class, but they, not in everybody's opinion, because they've come in kind of, sideways, you know, and they haven't... But, I, I mean I think some of them, Tariq Anwar and people like that, are brilliant editors.

Yes.

And well deserved to get into features.

Well there are so few other opportunities to learn their craft.

Yah.

[inaudible-40:42].

Well I think... And also they, you know, they work more cheaply than the old established editors. And some people don't want the older editors, they want the young people they, they know when they grew up and things.

Yes. Yes.

So, you know, I've never been against, I've always been very encouraging to young people and helping them on. But I would... [phone ringing] This is probably my daughter.

[break in recording]

[0:41:04]

We were saying, what? We were into that area of, top rung...

Oh top... Yes.

[inaudible]. I was going to ask actually if, if technicians had representation, say thirty, forty years ago.

What, agents?

Yes.

Well, I had an agent... It was really strange, I fell into an agent, but I didn't really want one, and I didn't need one, and I've never needed one. But Ronnie Neame, after *The Horse's Mouth*, went in with London Management, and I'm not sure whether he was in the board of London, but he was involved in some, on some level with London Management. And, he suggested to me... Because after, on *Horse's Mouth*, I got married, you know, secretly. I told you about that? Yes.

Yes, [inaudible-41:50].

Yah. And, then I had, after that I had a baby, and I didn't work again for about, eight months, I looked after him myself, mainly because I really wasn't offered anything much. I mean I wanted not to work for about five or six months. And then, this agent that Ronnie wanted me to go with, Adrian Pryce-Jones, he's dead now, he rang me and said, oh he knew of a great picture for me if I'd like to go with them as an agent, as a, you know, representing me and everything, that they had a great picture they were going to recommend me for, and all this sort of thing. And I said, well, it sounds good, you know, because I hadn't worked for a bit and everything. And, then I discovered afterwards that it was Ronnie Neame's picture, and that Ronnie was going to offer it to me anyway. By that time I said I'd go with them, and I said, 'Look, you've slightly misrepresented this to me. So,' I said, 'I'm not going to pay the whole of the ten per cent; I'll give you seven and a half.' Or actually I said I'd give you five. And we settled on seven and a half. Because, I thought they came by it in a slightly...

Indeed.

...sideways way.

Yes, well, that's all one thinks and says of agents isn't it. Did they do a better deal for you?

No.

No.

Sam Spiegel... I had a rotten, terrible deal on *Lawrence* actually, unbelievably bad. But Sam Spiegel always said, 'After *Lawrence* you'll be able to ask any money you want.' Which was of course, not strictly true but certainly put my money up. And the funny thing was that, the agents... Then Hal Wallis saw some of *Lawrence* during production, he came to see some scenes with Peter O'Toole in them, for *Becket*, and he saw my editing, and he immediately offered me *Becket*, to cut *Becket*. And in fact

put me on a retainer for two months, which was very nice. And, my agent I left to do the deal, and, he didn't ask enough money. I said... You know... Because Hal Wallis was pretty astute, he thought there was a possibility I would win the Oscar or something, so he was going to sign me up first, so he didn't have to pay too much, too much money for me. And I was so angry with Adrian Pryce-Jones, I said, 'Adrian, I want to ask more than that now.' And so Hal Wallis then said, 'Oh well I don't want to... If she's one of those people who keeps changing her mind, you know, I don't, I don't want her,' or something like that. And it was entirely due to the agents not having asked me and conversed with me.

Mhm.

So I, I then fired them.

One wonders what other favours they were doing for Hal Wallis I must say, it sounds...

Mm, well I wonder. So anyway, I never, I, I said, 'Well look, I think, Adrian, it's not going to work out for me.' And I never had an agent again, until I went to America. But some editors had agents but not very many. Not like today, you'll find all the top editors have agents now, I think here and in America, because, the top editors here want to work in America and the only way they're likely to work in America really is to have an agent.

Yes.

But I didn't go to the States with an agent. But I found that... And I didn't need one for getting work really. I needed sometimes one for sending me round to meet people, which in itself is interesting to do when you're in a new place like that, and a new... But people would approach you themselves, directors or producers would ring you and say, were you interested, and send you a script or something. But, then they'd

say, 'Who's your agent?' Because they wouldn't want to deal with you personally, they like to deal with an agent.

Mhm. Do you find that editors are now part of the deal in some cases, the overall package?

[hesitates] Not very often.

No?

No. No, occasionally, occasionally they use an editor's name. I mean I've had mine used a couple of times in deals, they'll say, 'Look, Anne Coates will cut it,' and things like that. But... And I imagine that does happen occasionally.

Yes.

But I don't think it's...

But you haven't found that the agents stipulate it?

No. No.

Mhm. Right. That's an interesting side [inaudible-45:40]. Was there anything more to say about the, whatever distinction existed among technicians at...? So talking now mid-Fifties aren't we, middle, late?

Well yes, middle Fifties. There was a, quite a hierarchy of editors in the mid-Fifties, that didn't like young editors coming up, were very insecure in their jobs. And, one of them stopped me from getting a job as a first assistant once, because, she said I hadn't been in the business long enough.

No.

Well if you're fairly bright, it doesn't take you very long to learn that technical side of it, you know, and that sort of thing. And there were quite a few of them like.....

[End of Track 3]

[Track 4]

.....who were, that were the top editors of that time. And they were jealous of young.....

[break in recording]

I was just going to say that I...

It's still [inaudible]. Right. OK.

OK? That I... You know, my theory has always been that there's plenty of space for everybody, which of course is blatantly not true now, there isn't a place for anybody, let alone everybody. But I still don't think you can hold young people down, I think you've got to give them a break. I mean my ex-assistants are, like Ray Lovejoy, who's probably one of the top editors in the world; Norman Savage who cut *Zhivago* and things for David Lean and, unfortunately died or would have been one of the top editors. Who else can I think of? Ian Crafford who cut *Field of Dreams* and things like that. So that... And Willy Kemplen[ph-Ralph?] who's now retired, but he cut several very good films, and Barry Peters who's another editor. They were all my assistants, because I've always helped assistants. Patrick Moore, who was my assistant, I got him a job with Elliott Kastner cutting. And, my assistant in America, the best assistant I had there, now cuts my son's film, he's like the supervisor, well he cut a couple of them, he's now, like, supervising with James, working under him as a second editor. And so, you know, I was very silly there, because he was by the best American [laughs] assistant I'd ever had, and suddenly I hadn't got him any more. But, you know, I, I do help young people on a lot. And... Because I think you can, you can get so frustrated. I'm working with an assistant now whose father was Russ Lloyd.

Oh yes.

Chris Lloyd's son. I mean, he, he's so ready, over-ready to be an editor, but, you know, he can't get a job here being an editor. He's way more experienced than my kids, he's thirty-five or something, you know. And, very nice and, and very bright.

Yes.

Just incredibly sad, there's no opening here for him. He has a wife and a couple of kids and, he has to keep working, you know.

[0:01:57]

While we're in this area, two things. First of all, if you can cast your mind back to ACT, in those days. I was going to say that, until very recently, until in fact Jim Connock[ph] died last year, the editorial section of ACTT was probably the most restricted of all, because Jim I know always felt that, an unemployed member who was on the books ought to get work before anyone else, you know, before any new intake. So they made it very difficult for newcomers into the union.

Yah.

Do you remember what the atmosphere was, forty years ago? I've never asked you actually if you were ever engaged in any of the union activities. Did you attend meetings or sit on committees?

I attended meetings quite a lot upfront, but I never sat on any committees. But I did attend meetings, and, in that way I was involved, you know. But I didn't, I wasn't ever on any committees of any sort. I always struck, cut... What's the word? Stuck very carefully to the union rules by not employing people who were not in the union or anything like that. I was always very careful. Some, somebody sneaked through somewhere along the line, and hadn't, and had said they were in the union and they weren't, and I immediately got rid of them. Because I didn't... You know, I thought the union had done a very good job frankly. I mean I, I think eventually it overstepped its mark like most unions, but what it did originally, I think was

excellent. And you can see now they have no control, that everybody is being exploited right, left and centre.

Yes.

Right under my very eyes, I see my crews being done, you know.

Yes. Back to the Thirties.

Well exactly. And I don't think this is really very fair, and, you know, people like Dickie doing it seems to me extraordinary, supposed to be a socialist, that he would be doing this. All the crews are on all-in deals, so they work till God knows what hour, and, and they're expected to. You know, not just the odd occasion. So, I mean, I think a lot, as I say, a lot of what they did was very good, and so... I do think that it was important to get in new blood, and I think that in a way there was a certain time in the union when they were getting in the wrong new people, they weren't getting in people who perhaps had something to give to the industry, they were just people who were just snucking in from various places who had got in through, I don't know how. But they weren't getting in right people, who could perhaps go somewhere in the business. I think there was a definite period when that was happening. And if you had any connection with the business, it was the last person who would get in, which is stupid, because kids brought up in the business actually are extraordinary most of the time, they've lived with it and know about it.

Mhm.

And if they want to do it, they can be very good, as several, you know, like Gerry Humphreys's son and people who are working at, thing. And there's Dick Lester's son who works on the sound there. And they're hardworking people, and...

Yes.

You know, and I, I don't think you should either stand in their way or, or necessarily push them, but if, you shouldn't stand... And I think there was a time when if you were related to Dick Lester and you tried to get into the business, you probably wouldn't get in. And I think that was a very bad period for people. The one time I, I got in an apprentice on *Greystoke*, a non-union apprentice, and we did it all above board, because Patrick Moore, who was my first, was on the editing committee, council, whatever. And so we went through them, and we were employing a first and a second, and I wanted to have an extra and I wanted to bring in somebody as an apprentice, with the possibility at the end of the picture that we, there would be an opportunity for him to get into the union.

That was here?

That was here in England, yah. And, so the ACT said yeah, I could do that. And they would see, they would, you know, reconsider the thing at the end of the film, whether or not they let him into the union. And, so I actually went down and saw about half a dozen different boys, from various... And I went with a very nice boy called Tim Arrowsmith. It was between him and Simon Cellan Jones, you know Jimmy Cellan Jones's son, and, who I liked enormously too and was bright. But I felt that Simon had, with that father, had a fairly good chance of getting in anyway, whereas Tim had no connection with the film industry, started his own film school at university or college or wherever he was, and, very bright, very nice. And a good choice, turned out very well. And ACT took him in. I've lost touch with him now; I used to hear from him at Christmas. I don't know... I would think he may have gone off into documentaries or something like that, but, very nice. And I think that more of that should have, at that time when the industry was blooming, should have been allowed to happen, rather than having to take some... Because there were some real deadbeats in the cutting rooms.

Mm.

You know.

Well in every department.

Well, yes. So, I mean what you did was, and I can't remember whether they ever actually did it, I certainly did it, Patrick may have done, is like, interview the deadbeats and say, and after all you could always have that freedom, that they weren't any good, they weren't what you were looking for, you know. But I don't think at that time we had to do that; I think we really had it right upfront, that we wanted to bring in somebody new and train up somebody, and they were prepared to do it. And I'm, you know, I think when the company can afford it, because obviously they had to pay him, that that's a very good way of doing it.

Yes.

And nowadays it's difficult because, you know, there's not, you know, there are some very good assistants out of work.

So little production and, [inaudible-7:30] restricted [inaudible].

Yah, yah. So it's a different thing. But I do think that, you know, the... I suppose the people that are coming up through TV are getting that kind of training probably.

Well they were with the dismantlement of the ITV companies.

Yah. Yah.

And the BBC, there won't be any formal training there.

No. I saw Simon Campbell Jones – Simon Cellan Jones's name on television just the other day in one of these series, he's working as a floor manager or something, so I knew he'd get into the business, you know.

Right. Mm. But, BBC intends to cut back.

Yah, their training.

So... Yah. So all those people will come onto the freelance market, and again, working conditions and pay inevitably will slump.

Mm.

[0:08:14]

I remember you saying that, when first you went to the States you couldn't get into the union. Presumably you are now in the IA Local.

Yes.

Right.

Yes.

Can you make comparisons between the two unions, between IA in the States and ACT here? Of the two, which would you rather be a member of, and, what, what do they do for their members?

Well, Local 776, which is what I belong to, don't ... I mean, I... They... I mean, their main thing of course is, they have a huge motion picture health and welfare and pension fund, which, you don't now even pay into, your employer pays into it. You used to pay a part of. And they're marvellous, I mean I broke my leg recently, it's cost me practically nothing. You have to pay a small percentage yourself, but you know, I've had radiotherapy and all these kind of things, and seen the doctor here and in the States, and, had plasters on and things like that, and... I mean that's marvellous. Any pills that I take, I just, get for absolutely nothing. And, I think in that way they've, it's a huge improvement on ACT. But the actual working conditions, I'm

trying to think. I had a little problem with a rather unpleasant employee over something once, and I have to say that they handled it extremely well, 776, and got the money and everything, with the minimum of fuss and things. And I'm not sure, because I never had an instance like that happen here, but I just have a feeling maybe they wouldn't have handled it quite so well there. I mean, if a company there messes a, like a cameraman or a sound man or editor or anything, about, they, they slap litigation on them.

Yes.

And stop the films from opening and things like that. They seem to have quite a lot of power.

Yes.

I mean, IATSE, you don't really come across except the time when they were trying to get us... A really funny thing happened, because, I couldn't get into the union, and they all kept saying they wanted me in the union. But it's the same jealousy thing really of here when, those editors in the old days, I mean they, all are so nice to me and, you know, what an honour it would be to have me and everything, but, you know, I just had to qualify and, you know, and things like that. Anyway, I was working on this film with Cannon called *Master of the Universe* when they were trying to unionise Cannon. And they were trying to unionise all their bigger movies. This was like a six million dollar movie, which for Cannon was quite big. So all films like, over five million, they wanted everybody to join. And they had a big rally, IATSE this was actually, had a big rally, and Itola[ph-10:52] or whatever his name, everybody came. And they served us beer and, and frankfurters. I always remember eating beer and frankfurters, it was so funny. And they were trying to get us to join. So one moment I was being told I couldn't join; the next minute they were, you know, feting me to make me join. So I was in. Because we went in through Cannon, they had a special deal. Because it's quite expensive to join there. And I think it's \$3,000 for an editor to join. And we got, I got in for \$1500, and my son who was working

with me also got in, and he got in for half the assistant's fee. So I mean when I got in in the end it was really a very funny thing. There was an organisation, there was, not, a group of people, and one or two other editors that were like me, trying to get in, sort of, kind of, number one editors, they were both from New York. No, one was French, and one was from New York and one was me. And, we were approached by somebody, and I think that they were, you know, we were, they wanted us to come to dinner and have a talk and all this sort of thing, and this was a back way into the union where we would have paid money to get in. And I didn't want to know. I mean I just didn't think that was... I think the other two did it, and so I certainly shall not use their names. But, as I say, this other... I then didn't do it, because I just don't think that's the right way of going about... Get in the union by paying money? I mean, it just seems so...

Straightforward corruption to a union official, of course[??].

Yes. Something like that. Not quite that, but, you know, that kind of thing. And I couldn't prove it, so, I mean you know, I just think there was something like that going on.

Yes.

I don't think to an official; probably to funds for the union rather than an official. I don't really know. You know, I just don't know what it was, but I know... I don't even remember the names of the people now. But, I didn't do it, and then, as luck would have it, soon after I got in this way anyway, so I was pleased that I hadn't done it. But all you had to be, I don't know whether you know about it, there, is, you have to work on a film that is non-union, and then turns union halfway through. In other words, well becomes signatory, which is what they call it over there. And then, if you're working on it, you automatically go into the union. And they're always trying to unionise the non-union films, so the chances of that happening to you are quite good, particularly if you're on kind of upmarket non-union films, which some of them are. *Field of Dreams* was non-union, which is how they used Ian Crafford actually,

because they couldn't get a non-union editor they liked in America. And, if that didn't go signatory, he's gone union since, but, those kind of films very often do go signatory later on. They're coerced and they're pushed and, I don't know, various things happen and they, they join the union. But...

But the individual still has to pay the initiating fee presumably?

Yes, yah. Yah.

[0:13:54]

Difficult and highly subjective area, but, could you make comparisons between the quality of work in the two countries?

In the editing department?

Yes. Yes. Or, I mean is that impossible to [inaudible]?

Well it's so, it's so...

Good, bad and indifferent in both countries?

Well it's good, bad and indifferent in both countries, and it's also very similar. I mean cutting routine, from the time the film is shot to the time you get your married print, is so similar, that the differences are fairly small. There are some good... I mean they work with an American system which is, is, you know, shooting with scene numbers and not slate numbers, which I like very much. I wasn't so sure to begin with but I have a system now that I work with and I like it a lot, which is the main difference between the two. And it takes people a little time to get, to adapt to that if they're not used to it. But, there are some continuity script girls who do both systems and it's no problem, as Nikki Clapp did on our film. And Dickie was prepared to go along with it and the camera crew wanted to work with it because they had worked with it before. And I think that's the main difference. But, when you get that going

smoothly, it means the boys take a little bit longer doing the numbering and things, but it's a very good routine.

Mm.

I also now, and, I don't think this is particularly in America though it's probably done more there, but I did it on *Greystoke* first, which is, I video all my dailies. I have an attachment to my Steenbeck, so that before the dailies are... The... You see how American I'm getting. Before the rushes are broken down, I have an assistant who videos them all and logs them. So I've got, like, what we in America call KEM rolls. So I've got everything before it's cut. So if the director wants to look at all your outtakes, you don't have to put them together like you used to in the old days, you can just pop your tape in and look at them. And you've also got the one you cut in there, so you can compare the two. And I find that enormously useful. But I don't think many people do it over here, but it's probably becoming more common.

[0:15:57]

Well they're getting into electric editing more and more here.

That's... This is a different thing.

[inaudible].

Yes, oh yes, very true, yah. Emma, my daughter, has just done this little short electronically. She'd never done that. She'd done a course before but she'd never actually cut anything before.

Yes. You haven't ventured into that [inaudible]?

Yes, I had... Yes, I had a whole week's, week's training on Ediflex, which they gave me free. And... I'm not just great with buttons and things, I mean it's all I can do to record a, a video while I'm out [laughs], and get the right station and things, and, I

don't, I can't seem to get myself into the feel. I don't cut on a KEM, basically, I cut on a Moviola still, and I like that feeling, that relationship, and, the fact that my brain is going somewhere that fits onto that. Even on a KEM. I'll do big alterations on a KEM, but if I'm doing something really complicated, I like to be on a Moviola. And, I find the same thing, that I'm slightly divorced when I'm doing it on video, that I don't feel I'm really close to it.

Mhm.

And, it feels like there's something between me and, and what I'm doing.

Would that apply were you starting out now? Or, do you think [inaudible]?

If I was starting out now, I would definitely learn video.

Mm.

And I think that if you learn...

Relate to video better than you presently do, do you think? In other words, is it a generational thing?

Yes.

You came in...

I think so. I think so, because...

...[inaudible] 35mm.

Yes, I think very much. I mean because I think all kids learn computers at school now and things like that. I didn't even know what a computer was, I still don't understand

them. So that I think, very much so, I would be completely different. I mean all my kids have learnt, and at my instigation actually, video editing, both of them. James just cut *Hellraiser III* on video. And as I say, Emma's just done this little short on video. So, they shot, you know, they were shot on film, but they go on to video. A very big American editor who's a good friend of mine, Dean – no, Neil Travis, won the Oscar for *Dances with Wolves*, he's gone completely over, and he's a man of, fifty I suppose, forty, late forties, fifty. He's gone completely over to video editing now, he's just done, oh, big film with Harrison Ford, and they've done that on video. Must have just about opened in the States about now.

Mm.

June it's opening. And he didn't do *Dances With Wolves* on video, but since then, he did *Deceived* on video and he's done this new one.

[0:18:25]

One of the problems I think in that area is, it's an ever-changing field still, there is no basic system...

Well you don't know which system...

...[inaudible].

That's right. You don't know which system to learn really.

That's right.

And that I think is a problem.

And increasingly the, the capabilities of the various systems gets better and better.

Yah.

It's quite extraordinary now what can be done digitally.

Mm. Yah. Oh sound too.

Yup, yes.

But then it's something quite interesting. I've just noticed, we were talking about it the other day, that films I've seen recently, I'm not hearing the dialogue; I'm hearing the most marvellous music, and fantastic effects, and no dialogue. Because, Dolby apparently isn't really kind to dialogue, it's great for everything else.

Thank God you said that, because I've been convinced I'm going deaf.

Yes. Well I think this. So I, you know, I, you know, I've been kind of enquiring around, because to me, dialogue is first and foremost, and music and effects are just, you know...

Mm.

And this is apparently what is happening, and they're going to have to do something about this. But I mean, digital, I think, it's like everything else to me in the way of digital or videoing, you use it where it can be useful to you. I can't see myself turning over to it completely. But like when I was working on *Elephant Man* and we had those very complicated, like the opening when the mother's head's moving and the elephants are jumping on her and all that kind of thing. And you can't get into the mind of somebody like David Lynch, nor would you want to get into the mind of somebody like David Lynch. [laughs] It would have been very useful, instead of having to have it done fifty different times at the labs before we got even near to what he wanted, if we could have put that on the video, taken it into a suite and shown him, he could have got on the knobs himself even, or had somebody on them, and we could have shown him what you could do and how to slow it down, and then we could have

given it to the labs. I have done this a couple of times with just simple opticals, where we've gone in and shown what the effect would be, into, you know, optical houses. So I use it for that kind of thing, and for montages. I might do it with, we have a little newspaper thing and I thought the other day, if I could get Dickie, Dickie's not too, you know, doesn't like advancing into that world much, that it might be quite useful to show him what I'm trying to do with it, on...

Yes.

On something like that. And I think, there I would use it all the time.

Right.

And I think with certain directors. When I went to see Miloš Forman on, when he was doing *Valmont*, he was working with an assistant on a KEM, and in another room he had a, one of the, a little editor, Alan Heim, working, who's totally like me, and not electronic, working on one of these machines. But he had a technician by him all the time. And, it was marvellous for somebody like Miloš, who usually has three three-headed KEMs in the room with him so that he can have all the different takes up. Because on this you could just mark up your script and you just, say what sentence you want, like say, sentence six, and you just press that in, and on the various screens, every single take that says that line, comes up on those, and so you can run them over again, and eliminate them and see which one you want. You can have the one that you've got in already at the side so you can compare them all the time. And I mean that's very much quicker than having to lace up KEMS with the, however many, six different reels that these are on or something like that. So I think in those areas, with somebody like un Miloš who looks at every single outtake of film, it's very useful.

[0:22:01]

Would you care to crystal ball for our unknown listener in the future what... is it going to be all electronic do you think eventually?

I would have to say I think it probably is, yah. When it gets better. I think, seems to be going towards the floppy disk. I saw them doing some cutting in New York on, is it called Laser 6000? Or something.

[hesitates] Yes.

Some name like that.

It might be 2000, but I'm not, I'm not... Yes.

Yah, that one. And I must say, that was very efficient. Because one of the things I found with Ediflex is that when you did my first cut, it was fairly simple, and you know, you got it, fairly right, but, the cuts that you didn't get right and you wanted to change, or just for the sake of using the machine you wanted to change, overlay more dialogue, take a few frames off, because I'm a great part of the David Lean school that, you know, you really check every frame to make sure it couldn't be better on another frame and things, and, doing something like that on a machine like that would drive you crazy. I mean I could do ten cuts in the time it took to do one. Now they found that very useful, that I was able to explain that to them. As a feature editor that was some, really bad fault in their outfit, that until you can alter immediately, it could be just, you know, waste you a lot of time. But this CMX 6000 it's called, so the CMX 6000, there you could, you could say you wanted this and that, and you could take off a few frames and, because it's a floppy disk one. I'm not really into all this software stuff, but, it was not offline. The other one was offline and if you're offline it takes you much, much longer.

And, yes, it's not the most exact offline tool.

Yup. And I would think that it will, I would think it would come. I mean you know, I remember, I was in the industry when magnetic tape came, and I remember a lot of people said, oh, never, you can't read it, you can never... You know, and all that sort

of thing. It'll never take over. But, I mean I never, I always thought it would take over, it's so vastly superior.

Mhm.

Once you got used to it.

Yes.

And I think...

It was very late introduced into this country.

Yes.

It was much more advanced in the States, and it was actually being done.

Yah.

So it was kind of Luddite to say it will never work.

Yah, I know.

Yes.

But, no, I, I think in a few years, I think, you know, more and more people are training on video.

[0:24:27]

Yes. Have you done any of your special effects yet on video? I mean the actual finished, final special effects.

No. No.

On high definition.

No. No, I mean that's... And again, as you say, that's an area where one, I would use it.

Mm.

It's just that, I don't work a lot on special effects movies. And we didn't use them, the real one I did was *Masters of the Universe*, and we didn't really use, we weren't using that there. I find all that fascinating, I mean like *Terminator 2*, some of the special effects in there are quite extraordinary to me.

They are indeed, yes. Yes.

And very revolutionary. But, no, and I quite like to do, I'd like to do... I don't like special effects movies actually, because you spend so much time having to fit yourself in round what special effects do that it ceases to become your scene really in the end.

Mm.

But, that's why I only did one, I turned down several, like, *Flash Gordon* and, I can't remember what others, you know, because I didn't want to do special effects. In the end, I thought... Well I missed *Fatal Attraction* because I wasn't in the union, which I was very disappointed about, and *Masters of the Universe* was in the wings waiting, so, as I say, it got me into the union in the end. But, that was special effects, and that was quite interesting, it was very interesting as a film generally because the director was a first-time director, really didn't know what he was doing. So Menahem Golan put me on the floor to block out all the scenes with him every night. So I was cutting in the daytime and blocking out the scenes on location at night, and getting no sleep. And...

No disrespect to you, that particular film I thought always had the Cannon aspect to it.

Oh definitely. Cheap.

Kind of, cheap, yes. [laughs]

Cheap, is what it was. Well that's why you see it could have done with more interesting special effects. No it wasn't, no, it wasn't a film I'm particularly proud of actually at all, but it is, yah, in a way it is, because the way the director was shooting, it would never have gone together. I mean you know, people used to see the rushes and they used to say, 'What are you going to do, how are you ever going to cut it?' And in fact that it kind of looks OK when it's finished, in itself, but you know those things, they're not blatantly obvious, because the film was, I didn't think the script was very good or anything about it, and they didn't use He-Man very interestingly, and, you know, I mean... And Dolph is awful. The only thing that was quite good I thought, Frank Langella. But funnily enough, we've all stayed friends. I'm great friends with that director, I saw him just the other day when I was back in LA, and the actors, and Frank, we've all remained friends. It's really strange.

[inaudible], was it Tobe... No it wasn't Tobe Hooper was it?

No, it was Gary, Gary Goddard his name is. He's never done another film. But he runs those big sci[??] shows that go, Universal tours have. And he's got... I don't think he's got one in Euro Disney but he runs, you know those sci/side[??27:15] shows when you have, King Kong doing things or the, at a Universal Studio tour, he's got a couple of those.

The sort of Disney [inaudible] really.

Theme thing. Yes.

Or, a theme park, yes.

Yes, theme park. He's actually opening his own theme park in... He's a multimillionaire, Gary, he doesn't need to direct films. But all he really wants to do is direct films. But he's just opening his own theme park in, just outside Tokyo. Seven floors of...

Oh dear God! The world will be one large theme park before we die.

Yah. Well I hear the Euro Disney one's not doing that great.

No no no, I, I heard on the radio this morning, they've laid off most of the staff, or at least...

Oh really?

Yes, a lot of people have left. They're not saying how many had quit because they can't stand the Disney organisation.

Yah.

[0:28:10]

They quit, laid off. That's a whole interesting side-track we've been down.

Yah.

*Is there anything, while we're at it, is there anything more in, within that area?
We've covered unions I would have thought fairly...*

Yes. Yah.

And comparisons, well,[inaudible-28:24].

Well I don't think there are a great deal of, of... I mean most of it is fairly similar. Generally speaking I would have to say that the British assistants are better trained than the American assistants.

Yes.

I've only had one or two good American assistants, whereas in England you can pick a great many. And it's sad, because a lot of them are not working, but, I have found that they are much better trained here. And I've found that a lot on the floor as well, my observations, because I obviously don't work on the floor, but that, OADs/OEDs[??-28:53] and people like that, are mostly more efficient here. Not all of them, I've worked with brilliant ones over there, but, a lot of them are. I think the British... I think what Steven Spielberg said, the British crews were the finest in the world, he said it to me personally, so I know that he actually, it's not just quoting. He did actually say it to me.

It still applies, do you think?

Well I would say, this is a couple of years ago when he said it, so I don't know whether it still applies or not, because I don't think he's been back making a movie here. But, it certain still applied when he last made a movie here, because that was about the time he would have said it to me. So, and I, I, and you know, I'm inclined to agree with him. And, that's not everybody, but that's a, that's a kind of sweeping statement, that I think they are better, actually. The Americans always appear to be rushing round and being terribly busy; they don't always get anywhere very fast, you know.

Yes.

Maybe I've just had bad luck, I don't know.

I suppose a lot of them are television trained basically now.

Some of them.

Does that, would you say that's true?

Well I don't know, I don't think so. There's not so much of crossover as here, actually, there. And there's many more features made. They may be small features but, you know, a lot of B pictures are made really, because they're made mainly just for video and things like that.

Yes.

But... I don't know why it is, I don't know the answer to that, I just...

[0:30:22]

Well let's go back to our chronological sequence. I am sure we... We were still actually on The Horse's Mouth.

The Horse's Mouth.

I'm not sure because, your memory of being hired is, is where we side-tracked.

Yah.

We got into agents and stuff.

Yah.

So, Ronnie Neame wanted you for that.

Yah. Yah. And John Bryan. Because as I say, I had worked with them before as an assistant on a sound film some years ago, and I knew them. And we got on very well. They luckily loved my work. They... As I say, they said they'd never employ a married woman, and we had a lot of jokes about that. No, we, I was very friendly with them, we always used to go drinking together in the evenings and that sort of thing, you know, which was nice. And, Alec Guinness was, you know, producing on it, so he was, you know, on it at quite a big level. He had written the script. But he, you know, Ronnie Neame, he didn't interfere a great deal. He came to see the cuts and stuff like that, but he didn't... You know, it was a very good team of people, I mean you know.

It was Guinness you say who came to see the cuts? Do you mean...

Yes, because he was producing it.

Right, yes.

So he was sort of, in on seeing some of the cut stuff and things like that. But not a lot. He didn't come in and demand things or anything like that, you know, I think he was just genuinely interested in learning that side of it as well.

Did he suggest things?

Yes. Oh yes. Yah. But not a lot, but a few things.

Mm.

Oh it was just... I think there were some strains and things, but from my point of view it was an extremely happy experience. I loved working with Ronnie and, and John and, and Alec and everybody, and, as I've said, I felt I was in a better class of picture for want of another, better word, not a word I particularly like, but I thought that I was getting into more the kind of movies that I wanted to be making. So I was very happy

about that. I also met my husband on it, when I was making it, so I was happy on that, that level as well. And, you know, I, I don't know what to say really about it. I can't remember that much about it. I know we had some problems getting, with the music for instance. Because Tristram Cary, who was Joyce Cary's, son, son?

Could be, [inaudible].

Was promised to write the music. And, we had fitted, Ronnie, Ronnie's idea, the, Prokofiev's *Lieutenant Kijé* music onto it, and it fitted like a glove. Sure I altered the odd cut here and there, but I mean basically, it fitted just beautifully. And we always laid it on for screenings. And...

Was that the origin of the idea, a kind of ghost track but...?

Yes, oh yes, it was just put on, you know, like you do. I've got stuff on now, on this particular film, we use a lot of actual Chaplin stuff. But... Which we won't in the end, we'll use the John Barry. But, you know, yes, we just used that. Ronnie knew quite a lot about music and brought it in one day and said, 'See how you can make that fit,' and, you know, started to fit, it just fitted, some things just do, it just went right. All the chases down the river and things. It was great. Well we used it in the end. But... Then, Tristram Cary came down, and you know, we did the music notes and, thing, and he was a very charming man. But he did very much musique concrète kind of thing, which isn't Ronnie Neame at all. Anyway, we came to the first morning of music recording, and Ronnie just hates it, you can tell he just hates it. And, it didn't seem right to me either actually. Anyway, it's a really horrible situation for an editor to be in, because they asked me, there were no music editors in those days, asked me to lay the music up very quickly the next morning, the reels that we had recorded, and run them to listen to. You know, and I had Tristram in my, I knew why they were doing it obviously, and I had Tristram in my room saying, you know, 'Pull that up a little bit and fit that here a little bit,' and, you know, helping. He, I'm sure he must have known. I don't know, maybe he didn't. He was full of enthusiasm and things, you know, and everything, and, we ran the film with the music on, and, I

never saw him again. Never ever have I set eyes on him again. So obviously told[??-34:41] him. Then we got in, Ken Jones I think, who did, I remember they bought the Prokofiev or whatever they had to do, and that was rearranged. And it never fitted as well as the record actually. [laughs] So that was one of the things, I remember that. And I remember the young boy died, Nosey, the guy who played Nosey, died of a heart attack. Did you ever see *Horse's Mouth*?

I saw it. I don't remember [inaudible].

Well he played the little boy.

I remember the music, strangely enough.

Yes. He played the little sidekick, who was always hanging about, Gulley Jimson.

Mm.

Anyway, he was older than he looked. He played like an eighteen-year-old but he was about, twenty-eight or nine, and he died of a heart attack two or three days after the end of shooting. And we had to do looping with another voice, which was, you know, put rather a dampener on everything because he was such a nice boy, everybody liked him so much. He was married to Elvi Hale or somebody, and, it was very sad.

Mm.

And we had problems cutting some areas I remember.

[0:35:40]

The tensions came from Guinness as an actor presumably?

I would...

[inaudible] I think.

Yes. Yes. Yah.

[inaudible] he has[??] [inaudible].

I remember a funny scene one morning, well it wasn't that funny, but, Alec was doing... I think, I have a theory Alec over-rehearses himself actually, because he did such marvellous rehearsals, and sometimes, I don't think the takes were as good. But anyway, he was rehearsing this, and the sparks were up in the gantry there, you know, doing their pools and their racehorse, you know all their selections and things. And Alec looked up at them, and he really lost his temper, raved at them. Said, 'How dare they have so little interest in his acting. If his acting was that bad, he might as well give up forever if they weren't watching. He was so upset and annoyed at these people. Poor men, I mean you know, they'd got their cup of char up there and they were, happily... I mean they'd seen, and this was probably the twentieth rehearsal that he was on by then. And they were so upset, these people. And he stormed off and didn't come back the whole of the rest of the morning.

Did they take it seriously?

Yes.

They did?

They were very, very upset. Yes, very. Thought it was very unfair of him.

Yah, I'm surprised they didn't understand that, someone that tense, indeed I suppose in a sense insecure.

Well they thought that he was insulting them. He was pretty rude. I wasn't exactly reproducing his rudeness. He was very scathing and sarcastic with them like he can be.

But he is notorious for, well that kind of...

Yes.

...compensation[??-37:22] I suppose.

Yah. But then he did another very nice thing I always remember. He had £100 stolen off his dressing table in his dressing room, and they discovered that it was the young window cleaning boy that had taken it. And they wanted to sue him, and Alec said, 'No, I don't want him sued.' He said, 'It's my fault, I shouldn't leave £100 lying about on my dressing table, temptation for young boys like that. I know he did wrong, and the fact that he's now, you know, in prison or whatever, in custody, will probably give him enough of a punishment. Because,' he said, 'I don't want to sue him because, you know, I consider myself as much to blame.' And I've always told that story to people, so much so that when we were picking up per diem and things in Virginia, I always said to my crews, 'Whatever you do, put your money straight away, don't carry it around with you,' because everybody knows which per diem day is, and, you know. Who had their money stolen?

Ha!

\$1400 stolen out of my bag.

Oh.

At a party. Because, I'd been in a hurry when I picked it up. I was saving the money so that when we went from Virginia to Connecticut I could go via Los Angeles to see

my children, so I was saving my per diem. Anyway, so I'm going to spend it on there. And I had, like, two weeks in my bag. Never got it back. And Bill...

A member of the crew?

Pardon?

A member of the crew do you think?

Seems difficult to believe it was, but we had quite a few hangers-on. I was at a party of Bill Murray, the actor's, at the time, and he was very upset, because he thought, you know, I thought it was somebody at his, one of his friends, and... I really don't know. I, I do suspect who I thought it was, but it wasn't who I first thought, I don't think. But... I don't know whether it was her. It was a woman actually. I remember an instant where they were looking for cigarettes at the party, and I think maybe she went to my bag looking for cigarettes, saw this money in the envelope and just whipped it, maybe. Anyway, Bill Murray was so upset about it, he did a collection for me. And I still have a shoebox with a hole in the middle of it saying, 'Contribution for Anne Coates' or something, you know? And he collected, eight, \$800, out of the crew. I thought, really touched by this.

Well, yes. Yes.

I thought that was really sweet of them, you know. Everybody was so upset.

Mm.

And everybody put in a dollar or two dollars, maybe Bill put in 100, I don't know. But whatever it was...

The reason I asked was, I wondered if, in general, you find crews honest and very straightforward, punctilious in that respect, or whether there are some rotten apples around.

I, I haven't come across rotten apples. I'm sure there must be some around. But I mean, no, I, that's the only instance really of that. I did have some money stolen on *Pickwick* many years ago, but, I think generally speaking crews are fairly honest.

Yes. And I really think that it's foolish to put temptation in [inaudible-40:28] way.

Yes, well that's what, that's what Alec said you see, and I thought that was very fair of him, because I thought somebody like him would probably make an example of the boy, but he didn't.

Well he's a very serious Catholic isn't he?

He was just about converting around that time, yah.

Yah.

I don't think he had really gone over to Catholicism, but... Because he became a lot mellower when he became a Catholic, actually. I noticed a definite difference in him.

Mhm. Oh. I'll ask you later if David Lean did.

David Lean never became a Catholic.

No no no, but working with Guinness.

Oh.

[0:41:01]

There's one sort of general question, and maybe it's too early to ask this. It's still sort of the classic era of British production isn't it, and, we've talked about, say, John Bryan, or we've mentioned John Bryan and Ronnie Neame. Was it a different breed of man in, or person, in those days making films and...? Or maybe we should come on to those kinds of philosophical aspects later.

Yah. [pause] I don't know really. I mean, are they different from the equivalent today, which is, your Alan Parker and your Ridley Scotts and people like that?

Essentially I suppose is my question.

Yah. Well I think they are in as much as they were people of their time.

Mhm.

I mean, people of, those guys have grown up in a different era of movie-making, really.

Mhm.

But they, I think they still have a lot of things in common, even though. I mean Ronnie and John and David and all those people grew up, I mean they were all in the industry as boys really.

Oh yes, most of them joined at the age of, what, sixteen?

Sixteen, seventeen, yeah, and worked their way up through films, only films, nothing, there was nothing else.

Mhm.

So they worked their way through films. Whereas most of the top British directors, or a lot of them, have come up through commercials and things like that. So their basic training has been different. But I still think that certain elements that makes a director are in both of them, both types of person.

Yes. Maybe we should delay this until later.

Yah.

Because, it seems to... I made a lot of commercials, and it seems to me that really all one does in commercials is squirt a great deal of film through the camera, and it's a different kind of training.

Yah.

It's a certain area of, of prodigality involved, which, I'm not sure it...

But you still, I mean not all commercials, because obviously they vary, but, there are certain commercials, the sort Douglas used to make a lot of, that are story. He used to tell a story in a minute.

Mhm.

When I was working with a director that I loved working with, Trevor Nunn, who did the last film I did in England, and he hasn't done a film since I don't think, who was marvellous in many areas, but I used to say to him, 'You should go off and do some commercials, and learn to tell a story in a minute. You don't need half an hour to tell a story, you can tell a whole story in a minute.' And I said, 'Your direction will be ten times better if you could learn that that's the way film is, not theatre, but film is like that.' He used to laugh. And he said, 'Yes yes, I'll go off and...' And he admired Alan Parker a lot and people like that, so I mean he did admire that kind of film-making. I'm sure he never went off, he's got about two or three of the top plays

running in the West End at the moment, and, as he staggers to the bank. But he wants to direct another film, I know that he wants to do. I was surprised he, he wasn't going to do *Les Misérables*, but maybe he's fallen out with Cameron, I don't know.

The fault with, oh what was it, the film, the Trevor Nunn film.

Lady Jane?

Lady Jane, yes. It seems to me was...

Stagey.

Well, it was the script I thought, that everyone was so intent on making a contemporary political film.

Yes.

Which had absolutely no relevance to the Tudor aspects. But again, maybe we should leave that until when we get to him.

Yes.

[0:44:29]

Right, so, Tunes of Glory I have next on the list, following Horse's Mouth. You've obviously established a good relationship with Ronnie.

Yah. Yah. Yes, and it was very nice to be asked to, to do that with him.

Yes.

Let me think what I can remember. I don't know... I have such a bad memory, I mean you know. I do remember that, what was very very nice was that Ronnie had

me in on the rehearsals. He had the, all the actors who were going to be in the officers' mess, all kind of living down, they didn't stay together, I mean they didn't live at night, but they spent days together for, a week or two or three even before shooting, so they got used to each other in a gossipy, chatty way, so that they would appear to live together, which struck me as a brilliant thing to do. And I lived with them too, which, most directors don't involve you in that upfront like that. So I was there watching, and, and Ronnie, and he would rehearse little scenes here and there and... And then later on, just before the end, he rehearsed the big scene where the pipers come round the table with everybody, and, I was in all those rehearsals, watched him talking to the actors and moulding them and, you know, Alec and Johnny and everybody making suggestions and things like that. And that to me was absolutely fascinating, because, as an editor you really don't get in on that aspect, officially, like that. I mean I, I've always spent a lot of time on stage, unlike, you know, the shooting set, unlike.....

[End of Track 4]

[Track 5]

We're on to Tape 3. Yes, we got carried away there I'm afraid, but... You were saying about Alec being very [inaudible].

Yes, I think that he was. The only really difficult sequence of course was the end sequence when they were marching and he was up by the blackboard by himself, which was very difficult to do, and very difficult to cut because it was too long and we had to work out exactly the right bits, and the music played such an important part that you couldn't get it right till you'd got the music on and the marching feet that he was hearing and all that kind of thing. And that was a tricky scene to cut. But, I was going to show that at this BAFTA thing, but they want scenes with Johnny Mills in it. But it's, it was an interesting scene to do. And I think Alec got fairly, you know, uptight during, doing that, because it was very difficult to do, and he was by himself you know, it's difficult.

[inaudible] filmed[??] about a year ago, [inaudible] .

Yes it does, doesn't it.

Yah.

Yah. Ronnie's best film without a doubt.

[0:01:01]

Don't Bother to Knock I have next.

Well yes, I got *Don't Bother to Knock* while I was waiting for *Lawrence*, really.

Right.

Did I not do something else between that?

Well, I'm not... I'd have to rely on your list or your memory.

Yah.

This...

I, I did *Don't Bother To Knock* when *Lawrence* was postponed, but I didn't think I went straight from, from *Tunes* to *Lawrence*. I wouldn't have gone straight from *Tunes* to *Lawrence* had not I'd done, it been post... It was postponed because of Robert Bolt rewriting the script. Because Michael Wilson had written the script and they were going in kind of January or whatever. And then, when Robert Bolt wrote the script we didn't go till May. So in the meantime I cut a couple of commercials, the only ones I ever cut. And, did this film which Cyril Frankel directed with Richard Todd.

I don't know that.

And a whole lot of girls.

Mm.

No, not very good.

And this was, what, was that the beginning of swinging London? I don't know the film, so I don't know what it's about.

No. No, it's about... I can't... It was Dickie Todd, and six young girls that he was having affairs with, but I can't remember how he got in the position of having affairs.

It sounds very Sixties I must say.

Yes. Yah, it probably was fairly Sixties. Yah. But it wasn't really in the Sixties, it was...

No no no. It was a precursor.

Well, yes, I mean it was just in the, in the Sixties I suppose.

Mm.

Anyway, it was quite a short film, and I did it, it was at ABPC at Elstree. I don't remember it. I mean Cyril was very nice to work for, and I knew Dickie Todd from *Robin Hood*, so, you know, it was a very pleasant interlude really.

Was it an ABPC film?

[hesitates] No.

Festival Producing[??] I... Yah.

Yah. Yah. I think... It probably was, yes.

Yes. Well it doesn't sound as if there's much...

Much to say about that. I don't think so. It was an easy film to do, not, not any problem.

[0:03:09]

It brings us more or less to the great blockbuster.

Yah.

Yes. How did you first get involved with David?

Well, what, cutting the tests?

Well, I mean, from the start, from the beginning of the, your association with him and the film, Lawrence of Arabia.

I've told this story so many times. I'll tell it to you again.

Please.

[laughs]

Because I know it's been recorded before, at least...

Well I think it has maybe, but it's been put in...

But not in our archive.

No. That was because, just luck, like you, all your life is luck really, or most of your life is luck. We used to live just opposite Harrods, and my husband and I were, used to go into Harrods rather like the local supermarket on a Saturday morning, you know, go in there for coffee and stuff. And we bumped into Gerry O'Hara, who was a friend of both of ours, in there, and said to Gerry, 'What are you doing?' And he said, 'Oh, I'm doing some tests for *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* with David Lean and they're testing Albert Finney.' And we went and had coffee, and he said, 'You know, we're doing this, real tests, doing two scenes, one of him in the map room,' you know, when he's an English officer, 'and one of him as an Arab, and they're two complete scenes and everything.' And I wasn't working at the time, and I said, 'Well have you got anybody cutting them?' And he said, 'Well, I don't think they have.' He said, 'Ring John Palmer on Monday morning and see.' So I rang Johnny Palmer on Monday morning, and he said, 'No, we haven't got anybody cutting them. Do you want to do them?' I said, 'Sure.' Work with David Lean. You know. He said, 'Well we're, you

know, it's really just, he does want them cut together but, you know, and, that sort of thing, and the negatives are going to be cut and they're going to be real little films. But,' he said, 'we're not really paying any money, we'll pay you £50 for the package, you know, however many hours you work,' an all-in thing. So that was OK by me. So I set off down to the studios, and David, and introduced to David, who I had met before but I didn't really know him. And watched. And, what amazed me was that he didn't shoot... This was a test. He didn't shoot a single foot of film until four o'clock in the afternoon. I mean, I'd cut tests for other people before, and you know, by ten o'clock they'd have, be shooting, and, you know, it would just, a fairly, you know, chance, you know, rough affair. But this wasn't; all perfect sets, beautiful sets, beautiful costumes. Everything just looked like out of the film. Real actors. And Albert. And, we had, we shot these two test as I said. And the first one, I went ahead and cut. And David said to me, we were running the rushes for the second lot, he said, 'Have you cut the first one, first, yet?' I said, 'Yeah, yes, I have,' I said. He said, 'Well let's see it.' I said, 'Well, not... you haven't seen[??-5:57], none... You know, all the crew were there. I said, 'Well not in front of everybody like this.' 'Oh don't be so silly Annie, go off and get it, it's only, we know it's only just a, a rough cut, you know, no... You know, everybody understands.' I died. I went and got it. I felt so sick, and terrified, to run this for David Lean in front of everybody like that? Anyway, he ran it. I, I mean I was so frozen with horror, I didn't even see a shot go by. And at the end he got up and he said, 'That's the first time that I've ever seen a piece of film cut exactly as I would have done it myself.'

Well well well.

Wasn't that a piece, that was a piece of praise, as you can imagine, that has always stuck in my mind. And you know, then I was very cock-a-hoop. Anyway, back to Douglas and told him what he had said. He said, 'They're going to ask you to cut the film.' I said, 'No, no they're not, because,' I said, 'Peter Taylor's cutting it, and, you know, they won't.' Anyway, about, a few days later there was a message from Sam Spiegel, would I please travel up in the Rolls to London with him and David? So then I rang Douglas and said, 'I think they may be going to offer me the movie, because

they're, you know...' And sure enough, they did, sitting in, travelling in the Rolls up to London. Did I think I could cope? Now, Ronnie says that they had rung him and asked him, David probably had, you know, about me, so that I had... I mean I, you know, people are rather inclined to think that I had really cut nothing before *Lawrence*, but I mean I reckon that both *The Horse's Mouth* and *Tunes of Glory* were very good films.

Oh absolutely, yes. They were major productions.

And that I wasn't... Yes, exactly, that I wasn't coming from exactly nowhere.

Mhm.

I felt I was coming from nowhere, because I was very insecure.

Well, David's position I suppose post-Kwai was already legendary, was it not?

Pretty legendary, yes. It was post-*Great Expectations*, it was fairly legendary.

Yes.

I mean I remember when I was first at Pinewood, that he was pretty legendary, amongst women particularly, because he was so fantastically attractive, you know.

Yah. Was he known to be difficult? I mean...

Yes, quite difficult, yes. Yah. I must say...

Almost an insane perfectionist.

Yes, you could say that. Not in... I don't think insane. A perfectionist, yes.

[inaudible-8:12] he carried to quite extraordinary things.

Yah. But I think he was much more difficult, and bad-tempered, with people on the floor. He just loved the cutting rooms. I have to say that really, I didn't have any great problems with him. I mean I got on very well with him, didn't have any great rows or anything like that ever. We had disagreements, and, [laughs] he always said this thing to me which I think was quite funny. Because, we were having an argument about an actual cut, where we were actually cutting something. Because, it was just about somebody coning through a door, because I felt that I wanted to cut inside the door to see where he was going, as he reached the door. David wanted to have him open in a more conventional, to my mind, just open the door halfway on one side and carry the other half through the other. Both valid things, you know, purely matters of taste, either of them. Anyway, he wanted to do it his way, which was fine, because obviously you do it his way in the end. But, I was sort of arguing, and he said, 'Well that's the right place to cut it.' I said, 'Well it may be the right place for you David, but it isn't the right place for me. That's the right place to cut it.' And he said, 'Well,' something about, 'there's only one right frame to cut a film on.' I said, 'Yes, but there's a right frame for you, and there's a right frame for me, and they're not the same.' He said, 'No, but I'm the director, so my frame is more right than yours.'

[laughs]

Yah.

And that's, you know, true. But most directors don't interfere on that level with the cutting really. I mean he only did it occasionally. I mean he felt strongly about something, and I felt strongly about it, but we didn't argue it, we didn't fight or anything like that. I wasn't in a position to fight anyway, I mean, you know.

Right.

I was so, always in awe of David in those days.

[0:09:59]

Where were you during the production, were you always here, or did you ever go with the...?

When he was in Jordan I was at Shepperton, and we sent out rushes for the first two or three weeks, then we didn't send them any more because it wasn't possible for him to see them there, so they just amassed. And I cut the first few sequences with notes that he sent me from Jordan. And then he didn't see/scene[??-10:21] any more, so I really didn't do much cutting. I did some odd assemblies for, that Spiegel wanted doing here and there. And, I didn't, you know, not a lot. We ran the dailies and we logged it and I got to know the work very well and that sort of thing. But when David came back and stopped shooting for three months, when Sam brought him back from Jordan, and then he was going back to Spain, and Robert Bolt hadn't written the second half of the script, they had to stop shooting. And then Robert went to jail for a month because, he lay down in Trafalgar Square and things, and, so, you know, the month went on a bit. And David ran all the dailies then with me, and made, we made copious notes. And so that when he went back to Spain, then I cut all this while he was gone. And then, when he was in Spain I used to go down once a month with the dailies, I would go down with the rushes once a month, and then we would run them in a monastery or a cinema or somewhere. And again, he'd give me a lot of notes and come back and cut them. But I never took cut stuff back to him. He didn't want to see it, he trusted what I was doing, he didn't feel he needed to see it, he, you know, until he got back.

Right.

So I had about two-thirds I suppose of the picture cut by the time he came back from... Because then they went to Morocco, and I didn't go to Morocco because they weren't there very long. So that the whole of the bloodbath sequence was not cut, obviously, because they were, you know, in Morocco doing it. And some of the bloodbath sequence had in fact been shot in Spain. So that was kind of not done. But most of the other scenes were cut in some way or another by then.

[0:12:06]

It's such a huge story and saga, one never knows where to start talking about Lawrence. Have you, you've covered a lot of this I suppose with Kevin, have you, Kevin Brownlow?

Yes, yes with Kevin, and with the various books of, Larry Raskin and, there are various books being done about *Lawrence* here and there.

Yes.

And so I've done, had quite a lot of interviews about it. I mean, there are so many aspects, there are so many stories about it and things, you know, that... I mean I think the most amazing thing, and I mean I still think it's amazing, even today, was the speed in which we actually cut it. Because they shot it for thirteen months, and we cut and dubbed and did the music and everything in four months. They finished shooting in August, and we were out in front of the Queen on December the, 11th or whatever it was.

Was it always working towards that date?

Well it had to be. Sam made that date way up.

Yah.

Because you have to book the Queen a long way ahead. And I think he did it psychologically so that David couldn't go on cutting forever. We had to be ready. But in that period of time we shot the motorbike accident, after he came back in August, and we shot the steps of St Paul's.

Right. Are there any areas that haven't been covered? I don't know, obviously, what Kevin kind of put into the biography, but...

I don't know what he's putting in.

[0:13:25]

Any, any things that you think ought to become a matter of history, record, that your recollections haven't yet covered?

Not much.

I mean we could sit here for days talking about Lawrence of Arabia.

Yes. Yah.

It would be kind of fruitless.

Not much really. I mean, it's... Well it was such a stupendous undertaking to do, and the dailies that came in every day were so amazing, that one lost perspective on it after a time really, because it was so brilliant.

Yes.

And the [inaudible-14:03-vistas?] of the, of the desert and that sort of thing, and camels and everything, were so amazing, that...

What would come in? Was he... He was shooting to a very specific plan of his, or...?

He had written the script with Robert Bolt.

Yes.

So, most of it, yes, he did... He does a lot of cover.

Mhm. You say a lot was coming in very day.

Not every day, twice a week.

Right.

We got it back twice a week, and...

But there was a great deal of footage [inaudible].

Some days a great deal of footage; some days 100 feet. You know, Sam made that remark about, there would only be, I can't remember what it was today, but David frequently quoted it, that there was only 100 feet, we only got 100 feet in some days, you know, of a four-day shooting. Well they had sandstorms. David shot this piece of film, which I think's lost now unfortunately, standing in the middle of a sandstorm, holding a microphone, talking into it, sending a message to Sam on the yacht in the south of France. Because there was a lot of niggles went on about that, because Sam would say, 'Oh I've been working hard all the weekend,' and then you'd see pictures in the, *Tatler* or somewhere, of him on his boat with, you know, in his Bermuda shorts with all these girls around him. And David used to see these and get very annoyed about it, you know. And, and Sam kept us waiting, always waiting, waiting, to run, when we had rushed to run, he kept us waiting, always. So much so that, I mean it was[??] very nice, sometimes he sent us out to lunch. He'd say, you know, 'I won't be, I'm taking the train back in three hours.' He'd still be in the south of France or somewhere, and we'd be in the theatre with the rushes all ready for him, having worked like, you know, fury to get them ready for the time he wanted to see them. And, and he'd say, 'Oh well, go out to lunch, I'll pay,' and we'd go to the Mirabelle or somewhere really smart and chic, and have a really nice lunch.

All at Columbia's expense presumably.

All at Columbia's expense. Yes.

What if any was Spiegel's special magic, or touch, or ability, other than presumably being a great conman?

Well of course he was that. I mean, the interesting thing about Sam was that you knew he was totally dishonest, so you never believed him and you always knew where you were.

Mm.

So I mean...

Was it always a matter of fact that you couldn't trust him, or... [laughs]

I think so.

Or were you surprised from time to time?

Yah, I, I suppose he did, he probably did, but you wouldn't... You know, it just was that one didn't trust him, and so you, you, as I say, you kind of knew.

Well in the early Forties in Hollywood there was a verb to Spiegel.

[laughs] Yes, to Spiegel, that's right. But, I, actually I quite liked him, and he was mostly quite nice to me, but he was a bully, and I mean I had real problems with him, with his hands up my trousers and, all round me, I mean terrible wandering hands he had. And he always insisted upon my sitting next to him in rushes. So then I used to get Willy[ph], my assistant, to sit right the other side of me, you know, so that when his hands were on my knee... I never wore skirts, always wore trousers. And that sort of thing, I mean, but he was known for that. And then he'd whisper things in my ear like, 'We're going to have such fun when we go to Jordan together,' and things like that, and I'd think, [gasp], you know.

Would that be tolerated nowadays?

Oh no, I think that would be definitely not. That would be, workplace harassment, wouldn't it, or something?

Yes.

I mean he was the worst workplace harasser I ever know, he used to chase his secretary round the table and things like that, I mean... No, I think he would have landed in jail without a doubt. I mean, I didn't like it, but it certainly wouldn't, didn't upset me.

Did you like him?

Yes.

Yah.

Yah I did like him. Oh he had a lot of charm, a lot of charm, Sam. And he came out with some really good ideas you know, at this distance I can't remember what they were, but I know that David scoffed at a lot of the things he said, but actually he came up with a lot of ideas. He couldn't always encompass the way that when we saw rushes, how David was going to do stuff, David's plan for things, you know, and so he, he'd send back telegrams saying he didn't like this and he didn't like that. And David would tell him to mind his own business, or whatever. And they had these terrible rows. I've never seen two men... Well I've since seen Miloš Forman and Dino De Laurentiis fighting like that, but they're the only other two. Screamed at each other. And it was nearly always only because Sam was late. Sam knew this did to David, made him go crackers if he was late, and yet he was always late.

Yes. Well it's the basic discourtesy I think towards anyone, yah.

Well it is, it is. Particularly if, if something that he knew, he would then not be able to have any conversation with David afterwards, because David, they had such a terrible row that they never could get back on a normal even keel of running the movie.

This thing of making suggestions to Lean, I mean legend has it that Lean really resented anyone making suggestions.

Well he didn't take much notice. He didn't do them if he didn't like them. Sam was not in a position. But one or two, and he would always say, 'Oh Sam's making one of his stupid ideas again.'

Excuse me, I'm getting a lot of noise from the cassette.

Oh sorry. You know, that Sam, Sam's making one of his stupid suggestions again and everything. But, it, some of them were very astute, I thought, and they were mostly things where you could lose lines and tighten things and things like that. And, occasionally we did them. But, Sam didn't have a lot of input. I don't know whether he had more on *Kwai* or not. [pause] But he didn't have a lot of artistic input at that stage, I don't know how much he'd had before, particularly in the casting and stuff like that.

*The interesting thing about so many Spiegel films is how unsuccessful they were. There is his image of him as **the** [inaudible-20:03].*

But some of them... Yes.

But he made a great many films that were terrible failures...

Yah. Yah.

...artistically and commercially.

Yah. That's true.

Yes.

But, he was a big person, and he was a big producer. He was the kind of person that, I think helped to inspire you to do good things actually. He kept you on your toes, he asked you pertinent questions about what lenses were used and what this was used and that was used, all the way through the rushes. I've never had another producer take so much interest on a technical level as Sam did. I mean, we had to learn it by heart, everything, before we went in, we had to read the sheets and, you know, know exactly which camera. We had four cameras; he always wanted to know which camera we were on, and that sort of thing, you know.

It's pretty relevant isn't it for the...

Totally relevant.

[inaudible-20:51] to know all that.

Totally relevant, you know. And... But he, I think it just, it just showed us I suppose that he knew what he was...

*Was it more than, what,chutzpah, or, was there an inner intelligence, and innate[??]
[inaudible]?*

Yes Yes, interest in film.

Yes.

Yes, I always think he was quite a tasteful person. David said he wasn't, but I always found him quite tasteful, I have to say. I thought, as I say, that the suggestions that he made, I know I thought once or twice that we didn't do, but were really good ideas.

But would it be fair to say he was totally untrustworthy?

On that kind of level, yes, I would say so. He'd twist anything to suit himself, you know.

Yah.

And he was, you know, famous in older days when he wasn't so famous for setting up movies and telling stars that he'd got directors when he hadn't, and directors he'd got stars, until he'd got the whole deal together. I remember Mike Francovitch at Columbia telling all sorts of fabulous quotes. Because I love old Hollywood stories, and they, these two used to reminisce about their old days when they, you know, they used to know what they'd been doing. They admired each other for doing these kind of deals, you know. But there was really, highly dishonest what they were doing. Like taking money on false pretences, because, you know, they were getting money out of people for, for things they hadn't got.

He had a criminal record for [inaudible].

Yah. But, you know, if it worked, but if it worked out in fact because he, somebody heard that somebody else was doing it and they did the movie, and, you know, it worked. And sometimes it is. I can't remember but there were films that they had done like that, he and Mike, and that sort of thing, and turned out to be really good films, but had been got together in a completely dishonest way.

Well it's like the Rothschild family, or the origins, are in, in total dishonesty, corruption, malfeasance and...

Yah. Yah.

Nothing succeeds like success [inaudible].

Success. That's right. Yah. But Sam was good at looking after us and things like that. I mean when we were working very long hours dubbing, when we were doing music on one stage and then we were whirling across into the other stage, and we were there till, I suppose midnight every night and that sort of thing, I mean he would lay on the most marvellous cold food to be sent down from Fortnum's and that sort of thing. We had lobsters and, you know, just, smoked salmon, and, just the best things. He really looked after us. Bottles of wine and stuff like that.

But how often did that come out of his pocket?

Oh never. But people don't even... But some people don't even think about doing it. He was feeding us like fighting cocks to keep us on our feet, actually. I mean it was...

And to win you over, to...

To win us over, and to, to keep us going, because he knew by that time we were extremely tired, we hadn't had a day off for four months.

He sounds very similar to Alexander Korda in that...

I didn't know Alexander Korda, and I'm really sad I didn't know him, because I'm sure I would have loved him.

A great charm and [inaudible] deliver[??].

Yes. Yes. Yah. And he was a huge womaniser, Sam, I mean he just couldn't keep his hands off women. [pause] I mean... And he and David, I mean, were both the same like that in a way, but in total, different ways that they went about it, you know.

[0:24:06]

Mm. Well on the scale of the operation, you make it sound as if it's almost a conventional picture in the way it went through, that they were... Were there major areas of, of problems and, disasters of any kind?

Well there probably were in the shooting that can't remember about. [pause] But in the actual picture, there weren't. There were some sequences, like when he went back for Gasim and things like that, I remember we worked and worked and worked and cut a million different ways. And, the scene on the balcony where he cons him to go back with Allenby again, millions of different ways. I just remember some sequences. Feisal's tent, practically exactly the way I first cut it. You know, there were just certain areas. But just like, really normal film-making. David does quite a lot of cover, he likes to see things quite a lot of different ways, but not like some directors who like to see everything every different way. I mean he wouldn't. A couple of sequences I personally think I cut better, and then when he came in and had alterations done to them, I didn't think they were as good. But, you know, that's, that's my personal against David Lean, and, who am I to say that? But you know, certain things, areas. He was always a little, to my mind, frightened of too much emotion, and I rather like emotion. So he pulled back sometimes when one maybe could have had more. [pause] But, I mean you know, there were such amazing scenes to cut. I mean I would never have had the courage to hold those shots as long as David did, and so it taught me a lot like that, to have the courage to do it, you know, and to be able to visualise how it will be when the music is on and the, you know, they're plodding and, the effect of plodding without become boring. I was always worried that the scenes would become boring. Style-wise, it was very much my idea to do the direct cutting, because, if you read the script it still has dissolves and fades and things in it, between scenes. But I had been going to the French cinema, which in fact David to his, I suggested he went to, and I think he did go and see a couple of them, because I said, 'People aren't doing that now David, they're going straight from one thing to another. This continuity of stuff, and, and you know, slowing down,' I said, 'it's getting rather old-fashioned now.' But once he'd got that

into his head, he then came up with some brilliant cuts. We also did this overlaying of sound before picture, which had not been done a lot. One of the ones I remember is, after he shot the guy, before Aqaba, he had to shoot Gasim, who he pulled out of the desert, and he said, it was not written, that the bell that the Turks are ringing for the charge on Aqaba, we laid ahead. And the guy at the premier rehearsal, well the first show we did, which was like a rehearsal for the premier, it was a press show, the manager of the theatre, or head projectionist I think, said to me, 'I know that you guys have had to, you know, work really hard and fast and things, but I would have thought you would have got the sound in sync.' So that's how I knew that was at that time, [laughs] because he thought we, you know, we'd goofed.

Yes. Do you remember where you had picked up the idea from? You say...

From the French cinema.

It was from the Nouvelle Vague?

Yes, Nouvelle Vague cinema, sure, yes, I would say, yah. That's what had kind of influenced me. I'd been fascinated by the way they were cutting. I had always thought too much time was spent in matching and all those kind of things and...

Yes. Opening and closing doors and...

Opening and closing doors, and walking across streets. I mean once somebody starts to go across a street, you know they're going to the other side, so why bother to plod 'em across, you know, unless they're weaving in and out the traffic for some reason. So, I always thought that, that there was a lot of room for much more, much sharper cutting.

[0:28:06]

I wonder if commercials had an influence here, because after all...

Not at that time. I think after that they certainly did, a big influence. At that time I wouldn't think... People were pretty sneery about commercials around that time. It hadn't become fashionable and vogueish like it did.

This is the very beginning of the Sixties.

I'm talking, yes, '61 and '62.

'61 and '62.

Yah.

Yah, I guess you're right. [pause] Yah. In the States though... Mm. Well we won't go there[??].

What were you going to say?

I was going to say, in the States there was almost, as I remember, and it's difficult to precise it exactly in time, but, telling little stories.

Yah.

It was beginning of the funny commercials as I'm aware, then.

Oh yes, yah. Yah, could be.

There were some good ones that were made.

Yah. Yes.

But probably they were very self-contained dramatically.

I'm not saying they weren't good at this stage. I'm saying they weren't recognised by everybody as being good.

They hadn't split over into [inaudible-29:12].

No they hadn't. Because you know, they weren't taken very seriously by feature, in fact they were sneered at by feature film-makers, is the truth of it. And then, suddenly they became so excellent and so in vogue and, Ridley and Alan and people like that came from there, and they were looked at in a completely different light. But I'm not saying they weren't doing good and interesting ones.

Well you're absolutely right, the fact is that most commercials in those days were made by failed feature people.

Yes. Yah.

Second-rate feature people. Yah. Other than in the States, where they were already coming out of advertising.

Yah. Yah.

[0:29:47]

Well, as I say, it's such a large area. I'm [inaudible] if I know what to ask about Lawrence. I'm relying on anything that triggers your recollections. Or whether we should assume that as a movie it's so well documented now that...

I think it is really pretty well documented. I mean, there are odd stories one can tell, but you know, there aren't really many. One of the saddest things I think was the fact of cutting it down, because, when we did that first cut and it opened at three hours forty-two or whatever it was, it was too long, but it had a magic to it. And you knew and you understood all of it. And then, I always thought... I mean it broke my heart to cut it down.

Well I can imagine that. I saw the original cut when it opened, and it was irresistible.

Irresistible wasn't it. Well that's what you see again now, is, when you see it again.

Well, more or less.

Yah.

But you've lost some [inaudible-30:40].

A little bit. Well they've found, I hear they've found, but I haven't spoken to Bob Harris because he's in New York, that they've found the Allenby... The only real scene that wasn't there was the Allenby conning scene which I always loved, and which was a very big controversial scene between Sam and David. Sam didn't like it, and David liked it. It's the one I remember the most rows on a creative level between them. Because, Sam was always trying to get David to cut it down, and it was cut twice, which was why it was very tricky to try and put it back together again. And then we couldn't in the end because we had no track, and, so no guide, and it was impossible to do with Charles Gray imitating Jack Hawkins without even a guide track to go by. And we had, we got in lip readers and things, but it never really worked. So, some of that didn't go. But otherwise it really, nearly, the rest of it I think's practically the same, in fact. There are various stories go round that this is missing and that's missing, but it isn't; except for the, the balcony scene, everything is there. I think that we took out two shots around the train where we thought it was repetitive, but those are the kind of things that we would have done had we had a little more time. Because as I said to David, they don't need to come up to the same side of the train twice, and things like that, you know. And so we pruned the odd bit out, but basically, we didn't take anything out.

[0:32:05]

What was it like coming back to it after almost thirty years?

Pretty weird. I mean when they first, Bob Harris first rang me, I said, 'Well you'll never be able to do that, they'll never be able to find it, the negatives will have been junked.' He said, 'No, I've found it. I've got it all.' He said, 'I've got rolls of film with what's probably your handwriting round them and...'

Really?

Yup. They found it all, all the out stuff. Nearly all the out stuff. He's marvellous, Bob, like that, at finding stuff.

Yes. I had the impression the neg[??] was more or less in shreds, though, you went [inaudible].

Well it wasn't in shreds. The original cut, cut stuff, what had happened was that, because it was, you know, so old, that the joins were all coming undone.

Mm.

Because the cement had cracked, and dried and cracked. And so, I think every join without exception had to be remade, and in some cases patched a little bit. I think they patched some of it with tape in the end, but they redid the actual joins with cement. And, I mean the labs did the most fantastic job in both grading, after all these years, and in... I mean they loved the, they loved the project, they were so excited, and they felt so proud about working with David and everything...

You see I...

...that they...

Sorry, I was going to say, it was a 65mm negative, wasn't it?

Yes. Yah. And they hadn't probably worked much with that.

Mm.

So they did a loving, caring job on it. Because it must have been a hugely long film. And some of it was joins that were coming undone, some were ones that were now going from different shots and things like that, you know, would be putting back stuff. And it wasn't... I mean so many of the scenes, the balcony particularly but other scenes, were being, that had been cut down, had been cut down twice, so they had to be put back like that, and then...

On the original negs?

From the... Yes, because I went back on it twice. I cut it down immediately afterwards, well like in, whenever it was, the January or February afterwards, when we took out about twenty minutes, and then seven years later Sam rang me. That's when I was able to get my own back on Sam, because, he wanted me to go back on and cut the television version, and David was involved, David came back and we did notes, what we were going to do and everything. And I asked for a heap of money, because I knew I was the only person who could do it. The only other person that could have done it would have been Norman Savage who wasn't, he was still alive then but he wasn't available. And I don't think he could have done it anyway. So consequently, I asked for a lot of money. And Sam said, 'This is ridiculous,' poof poof poof. I said, 'Sam, you said, once I cut *Lawrence*, I could ask for any money I like, and I'm now asking for it.' And he saw the humour of it actually, he paid, paid it to me. And I went back on and cut it down again. And, that was the last time I really saw it. I took my eldest son, who would have probably been about ten or eleven then, because he was three when I did *Lawrence*, so I guess he would have been ten or eleven, to the Metropole, which could run 70mm, to look at print. And Douglas, my husband. We went off with a couple of other people to check the print. And I think that's the last time I ever saw it until I went back on it. The kids had run it on

television occasionally, and I may have watched the odd scene, but I had never watched the film. I'd forgotten how good it was, I have to say.

Mm.

It was amazing to see it again all together, on the big screen at the Academy cinema, which was probably the best cinema in LA. 200 people had been shipped over by Dawn Steel from Columbia to see the screening, none of whom really had seen... They'd all heard of the great *Lawrence*, and, you know, it was like a legend over there, but they hadn't really seen it, they all pretended they had but they hadn't. They were bowled over.

Yes.

You know. Because it was so much funnier than anybody remembered, and so much more political, and pertinent and everything.

There is an element of criticism about it, which I don't share I hasten to add, that it's superficial, which I, I think is totally untrue.

It's a movie; it's not a, it's not documentary on him, that's for sure.

But it's all there if you look...

Yah.

...it seems to me.

Yah.

All, all the possible permutations of Lawrence's character [inaudible-36:15].

Yes I, I think so too. I mean obviously it isn't immensely deep, because...

No, but it isn't an historical document.

And there are mistakes in it, and, I'm sure, and that sort of thing that were done, and, and you know, Robert Bolt compressed people. Ali was made up of at least two people, and things like that. But that's really good film-making. He'd done the same with *Nostromo* actually.

It was a four-hour film.

Yes. Yah.

[inaudible].

Yah. Oh there's been a lot of criticism, it was superficial, it was this, it was that. You know, it really, it didn't have such a great press when it first opened, and several friends of mine didn't like it. But, you know, a lot of those people have swallowed, and actually, one or two of the critics have actually come out and said that they were mistaken with their first, on seeing it again, the other day [laughs], that they had reassessed it and realised that perhaps they were mistaken the first time, and things like that. But I mean I remember it didn't have the greatest press.

[0:37:12]

What, as you remember them, were Lean's reactions coming back to it?

Pretty excited. Because I was the one who rang him first of all to tell him. I said, 'Do you want to be...' I mean, 'They want to do this reconstruction of *Lawrence*.' And he said, like me, 'Well they'll never find it, will they?' I said, 'Well David, they appear to have found it. Bob Harris wants to talk to you about it. Are you interested, do you want to talk to him?' He was in Marbella doing, working with Chris Hampton on the original *Nostromo* script. And he said, 'Yeah! Why...' And you know David, he was

sort of, thing. And we had a long talk, for about half an hour. And, he was saying, and he kept coming back... And then we talked about other things, what was I doing and all this sort of thing, and, how was his script going, and... And kept coming back and saying, 'But they won't like it after all this time, surely?' 'Well,' I said, 'everybody seems to think they will.' 'Well it would be marvellous Annie darling to get it back like we had it, because it was definitely best like that.' And then he'd go off and talk about something else and then he'd come back and say, you know, 'It's a bit risky doing something like that. What happens if they don't like it?' You know. Anyway. And he asked this, he said, 'Well if we do put it back, we must remember to put back the goggles.' Now the first thing I said to Bob Harris when he said to me, he'd found the negative, I said, 'Have you found the goggles?'

Were the goggles taken out?

Yes. I don't know it got, we allowed them to be taken out, because, the first thing I said was the goggles; the first thing David said was the goggles. How did we allow them to...

It's one of the emblematic shots in the film isn't it.

I know. How did we allow them to take it... I don't know how they took 'em out. I don't know why they took them out. Very strange. Anyway, they're back in now. And the other thing, did you know about that discovering, it's actually in a book of, in Hollywood, about discoveries, that we discovered when we were doing the reconstruction that one of the reels had been run the wrong way round forever. Flopped over.

[laughs] No.

I noticed it. We were running on the KEM, and it's, it wasn't a reel that we were doing any reconstruction on, so we were speeding through it really. It was the one where Ali comes out of the thing, and so we'd done no cuts on that, that was just like

it was originally, it was never cut down. And I suddenly said, 'David, Peter O'Toole always wears a watch on his right arm?' And we stopped and ran it, and we looked at each other, because the whole sequence had been flopped over. Now nobody knows at what stage that was. I actually have somewhere in the house it taken off television, the original, the, not the original version, the middle version, the shortest version that used to be shown on TV, and it's somewhere there that it happened, that it got flopped over like that. And I was quite interested to show it actually, because, hundreds of people, thousands, millions of people must have seen it like that, and never noticed it.

Wow[??].

But you'd think a connoisseur, because we were always running that film, studying it in film school and everything. So how many prints there were that went out like that, goodness only knows.

So you think even, even original release prints were...?

No not the original, no. I think it happened after we cut for television, down...

I see.

Somewhere after that it happened.

Right.

Because the last time I saw...

[inaudible] 35mm anyway wasn't it.

Yes, oh yes it was only the 35.

[inaudible] 65.

No, it was the 35mm prints that it happened on.

[0:40:36]

Well that's interesting. So, I was, I was curious if in the course of restoring it... Well let me ask what was the, you know, the very first departure point for the restoration. I mean where did you start? It was entirely in the cutting room, or, or what did you screen first of all?

Yes in the cutting room really.

Yah.

We didn't really screen anything up on the big screen. We had a...

Getting all the bits and pieces together [inaudible].

Yes, get... Yes, and putting them back in. And we were working with a 70mm print.

What did you work from?

70mm, we had a seven...

No, no I mean, memory or, or [inaudible] continuity?

Memory. And we found the continuity. We had memory mostly. We had the continuity. We had my script, locked-up script.

Yes.

But mostly memory, you know. And we had comparison, because we had, you know, some of it we had bits of, some of it we didn't. I mean, it's really a hotchpotch in a

way, because some of it we had only in 35, some of it we had in 70, so we were working on all sorts of levels, you know. Some we could only match the bits from the 70 print, and then match it into the 35 [inaudible].

And are there any [inaudible] masters of the original cut?

Yes.

Yes. Right.

Yes. Yes, but not... No, not the original original cut.

No.

But the, there were ones... Because I didn't... Did they find those bits in the end? I don't think they did.

I remember reading, I think it was in the American Cinematographer, an account of the restoration, and it seems to me that, at that stage anyway, a few little bits were missing. [inaudible] track [inaudible].

Yes, there were things missing. Yes. Yes, it was mostly track. That's why we had to, we had to loop with Alec Guinness, Peter O'Toole, Tony Quinn, Arthur Kennedy. Not Omar Sharif funnily enough.

Right. And Charles Gray for...

And Charles Gray we tried, yes, but it didn't really work. I think we used one of his lines in the end. But we had to do Peter doing himself there. Somebody said to me, I forget, it must have been Bob, Bob Harris that said, he said, 'How is Peter going to, after all these years, how is he going to be able to talk like he talked in *Lawrence*?' I said, 'Well, he was acting actually Bob.' I said, 'He doesn't normally talk like that.'

He comes from Manchester or somewhere.' I said, 'He was putting on a voice for *Lawrence*,' I said, 'and being an actor, I'm sure he can reproduce that voice again.' Well of course he did. [laughs] Isn't it funny to think that, because, I mean he was acting. [pause] I'm going to have to go soon. It's twelve o'clock.

[0:43:04]

It's twelve o'clock. OK. Well one last question...

Yah.

...if it doesn't keep [inaudible].

No no.

Which is, as I say, Lean's reactions to it. Would he, would he have done anything differently, did he say?

He says he wouldn't have done very much differently. I think we would have done... You mean if we'd had more time, upfront?

Well, I think, again, the intervening thirty years.

Well, we went through a lot of controversies, whether or not we would do what Bob Harris was doing which was, say, this is the print that went out, it's the director's cut as the director put it out in, 1961 or 2 or whenever it was it came, '62, came out. Or, we would say, this is a doctored thing. And, it had to be really one or other, either we could go back in, David and I, and do some re-cutting everywhere, even the pieces we were putting back in, or we could put it back exactly like it was, and sell it as it was. And that's what they decided to do. So except for, I said to you, we cut out a couple of shots by the train and things, it's basically... and we couldn't... At that time we, that we made the decision, we thought we'd be able to put back all the balcony, and we had the picture. We thought it was best as a, as a, not a gimmick but as a sales

thing, to say that it was going back like the director's cut had been. But, my thing is that if we had had more time before the opening, how much different would David and I have done to it, given that time?

Yes. Right.

Now David says he wouldn't have done anything.

Were you satisfied?

And he... Well he says that upfront, but to me he says, 'Oh yes we would have done some things.' And I say, yes we would have done some things.

And he was a great fusser and finesser, wasn't he?

Yes. Yes. But we, we did a lot of fussing and finessing in the time we had, I mean you know, we, we worked really hard. We worked seven days a week till midnight every night. Though Sam did another good thing, he moved the boys for instance into London so they didn't have to travel back at night unsafely, put them up in nice hotels and everything. I lived in Knightsbridge, so, you know, I prefer to go home anyway. But, you know, he did those kind of things. They all lived right on the job, so that they could...

But it wasn't grabbed out of your reluctant hands then in 1962, or '61?

You mean... No. No. We had to work, we were always working towards that.

Mm.

We cut the second half first, which was quite interesting. We did that again as a calculated, we discussed it with, David and I really, and, I can't remember if the sound editor, Win Ryder, was there or not. But it seemed to me that it was easier to

cut the second half, and it had most of the train wrecks and the blowing up and the bloodbath and things like that in it. So it had much bigger sound things. The first half had a lot of walking over the desert, which after all only has feet and, and wind and, you know, a few things like that, music and stuff. So, we cut the second half first, and shipped...

Was that to give Win more time?

Yes. Yes. And so we could ship that down to him, and he could put the effects and everything on. And then we cut the first half. And David and I never saw it all the way through from beginning.....

[End of Track 5]

[Track 6]

.....on the Sunday morning. Now that's extraordinary.

It is.

And when you see it like that, and you have, you know, you haven't ever run it, we never had a spare.....

[break in recording]

.....that first Sunday morning screening when you saw it for the first time, were you both sitting there sort of...?

David didn't come to the first Sunday morning screening. Isn't that extraordinary?

[inaudible].

Because the main screening was going to be at six o'clock in the afternoon, the press screening, and it was going to be a party afterwards for the crew. And, it was so oversubscribed, I mean just everybody wanted to see the movie, that they put on an extra screening on Sunday morning. So David had planned to come to the six o'clock, and didn't come to the morning one. So it was only really Sam and I who saw the morning one. And, I mean we were both bowled over. And I, my mother was there and my brother and some friends and things, you know. And, it was an extraordinary thing, because that story about selling out of juice, absolutely happened. I mean, it was extraordinary, this desert, every... My mother and everybody, they were all, couldn't get enough to drink.

Parched. [laughs]

They actually ran out, that first...

Yes.

Caused by this hot, being in this hot, psychologically being in the desert, you know.

Well that's extraordinary, because I've seen Lawrence several times and I, I never felt thirsty.

No?

The last time was at the Odeon Marble Arch, you know.

Yah. Well, that's how it affected people that first time, and their sales went up enormously all over the world.

Oh, I've never heard that story before.

Haven't you? Yes. Yes.

Yes? Golly. Yes.

So, people were so in it. So, David then saw it for the first time in the evening, you know. And, I mean I think, I mean I had feelings that there were reservations, there were areas, but then I do on any film, ever, always there are things I should have done that I didn't do, reservations about certain areas that I thought we could have tightened up and lost a little bit and things, things that you wouldn't have had time to do. But basically, it looked fantastic, I mean it was such an amazing film up there all in one piece, that you could hardly take it all in, you know, to think we had actually done it, seemed absolutely stupendous.

Was it desperate toward the end? I mean did you feel, not, that it was a tight deadline but...

Yes, very tight.

Great, great pressure?

Fairly. And poor old Maurice Jarre felt under really high pressure, because he...

Yes. How does that affect your work though, when there is that pressure?

Oh I... Good.

You like deadlines?

I work under... Yah. I, I mean I'm working not under pressure on this picture, and I actually like working under pressure.

Yes.

I like... The last film I did in America, *What About Bob?*, they took four weeks off my finishing schedule. And Jeffrey Katzenberg, who was head of Disney, was waiting for me to complain, but I never said anything. I mean, what was the point of complaining when I would have, we'd have to do it anyway? So you might as well just, say, 'Right, sure Jeffrey, if that's what you want, I'll have it ready.'

Do you find yourself putting things off until you have a deadline, if you have lots and lots of time?

I just...

You like creating your own pressure?

Yes, I suppose I do up to a point, yah. Yes. I don't do it consciously but I think I do do it. I love having a rush at the end, I love a rush of adrenalin and everything and you're just doing the last reels before they go into the theatre and things, you know. With *Lawrence*...

Things come out of the unconscious I'm sure...

Yah.

...given adrenalin, pressure.

Yah. I mean on the, on *Lawrence* actually, I had to go and get the 70mm print, there were only two, there was the one we were showing for the premier here and the one that was going to America for the premier. And the one that was going for the premier here, one of the reels got scratched when it was being striped. And so I had to go, personally, down to London Airport and get that replacement reel six off, double reel six, off that, that copy, and bring it up to London for the premier and deliver it to the Odeon. And, they had to quickly replace it for the American copy.

Yes.

So we had last-minute dramas, up to the very last minute in time we had dramas on it.

Is there, ever was struck two, two copies?

There weren't many of that very first version. That was why we, we never found one. But, I believe there was one found in Texas, but I haven't really, because I'm kind of involved in this film now, I haven't really got round to asking Bob if he has found one. But I understood that he had found one somewhere in Texas. Everybody always thought Sam Spiegel had one, and the one that he gave to the Museum of Modern Art, which he did when he died, he left one, would have been that original version, but it wasn't, apparently, it was the second version. And that was a 70mm. No, of the long

thing, there were probably two or maybe three. Then of course a lot struck off after that, for the next version there would have been a lot of them.

Yes.

And very few I think of when we cut it down more. I don't know... They did, must have taken seventy of that one. They promised David they'd never show that version in the cinema, which of course they did. But they must have done seventy because when we, as I say, I took my son to see it, and we checked out the print, after they'd done all the new cutting and everything, at the Metropole, because they run 70mm there, so there must have been at least one print of that. [pause] Anyway, I'm sorry about this, but I have somebody coming to lunch, that's why I have to, I have to go.

Right. OK, well.....

[end of session]

[break in recording]

[0:05:17]

The 9th of June, and we're resuming after great disasters with batteries. Right. And, we were in the final stages of talking about Lawrence last time. And the one thing I know we didn't cover was the Academy Award aspect of it.

Uh-huh.

But, before we get on to that, has anything occurred to you?

Not really. I mean I can't remember whether... I may be going back and repeating myself but, the fact that we finished, you know, we cut it in four months, I can't remember whether I told you about that.

Yes, I think we covered...

We covered that?

Yes.

And the premier and everything with the Queen and...?

The premier, yes.

And how we scratched one of the reels. I don't think I told you that story.

Right. You did, yes. You had to go out to the airport to retrieve reel six.

Oh yes, right. Right. Yup.

Yes?

Right, well I guess it's up to... I guess it's up to when it opened, and, it got really mixed reviews, which, when you look back on it, it's quite funny now, that, several people actually gave it not particularly good reviews, especially some of the British press, who for some reason or another always downed David at that time, have since changed their minds, but...

Mhm.

I always remember that. You know, it was, we were quite surprised. But the other thing that came out of it was that everybody thought it was too long. I mean you know, people did at that time. It wasn't just Sam and people like that, people generally, a lot of David's friends amongst the directors in Hollywood and things thought it was too long. People forget that now, but in fact they did. And then they,

you know, the exhibitors were getting worried because they couldn't get enough shows in in a day and things.

Mm.

So that's when it was decided to cut it down, and I was still on the film at that time, so I just stayed on and did all the cuts, and redubs and everything like that.

Right.

And then when they came to reconstruct it, you know, all those many years later, they actually found the cuts wrapped up with my writing on and everything just as I had taken them out originally.

Really?

Yah.

Aha.

Yah, which was quite extraordinary.

Yes.

I presumed they would have been junked years before.

Where were they, in this country or...?

At Technicolor.

Yes.

Yes. In this country, yah.

Aha.

Yah, all in the vaults here.

How extraordinary.

Which was, you know, which was a piece of luck as it happened. I think it was because it was 70mm film, probably, it would have been in separate vaults. But usually after you release a film, two or three years, they throw away all trims and stuff.

Mhm. Mm.

[0:07:40]

But anyway. So we went back and did the recut and the redub and everything, and... And then, I guess the Academy Awards came. I mean I always remember having lunch with David in Seville, quite early on in the film, and him laughing and joking about the Oscars. And I thought, well that's finished, any chance one ever had of getting an Oscar, [laughs] gah, boo, laugh and joke about them before you even get the film finished, it's bound to be bad luck. But obviously it was wrong. And I didn't go over to the Oscars. Now I do rather regret it, I mean not deeply but, it would have been nice to have been there. But I didn't know a lot about them at that time, I didn't realise that if you were nominated you were expected to go, being British. I mean I didn't even know that the Oscar for technical achievement would be the same size as one for actors and things; I just assumed it would be a little one.

Mm.

So... I mean I was excited when I was nominated and they rang me up, but I didn't really know about it. And Sam didn't offer to fly us out there, which, nowadays of course one would be flown out, and put up for a few days and things.

Yes.

But nothing like that happened then. And it was expensive to go, and I didn't like flying. And as I say, to me it looked a bit like pot-hunting, if you went, you expected to win, which of course is not the way Hollywood looks at it at all. They look at the nomination as an honour in itself, and that you should go. In fact you should really send a letter of apology if you are not going. So... I didn't, as I say, I didn't go, and an actor called Tom Tryon...

Oh yes, I remember Tom.

...yah, took the Oscar for me. They asked me if I wanted to nominate anybody to take it since I couldn't go, and I said Robert Mitchum, since I fancied Robert Mitchum, but, they said they asked him and he was going to be in the Pacific at the time or something, but, I don't know whether they really did.

So how did the news come to you?

Somebody rang me.

From the Coast?

No.

No?

No. No, strangely enough. Somebody like Judy Steel[ph] from what used to be the BFA[??-BFI?], phoned me. I was asleep. Phoned me, and told me. It had apparently

been on, like, the seven o'clock news. And very shortly after that David came on the phone, and phoned me from LA to tell me all about it, you know, and congratulate me and tell me all the thing. And then it was amazing, because the reporters were around, and, you know, it was huge coverage of it. Because I was the only Oscar winner in this country at that time. Freddie Young was off shooting something, and John Box, and, and none of them were here. The people who could afford to go, they took, like Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif and, I think Maurice Jarre was there, I can't remember, but... Us poor technicians, none of us were flown out, and we were all the ones that won actually. [laughs]

It was ever thus. Yes.

So, that, you know, as I say, I think it would have been nice. It would have been nice to be there, it would have been nice to have the record of actually receiving it, you know.

Oh absolutely, yes.

It was then sent over to me, and I had to pay fifteen shillings Customs on it at London Airport, which seems... I mean would...

They are merciless, aren't they.

Aren't they, absolutely. And then it was kind of re-given to me at the BAFTA awards. The BAFTA awards in those days didn't have an award for editing, came quite a few years later. I think next camera, and then production design, and then editing or something, I can't remember. But... Anyway, so, Prince Philip was at this BAFTA do, and he kind of re-presented it to me in a little sort of private, thing, which was quite nice. But, it wasn't quite the same as being at the Oscars.

No indeed. No.

[0:11:18]

Anyway, while I was cutting *Lawrence*, I used to go down and run the stuff, I think I said this, with David, and then come back and cut it. I never took anything back for him to see. But during that time, Hal Wallis came over to England to see some of Peter O'Toole for *Becket*, he was thinking of doing *Becket* and he came over. Ran some cut sequences. And while he was here, he, well, he offered me the film to cut, he saw the sequences and, and offered me *Becket*. Which was kind of nice, because you know, to go from one picture like that to that other one was really terrific. And he in fact put me on, which was about the only time it's ever happened in my life, particularly so early on, he put me on a retainer for two months to stop me from doing anything else, at half fee.

Mhm.

So my holiday credits from *Lawrence* plus my retainer from *Becket* meant I had a three-months holiday on pay. So that was really...

Ideal.

Yah, very nice.

[0:12:16]

So it brings us then to Becket and Hal Wallis.

Yes.

Let's start with Hal Wallis, your relationship with him.

[laughs] Well, he was one of those real mogul producers, you know, but I only really heard about them all... You know, we worked differently here, the producers that I had worked with. Well Sam Spiegel was pretty, mogul producer I suppose, but he was, he was quite friendly, Sam. And Hal was, you know, was rather inclined to sit

up in an office and, you know, with lines of coloured phones and outer offices and things like that. But you know, we don't operate like that in England, so I didn't take any notice of any of that, and I used to go straight to him, he was the producer. And we very soon had a great relationship, I got on very well with him. And, I enjoyed cutting *Becket* actually. Peter Glenville was very very nice too, and... But Hal Wallis, which I had not been used to, made the choices on the rushes. He used to run them with me in the morning about noon, and make the choices, and then I used to run again with Peter Glenville at 6.30 in the evening, and he would choose again, his. And neither of them ever knew, I never told them, that the other ones were making the choices. I always used Peter's, because the director's, and that's what I was used to doing.

Mhm.

And Hal Wallis really never discovered until the very end when we were doing the, as we called it in those days, post-sync. And Win Ryder had obviously put in the chosen take, and Hal had noticed that it was a different take, and there was a bit of kerfuffle about that. But he still didn't realise, all the way through the film. And also, Hal liked to see the cut sequences, like, a couple of days after the rushes, and I didn't like showing them to the producer until I had shown them to the director. So I, again without Hal knowing, I would always get the sequences cut in time to show them to Peter Glenville after rushes the evening before, then first thing the next morning I'd make any alterations that he wanted and then show them to Hal at midday. Which I think's partly helped me to get so very fast, because, I had to cut very fast to keep that pattern going. So really I never ran anything for Hal that I hadn't run with Peter first, without Hal, as I say, ever really realising that. So he always thought he was the big producer in, in charge, you know.

Mhm. But I, he was, after all, a man who had been the head of a major studio for a great many years.

Oh he a man... Yes.

And, and infinitely more experienced than Peter Glenville. So, how did their choices vary?

Well Hal didn't... Actually in a way he... Their choices didn't vary a lot, but they varied a bit. But Hal would nearly always go for the fastest, is what I particularly remember. And his main contribution I think when we actually came to the cutting was, he didn't interfere with the editing itself, but, he did lose lines and lost scenes and, and very much pruned it and made it very tight. But Peter Glenville only stayed on the film for ten days at the end, he was given ten days. I mean directors would throw their hands in the air.

Yah.

He was given two working weeks in which to get his cut out, and then he was sent home to New York where he lived. And Hal Wallis took the picture over from then. And he didn't even pay for him to come back for the dubbing, he paid for himself to come back. Because he wanted to be there.

Mm.

But Hall was a, very much a hands-on producer in that way. But other editors that I've talked to, because I couldn't... I did three films with him in fact. But I didn't do *Anne of the Thousand Days* which I'd... [laughs] He was very annoyed. Because he had rung me up and asked me if I would like to cut it, and I said, 'Of course, yes,' but then, you know, like, eighteen months later when the picture actually came up, I was already on something else and couldn't do it. And he said, he was really quite peeved with me. But, you know, he, he was more hands-on I think with some other editors than he was with me, and I don't know why that was. Maybe it was just my personality, I don't know.

Yes.

I just didn't expect him to be. But I understand he came in the cutting room much more with other people than he ever came in with me.

Mhm.

I did *Becket* with him, and then I did Carol Reed's last film, which was called *Public Eye*, and then it was changed to *Follow Me!* with Topol and Mia Farrow and Michael Jayston. And, he respected Carol Reed a huge amount. The film wasn't a great success but, you know, Sir Carol he always called him, and...

[0:16:48]

Mm. So in a way, this kind of epitomises a difference in system between the, what, you know, the industrial assembly line as it was practised in Hollywood for so many years...

Well I think that...

...and the, the craft aspect here. Mm?

I suppose in a way, it was, I think it was, I would sum it up more as when the producers cut the films, you know, had much more artistic input in a way into a film, in those days, which was why the directors got so fed up there, because their films were taken away and recut by the producers afterwards.

But that was the industrial process as practised in Hollywood, was it not? Yes, it was product.

Yes. Sure. Yes. Well I suppose you could call it that. It was, it was a different process anyway.

Mm.

I wouldn't call it exactly industrial, that sounds as if they were really making sausages.

Well they were in effect. It was product.

Well they were and they weren't. It was product, but also, if you look at Hal Wallis's list of movies, I mean they're quite extraordinary.

Oh absolutely.

Entertainment, with one or two gems in there, like *Casablanca*, and I suppose *Becket* and films like that. He used to laugh sometimes with me, because his American editor, Warren Low, brought over the cut of one of the Elvis Presley pictures for Hal to see while we were doing *Becket*, and he said to me, he said, 'Oh I make these, you know, Elvis Presleys to pay for the *Beckets*,' he said.

Mm. Now I'm not decrying the, the system. I'm trying to sort of, define the differences if any between working here and working there.

Yes. Yah.

And I'm wondering if it is scale, because in those days still the major distributors were linked to studios and they had to supply so much product each year to feed both the motion picture houses and the distribution networks, did they not?

Yah. But I think that it's in a way how, sum that up[??-18:36], because they made what they thought were their kind of classy classickey films, some of which were no good at all, but you know, and then they made their, their product films as well. I think in a way England was doing that when I first came into the business, because there was, like, Denham and Pinewood making the really top-class type films, and then there was Gainsborough, and what was that other place? Not Ealing, somewhere

else, that was making the more, what I call product entertainment, *The Man in Grey* or, *The Seventh Seal* and things like that, all those kind of films. No, what was the one about the piano called?

The Seventh Veil.

The Seventh Veil, yes, Seventh Veil.

Yah, Sydney Box.

Yes. Yes, those kind of films that were more, the product films that were, you know...

Yes. Yes. Because...

The immediately popular entertainment.

Mhm.

Whereas they were making, you know, Denham and places like that were doing films which became classics, like *Brief Encounter* and...

Well there was still a cinema-going habit and...

A Matter of Life and Death and things like that, you know.

Right. Yah. Yah.

And I always thought, looking back on it, or even I thought at the time, what an ideal set-up that was for film-making to be doing, because they were really in a way doing what Hollywood was doing but slightly differently.

But again it was the industrial processes feeding cinemas and...

Yah.

...and feeding a distribution network.

Yah.

And there was a cinema-going habit, which has been replaced to a large extent by television. So that, that activity has been in essence hived off into, into television, the...

Yah. Yes that's true.

...the low-budget activity.

But also there were the big producers in there, you know, the Sam Cohens[ph] and the Goldwyns and all those real personality producers, who were, had a real finger for some reason on the pulse of what audiences wanted.

Yes.

I mean, you know, a lot of those films are kind of sneered at in a way, but when you watch them on, old black and white films on televisions, they're so greatly superior to most of the films that they make today, that it's extraordinary and yet they were just run-of-the-mill films they were turning out one after the other. It's very impressive I think.

Yes.

Well that was a producer-run organisation, really, the directors didn't have much say, until they...

Indeed. We're, we're back to the assembly line.

Yes, that's right.

Mhm. Yes.

And then... Until later on, which is why they eventually rebelled.

Well then they made pictures and now they make deals, it's essentially the difference.

Or now... Yah.

[0:21:00]

Mm. So you had respect for Wallis?

Oh yes, a lot, a lot, yes.

Mhm.

I mean, I didn't find him such a, a charming personality as Sam Spiegel, who could be very difficult, I mean, you know, charming I don't know is exactly the word, but, he was dynamic, Sam, in a way that Hal Wallis was more laid-back. And Hal Wallis could be very bad-tempered with people and things, and so could Sam, but they were such different people to work, one after the other, with those two people. I mean I didn't respect Hal Wallis all that much when I first worked with him, and I grew to respect him actually. And he had some odd things, I thought, the way he, he went about things, you know. Somewhat cheap.

Yes.

Cutting the corners. I mean John Bryan did these fabulous sets for *Becket*, and that sort of thing. And Hal, I mean Hal Wallis, it sounds silly but was literally cutting the corners off things, and I mean I think that was his attitude about a lot of things.

Yes.

And, in a way he was right for him, because, you never saw that, the audience never saw it. But if you took a pride in your work, you needed those corners, you know? And it was the same with, with sound and stuff like that. Win Ryder was my sound editor, who was marvellous, and he, I remember, he had to give Hal Wallis a list of effects he was going to put in every reel, and Hal put lines through half of it. Because, maybe you wouldn't hear it, but maybe you would.

Mm.

And it was... I mean Win laid up the tracks that he thought would make an excellent dub, and Hal Wallis just left the bare essentials.

Yes. Yes.

We naturally put in it, or, put it all in, we paid no attention. [laughs]

Well he spent so long at Warners, and Warners was a notoriously cheap studio in that respect.

Yah. Yah.

Yah. You had to see it up there on the screen.

So that I remember used to irritate me a bit about him. But, yah, I did, I actually grew very fond of him, I liked him a lot.

Mhm.

I used to see him, I went to dinner with him a couple of times when I went to LA, and I was sad when he died really.

[0:23:02]

I'm not sure if there's anything to be said about Becket particularly, is there? It was of its time I suppose.

Yes. Yah. Yes. It was such a beautiful... It was, I think it was probably the most beautiful, or the script, that I've ever worked on actually. I mean, it's a film that you could see time and time again and enjoy every line of dialogue. I just thought it was, in that way, a most superior kind of script of its kind.

Mm.

But it was a little bit stagey, you know. I mean there again, we never had a large crowd, you know, we never had 5,000 when 2,000 would do, and things like that, and they were always cutting off corners there. But I don't think it notices because of so much that was good about it, you know.

And the performances really are central to it, aren't they, yes.

Exactly. Yah. They were. The boys, I mean most of the time, behaved really well considering we had two of the well-known [laughs] drinkers of the business. They didn't drink very much, and Elizabeth was there a lot of the time with Richard.

Mhm. It was she rather than Wallis that, that kept Burton in line, was it?

Yah, I would think she helped quite a lot, yah.

Mm.

But they both, they both did, you know. He originally had a very good relationship with Hal, they, they liked each other.

Mhm.

And Peter and Richard liked each other, they got on well, so there was no aggro there in that way, you know.

So, no major anecdotes to, to retell about...?

Well the only one really is the one that I sometimes tell about, when we actually went up to Bamburgh to do the scene on the beach, because they all went up on, it was the only location actually, up to Northampton to do the scene where they meet on the beach, on the horses and everything. And, when they went up there, Elizabeth went with them, and she got all the publicity. This is the story, this is, I don't know how true it is, but she got all the publicity. Because people really didn't know Peter O'Toole, he had only done *Lawrence*, and then he'd had blond hair, and now he was dark, curly hair and everything. And they slightly knew Richard Burton and things. And the boys got pretty peeped about this, because it was their movie and they reckoned that they were the ones who should be getting all the coverage. And so that's where they actually hit the bottle, up there. And they were on location and things, you know. And they came to shoot the scene, I mean they could hardly sit on their horses. They couldn't control them at all. They were all over the place. I mean they couldn't get their lines. I mean it was just chaotic. And, we reshot quite a lot of it another day, and it wasn't a lot better, the horses seemed to always be facing the wrong way. It was very very tricky to cut. Anyway, I ran... I told this story at a seminar in LA, and ran the sequence, having not checked it first, it was so long ago, I thought I remembered it. When you see it, the horses seem to be perfectly still, the boys as bright as a button, [laughs] giving marvellous performances, and all the things of horror that I remember from it, you can't see at all.

Whence this anomaly then, is it your memory, or, or...

No.

...or your expert job of cutting?

Well I like to think it's that, but, and that all the problems that I had that stood out in my mind at that time, just because you're so interested in the scene, just, you just don't notice.

Yes.

I mean if you really ran it slowly you could see that there are. But the horses are being held out of camera all the time, but, you know, you...

It seems to me that I have a recollection of that scene in which there is a lot of movement on horseback.

Yes. Yes there is.

Is that right? Yes. Mm.

Mm. Yes. Yah, yah.

Mm.

But, but they also keep moving in...

So a lot of that was inadvertent, or...?

Well some of it was, but some of it was... I mean you know, it was a question of cutting at the very right moment to get them facing the right way.

[0:26:48]

Right. Peter Glenville. I said a moment ago that he was less experienced, because I think he was known more for his theatrical work than, than motion pictures.

Yes, certainly, yes. Yah.

Tell us about him.

Oh I liked him a lot, I thought he was a very talented director actually. I'm surprised he hasn't gone. He had a disaster in his life in, film-wise, and as far as I know has never made another one. He made *Hotel Paradiso* in France with Alec Guinness.

Which you, you...

Which I cut, yes, yah, with him. And, I shouldn't have done really. My younger son was too young to have gone back, for me to have gone back. I mean he was a baby. But, he's very persuasive amongst other things, Peter Glenville, and he persuaded me, while I was still in hospital with James, to go and do the film. And, we lived in Paris for four months, and my husband used to fly over every weekend. And it was very pleasant in a lot of ways. The film wasn't a big success. But then when he came to do *The Comedians* with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton... He loved me, Peter, actually, I mean he really was very fond, close to me and fond of me and things, and he wanted, he didn't want to do films without me, you know. And he wanted me to do that film. And as I say, he was very persuasive, so that I more or less said yes to it. But of course, it was really impossible. I had three small children then, I couldn't go off to Haiti or wherever it was they were going, they were... Yah, they shot it out there somewhere, for several months on end. And my husband said, 'Absolutely not, I mean there's no way you're going.' So then I had to write a letter to Peter explaining that I really had to put my family first and all that sort of thing. And he never really forgave me. And yet, you know... I wrote a very nice letter and

everything, and he, he didn't not forgive me but he just, I've never seen him since. I feel it's rather sad.

Is he still alive? I had a feeling he was dead, but...

He might be dead now.

Yes.

I'm not quite sure if he's dead. I mean he shouldn't be, he's not that old.

Well, no. No, I suppose not. I, I'm not sure.

No, I'm not.

I just have that feeling, it may...

He wasn't... I saw, I was in New York doing, I guess it was *Orient Express*, some years ago, because I cut that in New York for three months, and, I met up with Bill, his manager friend, stroke friend, who lived with him, who was a very very nice, charming man. Because I had got to know them both very well when I was in, living in Paris; because Douglas wasn't there, they took me out to dinner a lot, and they had this lovely old mill house, so like, two or three nights a week I would go to dinner with them there. And it was really nice, it was like having sort of, home from home. Because we were living in a kind of residential home, I had a nanny and the three kids there. And, so we'd become very close, all of us had become good friends and everything. And I saw Bill, his friend, when I was in New York, and he, I didn't really ask, but he didn't say anything. I bumped into him I think actually, and then we went and had a drink. And he didn't say anything. And Peter knew I was there and never phoned up or anything. So I guess he was... It was rather sad really because I would have liked to have seen him, but I didn't want to get snubbed, so I didn't try and contact him, you know.

Mm.

And he was alive then, but that's some years ago.

[0:30:08]

I just have a feeling about Peter Glenville that he seems to have failed as a film director.

Yah.

Whereas he's had a great reputation in the theatre.

Well that's very true.

Mostly with actors I think isn't, his performances.

Yes. Yah.

Did you find any technical problems or...

No. Geoff Unsworth was the cameraman...

Right.

...and the stuff was, the stuff was simple, straightforward, very good storytelling on *Becket*. We had more problems because we had a French cameraman and things on *Hotel Paradiso*.

You didn't have to counsel him about coverage or what you wanted?

A little bit, but not a lot. And of course Hal Wallis kept an eye on *Becket* coverage, so he was pretty astute at that sort of thing, and, you know, would talk to him about that. On *Hotel Paradiso* I did a few times.

Paradiso...

But a problem really, that, that Feydeau farce doesn't work on film.

No.

And there was no way that he could work it on film. And it really wasn't very funny. I mean it should have been funny but it wasn't. That was in the performances as well as in the way he shot it. Maybe there was a way to do it.

The performances are very stage performances aren't they?

Yes. Yes.

Very noisy and...

Yes. Yah.

...over the top I suppose is, one would say.

Yah. Over the top, yah. And it didn't work at all really as a film.

Yes. No, no.

I've never seen it since.

Yes, it becomes boring and, and irritating.

I'm very... I actually don't see my films after, I very seldom watch, watch them on television or, or anything like that. I sometimes record them so I have them if I wanted to watch them in my old age, but... The only thing I did watch, strangely enough, was *Becket* once with my kids when I was living here. I said to them to watch it, and, I was going out to dinner, and I sat down and started to watch it, and I couldn't drag myself away from it. I rang up and said I've been held up at work and couldn't get, you know, arrived late to dinner. But normally I never watch.

Why, why is that?

I don't know.

You, once a film is finished, it's over and done with, is that it?

It's like in another box. Yes. Dickie was talking about how he lives his life in boxes, but, I think that this, that's true, I mean I think I just cut it off. And I found it very difficult, going back on *Lawrence*, to remember it. Once I got back on it, then things came flooding back to me. But even now people say, 'Do you remember so-and-so and so-and-so?' and I say, 'No.' And then, it come... you know, and then it starts to come back to me. I don't know why that is really. Maybe I don't want to live in the past particularly, I like living right in the present.

Yes. But...

I'm not nostalgic in that way really, you know.

You said once or twice though that, if you have seen things again, they, they then suddenly seem to be quite different from the way you've remembered them.

Yes.

Which I think is true of most, most things.

But that's probably because...

They usually seem better too...

Yes, yes sometimes.

...because of the, the agony of working on something, even if it's a happy occasion.

Yes. Well I think partly that is because I don't see them for a long time.

Yah.

You know, if I saw them all the time. I hadn't seen *Lawrence* for at least fifteen years for instance, when I went back to do the reconstruction.

Mm.

I last saw it when I did the recut for television. And, you know, we cut another fifteen minutes out or whatever. And I had to run it at the Metropole because it was 70mm print. And that's the last time I ever remember seeing it. I'd seen bits and pieces on TV, the kids were actually watching, or whatever, and I'd come in and watch a bit, but I mean, I hadn't watched it.

Mm.

I can't think, except for *Becket*, of a single film of mine that I've run all the way through since I finished it. I'm running *Orient Express* at, I have it at the studios at the moment because I'm showing Dickie some little opticals that we used in it that, we're going to use something similar in the film and I wanted to show him that.

[0:33:50]

I was going to say, did you pan and scan Lawrence, or you just cut it to a length?

I just cut it to a length, and then they did whatever with it.

I see. I wondered if you had a hand in that, and how you...

No. No, the only film I panned and scanned was the first film I did in America called *Raw Deal* with Arnold Schwarzenegger. I did pan and scan that. And I had quite fun, I was saying to John Irvin, the director... [phone ringing] Excuse me a moment.

[break in recording]

Panning and scanning.

Yah. And, I was saying... Yes, that's right. And I said to John Irvin, I said, 'Oh I put a whole heap of close-ups in where you didn't have them on your movie,' I said, 'it's improved it enormously.' [laughs] And it's quite fun actually, and you do need an editor to pan and scan, because, it's not a question of just, if you've got a two-shot, you know, just playing one side of it, you've got to be on the other person to make sure you get the reactions, and that sort of thing, you know. So, I, I really quite enjoyed it, and you could change the colour and all sorts of things, you know. You can practically recut the sequences.

Right. So, as, as an editor, having worked on a film, you don't object to seeing it in a rather truncated or...

I think it's much better to letterbox it even.

Right.

And particularly now that you've got, discs, what are they called?

Laserdiscs?

Laserdiscs, yes. Yes. And now that you've got that, I think it's much better to letterbox it and, and... I think it's, was it... Somebody insists upon it or has it in their contract that they can have all their films a letterbox if they've done, been done in cinemascope.

It sounds like Kubrick.

Well it might be Kubrick, but it isn't, it's... Oh, what's his name it is. The guy who did *Hook*.

Spiegel.

Vic[??] Spiegel. No.

Spielberg. [laughs] Not Spiegel, Spielberg.

I can only think of Spiegel too. Spielberg. Spielberg who does that, who has that in his contract, that he can put them out letterbox.

[0:35:50]

Mhm. Well I'll ask you about Hook off camera.

About what?

I'll ask you about Hook off camera. We won't put it onto tape.

Oh right.

I'm curious what you think of that film.

Not much.

Not much indeed. Mm.

The reason that I enjoyed it more than most people probably is, I literally hadn't seen a film... I'm a big filmgoer, I go to the films at least once a week, and, I hadn't been, because of work and my broken leg I hadn't been to a film for, I think it was two months or more. It was when I first came over here, it was the end of over there and coming over here. And so, *Hook* was the first one I went to see. And I was so happy to be in the cinema and seeing a movie again, that I think I enjoyed it more than most people, but it was terribly disappointing. Even the sets, which I had actually been on in LA, out at Columbia or whatever it's called now, looked nothing on the screen compared with what they had looked to the naked eye. That galleon was so amazing on the set that it looked as if you could have sailed away in it, and you never got that impression from the film.

Indeed. Indeed.

I think the idea was quite neat, I quite like the idea of it, but I just didn't think in some way it worked. And the performances were way over the top, but, you know, I guess that's, that's the way they, they want it. I thought the little boy was the best thing in it, he was very good. Charlie Korsmo is such a good little actor, I've worked with him, and, I thought he was terrific.

A strange film.

Yah. What did you think of it?

I thought it was terrible.

Yah.

I thought it was, worse than I had heard.

Yah. I think, I would have thought it was, was more terrible if I hadn't, as I say, seen it in those circumstances.

Mm. It... Well, I mean it's not, not a proper subject to discuss on the tape.

No.

[0:37:34]

We'll talk about that later. Right, so, we've touched on both Becket and Hotel Paradiso. There's one in between, The Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines.

Oh yeah, well that was rather a sad story actually, because Ken Annakin had asked me to cut *Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines* upfront, and, I was pregnant at the time and couldn't cut it. So I said, 'No, I'm sorry, I can't.' So I... The film must have been delayed, I don't know the whole story of that, what happened to them, but what happened to me was that I had the baby, which was my middle child, my daughter, and then I went and cut a film called *Young Cassidy* for what was to be John Ford. And, it was very exciting. I met John Ford. That was a bit disillusioning.

Would you care to tell us how and why?

Well because he was, [laughs] he, he was in bed when I went to meet him, he was propped up in bed, which, there was nothing wrong with that, just a little strange, you know. And, I expected some, I don't know, you know, John Ford, you're like, God, he's practically God to film-makers of my age group, you know, and I expected somebody just fantastic. There was this old man in bed, you know, with a spotty dressing gown on and everything. And he just had a quick chat with me, he said, you know, he said, 'I see dailies and...' He said, 'I sometimes see dailies; sometimes I don't.' He said, 'I mostly leave it up to you.' He said, 'You know, I shoot it and I know what, how it's going to look, so,' he said, 'and I, I will maybe run a cut

sequence or two with you or I may not bother,' he said, 'because frankly, if you are good enough for David Lean,' he said, 'you're good enough for me.' 'Thank you very much.' And that was basically all the interview was, it was a little longer than that but not much. And...

Was he... Sorry, I was just going to say, was he perceptibly failing? Because, he became increasingly irascible I think, did he not...

Yes.

...as, as he approached the end of his life.

Yes, I think so. I mean he was very, he was very, he was very pleasant and, and pleasant, nice and that sort of thing, but, he didn't seem immensely interested actually. I mean you know, I think he was quite happy to go with my reputation and, you know, just sort of quickly clapped eyes on me. I don't think he, he... He didn't seem to me... I mean he didn't really interview me like people normally do when they see you and meet you and talk to you about your views on films and things. I mean I would have loved to have talked to him about that. And I never saw him again. Because they went off to Ireland, and they were going to fly me out to Ireland with the rushes and the cut stuff that I had cut, which in fact I did do, because I had to go over and show it to Jack Cardiff, who took over from him, because by that time he had got this cataract and was off the picture. So obviously I had to take over all the stuff that was shot already, plus what I'd cut, to show Jack what we'd got. And... But he did do, we had a fight scene in a pub, and he did do the famous John Ford thing, literally, saying, you know, they said it was getting behind or something, and he just took a couple of pages, tore them up and then shot. And you never noticed it, the scene played perfectly well. So that was quite fun.

Mhm.

But the stuff that he shot was not great. And it was a bit unfair on Jack Cardiff, because it was not a very good film and it was to my mind totally miscast. And, that, everything that was good in the film was attributed to John Ford, and there was one very good riot scene in there, mainly due to, I think Alan McCabe, who was the second unit cameraman, and got some really great stuff, action stuff. And, because this scene really worked very well, John, everybody always thought John Ford had shot it, and he hadn't, I mean Jack had done it, Jack had staged it and everything. And, Jack got pretty piqued. And then he suddenly wanted me to measure exactly how much of John Ford's work has left in the film, and things like that. But I don't, you know, I don't know what happened.

Mm.

But for me it was fantastically disappointing to think that you were going to work with John Ford and land up with Jack Cardiff. I mean there's nothing wrong with Jack, and I like him a lot, but he's certainly not John Ford. So that was kind of disappointing.

[0:41:49]

Anyway, I was cutting that film when they phoned, me and, Denis Holt did from Pinewood, and said, 'What's your position?' I said, 'Well we're just finishing dubbing.' And, he said, 'Well would you be able to take over the picture? Because,' he said, 'Gordon Stone's had an accident.' I said, 'Oh I don't know, because, you know... What does it involve?' And of course they lied to me, like always, they said, 'Oh well, the picture's really virtually cut, and, you know, it just means coming over and supervising it et cetera et cetera.' So, I said, 'Well OK.' 'Because,' he said, 'Ken,' you know, 'would very much like you to come over and do it,' and everything. So, I agreed. And then I said, 'And how bad is Gordon?' And he said, 'Well actually he's dead.' You know, he'd had this car accident and been killed. So then I felt really awful. I didn't know him well, but I knew him, and I was really upset about that. And I went over. And so I took over the film, like, halfway through or a little more than halfway through I guess, only to discover that the second half, it was in two halves, because it was like a road show film, hadn't been cut at all. Actually the first

half was in a pretty good state, though we were doing a lot of re-cutting on it. The second, which was the race, really there was practically nothing cut at all on it. So I cut, you know, had to look at all the dailies and cut the whole thing really, make an exciting race out of what was not very exciting material, when I came to, to do it. So, you know, it was another experience, it was something different and in that way it was interesting. I always got on very well with Ken. And, you know, taking over and looking at all the second unit, flying stuff. I'd keep saying, 'Where are the aeroplanes overtaking each other?' And they'd say, 'Well, they didn't actually get the overtaking bit.' So I was doing things like, literally having the actors, finding bits of the actors where they were turning their heads like that, and then on the stereo[??-43:40] we'd have the noise of the aeroplane passing, and things like that. And it, it worked out OK in the end, you know, so... And Ken Annakin said to me, which I thought was the most tasteless thing to say, he said, 'Oh well, obviously you were fated to do the movie.' Seemed to me not very good. But... So that really was *Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines*.

[0:44:01]

But just one interesting point from *Young Cassidy* was the fact that while I was on *Young Cassidy*, David Lean phoned me to ask me about, what I thought of Julie Christie, and if I'd send him some material. Because he had asked me originally to cut *Zhivago*, but I couldn't because, it meant going away for eight months, so obviously my, I had a young baby at the time, Emma was just a baby then. And, so I couldn't go, and didn't, you know, didn't, and got out of the thing with David then. But he rang me and asked me what I thought of Julie Christie, and if I could send some cut sequences of her out. [phone ringing]

[break in recording]

So I... So, it was due to those sequences that I sent out really, or partly due to the sequence, I sent him out some cut sequences, that he had picked Julie Christie for *Dr Zhivago*.

Mhm.

And she was very good actually. Maggie Smith was also in *Young Cassidy*, who was brilliant too, they were both, they were very good. It was Rod, Rod Taylor who played... who was, I mean he's quite a good actor, but he just was miscast for the leading part, you know.

Yes. Yes. Are you sad not to have cut Zhivago?

Yes. Yes.

Mm.

Yah. Yah, oh yes, of course I am. But I mean, you know, if you have a family... I've always put my family first, they're the most important thing to me. So, you know, once it meant... David rang me and talked to me about it when I was in bed with, having just had Emma, you know. And, you know, he wanted the editor right out there. I mean I would love to have gone on location on *Lawrence*, but if it meant going on location I probably in fact wouldn't have done it.

Right.

Because, what I did was go down once a month, and that was fine, but, I couldn't have gone away.

[0:45:54]

Mm. He had become perhaps a little more of a problem to work with by this time, hadn't he, increasingly?

David?

Yes.

BECTU History Project
Interviewee Anne V Coates
Interviewer Roy Fowler
Track No 6

[End of Track 6]

[Track 7]

We're on to tape four. Sorry, we'd better overlap that just a wee bit.

Right. So... Well what... I was going to say, by taking, you know, that David really wanted to, I think, be more hands-on with the editing. He had always been pretty involved, in fact he was probably less involved in *Lawrence* than any of them, merely as I say due to time. I mean he just didn't have time to. And I had about two-thirds of it cut by the time he came home, and, I suppose in a way that was lucky for me, but, he wanted to, because he admired Stanley so much, to have more, thing. And by doing that with Norman, who wasn't very experienced, he was able to do what he particularly wanted to do, which was, I think teach somebody, really.

Was that a side to his character, to [inaudible]?

Well I didn't know it at the time, it never really struck me. But afterwards I thought about it, and, I know he said about... It sounds, you know, I don't like saying bad things about people, but I know he said about Eunice, who cut *Passage to India*, that one of her problems was, she didn't want to learn. 'I felt I was passed, doing maybe my last film,' which turned out to be, 'or one of my last films, and that I wasn't being able to pass on any of my knowledge to somebody because they just weren't that interested.' So I imagine that he has, had wanted to pass on, you know, and I think that, taking Norman, who he liked enormously, and felt, and grew very fond of, almost like a son I think in the end, he was able to part that, impart that information to him, and I think he probably did, and some of his expertise to him, you know, and I think he probably really enjoyed that. He worked with him apparently every weekend and things like that. And in the end he did what he really wanted to do, which, which was cut the film himself and take the credit, which was on *Passage to India*, which every, which he told me afterwards, which was why, he then asked me to do *Nostromo* because he hadn't really liked doing that. He didn't like not having the input from somebody in, you know, that really knew what they were doing and, that sort of thing. So...

That makes him less of a, what, he was a demanding taskmaster, but, a gentler side to him I suppose. That's not the right word, but...

He wasn't ever gentle. [laughs]

No, you know I mean, in other words, he, he was receptive to...

Yes.

...to other people's suggestions and...

Yes. I got on terribly well with him.

Yah. Mm.

Somebody asked me just the other day about, it was Dickie actually, if had a lot of rows with David. I said, 'No, not really.' We had a few disagreements, and sometimes he'd say I was crazy. I put up ideas to him and he'd say, 'You're out of your mind, you're absolutely out of your mind.' And, you know, that sort of thing. But I mean, not really. He had rows with Sam, but he, I didn't have rows with him.

I wonder if it's because, in the area of editing he was...

Happy in the labs[??-2:53].

...one of the great masters.

Yes. Yes.

Yah. And maybe he was less sure of himself in those other areas of, say, camera or, or whatever.

Well it's very different...

Because he, he had lots of problems with his camera crews, didn't he?

Oh yes. Yes. But being on the floor with a whole camera crew and, 100 crew and that sort of thing, and everybody looking at you, and, or actors looking at you, and a crowd looking at you, I mean it's very different, it's a very lonely job to be there, to be snugly sitting in your cutting room and an editor who probably adores you. I mean, you know, the relationship and all the assistants round, doing your every thing, it's, it's very difficult. He was so happy and relaxed in the cutting room that he was another person.

Mm. It's very easy also to give way to panic or pressures on the floor isn't it?

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Whereas you, it's...

Well I found that when he was on the floor, I mean he was always very nice to me, but I mean, I didn't find I got at all close to him in the time I spent on the floor watching him shooting, because obviously I did that as much as possible when I went to Spain, when I wasn't, you know, I'd watch him all the time. But, I didn't feel that I got very close to him, and I was worried about what it would be like in the cutting rooms, but once he was in the cutting rooms he was very approachable, always very approachable.

[0:04:04]

You said you learnt so much from him. How does one, one editor learn from another?

You assimilate, you assimilate things.

Mm.

He gave me a lot of...

Is it in detail or...?

...courage of my convictions.

Yes.

He gave me, you know, a lot of... He had always said, 'Be brave,' I mean, you know, in what you are doing, be definite, and things like that. I mean he, it was just, you just, it just rubs off on you. He never directly taught me things, but I think indirectly he did all the time, watching what he was doing on scenes and things like that, you know.

Yes.

And if he... And the fact he gave me a lot of confidence because he liked what I was doing, and I think that's also very important when you're younger, you know. You thought, if David Lean liked what you're doing, you must be on the right track.

Mm. Did he ever talk about those who had taught him? I think Merrill White was one of his mentors.

Merrill White. Yes.

Mm.

Yes, he did, yes. He loved talking about the old days actually, David, and he also was very fond of Jack Harris who had cut with him, you know, he used to talk to me quite a lot about Jack. But... He had a marvellous perceptive editing eye, apart from

cutting eye, editing eye, of seeing things in his mind, you know, which you have to have. And, he could...

What do you mean by that?

Process.

The sequence rather than...

Yes, sequences. Yes. Yah.

Mm. Yah. Which... Well...

And he also didn't dither. I've worked with editors who will sometimes dither doing matching and things like that. I mean David didn't dither, he was, very definite ideas. Because he knew that you could try it and you, didn't work, you could undo it and do something else, you know.

Did he have that marvellous ability to, to run the film in his mind?

Yes. Yah.

Which I suppose is more than anything the mark of, of a great director...

Yah, I think so.

...or, or an editor. Yes.

Yah. Yah. It's very important to do that.

Mm.

And to have all the options open in your mind too. I suppose like a jigsaw practically. No, more like a crossword maybe.

Yes. Yes.

But...

Yes, I mean, it is such a ludicrous business actually when you think about it.

Yah.

Putting all those little snippets together.

I know, I know. [laughter] Well I did tell this terrible story, it was on *I Love You To Death*, just, not long ago we ran a sequence. We had, on *I Love You To Death*, somehow the picture had had a long background of people being involved, producers, associate producers, writers, this company doing it, that company doing it. And it landed up eventually with Columbia, TriStar and, four, or was it six producers and six associate producers on it, and there was only really Larry Kasdan, who is a director/producer, a one-man band, I mean really nobody else had a look in by the time he was on it. But originally it was going to be directed by Mel Brooks or somebody like that, and it was going to be a completely different kind of film, and it had picked up these people along the way. And a couple of them, one who had a company did the trailers, I can't remember his name now. But we had all these hanger-on associate producers, who had really done very little if anything, but mostly were boyfriends and girlfriends of the producers. And there was one, she was really quite a nice girl, but she was very keen and very enthusiastic and very film school and that sort of thing, and... Larry Kasdan wanted us to run a scene from the film for the unit, which is nice, you know, enthusiastic. And so we ran a sequence, which is kind of the highlight of the film really, and everybody loved it and thought it was just great. This girl came up to me afterwards and, she must have been all of twenty-two I should think, and said, 'Oh, congratulations, I thought that was so marvellous. I want

to know, what was your psychological approach?’ and all this sort of thing, you know. I could see my assistants laughing like anything. I said, ‘Well I find it always easiest just to throw it all up in the air and where it comes down, I cut it.’ And it was an unkind thing to do to a kid like that, but, you know, I mean, you can’t explain psychological things about what you’re cutting, I mean I’m not that kind of person.

Mm.

I’m not... I don’t find it easy to explain what I’m doing.

Mm. I’m glad about that, because usually, films made by people with that orientation, they’re unwatchable I find, aren’t they?

Yes, probably. I don’t know.

And they’re so, so obscure and arcane.

Yes.

Mm. Well they are film school, and their exercises[??] [inaudible-8:13] frequently.

Yes.

Yah. Yah. And it’s just that, you know, I don’t know, I... David gave me that great, a lovely freedom to cut, you know, to try things and do things, and experiment and, not think that you will make... I mean he used to say to me, ‘That’s the most idiotic idea,’ and things like that, but often later he’d come back to it and say, ‘Well, you know what you were saying. That’s not quite right but you’ve given me an idea for something else,’ and it would, you know, we’d have a great working relationship like that. But, he was very sarcastic when you made a suggestion that he thought was quite stupid. But, in fact he always encouraged me to do that, and I never felt stupid, if you know what I mean, I always felt that that was the way he likes working. And,

he, when we did *Lawrence*, you know, did the reconstruction again, he said, 'I'd forgotten what fun it was working with you.' I thought that was really nice.

Very nice indeed, yes.

Yes.

[0:09:03]

Would it be fair to say that editing is, is a craft that is sometimes perceived as, as an art?

I think it can be an art, but I think it's mostly a craft. But I think there are certain instances where it can become an art.

Well how is the artistry achieved?

Well by try... by making something quite beautiful out of something that is kind of mediocre.

Right.

Which you can occasionally do.

Is that inspirational or perspirational then?

[laughs] I guess it's inspirational really, I would say.

Mhm.

It's, I think cutting a lot is just a flair. And I don't think you can really learn to cut. I mean you may be able to learn... I mean what you learn is like, I mean like, to learn the technical side of it, it's what you can do. And there's quite a lot to learn there

really. But once you've learnt that, you just forget it and you just use it, to achieve the things that are in your mind. Now some directors let you achieve a lot of what is in your mind, most do, but some have a very strong preconceived idea of what they want, and they want you to, to work within that framework, unless it doesn't work. Now the thing about David was, he was about half and half. Some of them he had very preconceived ideas of the way he wanted it to go, and some of them, he really just gave you a lot of material and, and just an idea what he wanted to get out of it.

Mm.

And, I mean, like Sidney Lumet, who I did *Murder on the Orient Express* with, I mean that was a very happy time, because it was extremely easy to do, he shoots so well, so professionally, everything is worked out beforehand for you, and it happened to have a really nice cast so we all had a lot of fun. And Sidney himself keeps the whole thing very light. None of the, those big stars we had, like Lauren Bacall and, and Sean Connery and Vanessa Redgrave, none of them had dressing rooms, I mean not caravan dressing rooms, they all had to sit in chairs on the set and things, and... And Sidney said, 'Well, you know, where would I put them? I've got fourteen stars and fourteen caravans on here, there would be no room for the set.' And you know, it was a... And they all ate together. And it was kind of a, you know, a fun film from that point of view, but from a creative point of view, from my point, there was very little that I could put into it, because as I say, it was very preconceived, very well done, everything was excellently done, you know. I managed to pop in a few extra close-ups that he hadn't envisaged, which I like doing, little looks and things, but mostly Sidney knew how he wanted it to go. And the only thing we did at all afterwards that was, you know, interesting, was the little flip-backs that we did, the stuff I was showing to Dickie, because, we discovered that people didn't remember from the montage that we put in the front, which was the kidnap, who the various people were when they saw them again. So we even flipped back a couple of times so that you were always quite sure who that person was in the kidnap situation. And we flipped back and flipped forward literally, little things like that.

Mm.

And we did... And that was the most interesting thing that we did on that film really.

[0:12:18]

Sidney of course comes out of television and meticulous pre-planning.

Yes. Yah. Yah.

We were colleagues at CBS together and...

Yah. Well we shot the film... The end, you know when he's interrogating everybody, we shot all one way on the carriage, so that people, all, half the scene was shot on one way, like that, for three weeks, with all the actors doing that. And then, it was changed round over a weekend and he shot all the reverses that cut into that, with people walking in and out of camera, from one shot into three weeks later.

And it all matched?

Matched perfectly. And what was even more so was the actors' performances, were absolutely, spot on. Now I don't know any other director that could have done that, held that in his mind like that.

Mm. It's, it's a great flair that he has.

Yes. Yes, yah.

Yes. Yes.

Yah. I mean he's still waiting to do his most magnificent film, but, he's gone downhill now, I don't know why. He's done such a, a lot of good films. Like they

were running one the other day, I didn't watch it but I have seen it, *The Anderson Tapes*, on. I mean that's a very professional, exciting film.

I've never seen that.

You've never seen it? It's an excellent film.

Mm. I saw one of his most recent, that only played for a week or two at the Warner, called Q & A, and...

Oh yah, I never saw that.

Very good. Extremely good.

Yes. Well he's an excellent director.

Yes. Yes.

It's just that he... And he did something called *Power*, which was really embarrassing, and yet the idea was very good.

Mm.

I've forgotten what he's doing, something good, now actually. And he's very prolific.

Well again, I think with television aspect runs[??] with that and...

He's also absolutely, not dedicated because everybody, a lot of people are dedicated, but he's, he doesn't, thing. He comes in at 8.30 in the morning and he sits down at the Moviola and he may just say 'Good morning, how are you?' But there's no chitchat, like, you know, 'Did you to the cinema last night?' or, you know, normally people will sort of, have a cup of coffee and ease in. He'll have a cup of coffee, but he sits

down at 8.30. When I tell you that we actually dubbed the picture in five days, *Murder on the Orient Express*, fourteen reels, you can see, he came in at 8.30 in the morning, and we had reel one by 10.30 in the morning, and reel two by the afternoon and reel three by the next morning. And while he's there, he's totally concentrated on what he's doing.

Mm.

Occasionally, right towards the end he started to tell me about his next movie, which in fact was *Dog Day Afternoon*. But up to that time I don't think, we hardly had any personal conversation. Once he took me for a walk at Elstree and he told me about the kind of film that he wanted *Orient Express* to be, and things like that. But normally speaking, he was, just talked about work. [pause] So he was a very different director from many that I've worked with.

Yes.

[0:15:11]

Whereas Carol Reed, who was just gorgeous to work with [laughs], talked about everything. I knew all about his early theatre life as a boy, and, and all these anecdotes he used to tell me about, you know, acting and things, and he was great.

Mm.

One thing, Hal Wallis really more or less employed me for that picture, but he said, 'Of course we have to do Carol the thing of letting him actually meet with you and say, "That's OK."' So I had this quick meeting with Carol, who was charming and everything, which didn't last very long, and his main thing was, he said, 'Do you mind working through your lunch hour and having sandwiches?' So I said, 'Not at all, no, and, we'll get some in for you,' and everything. He said, 'No no, I never eat during my lunch, I just like to come and work in the cutting room with you and run the stuff.' I said, 'That's fine.' So he used to come every lunch, and we used to get

sandwiches for ourselves. And very soon those disappeared, because he would be walking up and down munching. So we used to get sandwiches for him as well. And I used to get him off on to talk... Because I love to hear about those early days in the theatre and things, so I used to get him talking about those early days in the theatre, and we'd do about five minutes' work and, three-quarters of an hour's chat.

Uh-huh.

So he was the exact reverse. And he got as much done as Sidney but in a different kind of way, you know. He just loved, very... What's the word I want? Loqua... Talkative man. I mean he loved...

Loquacious.

Loquacious is the word I want. Loquacious man.

It's surprising about Sidney, because he has a very interesting background.

Yes.

He goes back as a child actor to group theatre.

Yes, I know, he never talked about that.

Yes.

I'd like... I mean I never talked to him about it, I wish I had actually.

Mm. And I suspect that the period that we spent at CBS Television was in a way much more interesting than, than many of the films he's ever worked on.

Yes. Yah. Yes.

Because it was a quite extraordinary collection of people there.

Yah, that's true.

And they were the golden years, the golden days.

Yes.

[0:17:01]

I was going to ask you, since we're on to general subjects for the moment, have you ever had an example of a total rescue job, or making, I suppose, the, the silk purse out of a sow's ear, or, also just changing a film totally around from...? A salvage job really I suppose I'm asking about.

Well I did, but I, you won't ever have seen the film. I don't generally do that, I don't want to become known as a film doctor, it doesn't interest me. I like going on a film from the beginning and it being my baby. Which is why I don't like being, I have done it, obviously, that again, a couple of times, like being a, a co-editor really. When they offered me *Red October* recently, they wanted me to take another editor right upfront, and I said that I didn't want to do that, I would work with, myself as long as I could, and if the work got really too much then I'd take on another editor. Because, I don't know, it's a very personal thing to me, a film, and I, you know, it's like a, I consider it exactly like a child really, because when they take it away from you at the end and start selling something, it doesn't sound like your film, I get very upset. So I don't want, you know, I, I like that kind of personal. So I don't want to go in and be a film doctor really. I mean there are several in America, people who do that. But I did go on to a film called *The Bushido Blade*, which had been shot in Japan, because, they promised me a trip round the world, including a week in Japan. And that was too much to turn down, I couldn't. [laughs]

Mm. [laughs] You're easily bribed are you?

Yah, I was easily bribed in that. And, yah, really I suppose basically, the film, but it certainly never turned out to be a silk purse, but, it was an extraordinary situation, because when I went on, there was, Toshirô Mifune was in it, and, oh I can never remember this actor's name. *Have Gun – will Travel*, American actor who's drunk.

I... Have Gun – Will Travel. Yes, he was a great standby actor in, in the Fifties. Oh God! I know who you mean.

Yes.

Yah.

Yah, I can't remember his name.

It'll come.

Anyway, they were both not good, Mifune, because they were being directed by a young Japanese whose name I can't remember, and you wouldn't know. And, it was so badly directed, and so, static, and you never knew where anybody was, and you couldn't understand anybody. And, you know. But I thought to myself, well what I'll do is, I'll mostly play off them, you know, like when you've got a bad actor or actress, you play off them. You play the lines off and you use the nice piece and play round them. But this director had shot it like television, he'd just shot the lines, and then he'd cut. So there was no reaction stuff, there was nothing at all to play off anybody. And you were just stuck with what you had. And you, I mean I found a few little reactions, sort of, just after the clappers and things like that, but basically, I was landed with that. So, we actually did some reshooting. I sort of, more or less directed the second unit in Japan, but that was more on the action sequences, because they didn't make any sense at all. The whole film didn't make much sense. So I suppose, I made it showable.

Mhm.

And... Because it actually wasn't, for a Western audience it wasn't showable when I first saw it. They couldn't have followed the story or would have cared about the story. So I re, in fact, wrote part of the script. I suppose years ago I rewrote the end script of a film called *Forbidden Cargo* which Harold French was directing, which was about my third film. And we changed the ending so much that we kept an actor alive that originally had died. [laughs] Put a whole new sequence in, of the car jumping the Tower Bridge and that sort of thing. I mean it never was a great movie.

Which, what, you shot after...?

We shot after, after Harold French had left. Harold French left the movie, when he had finished shooting it, and saw one cut, and then went back to the south of France, wherever it was he came from. He's still alive apparently.

He is indeed, yes, at ninety-two or three. Yes.

Yah, I didn't realise that.

Yes.

I haven't seen him for...

I don't mean he's... Yes, he's ninety, ninety-something.

Yes, something like that. Yah.

Yes, he's over...

And, so, and you know, and I was in on the rewriting of that, and... Then I shot some of the second unit on that, on the boats on the river, which was quite fun, with the

police, and Bob McNaught shot some of the, the stuff with the actors mainly, you know. And I shot the second unit. So I suppose in that way... Then I went on to *Ragtime* as the seventh editor, with Miloš Forman. They'd had an original, original editor on it, who Miloš liked very much and then took against, so they then brought in a whole lot of people, including Sam O'Steen and people like that, that I think Dino De Laurentiis had mostly brought on, and Miloš hadn't liked any of them, or they hadn't liked Miloš. I never went into it in detail. And then they offered it to me and Tony Gibbs to go on. Because apparently, all the Americans had been... I didn't gather this till afterwards. All the Americans had been so expensive, that Tony Gibbs and I together came to, one editor that Dino had put on. So Miloš's way of getting back at him was to get two editors on at the same cost. Tony never came, I went, started a month before him and went to New York; Tony never came to New York, he started on it when we came back here. And, I reconstructed the whole of the opening of the film really, because, when I first saw it, I didn't like it at all. And, so I suppose in that way one... And I also got much more of intercutting between when the siege was going on and the story of the family, much more intercutting and things like that. But I wouldn't say it saved the picture in any way. But one comes on later on and you see things and, you know, because you're, you know, coming on later on. Again, I said to Miloš Forman, I said, 'I don't generally like doing this, coming on halfway through a film, but, you know, I just thought it would be great to work with you.' He said, 'I take that as a compliment.' I said, 'Well yeah, it was meant as a compliment.' [laughs] He was a funny man. He was a difficult man.

[0:23:16]

Yes. Shall we talk about it now, or in sequence?

Might as well.

Right. Let's... OK, right.

Because, I flew to New York, and, you know, they approached me to do it, and I flew to New York to, to do it, on Concorde, and, they were doing some extra shooting, and

I went straight, I went to my hotel and just had a shower and went straight out to the location, and spent the day with Miloš. I had never met him before. And I went out, because I had heard what an ogre he was, I mean he was well known, he'd been at Shepperton shooting a film and everybody said how difficult he was, impossible and that sort of thing. So I said, 'Well, you know, I, I haven't met him and he hasn't met me, and, I'm going out there with a return ticket, and I'll give it like, three days, and if it doesn't work out, then I'm coming home. And that, I want you to understand that upfront. If Miloš doesn't like me or I don't like Miloš, I'm off.' So, I get there, and Miloš is, is very charming, he's shooting and everything, and we go and see the rushes. Then we go out to Mike Nichols's house, a quite beautiful place in the country, over the weekend, to run the film, where he has this, you know, real American projection room in a barn. Well he actually has editing rooms as well. And, it has a, you know, at the back it has a kitchen and dining room, and, you lie on these lovely sofas to watch the film, and it, you know, with a glass in your hand. I mean the ideal way to see a movie. And I saw the movie, and, you know, and then I went to stay the rest of the weekend at Miloš's house out in, this was in Connecticut. So it was really, you know, pleasant. He asked me what I thought of it, so I, I... I always tread a bit carefully, I try to get people's confidence upfront, you know, how much I liked it and things. And then... But I said I did, was worried about the fact that one didn't see Cagney till so late in the film. He said, 'Well we have got a sequence that comes earlier on, and we've never been able to get it to cut. So maybe that's what, the first thing you should do on Monday is to get the dailies out of that, we'll put them together, and we'll run them together and talk about it and see what you can do.' So, and that's what we did, we put them together, ran them. And I have a pretty good memory for stuff. And I took it away, and I did a cut on it, and it wasn't very good, I mean it wasn't very good. But I did this cut on it. And anyway, Miloš comes in to my room on the KEM, sits down and looks at it, and he says, 'I told you definitely not to use that shot.' I said, 'No you didn't.' I said, 'If you had have said definitely...' And it turned into a bit of a row. I said, 'That's absolute rubbish Miloš, I know what you said don't use and use.' And, we had this thing, and he stormed off out of the thing. And Pat, my assistant, and I looked at each other. I said, 'Well it's been great working with you Pat, but,' I said, 'you know, I think I'll be on the plane

tomorrow. Because,' I said, 'I'm not going to be treated like that, I'm not going to be told a liar[??-26:04] to my face when I know what I'm talking about.' It was, I'm simplifying it, it was more complicated than that. And anyway, I sat on the windowsill, I always remember, watching the, the player, some jazz players who were playing in the street below, because we were on Broadway. And, back in comes Miloš, about an hour later or so, sits down at the Moviola. Doesn't say anything. Runs through the sequence with me and says, 'Well, I think maybe if you did this and this, it might be a little bit better.' Nice as pie. Never had another, never said anything, never had another bad word with him ever. He was always nice, always listened to my opinion, always was charming. Said to me when we, 'I know we've been working you long hours in LA,' because we worked till eleven six days a week, at night. He said, 'But when you go back to London you've got your family and everything, I understand you won't want to work such long hours and everything.' And was, I mean really nice. I had a great relationship. I always see him when I go out there now. And, I suppose it was just standing up to him, I don't know what it was, you know.

Yes. Is he a bully do you think?

Yes.

Yes.

Absolutely. He was brutal to this other editor, a guy called Stan Warnow, who wanted the credit, and was pretty sure that it would – well not pretty sure but thought it could easily get Oscar nominated or something, you know, which it didn't as it happened. But, was going to stick this out. I mean, I would, I would have actually punched Miloš in the jaw if he had spoken to me like he spoke to that boy – man, he was a man, he wasn't even a boy. But he was determined to stick it out and get his name on the credit at the end. Which I admired him for, because Miloš, I mean Miloš would say, 'Stan, you're such an idiot, what are you doing? You're just trying to ruin my film. Every cut you do is just against what, you're doing it on purpose to annoy

me and upset me, and you're a fool and an idiot, and you shouldn't be in the cutting room, and...' He'd talk to him like this. I mean, I tell you, I wouldn't have lasted one moment if he had talked to me... He started to do that you see with me.

How many people are credited on the final film?

Only, only three of us in the end. There's an American editor, and, US editor, and then it says, British editors, me and then Tony. And then Tony didn't really, I mean Tony's a marvellous editor, but he didn't really like... What he didn't like about it was that, what we did was, and it is quite strange I suppose, but as I say, I don't like double editing anyway, was that we were cutting each other's work. And it didn't worry me. I mean I went on, I was happy to be working with Miloš, and so, I mean, I was happy to do this. But what he wanted to do was take the sequences, or the reels, himself, and have those as his reels. And Miloš wanted the input from both of us, so he'd give me Tony's reels to put input into, and my reels and Tony, or him. Because he cuts as well. I mean he's rather like, he's like David Lean, I mean he's on the KEM and we're all cutting together. And he cut some sequences and then he gives them to you and you recut them and, and vice versa. And then, quite funny one day, because Tony decided that the sequence was much too long, so, off his own bat, which you could do, he started trimming everything up, taking, just a few frames off all the cuts, and hang them up in the bin. But he didn't then make the mistake, he made the mistake of not saying to Miloš, 'I've done these cuts on the thing, and I think it's improved and I'd like to show it to you.' He just didn't show it, and Miloš then came across the reel sometime later, and didn't like what he had done. Sent his assistant in, and put, took them all off and put them all back into the film, every one. Now I did these kind of things too sometimes, and then I'd always run them with Miloš, and I'd say, you know, 'Do you...' And probably two-thirds of them would be OK, and he'd put back a couple or something.

All in all it sounds a mess.

Yah.

Yes.

Oh, it was a mess.

I think the film is, ultimately, isn't it, with all respect.

Yes.

Yes.

Yah. But it, it was overcut too.

Mm.

I think it was much better before it was so cut. I mean some of the sequences with the family and that sort of thing were so much better, and with that, the black guy, he was so good, that boy, I thought. And, so many of the scenes were so much better before he kept on cutting and cutting.

Yes.

It's like over-rehearsing, I've worked with actors who over-rehearse themselves, who are much better in the earlier takes.

Mhm. One also gets the feeling the script was twice as long.

Yes.

Which I'm sure it was.

Yes, it was.

Yes.

Yah. And I have to say that that scene...

And, and the book was three times as long as the, as the script.

Yah. And I have to say that the scene with, that I cut with James Cagney... I must just, if you could turn it off a moment, go down to.....

[break in recording]

Sorry.

I was, what I was just going to say was that the scene with James Cagney that I cut for Miloš, that first one, I never got it so that it could ever go back in, so it stayed out.

[break in recording]

[0:30:58]

Right, it's, no great problem. Still on Forman. I mean, it all, as I said, sounds a bit chaotic, and I suppose De Laurentiis didn't particularly help in, in the chaos department either.

No. No no no, he didn't.

Yah.

He, he and Miloš used to have terrible rows, nearly as bad as David and Sam. But, well they didn't really hit it off, because they were on such different wavelengths, two people like that, you know.

Mm.

They used to have these terrible arguments over, what should stay in and what should come out really. [inaudible-31:30] I think[??].

What were the respective wavelengths?

Well, I mean I think that Miloš was on a much more artistic wavelength, and Dino was on a purely, money wavelength really, you know.

Right. The promoter.

Yes, wanted to have a film that would make money. Though he did want to, he was looking to it also for, as an artistic film. Because everybody wants to have their kind of, *Lawrence* as it were. And I think he did look at it hopefully as going to win prizes. It didn't, I don't think it nominated in any area in the end. But I think he did look at it as, as a possible form for, for Oscars to win him some kind of creative laurels as opposed to...

Yes.

Well his films mostly don't make money either actually. I mean I like Dino a lot, but, he does make some rubbishy films.

A bit of an operator.

Yes.

[0:32:25]

So, really, going back to Lawrence, the creative tension, the tension between Lean and Spiegel was creative rather than destructive, would you say?

Well it was creative, and also, Sam always arrived late. I mean that caused the most terrible rows ever.

Right.

I mean, Sam is compulsively late. Because he knew it upset David, and so it set off every single screening with a row before we got down to running the film, you know.

Mhm.

And it was a very curious situation, that two grown men should, could go on behaving like that time after time. I mean Sam was, Sam only lived round the corner in Grosvenor House and we were in Warwick.

Yes.

And yet he was always late.

But it isn't ever a simple matter of being late is it, there's always a reason for being late.

Yes. Yes. Yah.

I mean in this case, it sounds as if it was provocative.

Yes, I think so.

Right.

Yah. But Sam's...

Mm. Sorry.

I mean Sam put in some, I think put in some very good ideas. I don't agree... I mean, it's difficult, it's so long ago, I don't remember it all, but I do remember thinking to myself that he sometimes put up some good ideas which David on principle did not listen to. But... He also put, I remember thinking he put up some silly ideas, and mostly his ideas of cutting down. I know they had a lot of arguments about the scene, the conning scene with Allenby when he cons him to go back, on the balcony, that we had a lot of rows about that. Because David wanted to keep it longer and Sam wanted to cut it down. And we did a sort of, half and half I think in the end, we certainly cut it down, but it was still pretty long. And it was one of the ones that was cut down twice again. And we never put it back. It's the one scene we couldn't put back, because we couldn't, you know, Jack Hawkins was dead, and we had no guide track, and it's practically impossible to loop him with another artist without a guide of any sort. It just didn't work. We tried with Charles Gray, but, you know, we used a couple of lines but we couldn't really.

Mm.

But... [pause] But I mean, in the end I think that, Dino made Miloš take out one of the best scenes in the film actually. And I'm not a great believer that a film is any better because it's three minutes shorter, or four minutes shorter or something, I mean you know, that was a long film, it was a big film, and it was such an important scene, I thought.

It very often takes out the touches and the resonances, does it not?

Yes. Yah. And I mean, I think Dino was just trying to get it down to a manageable length, and it was... I mean I thought it was a highlight of the film.

Which scene was that? Presumably it's in the book, which I, I never read, so...

[laughs]

Oh, well then you... [laughs] Well I'm[??] telling you presumably [inaudible-35:08].

Well, for the record is all I'm saying.

Oh I see. Well it was a scene where she, where the, she goes to the feminist or whatever she is, I'm trying to think of the word for it, suffragette woman, the young girl, Elizabeth McGovern. And she starts to undress her, and the boy is watching from the cupboard. It's a very funny scene actually, it was absolutely hilarious. Because he's getting so excited in there that, eventually he falls out of the cupboard and things. And there was a great line, I can't remember it now but it was a very good line. And it was very well done actually. [pause] But anyway, that came out right at the end. And the funny thing was that Doctorow himself, the writer of *Ragtime*, saw it, and liked it. And Miloš was inclined to listen to him, you know, whereas he hadn't listened to, to Dino.

Mm.

And he wanted things taking out and that sort of thing, and, I was a bit surprised by his reaction to it, really. Because it didn't seem to me that it really caught the flavour of the book.

[motor sounds in background]

[0:36:14]

Probably one of my favourite films is called Taking Off. Have you ever seen Taking Off?

Yes, [inaudible].

Delightful.

Yes.

An absolutely delight.

Yes. But that was really, that was years ago [inaudible].

Oh yes. Yes. Yes, indeed. People were younger and, and more talented perhaps then, I don't know.

I don't know, people seem to go off at tangents or something. I liked *Amadeus* actually.

Yes. Yes.

[phone ringing]

[break in recording]

[0:36:38]

Well Forman is an interesting director. Would you care to try and give a thumbnail sketch of him and his abilities?

[laughs]

You know what I mean, in other words, try and capture the flavour of him. Because, he's...

But he's also very much a hands-on director, like David. He likes to do a lot of...

Well in all departments.

In... In all department, yes. Yah. And, I mean I didn't really see him shooting very much, because he shot most of the film over here, and though I did visit the floor a

couple of times, I didn't know him at the time, to see James Cagney, because it was, not quite nice seeing poor old Cagney, I mean you know.

Oh yes. Yes.

It was a pity to get him out, I think those people should stay.

Yes, it didn't look like Cagney, did it?

No. No.

Not at all.

And he was a, you know, when I went on the set to see him, they were propping him up on either side and things, you know. So, it was, I thought it was rather sad in a way. But... He's a megalomaniac actually, Miloš, but, you know, he's also very, he really is genuinely so I think, but he's... I don't know how, he is a difficult man, a very complicated person to, to sum up very quickly I think. I don't know, I don't know how I would do it, with somebody like that.

No, OK, I wondered if there were, something that immediately came to mind about him.

Not really, no. I think he's very, I think he's very creative; I think he's also very chaotic.

Yes. Does the hands-on thing come from Eastern European film school background?

I would think so, yes. Yes. And also because he wants things done exactly his way, you know, and other people can't always do them...

That's the megalomania.

Yes.

Mm.

Yah. And very, he's a very, very impatient man, I mean you know, he really wants things to be the way he wants them, very, without having too much problem getting them, and he wants you to be right on the ball. Very charming man socially, very amusing.

Mm.

But, again, you know, really, we worked, we worked from, he came in at ten and we worked from ten every morning till eleven every night, and we never went out for a single meal, except that, we would have dinner sent in at about seven o'clock or whatever, and then, sometimes he would say to me, when we stopped at eleven, 'Would you like to come out and have a meal?' I put on a lot of weight in New York, because I was... [laughs] One thing, we were having doughnuts and things sent in. And he never would say to me early on, like seven o'clock, 'Would you like to come out and have a bite afterwards?' He'd wait till eleven, and then say, 'Would you like...?'

So, you were prepared for...

So I had already eaten. So then I had another meal, you know. Because by that time you were probably hungry again anyway. And then he would talk... I mean he was very knowledgeable about films, he'd talk about films, he loved films, talked about films a lot and that sort of thing. Loved to know about other people that I had worked with.

[0:39:37]

Mhm. Right. And, and, Dino? Is there much more to be said about him?

I've done several films for... Have I done two or three? Dino's offered me a lot of films, and I mostly haven't been available to do them. [pause] But I did... It was due to him, or rather Martha, his now wife, that I'm living in America really, because, they offered me what was called *Triple Identity*, the Arnold Schwarzenegger film, that John Irvin cut – directed, which took me to North Carolina, and from North Carolina we went to finish the film and dub it in California. And I never came back. I didn't really go to stay, but I didn't come back. I actually didn't come back to England for two years, because the children all came out one after another. I left them behind, but they all came out and joined me.

Is, is North Carolina an enclave of, of Brits? It often seems to be with, with the credits.

Yes, with the... Well it, it's partly because it's...

The union.

Non work to union[??], non work for non[??-40:40], something, state, whatever they're called.

Yes, they...

Work to, work to...

A right-to-work state.

Right-to-work state, yes. And I think that's the reason. But they were getting a bit difficult about, when he brought so many people in on Hong Kong – *King Kong* I mean, *King Kong*, he, they were beginning to get a bit difficult about allowing him to bring people in. I don't know what the situation's like now.

Mm.

They keep saying it's going to be more difficult for British people to work there, but I mean more and more of them come in. Seemed to me that when they really wanted to come, they started looking for loopholes. I mean I know a couple of people who have just got H-1 editors, John Victor-Smith and Malcolm Cooke. I mean... And, they're supposed not to be giving any more H-1s to editors at all.

Mm.

But they've come in through a kind of loophole, that a guy there has a, well it's not a loophole, it's quite legal, a guy there has a company who's an English guy, and he employs them, and therefore... You know, on sound, he has a sound house there.

Yes.

Employs them on sound.

Yes.

And fills in their forms and everything.

*I know, what, two years ago, three years ago, they were making it very very difficult.
I don't know if it's improved now at all, but...*

Well it must be, because a lot of people, as I say, not only, I mean cameramen, Doug Milsome who's living in my apartment at the moment, I mean he's working out there on a film, and, he's done two on a trot, one for Dino De Laurentiis actually.

So North Carolina is still operational, is it, as a studio?

Well, not, Dino doesn't have it any more.

No.

Is it Cannon, do Cannon have it or somebody?

I don't know.

Somebody else has it like that, I'm not sure who. But it is operational, yes.

Mhm.

Yah. Yes they're making films there. They've just made quite a big film there with, Michael Cimino or somebody like that's just made a film there.

[0:42:35]

Mm. Well back then to the list, shall we?

Yah, right.

Hotel Paradiso, we, we've covered. Great Catherine I have next. I don't know whether it's worth covering each movie in great detail.

I don't think so.

Let me...

Great Catherine was another film where I thought I was going to work for one director and landed up working for the other.

Yes.

Elliot Silverstein was going to direct it, when I first was on it, and he fell out with Peter O'Toole who was producing it, said he wasn't going to be an actor's lackey, was his famous quote he made.

A what lackey?

An actor's lackey.

An actor's lackey. Ah.

So he and Peter obviously fell out. But that was before I was, I mean, you know, I was only just going to do the film. And the Peter brought in an actor's lackey called Gordon Flemyng, who was actually from television.

Yes.

Not a very good director. Not a very happy film, at all, not one that I'm particularly proud of, except the one sequence which I think is quite good, where they have the little battle with the miniatures.

I haven't seen it. Mhm.

But other than that, it's not a film I'm, you know... I get on very well with Peter O'Toole, and done four or five films with him, but he was producer on that and he was drinking very very heavily. And, so, I had one of the, when I look back on it, funniest things said to me really, because, they did this shot which was in a one shot, a comedy sequence where it has Zero Mostel in it, and I think it was Zero or somebody fell down the stairs, and people were looking and things, and, but a whole unit or, like, Gordon and Peter and the unit were laughing. I mean Gordon and Peter laughed anyway, so everybody else laughed. And, that was it. And I said, 'Well, well where's the cover?' Because it cried out, obviously it needed close-ups of the people all, and the falling and everything in the... I said, 'Well, aren't we going to have any cover or

anything?’ And they said, ‘Well if you can’t see that’s funny, then there’s something wrong with your sense of humour.’ I always remember that. I thought, I’m going to walk off this picture. [laughs] But I didn’t. And, you know, Peter was very drunk and, and got really belligerent when he got drunk, and... So Jules Buck used to, you know, wheel me out of the room. Because, we’d been doing cutting notes and things and he’d go over and over, contradicting himself and the same notes over and over again, and that sort of thing, and it was... You know. And I’d say, ‘Well look, Peter, we’ve already covered all of that.’ And then he’d get rude and, you know.

Who needs it?

Yah, exactly.

Is it the Shaw play?

Mm?

Is it the Shaw play?

Yes.

It is, yes.

Yes.

Great, yes.

It was, I mean it was a good cast. It’s Peter O’Toole, Jeanne Moreau, Zero Mostel, Jack Hawkins.

Right. Well it disappeared didn’t it.

Yup. Oh yes.

[0:45:28]

The next one is quite interesting, a very intense little piece, The Bofors Gun.

Oh yes. That's a beautiful film.

Mm.

I'm very proud of that. I think it's about, one of my best cutting jobs actually. And that was Jack Gold's first film.

Yes.

And, it was... I mean I had, or I have had and I still have, such a great relationship with Jack, that... I mean it was so exciting to be working with a new, young director, because it's nice to be working with the old directors, you know, but, it's great to be working with somebody like that.

Mm, absolutely.

Who you knew, almost from the word go, was talented. And he was, we were working such long hours and at night and things, and he was so tired. And he was the first director I've ever worked with that slept through his dailies. [laughter] Because he was just exhausted.

Not, not a criticism I suppose.

No not at all.

No, on his part.

I just knew that he was just so tired.

No, I meant, on his part.

No. [laughs] No. No, he was just... I mean you know, he was just.....

[End of Track 7]

[Track 8]

Yes. One thing about Jack, he's such an imperceptible director. I must confess I've never really understood how he gets his effects, because...

Because he's so quiet.

It's all so effortless isn't it, from him.

Yes. Yah. Yah. And, I've seen him get uptight once or twice, but not often. He's pretty, what I call a laid-back director really.

Yes. Yes, and a very nice man.

Very nice man.

It comes from that. Mm.

And actors respect him a lot, so he doesn't have so much aggro from them as he might, you know. Because that was quite, in its way, a, an ensemble cast of people, of sort of... Because John Thaw was in it.

Yes.

And, you know, to handle all of those on your first film...

With very demanding actors.

With a very... Yes, that's right.

Yah.

It's very well shot. It's, it's economically shot, he didn't shoot...

Indeed.

...you know, a lot of extra stuff.

Yes.

But always when you wanted close-ups and cover and things like that, it was always there. I mean he knew exactly what he was doing. And Otto is also marvellous to work with, Otto Plaschkes. He was the producer.

Uh-huh.

And there you had two people who were both exactly on the same wavelength, making exactly the same picture. And, both people with a lot of taste and integrity, you know.

Mm.

It was really sad that that picture didn't do better, because, it, well it fell between the cracks of a changeover at... That and the one that Albert Finney did, *Charlie Bubbles*.

Yes.

For both at the time when Universal were changing heads, and the people that had kind of backed both those movies were out, and the new people that came in didn't really want to know.

Yes.

I mean it was a difficult film to sell anyway.

But the fact, it's a very difficult film to watch.

Yes, and to watch.

I mean it's, it's heartrending, heartbreaking.

Yah. Yah.

[laughs] I can understand people not enjoying an evening out in the theatre with, with one of those.

That's true. Yah.

Yes. Yah.

But it, it had rave reviews. Because I was out in Italy on another film at the time it came out, and I remember Otto sending me the reviews. It had absolutely fantastic reviews.

Mm. Well it is an experience to, to see it, to...

Yah.

A riveting one.

Yes. And I would... I haven't seen it for years. I am going to see it because Jack's going to lent me his video of it. [pause] But it, I quite... And like I told you, I don't see... But I'm going to be quite interested to see it. [inaudible-2:26] to think a picture that probably stands up particularly for television [inaudible]. Not for film so much.

Oh I'm sure it would. Yah. Because it's a very enclosed film.

Or even for video.

It would lend itself to television.

It's obviously on video.

It was originally a television play was it not, or, or was it a stage play? I think it...

I can't remember. I think it was stage.

It had an origin, one of the...

I think it was a stage play probably more than...

Yes, probably a stage play.

I don't think it was television. So, I think if it had been a television play, they'd probably have done it for television, you know.

Mm.

I can't honestly remember.

Mm. So that was really famous, a famous experience, was it?

It was, it was a lovely experience. And it was a definite decision on my part to make smaller, interesting pictures as well as larger. At the same time as that I was offered one of Bronston's pictures in Madrid, which I couldn't do for location for one thing. But apart from that, I, I definitely thought to myself, I'm being offered just big epics now, and I don't want to do just big epics; I want to do some small, more interesting films. And that was why I was really lucky. So I made the same kind of decision

when I did *Elephant Man* instead of, what was that film that Dino De Laurentiis did about the man with the... The special effects film, which was not a success. You'll know. Not *Superman*, another one of those.

Flash Gordon.

Flash Gordon, yes. Well he offered me *Flash Gordon* at the same time as I was offered *Elephant Man*. And *Elephant Man*, oh it was such a beautiful script. I mean obviously one would go for *Elephant Man* really, but I mean you know, it was also, I've tried to do that, to go for the small or more interesting films and the, not just do big empty epics. [pause] Are we going to stop in a minute?

Well, yah. I was going to say, Elephant Man is, is one we'd want to spend some time on, so maybe we shouldn't embark on that. Well let's rattle down the list until...

Right.

If you, you want to leave at 12.15 or break at 12.15?

Well break at 12.15 if we can.

[0:04:22]

Right. OK. So that gives us thirteen minutes. The Adventurers?

A very different kettle of fish. It's one of the films, there are a few films you've done in your life where you've been completely and utterly wrong about it. I mean we all thought it was going to be a huge success, in that kind of, Harold Robbins, you know, sex and violence kind of way. And it was a complete disaster, and the critics hated it. They did this big showing in America of it where, which was a disaster, up in a, Boeing or something, a jet where they had the, you know... And it was a stupid thing to do. But they took 'em up flying, and then they showed the film, which after all had quite nice photography, on a screen this size.

[phone ringing]

Excuse me.

[break in recording]

So where did I get to?

You were saying they were up in a Boeing.

Oh yes. And they gave this... Oh yeah. And all the critics hated it and everything. And so then we brought it back and, and did some re-cutting. And then, poor Lewis, he's such a charming, nice man, got a write-up which said, 'We hear that, since we saw the film it has been recut, and all that's left now is for the director to go and cut his throat.'

Oh dear.

Wasn't that awful?

That is. Yes.

Really was just devastating. Lewis was very, very hurt. But I, I don't care, I loved the film. I know it was full of bad taste and things like that, but it was meant to be. If you're doing blatant bad taste, it had everything. It had fashion shows and polo matches and, revolutions and... It had a leading man, who played the lead in a Yugoslavian film, who I thought... He was nowhere[??-5:58], he wasn't a very good actor in English, he probably was in Yugoslavia. But he had a certain kind of tough charm and things, but he didn't catch on with the public, you know. I guess if they'd had somebody like Peter O'Toole who had caught on the way that he did in

Lawrence, the film might have been more successful. But people didn't like Bekim a lot.

I didn't see it. Where did it go wrong do you think, just in the casting, or, or...?

I think, a lot in him, yes, a lot, that, you didn't have kind of sympathy for him. He'd also... I don't know why it didn't appeal to people. I mean, it's such a... You think it's got everything in it. Everybody thought it was blatant and obvious and bad taste and, I mean you know.

Mm.

But, everybody who worked on it thought it was going to be very successful, not a great film in any way but very successful. It had some rather corny nude scenes and stuff like that in it, you know. Like Candice Bergen being seduced and fireworks going off and things, you know, and, you know, it had a lot of that. But it was kind of, in a way it was nearly tongue in the cheek sort of stuff, you know, because... Because Harold Robbins liked it, I ran quite a lot of it for him.

Yah. Well maybe it fell between that thing of being deathly serious and being rather sent up, and satisfied no one.

Maybe. It was mainly serious. I think it was maybe me. The battle scenes were good I thought.

Mm. Well I shall watch out for that when it turns up on television.

Even[??]-7:24] you'll hate it.

Well, that's not to say.

Everybody hates it. Well, it's, most people just hate it, I mean you know.

Maybe I'll even like the actor. [laughs]

Well really, you know, there's Candice Bergen and Rossano Brazzi and Olivia de Havilland and, you know, endless amount of people in it.

They didn't... Well, those names don't sound contemporary now. Maybe they weren't then, maybe they were just a wee bit over the hill in that respect.

Well there are some young people in it as well. Rossano Brazzi played, you know, Bekim's father, as a, you know, his father, when he was a young boy. My son actually played in it, my eldest son, played one of the boys as a boy.

Mhm.

And, oh we had, the boy who played, Loris Loddi who played Bekim Fehmiu's part as a boy, was brilliant, Italian boy actor, was absolutely superb. And... And then, as I say, James played a small part, and had the funniest line in the film actually, because he says... Because this big boy comes to, to... Well Loris Loddi comes to this school when his father has to leave the country, because his... His father, Fernando Rey played his father, a fine, Spanish actor. Big part he had, and very good indeed.

Yes. A stunning actor.

And he had to leave the country because of the revolution and everything, brings the boy to school over in Europe, and, he goes to school and he, they pick a fight with him, and he picks the biggest boy to fight with. And James... And he hands his coat to James. And the three of them actually become friends through the film. And he says, 'Why don't you fight me, I always looth.' [laughs] With his lisp. [laughs] It was really, used to get the only laugh in the movie I think.

You make me want to see it.

[laughs]

[0:09:04]

A Bequest to the Nation followed by Catholics, and then it's probably time to, to break.

Yes. *Bequest to the Nation*, Hal Wallis again.

Yes.

Jimmy Cellan Jones, a very good television director. Not sure that he had done a film before.

Mhm.

Or many since for that matter. But top-class television director. That again suffered from the most terrible miscasting ever, which was Glenda Jackson as Lady Hamilton, which was the most ludicrous thing ever, and, but she did for me the absolutely un... Because she knew she was going to get slammed, dunked by the critics, she came out and said she hated the film and she should never have done the part, and she hated the director and he didn't know what he was doing. And that's unforgivable, for me, to me. It doesn't matter what, you know...

That's alibiing isn't it.

Yeah. Exactly. So the film was headed down. Peter Finch who played Nelson was really quite good, not one of his best performances ever but he was, he was quite good. And our problem was that, we shot with him doing the Nelson stuff first, and he and Jimmy got on very well together and me, I mean I'd known Peter Finch many many years, and Jimmy and I got on very well. And so, we all got on well, and by the time Glenda started, which was late for some reason, I don't know why now, we were

already a clique really, and I mean she walked in on this clique a bit. And I think she resented that. And, she was extremely unhappy on the film, I mean she was saying things like, Jimmy would say, 'Could you do it this way and that way?' And she'd say, 'Well, sure I'll do that way if you want me to,' she said, you know. 'I know it'll look idiotic but I'll do it that way, and I'll do it my way too,' and, you know, and it was that kind of attitude.

So she was disruptive?

Disruptive and unhelpful, and, and, awful.

It was a Rattigan play was it not?

Yes. Yah.

Yes. Wasn't he a bit past his time in...?

Yes. I think so. I don't think it was a great script actually, but it could have been better had it had somebody...

Yes.

And it was, they didn't open it up much, they didn't have the battle. I got a couple of tinted shots from Lady Hamilton, which we superimposed, the boats and things, but, you know, they didn't have very much. I mean you know, it just wasn't much of a film really, it was rather disappointing.

Mm. Again it just disappeared, did it not, sank.

Didn't... It was called, something else in America. I can't remember what now.

Mm. I wouldn't know.

Because I don't think they knew what a bequest was there or something.

Was it something close to Hal Wallis's heart?

I think he was very disappointed. He didn't... He was very disappointed in Jimmy I think. I don't know, he seemed to be out of his depth. I mean as I say, I think he's an excellent... And I was amazed that he didn't go on and make more feature films.

Mm.

He was under contract to Hal to make another feature, and there was all talk about doing it, and, and that sort of thing, until the film opened, then it was such a disaster.

But some make that transition, and others don't, and it's very difficult to...

And some don't. And I mean he was much more talented than Charles Jarrott, I would say.

Yes.

Not that he's doing very well in Hollywood, but he's there making movies. I guess Jimmy was right, I mean he makes top-class television and he's probably better doing that, than it is making second-rate movies, you know.

Yes. So, again, it sounds in a way a sort of typical product of the time we had a British film industry.

Yes.

They're really rather routine pictures though.

Yes. Yeah that's right, they were.

Just, just got made for whatever reason.

Well, there was Hal Wallis, I mean he doesn't really...

Well yes, Hal Wallis was...

I mean he obviously thought he was going to make money.

...a major producer. Yes.

Yah.

Yes. But it doesn't sound a very big picture in scope.

No it wasn't, actually. I mean, I guess if Peter and Glenda, or, or, those two people had gelled, the picture might have worked quite well.

Mm. And expensive cast of course.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes, and we had other good people in it. I can't remember who else, but...

[0:12:56]

We've got, what, three or four minutes on Catholics then in that case.

Jack Gold again.

Yes.

He actually, not only did he sleep through the dailies on that, he slept through the running of the film for the heads of CBS. It was made for television and film. And I knew by then that he...

Yes. It was television money was it not?

Yes.

Yah.

I knew by then that he was prone to go to sleep in screenings, soon as the lights went down he goes to sleep. So I always sit next to him, like that, and nudge him to keep him awake. And by this time... But this time we got separated, and we were on these swivel seats, and he was on a swivel seat over here and I was here. And he was next to the head of CBS, a very charming man whose name I can't remember. And I could hear him starting to snore. And I couldn't get to him. [laughter] It was so embarrassing. He knows the story, I've told it. You know, I said, 'Jack, how could you do it, you could have just stayed awake for one movie.' [laughs]

I've never seen that dormouse side of Jack.

No. I know. It's something to do with the lights going down.

Mhm.

Is conducive to it. Anyway, I just talked to him a couple of days ago. But... So, they shot in Ireland and I never went to Ireland, so I really didn't see a lot of the, of the shooting of the film, you know. I thought it was quite a good little film.

Mm.

It's run in America at Easter...

Yes.

...even now, you know, quite often.

Yes. Was it Trevor Howard's last film?

No. No no, he made...

He made more.

I did at least one with him after that. *11 Harrowhouse* was after that wasn't it?

Mhm. Well, according to the list it is, yes.

Yes. Yes. Yup.

Right.

And, we wanted him for *Medusa Touch*, but because of him falling flat on his face when, when he came to a dinner party by Elliott Kastner on *11 Harrowhouse*, Elliott wouldn't touch him. [laughs] We wanted him for the Harry Andrews part actually, in that.

Yes.

But, he had really disgraced himself. Elliott Kastner had arranged this big dinner party, you know, Candice Bergen and all these people there, you know. No. Yes that's right, and Charles Groden and, everybody, and, Trevor arrives late, comes in through the door, [laughs] and falls flat on his face.

And stayed there?

And stayed there, they carried him out, yes.

Oh Lord, bless him.

Yes, I don't think he revived that time.

Oh dear. Well they don't make drinkers like that any more do they?

No.

I think maybe then we'd better break if you have to get to the studio.

Yes, I don't think there's much more to, to talk about *Catholics* really. I mean, just trying to think.

Mhm.

Cyril Cusack I thought was terrific in it.

Ah, a lovely actor.

Yes.

Stunning.

And of course Martin Sheen, who I had actually never heard of at that time.

That's right.

Now a big actor.

Yes. Yes.

[pause] I mean, you know, being with Jack, it was well shot and, and not, you know... Little problems I think with the, round the Pope stuff, but other than that, it was, you know...

Mm. Is Jack a very assured director in the cutting room?

Yes.

He knows exactly what he...

Yes.

And he's shot to cut, has he?

Well he shot to cut, but we, you get to do quite a lot of experiments. It's not like Sidney Lumet who shot to cut and really doesn't want you to do anything except that.

Mhm.

Jack, he was always open to suggestions. When I did *Our Girl Friday* with him for instance, he never saw any dailies, and he never did see any dailies. I saw the dailies back here, because he was in Mexico, and cut the film, and he, I think he changed two takes on it. So if you have a good sort of working relationship with him like that, and he trusts you, it's, you know, he leave it up to you a lot, which is nice.

Right. Let's break there, because I always make you late.

Yes. Yes, right.

[end of session]

[break in recording]

[0:16:36]

Right, it's July 15, and we are reassembled, and we're going to start with 11 Harrowhouse. Well before we do that, the BAFTA celebration has intervened.

Yah.

But we'll come on to that later shall we?

OK. OK.

Right. Up to you, but...

I don't mind.

Well we'll, yah, we'll do it later. Right, so 11 Harrowhouse, or, those movies following that you feel worthy of comment.

Did I talk about *The Bushido Blade*, or did I not? I can't remember.

You touched on it briefly, but it was out of sequence.

Oh yes.

So I don't think we went into it that deeply.

That I went round the world on it, and that sort of thing? Did I tell you that?

[hesitates] No. No. At least, I mean don't trust my memory, but I don't think we went into any great depth.

I can't remember. Because the reason really that I did it in a way... Because I don't like going in and doctoring films in fact; it was already shot. But I had an idea I talked about it; I talked to somebody about it, but maybe it wasn't you.

We touched on it, and I think... It's, it's best to be safe and say, let's go over it again, rather than rely on my terrible memory.

Yah. OK. Because, you know, I didn't want to particularly do it. Oh yes, I, I did talk about it, because I remember I couldn't remember the name of the actor and I still can't. Toshirô Mifune was the, thing, and the other guy was, *Have Gun – Will Travel*. And I went out to Japan.

Oh yes.

What is his name?

He's... Oh God, I looked it up and I've forgotten. He's an old associate of mine, I used to work with him.

Is he?

Well he used to work, he...

He's got one of those names you just can't remember.

Isn't that ridiculous.

Yup. Pat Boone? No.

No, Dick Boone. Dick Boone, Richard Boone.

Richard Boone. That's right, Richard Boone, he was the other one, yah.

Yah. There we are.

Yeah we've got it. Yes. So, I think I did do, I think I've talked about shooting the second unit in Japan, and, and all that kind of thing. And how I did it because of, they promised me a trip round the world. Because I went to New York and, and did the post-sync with Richard Boone, and then I went on to Japan, and directed the second unit. Well not the second unit really, the retakes I would say it was more. Because, I don't know where the director was, I never met him. He's Japanese. But he shot it like a television with no overlap, so, when I went on it and thought I could kind of, pull it together by playing off people onto other people, I never had anything to play with because they hadn't given me any overlaps of reactions of other people at all. They'd just shot the dialogue and cut. And since Toshirô Mifune actually in English was not very good, and Richard Boone was drunk all the time, it was very important to have, you know, some neat little reactions in there. So, that was a bit of a problem. But then also the story didn't make sense to a Western audience, so, that's why I went to Japan and did some pick-up shots there. I don't think they were, I think they quite resented me. They were very nice to me but I didn't think they really wanted me in there doing that.

Yes. Who financed it, was it...?

It was one of the television companies.

An American television company?

No, British television.

Oh really?

British television company, yah.

And we do extraordinary things don't we.

Yah. Yeah, well it was actually quite a good idea. Some of it was quite good, you know.

Did it ultimately work?

It... Not very well, no. It didn't have... But it had a release, and it's on video and that sort of thing.

Mm.

So it's around.

Oh I'll have to look out for it.

[0:19:47]

11 Harrowhouse. Was that the next one I did? Could have been.

Well that was the next one after Catholics. We've jumped ahead to The Bushido Blade, but...

Oh I see.

But, 11 Harrowhouse. Is that of any consequence?

Well it was, it was great fun working with Aram Avakian, I have to say. Poor man, he's dead now, and he was...

Mm.

I loved him, he was a real character. He had been a very top editor, and then he had done one, I think it was called *End of the Road*, one film, as a director. But he was totally disorganised.

Mhm.

And, so, it was not easy to cut the work in a way. Because, Elliott Kastner wanted a straightforward storyline movie; Aram was the kind of director that shot off the cuff, bits and pieces here and there as he felt like it.

Well that's very strange. How does that relate to the, the concept of editing material?

Well it... [laughs] It was, kind of tricky. Also he had two actors that were not... Well, actually, Candy Bergen was fairly easy, but Charles Grodin was very tricky.

Mm.

He had just been very successful in something and was very difficult to handle, and they didn't like each other, the two actors, and so, you know, it caused a lot of problems. But I think the main problem with that film was the scripts, the first script was so much better than the ten they wrote afterwards. Because everybody was putting input into it. And at the... It was a very good idea, about sucking, you know, about stealing the diamonds out of a vault. And James Mason was marvellous in it actually. And he, he was the one who was doing the robbery. And they sucked them out with, like a Hoover thing, sucked the diamonds out.

Yes. I'm trying to think if I've ever seen it.

You've never seen it? Up through the...

I don't think so.

Oh it's very, actually the heist in it was very very clever.

Yes.

But the rest of the story was a bit weak. The love story didn't work at all, so we had to take a lot of it out, and things like that.

It's such an irrelevant title too, isn't it?

It was the... It was the name of the house, the safe house or whatever you call it, where the diamonds were kept.

Yes. Though that isn't going to get people into the cinema I wouldn't have thought.

No, that's true. Then, actually, afterwards, because Chuck played it as if he was Cary Grant or someone – no, not Cary Grant. Clark... I'm just trying to think. Cary... Gary Cooper, I'll get it right.

Ah, yes.

Gary Cooper, with a very deadpan kind of acting, which really didn't work with him. But he put on afterwards himself, Chuck Grodin actually, a very witty – I was not involved in it, put it on in America, a very witty lines over, narration onto it, which really perked his whole part up and explained while he was playing it like that and all that sort of thing.

Mhm.

Because, when he saw the finished film he realised himself it wasn't really working, you know, he wasn't coming over at all. So, that was quite good. Trevor Howard

was in it. I did quite a lot of directing with Trevor, on a horse, not the easiest thing. And Trevor disgrace himself with Elliott Kastner, because we had this big party welcoming the two American stars over, and, Trevor arrived extremely late, came through the doors, said hello to everybody and fell flat on his face. And Elliott never employed him again. When we wanted him for *Medusa Touch* he wouldn't let us have him. Which was kind of disappointing. What did I go on to after that? But anyway, I, I have to say that I did like working with Aram. I mean we worked all night. He used to send us crates of wine, always with a bottle of either Scotch or brandy in it. And then he would keep us working till three and four in the morning. I quite like that, that's, you know...

And curious if all that related to his working habits as an editor. I mean...

I would say absolutely.

Yes.

He then... But then strangely enough he was teaching at Columbia. When I last saw him, I had dinner with him in New York, which is some years ago now, he was teaching at Columbia University. I mean he was very highly rated as an editor, I don't remember what his credits were actually, but, I know that he was a very, he was a very interesting editor. I mean he had me try all sorts of absolutely extraordinary things, when scenes were not working, which taught me a lot, you know, I'm... Because some of them worked and some of them didn't, depended what time of the evening, what time of the night we did them actually. If we did them early night, they worked; if we did them at three o'clock in the morning, he was so drunk really that they usually didn't work. [laughs]

[0:23:57]

Yes. Is drunkenness still a, an occupational hazard do you think in the film business?

It seems to me, I see less of it.

I don't think so. I don't think...

I suppose it's more drugs in, in California now isn't it?

I think it's more drugs in California. I see, I mean, very little. And having worked with Robert Hamer and Aram and people like that, I have seen a great deal, you know. But I don't find, no, I don't really, you know. I mean, in America now, most of the studios are dry; the actual canteens, you know commissaries on the lots, are mostly dry. And when you're invited up into producers' offices for a drink after a screening or something, they offer you Coca-Cola and lemonade.

Yes. Yes, or Perrier water.

Or Perrier, yeah, Perrier's the in drink. It's going out a bit now, but it was the in drink. So, it's not like it used to be. [pause] I have been offered coke up in a producer's office, who shall be, obviously, nameless. He said to me, 'Would you like a line?' I hadn't any idea what he was talking about, shows how naïve, it's some years ago now. And I said, 'No, I don't think so, thank you,' not knowing what he meant. And he opened his filing cabinet, and there were the lines of coke in there with the things for sniffing it. I said, 'No no, I don't actually touch it thanks.'

It terrifies me.

That's... Yah.

Mm.

Terrifying, that, to me, too. Because I remember Lee Allen[ph], who I worked with many years ago, used to keep drinks in his filing cabinet, and at about 5.30 or 6 he would say, 'Would you like a drink?' And he'd open up his filing cabinet, you know.

Yes.

And that was quite a joke, it was well known by everybody. But this...

Well, I think I did that too, I had a drink[??-25:33] in, in my desk. But it was a disciplined habit.

Yes. Of course, nothing wrong with it at all.

No, no, it was social drinking at the end of the day. But I'm curious why drunkenness, alcohol, was such a crutch for so many people. I think we touched on this actually talking about Robert Hamer didn't we?

Yes, I think we probably did.

Whether or not it was insecurities and...

Yes, the Ealing people.

Mm.

I think we did, yah. But I don't know that people were any less insecure now, in fact I wouldn't say they are.

Which is probably why they indulge in other chemical substances.

Yeah, maybe. Maybe, yah.

[0:26:07]

Mm. Well that's a bit of, twenty-five cent diagnosis there. So the next one after Harrowhouse was Murder on the Orient Express.

Oh yes. [laughs]

Young Sidney.

Yes. Well that was fun, I mean with those stars, that was definitely fun. The thing about working with Sidney really is, he's not the most exciting director from an editor's point of view, though he was very very nice, because he wants, he, he shoots it how he wants it cut.

Yes.

I think maybe less so now, but he certainly did in those days. And he told me right upfront, and I like that, when he interviewed me he said, 'You know, I like it, you know, I shoot it the way I want it cut, and I like it cut the way I shoot it.' You know, he didn't want a lot of input, except in certain areas.

Right.

I mean I, I've tried to get him to use a lot more close-ups and little bits off the beginning and ends of scenes that I liked, and built it up that way. And also, we, you know, together we worked on, I don't whether you've seen *Orient Express*, the little flashbacks that we have in it.

Yes.

Which was the most innovative thing I think that was in it. Because, like turning back the pages of a book. Because it was very difficult, with so many people, to remember who they were from the early prologue that we'd had.

Mhm.

So we came in, and where we placed those were not in the script in fact, were a thing we put in afterwards. But we just flashed back and flashed forward again to remind the audience, which I thought was a neat idea.

Yes. Yes.

And, you know, we kind of came up with that idea together I think.

It's the best by far of the series of Christie stories I think.

Yes. Yes. Yah. I thought Albert was marvellous.

Mhm.

He never wanted to do it again, but I thought he was absolutely superb. I mean, I wasn't a Poirot fan, so I don't know how like he, like he was, but as a character I thought he was very very good.

Mm.

And they all were. I ran a bit the other day, you know, this evening that you talked about, the Sean Connery piece, because I love Sean Connery, so I ran that bit. But everybody said they'd forgotten how good he was in it. I mean, he only had a small part, but he was excellent.

Yes. They're all slightly over-the-top. They're very good actors.

Stylised.

*Well you can call it stylised, but I would call it a slight amount of campy I think.
They're, they're partially sending up the, the story...*

I don't think they...

...or, or the Christie... Don't you think?

I don't think they were meaning to.

Do you not?

I think they were endeavouring to be kind of periody stylised. Yes.

Mm.

Yes, kind of Agatha Christie, the way she wrote, you know, which was not quite real, the characters were never quite real, you know. And I think that they were more, that was what they were doing. I don't think they were really camping it up.

What she wrote is always absolutely devoid of characterisation.

Yah.

They're all pasteboard stereotypes.

Yes, so they all brought their own...

And appalling dialogue.

Yes. Well they all brought their own kind of characters to it and that sort of thing.

Yah. Yes. I was thinking of Wendy Hiller for example, I mean that's somewhat extreme, that performance in that film.

Very extreme. But, I don't think she was camping up, she's not that kind of actress. I think she was, that was the way she kind of saw the Agatha Christie character, you know, a little larger than life. And I think that's the way, from talking to them, because I became quite good friends. Because, a lot of the time Sidney didn't see the rushes so we didn't always get cut up to date and things, because he liked it to pile up and then see it, and maybe work, I don't know... Well he didn't really work on Saturdays, but I, but he'd run the stuff with me when it suited him or something like that.

Mm.

And I went to America to cut it, and that was one of the reasons I did the film. So that time I was, by that time I was divorced and I had a boyfriend in America and I wanted to go to New York. So that was another reason [laughs] why I took the film. And I lived in Westport, Connecticut, for, four months I think it was while we cut the movie. And I took my two younger children, our elder son was in boarding school, took two the two younger children and a nanny with me, and they lived out at Westport, and I used to commute in and out on the train. And I really enjoyed that, because you don't work long hours with Sidney.

Mm.

I mean I was on the train by seven o'clock every night, heading back out to Westport. I mean he'd sometimes say, 'Do you mind working late?' and you'd work for like, half an hour, till half past seven or something.

He's a very fast director isn't he.

Very fast. Very organised. He did this thing I explained the other day, at BAFTA, was, that we shot one way on the train for like, three weeks, in the interrogation at the end particularly. He shot one way. All the material went one way, with each person, with Albert, who was slightly different with each person that he was questioning.

And he shot him, and then he, over a weekend they turned the set round, and he shot all the reverses, and had him walking in and out of the shots that he had been in on the other way. Three weeks later he had to reproduce exactly the same performance. And so did the other actors. And it was a feat that, I don't know many directors could do that actually.

It was Sidney doing the remembering, was it?

Well and the actors as well. I mean it was before we had video. Now with video you see you could watch what you did, but there, we didn't have any video and they couldn't see what they were doing. And it's, you can't see the joins. I mean, Albert walks out of one shot and into the next, and goes on, and it's quite extraordinary I think. It's because he is very disciplined, so he knew exactly what he was doing, he knew exactly what angles he was going to do.

[0:31:23]

I think a lot of it, his style and, and his competence, derive from television, television training. We were together at CBS in what, '49.

Yah.

And, I mean there's very little rehearsal time, and it was all live, and there was no prerecording whatsoever, and you went on the air and you did it and that was that.

Well that may... Yes.

So preparation was, was the key to anything succeeding.

Yes. He did a lot of preparation.

Mm.

You know, beforehand I was in a lot of preparation, prep, you know, sessions on, because we had a lot of back projection and things, and he didn't want just straight, he wanted to be able to pan the people from one place to another, so that we had three plates running. And unfortunately they had, something had gone wrong in Switzerland where they were shot, because of the cold or something, and they weren't, when we came to run them they weren't in fact in sync. Even though Geoff Unsworth, the cameraman, swore that they had to be, they were not in sync. And the posts that went by, went by again if you weren't very careful. We had to sync each section up by hand. We couldn't just put them in. It was a very interesting technical point that was never, ever solved. [pause] Is it running out?

No no no. No. We shall be in five minutes or so.

Oh right. And... And then, we dubbed it, and this seems really, practically impossible, we dubbed it in, like, four and... Fourteen reels it was in the end. Quite a long film. Sidney stuck out for the sort of, rather leisurely opening to it, before it started. And, we ended up with fourteen reels, and we dubbed them in four and a half days. And that, I mean, I think must be practically a record for a picture of that size, you know, not just a, a quickie TV film but a film like that. Because again he was in at 8.30; we'd probably got a reel in the can by 10.

Yes.

I mean most directors do not have that complete dedication to the picture.

Mm.

And he came in, once he came in there was no chitchat. It was the same when I worked in New York with him. I'd come in and we'd have a quick conversation about, you know, what I'd done the evening before perhaps or something, or, you know, a little bit of thing while we poured out the coffee and stuff. And from then on his, he talked about nothing but the film. Until we got towards the end when he was

telling me about *Dog Day Afternoon* and things. But, most of the time, his mind was totally disciplined and completely on that film, on nothing else at all.

Mm.

And that does make you work fast.

Yes. Yes, well it...

Well it, it was interesting from that point of view, you know.

It looks to be effortless too, it's very smooth isn't it.

Yes. Yes. And actually with all those big stars, there was no problem, no bickering, they all, you know, got on very well.

No tantrums?

No, no temper... Sidney just doesn't allow it.

Mhm.

So no, [laughs] you know, nobody had any. Because, I was sometimes with Sean or somebody, and, people, the press would come up and try to say, you know, 'Have you got any troubles?' or, you know, 'What's happening, are people arguing?' And he'd say, 'No,' and it was perfectly honest, nobody was. I mean there was nothing to report that was, they, the kind of titbits they wanted, you know.

[0:34:24]

It's one of those films that, it's very difficult to, to comment on, because it does all work.

Mm.

And, and there doesn't seem to be another way of doing it, or no...

No. No.

...apparent disasters anywhere.

No that's right, there wasn't. It was, you know, smooth...

Smooth as silk, yah.

Smooth and, as I say, the dubbing went smoothly.

That's, what, a comparatively rare occurrence I suppose generally in, in...

Well being as smooth as that is comparatively rare, yes.

[0:34:52]

Mm. Well, unless there's anything to add, we'll go on to, there are two Jack Gold movies next, Man Friday, that was Jack wasn't it?

Mm. Yes, yes.

And Aces High.

Very different movies.

Man Friday was, was Crusoe.

Was Peter O'Toole... Pardon?

Is it a Crusoe?

Yes, that's right, yes.

Yes.

Man... It was Peter O'Toole and... Oh. What's the black actor called? I can't remember his name now. I know it perfectly well. It'll come to me. Yes, and they shot it all in Mexico. And Peter O'Toole, who was, I guess co-producing it although I don't actually remember him. It was a Joe McGrath script, only it was slightly different...

Joe or John?

John.

John.

John McGrath, yes. Slightly different angle on, on the Crusoe story. Because Crusoe... because *Man Friday* kind of takes over from Crusoe.

Mm.

Never quite worked. I don't, I wouldn't know exactly why it didn't, but they... Jack anyway shot it all out there, and never saw any rushes at all. And they promised me a trip out there, but I never got it. Peter kept saying, you know, 'You'll definitely come out for a few days, we'll fly you out for a few days,' and things, but I never, never ever got there. And I, I saw the rushes and I made the choices and I cut the whole movie before Jack came back, because we had a very good relationship, and I knew what he liked and what, you know. And when he came back, I think he only saw about, you know, a couple of out-takes, other takes, because he, you know, he liked what, what I had done and that sort of thing. And it was... It wasn't a great, I mean

we had to cut it down a lot, because it was too long, on some areas it wasn't working. And Peter was taken very ill during that and nearly died, after the shooting. He had this, well they thought, you see, it was liver. Because of his drinking habits, they thought it was liver, and in fact they didn't do the right tests on him, and then somebody came up and did these, I guess, well I don't know what they were, but somebody came up with the idea of doing different tests on him, and they discovered it was his pancreas that was infected, and it was something he had caught when he was doing *Murphy's War*.

Ah yes.

He'd got snails in the pancreas or something. And, the problem was that they didn't discover what it was until very very late. What's the word I want? Er... Not Oriental medicine. They didn't check him out for...

I'm not sure what you mean.

The kind... Well he was down in the, not Orient, he was down in the... Like malaria or something. What do you call those illnesses?

Tropical?

Tropical, yeah. They didn't check him. I don't think tropical's quite right. But they didn't check him for tropical diseases or anything, because he hadn't been down anywhere like that for a long time. They gave him the wrong tests, because they thought it was something to do with his drinking.

Yes.

So when, by the time they saved him he was unconscious. And of course he was very thin before he started, and when we got him back and he was looping, I mean he was just a shadow. And he's not been allowed to drink since then. And that's why he

went on to other things. But... He actually hasn't, I don't think, drunk at all since then.

[0:38:14]

Yes. Locations have done, or trips, foreign trips, have done I suppose for quite a few people one way and another. Because poor old Noël Coward had also got something terrible in the...

Yes. Yah.

...Seychelles, and eventually died of it.

That's right. Yah, I think that's true. I mean, I don't remember a lot about *Man Friday* really.

No. I think I've seen it, but it certainly didn't impress me to, to any extent.

No, it didn't. It didn't work. Whatever it was, it didn't, you know, for whatever reasons it didn't work really.

But an interesting concept.

Yes.

It sounds like the, the liberal Sixties, doesn't it?

Yes. Yah. Yah, I think it was. It was a kind of, role reversal, was the whole idea that it was based on, you know, that it was *Man Friday* that came into his own and took over, and saved Crusoe. But I can't remember the original Crusoe story actually. I don't know.

[0:39:07]

But *Aces High*, I am surprised, I mean *Aces High* I think didn't work mainly because the, well partly because, not mainly, partly because the main character was miscast. I mean Malcolm McDowell, who's a marvellous actor, was totally wrong for this, this smashing leading English young officer, you know, with a sort of...

He may be a good actor, but I find him a very boring actor.

Yes he is quite.

And I think that was true of all that particular cast.

Yes.

There was, there was nothing to, to stir one.

Well he was good in *If* and those kind of things. And also I thought he was good in *Clockwork Orange* actually, but...

Mm. But there it seems to me it's the movie really that...

Yes. Yah.

...that carries the performance, rather than the other way around.

Yah I suppose so. Though I don't know, there was something that he played. And there was something that's, I mean because he isn't, but there's something of that kind of underlying evil that seems to be in him that makes him...

Mm.

Whereas... Which was completely wrong for the character in *Aces High*, because this should have been a, you know, a young, heroic, First World War, British, you know, and rather beautiful, it should have been.

It's Journey's End isn't it.

Yes, that's right. So that's what he should have, have been like. And so why they cast him, I have no idea. Because Jack didn't particularly want him; he was cast by Benny Fisz, before we came on the film. Because I thought Peter Firth as a young boy was very good indeed. And, it was fun to cut, because, you know, we, I made up those dog fights and all the fights in the air from bits and pieces from other films.

It's all stock is it?

Well a lot of it.

Is it?

We had, we only had three planes. We had three SE5s that flew, and I think one or two German planes that flew.

Mm.

And from my point of view it's one of the most interesting cutting jobs I think I've ever done, because, we used stuff from *Darling Lili*, from *Blue Max*, from *Red Baron*. And I, if you watch it really closely on video, you can see that red planes get hit and, and white planes crash. And, you know, anything that you see with more than three planes is, is stock. And, I kind of made up the dog fights round the material that I could get, and then we shot into that, the close-ups of the people doing various things, getting shot, or, the little, the guy who pats his plane when he shoots down something and things like that, a lot of that was built round the stock material that we could get. We did, they did get some good flying stuff as well. But for the sake of economy or

something, they didn't have ground-to-air communication of any sort, so that the planes were told what to do when they went up. But nowadays, I mean with walkie-talkies... You couldn't talk to them, they didn't have them. But some of the scenes are made up from, you know, stock material from three different movies, plus our ordinary flying scenes, plus twenty-foot radio control models, plus tiny models, and tiny guns and things like that, plus the actual, you know, people in the aeroplanes shot from the ground, which is, that stuff is excellent I think. And the stuff shot on the ground, with just smoke going round them, and we didn't even have, we didn't have BP/VP[??-42:19] or anything like that. We just shot them on the ground in a, you know, rocking thing with smoke and stuff going round them and sky behind.

Yes.

And I actually did a thing I've always wanted to do, which is actually turn a shot upside-down. Malcolm McDowell going in the loop-the-loop. I simply flopped him over.

And just a straight[??], optically did you rotate him?

Optically, I put him upside-down.

You rotated him.

Yes. Yah.

Mhm.

I didn't rotate him, I just put him upside-down, I optically put him upside-down. [laughs] And he said to me after he saw, went to the preview or whatever it was, or the press show, he said, 'My God! I saw this fantastic dogfight and this pilot throwing the plane round the sky. And I suddenly realised it was me.' [laughs] So that was

fun from that point of view. And I think while it was in the air, it was quite exciting actually, but...

How laborious is that sort of fun though Anne? Especially ordering up all that stock footage. I mean, luck has a lot to do with it I suppose.

Yes. Yes.

Finding material.

Well you've also got to have a very clear visual eye, because you've got to be able to pick out when you see the stuff. I mean obviously we got more than we used in the end, but, you've got to be able to pick out what will fit in to what... I mean, there was a story going through it, so that you can make the dogfights within the structure of the story, but nevertheless certain things have to happen, like shooting down the balloons and all that kind of thing, and, certain... I thought the man falling on... and the burning stuff, is amazing. Now that is also, it's obviously the real actor burning in the cockpit, but the side angles of the plane burning are stock shots. And that, we cut those in and out. And then the falling shot with the dummy I thought was excellent too. I thought some of the stuff... Which obviously we shot. But they had to... So that when you were viewing them, you had to view what was actually going to be useful for you within your perimeters of what you were doing, and be able to visualise what you could do with it.

Mhm.

So in that way it was quite interesting. Because would think, yeah, I could put that, and then if I do that I can have the guy come up behind, and the other guy do a loop to get away, and... And you know, so that you were working round that. I have to say, I mean my memories of it are only kind of interesting, and, and fun to do, you know.

Are there any great contraventions of continuity that you are aware of, that you get away with?

Oh terrible, terrible.

Do you get away with them? Yah.

Oh absolutely appalling.

Yah.

I mean one plane gets hit and another one crashes, you know. But because they're done very quick, or the thing of the eye. I mean I ran it for all these BAFTA people the other night and I don't think anybody spotted any of those things. I also thought that Simon Ward was excellent in it, as the cowardly officer, and I did a, I think it was a good piece of cutting on a montage there of him, when he has the nightmare and the plane and the wings and everything, and... It was a, from my point of view it was a rather fun film to cut. I, I, you know, get on very well with Jack. I didn't get on so well with Benny Fisz who actually threw a phone at me once, but, because he said I didn't treat him with enough respect because he wasn't Hal Wallis [laughs] or Sam Spiegel or something.

And he wanted to be?

And he wanted me to. Yes, he wanted to be considered in that category. But, I mean he wasn't much. He was all right, but he... I mean you know... I think his problem was that he knew Jack and I worked very well together, and that he kind of, you know, we didn't take a lot of notice of him. And we didn't, so, he was right in a way.

The producer's lot.

That's right. And we had a great cast in that. I mean people loved working with Jack, so... I've got cramp in my leg. So we had John Gielgud and all sorts of people like that playing parts, and Christopher Plummer.

Mhm.

Apart from Simon Ward. And David, I can't remember his other name now, the guy who played, the sort of cocky actor who got killed, was very good.

I couldn't remember. I remember...

The blond one, the one that patted his plane when he shot something down.

No I don't, I can't remember.

I can't remember his name. But he was very good. I thought it was a very good cast actually.

Mm.

Except for Malcolm. And if your main actor is miscast, you're, you know...

True.

The whole thing becomes a bit suspect from the beginning, and I don't think you can ever overcome that. But and also, I think there were faults with, I think there were problems with the script, by putting it, you know.....

[End of Track 8]

[Track 9]

We're on to, what is it, tape five. Yes, still on...

I was only going just going to add a little rider about, it was of particular interest to me because my father was in the RFC in the First World War, and was in fact shot down by Göring's Circus as they called it.

Yes.

Yah. And, so you know, that kind of flying and things was interesting to me.

Yes.

He flew a Camel actually; we had SE5s but he flew a Camel.

Was he shot down behind our lines, or, or theirs?

No. Yes, behind our lines, luckily. And he was saved because, extraordinary thing, because he riddled with bullets, and so was his observer. I mean he had bullets that came through and out the other side. And my brother's got his spattered goggles, which I always wanted, it's got the blood spattered on them. And he always had problems with his side, one of the bullets went through his lung. I've forgotten how many bullet holes he had in him now, but something like fourteen or fifteen or something, you know. And the plane came down like that, those old planes, instead of whirling down, kind of floated down, and went across a bomb crater. And so instead of crashing into the ground it sort of, went, [vocal sound], like that on its wings.

How lovely.

It was an incredible story.

Mm.

And that's how he and his observer were saved.

The survival rate was, was really rather dismal wasn't it?

Very... Well, exactly, very, yes. So it was the luckiest thing that happened to him really, because after that of course he was sent home. [laughs]

Yes. Yes. Which explains your presence.

Yes.

[0:01:28]

We talked about Jack as a director I think before, and, said how versatile he was, and again how seemingly effortless his, his direction. I don't think there's much to, to add to that is there?

Well there isn't much, except that I just think it's extraordinary that he hasn't been luckier than he has, you know.

Yes. Yes.

Because I think he is a very fine director, and a very interesting director. I think maybe his choice of subjects has not been always so good.

Mm. Do you think that would be because it's a matter of what's offered to him, rather than what he tries to get off the ground?

Not all... Not in the earlier days. I think it was more choice, his choice.

Mhm.

Well, his choice and the kind of subjects that people knew he was interested in and would offer him, as opposed to other things. I know that, when we did *Medusa Touch*, he was kind of hoping that that would hit a jackpot on that other level, of just popular entertainment, as opposed to saying something very, you know, like, he usually tried to do films that, had a social content, particularly a left-wing social, or socialist social content, and things like that.

Right.

And, and people were aware of that about him.

Mm. Well a humanitarian concern I suppose it was.

Yes. Yes, yes, and quite, and quite rightly so. And I mean, any of those films could have been, you just don't know, it's luck, and somehow luck in that way, never came his way. But I mean as a, as a lot of work, I mean his films are very interesting, even, I mean a lot of the television films that he's done too.

I agree. Yah. Yes.

I mean he makes, I think, marvellous films.

He's one of our better directors.

Yes.

Almost totally unrecognised now at this stage.

That's right. But people, I mean, who know about films in England, not so, not in America, he's hardly known there I have to say, but in England, I mean he's very

highly rated, and he can always get actors to work with him because they like working with him.

Yes. Well one of the best television things ever made in this country, The Naked Civil Servant...

The Servant, that's right.

...was, was Jack's.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

And again, it's very difficult to, at least for me, to, to put one's finger on why it is so good, because it is so good and it seems again almost to be born whole.

Yes. Yes.

And, and working.

Yes. And I don't think they had a lot of problems with it actually, either, because, I must have been working with Jack probably on, was it *Our Girl Friday* or something? Or *Man Friday*. I think it was *Man Friday*, when he was planning it, and he was telling me the story of it, and some of the lines from it, and, he had us in fits of laughter, you know. A couple of them they had to take out because they were too risky. But, you know, it sounded right from the start a marvellous idea.

Mhm.

He's working on a very clever film now actually, I hope it goes... Well again I think it's mostly TV, but, maybe it's for cinemas as well, I'm not sure. So... I'll probably see him soon and find out how it's going.

Oh well that's...

Which is a clever, very clever idea when he tells it to you, it's really great.

Yes. Well let's see if he gets it off the ground.

Have you interviewed him?

No, I haven't seen Jack for ages, about ten years or more. We ought to.

I would have thought so.

Yah. Yah. Other than the fact, I think of him as, what, his sort of, mid-career[??-4:48] is the worst[??] review[??] in, in....

Yes. Well he's about the same age as I am I think.

Mm, a little younger maybe.

Yes, he probably is a little younger.

Yah. I think he's younger than I am.

But I mean... Yes. But he's, I mean he's not amongst what I call the young directors.
[laughs]

No no no.

He'd love to be able to say so.

No, he's... Happily for him I think. Yes, I must try and do that. But we are inclined to, by and large, I mean, you're here, so that's why you're being done, but ordinarily it's the Seventies and the Eighties who are our targets. I've been trying to get John Davis, who is very, very reluctant.

Oh yes. Is he?

Yes. He, I don't think he will.

No. He wasn't really that involved in film, but I suppose he was. Well he's not a film [inaudible-5:32].

Well he's involved with the company, which is, is important.

Yes. Yes, that's true.

But I don't think we'll get a clear-cut answer to anything from him. I've been going through Bill MacQuitty to some extent, who is trying to persuade him, but I don't think we're going to succeed.

[0:05:47]

Anyway, The Eagle Has Landed is, is next. That looks, what's...

That was on TV the other night, did you see it?

No, I haven't seen it since it was first shown.

No. I didn't see it either.

It isn't a movie I like. [laughs] I think it's a terrible film.

I didn't think it was a great film, but it was, it was a good idea. And funnily enough, I turned on the TV the other day, and I only caught the end of a conversation, it must have been the end of a news or something, and they were talking about that incident, of those Germans that they still say landed on the coast of Norfolk.

Yes, that's right, I heard that, yes.

Did you hear that?

In Suffolk, yes.

In Suffolk or wherever it was.

Yes. Yes. And nobody still to this day knows quite what happened.

Nobody knows. They all swear that they did, and there was a whole lot of graves there and that sort of thing, but nobody... I mean, if there are, why haven't they dug 'em up? I mean, you know.

Mm.

But they still swear, which of course that whole story was based on. That was a much better script than it was a film. It was quite a good script actually.

That's interesting. Because it doesn't play.

No.

Maybe that's my attitude toward historical travesties, it always bothers me when things are so historically naughty.

Yes. Yeah well that was, they put a lot of, of stuff in, and... And also an actor who I often like, who's Donald Sutherland, was so awful in it I thought. I mean nobody was particularly good except Larry Hagman who was way over the top.

Yes. And, and my un-favourite actor, Michael Caine.

Oh yes, well if you don't like Michael Caine, you aren't going to like it, are you, that's for sure.

No. The ubiquitous Mr Caine.

But it was quite interesting working with one of the old Hollywood directors, John Sturges.

Mhm.

Who I liked a lot. He was very laid back, and, you know, wasn't fazed a lot. Whereas the producer, Jack Wiener, was, I think it was his first film, and David Niven Jr who was very nice but not really involved. But Jack Wiener, I mean Jack Wiener's one of those people who's going to give himself a terrible ulcer one of these days because he's such a worrier, you know.

Is that the Jack Wiener out of documentaries?

No.

No. There was a series, there was... Well, the Churchill series wasn't there...

Yes. No.

...by a Jack Wiener. Not, not the same one?

No I don't think it can be the same one. I think it's slightly different spelling actually.

Mhm.

I don't know where Jack Wiener... Oh he was an agent I think, or something like that, before.

Aha.

Because he was a friend of David Niven Jr's. But, he was always in a panic, and John Sturges was always very calm. And when we used to, I used to go out to the location. We built this village, which really was quite extraordinary, out in Buckinghamshire somewhere, I can't remember where it was, by the river. And, it looked like a real village, I mean so much, so much so that when Jean Marsh came and started doing some work in it, because we... It was that very hot summer, we shot, '77 was it? When it was...

Six.

Or '76, when it, you know. We were having to spray the grass, because the early part had been shot with green grass, and then when we came to shoot into those scenes later on the grass was yellow. They were having to spray it green.

Mm.

And it was so hot to work, I mean it was just incredibly hot. Everybody was in the river all the time and that sort of thing. And Jean Marsh came down and she said, 'Thank God there's a pub, at least we can get a drink at lunchtime.' And of course it was just a set.

It's a totally convincing set.

Yah.

I had no idea that it was a set, yah.

Yah. Yah, no, it...

That does work.

Yah. It was absolutely amazing.

Mhm.

It really was, when you were in it you really felt you were there, it was so solid and everything. And...

Who was the art director, do you remember?

It's funny, I don't. I would do if I really gave it some thought.

Well it would be a matter of record.

It was a very good art director, but I can't remember...

Yes. John Box?

No it wasn't John. Somebody like that. Terry...? No it wasn't Terry Marsh either.

Oh well, I'm...

I can't remember.

Right.

[0:09:24]

And I, but I always remember, the first lunch I had with John Sturges at Twickenham Studios, because that's where we were based, we were chatting away about this and that, you know, and he said, 'Well of course you know, I, I have had the same editor for the last fifteen movies.' I thought, oh my God! How can I step into those shoes?' you know. I can remember my heart going into my shoes. But in fact we got on very well. He again didn't interfere a great deal, you know. I mean he ran rushes. He would come in from... I would go to the location. I spent my life, it must have been near Reading, because I used to go to Reading, where the location was, and, you know, the traffic was terrible, I spent half my life on the road in that terrible heat. And then we ran the rushes in a Nissen hut or something like that. And, John would have, as he had finished work they would, the assistants would bring him a tumbler of neat vodka on the rocks.

Right.

But he wouldn't drink at all during the day. But... And he wasn't a drunk but he was a heavy American drinker, you know, in the evenings he would, with his dinner he'd have a few drinks. And, he had, liked to have a blonde or two around him, you know, and things. I mean like the American. I always said, you know, my image of him was going to bed with a bottle of vodka under one arm and a blonde under the other.

It's almost a stereotype isn't it.

Well exactly, I mean real Hollywood.

Yah.

I mean I think that the girls that worked with him were more or less told that that was part of their job.

Yes.

And that if they didn't, weren't interested in that... He was quite a good-looking man in a sort of way, American way.

Mm.

I've never seen him since the movie. Now I live in Hollywood, and I see nearly everybody some time or another, at dinners or premiers or, restaurants. I've never set eyes on John Sturges. And I know he's still alive. And I'd really quite like to see him, but, I don't know where he lives.

How old would he be, would you say?

Well I should think he'd be, maybe eighty by now.

Yes. Yes.

I would think. He was sixty-something then. A very fit man, because he was shooting long days in that heat. And he did know what he was doing. But he was interested more in the action, even though the action wasn't particularly good in the film in the end.

Mm.

It was so improbable wasn't it, that was the problem with the film really. Even the action scenes on the church and things like that were improbable, they didn't seem...

That's... Yes. Childishly so, as I remember it.

Yes. Yah. Like a *Boy's Own* kind of thing.

Mm. Mm.

But he did a very clever thing I always thought. I mean he was a very good, solid director who knew exactly what he was doing, knew what he was shooting, and that sort of thing. And, we were, you know, more or less up to schedule but obviously got a bit behind. Because, he had a lot of problems with Donald Sutherland, who wanted his part building up, wanted his love scenes, with Jenny Agutter I think it was, or whatever, built up. Was it Jenny Agutter?

I don't remember.

I can't remember. I don't think it was, it was somebody. But whoever it was, he kept on writing new scenes and giving them to John. And instead of like most directors who would say, 'Look, I'm not going to shoot this,' and having a terrible argument with him, he just shot all the scenes in such a way that he said to me, 'Don't even bother to cut them. Just cut them out and put, you know, just take them out of the rushes and put them in the cans and cut the film the way it's written.'

That's fair enough.

But he was able to do that without Donald Sutherland getting on to what he was doing.

Mm. [laughs] They've probably never spoken since.

They've never spoken since. I don't think Donald Sutherland was very keen on me since either, because he, he was going to do a film with Chabrol and he rang me and said, did I want to do it and everything, and, I, I've never seen him since. [laughs]

No. Did you get lots of cover?

No, not a lot, not a lot. Not enough.

I was curious about Sturges as an old line Hollywood director, big studio director, whether or not he was shooting for Mr Zanuck, to cut the picture as it were.

No, he didn't. Some scenes he did a lot of cover. But he, he pretty well knew what he was doing, most of the time.

Yes. Well they all did, didn't they, in those terms.

Yah, they did, yes. Yah. It was just, I mean I think... I don't think it was particularly well shot really, but some of it was quite well shot. Some of it, you know, some of the scenes were not... And there wasn't a lot of cover, and there wasn't a lot you could do, you know. But I think, the fact that it was so hot and, the actors were not always behaving that well and things, you know.

[0:13:58]

Right. The inexperienced producer, was he getting nervous about time and money?

Yes, all the time. Pouncing up and down.

Mhm. Money?

Money, yes.

Mm.

Yah.

Mm.

And then, John Sturges, I did a cut for him, which he liked, a rough cut, which I showed him, you know, two or three days after we finished shooting. Which he liked, and he gave us notes on. Not extensive but some. And then obviously the producers wanted to do some things. And John, did he get...? I can't remember exactly, but he went back to America for a bit, and then he came back and he saw the film again in kind of fine cut. And he made another couple of notes, and said, 'That's fine.' And, then I didn't see him again till the music, where he didn't have anything very much to say, and he said, 'I'll see you at the dubbing.' And I have never seen him from that day to this. He never came to the dubbing, left it entirely to us. He was very interested at the time in this new boat he had bought for fishing in the Mexican, Gulf of Mexico, that seemed to be his main interest in life actually at the time. The writer was very upset, Tom Mankiewicz who wrote it was very upset with what they did with it, because, he thought... I mean there was some very interesting early stuff actually with the Germans and the submarines and stuff which wasn't in in the end.

It was shot, or...?

Yes... No, it wasn't, it was taken out of the script.

It wasn't even shot?

It wasn't, it was taken out.

Yah. Mm. Yes. The way you describe Sturges, it does sound very much like a, a journeyman director in, in a major Hollywood studio in, in the factory days.

I don't think... I think he was more than a journeyman director. I think he was quite...

Yes?

Yes, I think so. I think he was quite a good director. Maybe he was, by the time he did *Eagle Has Landed*, I feel that he was not as keen as he had been, because, as I say, his main interest in life really seemed to be his boat.

Yes.

I just feel that... But I think he had... I mean when you think he did *The Great Escape* and things like that, he had done some very good movies that were way out of Hollywood journeyman movies I think. And I think there were instances, you know, that, in this film that he did do that, that were beyond that. I mean I just think that maybe, I don't know to say it, he was just, the edge was off him as a director, and I don't know why that was, whether because he was getting old, because he wasn't that old in age, but maybe... He didn't seem to be that, keen? No it's not exactly so. Because he was always there, very early in the morning, everything was planned, he knew what he was doing always. But the edge had gone off him I think in some way.

[0:16:37]

Were styles changing, had it...?

Well yes, he, he shot very much the old-fashioned style.

Somewhat plonking I suppose.

Yes. Yes. Yah. But it was a big canvas to cover, I mean it was a big story actually. A lot of different people and different facets to it.

Mm.

There was a young actor, Treat Williams, who was in it, whose first film it was, who's gone on and done quite a lot of good work.

Yes. Yes, a good actor.

So they chose some, you know, quite good people in that way. And Larry Hagman, as I say, who played the, you know, over the top, I mean he was way over the top really, so he became unbelievable, but, what he was saying I'm sure was very genuinely what those idiot American colonels said in those days, you know.

Well I'm sorry I didn't see it again when it was on television.

Well maybe you should look. It has...

It'll turn up I'm sure.

It has some good moments in it. Yah I'm sure it will.

Mm. Oh yes, yes.

It was never, it was a mediumly popular film but...

Mm.

What was quite interesting was, the prologue that we put on, which was the actual, you know, kidnapping of Mussolini, which was, you know, library material that we found, that we put on the front that John didn't know, and that was, I think, he was upset about, because, we came across it when we were, when Peter Watson, who was my assistant, who now has a trailer company, a title company, and he made the trailer for the film, and he came across this actual material and we put it on like a little prologue. Which was quite interesting.

And you say the director disliked that?

Didn't know about it.

Didn't know about it or disliked it?

We could never find... We never could find him.

Yes.

I've heard that he wasn't pleased about it, but as I say, I've never seen him since the music.

Mm.

He never came to dubbing. As far as I know, never saw the finished film. But I have heard that he did see the finished film and was not pleased that that had happened. But, I mean I never do things behind directors' backs. I tried every way to get hold of him, and couldn't get hold of him. And Jack Wiener told me he was trying to get hold of him, but, I don't know whether he really was. But, you know, I certainly wouldn't have done anything that I thought would offend John. I got, as I say, I got on very well with him and he trusted me.

Mm.

But I... It just shows that I think he, the fact he didn't come back for dubbing, that he wasn't that interested in the film, was what makes me feel, you know... He said he was coming back, and then not coming.

Yes.

You know, trying to... And I think that was there in the film, that slight lack of, of thing that he had.

I think that's true, a distance.

And that's what the film suffered from.

Mm. Yes.

And I don't... You know, whether that, as I say, that was because he was getting on, or, he really didn't have any faith in the film, or what the reason for it, I don't know.

Yes, I think that...

But you always felt he wasn't 100 per cent behind it, you know.

Mm. I remember it, it think, as being somewhat mechanical.

Yes. Yes, yah, it was. But it did have some quite good moments.

But then the subject is that, it's such a funny subject.

Yes. Yes. Judy Geeson, that's who I'm trying to remember the name of.

Judy Geeson. Mhm.

Yes.

[0:19:40]

I have The Legacy next on the list, which I don't know anything about.

Well that was a horror film, which is almost continually on American televisions. Funny how you make some quite good films and some that you're not that proud of. And it's a very popular film, funnily enough. I don't think it ever was particularly as a, a cinema film. Though it probably was quite in America, I wouldn't really know. I don't think it was over here. It was a kind of Gothic horror. And it was directed by Richard Marquand, who is now dead, a most charming man. And I had lunch at, oh a

familiar, some restaurant with him, and he sold the idea of the film, and I thought, God! this is a director who really knows what he is doing. What an interesting guy, you know, it would be really fun to work with him, the way he described everything. But unfortunately when he actually got on the floor, I don't like to speak ill of the dead, [laughs] he clearly didn't know what he was doing at all.

Really? No, that's interesting.

Yes.

Because everyone thought he had great, great promise.

Yes. Well I think he...

He did the middle Star Wars didn't he?

Yes. And the reason that they employed him, I was told, was, he was the one with the last ideas and the least argumentative.

Ah.

And they thought they wouldn't have any trouble with him, and that they would, you know, what's his name, George Lucas would be able to come on and direct whenever necessary, because they weren't going to have any problem from him.

I see.

That was what I, why I heard he was chosen. There were three of them, there was him, Michael Tuckler[??-21:06], and somebody else. Well Michael Tuckler's[??] terrific I think, but very argumentative, I mean, you know. And I can't remember who the other one was. But the reason, I was told, he was chosen was that. And that did happen. George Lucas was redirecting stuff all the time.

Yah.

And then, he did this... He did a very good film, was it *Jagged Edge*?

He had made a... I guess it was Jagged Edge, yes.

I think *Jagged Edge*.

He made a name with something or other[??], didn't he.

Yes, *Jagged Edge* I think it was.

Mm. Mm.

And then he did a film with Bob Dylan, which was a complete disaster, and it was just after a preview of that when it was apparently booed and things that he had this heart attack, but whether the two were connected in any way, I don't know. But... I mean he, he was, to talk to... I think it was maybe just, inexperience and a certain arrogance that he had. He also had Sam Elliott and Katharine... What's her name? Oh. I, I'm absolutely out of it this morning. What was the woman who was in...?

Katharine.

Katharine. The young girl from *The Graduate*.

In The Graduate? Oh. Yes.

I know her quite well, I see her in LA and we go riding together actually.

Yes. I know who you mean.

They're married now, she and Sam Elliott. Your mind's [inaudible-22:28].

Oh my mind went months, years ago.

I'm always bad at names.

Names, yah.

Well anyway. She's very well known, I'll think of it in a minute. Pretty girl. And she had a baby, which is nice with Sam when she was about forty-two or forty-three, she had the first baby, who is about, probably about five or six years old now, five years old. And... Anyway, Sam Elliott is very difficult to work with, was in those days, very opinionated, very argumentative, and I think that he had a, a problem, that, Richard had a problem controlling him actually. And I think that was some of the problem. But he really... And then we had a cameraman and an art director who did nothing but quarrel with each other. We had David Foster, who was another one of those real panicky producers, quite experienced American producer who was producing it. A man I've remained friends with and see in LA from time to time. Very nice, but, not a very strong producer really, and not...

Mm.

And, it was actually a real mess. It was very difficult to even cut it together, he was shooting it so strangely. I went out and shot all the Rolls Royce crash in the freezing cold. I shot quite a lot of second unit actually, because David Foster put me on to doing it, because, you know, Richard really couldn't do it. And, then the make-up we had problems with. Was it John Standing who played in it?

I never saw it.

And he had this very old make-up, which was pretty phoney, but it didn't matter too much, and that it was phoney, because it was a horror movie really, kind of like a horror movie. But it's very popular, people really love it.

[0:24:09]

It's a British film is it, British money, shot here?

Yes, it was shot over here, yes.

Mhm.

Yah. Had the two stars in it, but the rest of it I think, and David Foster, but the rest of it was all English.

Mhm.

But as I say, we had lots and lots of problems with it, and I never thought it would be as successful as it was.

Yes. Does it play, do you...?

Yes. Actually...

I don't mean, is it on, but does it work for you?

No, not bad, it's not as bad as one thought it was going to be. So, you know, I guess it was, it was probably quite a neat editing job from the fact one even got it to, to go together like a story, you know.

Yes. Yes.

Because we had an art director and a cameraman, as I said, who didn't get on, so that that the, the great Gothic sets that the art director was doing, the cameraman was lighting them black, [laughs] so that you couldn't see them. [phone ringing] Excuse me.

[break in recording]

[0:25:00]

Let me ask that question. Nothing more then about The Legacy?

I don't think so, no. I can't think of anything right, offhand.

Mm. At some point it might be interesting to compare an American production shooting in this country and a wholly British production mounted here. I don't know if The Eagle Has Landed and The Legacy are two such that one could compare?

Well I mostly worked on American productions shooting in England, because, [laughs] I say this laughingly but I mean, mostly the American – British pictures, couldn't afford me really.

That's right. Yes.

And I mostly was approached anyway to do those. I mean, films I did like *Bofors Gun* were British productions. I'm trying to think of any of those. You see *Orient Express* was American. I mean I can't think of any that were... *Bushido Blade* was Japanese. I can't think of any that I worked on that were British.

You always charged Harrods prices, or, Bullocks Wilshire prices. [laughs]

That's right. [laughs] I think at one time I was the highest paid editor in the country. Maybe when I left I was, but I'm not any more now. Well I mean I probably am now

because I'm on American money, but I mean... But there are other editors here on American money, Jim Clark and people like that.

Yes. Yes, but as you say, they're American productions. Yes.

Yes. Yes.

[0:26:20]

Right. So, there's, there's nothing to follow along that...?

I don't... Well I don't think so. Maybe something will come up, but I can't think of any. I mean again, what are we getting up to, *Elephant Man* now or something?

The next is one of the chef-d'oeuvre, yes, Elephant Man.

Yah. Which again was an American production shooting over here.

Right. But not, not I would have thought on a huge budget?

No. But it... Not on a huge budget. Now Terry Clegg, who was the closest, meanest man I've ever worked with, working as line prod... no, as production manager on it. So money was always... They were always careful with money, but I don't remember them being really tight with money. I mean, we had a lot of problems on that picture.

Well Elephant Man is one of those films I think one should cover in as much depth and detail as possible, so...

Well we started with a problem really before I came... Well, my first meeting with David Lynch was quite amusing in as much as they asked... I was offered at the same time *Flash Gordon* by Dino De Laurentiis and *Elephant Man*. And, I read *Flash Gordon* – well, I mean you know, you read *Flash Gordon*, you know what it's going to be like anyway. And I've always tried to avoid, or did for a long time, special

effects movies because I know that, you know, you hang about waiting for special effects, and not that interesting to cut. But obviously it was a big picture. And *Elephant Man* sounded like a, quite a, kind of, smallish movie. And I started reading the script, and I thought, oh my God, I can't face this, this face on my Moviola every day, really depressed me. And by the end I was crying, and I thought to myself, I must cut that film. That's a film I really want to do. It was such a beautiful script. It was... I mean I think it was a beautiful film actually. You didn't like it?

Yes, oh very much so.

You look...

No, I'm looking at you, listening, listening.

You looked dubious at me.

No no. Oh forgive me.

No no, I mean I thought it was a beautiful script, very, very sensitively done.

Mm.

And I also think, in spite of a lot of problems, it was well executed. Anyway, as I say, that was the sort of start. And I thought, I really want to do that. And so I went down to meet the director. And I met the producer, Jonathan Sanger, and, who was very charming, and then a young boy came out of the inner office, and I was about to say, 'Well I'd like mine,' you know, 'white with one sugar,' [laughs] and they said, 'Can we introduce you to David Lynch.' And yet he looked about eighteen years old, he was in fact thirty-two I think at the time. But I mean he looked like a boy, and dressed like a boy, you know, like a college boy really.

Yes. What, all preppy do you mean?

Yes, kind of preppy, yes.

Yah.

Preppy Fifties.

Yes.

He had a, quite a stylish, style of his own he actually had, and the way that, his hair was very neatly cut and parted and everything. I mean he looks so unlike the way he is. But it's just amazing, you know. But he was very, we got on really well together, you know. And I think they wanted to give him a rather more experienced editor since he wasn't that experienced, and he'd probably seen... I mean I know he was seeing two or three editors, it wasn't only... You know.

How did he come on to the picture, Anne, do you know?

Oh yes. He and Jonathan Sanger wrote the script... Well, Jonathan didn't write the script.

It was from a play wasn't it? Was it not? Wasn't there a play to start out with?

No, I don't... No, it's from an original idea I think.

Ah.

But I don't think they... I mean I think they both had the same original idea. There was a play certainly. But to be honest with you, I'm not sure whether they both had the same idea or whether... But it wasn't really from the play I don't think. I should actually have a look at that.

Mm.

But the script was done by two young Americans and David. And David had only so far done *Eraserhead*, which was a short, a quite extraordinary short.

Yes. Again I...

Have you ever seen it?

I missed it. I'd love to see it, but I've missed...

One of the weirdest films you've ever seen. But let me get on to that in a minute, because, I had this interview with him, and, you know, it all went very well. And as I say, I would think that he... I can't remember but I think he probably saw more than one of the, my strata of editor, you know. Anyway, to cut a long story short, I got the job, and went away on holiday somewhere I think, or something. Oh no, before that Freddie Francis was going to do it, and David said, 'Oh I'd like you and Freddie...' and some... and the art director, I can't remember who it was – Stuart Craig, 'to see *Eraserhead*.' So the three of us went down to Denham labs for some reason to see it. And when the lights went out we all just looked at each other, and we thought, Christ, what have we let ourselves in for? You know, because everybody had thought how nice David was and everything. [laughs] Oh he is nice. But you know, he seemed very straightforward. And this extraordinary... You know, a lot of it was in *Alien*, the way the, the monster thing comes out of the stomach and everything.

Oh yes.

It was all in *Eraserhead* first, before *Alien* ever did it. And the, and the little creature, whatever it was, was very like the *Alien* one, actually.

Really?

Oh very, very weird. I mean you can't even describe it, it's so offbeat, but intriguing, and very interesting, and I don't think I really understood it totally, or if there is anything to understand. It took him seven years to make, with his friend Alan Splet who is the sound designer guy. I think they made it together. Because it had fabulous sound effects and music in it and things. So I mean the whole conception of it was very very clever, but weird, way out.

Off-putting?

I think to see in a way off-putting, but it didn't put me off working with him, in that, not off-putting in that way. I mean, as a film it's fairly nauseating. But, you know, as I say, we looked at each other and we thought, what have we let ourselves in for?
[0:31:58]

But anyway, I mean, you know, we, I went off on holiday or something, and when I came back I had missed the drama. David had it in, because he had made the little monster from *Eraserhead* and everything, and all the make-up in *Eraserhead*, had got it in his contract I think that he could do, I don't know the whole of this story, but that he could do the mask of the Elephant Man. So he spent some months apparently doing this mask and everything, and eventually, they put it on John Hurt, and I mean John couldn't breathe in it, and when they took it off, half his face came away with it. And, you know, the date for the... And David wouldn't let anybody see it beforehand, and it apparently just was a disaster to him and it wasn't any good as a mask. And this was, for some reason, I mean you can't imagine how they'd let this happen, but that they, this was about a week or two before shooting, that he unveiled this mask to them. So when I got back from my holiday, and was about to start on the movie, I had all this related to me. But the schedule had been completely turned round and now they were going to shoot all the stuff with Treves first, and his wife and the other guy, because, you know, they were very secretive about this disaster with the make-up, this wasn't, didn't, wasn't exactly explained, I heard all this later, but that the make-up hadn't quite worked and that somebody else was working on it and this and that and the other. And we weren't going to shoot with John Hurt for the first, four weeks I think it was or something like that. We did all the stuff with the doctors, we

did the stuff with, that other, lovely actor whose name I can't remember, who played his keeper.

Freddie Young?

Freddie... Freddie what?

Not Freddie Young. [laughs]

Not Freddie Young. Freddie...

Freddie Jones.

Freddie Jones. Oh, we did the stuff with Freddie Jones and the young boy and all that. And we did stuff where the Elephant Man was going to be seen but wasn't, and, we did everything. We shot round in other words, the Elephant Man.

Mhm.

And they got these people over from America to do the make-up. Which I think somehow by hook or by crook was more or less ready on time, but I mean it was shooting the whole picture back to front. And once John Hut started... The make-up took, something like four or five hours to put on, so John would come in, like four o'clock in the morning, and... No, I think six hours actually. And we shot every other day, because obviously he couldn't have this long make-up. We shot every other day, once he started. And they put the make-up on him, and then he would shoot as long as he could in the evening. I didn't mean the cutting rooms were shooting every other day, working every other day, obviously, we worked every day, because we were cutting on the days and running rushes on the days when we weren't shooting. But the floor crew worked every other day, and they worked in the evening till, like nine or ten, or as late as John could work. And then it was like, another two or three hours to take his make-up off again. So, it was a kind of, weird way of shooting, but, I

mean it was so effective. The first day that John Hurt worked, we saw the rushes, we were in Lee studio, in this tiny little room. And we used to sit out at the back, and, we'd have the normal amount of people would come, not a huge amount would come to rushes. Suddenly this day the place was packed with people, all the secretaries, everybody had come in to see John. And, and David was furious. He said, 'What are all these people doing here?' I said, 'Well they're interested in seeing the rushes.' I said, 'They're all unit.' He said, 'I don't believe all of them are working on the film.' I said, 'Yes they are. Just stay calm, it's, you know, it's nice that they're interested.' Anyway, by the end, everybody was sobbing. It was a, it was the scene he did, the first scene he did was the one with Treves's wife where he's saying, 'I must have been such a disappointment to my mother,' and all that. I tell you, everybody, I couldn't speak, everybody was crying. They all went rushing out at the end, you know. And then of course David was immensely pleased that everybody had come and they'd had all this reaction. And, it was extraordinary. When John Hurt was in that outfit, of course, he didn't talk with that voice, because he didn't have the teeth bit in when he was... But you would find yourself holding his arm and helping him places. I mean I'd never normally take John Hurt's arm and help him anywhere. But it was extraordinary how he just, you just thought of him as the Elephant Man when he was in his make-up.

Mm.

[0:36:20]

But, I mean David was, knew what he was shooting, but he had a somewhat irritating approach to the actors who found him a bit irritating. I mean it's really interesting in a way that everybody, now that the film is such a huge success, forgets how they ran him down while we were making the movie, actually, Freddie Francis and people like that, you know. I mean Freddie thought he was hopeless, and, you know, Freddie thought he was helping him a lot, but he wasn't really. David knew what he was doing.

Yes.

And he didn't always go the easiest way to getting it. But he always knew what he wanted. And, he was very definite, but he, as I say, he didn't always have the best manner with people, he irritated people.

Mm. Are you talking of, of...

I'm now on the shooting still.

...you know, film technique or, or relationships with actors?

Relationships with actors and film technique.

Mhm.

Because he would know what he wanted to do, and Freddie would try and help him, and, he wouldn't... I mean he wanted to do it the way he wanted to do it.

Yes.

And, it wasn't always easy for him to communicate with people what he wanted.
[pause] And Jonathan Sanger's an excellent producer, and as a pair they worked very well. We had the drama with Mel Brooks upfront, because Mel Brooks was going to involve himself quite a lot in the film. And by mistake somebody advertised for freaks, you know, and, people like that, in, like *Variety* or wherever you advertise those kind of things. And the press got hold of this, and they were really unpleasant to Mel Brooks. They said, 'Oh I expect this is going to be another send-up of cripples and, and disfigured people, and freaks and things by Mel Brooks.' And the film immediately got really bad press. So Mel had to really leave it, and go back to America, and leave it to the two boys to make. Which I think was not a bad thing.

Probably, yes.

Because they got on and did it themselves, and, and it was, the work was interesting. I mean you know, it was all there, a little bit long-winded, but, but there, you know. And, Tony was giving an extraordinary performance. I thought he had forgotten his lines on the first two or three days shooting, but it was the way he was playing it. And one actually had to cut round it eventually, because, you know, he was, David couldn't, or wouldn't, or, couldn't get him to play it any differently. But he...

Oh really?

He was humming and hahing, and getting... You know. A really weird performance. But it was all there, you just had to get the bits out. Because he's such a consummate actor.

Yes, that was a difficult period for him anyway I think wasn't it.

[0:39:03]

Yes. Yes. And, you know, some of the stuff, like when they were doing the operation in the operating room, I mean there was some worse stuff than that that we didn't use. David, David liked the macabre, there's no two ways about that. Anyway, after we'd got the picture about two-thirds of the way through, we took it over to Mel Brooks to show them what they were doing, and, amongst other things... And Mel liked very much what he saw, he thought it was very good. Made a few observations, always, always good ones I thought. He'd got his finger on one or two places where, you know, it wasn't gelling. But he did say to David... Because there were two ways of actually approaching the opening of the picture, and one was that, Treves saw the Elephant Man when he goes down into the, Bytes's place, the cellar where you first see him, and he sees him there for the first time, that's when the tears, he cries, or tears run down his cheeks. Or, you could not see him, just have, all on just his reactions, and not show the Elephant Man at all, even when he's lecturing about him. I mean you could see him with his hood on, but not see him without. And even, and just have him as a figure behind the screen, which was what they did at the, when

Treves gives the lecture on him, and that sort of thing. And not really see him at all until a little nurse goes up into his room, and drops the tray. Now Mel Brooks asked David Lynch to shoot it both ways, so that you could, you saw him when Treves sees him, but to shoot all the other scenes, which, including a scene where Bytes beats him, because he won't eat his food and stuff, and, and things like that, which are not now in the film. And, I think there was another scene, I can't remember what now. And shoot it so that you don't see till the, anyway, till the nurse sees him, the little nurse, and screams and drops the tray. And David decided that he wanted to see it when Bytes sees him, wanted to see him right up front there. And didn't shoot it both ways. So it was quite an interesting thing, because then, Mel Brooks was pretty annoyed about this, though he kept on calling David Lynch a genius, he said, 'I know you're a genius David, but you could do with a little help here and there and...' And he was always using the word genius about him. And he handled him very well really, except that David mistook what Mel had said and didn't think he really meant it, the fact that he said 'you're a genius' had given him carte blanche to do it the way he wanted, where he hadn't really. He had definitely asked him to do it both ways. And I had arguments with David, because I said, 'Mel Brooks I'm sure wants you to do it both ways.' And he said, 'Well I'm not going to do it both ways, I'm going to do it the way I think, which is showing the Elephant Man from Treves onwards.' So what we had to do in the end was, a) lose quite a lot of that scene where, with Bytes and the boy where they beat him. And the other thing we did was blow up shots so that you can't see the Elephant Man, you just sort of see the top of his head in some of the scenes, and bits and pieces of him, but, actually blow the shots up. Which in fact, since it was black and white and grainy, didn't really matter very much, and you can hardly see what we've done. And I managed to cut it so, all the way up, so that you never see the Elephant Man, until the moment when the nurse came in, which was of course the right moment, you shouldn't see him until then.

Mhm.

When he's sitting on the bed absolutely naked, I mean, or practically naked, you know. And you see the whole of his body and she screams and... I mean that was

such a shock for audiences. Because as far as I know, we never previewed that picture, I'm sure we didn't. And it was very carefully kept under wraps, his make-up was. There were no stills of it. We kept the cutting copy locked up.

Yes.

And when videos were made, they were made with an assistant, well there always are, standing by to make sure they weren't sneaking it, you know. And, then when we came to dubbing, he had his special dubbing person, David, and... I mean he put on the most extraordinary sounds, very interesting, some of them. Some of them were a little way off. I mean I, I remember coming in to the dubbing theatre when he was, Treves was down in the cave looking at him and everything, and I said, 'What are those rifle shots doing, are they meant to be shooting in the streets?' And they said, 'No no, those are raindrops.' I said, [laughs] 'Well they don't sound like raindrops.' Whereupon they all had hysterics and the dubbing editor lay down on the ground and things, you know. He was very temperamental, you couldn't criticise his tracks.

[0:43:38]

All this sounds great fun.

So it was, in that way it was great fun, you know. And, also, where I admire David a lot, we had put this... Oh. Barber, was it G, G, thing in G, on the, a piece of music we'd put on, where he kind of kills himself, where he takes, he wants to sleep like a normal man and he... You know, at the end, the end sequence.

Yes.

We put on this particular piece of music. And we had Johnny Morris, who wrote the music for the film, which was, pretty good without being outstanding, and he was put on by Mel Brooks, it was not David Lynch's choice. And, this... You know how pieces of music just work? This piece of music just worked on that particular piece of film. But it was the, like, the New York Philharmonic conducted by André Pevin and

all that sort of thing, and would cost a fortune to buy. And David was told categorically that he couldn't have it, that they had to go with Johnny Morris's music. And he kept on and... And I thought to myself, they'll never let him have it, it's costing far too much money to buy. And he kept on and on and on and on. And Johnny Morris did a piece of music which was good, but didn't compare with this piece, really. And eventually, you know, like some water dripping on a stone, David got his own way, and that piece of music is back in the film now. The same piece of music as he used in *Platoon* strangely enough. I thought to myself when I went to *Platoon*, I thought, that's the music from *Elephant Man*. [laughs] I suddenly realised that of course it was, public domain music or whatever. And he... And I admire... And there were other things, I can't now remember, where David wanted to get his own way, and got it by pure persistence. I mean those montages upfront with the mother and the elephant and things like that, I mean, they took us forever to do. I mean we tried this, we tried that. Patrick, my first assistant, who helped David a lot, you know, worked with him, ordering up this stuff and that sort of thing, was so patient. Now of course you could do that with video. You could put all those elements, the elephant and mother and all those things, and you could slow them down and speed them up. And what was in the mind of David Lynch, you could have, which, you know, was not easy to get, you could have got, you can now show him, and you could say, 'That's what I want,' and the labs could go away and do it. That's why I think video's very useful, and I've used it several times when I've been doing montages and things like that with directors. So that you can show them, split screens and things like this.

Yes.

And, but the other interesting thing in *Elephant Man* was the montage when he goes to the theatre. Because actually, when he went to the theatre, and Anne Bancroft, to, you know, as the actress, took him to the theatre as his treat, and he was taken in the box, which actually happened.....

[End of Track 9]

[Track 10]

.....Shakespeare. And somewhere along, I think he saw *Midsummer Night's Dream* or something. I can't remember, it wasn't that, but it was, whatever it was, when she took him to the theatre, because she played the actual Mrs.....

[blank 15 seconds]

We'd better overlap that, about going to the theatre.

Yes. Well when... Yes. So when... The theatre sequence, which, it was originally, you know, is an actual thing from his life, and they were going to do the Shakespeare, in the actual script the Shakespeare was in there, for some reason that I was not privy to they changed it to a pantomime, and they wrote this kind of pantomime about the fairy and the monster who's put in behind bars and things like that. And they shot it at one of the theatres in London, and he's in the box and all white tie and everything, and, you know, she makes a little speech about him and he stands up and they clap and everything at the end. Well this sequence completely didn't work, the pantomime was not interesting and everything. I always remember Tony Snowdon came to take some photographs there and saying to me, because I'd known him for years, saying, 'God! I didn't know they'd let college boys start directing now.' [laughs] I mean David didn't kind of impress people a great deal, and he wasn't in control in this day for some reason, and the material was not very good. And we decided to make a montage out of it, and it's a rather beautiful montage in fact. And, Johnny Morris had already shot the music, we had to get the music shot first, so we had to make this montage the exact length of the music. And, I mean David had some very inventive ideas, like using, we had some sparkle on the floor, black floor, with tinselly sparkle stuff on it. And we got little stretches of this where nobody was on them, and used them, blew them up and superimposed them, coming in and out of the scene, and the tinsel that was on the back, we used bits of that. And, between us really we invented this, I think, very charming montage, which exactly told the story of the magic of the pantomime, and the Elephant Man superimposed obviously watching it and excited,

and the other people looking at him and smiling because they're so happy for him and everything. And it's a, I guess it's about a three-minute montage out of what was a ten-minute disaster.

[0:02:25]

And, you know, so that one, I, I remember *Elephant Man* very fondly really, even though we had, I had a lot of, I had a lot of arguments with David about things he wanted to do which were, I didn't agree with.

Such as?

Oh, I think, I can't remember now to be honest with you, but, things that he wanted to cut out and, and lose and, and things like that.

Really?

Yes.

Well it's usually the other way round, isn't it.

The other way round. And yes, and things he... I was going to say, and things he wouldn't cut, you know.

Mhm.

Like some of the doctor stuff that we had to cut out was much too long, and he was very adamant about keeping it. But I'll just tell you one more story about David, which I think completely, absolutely sums him up in his future work, like, *Blue Velvet* and, which I like very much, and his last film which I didn't like at all, and the thing he did on television, *Twin Peaks*.

Twin Peaks.

Yah. Which I liked a lot of. But then it lost me.

Yes.

Anyway, he said to me, 'You must... Have you been to the London Hospital, their museum there?' Which has all these freaks, two-headed babies, has actually the Elephant Man there, you know, and his arm and his head and everything. And, it's got all these things in bottles, bits and pieces of, you know, all the horrors of the world are in these, in this place. And I said, 'Well no David, I haven't really.' He said, 'You must go, and take your children, because they'll really love it,' he said.

[laughs]

And yes, it's absolutely true, he said, 'And make a day of it. Take some sandwiches, and make a day of it,' he said, 'because it's so fascinating that you won't be able to drag yourself away from it.' And that to me is absolutely David Lynch. And he meant it, to him that was fun. And, you know, that's the way he is. And a very interesting just postscript to that is an article I read on Sunday about Jennifer, his daughter, who's producing this, somebody in a cage, about this man who, the girl scorns him, and so he chops off all the bits of her. Have you read about this?

No.

Yah. He chops off her arms, and then he chops off her, off her legs, and keeps her in a cage, as punishment for him... She sleeps with him one night and then says goodbye or something. And Jennifer, his twenty-three-year-old daughter, is producing this film. There's an article in the *Sunday Times* about it. And I thought...

With him, or not?

No no, not with David.

No, separate. No.

No no, Jennifer Lynch.

Mhm.

She came on the set a few times, Jennifer, she was about twelve in those days. And I've seen her since. And she grew up rather, very pretty, though she looked very like David in the photograph they had in the *Sunday Times* of her. But I thought, I mean, like father like daughter or whatever it is isn't it?

It's in the genes.

Obviously there, all that horror.

In a[??-5:07] word. Yes.

It's definitely there. And this is such a horrific story that, they have not been able to get it made in Hollywood, and eventually they've got it made.

Did you ever feel you knew the key to him?

No.

No.

No way.

He's a one-off.

He's a one-off. He's one-off, but he's very interesting. But he shouldn't be over-indulged. I thought his last film, he was over-indulged, and it was badly edited in as much as that, you were seeing everything, too much of everything.

I've forgotten the title, the one with Nicolas Cage and... Yes. Yes.

Yes that's right, I can't remember. Something of the heart. One for the Heart was it?

One for the Heart. Mm.

Something like that.

Mm.

And I just thought he was over, there were a whole lot of unnecessary things in there. Whereas *The Elephant Man*, I mean his ideas on, on the street sounds and the noises next to the Elephant Man's bedroom and things like that were so cleverly done, and the subliminal noises that we put on, which I wasn't really into at that time. And I kind of scoffed at them a bit, I have to say. But I think I was wrong, I mean they so add to the mood of the film, and they're not things that really you're conscious of. But I did get him to take them off the Treves scenes, because I thought that one should definitely have the contrast between the two, so that when you were with the Elephant Man and you were in the hospital, you had the subliminal noises.

Yes.

You don't know quite what they are, but just, but not have them when you're in Treves's house. Because he wanted different ones there. And I thought that was too much. But, since then I mean I've, people are obviously using this quite a lot, this kind of thing. But no, I think it's a very, I think David will make interesting films. He's doing *Twin Peaks* the movie now isn't he.

Yes.

Well...

A prequel isn't it called?

Something like that.

Yes. *What leads up to...*

Yes, something like that.

...the death of Laura thing. Yah.

Yes. But I never saw who killed her in the end, because I never got that far. I was on location and I missed it and I...

Well, yes, it...

Do you ever know who killed her?

[hesitates] I think I saw that episode. First of all, the second series became attenuated in, and rather, rather boring.

Yes. Yes, well this is it, I think he can't, I don't think he can be over-indulged.

Mm.

He's got this really horrific script called *Ronnie Rocket* he's been trying to make since *Elephant Man*, and he keeps about to do it and then the money never comes through. Because it's so horrific, about freaks and things that, you know...

Yes.

Anyway, enough about David Lynch.

[0:07:26]

OK. A question about Mel Brooks, because, Mel Brooks' performing persona is, is so at odds with the films that he makes, and I suppose part of it is an indulgence towards his wife. He is inclined to provide her with parts isn't he? I don't say in Elephant Man, but in, in other films.

Well actually, yes, you may be true, because in *Elephant Man* apparently, the script had been lying about on his desk for quite a long time when Anne picked it up.

Aha.

And she read it. Not because I think she necessarily wanted the part for herself, but maybe she did. And she said to him, what a fantastic script it was. And that's when he first read it and became interested in it, and met Jonathan and David.

Right. He, did he finance it personally, or, or just organised? He's the executive producer isn't he?

Well, he was executive producer, yes; it was, Fox wasn't it, Fox?

I guess it was Fox money, I don't know.

Or was it Paramount? I think it's Paramount, Paramount who did it. Because I remember, I showed some stuff to, then, the heads of Paramount who were Barry Diller and, another big head of the studios. And we only showed selected scenes, you know, a little screening, they wanted to see some over here. Who's the other one? Who's head of, of... Michael Eisner and Barry Diller.

Oh yes, yes.

We showed it to them and a couple of friends of theirs. And I mean the lights went up, [laughs] we'd never seen the heads of studios with tears streaming down their faces. Mind you we'd picked out some pretty good scenes. But I mean that's what happened. Do you know that people didn't go to the cinema because they, young people, because they were scared of crying in front of, like, men particularly, crying in front of their girlfriends?

Yes.

So the video sales were enormous. Huge. And that... And the reasons I, I gathered that actually from friends of my children, I said, 'Well why didn't you see it in the cinema?' They said, 'Well we didn't want to cry in front of, you know, our friends and things.' And they waited to get it on video when they could go and, get a quick beer or whatever, you know.

Really?

Mm.

Ah. Well how does it perform on television I wonder, does it get ratings?

Well it's very dark to me.

Well, yes. I mean ratings. But... Right.

Oh ratings. Very high.

It is... Well it's very contrasty isn't it.

Yes.

So, it's a problem for television.

It's a real problem I think. But terribly high, huge ratings it got[??-9:46]. It was top for, in America, for weeks on end. And that was one of the reasons I think that people just didn't go out to see it in the cinemas, because they were frightened of being too upset.

Aha.

People came home and said how upset they were. People really were very upset by that film, but, nicely so. They were uplifted upset, you know.

Yes.

And if you can get people in that way, I think you're on to a winner, even though you've got what was a very downbeat ending.

Yes. I suppose it has to do with, with the horrors of life generally.

Yes.

The horrors of the world.

Yah. Just appealed to people.

[0:10:24]

Yes. Going back to Brooks. It was, there is a contradiction then between his, I mean really quite crass performing abilities and...

Yes. And the films that he's involved with.

...and his own sensibilities.

Yes. Yah.

Mm. Mm.

Very amusing man. I mean he's... I met some, you know, some comedians and people, and they're not at all funny, like Steve Martin and people like that, who's positively dour. But I mean Mel Brooks is a very funny man to meet. I see him occasionally and we go to the same restaurant lunchtime and, you know, he's always full of beans and chat and things.

Yes. There isn't...

But underneath, I think, yes. And I think maybe in his own way some of the things he's been sending up, he's actually cared about. I mean, I can remember things, what was that one he did with the bean-eating things and...? That cowboy one.

Oh yes. Blazing Saddles.

Blazing Saddles. Yes, I think there was quite... I think if you look underneath, not so much now but I think used to be.

Well the last film was terrible.

I haven't seen...

But in a way it was well-intentioned, because it...

Yes. I haven't seen the last couple of films that he's done. But some... I mean he's very funny, and I think he thinks that he can get over to people things by being funny, you know.

Yah. So there are depths, it's...

I think so. Oh definitely.

It's the tragic clown.

Yes. Yes. Yah.

And he's not much of a clown. Yes.

And he seems to have got off kilter right now, but I don't think, that wouldn't mean that he won't get back on again. Or be behind films like *Elephant Man* again. I think if he could find another film of that calibre, that he would get the money for it again.

Mm.

I mean, he was very good, the way that he let the boys take all the credit, and when the Oscars and things were on he, he absolutely kept in the background, and let Jonathan and David take all the credit for the film.

Mhm.

I mean he really had come up with one or two very good suggestions. The one about, I told you, about not seeing *The Elephant Man* till then is definitely him, not those two.

[0:12:20]

Mm. This is a very general thing, if we're through with Elephant Man, do you think we are?

Yah, yah yah, I think so, yes.

You were talking about the montage you did for that.

Mm.

Would you care to comment generally on montage, the pleasures and agonies of preparing them, but I suppose more or less their place in a narrative film. Because in a sense they're very 1930s aren't they.

I was going to say, they're very period, yah.

Mm.

But you know, unlike opticals, opticals became very period. Nobody ever used them, everybody direct cut, particularly since the French Nouvelle Vague. In fact, as I think I may have mentioned, you know, that I suggested to David Lean that he went to see some of that French cinema before, when we were doing *Lawrence*, to show him what they were doing in the way of direct cutting, and then of course he did better direct cuts than anybody's ever done before. But, you know, then it became all, nobody used, I mean dissolves and fades and things like that became very old-fashioned.

Mm.

Now of course they are slightly back in and they're used with, I mean they're used slightly in films. In fact in *Charlie* we're using them a lot, but in the old-fashioned way, we're having irises and all those, but I shouldn't talk about that again. But I mean, you know, we are using them for a point of the story, and I think they're working out rather charmingly, I hope so. But, you know, nowadays they're used with discretion, but, and I think the same with montages. I mean, I remember all those old Hollywood, I was going to say 1930s, '40 montages in newspapers and things, you know, and, all that, and pages turning and things.

That's right, yes, leaves fluttering...

And [inaudible-13:53] very concisely a whole heap of rather boring material. But I would say, and I don't know this from fact, that most of those were in the script and were designed. Some of the ones that I've done in films, like the one in *Elephant Man*, and, and one that we've got in Charlie too, we weren't in the original script we put in.

Right. Are they salvage jobs in a way?

No.

No.

No no, not really. Well that was a salvage[??].

Elephant Man, yes.

Elephant Man was. This isn't really. It's just what was a fairly longish scene, we put it into a very quick little period montage, because we, we are going for period in this film, so they've been done for particular reasons of style, you know.

Mm. Mm. So there's no...

I'm trying to think of some other ones that I've done that have, you know... I mean one of the best montages in a film I've done was the one on the front of *Orient Express*, but that was done partly with me, but partly with Richard Williams, all the animated stuff was Richard Williams, and I did the live action. So we kind of worked together on it.

Yes.

But I would say it was creatively more... Well Sidney Lumet's it was, actually, and then Richard and I put it together, but I mean, the more interesting, whirling stuff was all Richard and mine was just cutting the background so that you could see enough background between the thing. So... But I think that was, that was a designed, again a period film with a period montage, you know, about the kidnapping of the baby and everything, which told the whole story which set the whole thing up for the rest of the, of the film, and included, well included the little flashbacks and things.

So on balance, they are intentional rather than moves of desperation, in your experience?

In my experience, they mostly have been, yes.

Fun to do, or do you regard them as...?

No, quite fun to do, yes. And I think now, you know, though Dickie isn't greatly into video and that, and the use of it, and they don't seem to be so much over here, but I do think that now that you've got videos, as I say, we could have had such fun on, particularly the opening of *The Elephant Man*, you know, with that, as I say, the slowing down of the elephants and the mother and stuff. And... I'm trying to think, I've used it once or twice in, in various instances. But it can be very effectively used as a salvage... I mean if you've got a really boring scene and, and you, but you must have it in for plot, and you can come up with what is an interesting idea for a montage as opposed to, which, I thought *The Elephant Man* was a very... I mean it looked as if it was designed from the beginning, and that's great, if you can make it look like that. But I mean I think again, if you can make them look as if they're designed and part of the film, and they are getting you over, a rather, what funnily enough Mel Brooks used to call a loop in your film, which is where it comes, goes down.

Right.

It's a nice line, loop.

Yes. Yes.

A loop down, you know, before it picks up again, and you can keep your story going, then I think, it's worth doing it, you know. We have montages in Charlie, but they are designed montages, as you will see there, designed in a period way.

Yes. And, and the function is what largely, to truncate action, or passage of time?

Passage of time, and, and, passage of time and so many characters that we have to get in that, you can't stay on all of them, so you can tell their story much more quickly by doing that.

Yes.

But they are, they are I think all in the script except one of them I think really.

Right.

But basically, I mean... And we're doing them when they're not in the script, we're doing them in such a way that they appear as part of the, of the style of the film.

[0:17:24]

Mhm. Well I hope we'll, we'll have some words about Charlie before we finish. The next one I've got on this list is Ragtime.

[laughs] I was the seventh editor on *Ragtime*.

Yes.

Miloš Forman of course is a director who, I've always admired his work a lot, but I know that he's very difficult to work for, and, on every strata, I mean on, very

difficult on the floor and very difficult with editors. And... I don't know the whole story of all the six that went before me, but they, he's rather inclined to fire his, on a film, he fires his last editor and promotes somebody up who's been helpful to him during the film or whatever. And so, I think on the film before he made *Ragtime* he promoted Stan Warnow up to being the editor on the film who had been like a second editor on, on, was it *Hair* he did before? I can't remember what he did before. Or something.

Could have been Hair.

Whatever it was, he's rather inclined to do that. He takes on an editor who then falls out with him and he promotes somebody, like that.

Yes.

And he had promoted this guy, and then he had fallen out with him. But Stan Warnow hadn't any really good credits, and I don't know how he stuck it, he actually stayed on the picture. And he then, Dino De Laurentiis brought in... No. Yes, Dino brought in other people. The only one I can remember offhand was Sam O'Steen who came in for a huge fee. Told Miloš Forman it was the worst cut film he had ever seen, and that he was going to recut it. Took it away and recut, like, reels one and two or whatever, and Miloš saw them and hated them, and told him not to touch another frame of film. So, he was on a, a minimum six-week contract, and so he sat in his room doing nothing for six weeks, getting paid, I'm told, \$10,000 a week, I don't know whether that's true or not, and living on per diem.

Mhm.

And, I don't even know if that story is true, but that's what I heard. I do know the part that he wasn't allowed to touch the film any more is true. And then there were others, I can't remember who they were, a couple of them are quite well known, and people, maybe Alan Heim was one or somebody, who came in, either didn't like

Miloš, couldn't take him and left, or Miloš didn't like them and it didn't work out. So then, Golda Offenheim I think it was called me and said, what was I doing, or, or something, and I can't remember what I was doing, and would I be interested in doing, working on a film? Didn't even tell me what it was. I said, 'Well, I might be if I knew what it was I was going to work on, but, I don't do anything off the hand, off, without knowing what it is,' you know. And, anyway, then she got back on to me and, it was kind of... I mean they're so secretive, these people. Kind of explained the situation, that Miloš hadn't liked any of the ones put on by Dino, so he wanted to bring in his own editors, and was I interested in doing it with Tony Gibbs? And I mean, the chance to work with Miloš Forman seemed to me interesting, so I thought, yes, why not. And... But it was like sight... I wasn't going to meet him first or anything. I was going to be flown over on Concorde, and literally, I landed in the morning and by lunchtime I was up on the set with Miloš, who is not an easy man to get on with actually, I mean, you can't understand half he's saying. But... And I was really scared of him, because I knew his reputation. But anyway, we got on all right, and I went and watched them shooting. And then... But I went with the proviso that if Miloš, a) didn't like me, or I didn't like him, that I would be able to come, by the end of the week I would come home, and that I had my return ticket on Concorde to come back. And this was fine. And Tony Gibbs couldn't start for a month anyway, so it was only me going on at this particular time. I discovered afterwards why he wanted two. It wasn't because he particularly wanted two; it the fact that we were so cheap compared with American editors, that the only way he could get back at Dino was to have two English editors. [laughs] Which cost the same money as one, one American.

[0:21:38]

Anyway, so, I then was taken that weekend, he was going to have a screening out at Mike Nichols' house in Connecticut. Mike Nichols had this fantastic set-up of a big barn which had a beautiful screening room with sofas and chairs and loungers all round it, and at the back a, a sort of, little dining room with a kitchen off it where you could cook proper food and everything. And... So, we took the film out there, it was, I guess a two-hour drive, this was on a Sunday, I went out with, one of my assistants drove me out, and we ran the whole film. I mean the most comfortable I've ever seen

a film in my life, we had a, did we have the meal before or after. We had drinks, and we lay back on these sofas and things and watched the movie, you know. Well I couldn't make head or tail of the first three reels. And then I was going to stay the night with Miloš at his house and drive in again with him next morning, because he wanted to talk to me about my impressions of the film. And Mike Nichols was there and his wife and, one or two quite well-known people, all of whom, well very few people there but a few of his close friends. Trumble, what's his name, Trumble?

Do you mean the special effects man, Douglas Trumbull?

No, not him. It was, Truman, Capote?

Oh Truman Capote.

Was it...

Truman.

Truman. Truman, not Trumble.

Truman.

Truman. Truman Capote. A few people like that were there. Anyway, then I drove through the night with Miloš. Miles, it was miles into the country to this fantastic barn where he lived. And, Ivan Passer, who was his great friend, he was there as well, who I already knew slightly from England, because he wanted me to cut *Silver Bear* or something like that, and so I had met him. And they were talking, actually Czechoslovakian all the time, so I couldn't understand much of what they were saying. But then Miloš asked me, and I'm always, a bit careful, I don't go in and say it's the worst edited film I've ever seen, but I did say, picked out the points I particularly liked, and, and then said that I wasn't sure that I really followed the opening quite. And, he seemed to take everything I said quite well. And then we got

back to his house. We must have eaten before, because then we had a... And he had converted this huge barn into this lovely house, I mean just fantastic. And, and he was living with some woman, I can't remember her name now, a pretty girl, very nice. And we had another big meal and lots to drink, and, some other friends of his came in and we all talked about the film. But mostly in Czechoslovakian, you know. And then they'd talk to me. And I'd hear my name coming in the chat-chat.

Yes.

And anyway, then I went and... And there was an artist friend of his there, that's right. That was great. And then his, the actual house that belonged to this, he had converted into a guesthouse, so I went over to the guesthouse. And, I woke up... I will tell you this story, because I don't really know now who it was or why. But I woke up in the middle of the night and there was a torch shining. You know, I was in this house in the middle of Connecticut, no idea where I was. The only other person that I knew was in the house was Ivan Passer, who was downstairs and I was in one of the upstairs rooms. And it was some way from where his barn was, in the middle of the, you know, countryside.

The light is coming from outside you mean?

Yah, outside.

Yah. Mhm.

Yah. There's a torch shining in my room like that. And I'm frozen with terror, I don't even get out of bed. And I still don't... I did tell Miloš, well I told Ivan about it at breakfast actually. Because we, you have breakfast in the guesthouse on your own and, [laughs] Miloš doesn't see people at breakfast. And so, I told him about this. And I don't know who it was. I... Looking back on it, it might have been the guy, the painter guy, I don't know, but somebody was shining a torch all round my room. I

could hear movements outside as well, you know. But nothing happened except that. But it did scare me, I didn't sleep all that well that night.

Right.

[0:25:35]

And anyway, next morning we drove in. And, fine, he asked me more about the film and that sort of thing. He's a terrible driver, frightened the life out of me. We went to the cutting rooms. And... And one of the things I had said was that James Cagney, I thought it was a very long time before he was introduced into the movie. And so Miloš said, 'Well we have got an earlier scene with him which we've never been able to make work. But,' he said, 'I'll show you the dailies on it and see if you can make it work.' And he... So we ran the dailies, and he made observations, said he liked this, didn't like this, that, that and the other, and I went away and did a... It was a terrible scene, I mean just terrible. And I went away and did the best I could with it in my room, cutting it, while he was cutting away in the other room. And, then I brought it in and showed it to him. And I didn't think it looked bad, but it certainly was a terrible scene.

Terrible in what way, scripted or, or the way it was made?

Badly scripted, badly acted. Not very well directed, not the colour that you really wanted. You know, I don't know, maybe because Cagney was so ill, you know, that they'd, not done it very well. Anyway, I, I showed him this cut, which I'm always nervous about anyway, and he said, 'I told you not to use that shot.' I said, 'No Miloš, you didn't.' I said, 'You definitely did not.' 'Yes I did. I know when I say that.' And I said, 'And I know what you said. I know exactly what you said, I have a very good memory.' And we had a great argument, upfront, right like that. And he stamped out of my room. I don't think this was the first day, it was probably the second or third day when, by the time I got this together and had seen the film and, and got it. And he stamped out of the room. And Pat, who was working, my assistant, terribly nice, said, 'Well...' Or I said to Pat, I said, 'I think that's the end of

that.’ I said, ‘I think you’ll be working with somebody else tomorrow.’ And I sat in the cutting room for a bit, I didn’t do anything and I watched, sat in the window and watched down, you know. About half an hour later, Miloš comes in, and sits down. I hadn’t altered anything. He sits down at the, at the KEM again, and he said, ‘Oh well I think I’ll take just another look at the scene.’ And he sits down, and he says, ‘Well I like that that you’ve done, and I’m not so keen on that.’ Like a pussycat. And from then on, do you know, we didn’t have one single cross word. Whether he was testing me, what he was doing, I don’t know. But I mean, I, I thought to myself, I don’t even know if I want to stay working with him. Anyway, I, I did the scene and, we put in the film and... And then he got talking to me about my ideas about the opening, because I hadn’t thought... the way he had got it was so bitty, that as soon as you became interested you chopped to somebody else. And so you never got a thread going. And so he, he got me to reconstruct the opening. And we got on, on fine, you know. Then he took me out to dinner a couple of times. But we worked from ten in the morning till eleven or twelve at night. And I put on a great deal of weight. Because all that time we had food sent in. I can’t think what it costing. And then we’d have dinner sent in about... So we had breakfast sent in, then we’d have dinner sent in about seven. And Miloš would never ask me out till eleven. So I’d have dinner at seven and another one at eleven. And, I said to him one day, I said, ‘You know, I don’t like coming in and, and doing this kind of, picking up films. I like them to be my personal thing.’ And I said, ‘I very very seldom do it, but just that, I think you’re such a, you know, that I, I’m only just doing it because of you,’ or something like that. He said, ‘Oh yah, I like that,’ he said, ‘I take that as a real compliment.’ [laughs] And...

Certainly.

You know. And as I say, we got on... And we did these fantastic hours in New York, six days a week. And, it was only due to me that we got Labor Day or whatever day it was, Memorial Day or something, off, which was a Monday, because I had been invited to some friends of mine who lived just outside and I wanted to go to this. Because normally you work right through holidays. But I said, oh well, you know, I

was going this and doing that, and... So we all got Monday off. And they all thanked me, they said, 'Thank God for you.'

Did you recut it...

Then...

Sorry.

I recut the... Yah, I recut the beginning. And I've done a lot of re-cutting on it. I also tried to get the... Because it was like, in two halves, there was a first part of the story and then the siege. So I tried to keep some of this story going, intercut with the siege a lot more, and things like that. And he quite liked the ideas of, of things that I was doing. But he very much supervises you all the time, you really don't do much without talking to him about it. Which is where Tony Gibbs slipped up a bit. He liked Tony, but, he, Tony started off when we got back to England, and he was going ahead and doing things without talking to Miloš, and Miloš would just, have his assistant put them back like they had been, you know, and this annoyed Tony so he kind of gave up really. But I didn't mind, you know. I just knew what the form was, so I did things, showed them to Miloš and he either liked them or he didn't. And he did a very fair thing about the opening of the picture, because, there was two definite, different openings. And so he said, 'Well the only way to do, we'll try it on a few people, we'll show them both openings.' And he said, 'To be fair to you, we'll keep your opening in the cutting copy in colour, and we'll do a dupe of my opening in black and white.' Which I thought was pretty fair, you know.

Yes. Yes.

And we showed these two to people, and everybody liked mine better. So he went with it, there was no problem, you know.

Mhm.

[0:31:03]

We did... I mean he titivates, or, titivates, a word of my mother's, but he does little... Dicke takes me up on the... little alterations, little things here and there, all the time. But, I felt that the contribution I did towards the picture was quite good. And at the very last moment, to the knowledge... Doctorow liked it. Because I didn't think it was such a good rendering of the book. Because I read the book, obviously, and I thought the book was better than the film, in fact.

Yes.

Because... But it was overcut. Miloš is one of these directors who overcuts. Because I'm sure that an earlier, well I know that an earlier cut was much better than the finished cut. And I know that they took out a really marvellous sequence right at the end which Dino wanted out, and Miloš didn't want out but lost, because Doctorow said it could come out. Which was when the younger brother is, and the girl is undressing and the younger brother is watching through the cupboard door. I mean it was such a great scene. And she's being undressed by this woman and you're not sure if it's a lesbian scene or not. And it's very clever, and the boy is behind the thing and he's getting so excited that eventually he falls out of the cupboard and... I mean it was just such a great scene. How they let that go, I don't know. And... But terrible rows, I mean terrible rows between Dino and Miloš. Neither of them could speak very good English, and they'd be shouting at each other, not understanding what the other one was saying. And sometimes they'd be saying the same thing. And I'd say, 'Well look, you know, stop it, stop it, because you're both saying the same thing, you're just saying it differently but you're saying the same thing,' you know.

Rows over the cut?

Yes, rows over the cut.

Yes, differences... Mhm.

What was going to be in and what was going to be out. Yup.

Mhm.

[0:32:49]

And, I, I liked to work with Miloš again. But, he had this, again he was promoting this young girl, Nena Davenovic, who I think was more than just an assistant but I'm not spreading any malicious rumours. [laughs] So I don't know.

It's hardly malicious rumour.

Anyway, she works with him now, with him. Because he directly cuts his own movie, I mean he sits on the KEM and says, 'Cut there and cut there.'

Yes.

And he has an assistant doing it. And then... And he had... And this poor guy, Stan Warnow, who he by that time hated, he was saying to Stan, 'You're just trying to ruin my film. Every cut you do, just makes the film worse. You're just trying to knife me in the back.' And he talked to him like that. And this guy stayed on to get the credit, because he thought the film would at least get nominated for an Oscar, which it didn't. And, he gets a credit, American editor, he's the only one of the Americans, and then Tony and I get English credit. But... I, I, you know, I mean he... And he then, Miloš would draw me in and say, 'Look what Stan's done to my film.' And I didn't want to get involved, I felt sorry for Stan. And at the very end Stan went up to say goodbye to him when we were coming to England, because he wasn't going to be on it any more, and say, thought that Miloš would bury the hatchet. And he didn't. Didn't even say goodbye to him. Well, he said goodbye to him. And, he said... He said something conciliatory, Stan did, and Miloš just turned on his heel and walked off. He was in tears. Because I was meeting him for a drink and he actually came into the bar crying, because Miloš had treated him so badly.

He sounds a son of a bitch.

Oh he is. He is.

And yet you say you would have gone through it again. Or you would be prepared...

I... Well I quite liked him actually.

Yes. Your match?

Yes, I... I like, I like being stimulated by somebody. I don't know that I could go through a whole film with him again, but, yah I went to see him in, when he was cutting, what did they call it, *Valmont*, in New York, I went up to see him in the cutting room and had a chat with him. And he was sitting there with Nena and everything, and he'd got Alan Heim in the other room cutting on video, which, he didn't know what he was doing, poor old Alan. And, you know, Miloš said, 'Well sit down and tell me how to cut the sequence.' [laughs] He said, 'Do you want a job?' You know, and he, I get up... You know, we have a good relationship.

Yes.

Then I, when we were over in England, he got my letter, his sons came over, his twins came over from Yugoslavia for a holiday and they were the same age as my kids, so they got together and things. And then when I went, I did some recuts, I had to do some cut over here after he had gone on holiday, and I went down to show them to him in the south of France, you know, and there was a little note saying, 'Join me by the swimming pool,' and things. And, then we, he said to me, 'Anne, what I want you to do is to find out the most expensive restaurants along the coast here.' And he said, 'You're here three nights, and we'll eat in all the three most expensive restaurants, because it will be being paid for by Dino.' He said, 'Once you go back, [laughs] then

I'm back on my holiday, but while you're here, it's all expenses.' [laughing] And he always sends me tickets to his premiers and that sort of thing, I mean...

Yes.

I think, yes, I think we got on well.

Had you not sort of hit it off with him, in a working...

I would have gone home.

You would have walked?

Oh yes, certainly.

Yah, mhm. Right.

I, you know, and I wouldn't have felt there was any stigma one way or the other.

No. No.

If he hadn't liked me, I wouldn't have felt that there was anything wrong with that. I mean if you're, if you, as Larry Kasdan said to me, what you do when you're picking somebody is, you only, you only pick, you only meet with people whose work you like, and you know that will do great work, and then you see if your personality works. If it doesn't, then, you don't work with them, you know.

Mm.

Got nothing to do with them not being good at their job. And the same with, if felt, with Miloš, I mean if we hadn't got on well, I'm not going to stay in an unhappy situation like that. And he wouldn't have kept me. So, I mean you know, I think that

would have been... No no, I definitely would have. I was just about to leave after this row. I mean I was obviously giving him a little time to work things out.

Yes. Mm. Right.

And we didn't work such long hours when we got back to England. He said to me, 'Oh I realised you've been working really long hours over here and I appreciate that,' he said, 'but I know when you get back to England that you've got a private life and I don't expect you to work these hours every night.'

Well he sounds almost conciliatory and...

Well nearly human doesn't he, every now and again.

Yes.

A very attractive man too actually.

Mm.

Can be. When he spruces himself up a bit.

Yes. And when the film works, he's a lovely director.

Yes, a lovely director.

Taking Off is one of my favourite films.

Yes. Yes.

It's a hilarious film.

Yes. I liked *Amadeus* actually.

Yes.

I enjoyed *Amadeus*.

And, and indeed Valmont.

Yes. Yes.

I enjoyed that one. Yes.

Yah.

[0:37:31]

Yes. Right, well the next one, Anne, I have on the list is Bushido Blade, which we have covered.

Yes. I'm sure that couldn't have been after. I think that was long before that.

You think so?

Yes.

Right. OK. Well we've dealt with that out of sequence. But I fear after that I have no titles, so now we rely on your memory.

The next one, I'm trying to think what it would have been. *Greystoke?*

Well, let's talk about Greystoke. We touched on it briefly at one stage, but again I think you...

[inaudible]?

Well yes, I think, it, it came up, and it was out of sequence.

Yah.

So I'm not sure we've covered it properly.

Well David Puttnam rang me and asked me if I would be interested in meeting... Well how are we doing for time?

It's nine minutes after.

Oh.

Would you like to start with Greystoke...

Next time I think, yah.

OK.

Yah, I think I'd better.

All right. Fine. So...

I'll have to leave it a little open when the next time is. Because we're really into dubbing from Monday.

Mhm. How long is that planned for?

Well, the plans are roughly that we're dubbing and then we're going to do a preview here, then we're going to, before we finish dubbing, then we're going to finish

dubbing and take the film to America for a few weeks – a few weeks, a few previews, one or two, like an East Coast and West Coast or something like that.

Mhm.

Preferably they don't want to do it in California because, you know, as somebody said, I don't know whether you're aware of Spago's, but it's like the in restaurant...

Oh yes, certainly, yes.

You know. Where, what's his name said the other day, the writer, Bill Goldman, he said, 'Before you've even, the lights have gone up, they know in Spago's how your preview's gone,' you know. And that is very true, when you preview in California, because they always get spies in, they know where they're recruiting, which shopping malls they're in and things, you know, and which cinemas they're outside of, and they get people in. So there's nothing you can do to stop it. But if you do it out of town. So I think they're trying to do them out of town. So, suits me to go, I mean as long as I can go via California, you know, Los Angeles, to see the kids, and I'm sure Dickie would let me do that, I'm happy to go anywhere. So... But there are certain days when he can't be there, like, I know next Monday he can't be, but I am going to see, that's what, I just made the appointment to see my lawyer then, I have to see my lawyer about my will. So, I'm not sure what days he isn't going to be. And he's in a court case, Channel 4 court case, something to do with, some programme they showed, and that could go into two days, so it's possible that, if it does I'd have Tuesday morning also not busy. But...

When shall I call you?

Well I wouldn't know about that till Monday.

I'll call you Monday then?

Yes.

At the studio?

Yes, not this Monday, this is the following Monday. Next week we're dubbing every day.

Yes. So, Monday week...

Monday... We're starting on the 20th and we're working every day dubbing. So, I wouldn't have a free moment then.

Right.

And Saturday.

So Monday week, where, here? Or there?

There.

[inaudible] at Twickenham.

There.

And, when will you be in the cutting room?

In the afternoon.

Right, OK.

I'll be there by lunchtime.

I'll do that then, fine. Good, lovely, well I think that was a very enjoyable session today.

So we should easily.....

[end of session]

[End of Track 10]

[Track 11]

It's now the 8th of September, after a lengthy pause we're resuming, and I think we were talking about Greystoke.

I guess so.

So, let's plunge into Greystoke. Were you on it from the start? You weren't as I...

Yes.

You are? Right.

Yes, yes I was, yes. In fact, I was on it from the time David Puttnam was on it. It was David Puttnam who originally approached me to do the movie, and got me together with Hugh Hudson. And we met and had a very nice lunch, got on very well. And then, they offered me the film. Next thing I knew, David Puttnam wasn't on it any more, and Hugh had kind of taken it over, as, as it were, producer/director in fact. Because we only had, a kind of line producer under Hugh, and a man that, thing, that was a mistake. I mean Hugh Hudson is, I think, a very, very talented director, but he's his own worst enemy because he's, you know, he makes a lot of problems for himself.

Could you define his talents, or would you?

I think he's got a great pictorial storytelling quality. And I think you can actually see that in the commercials that he makes. Because in thirty seconds he can tell a story with pictures, and I think that that is something that very few directors seem to have, particularly in England at the moment. They seem to be great with words and things like that, but a picture, I mean films are about pictures, not really words. And I think also Hugh has, most of the time, very good taste.

Yes.

I think he errs, he... For some... He's a very arrogant man, a very, I don't know what words to use, because he's, he cuts his own throat by his own... And he flies off at tangents onto things. If he has a strong producer... He and David Puttnam could have been a great set-up, like David and Sam, you know, that sort of thing, if only they could have got on and they hadn't fallen out. Now they'll never work again together, but... Hugh needed a very strong director to keep him on the sort of straight path, and go exactly where he was going. On *Greystoke*, we, suddenly about halfway through we headed into a totally different direction. Because making the story about Tarzan, and Tarzan and Jane up to a point, in the test [break in recording] scene that they did, they...

Sorry, something's happened.

Oh.

[pause]

Hello, it's all gone dead.

Oh.

Let's... One two three. No, there's nothing there.

[break in recording]

There it is.

How far back did I go?

You were recording, there's no problem on that. It's, it's the, it's the switch here I think. [pause] Yah I think there's a fault on that. Anyway, it's working now, so we'll, we'll continue. Don't worry about anything you might have missed.

Oh right.

You didn't. Right.

[0:02:48]

Well what I was going to say, or started to say, was that Hugh went off on the picture on a tangent, and I'm not quite sure why, because he was out in, [bread in recording] where did they shoot that? Oh, what's the name of the place? In Africa. Not Colombia. Oh, my mind's always blank at this hour of the morning. Do you remember where we shot it? In that, country...

Congo?

No. I'll think of it. Anyway, well they were out there.

Gold Coast?

In the middle of the jungle shooting. And it was a story with a fairly... It had a very, excellent, brilliant first script, except it didn't have an ending on it. But other than that, it was one that Townend did, was a very good script, Robert Townend.
Townend?

Towne.

Towne. Robert Towne did. Was an excellent script. And had a good storyline, and included this very good scene between Tarzan and Jane where he explains his feelings about the jungle, how he feels, that, dead wood upsets him, because he feels it should be live and trees and all this kind of thing. And when Hugh got this other idea about

building the film around Tarzan and D'Arnot, the character played by Ian Holm, suddenly all Jane's scenes started going out the window, and he started building up this character of D'Arnot. And, Tarzan, you know how, Tarzan's effect on D'Arnot's life and things like that, which really weren't of any interest to the audience whatsoever. And shot a whole lot of stuff, shot a whole lot of, thousands of pounds worth, in fact maybe a million pounds' worth of special effect effects shots of a volcano and stuff like that, which was, and people falling into the lava and things, which, none of which was ever used in the movie. It all came out. Because, they had all this trekking stuff with D'Arnot, you know, hearing the woods and hearing Tarzan and stuff. I mean it really had no relationship to the film.

Mm. Mm.

And, you know, if he had had a strong producer, he'd never have been allowed to do that, he'd have concentrated on the other stuff.

There was no control at all, not from Warners?

Well there tried to be, but he had a very bad relationship from the beginning with Warners. He had this terrible screening at the BAFTA, in the Princess Anne Theatre where we ran, I think it wasn't any cut stuff, I think it was just rushes for Warner, all the heads of Warners. And, one of them turned round, quite nicely, and said, 'I think some of the photography's rather dark, you know, it's difficult to see the...' And Hugh snapped back at them, 'It's got absolutely nothing to do with you what the photography looks like. I'm the director.' Bang bang bang. And this transpired into, I then had to take them off for, for a coffee at Fortnum & Mason's and, he went off somewhere, obviously avoiding having a meeting with them and things. But they did have a meeting later on, and they took some of the control away from him after that.

Yes.

It caused a lot of problems.

I was going to say, you reminded me that Towne put his dog's name on didn't he?

That's right.

Yes. Yah.

Yah.

I'd forgotten that.

Yup.

[0:05:29]

Have you worked with many directors who came out of commercials? Because I have a question that may only apply to Hugh Hudson, or maybe a general thing, with Ridley for example.

I haven't worked with... I nearly worked with... The only other one I nearly worked with was Adrian Lyne.

Yes. Well Adrian I think falls within this category, and for all I know Doug did too, although... No, I think things were a bit different in Doug's day, doing commercials. But, there is so much footage shot with commercials, and, and, you know, generally one was there until three or four in the morning doing things, that, there was an enormous amount of coverage, but there was a kind of, lack of discipline built into the system, it seemed to me, with the ranking directors, not with the run-of-the-mill people, but with people like Hugh Hudson and, Ridley, Adrian.

Well, you probably know more about that than I do, because I've really never worked in commercials, but I've heard these stories about the amount of material there was, and they kind of run away in a way. And I think this may possibly be true. I mean

Hugh shot a lot of material. But it was funny, because, I was saying to somebody the other day on an interview or something that, I mean you knew from the first few days' rushes how good Hugh was, actually you could tell by the stuff that was coming back. Even though there was a lot of stuff that was... You know, you can imagine, shooting with a small boy in the jungle, and that sort of thing, and a lot of local natives in the jungle and things, that there was a, a lot of, a lot of useless material, but there was also a kind of, line of material that was coming through even in that early stuff that was very interesting, I thought.

Mm.

And we, and we did, as you say, we had thousands and thousands and thousands of feet. And I used to have to ring Hugh and give him a description of every single shot, every single take I used to have to ring him, in... The name, it's just driving me mad that I can't remember it. And I believe he was pretty fanatical out there, I've heard, you know, the hours he shot and, and the conditions people were shooting under, miles away in the jungle without proper medical care and things like that I believe. But, you know, I wasn't there, I've just heard stories about it. I was going to go out, but because we were having a lot of problems technically with focus and things, because of this new system we were using, you know, so that we could blow it up to 70, super... What was it called?

No idea.

Neither have I, I've forgotten. But it was, we were only using part of the screen, and we got direct 70mm prints off it, we didn't have to go to... It was anamorphic, but it wasn't using the whole of the screen. It was using just about, two and a half perfs of it actually. And so you had to design your sets, I mean your shots, so that they came within this particular frame.

And no hard mask in the camera or anything like that?

No, no no, because you had to, when it was in cinemascope it was open, and then... It was quite a complicated system. And the problem was that it was becoming out of focus. What was the 2-perf one called that they did?

Technorama?

Tech... No, not Technorama. It had some name...

Technis...

Techniscope, something...

Techniscope. Technicolor 2-perf.

Yes, something like that.

Yes, I think that was Techniscope.

Yes, it was similar to that.

Mm

Only it was, it was more complicated. And a lot of the dailies were coming out of focus, and it was difficult to tell whether this was the system that was doing it, because we were obviously having anamorphic prints off it, or whether it was because they were shooting in very dense jungle, very dark jungle, but it was very dark. Warner Bros were absolutely right, it was extremely dark, but very atmospheric as well, you know.

Mm.

And... So I had to be here all the time to judge this, and so I never got... The Cameroons, that's the name.

Ah yes.

We were in the Cameroons.

I would never have thought of it.

So I never got to the Cameroons, much to my disappointment, because I actually love jungles. And... Because I had to be here and run the stuff. I was so worried about it at one time, since I was the only person here, that I went and ran some of the stuff with Alan Marshall, who was a good friend of Hugh's. Because I said to Hugh, 'I've really got to have somebody else's eyes watching it.' So, I went and ran some stuff with him, and... We, you know, there was, there was a problem there, because there was also a problem with the focus-puller who they then fired. So, you couldn't be sure which of the three problems it was half the time.

Right.

[0:09:55]

But... So they shot out there. And then we had this fantastic set back here that, I mean, Stuart Craig did the most amazing set, jungle set, that all took to pieces. But, you could, it was all on wheels as it were and you could wheel in. And it was all proper trees growing, and there was a waterfall, and a great big lake in the middle, and... It all had to be sprayed to keep the foliage alive, it had to be sprayed all the time. And also to give that... and kept at a special heat. And to keep that moist, sort of jungle feeling, they had the heat up and the moisture there, and, you felt, little jungle paths, as if you were in the jungle.

Kew Gardens.

Yes, Kew Gardens, yah.

Yes. You said the trouble here. What was the trouble with the shoot here?

[pause] Did I? I didn't...

I thought you said. Sorry, maybe I misunderstood.

Yah, I don't... Yah I didn't really. I said, then we moved back and shot here. No there wasn't any particular trouble. We got way behind schedule.

Mm.

But, no, the stuff here I thought was, some of the stuff that we got, with the apes, you know, and the men in ape suits, and the little boy, were just extraordinary. A lot of it came out in the end. Because eventually they told Hugh that he had to get the film down to two hours and fifteen minutes, so the whole of this D'Arnot stuff I was telling you about went out of the window. Hugh then went back to the Cameroons and did some extra stuff, including a scene that he had always wanted to do, miles up beyond everywhere, I mean you know, they had to take a whole unit up and Ian Holm up and everything. I mean it was never... And Warner Bros told him he couldn't shoot it, and he took no notice, he just took the unit up there. So... And it never, it was so bad that it never even went, ever, in the film. I cut it as a scene but we... Oh the film was already too long.

Yes.

So there were all sorts of ridiculous situations like that. We were shooting this stuff which he knew he couldn't use.

How long was the first director's cut?

Four hours and something.

Yes.

Well not the director's cut, the first cut was that. I should think the first director's was probably about, three hours, something like that.

Yes. And they wanted it what, two hours and...

And fifteen.

...and fifteen. Yes.

The best cut was around two hours forty. At two hours forty, it was, I thought, an excellent movie, much better than the finished one.

Yes.

Because what happened in the end, that, they were having a great fight about the scene, the sort of halfway house scene, where he comes back and there are all those weird characters living on the, you know, the dropouts all living on the edge of the, of the river, which is the first civilisation that Tarzan sees. And, they never wanted Hugh to shoot this, and Hugh had shot it. And it was a very good scene actually, with Ian Holm and, what's his name, Charleston and David Suchet, the guy who died. Charleston? Ian Charleston.

Charleson, Ian Charleson.

Ian Charleson, yes. And, and it was an excellent scene. And it was in kind of two parts really, and it, it, we thought it was interesting. I know people said you could leave it out, but, we thought it was interesting. And there was another, the big scene at the beginning where, which sets the whole film up, where the big, where the big

ape, Greybeard, chases, his wife as it were, with the baby. For some reason he chases after her and she drops the baby and it dies. That was another fantastic scene, because it had him up there with all the lightning, all these special effects, and, lightning and thunder, and in the distance the volcano going off, and it was just a fantastic shot. And they took... They had an argument about those two particular sequences, at, at the end that was, and the film was running then about, two hours twenty I suppose. And, in the end they had two previews the same night in San Diego, and I'm sure myself that it was in some way fixed, because, they literally, there, taking out those two scenes, it was two points ahead, two points. And it was a less good film, and they knew it really.

Yes.

But they made Hugh take them out. And then he said, well, he would lose all his, his pride, and this, that and the other. And he managed eventually to get half of one of the scenes put back in again, and permission to have them in in the English version, because they actually are in the English version.

[0:13:54]

Why were they so insistent on yanking them out? Was it...

Well because they wanted, partly because of pique, partly because of Hugh's behaviour.

Proving a point.

And their proving a point, that they were boss and that he wasn't going to get away with it.

Right.

And so... And we nibbled a lot of the rest of the film to keep these scenes in. Cut out things that I thought were important in other areas. But when they made us take those out, the film actually was two hours eight minutes, because once we took those scenes out, we could have had the other work put, if we'd done it earlier, we could have had the other scenes in that were good.

Mm.

So it, it was always very sad to me that we did that, you know, the way round that we did it.

Right.

And, a lot of it was just, you know, macho something or another on the part of Hugh and the part of them. Neither of them would give way at all. And you know, if you're in the middle of something like that, it's really very sad.

Was it a runaway production, or was it just messy? I mean it wasn't quite Heaven's Gate was it?

No. No no, definitely not, no. It was just Hugh wanting to shoot what he wanted to shot and not stopping and listening to anybody really. But it never got... No I don't think it ever was a runaway. He always knew what he was doing. And we had Garth... Garth. Craven? Garth. No.

No, no idea.

A sort of line producer who had some say in the money side of it, but not very much. Hugh didn't even allow him to see the movie. Hugh only allowed his psychiatrist to see the movie, the first few cuts we had. Because he had a psychiatrist and he was allowed to see the movie but nobody else.

You make it sound as if the movie were part of his treatment, his therapy.

It may well have been, because I didn't know Hugh before, so, you know, maybe it was.

Paid for by the Warners shareholders?

Paid for by Warners, yah. But you know, it could have been such a good film, I'm really sad about that.

Yes.

Could have been an excellent film.

[0:15:42]

I don't remember it clearly, other than the fact that, it, so much of it was illogical and so obviously illogical, and that was especially true of the Greystoke character who...

What, do you mean Ralph Richardson?

No no no, the other one, the... Lambert.

Oh, yes, Christophe.

Mm, Christophe Lambert. Who as I remember is out of the jungle and suddenly immaculately dressed and...

But that's the Tarzan story isn't it really. Well he wasn't, you see, it was more gradual in a way, though he...

Well, not in the film as I remember it. Maybe I'm wrong about that.

No that's right, that's what I'm saying.

But there...

That's what we cut out, all of that, yes.

Right, uh-huh.

But it even, was, even then. But it is in the books, I mean the Tarzan books, he comes back, I think, you know.

Mm. His sexuality always bothered me too. There he had been, in the jungle for what, whatever it was, twenty years, and, suddenly he's kissing decorously on the, on the terrace, you know. It, it made no sense in terms of...

No. No.

...humanity, of humankind.

Yah. Yah. I don't know, some people I know love it, some people I know don't particularly like it, but, it's very underrated I think for what it was, because everybody knew, it was so well known everywhere, what terrible rows.

Mm.

And of course an interesting thing was that, when we first previewed it up at Seattle, we were really, it was running quite long then, but we were really worried, or Hugh particularly was, about the men in ape suits, because he thought, God! the audience is going to say, you know, what's Hugh Hudson doing making films, as if anybody knows who Hugh Hudson is in Seattle.

Incredibly. Right. [laughs]

But... In fact, their worry was that they were very upset at the animals fighting amongst themselves. We had a great fight between the baddie ape and the, and Silverbeard, where they tear each other and things, you know, and, and several other, where they're fighting over the food and this and that. And the audiences were so upset by this, they were saying they would never recommend it, for their friends to come and see animals fighting with each other like that. Now that was not a reaction we thought. And they didn't actually mind so much where they tore her to pieces, where the big old ape tore her to pieces, but they minded when they fought amongst themselves. Now isn't that an extraordinary reaction?

It is. Well I'm not sure. I suppose, to some extent it was, it was possible to predict it.

Well it was also a good reaction in a way, because they believed in them, so much believed in these men in ape suits, they were actual animals.

Right.

You see, but you can't, you can't make... A lot of people believe, because we put out that some of them were real, which was psychologically the right approach to do, people still argue that some of those grown apes were real, and none of them were real. The only real ones were the babies, the two babies were real.

Mhm.

Everything else were the made ones, you know, the electronic ones. And, I mean, obviously they were 100 per cent successful, and, we very carefully... I mean I had it vetted by one of the experts right at the end to make sure I hadn't got a piece in that didn't look absolutely real in ape movement, you know. So we did take a lot of care in that, and the noises that they made. Went out to a big ape farm in America, Les Wiggins, the sound editor, did, to get the right noises and that sort of thing. So it was very authentic in that way.

[0:18:54]

Mm. Are you frequently surprised by unexpected reactions at previews? I mean, you seem to have found that particularly so, that one.

Everybody did actually, not just me. I mean, yes, I... Yes and no. I hate, don't like previews, you're on one of my pet hates. Because I think so often... Yes, I, I think I quite often am, yes. Not always but sometimes.

Mm.

And also when people see, you have these focus groups and you start talking to people, I'm amazed at the reaction, what they see in the picture, what they get and read into it that isn't there, good or bad. I mean they come out with the most extraordinary thoughts on your film. I think that's quite interesting.

Yes.

I think previews are a good thing. I mean I think comedy should be certainly run, maybe once or twice, because you do get good reactions, you know, to laughter. But I think you should go a lot more by your gut feeling and the vibes that you feel with an audience and when they start writing it down.

Mm.

And all the films I have run, and I hope this bears out, because there's always exceptions, with all the films that I've run so far, previewed, the figures have never altered very much, whatever we've done with them. Like *I Love You To Death* we shot for \$2 million or more, a new ending on it. And the figures never went up. Now that's a film that we really spoilt because of the previews, and Larry Kasdan, the director, he's the first person who says it, I mean he says it to me, because I tried to stop him doing it. But because the reactions were not good to the first preview, they

panicked, and they started cutting everything out. And instead... And it was a film that was only going to appeal to a certain audience, and that certain audience would have liked all the bits in that we took out. The other audience, you weren't going to win anyway, it wasn't going to make any difference. They didn't like the story and they weren't going to come.

Right.

And so, we, [laughs] actually it happened in Seattle again, we, which was Larry's lucky place, or supposed to be, for previews, and we put this new ending on and we went up there, and I think, I can't remember whether we were two percent over or under what we had been with the other ending. Made no difference, they didn't want this... I mean you know, as I say, it didn't appeal. Now if we had left in the bits that were really, more violent in a way, there was kind of, a scene where he hits her and things, and, everybody said, ooh! like that. But, you know, this happens in marriages and, thing, you know; it wasn't really very violent, and they end up by making love and things like that. And people said, 'Oh it's marriage rape' and things. I mean it wasn't anything of the sort, it happens to everybody who is in a marriage in one way or another. And that's one that sticks in my memory, but there were other things. We toned it down in other words, and by toning it down, we spoilt it for some people who liked really black comedy, and we didn't get the others in. So, it was a, a bad mistake.

Mm.

[0:21:45]

Why I crossed my fingers at the beginning is, because when we previewed Charlie the other week, we had fantastically high ratings, so I can only hope that these other things... Because, in *What About Bob?* we did the same thing, we did two different endings on that, at a huge cost, and previewed it the same night with two different endings on, and got about the same, maybe a few points higher than we had got with the original ending, which had been badly shot, because it was much the best ending,

and, and we got about four points or three points difference between the two endings. And the one that all the Disney people liked was the one that got the least marks.

Yes.

Which was quite funny.

What About Bob? is not a film that I can place.

You don't know it?

I don't think so.

It's in the...

Give me a hint.

It's a film that I did with, Frank Oz directed, with Bill Murray and Richard Dreyfuss. It's a film I did before this in fact.

I... Yes I remember it now, and...

It came very briefly here.

That's right, I didn't see it.

It was a big success in America. It was number one for a couple of weeks, mainly because of very clever marketing on the part of Disney. I have to admire Jeffrey Katzenberg who I think his idea it was. Because it was set, opened on a particular weekend, and they discovered that, I can't... a John Candy film that, he never did any money in the end, was opening the same weekend. So they took four weeks off my finishing schedule, including shooting two different endings. I mean, you know, it's

interesting in a way, because my sound editor did kind of think he couldn't cope, but, nobody panicked there. They thought I was going to say I can't do it. Disney were waiting for me. I'm not going to say that. If they tell me they're going to open the film, I'm going to get it done.

Mhm.

And... Because they say, you can get as much help in as you like, you know, money is no object. It's much cheaper for them to get people in than it is to miss the particular swap they want.

Right.

Anyway, we got it done in the four weeks, we were working very late hours, we were coming in at four in the morning to run dailies, sync up dailies and things like that, the boys were and, and things. But we got it done. And, because we opened that particular weekend, we went to number one. And we made two million more the second weekend than the first weekend, and that was, I think, clever marketing. I think getting it out that weekend, they saw a little pocket there, and popped it in.

Yes.

Bill Murray is immensely popular in America; he's not even that well known over here. People mostly know him from *Ghostbusters* and things.

Mm.

But in America people follow him down the street and things.

Well, from, from television I suppose, his beginnings in television.

From... He's... Yes, *Saturday Night Live*.

Mm.

Yes. But also his movies as well there are popular, I mean...

Yes, I suppose, maybe they're perceived as being manically American here for the most part. Or, or they, childishly American perhaps.

Funnily enough, Hugh Hudson rang me the other day, talking of Hugh, because we've remained good friends, and he's always ringing up about this and that. And he rang up and said, 'I've just seen your film *What About Bob?*' He says, 'The funniest film I've seen for years,' he said. 'My son Thomas adores it, and I've been running it two or three times,' he said, 'it's so funny.' I think they didn't sell it over here because they didn't bother to. But it's on in, they've got little plaques of it, it's in the videos now. It's very high up the video.

Yah.

It was in America, it was number one on video for some weeks.

Oh well, I'll get it out.

I don't think you'll like it, I have to tell you.

I think it was up the street at the Fulham Road, and, but it was there so briefly that, one almost never had a chance to see it.

No. No no, I don't think it did at all well here.

Mm.

Or in, or in France or anywhere. But I don't think they care.

Mm. But I don't think it was pulled; I don't think it was booked in for any length of time.

Well maybe not.

A week or two, that's all.

Yah. I don't think... I don't think Disney ever got really behind it, considering it made so much money. It made, like, \$66 million in America alone, which is, it was about the... At one time it was the fourth highest film for most of the year. It was the highest Disney film of last year, and yet it was one they never really got behind, I didn't think.

[0:25:39]

Right. I suppose, somewhere floating in my mind is a question about the, the innate arrogance of directors. I mean Hugh is a prime example of that, and...

Yes, sure. You've got to be a bit arrogant to direct.

Yes.

Because you are the one right up there, you're the one where the buck stops, you're... It's a very lonely job, being a director.

Mm.

That's why I think that a director should have a really good relationship with the editor, I think it's very important, to... But it isn't just your editing, it's the fact of a backup that you give the director. Which is also a very important thing. Because, they are right up there, everybody is, you know, everybody's making very clever suggestions. David Lean always tells the story how Freddie Young and John Box and

all these people were saying, 'Oh, I wouldn't do that David,' and 'I'd put it over here David,' and 'I'd do this David,' and confusing him. And David of course being himself just did what he wanted, quite rightly. But one day he got, he had about 5,000 Arabs, and he was at the top of the hill, and, with Peter, and Omar and things, and he said he really didn't know what to do. And he just stood there and looked at all these people, and he said, 'OK Freddie, what would you do?' Now... Or John. Neither of them could come up with an idea, because they couldn't come up with an original idea. They could only knock what he was doing, but they couldn't come up with that one idea. Now a director's got to come up with that idea every morning. He's faced with the equivalent of 5,000 every morning, and he's got to come up with those fresh, brilliant ideas if he's going to make a brilliant film. And that's what is so difficult. It's easy enough, it's easy for me as an editor to say, 'Why didn't you give me this cover?' 'Why didn't you do that?' 'Why...?' You know. But it's not so easy to be the first one that starts it.

But the age old dichotomy in the film business of the conflict between money and art, or industry and art, commerce and art, I mean how, in a commercial set-up, should the director, with his vision, relate to the studio representing the money, and indeed the audience who's going to see it? You know, what concessions do you think he should make? Or she, I should say these days.

That's, that's true. I don't think in a way they could make concessions, but they should, I mean they should be prepared to make their film in a way that is economical from the start.

Mhm.

I mean that should be... I mean, the schedule that they make should, should be workable. I do think that there's a great mistake these days, and we've actually done it with Charlie, shoot far too much film when we know that we aren't going to be able to use it. When I produced my only film, which was *Medusa Touch*, Jack Gold and I went through that script until we'd got it down, and timed it, and I think we took out

one small scene, and obviously trimmed the odd line here and there, but basically, what we shot is up on that screen.

Yes.

And I think, you know, and I'm not a very experienced producer, but I think more directors and producers should do that. They should go through their... They shouldn't think that they can get away with a longer film, because, mostly they can't. You have the *Dances With Wolves*, you have your odd film that does, but basically, you've got to get your film down to its length. We've had to get Charlie down to two hours fifteen minutes, and, Dickie thought he'd get away with it, but he hasn't been allowed to.

The script was over-length, or...

The script was over-length.

...or he became self-indulgent in shooting?

No. No, the... No, the script was over-length. It was always timed over-length.

Mhm.

And it wasn't... I mean you know, his films don't exactly race along, I mean, neither they should. It has its own leisurely, it has its own pace. It's not actually slow at all. And we go from character to character very fast, and so fast that people say it's a bit episodic, which it is.

So, what, was there a kind of, it'll be all right on the night attitude?

There wasn't, it'll be all right. It was that people would have liked the film so much, as they did, luckily, and he thought that, he would get away with it. But his contract

is, I think I'm right in saying, that, if he delivers two hours and fifteen minutes or under, they can't touch it. If he delivers one second over that, they can cut the picture.

I see.

So he had to be, in the end. But first of all, he thought he'd get away with that. He'd always thought he'd get away with it. The film is better when it's a little longer, but only a little. But it's, it's because it's a contractual thing, and I think it's quite wrong. They won't allow it to be five minutes over. It's actually best at about, I guess about two hours twenty-five, it's really good, because things are more explained and, the character is in who makes a lot of difference to the end of the movie, who's come out now. And, to actually have to deliver, like we, the same as *Greystoke*, exactly the same, we had to deliver two hours fifteen.

Right. Now that presumably is based on four a day rather than three day.

Yes. Yah, exactly. It's economics.

Right.

But... You know, and directors do, I mean I'm sure, I actually spoke to Wolfgang who I'm going to work with about this situation on the phone the other day, because I said, you know... They've just sent me the new script, it's actually at one of my neighbour's, I'm going to pick it up in a minute. Because it's running too long. And I said, 'You know, you won't get away with it, don't think that you will because you won't. It's much best...' I said, 'Have you got it down?' Because the original script was too long, much too long. He said, 'Well we've got it down a bit, but not a lot. But I'm going to play the scenes very fast.' You know, and you can see the same thing happening.

Yes.

Then they shoot marvellous stuff which you're going to have to take out.

Yes. Which is heartbreaking.

Heartbreaking. Much better not shooting.

Right. And wasteful.

Much better to be brave and take it out of the script.

Yes.

Particularly if you're on... I mean obviously it's not such a tight budget, but even then, we were all going, the cutting, we were all going to Washington for three weeks, and now to save money they're not going there, you know, so however big your budget is, it's always the editors that suffer I may say.

Mhm.

But they're already cutting back on things.

Well people fall in love don't they with, with either what they're going to do or what they have done, and...

Yah. It's an interesting thing, because there was a scene in Charlie which, right upfront, everybody always thought was very expendable. They didn't want Dickie to shoot it particularly. It's only quite a short scene. And, we always thought, well that will be one of the first to go. And funnily enough, when you saw it in the finished film it's very important where it is. As I say, it's only quite a short scene, but it makes all the difference, and it's something that survived. And, that nearly might not have been shot, and it's certainly better where it is, you know. But... You see I don't think Dickie saw eye to eye necessarily with Carolco as to what should come out if

we had to shorten it. And in the end... They had, you know, Mario had quite a say in what came out in fact, not in my view rightly either.

But you say that if he delivered two hours and fifteen minutes, it was his picture, they couldn't touch it.

No. No.

Even so, there was pressure was there to...?

Yes. Yah, because, Dickie was kind of threatening to take out two of the good scenes, thinking that they would come to their senses and let him keep it longer, but, he didn't call their bluff and he was quite right, because they're people who were totally ruthless and they would have just let him take them out and spoil the picture, you know.

Yes.

So they've taken out a scene... They'd taken out particularly a scene, but not a terribly good scene in itself, and nobody liked it that much. But when you see it out, you realise, there's something about editing, you realise how important it was to three scenes that come after it.

Yah.

We're still fighting to get it back in again, but I don't think we will.

[0:33:09]

Generally how valid would you say are the judgements of the, the money men, the executive producers?

Well they vary. Because they do come in with a new eye very often. I mean they may have seen the script, they may have seen – well they will have seen the script; they may have seen some of the dailies and things like that. But they don't, haven't generally seen the cut. So that I think sometimes they can come in with a fresh eye and some quite good ideas.

Mm.

But they're very... I mean they often don't think about what they're cutting out. They'll say, 'That'll make a great cut if you go from here to here.' And sure, it does. But you don't realise, rather like the scene I'm talking about, that if you take that out, it affects all sorts of other scenes, or people's characters. And though it may not be needed exactly for a plot, it still has its own place in the story.

Mm.

And I think there that they, you know, have argued. That's where I think they're bad. They say, 'Whip it out.' 'Oh doesn't that make a great cut, going from that close-up to that,' whatever. And they don't think what they're actually doing, you know.

Do you ever weep at some of the things that have ended up on the cutting room floor?

Oh yes. Sure.

A prime example.

Well I think in, in *Greystoke* would be the prime example, several scenes in that, particularly with the little boy upfront. The one where he first swam, was so beautiful, because, you know, he, it's the first time that he realised that he was different from the apes really. And he, he went in, he went running away, he was being chased by one of the baddies and he went down this tree, down the branch, and fell off the end, and all the apes were horrified because they were scared of water.

Never did more than kind of put their toe in and drink and things. And this little boy goes down and down and down, and all his hair flows behind him, and it was a beautiful scene. And he can, he swims, and he realises, and he comes up. And instead of being a really dirty little boy, which he was before, just like the animals, he feels much better. His whole personality changes after he swims. Because, a) he's superior to them, he finds, and b) he, he's clean. And he swims. And it was a beautiful underwater sequence with him swimming and his hair behind and...

Yes. How far did that get before it was dropped? I mean, was it... It was cut and dubbed, or...?

No, no no no, much... Oh no, came up far earlier.

No. I was...

A lot of the early ape scenes came out.

Yes.

Lovely scenes with the apes playing with each other. I made up some scenes which were, I thought, really charming with the apes living, and the way they slept in their trees together and, all those really nice touches. It was the ape stuff that I was sad about, not the stuff in England particularly that went. But some of that, I thought it was... And I think the audiences would have loved it, you know.

So, there's no chance ever of, of a, what's the word?

There's talk of it.

Yes? All that material survives does it?

We can... Yah, it must be around somewhere, yes. But I don't think it'll ever go back in, really.

It's curious isn't it how once the commercial pressures are over, one very frequently gets a more objective judgement on a picture and a desire to restore it.

Yes. Yah.

That's happened so often now.

Well because then they don't need their four screenings a day, because it comes out in specialised art houses or wherever, you know, and so there isn't the same pressure on you.

Mhm.

But...

[0:36:27]

Well Greystoke then, which theoretically we're still discussing, was, not the way you wanted it.

No.

I mean, where on the scale is it as a failure or a success would you say from your point of view?

Well I'm, I'm proud of it as it is.

Right.

But I just feel sad that it could have been so much better, and Hugh feels sad that it could have been so much better.

Mm.

But I, I mean, as I say, I would, I would put it quite high on the films that I've cut, because, it was, I mean it was very interesting. I mean I think by, by shortening things, even by doing the things to save things for Hugh and that sort of thing, it became interesting from a cutting point of view, you know, what we could do, what we could lose, what we could take out, how the story would run without things, you know. But I don't think they were necessarily good things.

Mhm.

But, you know, they were quite interesting to do.

Well I think you said earlier that he, he is or was anyway his own worst enemy, and really, his own cussedness or, or intransigence had a lot to do with, with his...

Yes. Yah. I think he needed a producer.

Right.

That's all. I think if he had, he and David could just not have fallen out, it would have been a much better film.

But two egos like that inevitably must, must come into conflict.

They could have... Yes, they could have had rows, but I think they would have stimulated each other. I don't think there's... I mean David and Sam had terrible rows, but, they stimulated each other in a way, you know.

Mm.

I think... I just think... I mean I spoke to David Puttnam a couple of years ago about it, the fact that Hugh needs somebody like him, he's never going to have him again but, he needs that.

[0:38:06]

Right. Anything more to say about Greystoke before we move on?

I don't... No no, I don't think so.

No? OK. The next one I have on the list is Lady Jane, which we have touched upon haven't we. I'm not sure what there is to be said about...

No I don't think a lot really.

Very straightforward isn't it?

It was fairly straightforward, yes. It was interesting working with Trevor Nunn. It was also interesting in a way, because Trevor didn't really want to make the film that he ended up by making. He wanted to make, which wasn't interesting, he wanted to make *Lady Jane* look as if it was a contemporary film if they'd had film at that time.

Yes.

He wanted it to be a very grainy, realistic, newsreel type of film. And he was never really allowed to. I mean he had Dougie Slocombe as his cameraman, and Dougie is a beautiful cameraman but he wasn't doing what Trevor wanted. Trevor wanted practically black and white grainy photography, whereas Doug, Dougie likes so that you can practically take the pear off the plate and eat it, you know, and that's not... So there was a lot of problems upfront because of that, because he, Trevor wasn't

getting what he wanted, and in the end he never did get what he wanted actually.
And...

It's a very much too, it seemed to me when I saw it, a 1970s picture although made in the Eighties, in, in that it does have, it tried to impose a twentieth century liberal viewpoint...

Yes, that's true.

...where it couldn't possibly have existed, it seems to me anyway, historically.

Yah. Yah, I think that was it, that was, I think that's what they intended to do really, in a way.

Yes.

Well in fact they did. But, it was, it would have worked much better had he been able to, in the end, I think get the kind... That would have, that kind of concept would have worked a lot better had he been able to shoot it the way he wanted to shoot it, you would have believed in it more, than doing... Well it ended up with a rather stylised look that it had in a way, a theatrical look with that, didn't seem to work. But if he'd got the rough edges kind of picture that he had intended to get, I think it would have done.

A little less luscious.

Yes.

[0:40:10]

Now what does one do in a case like that? Does one fire Dougie Slocombe? I would have thought that...

Well there was a lot of talk...

...a Hollywood director would have done.

What?

A Hollywood director I think would have done.

Yes, I think so. There was... I don't like really to talk about it, but there was a lot of talk like that. I mean Dougie's a good friend and everything, but...

Mm. And a marvellous cameraman.

And a marvellous cameraman.

So it's nothing against him.

I mean it wouldn't have been against him at all, but there was some talk about... Yes, they looked around actually at one time.

Yes. But it needed someone like Bill Taylor I would have thought, or...

Yes, they were looking at him. Look I can't even remember who the cameramen they were looking... But I know that they had found, the people they wanted and they were interested in, they couldn't get, none of them were free.

Mm.

I guess they really wanted, the sort of Roger Deakin didn't they, or the younger cameramen.

Yes.

That sort of thing was what he really wanted. And, nobody knew enough about them, you know, that was in a position to advise him. So in the end we... And you know, days were going by and we were getting into the film, so it wasn't...

Mm. So it's an honourable failure I, I suspect.

Yes, I think so. A lot of people, you know, think it's one of the best historical films made. I mean I can't really see that, but, I did like it. And I loved working with Trevor, he's a most exciting man to work with. I'm only sorry he isn't doing *Les Misérables*, but he's apparently fallen out with Cameron Mackintosh, so he won't be doing that. Because, you know, if he did, I would definitely be doing it, and that would be a really exciting movie to do.

Indeed. Mm.

So... And I think he'll probably do some films again, I hope so. I haven't seen him while I've been over, because he was very busy and I've been busy and... I usually do see him when I come over. In fact, now you remind me I think I'll give him a call.
[laughs]

Good. Before you go.

[0:41:52]

I don't think there's much more. What did I do after *Greystoke*?

*I've got a film called *Raw Deal* down.*

Oh.

Now does that...

That's the film that got me to Hollywood. Yah.

Right, well then let's...

That was John Irvin. John Irvin. John Irvin, I was having lunch at Pinewood one day on *Lady Jane* and John Irvin came by and said, 'Do you want to come to America and cut a movie for me?' I said, 'Yah, I would love to.' He said, 'Well it's in North Carolina...' Oh, 'It's in Chicago, and North Carolina, and then,' he said, 'we're going to finish it in California.' I said 'Gosh, that sounds great.' He said, 'It's a thriller, a lot of action, that kind of thing. Starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.' And I thought, oh-ho, I don't know that I [laughs] want to work with Arnold Schwarzenegger. But anyway, it was, to cut a long story short, because first of all I was on it, and it was a Dino De Laurentiis picture and I knew that Dino liked me, and Martha was going to produce it, and they all liked me, so, there wasn't any problem. But the problem in fact, only I didn't discover it till later, was Arnold, who wanted him to look at his last editor's work, who he thought was very good. And, apparently... Then my, suddenly my job seemed as if it wasn't going to be there any more. But, I went off to China on a holiday, thinking that I, you know, that something had happened, I hadn't heard from them and this and that.

[0:43:10]

Can I say, how was China? Very big.

[laughs] Yes.

And Japan[??].

Anyway. And when got to Peking, I mean you wouldn't think this is possible in China, there was a message at the hotel, would I ring Martha Schumacher in North Carolina. And it took me four hours to get from Peking to North Carolina, and it then took me another... Then, they transferred me from North Carolina to California, like that, and one noticed the difference in the American system, [laughs] how quickly you

went from one thing to another in America, but took me four hours to get from China to America. So anyway, what happened was that, apparently, I didn't hear this till afterwards, I didn't know why there had been the change of heart, and it was a bit difficult for me to get back from China in time, so I cut my stay in Hong Kong short. I came back for five, five days here, to organise my children and pack and everything, and then I went off, and never came back for two years, with two suitcases.

Right.

That's how I left the country. Because I didn't really go to stay, but I had always thought that if the opportunity came, I would like to work there when the children got old enough. I wouldn't have left them. But Douglas wouldn't let me educate them there, so, quite rightly, and so, I was kind of waiting for the opportunity, and there it was. [pause] And, and Arnold Schwarzenegger had wanted him to use this editor. John had seen his work and said no way was he going to work with that editor, and that he wanted me. So, out I came. And we went, I was in Chicago for about three weeks, then I went to North Carolina, and cut the film there. And then I went to Los Angeles, where we dubbed and everything. And while I was there I got offered other films. I discovered that there were non-union films, because I could never work in Hollywood. You see they tried to get me out, Paramount, when I was doing *Lady Jane*, they'd tried to get me out there on films, and *Fatal Attraction* with Adrian Lyne, which is how I came across Adrian Lyne, but the union wouldn't let me do it. I then discovered that there were non-union films, both types.

Mm.

And so I was on non-union film, and did non-union films until I got into the union.

Mm. You didn't go into one of the East Coast locals then?

No, I only...

They were a little more cooperative I think.

I'm only on a West Coast local.

Right, uh-huh.

Yes. The only place in the world that I can't work now probably is New York, actually, because I can work in all of Europe.

Right.

[laughs] And I can work in the West Coast of America. But I'm not in the East Coast local.

It's, it's noticeable how, how many British people are working on the East Coast now.

Is it?

Especially... Well, I'm not sure... I notice with cameramen.

Yes, yah. I didn't know that.

Yah.

But, you know, you have a standby editor there who works as your assistant, it's not difficult to work there, but it just amuses me that, on paper one can't work on the East Coast of America, where one can work almost every, anywhere else in the world in fact, China maybe not. But... So that's really the lot[??] about *Raw Deal*. I mean I like working with Arnold, he's a very amusing man actually, and we got on very well together. In fact they sent me a script the other.....

[End of Track 11]

[Track 12]

.....that John McTiernan's going to make with him, but, in the meantime I got offered.....

[break in recording]

Back to North Carolina. My question was, the similarity or dissimilarity of working in the two countries and, the environments.

Well actually, cutting movies is much the same anywhere you go. You know, I cut on a Moviola which is considered old-fashioned in a way, but then now people are going back to Moviolas because it's much faster I think, and everybody also agrees. I mean I'll cut on a Moviola and a flatbed, either a KEM or a Steenbeck, I'm not really fussy. But, cutting, but sound is very different there. A) you don't take on our sound editor before the end of shooting like you do here; you take them on really more or less when you've got a fine cut. So that's why I discovered, you take on such large crews there. Well mind you, the crews are getting a lot larger here than they used to be. But, it's, you know, you have sound houses, or you... but you do get sound editors as well, but they do bring on a lot of people. And I had a lot of fights upfront, because I said I don't need all those people on my sound, and not realising the difference of the whole set-up, it's completely different. And I didn't, I've never been with a sound house, I've always been with an individual sound editor who's brought on other people, because, I do believe in that. I like to have my sound editor, either right next door or near me or something. You know, otherwise they have them miles away, and they just take that, and you have no kind of cooperation between the two. I mean you're friendly but, it's not the same. I mean they are amazed because I want to be friendly with them and have lunch with them and talk to them and things, because normally they work like two entities. And, I had a few rows about that when I first got there. And then I discovered that the differences kind of seep through to you slowly, about the way, the different way they work. And I think the British way is a lot better. Even there, even if you're going to do a temp dub, they'll bring on another

crew. Well that's stupid to me, because you bring on the same crew, they can prepare a lot of tracks that they're going to use on the final dub. But, not necessarily. I mean I've always done, been able to do that, but I know that, often they'll bring on another crew just to do your temp for the previews.

Mhm.

So that's the main difference from that point of view. But actually cutting is cutting, wherever you go, you know.

[0:02:24]

Right. Laboratories and the other things that are all part of it, getting your optical...

They're all much the same.

Yes?

No, the differences...

The standards, quality?

Much the same really. The one difference they have there is that you have a negative cutter who you, who works as a separate person. They work with the labs of course, but they cut your negative, and they handle your negative even from the reprint stage. And they're given, that's why they're given... Donna Bassett is the kind of, top negative cutter there; she now has her daughter and various people working with her. Whereas here the negative is cut by the labs and you don't really know who's cutting it in a way. I mean you may know the person but it's not... There it's an actual business, the negative cutter. You choose who you are going to have as your negative cutter, on the beginning of the production. And then as I say, they handle your negative. And they're brilliant actually at it, they're marvellous at matching. If you're using library stuff and you haven't got proper key numbers and things, they're

very very good. But other than that, the lab service is, is much the same. I have to say that generally speaking the assistants are not as good, not as well trained, not as efficient, and that isn't always so. I mean the first one I had on *Raw Deal* was useless, I parted with him quite quickly, and not... an aggravating character. The second one I had was one of the best I've ever had in the world, I mean he was brilliant. And he now edits for my son. So that was a stupid move on my part, [laughter] because I have not been able to replace him with anybody as good as him. I actually use, my younger son has been an assistant, he's excellent too. But he's now cutting, cutting for his brother.

Yes.

So, you know, it's not easy to find... I'm looking for one right now, a really good first. I've got a really good second, but he's not quite ready to be a first. And, they're few and far between, to find a good assistant. I knew of one who I thought I might like to have, and I rang up Jim Clark to find out where he would be working at the moment, and of course he's Jim's assistant [laughs], and won't be free for another month, so he's no good to me unfortunately.

[0:04:30]

Mm. How do they see their career progression, are they all aiming to stay as editors, or in the cutting rooms, or, or is direction usually the goal?

No, I would say that more editors are happy to be editors there than here in a way, or, used to be here in any case. Obviously there are some that go on to being directors and producers, but on the whole... And also assistants, there are a lot of assistants that are happy to be assistants, that don't want to go on to be editors in a way, you know. So that I don't think there is...

What is that, a steady job? Well it isn't really a steady job is it?

Yes. Well it's not a steady job really but...

Well it's competition I suppose.

It's quite a well... Well there's more work around. It's quite a well-paid job.

Yah.

But... [pause] I don't know why it is really.

Well it's good in a way, because, in so...

Yes, they become very professional assistants.

Right.

Yes.

In so many areas people are promoted beyond their competence.

Yes. Yah.

It's, it's nice to see people in a niche. Right.

Yah. I mean most of the editors I know, I mean one or two of them want to be directors, and certainly, one or two of the cameramen I know have been, or are now, directors. They seem to be coming more from cameramen at the moment, writers of course. But not editors. I can't think of any editors I know in America that... I mean Michael Kahn and Carol Littleton and all those kind of top people, I don't think any of them want to be. Carol I know doesn't, because I've talked to her about it. And I imagine Michael Kahn probably doesn't either. They seem to be happy being top editors, you know.

[0:06:05]

Right. [pause] Raw Deal is not a film, again, that I can place. I may have seen it, may not.

Well it was called *Triple Identity* originally, then Arnold Schwarzenegger wouldn't assume the third identity, because it had something to do with his wife being unfaithful to him, in the film only, [laughs] and he said no woman would ever be unfaithful to him. I always remember that. And the whole script was changed. And he never took on, he went back to his wife at the end instead of... He never came home and found her with another man like he did in the original script.

Oh well that seems to be prevailing idiocy, doesn't it.

Yes. Yes.

Arnie is a bit of a phenomenon isn't he.

Well he is, he definitely is, because, you know, I mean he really isn't much of an actor, and he's not particularly good-looking.

No. In fact he's grotesque, I think, to look at.

Yes. He looks like an ape.

Yes.

I used to make jokes about the fact that having just worked on *Greystoke* I was used to looking at apes. [laughs] And I was frightened it might get back to him so I stopped saying it. Yes. And he, I mean you know, he really isn't that good at light comedy, which he's trying to do now. He's got a, he's got the most marvellous, this new script of his that I've just read is, is just terrific. I don't see, I wouldn't put him in it if I was, you know... He's given the choice of almost any script he fancies doing. But it's a

fascinating film, very, and from an editor's point of view fascinating. But, yes, he's, I mean, you know, I remember when we were in Chicago on location that I was amazed that so many old women came out into the street to see him. I mean then he wasn't as big as, anything like as big as he is now. I mean he was quite big. But it wasn't just the young girls that came round, because of the muscles and things; there were all the old grannies out there, you know, everybody wanted to see Arnold.

Yes.

He's very very popular. But I don't know why. What is it about him?

I don't know why either. It baffles me. Because he's...

Because he doesn't speak very good English.

No. Limited in all ways I would have thought. Yes.

Yes. He's no... Except he's very bright, extremely bright. Very...

Yes. Self-aware, is that right, would that be fair, or, or is he, is he overall bright would you say?

No, he's overall bright.

Ah.

Actually he's quite an intelligent man.

Mm.

I don't agree with his politics and things like that, but, no, he's, he's nobody's fool actually, he's a lot brighter than you would think from the way he looks for instance.

And... But you would, if you look into what he owns and where he's steered his career and things like that, you can see that there's more than streetwise there, and that he's...

Yes.

Well he comes from quite a good Austrian family. I mean he made a joke once about travelling, always travelling on his Austrian passport, even though he has an American one, because he said the Americans are always the first ones that are taken off and shot, he said. [laughs] You know, he's not like your image of the he-man that he's supposed to be. But you know, [laughs] struck me as quite intelligent actually. Said, 'Oh I always travel with my,' thing. And, no, I would think he's, he's quite bright.

Mm.

Also very powerful. I mean he has, I mean as I say, he nearly got me off the, not off the picture because I wasn't really on it, but I mean he nearly, he wanted to use his own editor, and things like that. He wanted to have a lot of control. And I'm sure now he does have a lot of control. He has directed a small film, I never heard what happened to it, a television film. I doubt if it's come over here.

I don't know.

And he will direct. Oh he'll do anything he wants to, because he is so powerful and so wealthy, that if he wants to direct, I'm sure he'll direct.

Yes.

And I'm sure he will direct again.

[0:09:32]

Can you see it lasting?

What, Arnold?

Yes. Or, or his, his eminence, his present eminence, do you think that will continue?

I would think so, yes.

Yah?

Yes, because I think he'll steer himself in, you know, when he sees himself going in a certain direction and it's not working, he'll steer himself in another direction. And, I think he's, he's so powerful. I wouldn't say maybe he'll go on acting forever, he might do all sorts of things. I mean he owns gyms, he owns property, he owns, I mean lots and lots of things.

Yes. Yes, it's clear he's very rich, and...

Yes. Yah. And he uses his money sensibly, and he helps, you know, with drugs and AIDS and, all these kind of things, particularly, you know, he goes, has these boys' fitness clubs and things like that, that he runs in America, and he goes to them and things. He's opening this restaurant in London, I've forgotten what it's called now. He's into restaurants, a couple in LA and New York and things, and he's opening one, what's the big one on the corner called? Hard Rock?

Oh yah.

They're opening in competition to Hard Rock, another similar to that restaurant. And, he's involved, he and Bruce Willis and one or two others are involved in that. It opens in London quite soon. And he'll come over and promote it and that sort of thing.

Is, is that the one in Coventry Street by any chance?

Probably is, yes.

Yes.

I don't really know where it is. But yes, I think it is.

Mm. Oh I didn't know.

Yah. And... And you'll see, he'll be over promoting it and things, you know.

Right. Right. It is fascinating how such a quirky character can become so important to the public, and then assume a great economic influence and economic power from that.

Yes. Yah. Well I think... Yes, I don't know why that... Yes, honestly, I don't know how those people come up or where they come from, because, or why people find them so compelling to look at, but they do.

Well it's always said that he has had a very clear idea of where he wanted to go.

Yes, I think that's probably true.

And he's structured his career and his persona.

Yah.

Yah.

I mean I'm wondering now... He doesn't look quite so Neanderthal as he used to.
I'm wondering if he's had some kind of plastic surgery on his face or something.
Because he doesn't look quite..

[laughs] So beetle-brow.

No, as he used to. His face looks just slightly, similar but slightly, you know...

Greystoke.

He has actually quite a good sense of humour.

Yes. Yes, and which is self-deprecating too.

Yes. Yes. Yah.

Yah, he is inclined to send himself up.

Yes. Yah.

[0:11:49]

Yah. Any anecdotes? I can't imagine the film's important, so...

No, it wasn't.... What it did...

Any anecd...?

Well what it did to me, as I say, is got me to America, which is where I wanted to be.

Mm.

So... That was where it was important. I like working with John Irvin. I'm actually having lunch with him tomorrow. And, you know, I don't, you know, not really. I mean it was just a film and, and, I, I enjoyed it.

Right.

I quite liked, I like working with Dino, and, and Martha.

Anything special about living or working in North Carolina?

It was a very simple life there actually. And it was very conducive to hard work, because there wasn't a great deal to do in the evenings there, and there weren't even any very good restaurants, or a couple of quite good ones. And, and I took up bowling while I was there, which I hadn't done before, because there wasn't much to do, so one went to the cinema and one went bowling and a few things like that. And to me, what was great was, it was on the sea, right on the ocean, and even though it wasn't really swimming weather much of the time, though we did go in on Thanksgiving Day, it was Arnold who got us in, [laughs] because he was in and we all went down to the beach, you know, having had a few drinks.

Good[??-13:06] Arnie.

Yeah, and we all went into the waves. But, I just loved it. I had an apartment there, and, with a balcony over, which was right on the beach overlooking, and the sea, you know. I could see the dolphins and the flamingos and things, and it was...

So, what would you say, this is small town American life?

Very small town American life, yes.

And which you enjoyed?

Which I enjoyed, yes.

Yah?

Yah. I didn't get to know a lot of local people or anything, because you don't on a unit, but, it was a nice unit. But I, I quite, I enjoyed the quiet life there actually, and, we did get to know the people in the restaurants and things where we used to go, and the bars and things like that. I was very surprised how much segregation there still is there, I mean you know, blacks didn't come... Blacks lived in their own townships as it were practically. And there were areas where they said don't stop and refuel, you know, have, put petrol in and things like that which were in the black areas. [pause] And, you know, if blacks came in to some bars, they were very much ostracised. And that I found upsetting, and I hadn't really realised. I found it again of course when I went down on location on *What About Bob?* to Virginia, where they're quite openly anti-black.

Mm.

And there were people that we, when we went riding in the forests there, there were people living like slaves practically in little tiny huts. They'd come pouring out of the door and we'd give them rides on the ponies and things, and, but you know, there'd be like, ten in one room.

Mm. It will never change, and, I think eventually there will be a South Africa situation.

Maybe.

And one sees the beginning of it. [break in recording]wrong with...

Your machine?

Well, it, it keeps clipping in and clipping out. I think it's recording, the needles are moving. I think it's some problem with the playback circuit.

[0:14:55]

But, while we're on that subject, do you see approaching Armageddon in, in Los Angeles?

Approaching what?

Armageddon, in Los Angeles, do you see the breakdown of civilisation as we know it?

Not really.

No?

I don't think... I, I mean, I don't think so.

But there is that same kind of segregation in effect there, is there not?

Oh yes there is. Oh yes, yes. Well yes. Certainly there is amongst... Have you come unplugged?

No no no. No, everything's working fine.

Oh right. Yah. Yah, oh yes. Oh there's a lot of unrest. It's very dangerous there, it's a very dangerous place to be.

Yes, terrifies me.

Yah. And I worry about my children constantly. But, there is a segregation amongst the poor blacks but not, I mean not amongst the rich blacks there, I mean, in the restaurants and things you'll see, in bars and everything, they're completely mixed.

Yes, I was thinking more of the, the consequences of the poverty and the homelessness.

And the homelessness is, just extraordinary there.

Mm. The illegal immigration.

And encroaching more, encroaching more on, into Beverley Hills where they've tried to keep it out, and things like that. There was a, a black guy that, quite nice looking actually, that came up to a friend of mine, we were meeting outside the Dome, and he came up in the car park there, now that's a pretty security car park, and asked for money, and John gave him, two dollars or something, and he said, 'I want twenty.' He said, you know, 'That's not going to feed me and my wife and family,' or something. And John hurried away, you know, and he said, 'That's all you're getting,' and hurried into the, the Dome is a very smart restaurant that has a sort of round bar in the centre, where he was meeting me and some other friends. Next thing we know, this man's in the bar, demanding more money off everybody. Well that's, I mean you know, that you wouldn't have seen, I've never seen that before.

White or black, or, or...?

He was black.

Yah. Mm.

But, the fact that he was allowed into the bar. Of course they did, then they came and threw him out. But he looked so respectable, he had sort of, white beard and white hair and, really, nice looking man, you know.

Mm.

I thought he was just a customer, that John knew. And he was actually demanding more money from him.

I do suspect that there will increasingly be a point of explosion of some kind or the other, one sees it from time to time.

Well I think this is probably true. I mean when I went back a few weeks ago, I did, they'd boarded up so much of the, you know, the burnt areas and things that I didn't see, the riot areas, so I didn't see a lot of riot damage, but I think, I probably didn't go in those particular areas a lot.

Mhm.

But, I don't know, it's, it's, you feel a feeling of unrest there all the time underneath the surface.

Yes.

I mean I did before the riots. I mean the areas that, no-go areas that you really don't even drive through.

But meanwhile, up in the Hills there's still a great deal of complacency presumably, that, security systems and private guards and such will...

Yah, more of those, because people are getting more and more nervous about being burgled. But then here it's getting worse isn't it?

Mm.

I mean I notice that coming back after a few years, you know, I put my security system on all the time, and I never used to do. I never even had one.

No, one used to leave one's door open.

And one never... We always did when the kids were small, the door was always open, they ran in and out the front door and, you know.

Mm.

But now I look behind me when I'm leaving my car two streets away when I can't park it. Like you saw, I was on a yellow line this morning, but normally... I drove round about three streets last night, couldn't find anywhere, and I thought, well, I'll keep an eye on it over there. But I don't like walking back down the streets like, at twelve or one o'clock, particularly.

No. No, well you're wise I think.

Somebody said I should put these lights on, which of course they have in America, my brother has them in Kent, that come on when anybody approaches the house.

That's right, yes. Well you can get them here quite easily.

Yes.

Yes. Proximity lights.

Yah. Well, I'm going in another three or four weeks, so, I probably would if I ever came back. But I'm trying to sell the house, the house has been on the market now since Easter. It's not going to sell. It's not even renting which is somewhat surprising, because normally rents...

That's surprising indeed, yes, a marvellous rent I would have thought, yes.

Yes. Yah. I'm sure it will rent, but it's just that, you know, I thought I'd rent it fairly quickly.

[0:19:08]

Mm. Well we mustn't... We'll go down the list. I've got two more on my list and there are subsequent ones I'm sure. This was...

Probably not.

Well this is the last Screen International Yearbook I've got which I think is '88, so you must have done something after that.

Well I did *Masters of the Universe*.

That's the next on my list.

Yes.

And Farewell to the King.

Yup. Well *Masters of the Universe*, I'd always say I never wanted to do a special effects movie, and how right I was actually. [laughs] Because I didn't enjoy doing a special effects movie that much. Because you have to wait around a lot. But, I did it because I was going to do *Fatal Attraction*, and you know, I was really going to do it, and Adrian wanted me to and Sherry Lansing and everybody, and, then the unions just wouldn't let me do it in the end, having said they always wanted me to get into the union and all that. I could get in now, I could have done it if it happened now.

Oh you still haven't?

Oh I'm in the union now, yes.

Right.

I got in on *Masters of the Universe* actually, me and my son who was working with me. Because, they unionised Cannon, and we got swept in, and suddenly having said no no no, they then were feeding us on frankfurters and beer and stuff and trying to get us in. And, so we got in, and we actually got in paying only half fees in the end, because Cannon, they knew we were so badly paid, that we didn't have to pay the whole fee. So, from that point of view. But it was sad not doing *Fatal Attraction*, I've always been sad about that. But, the director of *Masters of the Universe* had never directed before, he does these side shows at Universal.

Yes. We did talk about that.

Oh we've done that have we? I can't remember.

We, we have, we haven't completely covered it. I think there are two areas, one, you said you were always reluctant to do a special effects movie, but this was a special effects movie on the cheap, wasn't it?

Yes.

So presumably that must have affected what you did and how you did it.

But we used the top...

No?

No, because we used the very top people for it actually.

Did you?

Yes. Yah.

It looks a bit grotty, if I may say. [laughs]

Well that's right, they never were, because he never, they never paid him properly in the end. And, also... And I thought very unprofessional actually, because, even, even if I wasn't paid, I'd still want my work to look good. And, he didn't. I can't remember his name, the man's name. A very famous special effects company.

Trumble?

No.

Um... Oh dear. I'm out of touch. Well anyway, it will be...

But anyway, I was very...

...a matter of record.

I had always wanted to work with him, and that was one... Ellen/LN[ph]... Not Ellen/LN Shaw[ph]. A name like that. I always wanted to work with him because of his, Boss Films is their company, but I can't remember his name. And, I was really disappointed because I thought he'd be more professional. I know it's annoying when people say... You know, there was all this argument about whether they'd done it two times, three times, and whose fault it was, and so, Cannon weren't going to pay, and, you know, but I still think you should, in the end if you really saw Cannon wasn't going to pay, you should have still done your work well.

Well, I'm not sure I agree with that, because Cannon after all took so many people didn't they.

Well that's true.

They were taken willingly, and rather stupidly, it was so apparent that, it seems to me, that they were in there as crooks, but there you are.

Well they are crooks, and I checked my pay cheque every week to make sure it was being paid. And funnily enough, it's this picture I haven't been paid on, not... Cannon paid me every week. I wasn't paid for five weeks on Charlie.

Well Carolco is now going down the tubes isn't it.

Yes. Well they, they used my money to pay Technicolor I understand.

Yah.

They sent the money from here, and then when it reached America, where it should have been paid into my, because I'm paid in America, dollars, I don't have any money paid in here at all, they used the money to pay Technicolor or something.

Good Lord.

And it's happened twice now. My agent, I'm very angry, because it's the second time, they certainly should have noticed. Now they're paying me. But, you know, they, they were trying to save money I suppose, the interest and things, and not pay me.

Mm.

But Cannon always paid me. But they owed other people. It's embarrassing working for Cannon because they owe everybody money and nobody wants to, unless they get the money upfront, you can't get your dupes done or anything, and I found that very embarrassing, you know, some, with... I like to have a good reputation and you were getting tarnished because of who you were working for, you know.

Yes.

But..

[0:23:18]

Did you have any direct dealings with the, the Go-Go cousins?

Yes, yes.

Yes? Well tell us about that.

Well, Menahem I... Well I did both, but Menahem I did. Because we were having such problems, and they should have really fired the director, a very charming man and good friend of mine still, but I mean he wasn't a director. He's the only director I've ever worked with whose work was as bad at the end as it was at the front.

[inaudible]. [laughs]

I mean, he had exactly what Hugh Hudson doesn't, had no visual view at all, no eye, storytelling eye at all, absolutely none. Which was why, what happened was that they were, they fired the cameraman instead of the director, and they should have, I think, fired the director, maybe and the cameraman since he was the wrong cameraman, but...

And maybe the finance...

Somehow Gary, they managed... What?

Maybe the finance was coming via the director, in these circumstances.

Well I don't know.

No?

I don't know. But anyway, in the end, we had a lot of meetings and they were going to fire him, and in the end what happened was that they put me on to the floor when they were shooting nights, and I had to go and block all the scenes out with Gary, for all the sequences. And so I was working all night and all day. I was cutting all day because they wanted it cut up to date so they could see what was happening, and then all night I was out on the set, miles away, an hour's drive outside of town. I used to take the dailies to run on a portable machine and then stay and block the scenes with Gary. As soon as my back was turned the new cameraman would anyway start changing things, because I couldn't stay there all night, but sometimes I stayed as much as four o'clock, and went back and had about three hours' sleep. And they eventually paid me a little extra money, because I said, I'm not going to do this without some compensation, because you don't get overtime, you know. So they did pay me a couple of little lump sums of extra money, but very little. But it was interesting in a way working out these scenes, because, you know, you work them out, what you think is a storytelling way, and the... Then the cameraman would come and redo things after you'd gone. And, he would do things what he thought were interesting shots, but had nothing to do with whether you were on the right person at the right time or anything. You know, he'd do great complicated sweeping shots, and you'd be over this side of the room when you wanted to see the reaction from this person with no cover, and things like that.

And all this gets dumped in your lap.

Yah. So I go back next night and we'd have to then, you know, cover it and things. So, from that point of view it was quite interesting, because I was virtually in a way directing a lot of the film, you know. And I got very friendly with all the actors and actresses who've stayed friends since, and we all got... You know, it was all in a way a happy film and yet everything was going wrong on it, you know.

[0:25:49]

Mm. I often wondered in those days what was the point of Cannon. Was it just a crooked operation, or were there people there trying to make good movies? I mean this is a case in point, because this was presumably a viable notion.

They wanted to make a good movie.

Mm.

Yah, oh they did. With, particularly with *Masters of the Universe*, and the people, Mattel, the people who were putting up money for it who make the He-Man and, toys, you know, and all that kind of thing. I mean, it's, it's big on television over there. And I remember that when we previewed it, they were queuing right round the cinema to get into the previews, because of Dolph Lundgren and He-Man and everything. I mean Dolph's name came on, they all cheered and everything. He was, I mean he really was awful, ten times worse than Arnold.

He continues to be, I saw him quite recently in something.

I've only[??] seen him in *Universal Solider* or whatever it's called. But, I'm sure he continues to be. And also not very smart, unlike Arnold. But, people adored him, but, also, but the film, I mean it had basically very bad things. They never had He-Man doing anything particularly interesting in it. I mean he should have done things like lifting up cars and, you know, some scenes like that, but there wasn't anything like it.

Mm.

There was nothing, he wasn't... It was just a very ordinary script.

Indeed, it never went anywhere at all, did it.

Never went anywhere.

No, no.

There was opportunities for it to do things and be quite fun, but it never was.

Mhm.

The only thing that was interesting was Skeletor, you know, played by Frank Langella, I thought he was quite fun.

Yes.

He was the baddie.

Vague memory. But...

He was quite, he was quite good. But the... And when he was on the screen, the whole thing came to life a bit, you know.

Mm.

But the rest of it was very ordinary. And the director was, we wanted... I got a sound man on to do some great sound effects and things, but he only wanted sound effects that sounded like *Star Wars* and all these other films; he didn't want something different, something unusual, he wanted just to always copy things you know. And we came up with some great sounds, because laser guns and things are so boring and they all sound the same. So we came up with all sorts of different noises and things, you know, going on to, what are those machines called, that make sounds? Not, computers is the word I can think of but I don't mean that.

Yes, synchro...

Yes.

Not synchroniser.

Yeah, you're on the right track. But anyway, we went on... And with those we made some great noises and things. And he always wanted us to make more ordinary noises and things. So, it was a fairly disappointing...

Synthesisers.

Synthesisers, yes.

We got it.

We got a lot of synthesiser noises and stuff like that. And, you know, and as I say, the sound editor, and we could have made a lot of fun out of it. He's done some work with my son on his films actually.

[0:28:36]

How about Golan and Globus, how closely at all did they involved with the actual production?

Well, Yoram didn't a lot, though he had a few things to say, but, Menahem did, yes he was always around. And he wanted to come in the cutting rooms and run it on the KEM with me, which I, I managed to resist in the end because he smelt so strongly. He was always dirty, down his front.

Oh dear dear dear.

Yes. Not nice people. Anyway. I, I can't remember but I had a falling-out with them eventually, and they said to me that I should go back to film school and learn how to

cut movies or something, which I thought was quite a nice remark. Since I'd never been to film school and learnt how to cut movies.

Charming.

But we had a... You know, and I wasn't speaking to them by the end, which was not surprising. But upfront they were actually quite good to me, they put me in a cutting room that had a window, because I refuse to work in a cutting room without a window, and, you know, they were fairly, you know, started off all right. And as I say, they wanted me on the floor organising everything and that sort of thing, and...

Well isn't there a sense of the House of Cards when you were there, that it was the year of living dangerously?

Not really, because, you know, when you're working on a movie, you don't, that doesn't really affect you very much. I wasn't even in the same building, I was in a building opposite them.

But didn't friends say, watch out, something...

Oh yes, that's why I said, I checked, I got my agent's cheque, my cheque every week, and that sort of thing. But they always paid me, they never didn't pay.

Yes.

And... Ekland[ph-30:00], his name was. What's his name? Not... I'm going to say Britt Ekland, but the, the special effects man. They didn't pay him you see. Something Ekland[ph]. A marvellous special effects man, as is ay, it was partly due to him. [sound problem] I thought, well if they're using him, they're obviously putting some money into this movie, you know.

It happened again, but it's all right.

Oh.

The break-up.

But it wasn't a great experience, except that I, you know, I liked everybody on it, not... And Ed Pressman, who I had worked with before on *Pirates of Penzance*, was the producer, who was the one that really got me onto it I think. And he kind of, he wasn't getting paid, so he was getting a bit upset I think. They weren't paying his deferments and things. I don't know whether they ever did. I've never asked him. But, you know, and then we previewed it, and of course people were really disappointed in it because they came with high expectations for that kind of movie. And even within that kind of movie it didn't live up to its...

No no no. No. No indeed not.

So, you know, it was a kind of disappointing experience, except for the friends I made from it.

Was it an expensive film? It doesn't look it, but, did it turn out to be?

No, not really, \$6 million I think or something, or... No, I think it was \$10 million in the end actually. So for Cannon it was quite expensive, but for that kind of movie it wasn't.

Right.

Which was why the things were done, the special effects were done cheaply, you know.

Mhm. I've nothing more to ask about that I don't think. Do you have anything more to volunteer?

No, I don't think there's much to [inaudible] really, no.

It, it came and went.

I mean, it made quite a lot of money but nothing like its potential.

[0:31:33]

Right. The next one I've got is Farewell to the King, which again in my recollection looked as if there were all sorts of problems.

Well I never finished cutting it in the end.

Did you not?

No.

No.

I read the... I read several scripts when I finished that, and that was by far the best script I read, and I gave it to my son who was working with me, and the assistant I had working with me, and they all read it, and we all loved the script. It was a terrific script. And everybody said, whatever you do, do not work with John Milius, you will hate him. He's not your kind of person, and he's a bully and he's a this and that and the other, and you won't really get on with him. But it was a three months location in Borneo, and so, rather stupidly, I went for a meeting with John Milius, and he was very charming to me, but, I didn't like him. And he ran down everybody that I admired and liked. And... But he was being his sort of, most charming to me and everything. And so I thought, oh well, maybe it'll be all right. And it had Nick Nolte and Nigel Havers and people in it, and, you know. And three months in Borneo really appealed to me, I love the jungle and everything. So, I followed what was my common sense, which would have told me not to do it. And I went out there, and,

again I had a great time out there, and we had this cutting room that was in a shopping mall, and was, three sides were glass, and you couldn't get anybody to do anything. So on the end I got my crew. I didn't have a very good crew. Well, no I shouldn't say that really, but, Craig who was my first, we picked up out there, who had been travelling around Malaysia and really wasn't competent to do as difficult a picture as that. But it was, he was cheap because he came without any per diem and things. They really double-crossed him. And my second was quite good, Sam, who has worked with me again, he was quite a good second. And then we had to get in a local boy, who was very good actually, he'd only done commercials, from Kuala Lumpur. And we had these two cutting rooms, you know, and we had to... And the boys, I said to them, 'You're never going to get the glass covered in unless you do it yourself.' So they brought a whole heap of brown paper and they pasted up the windows themselves. And we were working in this huge cutting room with stone floor, so I got the production office to get me a couple of rugs to put down under my feet, you know. Because otherwise I, it was standing on concrete all day. And all the equipment, it came, the heads upside-down and, it was, you know, it was really doing...

Local gear that...?

You know, they were doing that on the cheap.

Yes.

Yes, and the guy, the production company were really doing that on the cheap. They were getting equipment from here and equipment from there and, half of it, we had Moviolas that didn't work, and, it was really, a real mess actually, the whole thing. André Morgan, who was the producer, was extremely unpleasant, and, made us use this cheap equipment. And then we got this projector to run dailies on, and they, and that was always breaking down, and... Anyway, then everybody came to dailies, and John Milius didn't want to see them with everybody, so, he used to come down and see them on the KEM, down in the cutting room with us. And that would interfere with your evening completely because, he'd do it to suit himself and his girlfriend,

and, no consideration for people at all. And he was a boorish, vulgar, crude, rude man, and not a very good director.

Of limited talent, I was going to say, yes.

Writer, very good writer.

Mm.

But not a very good director. All he thought about was food and his girlfriend. And, I mean they've got great shots of him up in the middle of the jungle fast asleep directing the picture. The actors would look up and say, 'What do you think?' and, you know, he'd be asleep. And he didn't, he didn't control Nick Nolte at all, who was a very good actor but he does need some help from the director, you know. I thought Nigel Havers actually was very good in it. But... I've never seen the finished film. Because then... Oh, I don't want to go into it, because there was this, we had rows and it didn't, you know, and, he... You know, he told us we didn't have to work Sundays and then suddenly he'd say we did have to, and, the boys would have gone off, and, I had to run stuff with him alone and... Then another evening on a Sunday evening he had us on standby from ten o'clock in the morning and eventually saw the stuff at seven in the evening. It was my assistant's birthday, and we had arranged a little party at eight o'clock. So I said to him, 'Can we go off at eight because we, you know, it's Sam's birthday.' He said, 'Who's Sam?' And Sam had been working with him for like, two months then, was standing... I said, 'That's Sam standing right beside you.' 'Oh yes, yes, OK then,' he said. And then at five to eight he said, 'Put on another reel.' And all he was doing was showing the stuff to his girlfriend. And I said, 'Well it's five to eight and we've got a party.' 'Oh well...' you know, and he was very unpleasant about it, you know.

Yes.

[0:36:06]

And, it got to a point where I was going to leave when we left Borneo, and, I was going to leave and, and you know, and John and I were obviously not getting on. He was... Because I wasn't sucking up to him. He likes people who say how marvellous he is all the time, and I'm not one of those sort of people anyway. And I certainly couldn't do it to him because I didn't think so. And he was always saying, 'Oh isn't that like a David Lean shot,' and this and that. 'Look at that John Ford I've just done.' And one day I said to him, 'How about having a John Milius shot today for a change?' you know, and that didn't go down very well. And, you know, it was...

Sounds like a turning point.

Yah. And then we did a... The turning point was really a row about the fact we could never find him the night before to find out if he wanted to work on the Sunday or not, because he was going round all the clubs trying to find his girlfriend who was standing him up with one of the extras or something, and, you know, it was all very nasty.

I kind of can...

But anyway, I then ran... Then, it came to the point where I was going to leave, and I ran, before we left... And he, he was happy about that really in a way. And then we ran the cutting copy, what I had cut so far, for him, the day before he left I ran all the cut stuff, which was quite a lot, because, I'd managed to cut quite a lot of stuff. And, for John, I have to say, he, it was very difficult for him to say that it was the best rough cut he had ever seen in his life, and thanked me very much for it. And, so he was just, you know, really excited about getting, he'd been worried about the movie but seeing it cut he was really excited about getting, and I came up with some ideas I had and things. And I started to think, maybe it would work. But, we came over to England to cut it. I told André Morgan that the pound, it wasn't going to be viable to come over here any more because of the pound. He'd taken no notice of me. Said, 'You're an editor, not a producer.' You know, you get on with your editing. Of course we got over here, they couldn't afford it. I had employed a whole lot of cutting

staff over here. Because, then John and I sort of, buried the hatchet and said that we'd start again. And, his girlfriend came and said to me, 'You know, John really wants to make it work with you, because he's never been, he's never seen such well-cut stuff,' and all that kind of thing. So I knew, when she actually, who hardly ever spoke to me, came and said that to me, I thought it must be fairly, he really wants to make a go of it with you and things. So I thought, well, I hate leaving a picture halfway through, I'll... And I should have followed my instincts and left then. So I came over to England with it, and we only... And you know, and I employed, got, or was cutting the rest of the picture and got all the opticals in the labs under way and, took on a big sound crew and everything, and then suddenly André Morgan said, 'I'm going to bring you all back to America on Thursday.' I said, 'Well you may be bringing all of them back,' I said, 'but you're not bringing me back.' I said, 'I can't, I've just taken this place, I've got, rented my place there, sold my car.' I said, 'I can't suddenly,' thing. And it sort of blew up into a row, and he, he again said, 'You're not the producer.' Because I said, 'Well if you had listened to me in,' in, thing, 'we wouldn't all be here.' I said, 'You just, because you knew I didn't want to come back to England, you just didn't look into it. Now it's too expensive, you can't afford it and everything, you want to come back, and John doesn't want to come over here, and, all these things.' And I said, 'I'm sorry, but I'm not coming.' So we parted kind of like that then, you know. I said, 'I'm not coming back,' and he... And, you know, he said, 'Well then, then, you're not on the picture any more,' and, you know.

And that was that?

Yah, and that was that. And, also, he had an editor that he liked, John, who hadn't been free at the beginning of the picture, who was now free, Timothy, who's very nice, Tim. And so it worked in, that he could take over the picture. But you see, contractually they had to give me a credit. In fact a lot of the scenes are cut almost virtually the way I cut them. The one problem that the picture had, and which gave him a very good storyline on I thought, he never followed through on, which I think was a mistake. Because at the time he had liked it. But... And then, Tim O'Meara, then Tim couldn't take it and, and left. And then they brought on somebody else, I

can't remember the last editor. A very nice old editor, Warner, Jack Warner was it? And who took it over. So three of us in fact get credits on it. Because... I could have not taken a credit, but on the other hand I had spent by that time four months of my life doing it, and as I say, a lot of my cuts are still in there.

Yes.

So, I thought, I might as well stay on it, you know. So we shared the credit.

It's an inconclusive picture, it always seemed to me.

I've never seen it.

No.

Since it was... I mean I, not because I didn't want to, I just can't... It ran, like you said, so quickly I didn't have time to catch it.

No.

And it never was a success at all. Critics didn't like it, nobody liked it, and... And they changed the story, because it was Nigel's story. It was a botanist's story, and then they changed it to Nick's story.

Mhm. Not a very good story either, I'm sorry to say.

No. The other story, when it was the botanist's story, it was much better.

Yes.

But for some reason they changed that, and he came in and told the story about how he met this man and everything, you know.

[0:41:19]

Milius seems again to be one of those directors in a position of power and they use it for personal therapy or aggrandisement, and, in ways that have, have really no relationship to making film.

Well he's such a lazy man that he doesn't really... I don't know why he bothered. He only directs I think because a director gets so much of the glory.

And the money.

And the money. Yah. But I mean he really is, yes he is a good writer. I love that thing he did with Robert... Well I liked, the one he did with Sean Connery. [pause]
Wind and the Lion.

Ah yes. Yes an early one.

Yes. And I like... And the one that he did, *Jeremiah Johnson*, with Robert Redford, about the wild, too, was a beautiful film I thought. But neither of those were directed by him, or was *Wind and the Lion*? I think may have been.

Yes, I think it was.

But he is a very good writer, but he's not a good director, and he's a fat, lazy man who just wants...

A slob.

A slob, yes, exactly, and just wants those things from life. And therefore I don't know, you know, why he doesn't just write.

Mm.

Because he's got... The film that he did, *Flight of the Navigator* or something, I mean, what's it called, got the most terrible reviews, and never got seen by anybody, even worse than *Farewell to the King* really. And I hear he's working on another script or another something or another out there. I don't know why people go on working with him.

Memories seem very short, don't they.

Yes.

You know, [laughs] people go from one disaster to another.

To another. I know.

Yah.

How are we doing?

We're... Well that's the end of my list. What have you... I'm going to have a break if I may, dash downstairs.

Right, I'll do.....

[break in recording]

[0:42:55]

.....*I Love You to Death*, with Larry Kasdan.

Yes. Is that '88, or, or that far back? It seemed to me a little later, but maybe it came over here, as they so frequently do, you know, six months [inaudible].

Yes. I'm trying to think. I can't remember. I must... I seem to think... Oh I, yes that's right, I did do a film, what was it called? *Listen to Me*.

Yes.

It was called *Mismatch*, and it was directed by, a director whose name escapes me. And it had Kirk Cameron and Jami Gertz in it. It was about a college.

[laughs] Yes, We haven't put our microphones on. It's OK, there was very low level and we haven't really said anything so far, so... Sorry about that, I'm not as organised as I ought to be. Yah.

I did a film called, yes, not a particularly successful film, called *Listen to Me*, which was originally called *Mismatch*. It was about a young people's debating team, directed by, Douglas Day Lewis was it, I think his name was? Not a director who, again a writer, wrote *Officer and a Gentleman*.

One of that family, presumably?

No not... It isn't Day Lewis, it's some, Douglas something. Douglas Day something. I can't remember his name, isn't that awful.

No idea.

It's gone out of my head. And...

A youth picture was this?

It was a Weintraub. Yes, it was a... It was Kirk Cameron, who is a very big star. He does a television show in America. A young man. Probably not known over here really. Do you know him?

No I don't.

No.

No.

I can't remember what show he does, a television show. But he's immensely famous in America, as a, you know, youngish person. But he hadn't done a feature film, this was his first feature film. And Jami Gertz, who's a very good little actress actually, played the girl. And, it was a college film, you know, one, he came from a poor hick family and she came from a rich family and, and they got together.

How novel.

Yeah exactly. And he... And... But, but the novel thing was, it was about a debating team, so it was about something a little more intelligent. And in fact the subject was about abortion really, and, that they were debating about, the big case in America which had been, had come up. And... I'm trying to remember. And then there was a young guy. It was three-cornered, there was the young, smart guy, who was really rather charming, who came from a wealthy family that also was after the girl, you know, and was on the other side, who was the debating champion. And he rather sadly got killed in the film actually. And, it was no great shakes but it had one or two quite nice ideas in it. It had Roy Scheider also in it, playing the professor, the man who guided the family – guided the two kids. But the idea of being about something a little more intelligent, like a debating team, and things, was, you know, as opposed to a sports team or something, was.....

[End of Track 12]

[Track 13]

Right. The guy next door.

Right. Yes, so the guy came in from the cutting room just down the corridor actually from me and said that Bob Harris wanted to talk to me, because they wanted to put back *Lawrence of Arabia* to its original state. [laughs] I just laughed, because I was sure they wouldn't be able to find the pieces. But this guy, Bob Harris, when he got on the phone to me and started talking to me about it, they had found the pieces. And, you know, and they were very keen to, to do it. But, then there were all sorts of legal problems and it never really got going for a time. I think I was on *Masters* when I rang David, because they hadn't approached David. David was in Marbella writing with Christopher Hampton's script of *Nostramo*. So I managed to find him, and I rang him and said that they were proposing to do this, though I didn't know how possible it was, and David said, 'Oh great idea, really exciting.' And we had a long chat. And then, Bob eventually rang him and talked to him about it, and he was very excited about it. Then it must have gone on, on and off, for, until the end of *Farewell to the King*, but, in the meantime I think, there'd been some legal problems between Bob Harris and Columbia or something. And then suddenly it was all on, and they said could I do it? Luckily having had this falling-out with John Milius I was able to go on and do it. And, that's right.

Strange how things work out isn't it

Yes it is.

Your presence there and your availability.

Yews. That's right. So that was fun, I enjoyed that, working with David again was fun and putting it all back. And, you know, when they first started talking to me about it, I couldn't hardly remember the film, but when I, you know, when you start talking and thinking about it, it all comes flowing back to you.

[0:01:35]

Had he mellowed in the meantime?

Well I... David and I...

He was never un-mellow, was he, to you?

Well not with me, not with me. I had always had a good time with him. But, yes, I think he probably had a bit.

Mhm.

But he had said to me one day, we were laughing and joking in the cutting room and he said to me, 'Oh I'd forgotten what fun it was working with you,' you know. Because we, we had always had quite a good time. I mean we'd had a few rough moments, but basically we'd always had a good time.

But he was a grand old man by this time, was he not?

Yes. Yes he was. But the thing was that he looked just fantastic. And we had this cutting room that they gave us at Warner, Hollywood, we were up some quite long stone steps, and Bob Harris said, 'Oh well do you think Sir David will be able to get up and down those steps?' I said, 'Of course he will, no problem.' And sure enough, David was running up the steps; Bob Harris was limping up behind him, [laughs] because he... You know, I mean David was so well then that it was so awful what happened to him afterwards, you know, so sad. Because he was, he was fit in his mind and everything about him, he was so excited about *Nostromo*.

Yes.

And then, you know, I had dinner with him quite a few times, and then the last time he invited me up to the Bel-Air Hotel to have a goodbye dinner and asked me if I'd do *Nostromo*, he said, 'Would you want to do *Nostromo*? Because,' he said, 'you know I interfere a lot,' and this and that. And I said, 'Yah, yes.' I'd read the script by then. And it got better, the script, actually. I said, 'Yes because it would be fun working with you David, and, you know, we have a good relationship and,' you know, and that sort of thing. And I said, 'I know that you like to do a lot yourself and things like that, but that's fine by me.'

Would you turn down a prestigious project of that kind with the expectation there might be clashes or personal problems with the director?

I might.

You might?

I might, yah. I turned...

Because, enormously tempting I would have thought to, to do something which was obviously going to be important, even as a failure, you know.

Yes, but you... But you didn't even... I didn't know that... I mean yes, I suppose so, but to work with David I suppose, I wouldn't turn down, but, one had to get clear the situation and the relationship and that sort of thing.

Right.

Because I had moved on since I did *Lawrence*. I mean, I was a kid when I did *Lawrence*.

Mhm.

So... And David was aware of that. So, you know, we kind of worked it out that it would work really well. And I had always... David seemed really well then, and great. But later on when he wasn't well I realised that I would be more of an asset even, because if he had got taken ill or hadn't been able to finish it, I at least knew the way he liked things done and cut and, you know, and could have been a huge help to him.

Yes.

So, I was glad that I had said yes, and the way that it looks as if it's going to work out, I would actually have been practically indispensable I think in a way to him on that. But anyway, it wasn't to be in the end. But... So, two years actually I manipulated my career round doing *Notromo*, because it kept being on, so I would say... It was useful in way, because I could turn down films I didn't want to do by saying I was going to do *Nostromo*. But also, a couple of films I think that I had, I can't even remember what, I didn't do because I wanted to do *Nostromo*.

What were the delays, was it getting the finance in place, or...

Yes.

Which had to do with his age as much as anything...

Yes.

...rather than the subject.

Yes. And then he was taken ill, and then once that, then it got... You know, which wasn't long after that. He came back from *Lawrence*, and we had, he came over for the premiers, and I mean he was in a great form. We went to, they were very kind, they took me to New York and Washington for all the premiers, and I was up on the stage and...

Marvellous.

You know. And then eventually they took me to Cannes for the premiers, and that was when David was first ill. I went to Cannes. And Larry Kasdan, who adored David Lean and had gone into the film industry, like Spielberg, because of seeing *Lawrence* when he was a boy, said, 'Of course you must go to Cannes for the opening and everything,' and I went to Cannes. And we were up in, near Seattle, at Tacoma, on *I Love You to Death*, and he let me have four days off, and I flew to Cannes for the... And David didn't turn up, David was ill with flu, so they said. And that was really disappointing, because it was like having *Hamlet* without the prince. And, Tony Quinn came, but Peter O'Toole didn't, and Omar was there and things, but nevertheless it wasn't the same. And, you know, we just thought David had flu and he had wanted to come down and he hadn't been able to in the end, quite well enough, but of course, it was the beginning of the end in a way. Because they gave him this cortisone for this germ that he had picked up. Because he went back from America, after the previews, to do recces for *Lawrence* – for *Nostromo*, in Spain, and that's where he picked up whatever it was. Sandra didn't go with him, because she had had a bad back. She didn't even go to the New York – to the LA premier, because she had this bad back. So she hadn't gone on the recces with him. So, she always reckons if she'd gone he would never have picked up this disease. I don't know whether or not. And he came back, and they gave him the, what may have been or may not, the wrong dose of cortisone. And he was, I mean it affected his brain at one time as well as his body, it blew up and things, and... But then his mind cleared, but then his body never got a hundred per cent right, he was always in a wheelchair basically. He could walk a bit and he was walking up and down stairs at the end, and, he, I see pictures of him standing that she's got of him in the garden in the south of France and things where he was obviously walking around a little bit. And having meetings with Columbia, Mike Medavoy, who were backing the picture, and, you know, and Serge Silberman and, it was all going on. And then he got this last illness, his throat started going. Because they wanted Kevin Kline, and I was the sort of intermediary as Kevin's a friend of mine, and Kevin rang to speak to David about the film and couldn't, David couldn't

speak. And he had to speak to Serge Silberman, and he said, 'I don't think I can do the picture because I don't think David's well enough to do it. I couldn't talk to him,' and, things. And he backed out of it in the end. But anyway, that, that... So that's what I did in that period.

[0:07:19]

Then I went on to do this *Listen to Me*, which kind of fitted in; because I had come off *Farewell to the King* and hadn't expected to be free, I took this picture as a sort of, you know, stopgap as it were. And then I did *I Love You To Death*. And when I was offered *I Love You To Death*, I was offered that and *Red October* at the same time. Which is sad, that, because I'd like to have done both those films actually. *Red October* in a way was the more prestigious film, but on the other hand, I'd always wanted to work with Larry Kasdan, who always has the same editor. And the fact that she had gone off to cut her husband, John Bailey, the cameraman's film, meant there was this little slot to work with him.

Mhm.

And, I never thought the script was that great, but, I just admire his direction. And it had a great cast, you know, Kevin Kline and William Hurt and Keanu Reeves and Joan Plowright and, and Tracey Ullman, I mean it was just... River Phoenix: a fabulous cast.

Mm. Mm.

And it was a fun, quite a fun story.

Plowright too, wasn't she in it?

Pardon?

Plowright was in it too?

Yes, Joan, yes, she and I have become bosom pals since then. [pause] So, you know, I made that, I kind of made that choice. Also they were squabbling a lot about money on *Red October*. But I really upset them. I don't think John McTiernan would ever offer me another movie, which is quite sad because I think he's quite talented.

Why did you upset him, over the money, or...?

Over the fact that I didn't do the movie.

Ah.

So though I always said it was the money...

You turned him down. [laughs]

...I think he thought... And Larry DeWaay was the producer on that. I've met him since and, he was very, they were very upset. Because they had seen hundreds of editors, and, for some reason, I don't know why, he picked me. And they'd rung round, and they turned down all these other editors, you know, and said that I was going to do it. And everybody thought I was going to do it.

And you weren't, you weren't supposed to turn them down.

Well no. I think this was it. So, you know, it got, I think, it was a pity because as I say... You know, some other time I could have done both those movies, so, it was...

Yah.

The only other choice I ever had like, similar to that, I chose the right one, which was between *Lawrence*, I think I told you, *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Lolita*. And I chose *Lawrence*, because, you know, it was interesting to work with Stanley Kubrick. But anyway.

[0:09:33]

I'm aware of time.

Yes.

So what time do you have to be off? It's now five minutes to twelve.

About, about quarter or half past twelve, something like that.

Right, OK, so we'd better push a bit, because this is our last session.

Yes. Yah. Yah.

[0:09:48]

There are what, two areas at least to cover. Certainly Charlie.

Yes. Yah, right.

Although, it's, it's unfinished at this point. Is there anything before Charlie that we ought to go into?

Well *What About Bob?* I think I talked about mostly, didn't I? Did I talk about *What About Bob?*? Because that was what I did before *Charlie*. I did *I Love You To Death*.

You, you touched on it, you mentioned it, yes.

And then I did *What About Bob?*

Yah, I think, I think we went into it as much as...

Yah.

Unless there were very specific problems or...

No, I mean it was...

...or joys from your point of view.

Not really, not. I mean, it was a lovely location, best, other than Borneo it was the best location I've ever been on. Because we went to Virginia, on Smith Mountain Lake, and we were on this fabulous lake, and Bill Murray lent me his speedboat every day, and we were swimming and water-skiing and... The cutting room was right, [laughs] its own room right on the edge of the, of this lake.

It's a terrible life isn't it. [laughs]

Three months we had here. You know, miles from anywhere actually, not great food and things, but I mean the most beautiful location you could ever imagine. Frank Oz described it to me, and I couldn't believe it could be so nice. And, then we went for three months up to Connecticut, because he wanted to cut near his family, his wife had just had another, new baby, well she had it on the film actually. And, so that was pretty, miles from anywhere and rather remote. And that was real small town America, living there. Small shops. Very pretty.

I love it.

Lovely area.

I adore it. Yah.

Yah, I loved it too. But we were living in a kind of motel, and we had, a conference room was the cutting room, and, I had my own little, duplex really, I mean I had, my bedroom was upstairs and looked down on a sitting room, and I had a little kitchen

and things. The boys were in more, more ordinary rooms, because it was a Disney picture, there wasn't a lot of money. But... And we did the director's cut there, and then we moved back into Disney itself. Which actually was quite pleasant. A lot of people have had bad experiences with Disney; they were always very nice to me. And, you know, they took, as I say, four weeks off the film, and we had a lot, twelve previews. Can you imagine twelve previews? I mean it was crazy.

All in the Los Angeles area?

Yup.

Yes.

Yup, we never went away anywhere. Disney don't. They go Pasadena mostly, and that kind of area, you know, they go around, Orange County and things.

Yes. San Bernardino, did you get there?

No, we didn't go there. I'm trying to think of the other places. Oh Encino or somewhere like that we went, a couple of them.

Right.

And...

[0:12:12]

And, although we touched on previews, in this case did you find them productive, or not?

Well for the, for the last[??], [inaudible] a little bit to begin with. A couple of previews have been quite useful. And we had a linking story in that, rather like Charlie does in fact, the doctors, it was told like a parable in a way. And... But they

were so badly directed, these doctors, so badly acted, that every preview we had, everybody said they didn't like them. In the end... So I suppose in a way, it was interesting in a way the way we cut it, because, in the end we took the doctors right out, and the whole story was built round them. They started off the story by pointing out and saying, that used to be the doctor's house, and it was just a burnt rubble. And we did an interesting thing actually, because we showed the ruins upfront at one preview, then we cut it without showing it until the house actually blows up at the end at another preview. Got exactly the same marks. Didn't seem to make the slightest bit of difference.

Mm.

They were always quite high marks, not very high, not as high as it, actually, because, it opened better than the marks ever were. But it just shows what you can do. And then just at the very last moment, we cut the doctors right out of the whole film, and made the film work without them being in.

It is quite extraordinary isn't it what can disappear.

Yah. Yah.

And not be noticed.

And I don't know whether that helped. It certainly, the film, as I say, did better than its preview figures would have said it would do, not a lot but certainly better.

Yah.

They always tried to get the figures up, but whatever we did, they never really went up a lot. And then, Frank Oz seemed to get a death wish and started cutting all the funny stuff out, particularly Richard Dreyfuss, he took a great dislike to Richard Dreyfuss, and all his best... One of his best scenes is still out, we never got it back in.

And Disney said, 'Well...' You know, because I talked to them about it. But it was lucky we did take those four weeks off, because otherwise I think Frank would have taken everything out by the end. I think his friend Steve Martin saw the movie, because, I know he sneaked in and saw it. And I thought it was very rude to come in and not say hello to people and just sneak in and sneak out again.

Mm.

I thought that was... I never have liked Steve Martin actually. And I like him less now. And I'm sure he said things, and I'm not so sure that he was right, and whether he was doing it on purpose to make Frank not have a good film or, because he wasn't in it, or what, I don't know, but Frank came back and, you know, and started slashing all sorts of great scenes out and cutting down. Which everybody was loving, Richard's performance.

Mm. Well it's astonishing.

He was, you know, sort of, flattening out Richard's performance and things, making him really ordinary, and, the whole thing went crazy. We had this producer, Laura Ziskin, who had produced *Pretty Woman*, and has now just done *Hero*, she's a very successful producer, but, she and Frank didn't get on, and it was a picture completely split down the middle. Bill Murray sided with Frank, and Richard Dreyfuss sided with Laura. So it was one of the few films... And I managed to stay friendly with both sides, and I think that was fairly remarkable and not easy to do, by being honest I think. I mean, you know, I agreed with whichever side I really agreed with and didn't play one against the other, because there wasn't, to my mind, any point. Bill Murray threw Laura in the lake fully clothed one day, which she took in quite good spirits. And then, another time he broke up the set, because he lost his temper, and she... And then, Frank Oz had a nervous breakdown in the middle of it and went berserk and started throwing things, and, and then forbade Laura on the set. So eventually she went home. And then Richard Dreyfuss said he wasn't going to stay on the picture if she went home. [laughs] Actually it was quite an interesting picture to talk about.

Your everyday American movie.

That's right. So actually, we had a lot of problems with it. We shot at least a third of the picture there and then, you know, because, I suppose Frank is... I mean Frank can't make up his mind what he's going to have for breakfast, let alone about directing a movie. I mean he changed his mind all the time. Warner Bros tell this story about him, when he came on to *The Little Shop of Horrors*, and they, and they invited him to have breakfast or something, and he couldn't make up his mind whether to have orange juice or grapefruit juice. And then he asked where the grapefruits came from, [laughs] and things. I mean you know. And then we had this lunch with, Bill Murray came out to Connecticut to have a look at the film and, and he took us all off out to lunch, which was nice, in his stretch limo that he had borrowed for the day, or hire for the day. And, you know, Frank ordered first by mistake, so he ordered a whole heap of things, and then, when we started ordering he ordered all our things as well. [laughs] So he ended up, I remember, with four salads.

Manic.

Oh yes. It was a great, crazy picture. And, you know, we had a producer who wasn't really very strong and a director who couldn't make up his mind. So it was, you know, the whole picture was crazy from the word go. As I say, we were reshooting. Richard... Bill Murray threw a glass at Richard Dreyfuss, because they couldn't... We shot two endings, because we shot Richard's ending and Bill's ending. And then Bill Murray had the script rewritten and, what's that woman called? May. Ayleen May, is she called?

Actress, or...?

Oh well she's a writer now, but she used to be... Oh, you'll know her name. She's a director, she directs movies. You'll know who I mean. Did *Heartbreak Kid* and things. Ayleen...

I don't know, I...

Oh you would know her.

Nothing....

She's frightfully [inaudible-17:50].

Nothing is clicking. No. We...

Anyway. It's quite... Well she was flown in, this woman, to rewrite Bill Murray, by private jet, and then she had to go back to New York, to the dentist, so she was flown back by private jet, and back again. And I think there's one line of hers left in the film, which happens to be the funniest line in the movie, but nevertheless it was an awful lot of money to pay for. May, somebody May. She was part of, was it Mike Nichols and her? I don't...

Oh. Elaine May.

Elaine. There you are.

Elaine May. Well forgive me, yes.

Ah. Well I got it right.

Yes, yes you did.

Elaine May, yes, she was flown down. Because I went boating with Bill Murray on the first day we got there, and I said, 'Oh it's a fun script, I'm really going to enjoy this.' And he said, 'I think it's a lousy script.' And I thought, to accept \$8 million for

a lousy script. He said, 'I've got Elaine May coming down tomorrow to rewrite it.'
He had already been shooting a week.

She's another one who can't make up her mind.

Yes.

So that's extraordinary, the two of them together.

Yah. She seemed...

It doesn't sound like a Disney picture. I always think of Disney as being very well organised in that respect and...

Well we were a bit... We had a Disney man on there who kept an eye on us, who nobody took any notice of, and then eventually, was it Bill Murray took... He was friendly with Richard, so Bill Murray took against him, and forbade him to, because we had, you know, video assist on the set, forbade him to look at the video on the set, nobody was allowed to look at the video, or Bill Murray would walk off. I mean it was an extraordinary film. And Bill, and the big scene between the two doctors when they first meet, the psychiatrist and the doctor, which is the big scene that sets the whole thing up, they weren't speaking to each other.

[0:19:27]

The funnier movie obviously was, was the one off-screen.

[laughs] Yes. That's true. It's pretty funny on-screen.

Yes.

Some very funny things in it.

Oh I wish I'd seen it now.

Well you can get it out on video.

Yah, I suppose I can, yah.

It's being advertised in the shops with little plaques and things, you know.

Mhm.

It's been quite high up here I think, on the video charts. I don't know...

I don't follow those so I wouldn't know, but... Oh.

No. No no, it's, it's been quite well done. Much better than it did in the cinema.

I seem to think I made a conscious decision not to see it, but I, I can't really remember why.

Well, I don't think it appeals to English audiences, but if, you know, if you've got a few friends in one evening, young friends really, because it appeals... It appeals to kids. I mean friends of mine's seven- and eight-year-old kids say it's their favourite film of last year.

Yes.

But we didn't make it for kids. [laughs] I mean, Frank was quite shattered that kids liked it. He was making it as a statement on something.

[0:20:18]

It, it's a lovely story. But I think we'd better move on now, we've got ten minutes more or less to, to talk about Charlie.

Right. Charlie.

Right. Unless you want to...

What do you want to hear about Charlie?

Well, I suppose, we're in a novel situation of, of a picture that isn't completed, so we don't quite know what's going to happen to it eventually. Although you...

Well it's nearly completed.

Yes.

We've dubbed it once, and previewed it.

Right. Well bring us to this point, bring us forward to...

I think I've talked quite a bit about the fact of cutting it, preview and thing, and how we've got to cut it down. I mean those are the...

Well we've done that off-tape. I don't think actually we've got it onto take.

Oh I thought we did that on tape.

No. No we haven't talked a lot about...

I thought I'd brought it into...

I mean we, we mentioned the fact you had to cut it down.

Yes. Yah. Well I thought I did, but maybe I didn't. You know, that we, I had to make it two hours fifteen; you know, after the previews went so well, we thought we wouldn't probably have to cut it down, but we have had to cut it down. And, that's what we've been doing. Dickie's now gone off to Hawaii to shoot *Jurassic Park*, and he's coming back next week I think, and we have some, a little bit more narration to do, both with Tony Hopkins and with Robert Downey Jr. And so we've got to redub quite a lot of it. We also have some more music to do with John Barry, because he did a lovely sort of, a theme for the sad theme, but he didn't do very good comedic music. And so, I don't know that he can do very good comedic music, but we're keeping our fingers crossed. Because, you know, we do need some.

What are the...

And shooting some more music on the 19th.

Right.

And then we're going to do a redub, and then I leave immediately for my new movie.

[0:21:58]

What do you perceive to be the hurdles, the obstacles in tackling a subject like Chaplin?

Well basically, because it was too much to put into two and a quarter hours or even three hours.

Right.

There's too much story. He's the most interesting man. I mean I've never been a Chaplin fan. I prefer, I think, Buster Keaton. So, you know, it wasn't until I started reading David Robinson's book on Chaplin that I realised what an extraordinary life he had. I mean, if you made it into, made it fiction, you, I mean you couldn't really

believe it. It's more, it's more strange than fiction, from the time he started as a five-year-old, taking over from his mother, who collapsed on the stage, and because he was such a great mimic, and she had taught him the song, he went on and sang it to an audience of soldiers in Aldershot at the age of five. And then, you know, being in and out. I don't want to tell you the story because it'll spoil the film, but you know it anyway because you wrote that excellent article.

Did you like that?

Oh I did.

Oh, yes.

I meant to say to you, I'd forgotten because I read it so long ago. Very good. I mean you know what an interesting life he led.

Mm. Mm.

And there's more than you can possibly tell. So the film's worst fault is, it's episodic. I heard yesterday, I rang New York about something else, some friends of mine there, and a friend of theirs had seen it in LA, and they said they loved it. And the only thing that worried them was that it was episodic, that you don't... Because it's episodic, you don't ever get to know the other people. You get to know a bit about Charlie, but you don't really get to know the other people, because they come and go. And you don't really, in a way, get to know what Charlie thinks about the other people in... You know. And that's, I think, its main fault. It's not funny enough, but then, it should have had, somehow it should have had a couple of really good belly laughs in it. It's got a lot of chuckles.

Is it about him, or, or...

Him.

...or the films he did?

Him. Story about him. The man behind the mask is what it is really. It's not about the tramp. And people who don't like Charlie and don't go to see it because they think it's about the tramp, it's not about the tramp at all. I mean it obviously comes in, but it's just one other episode. It's about the women in his life and his childhood and his, when he was a teenager and, you know, it traces him right the way through to the, him, you know, going to the Oscars.

[0:24:08]

I think it's too early to talk about it. We'll have to at some stage squeeze in another session on, when you're over again.

Yah, I think it's too early to, to really.

Yah.

Because, you know, we've got currently the Queen coming to the premier in December so it's having a big send-off here. And, big premiers in New York and LA, an opening in, on Christmas Day. They're going to platform it, which is a bit more expensive but they think that's the way to put it out.

Right.

And then it'll go wide in, like, January and things. So that, TriStar are very excited about it, but, you know, I just keep my fingers crossed, I don't know what... You know, I know that, I was very impressed by the reaction of the American audiences, not by their cars necessarily, though, you know, as you probably know, the numbers are up in the eighties for very good and excellent, like eighty-two in LA, which was, you know, kind of, a slightly different audience, so they decided to do another preview with it and took it out to Costa Mesa, which is, you know, in Orange County

in the sticks. And everybody said, 'Well, you know, it won't go quite so well as in Hollywood,' and that sort of thing, and we were all prepared for the worst, and it got eighty-seven. So I mean, it went even better there. But it wasn't that... The audience were so still. I know American audiences, they go in and out getting popcorn and stuff.

Yes. Yes.

And they hardly did.

Oh that's fascinating.

They were very grasped. And, many people have said that it was much better than they expected. I mean that has been the most, you know, like, something comes out of previews always; the thing that's come out of this is the fact that it's much better than people expected. So people not expecting it are not going to go to it unless they can sell it really well. They've got to sell it really well, and they've not got to sell it on the tramp. They've got to sell it on being the story of a man.

Mhm.

You know? And I think it will not appeal to the large mass male audience of sixteen to twenty which is the biggest picture-going, maybe; the more intelligent it may, but you know, the unwashed masses as they say, it probably won't. But it will I think bring out a very large audience of young marrieds who will think it's worth getting babysitters to go out and see.

[0:26:13]

Movies do seem to find an audience, if they are well enough marketed and, and promoted.

Yah. This needs very careful mar... and I don't know that they've got on to it yet. And they know this, they're aware of it, but I don't know that they've thought of a gimmick. I mean I thought of an idea, which is kind of crazy, but it's the sort of idea that they should go for, which is to have a tie-up with McDonald's. And have a pair of free seats, you know, for somebody to win a pair of free seats every day, so you get that kind of middle-class audience, young marrieds, who go there a lot, in, in free seats. You sell... And also you give little bowler hats and sticks to the children and things, and you do, try to get to that audience level. And get then in. Because then you've got your word of mouth going, and that's where I think it will score, because people will go, will enjoy it, and will then say to their friends to go. And so that's the kind of crazy idea, and I'm sure they're not going to do it, but that's what they should be doing. They shouldn't be looking to an audience, again, like we did on *I Love You To Death*, that isn't going to come and see Charlie anyway, which is I think the young teen, males, you know. My son's *Hellraiser III* had a ninety-five, very good and excellent, amongst the young males, [laughs] and that's the sort of film they're going to go and see isn't it. Opens on Thursday.

Here or there?

There.

There.

In LA, yes, with a big premier. That's one of the reasons I was going back.

Yes. Was it shot there?

Yes. Yes, special effects were done here, but it was shot there.

Yes.

So I'm very excited about that. I get more excited about my kids' films than I do my own actually.

Yes. Well, indeed. I'm conscious of the fact, well, we're toward the end.

Yes.

[0:27:46]

Shall we do a peroration? I did want to talk about Dougie, and indeed what your sons are doing. I think we mentioned earlier that you seem to have started a dynasty.

[laughs] Yes. Well Anthony's doing, he's just done *Hellraiser III*, which as I say is going to open on Thursday, Miramax are releasing it. And, you know, I'm keeping my fingers crossed. He's already gone straight on to *Warlock II*, which he has finished shooting already, they finish this weekend.

How old is he?

He's thirty-three.

Uh-huh. Oh that's neither young nor old, is it?

No. No no.

It's just about the right age I think, to have the authority.

Yes. He's done... This is his fifth film. Both the *Waxworks* he wrote himself. He's had some good reviews in magazines so far for *Hellraiser*, which he hasn't had much before. But... So we're, you know, I'm hopeful that he will go on to now bigger and better movies, which I'm sure he will. He's with William Morris, the agents, now, and that sort of thing.

Mhm.

So I think that...

Well this obviously is a key film in his career.

I think so, this is a key film I think, yah. And, my daughter's editing, having done a theatre course at Warwick University, which, she really wanted to go into theatre at one time, and she never wanted to go into editing, because I was an editor, she didn't want to follow my footsteps. So she kind of fell into it sideways, and she's, was going to India, or is going to India, to do quite a big movie, it's just been postponed a little bit but she will, it is supposed to be going. So she's cut a couple of small films so far. Seems to be making... And my younger son is, edits for his brother. He's sort of second editor really. Because, he worked with me on several films. And he's also just written and directed his own half-hour video film that he's just done, that he's about, trying to get edited, because he's busy doing this other film and he hasn't got time to do it. And he loved directing, and so maybe he'll go in the same way. But it's not a horror film, it's more a little story film, you know. Because Anthony's always loved horror ever since he was a tiny boy, I mean you know, he's always been into horror. He loved telling horror stories. He loved watching films that frighten him. And it's always been his kind of, you know...

Does he get that from you, or from his father? [laughs]

[laughs] No, from his father.

His father.

His father. I went to see...

His father did the same, didn't he. [inaudible-30:00] blood.

Yes. I went to see *Psycho* with Douglas and another friend of his, and they were both clutching my hand, [laughs] because they were both so terrified. And thoroughly enjoyed it, you know.

[0:30:09]

Yes. It's a pity we've had no chance to talk about Douglas.

Well we've got a few minutes.

OK, all right. In a few choice words then, since, he, he died prematurely. So...

A very underrated director I always think actually.

Yes. Yes, absolutely.

I think, on lots of levels.

Mm.

I mean, I don't know why he was, because he was... He, he was supposed to be a little bit difficult with producers, but never really, I mean you know. And I thought a very good visual director too. I mean he had a great knack of, of telling stories with his films, and his commercials were excellent. I remember when he won the Palme d'Or at Venice, I mean it was so exciting. I don't remember being that excited about winning the Oscar actually as I was when he won that. It was so unexpected, I don't think I realised he was doing so well in commercials at that time, it wasn't... It was something that I very foolishly pooh-poohed a lot, you know. Now I look back on it, it was not, not a fair thing to do, you know, because he was doing really well there, and I didn't rate commercials very high. And the work he was doing there was very interesting, and I think helped him a lot in his features later on.

Right. Well the early commercials in this country I think, first of all there was that snobbism about ITV or Independent Television as it was called.

Yah. Yah.

And, I mean by and large the work was, was pretty awful. But, gradually it became a minor art form.

Gradually they got better. Yes, that's right.

Yes.

And I think he, eventually he was using commercials to do quite a few things that he was trying to do in his features, you know.

Mhm.

I mean I thought his best film as a matter of fact, I know *Theatre of Blood* is kind of remembered because it's very much a cult film in America, and when Vincent Price had a retrospective recently he showed that film and spoke very highly of Douglas, and invited all the children to the, for the evening and things, which was nice. And... But I always think *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, his first picture, was a, a little masterpiece in its way, I thought for a first-time film it was a beautifully made and conceived film. But you know, the subject was way ahead of its time.

Mhm.

And black comedy really doesn't, like *I Love You To Death*, it doesn't seem to be a thing that catches on with the public really. It got very good reviews.

Yes. I think it was, the play in a sense was ahead of its time.

Yes. Yah.

Because it was always done in a mealy-mouth fashion in this country.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

I don't say the movie... Well actually the movie was not as bold as it might have been.

No.

But that might have been Doug Kentish rather than Doug Hickox.

Yes, it may have been. It may have been. Or... I think they, John McEnery would have been better than Peter McEnery as the boy, who Douglas originally wanted.

Mhm.

But, the company, I can't remember who it was now...

Yes, you don't get the feeling of, of the, the boy being as evil, so... Yah.

That's right, and I think with John McEnery you would have got that. So it did soften it a bit by having Peter, I think. But I don't know, I just thought that the way he conceived it and did it... And I was more involved in that one than the later ones, you know.

Mhm.

But, he was just about to do a film with Peter O'Toole and things when he died. Because Peter spoke to me at the premier, you know, the reconstruction premier of *Lawrence* and said, 'So upset about Dougie, because we were going to do this film together.' [laughs] I didn't, I didn't even know about that. So I think his career was

about to pick up again. He had had this script he'd done with Annabel, his second wife, which has never been made, and he had spent a lot of time working on that, and I think wasted a lot of time working on that when she should... People actually said to me, they thought he had left the business, because he was, you know, trying to get this, I can't remember what it was called now, film going. And... *Love Bite*. And Annabel's tried to get it going since actually, and I think the children would quite like to do it, Anthony, who probably could do it. But she was looking for, you know, I don't know whether you know Annabel.

No I don't.

I mean she was looking for Roman Polanski and people like that; she didn't want to have an unknown director. But it would have been nice for the children to do it as a tribute to their father.

Yes, yes indeed. Yes.

Well they may still, because she, you know, she was into all these big directors and it looked as if it might get taken up, but it never did. And he wasted a lot of time working with her on that. I actually got him the job with Otto Plaschkes on the Sherlock Holmes film that he did, because, he said, well is he not directing any more? I said, 'Yes, of course he is Otto. And,' I said, 'he loves Sherlock Holmes, he's always loved him.' And Otto got on to him and he did the movie. But I think he was ill-advised somewhere along the line. I think, Annabel had the idea, and Douglas too, that, you got on by the people you knew, and the, giving dinner parties and things like that. But you really get on basically on your work, you know, I think. I mean he was always getting at me because I didn't socialise enough, but, you know, and give enough dos for him and things, but, you know, I was cutting movies, bringing up a family and things, so I didn't have a lot of time.

Mm.

So, they spent a lot of time giving big garden parties and things like that, and it never led anywhere.

Right.

[0:35:07]

I mean I honestly, and I say this because I believe it, but I mean I think he'd have done much better had we stayed married, but, you know, the marriage wound down. It wasn't because he found anybody, I mean it wasn't because of Annabel, he found her afterwards. I mean our marriage just, we kind of grew apart and split, which was sad. But I think, looking back on it, that we should have made more effort to stay together, and I think that his career would have been much better had we stayed together.

Do you think possibly though, he was more acerbic toward those who, who might have helped him than, than maybe you think now?

Well I think that he was. And I think that I could have, you know...

You would have softened that, or...

Softened that, and, and...

...looked after that end of things, yah.

Yes. And I think that I could have maybe stopped everything. Because, Bill Franklin, who was always a good friend of his, didn't get on particularly well with Annabel, but, he always tells about, some story about how she was telling these, bumped into some people on the pavement saying that Dougie was the coming Roman Polanski and all this sort of thing, you know. I mean ever so stupid to say things like that.

Yes. But there was a great deal of talent there, without a doubt.

Yes there was. This was, this was true. This is why I think that he, it was so sad that he died so young.

Mm.

I mean I think it's a terrible waste. I mean, because, at his age, he still had twenty years of good movies in him still, you know.

Mhm.

And I think would have taken on... He came over to Hollywood and had a really rotten time, kept, about to do things and then they didn't come. He really had a very sad life, the last few, couple of years, I think.

Did he have good representation, or, that may be part of the problem?

Well he, he did, and he didn't. Yes, I'm sure they weren't putting him... But they did these mini-series, and, though he wasn't choosing to do them, he did them very well. And he was very friendly with Judith Krantz, and then suddenly they decided to go with somebody else for a change on one of them.

It's a heartless business isn't it?

It's a heartless business, you know. And she felt very bad about it, because she felt she contributed to his death I think, because she felt he should, you know, that he'd got so depressed and everything. And he went off and did this *Dirty Dozen*, which he didn't want to do, and, things, and he was only going to do the pilot, which is kind of all right, but then nothing else came up. And they'd moved into this big house which, I don't think Douglas ever really wanted to move in, and never lived in in fact. And... So he had to keep the money going. So that's the other thing, he wouldn't have had those kind of problems had he been with me all the time, so...

Mm, mm. Mm.

[0:37:28]

I feel that, you know, I feel sad about it really, because I just think it should have...

Well understandably, especially in the light of, of your eminence as it were.

Well I don't know about that.

Oh yes, that's [inaudible].

But you know, I just feel that's, we could have been a great, we should have not been so hasty, we should have tried to work, me particularly, I was the worst, I mean I was the one who wasn't making any effort to make it work really at the end, and I think we should have actually, you know, tried to make it work, and maybe gone to see marriage guidance or something like that. But somehow in those days one pooh-poohed things like that.

Yes.

One didn't think of doing things like that. But maybe we should have got some help and got it worked out. Because there was nothing really basically wrong in a way, I think, that couldn't have been repaired, particularly for the children, it was very traumatic for them. Douglas always buried his head in the sand and pretended to think that it wasn't, but it was. And, they were lucky in a way because, we stayed reasonably friendly, and particularly towards the end we were very friendly. And, so, and the kids always saw him, he came in and always, he was always in here. Though we were separated he was always here. Which was nice for the kids, irritating for me [laughs] but nice, but nice for the kids, you know.

[0:38:39]

Yes. It's a sad sort of resolution to our series of chats.

Yes, that's true.

We're ending on a down note.

That's true, we should talk about something more cheerful. We should talk about how well the kids are doing.

Yah.

How immensely proud he would be of them.

True. And obviously, there's a lot of his input into, into that.

Yes, I think so. Yah.

His genes as well as your genes contribute.

Yes, I think particularly in Anthony's case, I think Anthony follows in his footsteps a lot more than he does in mine, and his whole outlook on life I think is a lot like Douglas's actually.

Mhm.

And... No, it's sad, because as I say, he would be, really enjoy them now and the fact that they're doing so well and everything, and... So, yah, I think, you know, we must have done something right between us, with them somewhere, because, you know, they're doing well.

[0:39:26]

Well, at some future stage I hope we'll do another reel of tape and talk about the movies you've cut in the meantime.

Yah.

And Charlie, and Nostromo, let's hope Nostromo finally gets going.

Maybe, maybe. I mean, we've had a couple of meetings about it since with Robert Bolt and, Sandra Lean who wants to get involved in it and things, and, you know, John Box and Maggie Unsworth, we've all had meetings and things and talked about it. But I don't know whether it'll ever get made. It's very difficult for a director to step in to David's shoes.

Especially if the script has to remain a monument to, to him.

Yes, exactly.

Yah.

So, I mean I have mixed views about it. I mean when I'm with Sandra I pretend I'm very enthusiastic about doing it, but, to be honest with you, I have mixed views about whether it should be done or not.

I think probably it's almost impossible for a director of standing to...

Take it on. Yah.

...come in and say, 'Right I'll shoot this.'

That's right. Because I was talking to Larry Kasdan about it, because he's, we've become good friends and everything, and, and he was saying that, you know, it's very difficult to move into David's shoes, no director that's really, the right kind of

director, would want to do that. You would only get the kind of, John Milius or somebody like that that might want to do it, you know, who thinks he's as good if not better than David, and, you know, that would be completely wrong.

And the chances are, the critics then would say, well of course Lean would have done it so much better.

Yes. Yah. Yah. So I don't think...

Invidious.

I think maybe it should just stay as a thing that might have happened, you know.

Yes. Yah. I wrote an obit of him and I said, one of the great movies that never was, is Nostromo.

[0:41:02]

Yes. Have you seen the, John Glen's *Christopher Columbus*?

No. No, I've seen none of that[??-41:09].

There's a boy, Georges Corraface or whatever his name is, who is in that, was, was the guy that was going to play Nostromo.

I saw the bit on television last night.

Oh yes. It mentioned that, yah.

Mhm. Yes, that he was Nostromo.

I don't think he, I mean he was and he wasn't. He was definitely going to do it, then they saw some tests of him and David didn't like them that much, and, decided to go with somebody else. I don't think he was doing it at the end.

Well he read the script extract at St Paul's.

Yes, that's right. but that was really Sandra's doing.

Yes.

I mean everybody was a bit upset about it. [laughs] You know, they didn't really think that he was involved with David enough to be, that there were people like Ronnie Neame and, and Guy, well not Guy because he wouldn't have wanted it, but Ronnie Neame and Tony Havelock-Allan and people like that who have been David's old friends, who were very upset about that. Though I believe he read it beautifully, but nevertheless, they felt that somebody that had been with David should have done it, you know.

It was a very enjoyable occasion, if that's the right phrase.

[laughs] Yes it was. I didn't come over for it, but...

I think it would be[??] an Ed Sullivan Show, or...

Yes, that's right.

A really, I mean it's a really big stage.

Yes.

There was something Leanesque about the setting, wasn't there?

Yes. Yes. Yah. I'd like to have come over for it, but I'd only just gone back.

You missed it.

I didn't come over. I've got the tape of it, but I didn't come over. But... [pause] So, I mean I think, now he's done this film, probably he would play Nostromo. I mean he can probably do it very well, he's a good-looking guy, I met him at Cannes.

Mm. I've never read the book, so I, the novel.

But I noticed a rather curious thing yesterday, because, Barry Norman spoke quite highly of him, or, you know, said he had liked him in the film, but I noticed that the excerpt that they showed, because I was particularly looking to see how he was, that they kept cutting away from him. Whenever he spoke, they were always on the girl and things. And I wonder, you know, as an editor, one suspects that. So, I'm going to ask John Glen what he actually thought of him as an actor. Because, it was... And the excerpt they showed, it was very obvious that they had not ever shown him in a close-up.

Yes, I, that hadn't occurred to me, but...

No, well it wouldn't. Because I was particularly looking for him, and as an editor I know how you cut round somebody, by cutting to the girl and, and when he was talking he was in a sort of group shot. And then they came on to him halfway through

his sentence, on a close-up, so you hardly saw him. And it was very strange. It may have been that they were actually doing, they were cutting out some dialogue or something, but there was definitely something strange about the cutting of that scene, that didn't show him.

It was a strange thing to, to choose anyway.

Yes. Yes it was.

Because again it was so nondescript, and, and had nothing particular to say.

No. No no, I'm sure. I don't think, I think the whole film's a bit like that isn't it?
[laughs]

Yes.

I don't know. I hear it's not very good. But I don't know.

I think, by the time the year is over we shall have had a little too much of Columbus anyway.

Yes.

Oh they[??] carry on...

I hear Ridley Scott is[??-43:48] great, obviously.

Ah yes? Yes.

Yes, obviously they're going for the Oscars for Charlie, I mean, not, I mean I think Robert Downey particularly, and maybe sets and, and costumes, that kind of thing,

you know. And, obviously, what do they call it? A fifteen nine... What's it called, fourteen... What's the film called, Ridley Scott's, now? *1492* is it?

1492 I guess, yes.

Yes. Yes.

Yes.

But isn't it *1492* something? I'm not sure. Maybe it's just fourteen... But whatever it is, it's obviously a big contender at the Oscars.

Oh God yes. Yes. Right.

As is *Dracula* and films like that. And probably, Clint Eastwood's new film too.

The western.

The western, which has got huge reviews in America, and enormous money it's been making.

Yes.

[0:44:31]

And there's a lot of nostalgia for somebody like him in the way of John Wayne, you know. So those are the kind of pictures which are obviously in competition. But they're going to push Charlie for the Oscars. But I think Robert will get a nomination, without doubt, he's absolutely superb as Charlie. I mean, it's one of the most extraordinary acting performances I've ever seen.

Really?

Knowing him as a person, this twenty-six-year-old boy, you know, a bit scatter-brained. Up on the screen, Emma, my daughter, said, I mean, you can't believe that's the same person up on the screen. He just is Charlie. I mean Geraldine Chaplin, who has seen some of it, I mean is terribly impressed by it, she had tears in her eyes, you know, she said, 'That's really my dad.'

Oh that's marvellous to hear.

Yah.

I'm immensely looking forward to seeing it.

Well, you know, Sydney Samuelson and one or two people like that have seen it, obviously had to see it because of choosing it for the Command, you know, or, it's not the Command Performance, I think it's just a royal premier, I'm not sure. But whatever it is, several... Because we've got a few bare bosoms and a couple of fucks in it, so, they had to see if it was suitable for the Queen and things. And, as Sidney said to me, I mean he was bowled over by it, and he said, 'I hadn't really expected it to be anything like as good as it is.' You see there's low expectations for it in a funny way, which is probably good.

I notice people keep referring to it as Chaplin.

Because that's what it's called now.

Oh is it?

Changed the title.

Oh, I see.

Yes. Yes I shouldn't call it Charlie any more. They had to call it *Chaplin* because...

There was a film called Charly wasn't there?

Yes, Roberts...

Ralph Nelson I think.

No it's Cliff Robertson.

No... Well Ralph directed it.

[inaudible].

Wasn't it Ralph? Yes it was Ralph.

Maybe.

Or Frank, Frank Schaffner. Ralph Nelson.

But, it was Cliff Robertson who threatened to sue if we called it. Even though they had the r the other way round, because it was about a retarded man, and it was e-y[sic] and ours was i-e. He still threatened.....

[End of Track 13]

[Track 14]

What final sentence do you want?

Well, certainly the one for me, as we've reached the end of at least this session, to say...

I thought that was quite a nice ending.

...thank you very much. No, it would, they would have thought that the, the tape somehow had broken.

Run out. Oh I see.

I want to thank you, to say how interesting it's been. It's too late now to say, [laughs] have we left anything out?

Well thank you, I mean, it's been most enjoyable.

Not at all.

Everybody loves sitting back, talking about themselves, I've no doubt, actually.

Well you do it superbly.

Well I don't...

Superbly and modestly.

[laughs] I suppose... I don't know, I... I mean I've rather enjoyed it, it's rather nice talking about... You never really think back over your life really. It's when something like *Lawrence* comes up that you sort of go back on your life a bit, but

most of the time, I'm rather inclined to think present-day and forward rather than back.

Mm.

Once I've finished a film, I don't think about it a lot any more. Obviously you do when it's opening and that, but once it's out of the way and gone.

Well may I say, at an age when I think most women, ladies, females, are arranging flowers and, and sitting around in woollen cardigans [laughter], it's extraordinary that you are still, well, accomplishing so much.

Yes. Yes. Yah, I'm still out there I think. Somebody approached me about possibly doing one of those jobs at the studios that Dede Allen in fact is doing, that Stuart Bear[??-1:24] did and things, you know, where you are like... [inaudible] exactly[??], because it's quite a creative job, Jim Clark did it with David Puttnam, and, thing. But I said, no no, I didn't really want to do something like that yet. I wanted to be – or if ever, I want to be out in the field, you know, I like... and cutting movies, that's what I like doing.

Mm.

It's a possibility I might produce another one. Jack Gold and I are having quite a few little meetings about possibly doing another film together, in the way we did *Medusa*, but that wouldn't mean that I would take up producing; it would only mean I might just do another film with him. We're working on another, we've read a couple of books, and, and one I'm reading now I quite like. So, you know, there's a possibility that I might produce another movie.

Yes. A change of pace.

Yes. Yes, that's right.

It would be interesting to know what Uncle Arthur would have said about all this.

[laughs] Well, Uncle Arthur didn't want me to go into the business, as you know, but, once I was in, and you know, and got the Oscar and things, he was pretty proud of me I think. I think he would be fairly proud of me.

Oh I'm sure, yah. Yah.

You know, I think he would have thought it was...

I'm sure his attitudes would have become a little looser anyway probably over the twenty years or so.

Well that's true. And I think he would have thought it was worth my while going into the business, which he hadn't thought at the beginning, I think he would have thought it probably was. Because, I do endeavour to turn down ultra-violent pictures, like *RoboCop* and things like that that I've been offered. So, I try to keep mostly a fairly taste, films that I think have a modicum of good taste to them. And so... And that's what he wanted to do, is improve. But I was just saying to somebody the other day, what ideals I went in to the industry with, which have gone a little by the wayside you know, about being the director that made only, you know, films that were, I don't know, improving people's lives I suppose, that kind of thing, you know.

Yes. But the world of what, the late Forties, early Fifties, it, what we have now was I think, what we have now is, was, totally unforeseeable.

Yes, that's right. So, you, you know, you get your rough edges, your idealism rubbed off you a bit I suppose.

Mm.

But...

It's getting old, growing up.

Yes, I think so. That's right.

And I think it's better that way too.

Well probably. But, I think it's nice to have ideals, and I think when you're young it's, it's essential to have them, even if you get them knocked out of you I think.

Well yes. Ideals, impressions and moral concepts.

Yes.

We usually cling to the moral concepts I think.

Yah. Yah.

We don't always live up to them, do we?

No, that's right. But... Yah.

Mm. OK.

Well thank you very much.

Many many thanks.

No, thank you.

[End of Track 14]

BECTU History Project
Interviewee Anne V Coates
Interviewer Roy Fowler
Track No 14

[End of Interview]