Name of interviewee Susan Crockford
Tape 1 Side A

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Tape 1 Side A

This is a BECTU History Project, owner of the copyright. It is the twenty-first of October 1998 and we're interviewing Susan Crockford. File number 440. Interviewer Stanley Forman and recorded by Manny Osper [ph 00:31].

Say one, two, three.

SF: I'll say one, two, three.

And, mm . . .

SF: And Sue will say one, two, three.

[Laughter]

SF: Because it's her, the name of her film company.

Exactly, that's the name of the company.

Okay, right we're all ready to roll now.

SF: Okay. Off we go ma'am?

Yes.

SF: Right, question one, we assume you were born Sue Crockford?

Well, it's generally accepted.

SF: Good idea.

Right.

SF: So when and parents, you know, the, what might be called the en vivant, French word, the sort of climate out of which you sprang? You don't have to go in to hours of description.

No.

SF: But…

Well, I suspect you'd call it lower middle class.

SF: I would.

My dad was definitely working class but spent all his life escaping from it and not talking about it. And my mum was a class above, so I suppose if you work out in terms of where they landed...

SF: Yes. Between both it was a lower middle?

Between both.

SF: Yes.

And so on the one hand it was very loving, they absolutely wanted kids, they defined their life by having kids. On the other hand it was an extraordinary small unit because having abandoned his home in the two rooms he grew up in in Hammersmith, which I've only now in the last year seen.

SF: Ah.

Only three years ago did I find out anything about that missing family. We had what I felt was no real roots, we didn't have a close family and I missed that.

SF: Yes.

My younger brother and sister even more. And I think what was most interesting about where, being born in 1943 is that all the men like him who were away in the war for like two, three years came back having missed home so much that there was almost like a mini liberation movement for a very short time so that he, in all our lives brought us up equally. He had the money primarily, but when it came to like child rearing, cooking and just general care, belief in us...

SF: Yes.

It was equal. It was only later when I met, say, the parents of my sister's friends.

SF: Yes, yes.

I thought God I had this little tiny eye of equality so it didn't cross my mind to think of inequality. I was the eldest.

SF: Yes.

I was a girl. I passed the eleven plus.

SF: Yes.

I went to a girls' grammar school.

SF: Yes.

The teachers who taught us Maths and Science and English and Art were all women, so ineq…, I didn't stub my toes against inequality for a long, long time, I didn't think about it.

SF: So this was all during the war of course?

1943, yes.

SF: Yes.

So my mum brought me up and did the classically good thing, which is talked to me for ages so just like you I can talk the hind leg off a donkey.

SF: That's it.

And there's one funny joke, because we were brought up in Croydon and there were doodlebugs and stuff and I remember being very precocious about words and somebody said a twin had died and I couldn't work out whether a twin was two people or whether half a person had died.

SF: [Laughter].

I knew, I knew it was something odd, you know, nothing to do with films that was just… And then I got, we got evacuated to Pontefract and I just, I mean I can remember very far back, I can remember riding on a little white pony up there or being carried on a little white pony. And I'm sure it's one of the reasons why eventually I was attracted to go to university in Leeds, apart from the fact that in those days it was considered quite a pale pink university.

SF: Yes, indeed it was.

But because we grew up with absolutely no money, my dad was a, a civil servant. I mean he, he was brought up so poor that although he got a place at art school he couldn't take it but passed high up in the Civil Service and he got, became a civil servant but always an incredibly honourable one but chasing at the artistic bits as it were.

SF: Yes.

So when it came to my leaving school there was no money so I went to work for a year to earn the money to go to university. I didn't even know quite what university, I didn't even know things like you had to have Latin, so because I'd done German and French I didn't even know if it only had a choice of a few, you know, places.

SF: Yes.

And I went to Leeds and I'm really glad that I did. In fact some of the apparently leftie people like Kettle weren't as inspiring as one would…

SF: No, no. Was that the period when Arnold Kettle was the head of the English Department?

Yes, yes.

SF: Because he was a pal of ours obviously.

He might have been a pal, he wasn't that friendly to all of us lowly little students.

SF: Sod him. [Laughter]

[Laughter]

SF: May he rot wherever he is, no.

No. What's really interesting, because one of the things I've learned is that some of the loudest left wing men are actually not the nicest people to have relationships with, and some of the unpretentious libertarian-ish men are actually the nicer people personally.

[05:09]

SF: Better fun. Without developing it in to a theory it's more fun?

Yes.

SF: Yes, I agree.

I only like people for whom politics and their private life are the same thing.

SF: Yes, yes.

And who don't, who neither harangue nor…

SF: Yes. So there's no sort of dichotomy or whatever they call it these days, yes. So you got a degree of course?

Yes. Well, what was interesting was during the second, during third year we, because I'd chosen to do the first of a Combined Honours I was allowed to choose a paper. So you were supposed to choose an artist or a writer and I said 'Could I please choose a filmmaker'? And they said 'Woo, woo, we're not sure about this'. So I said 'Could I please have Satyajit Ray'? Well, we know Satyajit only made six films.

SF: Yes.

So they said ‘Oh we’re not sure about that. And I said ‘Listen if I’d chosen George Oney [ph 05:58] who’s only got twelve extant paintings in the world you would have said “yes”’, and they said ‘Yes’. And I said what do you call Renoir’, they said ‘Oh he’s a very fine artist, I said ‘I didn’t mean that one’.

SF: Oh the other one.

The other one. And they got terribly embarrassed and let me do my paper.

SF: This was an English Literature Degree?

Yes, English Lit.

SF: English Lit.

And Fine Arts.

SF: And Fine Arts?

Combined Honours.

SF: Yes.

They let me do it on Ingmar Bergman, which I digress slightly when I was sixteen or whatever it came out.

SF: Yes.

I’d gone to see the normal, we hadn’t got television in the house.

SF: No.

We didn’t have any money. Occasionally we went to the cinema, And my first film I remember was *Bambi* and then *Mogambo*.

SF: Oh yes.

Which deeply impressed me.

SF: Yes.

And then when I was about sixteen or seventeen I saw *The Seventh Seal* and I was just….

SF: Bewitched?

Bewitched.

SF: Yes.

And it suddenly combined all the things that I really loved. I was always directing plays at school and acting in them. I'd always written since I was tiny, and I'd always painted, and I thought 'I don't believe this, this is an art form that has the whole lot'.

SF: Wow.

You know, it really has the whole lot. But in terms of… So that's the film bit and I managed to write that. And by doing, writing about film and they suddenly thought 'Oh maybe we're going to take this seriously'. My old professor who was Quentin Bell, Virginia Wolfe's nephew.

SF: Yes.

Took me on one side and said, well, he kept saying to me during my finals 'I do wish you'd work'. And I'd say 'I'm doing my best', I'd got no money so I had to work in a theatre full-time as a lighting electrician to earn the money to stay at university.

SF: Good Lord.

And he kept saying 'I do wish you'd work', and I didn't know why, I thought 'Are you saying this to everybody'? And they kept saying 'Why is he asking you to work'. What he meant was he wanted me to get a 2/1.

SF: Yes.

So he could offer me a postgraduate in Film.

SF: Ah.

He didn't tell me that so I got a 2/2. Because what can I do? So I think I'm the only person with a 2/2 [Laughter] who was actually asked to develop this MA with, equally with Leeds University and The British Film Institute.

SF: Yes, ah.

So I came down to the archive which was then….

SF: When would this be roughly, do you…?

Sixty-five.

SF: Sixty-five?

Sixty-five to Sixty-seven.

SF: Ah, ha.

Which was, yes but there were just so few of us, I didn't know any other women going in.

SF: Oh dear.

Didn't really know. That's where I met David Francis who was supposed to be my moral tutor.

SF: Oh yes, yes.

And, and that's why I started. He and I, because he was absolutely fascinated by triunials and magic lanterns and God knows what.

SF: Yes, yes.

He used to dress up in Victorian gear…

SF: Yes.

And go round Europe in this 1928 Alvis.

SF: Yes.

And do things. So we'd go and open, I think we opened The National Film Archive in Brussels.

SF: Ah, ha.

And we went to Stockholm. And I remember going to Berlin because I'd never, you know, I'd never been abroad, we hadn't got any money, you know.

SF: No.

But I went to Berlin and I was just so like shocked. And there was this bloke running The East Berlin Film Archive. Herbert, was he called Herbert?

SF: Volkmann?

Yes.

SF: Oh God.

Incredible…

SF: Everyone you mention was someone I knew intimately.

Yes, oh sure.

SF: Herbert Volkmann, yes.

He would say and I…

SF: Member of the archive?

And I remember there being, and that was Brussels where there was a woman with numbers and I didn't even know about that.

SF: You mean concentration camp victim?

Yes.

SF: Yes.

That was, that was Belgium.

SF: Yes.

With Baker isn't it.

SF: Yes.

Anyway Herbert was clever because we'd come over with, I can't remember what it was we'd come over with but he took it away for a day and then came back and came back smiling away and David said 'I know what he's been doing he's been copying it'.

SF: [Laughter]

And I said to David, being a non purist.

SF: Yes.

And being an egalitarian democrat more or less.

SF: And all that.

'Well very good'.

SF: Yes.

And so he had probably the best collection. Well, you know, all this.

SF: Yes.

He had probably the best collection [Laughter] of old films because I was then…

SF: Yes.

I had been asked to study 1895 to 1925...

SF: Yes.

Silent film. And every time I asked for something he'd got it. So I thought this is, this is impressive. It's all very well to preserve and collate and collect and goodness knows what but if you don't actually use the stuff, if people can't see it then I get deeply depressed.

SF: Yes.

And in fact when I think I didn't get on with The British Film Archive was that according to the personal taste of the archivists, and there was a bloke John whose surname I forgotten, a big fat guy, his passions were bulldogs, trains and old cars. Now I can remember going there, this is 1966, and I found a couple of old films, one a suffragette film, well obviously I would wouldn't I?

[10:03]

SF: Yes, of course.

And said 'This is very, very delicate it's falling apart. Please, please can you preserve this'? And he just said 'Oh it will have to get in the queue'. And I thought but there's only three that I've found. And when I looked down all the list, you know, which I've got.

SF: Yes, yes, yes.

I thought there seemed to be an awful lot of things on cars and trains and goodness knows what.

SF: Yes.

And there's not enough on our social history.

SF: Yes.

But I was too green and twenty.

SF: Yes.

And twenty-one, you know, you don't fight the system then.

SF: Of course.

All it does is give you another little bit inside to think I'm, something's got to change.

SF: Yes.

You know. So what that film, but the politics stuff. I suppose I grew up reading *The News Chronicle*. Now the days of *The News Chronicle*, and it's a real shame it doesn't exist any more.

SF: Indeed.

That was the middle brow paper people like my parents read and it had James Cameron.

SF: Yes.

I can remember so vividly what a brilliant journalist he was.

SF: A wonderful man, yes.

And when that died.

SF: Yes.

And it got subsumed under *The Daily Mail*.

SF: Yes.

The world divided really in to the hard, in to the left and the right.

SF: Yes, absolutely.

With no middle ground.

SF: Indeed not, no.

And I thought what an appalling shame that was. Because my dad, who obviously started off Labour and ended up slightly to the left of Atilla The Hun, but, you know, not a lot.

SF: [Laughter]

Mm, I can understand. One of the reasons why I like doing what I do now is that, you know, when you're brought up the way you're brought up you have deep sympathy for suburbia, narrowed horizons, all kinds of things I sympathise with and I understand.

SF: Yes.

In fact so green was I at secondary school that I thought the world was divided in to Christians and Catholics.

SF: [Laughter]

If you'd asked me what a Jew was I wouldn't have known, I didn't know, I didn't know until I was probably eighteen or nineteen.

SF: And we had horns, you know.

It was people who believed in the Old Testament, I didn't know that.

SF: [Laughter]

We weren't taught that. It was like my Anglo-Saxon, powerful, spinster headmistress owned the Bible. She, that was it.

SF: Oh.

You know, we were, you know, she would read the Bible like this with her eyes down on it and say 'Susan Crockford stand up' whereas I'd be marking Deuteronomy verse twenty-two, chapter twenty-three, you know, which is all the rude bits, and I would wonder how she knew. But it's ext…, it's interesting when you look back that you're, people's experience isn't wrong it just is. [Phone rings - pause]

Okay we're going back to how politics starts because that's …

SF: Yes, yes. Before you do that you know apropos Satyajit Ray, you know that there is a Satyajit Ray Foundation that, that Charlie Cooper has begun as a sort of labour, of contemporary films as a labour of love and they hold meetings regularly at The Nehru Centre, you know, the Indian government cultural place?

Yes.

SF: And they showed loads of, not just Patapon Charlie but a whole stack of Ray films and Indian films. And Pam Cullen, I think it is, who was in charge of India House library of films and has now retired and Charlie of course, is approaching his ninetieth birthday.

Oh, I didn't know that.

SF: But believe it or not, but it's serious stuff and it's regular and…

I'd like to know, right.

SF: You know, I thought you ought to know before I in my, with my senile brain forget. Okay it's all yours.

Alright, the reason, politics, right.

SF: Politics?

I do remember 1956 I was thirteen writing an essay, the first time I got moved by anything political outside myself was Hungary.

SF: Yes.

And I wrote a story, which I've still got upstairs. I don't know why I called him Eve because I thought anything foreign over the Channel Eve might be Hungarian, I didn't know one word.

SF: [Laughter].

I didn't know any Hungarian names, and wrote this thing about what it must be like to have tanks rolling up. So that was my first connection between something real going on.

SF: And Literature.

And identifying.

SF: Yes.

You know, otherwise I was passionate about history, but that happened to some one else another time.

SF: Yes.

But this was happening in my own time and I actually remember thinking what would I do.

SF: Yes.

If. And I've always been conscious all my life that it's all very well getting up and, and saying what we say and risking lack of jobs or whatever, but only once in my life have I been in, in danger and I don't know how I'd cope. I don't think I'm going to be, you know, a physical, morally, brave, courageous person.

SF: No.

I think about it a lot because when people make these statements about courage and stuff. I think my God it must be so difficult.

SF: No one knows until you're in it.

Anyway what happened. Well, when I went to university I, one of my close mates was a, a South African Jewish woman, daughter of a doctor, who'd special, his special, is special study was African children diseases so he'd taken a huge risk by getting out.

[15:04]

SF: Yes.

Well, he got out just ahead of being got.

SF: Wow!

So she really awakened in me to what was going on in South Africa. I kind of read a bit I suspect but not a lot. And I was shown, not by her by some one else, pictures of Sharpeville and I was utterly shocked. [Phone rings]

SF: Right, we'll carry on there, I did pause it.

When I, when I saw these pictures of Sharpeville my first instinct was to think they weren't real. I know this sounds you can't quite believe it now but I thought, I thought this is some kind of test of me and I thought no for me my experience of policemen were they helped you across the road.

SF: Kind bobby?

Right, yes.

SF: Yes.

And to see people quite obviously waving bits of paper, burning draft cards.

SF: Wow.

And having people shoot them it, I was so shocked that on the spot I said 'Okay, I'll organise an exhibition I'll be part of'. We were, we just set up Anti-Apartheid at Leeds and adopted Nelson Mandela.

SF: Yes.

At that time and brought over Goldruk [ph 16:02] and Wolpe.

SF: Ah, yes.

And that was, I've never seen a mixed audience, men and women at the student union, with the men in tears. And they were telling the story about how they'd been tortured, but worse their servants had been tortured in front of them presuming they'd give up. I think they'd come out, they didn't exactly say but I think they said or we learnt that they'd come out dressed as a nun one of them or whatever.

SF: Yes.

But that was our first direct experience of what people went through.

SF: Yes.

So, so my first political thing was anti-apartheid and we did recordings and goodness knows what. And then I came to London to do this postgraduate degree at the archive and got involved almost via people I respected. It's funny this whole thing about how you get involved in politics, it's a mixture of what you know but also connection between people you respect about Vietnam. So my first two political experiences really were Vietnam and South Africa, personal, whereas my natal, my natal kind of release was during my degree, my second degree, sitting in The British Library, British Museum and doing all my silent film work but spending all my time reading about the suffragettes and looking for them on film because there's so little.

SF: Yes, not much.

And, so incipiently becoming a feminist without, before it was really invented.

SF: Yes.

So Vietnam was incredibly important. And we were, we were the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign in Camden and my, that's when I first started. No, actually that's not true. I started meeting some formal political people at university and my first impression was they don't laugh, and I thought I really don't want a revolution unless you have a laugh.

SF: Yes, a bit of humour?

A bit of humour. So although there was an attempt to recruit me I just said 'No piss off., you know, I believe in things but I couldn't see how it could be part of your life with people I didn't actually like. But when I came to Vietnam I think the nicest thing about the group was that half the group were already in other political groupings from The Labour Party to ISIMG.

SF: Yes, yes.

But the rest of us absolutely weren't and wanted to make sure that everybody could be involved who cared about this war.

SF: Yes.

Without having to sign on the dotted line for a party.

SF: Yes, yes, yes.

You know, and I don't think anybody from CP because I hardly knew what it was but never read Marx and Lenin. I think I might…

SF: Never?

No, I have read the Communist Manifesto, and then later on I read more stuff.

SF: Wow.

But almost as, I almost deliberately resisted it because of having it, because of having people leaflet and so it affected the style of how I first met politics affected the politics I developed for myself.

SF: Wow.

So that when I got in to like street theatre...

SF: Yes.

Immigration of films and all the rest of it.

SF: Yes.

I thought nobody has to listen. And also when I started teaching and working...

SF: Yes.

I thought you can take a horse to water but you cannot make it drink.

SF: Indeed not.

I've spent a lot of my life working with the toughest kids, King's Cross, you know, young, a couple of rapists and definitely a load of thieves, at least five murderers. You know, you don't tell them to look at Holbein and, and read Shakespeare and whatever else but you can get them writing about their own experiences.

SF: Yes.

And lead them via their own experiences to an awareness of other people.

SF: Yes, yes.

You know, all that. Like if you want to know about my views about communism, the way I'd do it with these kids, well the eventual job that I did after being a lecturer and stuff which was running this youth centre for fourteen years because you don't make any money making left wing movies as you know. I would take them off to this commune which is run by friends of mine in Scotland and take these real, real, real tough kids. And we'd have breakfast and I wouldn't say anything and then we would have lunch and I wouldn't say anything. I'd cook both and I didn't wash up and by, by supper there weren't any clean plates. So I'd say 'Well, what are you going to eat off'? 'Oh don't know really', and I'd say 'Well, someone had better wash up'. 'Well I'm not going to do it', so they'd all say 'I'm not going to do it'. So I'd sit round having a conversation about 'How should we organise who washes up'? You had this basic accommodation'.

[20:08]

SF: Yes, yes.

Three hundred and fifty miles away from London.

SF: [Laughter].

Nobody in the home about the nature of work.

SF: Yes.

In a totally obvious place.

SF: Yes.

With the dirty plate, you know, who's going to wash it up?

SF: Yes.

And we, you know, I started from that little.

SF: Ah.

To having political conversations about how you should organise society rather than starting from up there downwards.

SF: Yes, right.

I just, I think that's been the thread of everything I've ever done.

SF: Politics from below?

Yes, completely and utterly. So I came down to London to do this degree thing and….

SF: This was a Masters presumably was it?

Yes.

SF: An MA?

Yes. Which I didn't, by then I was getting so pissed off it was all academic and I was looking at other films other people had made and I desperately wanted to make something. And I was on a bus and I met this man on the top of the bus and I got talking and well, I think we started off. Oh I was doing a part-time job in Chelsea Antique Market so you can tell how far away it was from Islington.

SF: Yes.

So it was a long bus journey.

SF: Oh.

I got talking to this man whose name I don't know about what I really want to do. 'I really want to make things, I want to, I think film is fascinating, I haven't got any money. I want to do things'. And as we get to near Camden he says 'Well, would you like a place at a film school for four months? I can offer you a free place', and it was Peter Harcourt.

SF: [Laughter]

Right. Everyone assumes I had a scene with him.

SF: Yes.

I didn't, it was a sheer… We both came, we both carried on the bus beyond our stops but it was this absolute meeting of, I had no idea when I started the conversation who it was.

SF: Just the bloke in the next seat?

Yes. Just in the next seat. That's how we, we just talked.

SF: Brilliant.

And he offered me this four month free course at Hornsey Film School.

SF: Great.

You see 1957 this was.

SF: Wonderful.

So I did that. And that was my only, my only formal bit of teaching about…

SF: Film?

Film I've ever done.

SF: Yes. So no National Film School?

Nothing.

SF: No London International Film School, none of that?

Nothing, I never had any money.

SF: No money, no.

In fact we used to earn, we used to go out to work to earn the money to make the films we believed in.

SF: Wow.

So then I met Tony Wickert.

SF: Ah, how?

It was '66 and I was going round to babysit for a friend of mine from university whose girlfriend had a daughter, had a kid, and Tony was a friend of his and walked round there and we babysat together. And what was interesting we both eyeing each other to see who we were supporting to win the election. [Laugher].

SF: Yes.

So once he realised we were on the same side...

SF: Yes.

We then kind of got together and stayed together for five and a half years and produced a son and the Liberation Films really.

SF: Was Tony Australian originally?

Tony was an Australian actor and had come over. This is funny, he'd been a bad actor in this crappy series called *Whiplash*, which was really amazing, and he'd come over to England.

SF: Ah, ha.

As an Australian actor.

SF: Australian, yes.

And discovered you don't get a lot of parts with an accent.

SF: No, of course, not.

So he'd gone and taken elocution lessons.

SF: Yes.

And risen through the ranks-ish in the BBC.

SF: Yes.

Started as a floor manager.

SF: Yes.

And worked in the BBC. So when I met him he'd just made a little film, I think I was about… How old was I? Twenty-two, he was twenty-eight. Oh my God was I green, I was still doing my degree.

SF: Ah, ha.

So we both kind of went in to Vietnam together.

SF: Ah, ha.

Now what happened was we, there was a meeting in John Hoyland's basement.

SF: Hoyland?

Yes. Now we lived, we'd bought a house in Bramshill Gardens and we encouraged the people next door...

SF: Was that Doreen Hoyland's son, the artist, John Hoyland, the artist?

No.

SF: No, sorry .

His parents are Communist Party.

SF: Yes.

In Brownshill Gardens where we lived there were diplomats living next door to us and when they went away they allowed us to let it to people that we wanted to let it to, so we had a semi-commune going between our house and the next door house, which is where Steve Merritt who was in our Vietnam group.

SF: Yes, yes.

And Ellen Hammerschlag.

SF: Oh yes.

Richard Hammerschlag who then became an Adam [ph 25:13] reverted to. Now she and Richard had inherited the Newsroom New York films.

SF: Oh yes.

And when she was going back to Canada… In this meeting that was held in John Hoyland's basement about where all of us leftie, filmy-ish and alternative arts-ish people could all meet in a room this size.

SF: Yes, yes.

You know, come on in those days. Ellen announced that she was going back and what was going to happen to the Newsroom New York films, and there was this like deafening silence, and, as is my wont, I put my hand up because I can't bear no one taking responsibility said 'Well, I'll do it'. So I was just too embarrassed, I'm too English, I mean the idea of calling something Angry Arts was just so gross.

SF: [Laughter]

I mean gee, you know. So we did sit around and think liberation films was slightly more real, I could accept that. And then Tony joined later because he hadn't wanted to at the beginning.

[25:08]

SF: Ah.

But I thought I'm not letting this go, these are too important. And I suppose these films we didn't really, we only just had telly, these are the first films I'd really seen that showed an alternative way of American life, because up until then it was *Mogambo*.

SF: Yes.

'Bambi'

SF: Yes.

Disney.

SF: Yes.

And feature films. I didn't, I didn't know what real life was like. So those are incredibly important. And then we set up Liberation Films and it's about that time I met you.

SF: Yes. Me being Stanley Forman, yes.

You being Stanley Forman.

SF: [Laughter]

And Charlie.

SF: Yes.

You and Charlie, especially you, were like our mentors because we didn't know anybody who thought the way we did of another generation, nobody. Our parents didn't think the way we thought. We, all we knew about Hollywood and telly and all the rest of it were, were bourgeois middle class people who didn't actually have a sense of social responsibility. When I think my feelings about those years when I look back, and it's still the case with all of us that were together then, is this feeling of absolute trust. We might bicker on certain points of order, you know, but in terms of trust...

SF: Basic trust?

Basic trust it went so deep. Like I'd phone you up and say 'Oh I want to do a radical film workshop on teachers' or whatever, 'Have you got any films'? And you'd lend them to me. I'd come and collect, take them and show them, bring them back. I never signed a bit of paper saying I'd got them. You know, you wouldn't dare.

SF: It was you. I knew. It was you. I knew you, you know, Sue.

Yes. But when we first met we didn't know each other well but there was this assumption.

SF: There was an instinctive assumption.

It was wasn't it?

SF: Absolutely, true.

And I think, you know, you were probably glad there was another generation of people…

SF: Yes, growing up.

Taking on this…

SF: Yes, yes.

This feeling. And I remember saying to you, which is why I'm glad we're doing this now, to both you and Charlie. Every time you talk about, you know, your experiences no one knew anything about it.

SF: I know.

It really ought to be recorded.

SF: I know, I know.

Because I can read that as it stands very lively.

SF: Yes, yes.

I can't read about my own political past, my own mental…

SF: In your own country.

No.

SF: No.

I don't know anything about it.

SF: Absolutely true.

And in some of the like landmarks in Liberation Films where well, obviously at this time I was also getting involved with the Women's Movement.

SF: Yes.

And that was interesting. Because quite a few of the left wing men, including my own man at the time, didn't like it very much.

SF: You mean Tony - Wickert?

Oh later on I mean born again feminist isn't he?

SF: Yes, yes, yes.

But I mean as you can tell. Anyway I think quite a few men felt quite threatened. And we were all saying that you can't have a left wing, you can't have a revolution or anything like this unless the structure of life is based on respect and we ain't respected. And later on when I went to Russia in 1976 and I saw, I kept leaping off the bus and 'Oh goodness me there's women driving tractors, oh there's women running about'.

SF: [Laughter]

And they'd say oh never mind Sue, it's alright she'll calm down.

SF: [Laughter]

And then some of these women who took me on one side said 'Listen sweetheart, you wait until your revolution really takes off you'll not only be landed doing the work you'll also be landed doing the childcare and everything', and sure enough..

SF: True, true, true, true.

Here I am but being a bloody parent and it's too true.

SF: [Laughter] True.

I mean I wouldn't change my life but…

SF: Anything but, and of course.

I realise how much they've been dumped on.

SF: A sort of basic logic?

Really basic logic. So I suppose I was shocked because it was so, I mean that, the Women's Movement was the most exhilarating...

SF: Wow.

It's been the single biggest change in my whole life.

SF: Yes.

And when we set up the first conference at Ruskin...

SF: Yes.

And we expected three hundred people and there were six hundred. I mean it was like the hackles on the back of your neck rising.

SF: Yes, thrilling.

I mean it's, I don't know what it's…

SF: Thrilling, thrilling, thrilling.

What's your life, which particular bits of your life but that was it.

SF: Yes, there are such moments.

Yes.

SF: Like when Mandela comes out of jail or when Pinochet is arrested.

Oh yes.

SF: Two such movements.

Yes. [Laughter]

SF: In the Twentieth Century that can bring back memories?

Right. I'm being more selfish and saying things I mean well, of course, those, those are global moments.

SF: Yes.

This was a, this was a kind of feeling that it had got on the map.

SF: Yes. Did you get to know people like Sheila Rowbotham in that period?

Yes.

SF: Yes?

Oh yes.

SF: So you knew what might be described as serious Marxist/feminists/ socialist feminists in this whole period as you were developing?

Oh yes, oh we were.

SF: Yes.

Well, the point is we were among the first three women's liberation, we were the founders of the Women's Movement so.

SF: Yes, yes, indeed.

And at that first conference, this is where it's interesting, Ellen, Tony and I had agreed that we would film it. So we got the gear and we got another friend, camera person, man, with us, and I had to stand up in front of everybody saying Excuse me, do you mind if we film and by the way we're not all women'? So I got some stick from some people including mates of mine, and that was really difficult. And the joke is that a year later we completed the film, the film was basically The Oxford Conference and then a year later this amazing march in March.

[30:14]

SF: Yes, yes.

With the snow and stinging and God knows what.

SF: Yes.

And Buzz Goodbody and all those people.

SF: Yes.

She was great.

SF: Ah.

And then we filmed it. And then when we finally finished it and showed it the very people who'd said things like 'Take that phallic camera out of my nose' said 'Oh Sue, do you remember wasn't that lovely'? And I thought I don't believe it, you gave me such grief that day.

SF: Yes.

But I mean it was, it was amazing.

SF: Yes. You mentioned, I don't want to keep butting in but you mentioned Buzz Goodbody, a person for whom I had a formidable respect and regard and I never understood why this remarkable talent committed suicide.

Yes, no.

SF: Can you enlighten us?

No, I can't.

SF: For the record? No.

I mean, I mean the point is a lot of people like that came together to organise but we were all so busy like having kids...

SF: Yes, yes, yes.

Having a job, trying to organise our politics.

SF: Yes, yes.

Unless they were in our particular group...

SF: Yes.

We didn't get that close.

SF: Yes.

It was just, it was even like Bea Campbell.

SF: Yes.

We've only just got really friendly now.

SF: Yes.

We've always known about each other and respected.

SF: Yes.

Never had the time…

SF: To get together?

You know, we've all had, yes.

SF: Yes.

It's…

SF: Yes, that figures.

So my women's group was Liz Custer [ph 31:24]

SF: Yes.

And Audrey Battersby and Carol de Jonk [ph 31:26] and Nan Fren [ph 31:27], a lot of us in film and stuff. I do remember with Liz Custer [ph 31:30] it was quite funny because on my final…

SF: And most of them still around?

Oh yes. When I finally went to Channel Four, this is quite funny, thirteen years ago, Mike Custer [ph 31:41] was arts features editor.

SF: Yes, indeed he was.

And he walked in, he walked past, I'd not met him. He walked past and, Naomi Sergeant, kind of paused him and said 'Oh Mike, I 'd like to introduce you to Sue Crockford, new assistant commissioning editor for Channel Four'. And he said, I said, 'Mike Custer [ph 31:47], are you married to, were you married to Liz Custer [ph 31:49'? And he said 'Yes'. I said 'I know all about you then'. He said 'I suppose you know all about my sex life'? I said "Yes, I do actually'. [Laughter].

SF: [Laughter].

It was very funny. He went very pale.

SF: Yes.

And kind of left. And I suppose actually on, when I think about it some men must have been wondering what on earth we did discuss.

SF: Yes. Oh Mike was at a thing I was at last week, I saw him last week. He's alright.

He was alright. No, I liked him.

SF: Sort of, yes, he's okay.

So we made *A Woman's Place,* which was the first women's liberation film. And then not long after that I was splitting up with Tony.

SF: Yes.

And even in the year after I carried on paying five pounds out of my wages to him for Liberation Films, which is very interesting, it's when Margaret interviewed both him and Ron no mention was made of any of this which I find quite interesting.

SF: No, Margaret Dickinson?

Yes. So that whatever my personal views of Tony…

SF: Yes, yes.

I still supported Liberation Films.

SF: Of course.

In fact for a short time Richard Broad and I tried to keep a second Liberation Films, Liberation Films Two going.

SF: Yes.

And in the end I thought this is ridiculous, so I basically handed over everything and I was so disapproved of by Geoff and Marie Richmond.

SF: Yes, yes.

Because why on earth had I dared to leave this man?

SF: Yes.

Anyway I won't go in to all that.

SF: No.

But so I decided to set up One, Two, Three. By then I'd set up with a group of people a radical, feminist nursery, and it was feminist because we had a man and a woman running it. And people kind of get very panicky and say 'Oh what's a feminist, are you indoctrinating these children'? I'd say 'Well, actually sweetie pie most nurseries indoctrinate children by only having women there.

SF: Exactly.

Because it's so poorly paid - dear hearts...

SF: Yes, of course.

That unless you value child care…

SF: Yes.

And under capitalism you value the earliest childcare least because you don't get results for many years.

SF: Precisely, yes.

So you, as a lecturer I got paid like three times as much as a nursery nurse is.

SF: Oh of course.

Which I thought grossly unfair. And I was teaching nursery nurses.

SF: Ah.

And I thought my God they're going to be near my kid and they don't know anything, I've got to set up my own nursery.

SF: Yes.

And there were two reasons for it. Partly I wanted men and women and partly that in this class ridden society state daycare was for working class kids and private daycare

was for middle class kids, so by the time they got to primary school you've got the class division already.

SF: Yes, yes.

So we desperately wanted community daycare run by the parents with public money for both classes.

SF: Right.

And I, you know, people say 'Isn't it old fashioned to talk about class'? And I say 'What else are you going to call it'.

SF: [Laughter]

'You know come on'.

SF: Call it some other word.

Call it something else I don't care, but I want to mix people up .

SF: Yes.

And by then, by I, by then, by, I was twenty-seven, I'd become the youngest and the first woman to run an IDA youth centre, which there were a few of them around London which were these, you took a secondary school and at half past three waved a magic wand and it was supposed to turn in to a youth centre, which was extraordinarily schizophrenic because the head teacher still believed it was his centre.

SF: Yes.

When in fact it was ours. I won't go in to it all.

[35:00]

SF: Yes, yes.

But I mean the politics of ILEA, which I supported to the end.

SF: Of course, of course.

Never actually worked out what to do.

SF: Of course. Before you continue, what happened to the entire output of Liberation Films?

I think that Tony and Geoff and Marie took it and…

SF: Back to Australia?

Well, they, I mean they just took, so whatever happened to it they've got, I haven't got any of it.

SF: You didn't retain copies or anything?

No. I've never looked after myself or copies or anything. When I left I felt so guilty leaving Tony that he kept the house.

SF: But you had every moral right to leave Tony?

The house, the car and the film company dear heart. He never paid a penny towards Barney, and this is where my views about left wing men go quite deep, and he's not the first, you know, he was the first in my life.

SF: He's not the only one anyway?

But absolutely not the only one. I mean one of my first things I ask anybody is 'Where's your money come from'?

SF: Yes.

Because I know where, who's chasing your strings.

SF: Yes.

Your bells.

SF: Yes.

What you want out of me. Is it morally tainted in any way. It's like, you know, the advisers to MAFF and the sugar companies and God knows what.

SF: Yes, oh yes, [Laughter] yes, Tate and Lyle, yes.

All that.

SF: Yes.

I think people are disingenuous.

SF: Yes.

About, and that's something else, that's something else.

SF: Anyway if it's ended up, if the stuff in Australia does a reasonable archival job they, it seems to me a bit of a pity that no one had got their paws on this precious material.

Well, I've got a copy of *A Woman's Place*.

SF: Yes.

And I've got a copy of *One, Two, Three,* which was a film I then made about the children's community centre. Because we were then getting so, what was interesting in those days, the Women's Movement had just started and there was a really right on director of Social Services in Camden who asked, **asked** to meet us.

SF: Oh.

Which was very shrewd of him. So you've got people like Val Charlton, do you remember Val Charlton?

SF: Yes, of course.

Saying 'What's in it, what's in it for him'? And I'm saying 'So, so he might get some kudos from working with this new radical women's group, goodness know's what'.

SF: Yes, exactly.

So we went in there totally naïve, you'll love this, saying 'Well, we actually want twelve nurseries but we'll make do with one to start with'.

SF: [Laughter]

But we, we want twelve. [Laughter] And I thought bloody hell.

SF: Good for you.

Looking back, we got the one.

SF: Good for you.

It took us a year and a half, if I'd known how long it would take.

SF: What year are we in now roughly?

Barney was born in '69. He was three, '72. So what we wanted, all you have to do is literally go on your knees or sit and then look at the room you're in and you realise how high the ceiling is. So we kept saying to people 'We don't want a church hall, we don't want a trade union centre…'

SF: Wow, yes.

'We want intimate houses for little kids'.

SF: Yes.

'Everything else is too big'.

SF: Exactly.

'And we want several rooms, so that they, you know we have a quiet room, a noisy room'.

SF: Yes.

'And what we'll do is we'll have a house due for develop, redevelopment and we'll have it for a bit'. So they said 'Yes', and I began to realise how councils worked so I thought okay, I know what I'll do, I'll go out and find out myself. So two or three of us we would be going round finding out empty houses, we had a whole telephone tree. So I would troll off down to the council and say 'Could you tell us what's happening to nineteen Lupton Street and something Bramshill Gardens'?

SF: This is all Camden Council is it?

This is all Camden Council. And in a couple of case, cases including the one we got, they didn't even know they owned the houses let alone they were empty. We would try and get hold of houses as they were being vacated before people have got in and smashed the lavatories and everything else so we could just move straight in. They never let us do it. In the end we got one, two, three Dartmouth Park Hill, hence the name of the film company.

SF: Yes.

And it was quite sweet because when I was making the film I remember going down to the labs, Humphrey's, and they were kind of looking for the grading and they were looking slightly bored and they said 'Yes, what's the name of your company'? And I'd say 'One, Two, Three'. 'What's the name of the production of the film'? 'One, Two, Three'. 'What's the name of the…'? And by the time I said two, you know, three One, Two, Threes they said 'Oh that's funny, it's quite intimate isn't it'? I said 'Yes', you know, this is my first film on my own', you know.

SF: [Laughter]

And it was… And I didn't have any money at all so to raise the money for this I'd gone to work to raise my own money.

SF: Yes.

And I remember sitting in a room, a political meeting, and somebody asked me to help them on a project. I said 'I can't because I'm trying to make this, this film about the nursery and it's taking up all my time and I'm trying to raise money'. And somebody next to me, a friend, was kind of jabbing me with her elbow and I thought I don't want to help so I didn't take any notice. So someone tried to persuade me again. I said 'I can't, I want to devote my time to One, Two, Three and we've got in applications and stuff'. And when the meeting had stopped the woman sitting opposite me came over and said 'Hello, my name's Elizabeth', and I've forgotten her name. Anyway it was a Jewish charity I'd written to, me and Denise had written to everything in green ink by hand.

SF: Yes, yes.

She, and we'd written to the woman. On, on every bunch of trustees we'd written to whatever woman we could find.

SF: Yes, right.

I'd written to her, I didn't know who she was.

SF: Ah.

And she was waiting to see whether I said 'Oh I don't really care about this One, Two, Three. I'll go and do something else'.

SF: Ah, ha.

And the fact that I was so passionate about One, Two, Three she went back and persuaded the charity... It was The Cohen Trust, Elizabeth Cohen, she was Elizabeth Cohen, right, and they gave us like three hundred quid or whatever it was.

[40:07]

SF: But still…

Enough.

SF: Real to work with?

To carry us. We'd go and get short ends.

SF: Yes.

We'd go down to Mark Harlin [ph 40:15].

SF: Yes.

At UCM and say, I remember phoning and saying 'Mark can I borrow the Nagra'? And he'd say 'Yes'. I said 'Could you please give me a lesson on how to use it'? [Laughter].

SF: [Laughter]

So it was just like that.

SF: Yes.

It was just so…

SF: Lovely.

And Margaret Dickinson.

SF: Yes.

I mean basically what was nice was that she came and helped me make that, so the next film, which was *Whose Nature*, I helped her make so it was, it was the very thing that I'd, I'd written in my thesis about, about that had so inspired me about how Ingmar Bergman worked.

SF: Yes.

That it was anti-star system. So the first film I'd seen which was *The Seventh Seal*, which was Max von Sydow in the lead.

SF: Yes.

The next film *Wild Strawberries*, he was garage mechanic.

SF: Yes.

You know, and he didn't lose face by playing a little role...

SF: Yes.

In the next film and I thought why don't we have proper, you know, films like this. If, I think in a way in the old days we probably did in Britain, there was more of a…

SF: Did the GLC in any way help in this project, they were around then?

I, I didn't go to them for that, I did later on for a thing called *Peace In Our Town*.

SF: Yes.

Is this going, am I going on too long?

SF: No, God, no, no, no.

We haven't started yet.

SF: We haven't begun. And I'm joking but feel free, utterly free, this is it.

The GLC, which I, you know, I used to moan about before the thought of it dying and then passionately, you know, canvassed for it. The only time I really went to them was just before I was about to leave the youth centre I wanted to do something on peace because I'd become a pacifist I think during the Vietnam War.

SF: Ah, ha.

And that was, there was a time, we'd worked so hard over Vietnam, well you know we all did, and Madame Binh came over.

SF: Yes. T Binh, yes.

She was so lovely.

SF: Yes.

And I remember talking to her because Barney was very little.

SF: Yes, of course.

And she came over and looked at Barney and she obviously had a sad face and I didn't know, I just said 'Have you got children'? And she said 'Yes but I don't know where they are', and I just…

SF: Sure, oh.

And I just had tears going on, and I thought oh what have I done.

SF: Yes.

But she didn't mean it like that.

SF: No, no.

And we all lined up, I can't remember exactly how it happened but, and I don't have it any more I'm sure it's symbolic but, and I've never ever worn a wedding ring. I've never married on principle, I've never worn a wedding ring, never worn a ring on that finger. And she went down this line and she had these little aluminium rings made from shot down aeroplanes.

SF: Yes, yes, I know. I've got several, yes.

And as she was getting down…. Well, I'd like…

SF: Absolutely.

As she was getting down the line I thought this finger would burn, and she put the ring on the finger and A: I'd never worn a ring on it and then I realised that the moment that I put this on I had to accept responsibility for the deaths of those American airmen.

SF: Yes.

Now I hated America.

SF: Yes.

I didn't hate the airmen.

SF: Yes.

I hated American policies.

SF: Yes.

But I didn't hate individual people.

SF: Yes. A profoundly Christian thought actually.

Oh.

SF: In the best sense of that word.

In the best sense of that word.

SF: Yes.

And from that moment I realised I couldn't, I couldn't do anything that actively promoted people killing people.

SF: Right.

And what it means, and I'm sure it's connected with the Women's Movement because, and it's also connected with running the youth centre because I would have to clock the moment that a kid walked through the door potentially armed and knifed to the, you know, I'd have to clock it before any of my male colleagues. Because I physically couldn't stop a kid fighting, I'd have to do it another way so I would always use humour, always try and give a person a way out, you mustn't paint them in to a corner. And I'd go up and pat their pockets and I'd say 'Oh fantastic, I needed an apple paring knife' or a new steak knife or whatever it was they'd got or, and try and get out of it that way.

Can, can we pause there?

We can have a pause. Yes, I'm desperate for a cup of tea.

[End of Tape 1 Side A 44:00]

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

Tape 1 Side B.

I think if I was defining what I believe in it's horizontal politics, well, that sounds like Stokely Carmichael.

SF: [Laughter]

Horizontal politics viz-a-viz vertical. In other words I've always gone between. I've desperately wanted to connect it's, no I know what it is, like a bee in flowers. There's all these different flowers and I want to be the bee that goes between to say 'Did you know there was another rather nice flower across the other side of the meadow you haven't met yet'.

SF: Yes.

You know, like this cosmic political marriage broker, but I'm not interested in climbing political ladders or getting higher up a strata. Things like, even when I ran the youth centre, which I did, you know, I was the boss from twenty-seven and I didn't climb higher because the next step would have been going to County Hall and not seeing a live kid again. Well…

SF: Yes. Or becoming a woman MP or something like that?

Yes, I didn't, you know, I did seriously think about local politics because, and that's something I like to make films about because it's so underestimated and when everybody's talked about politics they're talking about Westminster. Bugger the Westminster.

SF: All the time, yes.

Politics is local.

SF: Yes.

And you have to get kids as involved as possible.

SF: Indeed.

Anyway did you know about trampolines? I just thought I'd, when I found out about this I thought this is just magic. The trampoline was invented by Eskimos, Inuit, and it was a stretched piece of skin. And when you're in a relatively featureless landscape all your friends, all your friends, you need friends, get you on a trampoline and bounce you so you can get very high and say 'Yes, the cape's over there'. And I think what's so lovely about that is my definition of why every so often Shakespeare emerges or somebody brilliant, they've got there by bouncing on a trampoline that their mates have actually been... So once you've got a, this feeling that something's

happening, it's like the Women's Movement, then all kinds of things took off because you suddenly thought this is such exciting times. You've got adrenaline, you've got confidence, you've got trust, you've got all this stuff. And like the '60s and '70s when we were doing all this politics, you know, the emotion and the commitment from that has never gone away. We may all be wrinkled and older and crooked knees and God knows what and need the osteopath...

SF: But it gives us added vision doesn't it?

Yes, and enthusiasm. And like certain, certain people say 'You can't be fifty-five, you can't be seventy-five, you can't be eighty', because they don't believe why we're not more depre...

SF: Yes, yes.

What they think we ought to act the age they think we ought to act.

SF: Yes, yes.

And what we've got is that, that level of enthusiasm just never leaves us.

SF: Yes, exactly.

You know, and it's precious.

SF: And the longer it continues. I mean at eighty it's different to sixty, and at sixty it's different to forty and so on. And it doesn't depress you but the spirit of, well what I call socialism, you know, which is a big word but the spirit of that keeps you buoyant somehow and gives you a sort of inner staying power. Do, do you know what I'm trying to express because I feel that you express it absolutely perfectly, you know.

It's optimism.

SF: Yes.

It is optimism.

SF: Optimism.

But whatever happens…

But not mindless and not naive.

SF: Yes.

No.

And I mean I think the good thing about the '80s, which was a shit time, and Thatcher was a person I have to rush even now to the television and turn off.

SF: Yes.

I mean dining with Pinochet, come on.

SF: Yes.

What it did was in a way, I was going to say toughen me up, it didn't, it stiffened the sinews because there were some drippy people in the '60s, not many but a few who kind of wanted the world on a plate, and you do have to earn it and you do have to prove why you want to do what you want to do. And I suppose long term always in education, for example, I've wanted a broad based imaginative approach to kids, at the same time they must learn how to spell.

SF: Yes.

And always. So I would do things like when working with those kids get them writing, but say to this group of kids where there was always a soft one who was kicked and beaten and bullied and called a sissy and whatever say 'Okay chaps you're not going to publish this book until absolutely everybody in this room has written something, so it is in your interest actually to help the other people here, because I ain't printing it unless you've done it'. So you've got this, you know, and that, my very first job working with these kids in a drama school. There was one kid picked on, he was thirteen very sweet and pretty, he probably is gay now but they called him 'Stephanie' instead of 'Stephen'. And I remember having a word with him and say 'Just be quiet in this one lesson', and reading out some Blake, who I passionately love, Blake and John Dunn are probably, and Shakespeare are probably my heroes.

SF: Oh William Blake.

And reading this out, reading out a Blake and then reading out this other poem and saying to the kids 'What do you think of it'? Having this discussion. And they all loved both poems, and after half an hour I said 'Right, the writer of the first one was William Blake, the writer of the second is sitting in this room and his name's Stephen'. And they just went 'Oh', and from then onwards he wasn't called 'Stephanie'. And I think things like, you, I suppose it's down to respect, you know. And in terms of enemies the only cosmic people, the only person whose death I've ever smiled at was Rajiv Gandhi.

SF: Oh yes.

Sanjay Gandhi, sorry, Sanjay Gandhi.

[05:01]

SF: Yes.

Who, I was in India when he died.

SF: Sanjay, yes.

Thank God.

SF: Yes.

Mostly when people have said 'Well, if you had a gun and a bullet would you actually take somebody out'? And I said 'No'. And even good mates of mine, who shall be nameless, have talked about taking out this, that and the other, and I thought A: I wonder if you would and B: the good thing about the advent of eastern philosophies in to all the politics was an absolute acceptance of everything you do from how you buy a pound of sausages to how you organise a mass meeting is political.

SF: Yes.

You must, whatever happens there will be a result from it.

SF: Yes.

And if you kill someone...

SF: Yes.

Or if you accept on, that someone has killed someone on your behalf.

SF: You've ended it, you've ended it, yes. On the other hand I will more than smile if Pinochet kicks the bucket in The London, he won't of course, in The London Clinic.

Yes.

SF: Because…

I'm glad that man…

SF: That man murdered…

Yes.

SF: My friend's husband and thousands of others, you know. Murdered, murdered, ah yes, I understand. I see what you're getting at completely, I understand it.

What was I going to say?

SF: Where were we at?

Unity PS.

SF: Unity PS?

Well, Unity PS I was going to say, oh that was quite interesting.

SF: Unity PS, yes.

Because my youth centre was a hundred yards from Unity Theatre.

SF: Mornington Crescent. Near the, the old Unity that got burnt down, yes.

Yes, yes. Well, I have to say I suspect I know who did it. [Laughter]

SF: Yes, what to get the insurance money?

No, the kids.

SF: The kids, oh yes.

And I used to go because occasionally we'd, we'd show some Liberation Films and various things there.

SF: Yes, yes, I remember.

And it was just so fucking cold, I just remember.

SF: Yes.

But it was exciting.

SF: And the lavatory outside wasn't nice for the gentlemen.

No, no, it wasn't. But I, the other thing that's interesting is, and it, I'm just connecting these things literally so late in my life, I mean why it came naturally to set up, say, Angry Arts was the first voice, the first singer, because I spent all my life being a singer, that I ever heard that just resonated was Paul Robeson but I didn't know he was black because I didn't see, I, I hadn't…

SF: You just heard his voice?

Yes. My grandfather had a, we didn't have a record.

SF: A record?

We didn't have any money. I just heard this voice and it just did me, I've now got Paul Robeson.

SF: Yes, of course.

And I sit there and I just… And then when I was involved with Unity Theatre and I, and I heard that he'd turned down this West End play to act for free.

SF: Yes, in 'Plant In The Sun'?

Yes. And I thought oh yes, I love this man, he's so special.

SF: Yes.

And you realise that, it's a bit like that line from John Dunn, you know, 'Gold to airy thinness beat', but a little tiny bit of gold you can hammer over half an acre.

SF: Yes, yes.

And that someone like him, okay he died under odd circumstances.

SF: Yes.

And there were sad things happening, but this man now dead inspires the rest of us.

SF: Absolutely true.

Now.

SF: Absolutely true.

You know, it's thank you very much whoever was up there for Paul Robeson. I…

SF: Yes. You know I brought him back from East Germany to Britain on the…

No.

SF: Yes, in '63. He'd been, he'd been through the witch hunt, he'd had his passport withdrawn - Robeson - and he'd attempted suicide. There's even a rumour that The CIA…

I know. I saw the drama on that.

SF: Were trying to kill him, to poison him the way they failed with Fidel Castro, which is a true story to this day.

I know.

SF: They won't deny it. Anyway the point is he'd been terribly ill, terribly ill and depressed and Eslanda and he were in East Germany because he'd been in a big clinic called The Buch Clinic. And by chance I was just doing the English, you know, I used to spend a lot of my time in Germany, in GDR, East Germany, doing English versions of their best documentaries or what they considered their best documentaries. Sometimes they were often they were not. And I was in the airport in Schönefeld, the East Berlin airport, and the woman who ran the Peace Committee, Renarta Meilke [ph 08:53], came up to me and said 'Stanley can you do me a favour. Would you help Harry Francis, one of the comrades in the Musicians Union who felt very responsible for managing Robeson, because he was, everyone wanted him to perform all over the show but he was getting on in years and he wasn't very well and they were a bit worried about him having the responsibility of seeing Robeson back from East Berlin to London, to his home in Marble Arch up the road. And so Renata asked me would I do it and I said 'Well, I'm honoured', you know, 'with pleasure and

all that'. And I was introduced and he was, and of course, I'd met him a hundred times at meetings with me cheering like mad, you know. I was a groupie, I, wherever Robeson sang.

I would have been too.

SF: I followed him around. Right, and he was lovely, he was subdued, you know, I won't exaggerate the meeting. Eslanda was wonderful, although she had been told that she had terminal cancer when I met her in '63. She died two years later in '65.

[10:02]

Before him?

SF: Oh yes, years before him. And he lived on until the mid '70s staying at the home absolutely without any creative life.

Well, they didn't let him did they?

SF: No, no, no. He had a terrible time, frightful time.

I want to make a film about him and have him cast, and have Willard White, don't you think?

SF: But there was a great nobility in his tragedy.

Yes.

SF: A great wonderful nobility in his tragedy, and that was a, an indelible experience. You don't forget being asked in the first place...

No.

SF: To take Robeson home, and we took him back. He was a bit apprehensive about paparazzi, which already existed in those days, would they be driving him up the wall at the airport because they were chasing him around all over the show. But we managed to avoid all that, it didn't, it didn't emerge as a serious thing and we got him in to a taxi and we all went back to Marble Arch and saw him safely home, and three days later he was on a plane to Philadelphia to, to America and he never came back. And that was it, that was the end of Robeson. And Eslanda died and they had a rather stormy relationship because he had, he had affairs with Lady Edwina Mountbatten.

What bad taste.

SF: That's very bad taste.

[Laughter] Dear oh dear.

SF: Yes. But it just as, like the Queen and this communist naval lieutenant, you know, the Queen Mother.

Oh the Queen Mother.

SF: Yes.

Well, she's got bad anyway. [Laughter].

SF: Anyway.

I kind of ignore all them. I mean all they do is take our money. I really am so dis…, uninterested, disinterested, past, beyond interest in Royal Family as it stands.

SF: You must return to Unity Theatre darling.

Return to Unity because it is, it's important. It was a, it was a double thing. A: I was inspired by what they did and keeping it altogether and B: by the time I was involved, or going there for Angry Arts, like kind of as a loving outsider I was pissed off with them for not engaging locally. I said 'Look here am I on the doorstep with all these kids, I'm a good old fashioned leftie'.

SF: Yes.

'Why aren't you meeting these kids'?

SF: Yes.

'These people. The experiences you're nostalging about of the '30s'…

SF: Yes.

'They're real and here now'.

SF: Yes, yes.

And so when they did get burnt down, and I don't know who did it.

SF: No.

But I really am not beyond me to think that it was some of the kids. I went straight in to see them and said 'Look, please for free, but unofficially, come and meet in my youth centre'.

SF: Yes.

So I gave them rooms in my youth centre to meet in.

SF: Yes, yes.

And then made a tape slide show of, about Unity Theatre, because I think what was interesting then they quite liked the fact that I wasn't, I wasn't in the CP but I was a leftie...

SF: Yes.

I was interested in everything.

SF: Yes.

And so I made it. And it was extraordinary, because when we had the showing, the first showing at I think it was at the youth centre I just thought I'll duck while the arrows fly over my head while you have Moosh [ph 12:59]. Do you remember Moosh [ph 13:00]?

SF: Yes.

She was so nice. She was Anna Ambrose's mum.

SF: Yes, yes.

And I remember going in to see her.

SF: I know, I know Anna Ambrose. Oh I know Anna Ambrose, she was a film maker.

And looking, and looking on the wall and seeing this picture saying 'How do you know Anna'? And she said 'Oh that's my daughter'.

SF: Yes.

And of course, she was dead, she'd just died.

SF: Yes. Anna Ambrose died tragically. We worked together on a film on the life of Alan Bush, which she made for The Arts Council.

Yes, which I saw.

SF: A beautiful film.

She was a smashing person.

SF: Which of historic and she was beautiful. I mean she was physically she looked so good, and she and this chap White, Michael White I think his name was, another film maker.

Yes, I remember that.

SF: And she died and she told me she was dying, you know, of cancer and that nothing could be done about it.

But to go back to Unity in a way.

SF: Yes.

The good thing that happened later was that Colin Chambers got hold of me.

SF: Yes, yes.

So he's still got my patent slides actually.

SF: Ah, ha.

We planned to, we planned a whole proposal because I really thought this is something that ought to be made in to a film, and this is where I got pissed off with Custer [ph 13:59] because Mike, Colin and I put this in as a proposal.

SF: Yes.

And it didn't get made because it wasn't…

SF: Colin Chambers and you?

Yes, mm.

SF: Because Colin's a friend. I mean, you know, he's someone I know incredibly well.

Well, I haven't…

SF: You'll know he's a comrade of course, yes.

No, I didn't, ha. I didn't but we got on incredibly well.

SF: Yes. No, he's a good guy.

And, you know, I really would love to have made this but you can't, if you don't get through the commissioning process you can't.

SF: No.

And that's one of the things where if we really had had the money. This is where if you'd had the money then...

SF: Yes.

That's exactly what we should have made.

SF: Yes.

Because they, a lot of the older people were still just about there.

SF: Yes, yes.

And it was special.

SF: Yes.

And it won't happen again like that.

SF: No, no.

You know.

SF: I'm afraid there's a lot of that in the movement and we've missed out. I think of it even in relationship to BECTU with what we're doing in the history group, there was, who was it who died recently Manny?

Sid Cole?

SF: Sid, no, not Sid Cole. He was famous, but someone who died and I thought Christ we never recorded him at all.

Oh Michael…

SF: Samuelson, Michael Samuelson was a famous…

[15:01]

Was Samuelson's the…

A famous…

SF: The Samuelson film family. And there was this bloke who died in his sixties, mid sixties whose elder brother, Billy's a member and who turns up even though he's a big shot on The London Film Commission and no one had thought of recording him, you know, and that's why its so incredibly precious.

I know.

SF: To get all this in words on tape somehow or other.

No, I totally agree.

SF: You know.

And also more than one version of people we've got. I mean like when Margaret was doing her stuff about the beginning of Liberation Films I've got one view...

SF: Yes.

Tony's got a different view…

SF: Of course.

And, mm, Roland's got another view.

SF: And certainly, and certainly the doctor what not that we did the other...

Yes.

SF: The other, the last one we did.

Yes.

SF: Geoff and Margaret, they certainly have another view, but I must confess, Manny will remind me, they were not critical of Sue were they?

No, no.

No, they wouldn't.

SF: You never emerged as a point of validity.

Not, not in, not in terms of Liberation Films, just in terms of leaving Tony.

SF: Yes, ah.

I was lectured.

SF: Oh I see.

I can remember Tony brought them in to lecture me and then when I refused to go back I was beyond the pale.

SF: You were right, Tony wasn't for you.

No, and he, to be fair to him he kind of always knew it.

SF: Yes.

He said 'You'll outgrow me one day', and I didn't, when I was twenty-two I didn't know what he meant.

SF: Yes but he was right. On that he was profoundly correct.

And that's…

SF: There are some women who are, for whom, I mean I don't know that Lenin was good enough for you. [Laughter]

[Laughter] I got my hands slapped for walking past Lenin's Tomb with my hands in my pocket.

SF: [Laughter]

I was told I had to take my hands out of my pocket and I thought look…

SF: Take the cigarette out of your mouth.

[Laughter] No, I'd given up by then.

SF: No, that's good. [Laughter] Anyway I don't want to divert you.

No, I'm just trying to think. I carefully wrote, I've carefully looked to see what else we did. The woman's plays, blah, blah, blah. And I think, I think along with all these things... Everything sprang from something else, like the children's community centre sprang from having kids, and I think gradually my politics came closer and closer and closer to home. So that out of the Women's Movement naturally sprang setting up the women's liberation, the nursery. And what you get as you get closer to home is that sometimes you're working with people you would cross the road to avoid were you not setting something up.

SF: Yes.

Like the nursery. There are a couple of people in there who came who I thought my God, I don't like them. On the other hand when you come out and say something people trust where you're coming from because you've got a kid and you have needs. One of the things that happened during the Vietnam Movement was we went down to a factory in Kentish Town called Gedeon Richter.

SF: Oh.

Which made, which made, which was part of Dow Chemicals.

SF: Yes.

And I remember we went down, we took street theatre because we were all in to these lovely street theatre things.

SF: Yes.

And I remember the people coming out at lunch time and saying 'What do you want us to do'? And I said 'What do you mean'? They said 'Well, what do you want us to do. Do you want us to leave, are you going to give us another job'? And I thought is my first real thought about leafleting the factory gates, we're asking people to take risks we're not taking.

SF: Right.

So, you know, my, my politics ch.., the core of it's the same the whole way through but the at one asks or what one expects you can't ever ask someone to do something you wouldn't do yourself.

SF: Precisely.

It's not…

SF: Absolutely.

Not possible. And I remember one of the nicest ones of that was we did a street theatre and Geoff and Miriam and people were involved in this and Henry and Shelley were, do you remember them?

SF: Yes. Of Central Books.

That was, they were special. Yes, they were very special.

SF: Or Collett, was he Collett's he ran, he was the manager of Collett's?

He, no, he wasn't.

SF: Or Central Books?

He was a doctor, they were both doctors.

SF: What?

They were both doctors.

SF: Oh I'm mixing him up then, another Shelley.

Anyway we did some street theatre about Vietnam and we went to certain landmark places. We, we went at one point to the queue at Everyman, The Everyman Cinema.

SF: Yes.

And we planted a couple of people in the queue and they had NLF flags tucked down. So when one of us went past with a sub-machine gun pretend like and went and the people were absolutely shit scared, and two or three out of the audience dropped out of the queue, dropped down to the floor. And then started pulling the flag out which had been carefully done to show the red star first so it looked like blood and then the whole flag and then draped themselves in the NLF flag. And they had conversation.

SF: Incredible.

And you had conversations based not on electoral leaflets...

SF: In Hampstead outside The Everyman?

Outside The Everyman. And, because we walked from The Everyman up to the Chairman, I don't know Chairman? Anyway it was someone very high up, Director of Dow Chemicals.

SF: Yes.

Who owned one of the houses up at the top near the pond.

SF: Yes, yes, yes.

Knocked on the door. The butler comes. We never get to see the man that owns it.

SF: Of course, never.

He says 'What are you doing here'? And we said 'Well, we believe that you own Dow Chemicals, we have a piece of napalm in our hands' - lie 'We're now going to, you know, put this alight and burn ourselves in front of you'. And he was going 'Agh'!

SF: [Laughter]

And it was extraordinary. He went in and he shut the door and of course, we never got… But by then we'd got a few people because we went on the tube.

SF: Ah.

And we collected a few people with us on the tube going to places.

SF: Ah, ha.

And I think, I kept thinking it was, it was going back to how I started which is what would have affected me when I was totally apolitical. Being harangued I'd turn the other way, I'd, I'd harden my arteries against you.

[20:08]

SF: Yes.

But if you tell me something in an imaginative or unusual way or get hold of me laterally then I'll think about it, you know.

SF: Yes.

And the other thing I've learnt by working with difficult kids a lot of my life, don't expect results instantly. Say something and they'll say 'Oh piss off'. Two weeks later they'll come back and say 'About what you said about Vietnam miss'.

SF: Oh miss, yes.

Right? And in fact I never ever took my politics in to my work directly but they all knew what I stood for. They knew that I didn't get married on purpose but because I respected them they'd still invite me to their weddings knowing that I respected them.

SF: Yes.

And I can remember the only time we ever did anything political together was the beginning of the anti-Nazi demonstrations.

SF: Yes.

And they asked, they said 'Something's happening', and I said 'Well, if you like I'll organise a coach'. So we organised a coach and went to Victoria Park.

SF: Ah.

And I can remember, oh God, I was aware that we went and then we walked, because by the time we got there I was knackered and I said 'Oh piss off the lot of you, go and get a drink I'm going to sit under this tree'. So I sat under this tree and communed with my soul. And they, a little bit further on some of the kids came back, and they weren't kids they were sixteen, seventeen and some of my favourite girls and they came back looking kind of worried with little postcards and they, some stall whatever, somebody, they'd bought these postcards and they were the Holocaust, right. They brought them back and say 'Sue is this true'? And I said 'Well, what do you mean is it true'? This was sixteen, seventeen year olds just leaving school.

SF: Yes.

And they said 'Is it true'? And I said 'Yes', so we had a conversation about the Holocaust what, and I thought these children are leaving a school system and they're still asking the question 'Is it true'?

SF: Yes.

And the other thing that I really feel deeply about is that there's an awful lot of left wing and I don't even think left wing people often know they are either snobs or they're intellectually arrogant because it's a long, long, long time since either they were ever working class or they never were, and they don't know what these kids go through.

SF: Yes.

And I had one particular kid who was a fascist little thug and I really didn't, to be honest I didn't like him that much but he used to go round clapping people on the back like this and when you took his hand away, or he took his hand away and walked off, there was a little sticker on it saying British Movement. It wasn't the British Movement.

SF: No.

And he'd go away. So I thought I'll clock this, I didn't say anything to him. So I watched him as he went up to clap some one on the shoulder and I went behind him and clapped him on the shoulder and said 'Yes, well, in to my office young man'. So he went in to my office. I said 'What are you doing'? And we had, because I didn't shout he said, he got this letter out and he showed it to me and it was embossed.

SF: Ah, ha.

And it said 'Dear Mr', his name.

SF: Oh yes.

Both names. 'We'd like to invite you to celebrate Hitler's birthday', and something about the *Luftwaffe*, there was something connected.

SF: Oh yes, oh yes.

'At blah, blah, blah, yours faithfully, blah, blah, blah'. Then, that he's, he was fifteen, it was the first letter he'd ever had addressed to himself.

SF: Ah.

And I thought people forget, this child had been treated with respect.

SF: Yes.

He's had embossed paper.

SF: Yes.

It was to him at home, 'Dear Mr'.

SF: Yes.

Yes, yes.

Come on.

SF: Yes.

Who else, who wants to put him down, has taken that level of respect with him. They said 'Hey you, come on do your homework, or get your fucking football shirt', whatever.

SF: Yes, yes, precisely.

And it really brought me up short that.

SF: There's a lesson there, a big one.

Anyway back to heroes and things, Paul Robeson and stuff.

SF: Back to heroes and Paul Robeson.

My heroine.

SF: Heroine?

My heroine is Mary . . .

SF: By the way before I forget, I kind of keep thinking of things that I mustn't forget to tell you. Have you read Sheila Rowbotham's latest book called 'A Century of Women'?

Mm, mm.

SF: Which deals with from 1900 until yesterday as it were, the most important women in Britain and in America. One chapter Britain, the second, it sort of goes chronologically through 1900, First World War, Second World War, Spain and so on. It goes right the way through and lists dozens and dozens and dozens of remarkable American women.

I did ought to.

SF: I mean you learn so much history because I knew bugger all, I know a bit about British history but I knew seriously bugger all about American feminist history I don't know much, and there it all was more or less in a nutshell and it's a wonderful book for a committed feminist, you know, which I can passionately recommend.

I have to confess I've, I've read extraordinarily little feminist works or history or whatever else, I mean I've been involved in films and stuff.

SF: yes.

But, and there's a lot of people I really respect.

SF: Right.

But some of the heavy American feminism really I haven't wanted to get to grips with.

SF: Yes, oh yes but Sheila Rowbotham…

Sheila's great, I agree.

SF: First of all she's British and she's easy to understand.

And she's fun. No, I agree.

SF: So you, you don't have to work at reading it, you know.

[25:00]

No, there's a point…

SF: It's a big book, mind you it's a lot of pages but it repays, it repays you.

In fact she was involved, the thing that, the Mary Wollstonecraft thing that I did.

SF: Yes, yes.

She was involved with because Mary Wollstonecraft's my heroine.

SF: Yes, that's good. Do you know the work of John Pilger, I know he's a man?

Yes.

SF: Yes?

Yes.

SF: Because his last book *Hidden Agenda*s is a wonderful book.

I've got that.

SF: Good for you.

Which I haven't read yet, because I keep getting through a couple of chapters and then go on to something else.

SF: No, of course, I know and then you go to sleep.

Anyway the point about Mary Wollstonecraft is…

SF: Mary Wollstonecraft?

I made a film. After I'd, oh I went to Channel Four to work full-time for two years because trying to ride two horses and bring up two kids was just tough.

SF: Were you with Alan Fountain or not really?

No, no, I wish I had been but no. It was very funny because, [Laughter] God I'd better be careful but…

SF: No, don't be careful.

When I, no I won't be careful. But when I saw these jobs advertised. I was basically running this youth centre and trying to make radical films on the side, and it was hard.

SF: Of course.

And setting up houses for homeless girls and nursing and all the rest of it. And I'd taken a year off, I'd had a sabbatical which was hard enough to get and I'd done lots of research. I'd made a film about alternative education to try to get unusual people into education. So I'd done it in Camden and there'd been things like the disabled person making a telescope, but I got her talking and it wasn't till you pulled back right far in did you realise she was in a wheelchair. Just countering stereotypes.

SF: Yes.

I can't stand stereotypes. And I got so involved in all this and started doing research on Mary Wollstonecraft just because I passionately cared about her. Oh no, what happened much more important than that. Because of working in Somers Town I'd began to realise there was some pretty interesting people involved in the history of Somers Town, and Somers Town is between Bloomsbury and Hampstead but no one's ever heard of it.

SF: Yes.

So I was doing some research on the radical women of Somers Town, this is where The GLC comes in.

SF: Ah, ha.

Because I thought I really wanted to get some money off them, I didn't. But I was doing some work on it and I knew there was a lovely old doctor who'd done a Robin Hood, she used to treat the women of Somers Town for free and then go and rip off the people in Hackney and wherever.

SF: Great.

I really thought she was lovely.

SF: Good.

And I knew Mary Wollstonecraft had died there and been married there, and I knew that this lovely old lady called Irene Barclay had, had been involved in this radical housing thing. Now I'd been involved in radical housing in Patchwork, which was a housing co-op which I'd lived in.

SF: Yes.

And, and also having been a homeless family I reckon that anybody can spout politics but if you ain't got a home, you know, you can't spout politics if you're housed.

SF: You need a roof?

And in fact I live in this house now because of Eric Walker.

SF: Yes.

As I said to you before, and bought this house cheap and I wouldn't have been talking to him had we not all been working together on these radical film workshops.

SF: Exactly.

That we used to do for free in our spare time. Anyway in the knowledge that I went to meet this old lady who was ninety-two, and I was so bowled over by her that I thought oh bugger I must try and make this in to a proper film, a proper television, I'd never made a television film. We were so pure, we refused to allow *A Woman's Place* to be shown on television.

SF: [Laughter]

You know, for ages. I mean, and when the BBC came we turned them away. Anyway that's beside the point. But I met this old lady...

SF: That's where we differ because very few Communist Party members would turn down a chance to influence the bourgeois media, do you understand? I can't think of any, at this moment I'm trying desperately to get our company and our stuff on Victor Jara on, both on the BBC Two channel and on Channel Four like Today and Yesterday.

No, I'd agree now but in those days.

SF: Of course, of course.

The way they would have treated us and topped and tailed us…

SF: Yes, yes.

It would have been with a laugh.

SF: Indeed.

Having been treated that way within the press at the beginning of the Women's Movement.

SF: Yes, yes.

I'd no idea people fiddled with what you said.

SF: No.

And made you look stupid.

SF: And edit things out?

Yes.

SF: Yes.

Anyway so I went to see this lovely old lady.

SF: Yes.

And was dead impressed. Oh, and then what happened, I did, I was doing some research about the housing policy in Somers Town.

SF: Ah.

And I went to St Pancras Housing Association, opened this cupboard door and saw like sixty cans of rusting film. And I said 'You shouldn't be having this near a radiator, please can I take this away and look at it in the archive'?

SF: Ah.

'Well, can I look at it on a Steenbeck because you shouldn't even be projecting this'? Took it away and there was this amazing cache of film. And it was, it was set up by a bunch of radical priests and women, and they were so radical in those days, although they were Anglican they always had a space on their board for an Agnostic and an Atheist. This is the 1930s.

[30:02]

SF: This is '30s material, yes?

Yes. This is, this is '30s, '40s, '50s.

SF: Silent footage or…?

Yes.

SF: Yes.

They had a voice over later on.

SF: Yes, yes.

And basically these, these are like the first 16mmil cameras around.

SF: Yes.

And instead of pointing them, this is Basil Jellicoe.

SF: Yes.

This is Admiral Jellicoe's nephew. Instead of pointing them at society weddings...

SF: Yes.

They filmed their own rebuilding of Somers Town. Now on one level you could say it was patronising, on the other hand what I'd say is that it was what Christianity earlier, this was practical Christianity they said, [Phone rings], they said either you do what Christ says, which is look after the poor and all the rest of it or you're not a Christian. So simple, you cannot profess Christianity unless you do something about it.

SF: No, no.

So they literally, physically, rebuilt Somers Town and they did it from the very first go, saying bricks and mortar aren't enough, you need community halls, nurseries, gardens. It was, I can't tell you it was stunning. And they also did things on trust like when, when they moved people out you lost, you lost your tenancy if you moved somewhere else while they built your house, you lost your rights, but it was so full of trust that they said to the, these people 'Don't worry, we'll go and move somewhere else we know you're going to move us back in again'. So I decided that to take this to, to the telly. So I went in to Thames with Richard Broad and met Catherine Freeman.

SF: Oh yes, oh I know her.

Who folded her capacious arms.

SF: Yes.

And said… Because, oh I know what I said. Irene Barclay, I was, I was gabbling so much my mouth had gone dry I was so nervous.

SF: Yes.

Because this was the first time I'd really met serious people from telly.

SF: Ah, ha.

And I said 'Irene Barclay's brother was Kingsley Martin and he edited *The New Statesman*', and she kind of narrowed her eyes and folded her arms and said 'Yes, when my husband edited *The New Statesman',* I couldn't have said anything better if I'd tried.

SF: [Laughter].

Yes.

You know, I was suddenly in.

SF: Yes.

And then the classic thing was she said 'Well, what are your ambitions'? And I said 'Well actually I spend a lot of time in India because Guy's dad is a tabla player, and I get pissed off with everyone seeing the Third World as something just in need of charity and I think the Third World can teach us something, and what I really want to

do is go out and make films in the Third World with kids but where it's equal'. And she said 'When my husband was ambassador to India'.

SF: As he was, yes. [Laughter]

And she realised that I didn't know, I didn't set up what I'd just said knowing, I knew nothing about her so she was partly thinking why the hell doesn't this woman know who I am? On the other hand she knew I was just so green and she said 'Yes'. So we did this as a People First.

SF: Ah, ha.

For the person before Alan, which is Paul, you know. [Phone rings] Paul, Paul, I've forgotten his name. Anyway so that was the first thing I ever did for telly.

SF: For Channel Four?

For Channel Four with Richard for Thames. And the next thing I had to make a choice. I got some money out of The GLC to make a film, make, to write a book with, with kids called *Peace In Our Town,* which is a send up, as you know.

SF: Yes.

Because I was so by then believed that peace has got to be taken seriously, we've got to do something about it. Oh I can remember, that's right. I remember meeting this bloke and saying 'That's very funny you look terribly familiar, I used to know someone exactly like you in Somers Town'. He said 'Yes, I am Bruce Kent and I was a Jesuit priest in [Laughter] Somers Town'. And he was bright, it was classic.

SF: Oh you got to know. Our worlds overlap, you know, virtually utterly you know.

Well, what was so lovely...

SF: Bruce is a pal of ours, you know.

Oh well I think he's brilliant.

SF: He's a wonderful man.

Well, you will have to tell him this bit. Because I took all these kids to do this, do these interviews...

SF: Yes.

So I taught them how to interview and said 'Okay, we're going out to interview people about peace and war, what they think'.

SF: Yes.

So took him to interview…

SF: Bruce?

Bruce Kent, and there was one of these lovely kids was like shaking and I said afterwards 'What's the matter'? She said 'I was so nervous', she said 'Why isn't he Prime Minister'? And I said 'Well, someone's not the same thing'.

SF: [Laughter]

He would make an excellent prime minister my dear, yes.

SF: Wouldn't he not, wouldn't he not.

And then it got so interesting that we decided to… I was then involved…. Oh I know what happened. A friend of mine called Jonathan Zeigen [ph 33:04] who was involved with Ed, you know, we were all involved with Interaction.

SF: Oh yes.

Because I'd been involved with Interaction for my youth centre and had a brief fling with Ed and so on.

SF: Yes.

And decided, he'd written this book about printed, you know, self help print.

SF: Yes.

So we thought oh bugger this, we'll go to Channel Four and so we went to Channel Four. Oh I can't tell you, so naive I can't tell you, and we met with Carol Haslam.

SF: Yes, we know her.

Who said 'What a lovely idea, what a lovely idea. Well, I know that Sue makes films but how much do you know about the legal and financial side'? And I said 'Absolutely nothing'. She said 'What I suggest you do is we marry you with a film company', and we said 'Oh we're not sure about that'.

SF: [Laughter]

I mean the naively. So she went down a list of, I can't, I can't remember who but we said 'Oh no, not them, they make this' or 'crap stuff'.

SF: Oh fair enough.

And finally we came across this company which we'd never heard of called International Broadcasting Trust, and we thought well, they sound alright.

SF: Yes.

So we went along to meet them and agreed to, to very kindly grace them with our presence.

SF: Daines.

And we made this series called *Print It Yourself.* And what we managed to do, and again it's lateral thinking, it was persuade IBT and Carol that development begins at home, that you can't go off lecturing to other people's countries if you haven't bloody well got your own act in order.

SF: Precisely.

And that what we needed to do in this country, there's, there were four programmes all about print and in fact the most ambitious, it was silk screen and goodness knows what, and the most ambitious which was offset litho I'd, I produced them all and directed that one and it was a bunch of illiterate women in North Islington who were writing their third book, quite seriously illiterate and they did a lot of it by exactly what you're doing now recording.

SF: Yes.

And some of the best was these great black Christian mamas. Who would distil their lives down to two paragraphs that were like straight out of the King James Bible.

[35:05]

SF: Yes. [Laughter]

And they'd say 'Is this any good'? And I'd say 'Listen my dear, I'd give my eye teeth to write like that'. I can't any more, I haven't got that innocence I, you know, I'd just be standing there thinking these words would tumble out of their mouths with sonorousness.

SF: Yes, there would be an interview with Jesus or the Virgin Mary or whatever she's called.

Straight up, straight up. It was brilliant.

SF: [Laughter]

So…

SF: That's wonderful.

That's what I made in the… And then I made that with Jonathan and then I was going to be making a film on…

SF: Jonathan whom?

Zeigen [ph 35:39] who's now dead .

SF: Zeigen [ph 35:41] yes.

He was killed in a car crash two years ago.

SF: Yes, yes.

I got the, I was either making the film or, or going or applying to Channel Four for the assistant editor.

SF: Yes.

And by then I thought I'm so knackered trying to make films and run a youth centre and bring a family up.

SF: Yes, yes.

So That I was going to try and put all my eggs in one basket.

SF: Yes.

And combine politics and education and everything.

SF: Yes.

So I would, I put in for the job, and then I met Nick Hart-Williams.

SF: Oh yes.

On the door as we were going to put in our thingy and he was going to, I was going to put in for working with Alan Fountain.

SF: Ah.

And I'd put in for working with Naomi and, and somebody said 'No, don't do that', so I rushed in to try and take my, my form out and put under Alan Fountain but it was too late.

SF: Wow.

So I got the job working with Naomi.

SF: Naomi whom?

Sargent.

SF: Oh that Naomi?

Andrew McIntosh's…

SF: Oh Lady Sargent?

Yes.

SF: I say.

But the reason I went to work at Channel Four was because of Carol. I was so impressed with working with her.

SF: Yes, Carol Haslam?

Yes. I'd had such a good time.

SF: Right.

We'd been made to feel that we'd got good ideas and that she encouraged us. It wouldn't happen now, that level of…

SF: No, no. That, and it's over, that phase of Channel Four is at an end.

It's a real shame.

SF: It's all over alas.

Sorry, Sky.

SF: I'm sorry.

Quickly, what do you want? Sorry. [Interruption]

SF: Are we out?

Now we're running again.

SF: We're running again now love.

Yes. Anyway we did all that. So I then went to Channel Four, and it was the first, it was the second two years, I mean the channel was only…

SF: Yes.

Was only like two years old and it, it was special then, it was different.

SF: Yes.

And people like me wouldn't have gone to work for the Beeb.

SF: No, no.

You know, as much as I respected it.

SF: No, no. Those were the days when Jeremy was running the show.

Yes, he was proper.

SF: And Alan was a wonderful comrade, you know.

He was great.

SF: And one had Caroline Spry and one had Rod Stoneman, one had some real committed people doing things at Channel Four, but I'm afraid alas that phase is utterly over.

It's not entirely their fault.

SF: No, no.

Just because of digital and all the rest of it but at the same time what I do, I still work there.

SF: Yes.

Two days a month.

SF: Ah, ha.

As, as the deaf adviser. I suppose what's…

SF: As a what adviser?

Deaf. What happened during the time I was at Channel Four...

SF: Deaf, ah, ha.

Is that I was working a lot developing the kids' stuff so [Phone rings]. I was responsible for a half hour weekly show which I called *Just For Fun*. A weekly, Christ we did it five days a week and I had a minute budget. Oh you'll love this. I'm so illiterate that we were sitting there trying to work out how I could spend this money and I commissioned two series and I'd bought in lots of stuff, and I'll tell you the arse of the universe story in a minute but I'd add it all up and I kept thinking I've cocked up, I can't cover, I just cannot do six months worth. I don't. I sat there with Liz Forman and I wondered why she was smiling and I'd put a hundred minutes in an hour hadn't I? No wonder I couldn't actually… [Laughter]

SF: Actually it's sixty. [Laughter]

It's sixty so actually I could afford it. But you'll like this story, I can remember *The Masters of The Universe* people coming up, they sent this blue eyed like six foot Texan with a Stetson...

SF: [Laughter]

To wine and dine and he said 'Can I take you out to lunch'? I said 'No, I haven't met you yet'. And he said 'I'd like to offer you *Masters of The Universe* for', I can't remember, something cheap, something stupid like two thousand a half hour or something. And I said 'Thank you very much I don't want it'. And he said 'How about fifteen hundred'? I said 'No, no, you don't understand, I don't want it'. And he said 'What'? I said 'And while I'm here, my, my brief tenure will not include any armed, you know, mechanistic, male dominated American crap' I said. So I was leaping around trying to find, what did I buy? I bought plasticine animation Bulgarian version of *Gulliver's Travels*. [Laughter]

SF: [Laughter]

Oh it was absolutely classic. I mean they had some lovely quirky stuff.

SF: Yes.

But I thought, what worried me because I was working so much with kids and I had kids myself, they knew more about Chicago and New York than they knew about Paris and Prague.

SF: Absolutely, of course, they did.

[40:00]

And it's, culturally we need to know more about Europe.

SF: Yes, yes.

We just … And I suppose I always respected the French fight against American domination with Hollywood but we lost, you know, they lost in the end.

SF: Of course, they did.

And Hollywood will just always win.

SF: Yes.

And yes, someone else bought *Masters of The Universe,* not for Channel Four for the BBC I think. But I did keep them at bay Stanley.

SF: Yes.

I did keep them at bay.

SF: You did indeed, you did indeed.

And the deaf stuff came because somebody brought a deaf project to me and it suddenly crossed my mind that in all my years running the youth centre I'd only met one deaf kid.

SF: Was that The Royal Deaf Institute people?

No.

SF: No?

No, it wasn't. In fact it was an ex Commissioning Editor for Light Entertainment.

SF: Good Lord.

Who'd met a person that happened to sign. It was as casual as that and he'd been taken by her. He brought in a proposal, I really liked it and Naomi said 'Well, you do this Sue, make this your own'. So I worked on it and I really loved it and I thought it was a good idea. It didn't, it wasn't perfect because unfortunately it was a, it was a commission between an indie, him, and an ITV company.

Okay, can you sort of cut it there that's…

[End of Tape 1 of Side B 41:10]

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

Tape 2 Side A.

BECTU History Project. Doing interview Susan Crockford and this is a second tape and side three. Okay, mm?

Deaf, deaf stuff.

SF: Deaf.

I think one of the reasons I became interested, apart from suddenly feeling retrospectively guilty that I'd never sought out deaf kids because it's such an invisible thing.

SF: Yes, yes.

Was also talking to my dad who absolutely didn't want to know. He was partially deaf, I mean he'd lost his hearing in one ear and gradually went deafer and deafer, and I saw him get more and more isolated, but for him growing up poor in the slums of, you know, Hammersmith, deaf and dumb was something that you slung as an insult to people.

SF: Yes.

It was never a minority you'd ever identify with.

SF: Yes, the cripple syndrome?

Totally, totally. And you were taught each little minority was taught to look down on the one below.

SF: Yes, yes.

So So Taffies were people you looked down on and they looked down whatever.

SF: Et cetera.

But what took really was having spent my life when I was at university earning money in the theatre and loving the theatre and being an actress and all that kind of stuff I looked at this sign language and thought bloody hell it's magic. It's the only three dimensional language in the world.

SF: Yes.

It's, if you could draw it like, like film it's a medium long shot and close ups.

SF: Yes, yes, yes.

So it's, it's different from any other language and has been underestimated and has been crushed almost out of existence until about fifteen years ago for a hundred years, where we met people who when they were at school were forced to sit on their hands and not sign. I mean it met every political criteria.

SF: Yes.

You know, I almost found what I'd missed from leaving Somers Town, which is at last a community. The fact that they're ungrateful bastards is neither here nor there - God I've said this haven't I? Some of the people in it are, you know, one would cross the road to avoid, but there are amazingly good, exciting, thoughtful, different people in the deaf world. What's a shock is the huge gap between the deaf and the deafened, in other words the deafened like all of us are becoming.

SF: Yes, yes.

Have English as their first language.

SF: Yes, yes, yes.

Until proving really deaf.

SF: Yes.

You have sign language as your first language.

SF: Yes.

But as ninety per cent of kids are born to hearing parents. Deaf kids born to hearing parents are at a double disadvantage, they're not only deaf but their parents don't have a natural language to communicate with them.

SF: Yes.

So one of the things I got involved with was making a series that taught sign language to hearing kids at primary school level so they could all go off and communicate. So I've taken, even when I left Channel Four after two years I'm still for two days a month their deaf adviser. And literally what I was doing last weekend was running this deaf film festival, which I set up as a result of being inspired at an European Broadcasting Union listening to all these people and thinking yet again it's like we're all motivated in talking but within a room where no one else gets to know what we're doing. And Stanley's gone to sleep.

SF: No, no he's just closed his eyes temporarily, it's alright. I'm alright honestly dear friend. Honestly I'm not…

Promise you're not being boring dear?

SF: No, you're not boring kid. Is she Manny, back me up?

No, no.

SF: You're wonderful.

Oh God.

SF: It's just I have a tendency, I can honestly, sometimes Hilda says…

This time of the day.

SF: Hilda says…

Siesta time.

Yes.

SF: And Hilda says 'You've got to watch this item on Channel Four' or whatever and so I go in to the other room. We, the house is split in to two halves, you know. So I go in to my half of the house as it were and sit in front of it and switch on, boink Channel Four and the item comes on and it's fascinating and then I wake up.

And it's gone.

SF: Ten minutes later it's all gone.

Oh okay, I know.

SF: Fucking hell, what on earth, what has been happening to me?

[Laughter] Oh I do know.

SF: So that is a tendency that I have.

I do know.

SF: But I'm awake now.

Alright. Anyway just to summarise, I've been…

SF: No, no, summarise.

Passionately committed to all this deaf stuff.

SF: Yes.

Despite the fact that a lot of deaf people would like me dead because I ain't deaf.

SF: Ah, yes.

I kind of say things like 'I've got Tinnitus, is that good enough'? But obviously not.

SF: Yes. Well, I've got, I've had Tinnitus ever since I left the Army.

It's horrible isn't it?

SF: Because I was in the Artillery.

Yes.

SF: And, and the wretched bloody Royal Artillery guns, you know, on top of tanks. And I did that from D-Day until we liberated the last spot of West Germany and…

I bet there's a lot of people in that war just the same.

SF: And I came away and, you know, I did nothing about it. I mean…

You can't though Stanley you can't do anything about Tinnitus.

SF: I know. But I did nothing about it in relationship, I should have done with the Army.

I see.

SF: To say 'Look you fucking well caused this row, a noise in my ears'. It ebbs and flows, I hate talking about it because the more people say 'Oh how's your Tinnitus getting on', it doubles in volume.

[05:02]

I know, because you're aware of it.

SF: Within my brain, within my head. I get, get doubly aware of it. If I read about it I, I cast it aside. So, you know, there are a lot of us about.

Yes.

SF: And of course, it's not deafness because I hear perfectly well. You know, I love music and all that stuff, as you know, but the life motif underneath everything there is this steady hiss, you know?

Yes, I totally understand. In fact what's, the good thing about knowing who has got deafness or Tinnitus...

SF: Yes.

Is that you then go and get this camaraderie.

SF: Yes.

Going. So that when I first started doing all this stuff at Channel Four I've, I was at a meeting where I heard Dickie Attenborough.

SF: Oh yes.

Say that he'd got Tinnitus. So I went straight up to him and said 'Look, you don't know me but actually I work for you'.

SF: Ah, ha.

He was the Chair of Channel Four.

SF: Yes.

'Could I please have a day on Channel Four when everything's signed and subtitled'? And he said 'Of course, you can darling'. And I remember someone coming up to me after about half an hour saying 'I didn't know you knew Dickie Attenborough'. I said 'I don't. I've only just met him'. [Laughter]

SF: [Laughter] I've known him for at least three minutes, yes.

I do think he called everyone 'Darling' I think but he was just so nice.

SF: He's a sweetie pie.

And so friendly.

SF: Yes.

So that when I went back to Channel Four and said 'This is what I want to do', and there's a couple of people said 'Oh really difficult'. And I said 'Well, Dickie says we can have it', and they went 'Oh bugger'. [Laughter].

SF: Oh well it's alright then.

We've got to be able to do it now. But that was incredibly nice. Because I think a lot of what the basis of that, you know, what we've been discussing is that to get things to change you've got to put politics in to the public domain in a way that's understandable. So narrow cast, or rather, you know, programmes aimed at only deaf people, yawn, yawn you turn off.

SF: Yes.

But a day, somewhere in the twenty-four hours someone's going to turn on to Channel Four and think 'What are they signing for'?

SF: Why?

What's the subtitling for, what's going on?

SF: Yes.

And we made these little, four short adverts. We couldn't afford the advert space, I managed to get, between us we got money from five different commissioning editors and The BFI, tiny, you know, but we couldn't afford the space to buy.

SF: No.

We could afford to make the thing.

SF: Yes, yes.

So we had to go to different companies and say 'Would you mind coming in thirty seconds under'?

SF: Yes.

For that, you know.

SF: Yes.

And we just had these, Joe Giddies, there was one lovely one where it's, it's somebody auditioning for Hamlet and these really crappy, two crappy actors come in and audition for Hamlet and they say well, 'Next, next' and the last one is doing it in sign language and they say 'Yes, that's our Hamlet'. And the last, and the second to last one says 'You can't have him he's deaf', and they said 'Tough'. So we just…

SF: Tough shit, yes.

So it was just, and we just had the whole tiny little what you might call trigger films.

SF: Yes, yes.

Which is in a way where, you know, which we did at the beginning of Liberation Films.

SF: Yes.

One of the things that Tony did a lot of were little trigger films that you'd would spark an idea and then the people, you're not lecturing, you're saying to people 'Okay, you take this and run with it'.

SF: Carry it, of course.

So…

SF: Good.

So done a lot of deaf stuff and not just programming. But I suppose the nicest thing about Channel Four is that you can be paid peanuts and do two days a month, like I do, but go off and be a spokesperson for policy.

SF: Yes.

As I do.

SF: Yes.

If that was The Beeb, if I did two days a month as a deaf adviser at, at The Beeb.

SF: Yes.

There would be twenty-four layers between me and John Birt.

SF: Of course, at least.

As it is I can go in to the Channel and say to Michael Grade, 'Look I've had this great idea, I want to set up a prize for deaf programme making'.

SF: Yes.

'What a good idea Sue'. Go away and I'd just do it.

SF: Yes.

I'd write him a letter, his, you know, he phones back and says 'Fantastic' I'd just go and do it.

SF: Yes, yes.

If I want to do a festival I'd go and do it. Yes, they get more out of me than I'm paid, surprise, surprise, but I wouldn't want to work in a way where you had those layers. I spent six months at The Beeb and it was just such a disappointment.

SF: Yes.

Because in principle I have, I have such respect.

SF: Yes, of course.

It was part of my childhood.

SF: Of course.

You know, but oh God.

SF: Did Joe Ashley, the deaf MP…?

Jack Ashley.

SF: Jack Ashley, did he help at all?

Oh yes, he's great. Not, not in so much in the Channel Four but, you know, he worked with us at The BBC, and he is someone you can always go to for help and support.

SF: Yes, he seems to take deafness seriously.

He is. And when I did the first, I was working on the first series, kids series, before we'd subtitled it I showed him some and we were sitting in The House of Commons and we had this napkin thing and he was writing a press release thing and it was his statement about it, and he said, 'Of course, I don't understand this because I've never learnt sign language'.

SF: Ah.

'But I really like what's going on'. You see he's very open.

SF: Yes.

About his experience.

SF: Yes.

And even though there's the whole of the politics like cochlear implants, which I won't go in to.

SF: Yes, okay.

Yes, he's a good bloke.

SF: Yes. There is a professor called Hazel at The Institute of, oh this famous hospital, London hospital where I went initially with my Tinnitus.

[10:01]

The Middlesex?

SF: I think it must have been.

Or The Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital down Grays Inn Road?

SF: Yes, I think it's The Ear, Nose and Throat. I wouldn't like to swear to it.

Oh Hazel, Jonathan Hazell?

SF: Jonathan Hazell, yes.

Yes, I know him.

SF: The professor of…

I've filmed him.

SF: The professor of Tinnitus?

I've filmed him. He's an expert at Tinnitus.

SF: Yes.

That's right.

SF: The expert, you know. And he started me, I don't want to divert anything but he started me off with things that fit in to my ears.

Yes.

SF: That reproduce…

Yes.

SF: A sound sort of similar to the noise that's in my head and I just couldn't live with it.

No.

SF: And they took them out and gone sod it to one side, you know.

In fact you'll notice if you look at a lot of deaf people, very rarely even if people are deaf in both ears do they wear hearing aids in both ears.

SF: Yes.

Because it affects your balance.

SF: Yes.

Your sense, your, just your feeling of the air around you.

SF: Yes.

To be closed off completely.

SF: Yes, yes.

Anyway that's something else but…

SF: I'm sorry about that.

Done a lot of deaf, no, no, done a lot of deaf programmes, and more and more, I did a thing called *Four Fingers and A Thumb,* which was using David Bower.

SF: Yes.

From *Four Weddings and A Funeral.*

SF: Yes.

And in fact there were five little short two and a half minute films and a half an hour doc that they were embedded in, and the aggregate was six million viewers, which when narrowly cast deaf programming it usually gets between two, three hundred thousand.

SF: Yes.

Six hundred thousand if you're very lucky.

SF: Yes.

That kind of proves what I really believe that if you've got something to say, even if it's about a, the minority, you can do it in such a way that presupposes the audience is ignorant but intelligent. They may not know about the subject you're discussing with them but they ain't stupid.

SF: How do deaf people respond to subtitled films?

Well, they need them and they like them.

SF: Well, they must have them obviously.

Yes. What's interesting is of course, we're only just addressing the fact that subtitling needs to be pitched differently.

SF: Of course.

You read *Little Red Riding Hood* when you're six.

SF: Yes, yes.

And you read *The Guardian* when you're sixteen.

SF: Yes.

You can't pitch *The Guardian* at six year olds.

SF: No.

So there is a great need for certain things being subtitled at the level for kids.

SF: Yes.

There's no question.

SF: And then the quality of translation is awfully important.

All that.

SF: With Russian films and Czechoslovak films, et cetera.

All that. The interesting thing is a lot of deaf people are extraordinarily clued up about European and foreign films because they're the only ones that's accessible because so many English films don't have subtitles.

SF: Exactly, yes.

Saw something good, God you've seen a really Butray Italian movie [Laughter] I haven't seen. Why not?

SF: Yes. So what about the future, or don't we want to talk about the future yet? Or do you want to talk about your family?

Oh I was just doing music stuff. Do you want anything else about all the things what I've done? No, you don't need.

SF: No, what about music?

Oh well, music. I've always sung and lived with musicians, so I've just made a political film with Simon Rattle.

SF: Ah, well, that's wonderful. I mean you must tell us about it as soon as the phone stops. [Phone rings]

He'll pick it up. About cuts to music because the last government seriously axed education.

SF: Indeed.

So that we've, we're now inheriting, this government...

SF: Yes.

You know, has now inherited a situation where those that have money can pay...

SF: Yes.

And those that don't don't.

SF: Yes.

And I think the gap is, is wider than since the beginning of the century between the rich and the poor.

SF: How specific.

I just think it's criminal.

SF: Clearly you can afford to buy a musical instrument, you can afford to buy a musical instrument which is a start if you're learning the violin or the piano or a woodwind instrument, but if you haven't got the money to buy it you haven't got the money to buy it and you don't get the lessons.

But what's interesting that Simon says, which hadn't really crossed my mind before is that if, if effectively lower middle, lower middle and upper working class kids get left out because if you're on SS you've got, you can have grants.

SF: Yes.

If you're just above it there's no grant at all.

SF: Yes.

And you need to be a musician, to be an excellent musician you need to be passionate.

SF: Absolutely.

All of us have got music but to be an excellent musician you need to be passionate.

SF: That bit extra, yes.

If the future of music is only left with middle class people then passionless people...

SF: Yes.

Whose parents made them play...

SF: Yes.

Will then fill the orchestras. And you won't know till *The Titanic* is actually on the ice cap that by the way we've lost our musical heritage.

SF: Yes, yes.

And I think, I suppose what I've always wanted to do with every single film or idea, whatever is be like the tug at the head of *The Titanic*, ahead of the pack and thinking where are we going to next, what's the next issue, what's, what do we care about?

SF: Yes.

How do we join these things together.

SF: Yes, yes.

Which is why it's interesting, you know, when I worked with Richard Broad at the beginning of Liberation Films, the second Liberation Films.

SF: Yes.

[15:00]

And he was making films about ecology so early on he had to explain what the word was.

SF: Yes, yes.

And he was doing things like being worried and saying 'Oh for God's sake we'll only get people interested who want to save the village pond'. And I thought no, you can start with the village, saving the village pond is the beginning of political awareness.

SF: Yes.

Because it's your village pond.

SF: Of course.

And every so often you have to think, you know, when you're going out like doing good or things on behalf of other people and you think… Oh I know what I was going to say. There's this lovely book called Leaf, *Leaf of Honey* or something like this, which is a Baha'I book, I knew nothing about the Baha'I religion and I still don't. But he was an anthropologist, he went out to the Cameroons and he's really getting close to the Cameroons, he's out there with his wife and kid and he's getting to know the Chief and the chief says 'What are you doing here'? And he says 'I'm, I'm an anthropologist, I've come to live with you for a year and study you'. He said 'How would you feel if I knocked on your door in New York and said I've just come to live with you and I'll study you for a year?

SF: [Laughter]

And the bloke said he'd never thought, he had never thought anthropology could work the other way round.

SF: Yes, yes.

You know, every so often there's these little blips.

SF: Yes.

And you think whoops that's another door, so that I'm looking at the world differently.

SF: Yes.

And, you know, I just read voraciously. I'm just incredibly grateful there are these people with these thoughts that I'm glad they did it, I'm glad they made the films.

SF: Yes.

I'm glad they took the trouble.

SF: Yes, yes.

Because they illuminate my life.

SF: Yes, yes. Rattle, Simon Rattle is a wonderful conductor and in, and human being, you know that just by hearing his work.

He's a good bloke.

SF: And seeing him.

He's a proper man.

SF: A good man, you know it?

And he's a mensch.

SF: Yes, a real mensch. Why did he leave Birmingham?

He didn't.

SF: Why did he pack up the orchestra?

But it is.

SF: What?

Oh he didn't pack up the orchestra, the orchestra's going strong.

SF: Ah, ha.

And in absolutely good hands.

SF: But he's left Birmingham hasn't he?

Yes. But he wouldn't have left without, you know, if he wasn't absolutely sure that it was going to run smoothly. He's educated...

SF: Yes.

An audience in Birmingham in a way…

SF: Yes, I'm sure of that.

But going to that last concert of his, and I told you that lovely punk kid.

SF: And they've got this wonderful concert hall in Birmingham haven't they?

Oh it's stunning, but with this punk kid.

SF: Yes.

There was a lovely old lady came up to her and said 'I do think you look amazingly good'. Now a lot of the people, these were people going to see Mahler and Adès, this, this new *avant garde* thing.

SF: Yes.

And I thought, you know, in St John's Smith Square they wouldn't be doing this.

SF: Yes.

The audience wouldn't go.

SF: Yes.

He's actually educated…

SF: Yes.

Encouraged, you know, got the Birmingham lot thinking this is our concert hall.

SF: Beyond Mozart and Beethoven and Brahms?

Yes.

SF: In to the other realms?

I, if he can do it other people can do it.

SF: Yes.

There's no doubt he's an enthusiast.

SF: Yes, yes.

I mean seeing him in the middle of this film, you know, take these nine year old Birmingham kids to conduct *Eastenders*. He's got no shame, you know, he'll conduct anything because he knows damned well that music's music.

SF: Yes.

The fact that we might think oh my God not the *Eastenders* theme tune.

SF: Yes.

But he realised these kids they identify with that, they go and watch it that night, they'll suddenly realise now how to play it. He, he's what I believe in, his approach is what I believe in which is you go, you meet them where they start from.

SF: At the level at which they're at?

Yes.

SF: And not down or up, at their level?

And they'll never forget. One day they'll suddenly think gosh who was Simon Rattle? They had no idea who he is when he came in, you know, they know he's obviously someone special or he wouldn't be in the film, but they don't really know who he is. And that's kind of as it should be, and he doesn't do the prima donna act at all so the kids just love him.

SF: I'm sure.

And oh God if only there were more people like him.

SF: Wonderful. There's a whole series of interviews on The BBC, BBC3, Radio Three I suppose, with Joan Bakewell. Now I don't dislike Joan, she's a progressive lady and bought things for Vietnam and medical aid exhibitions, you know, at a good price. I mean I don't mean she's paid well but we've done well by her and given a Jampipe, all sorts of good things. But there is a sort of pretentiousness and a patronising attitude that she has for all these people, and of course, some of them are pains in the neck to begin with. But if you're a great singer who's also a pain in the arse and you've got Joan Bakewell interviewing you [Laughter] as well it sort of gilds the lily, it makes it that much worse. And the way you feel about putting off Margaret Thatcher the moment you see her face on the telly I'm beginning to feel about Joan Bakewell. [Laughter] I know this sounds bizarre but I'd like her to see that I just can't stand that enormous area of artificiality between her and what might be called the pure, pure Guardianese elevated to a slightly higher level but not that much high level and classlessness you know?

I think that's crucial because I'm sure one of the reasons I stayed working in Somers Town for so long was A: I didn't have any roots myself.

SF: No.

And I really respected and admired people that did. And people looked after them.

SF: Yes.

But also a lot of these kids that I worked with who, some of whom were kind of illiterate, but they were literate in my terms, in other words our terms like words. In terms of pictures not at all, they'd bunk in to the, when we had cinemas in Camden Town...

[20:13]

SF: Yes.

They'd bunk in.

SF: Yes.

See something. Now I never told them off for things like this. But then they'd come back and I'd say 'Okay, describe, tell me about this film'. And they'd be able to tell me where shots were taken from, how you got from scene to scene. You know, they, when I started doing story boards and things, because very early on we did some film making at the youth centre, basic stuff, they instinctively knew because their literacy was television not words. So I would go backwards. I mean to get them literate I would record them on a tape recorder, then in the middle of this great school hall in the evening I'd set up with a table and a typewriter - this is how long ago it was - and I'd, I'd listen, just like you're doing, and I'd sit and I'd type their words. And they'd come and sit next to me and say 'Did we say that'? And I'd say 'Yes'. And then I'd give them the paper that they'd written after all, I mean they hadn't but they'd done it on tape, and I'd say 'Here's what you've written, do you want to correct it, do you want to add, do you want to…'? So then I'd gradually get them writing stuff on what they'd done and then we'd print it. So they'd, they'd got in to a book backwards.

SF: Yes.

By saying the, do you know what I mean, they couldn't do it?

SF: Yes.

Then I think what, if you go in to them with some form of respect... I can remember one of them saying to me, you know, because I spent six years at university, three, two at the MA and then I did a year at the Institute of Education. And they said 'Why are you working in Somers Town if you've done six years at, at university and we don't know anything'? And I'd say 'Well, actually I don't know anything about the last five years at Arsenal, I couldn't mend a bike if you told me to, and you know some things that I don't know'. Oh this is something classic. After I'd been there a bit there was absolutely no need to have a kind of management committee because we were statutory, we weren't a voluntary organisation. But because I often had difficulty with just a few of the kids. I mean some of the kids would say 'So you spend like fifty per cent of your time with ten per cent of the kids'. I said 'Well, that's because they are the ones that cause the problems'. But, so I took it seriously and I said 'Okay, we'll have like a monthly meeting to run the centre'. And I only had a thousand pounds a year for the whole centre.

SF: Not a lot, not much.

And you are, three hundred and fifty pounds is whatever you can be in charge of and you can help make policy. So we had some staff, some kids and them. And they, one of the first major suggestions they had, my God doesn't democracy grind exceedingly slowly these meetings went on interminably, but I remember at one point we were talking about the punishment of a particular bunch of kids who were a bunch of Barts and I said 'That's it, they're out'. And a couple of these kids in this management group said 'No, you're daft, you can't kick them out, there's not enough people to run all the doors to keep them out so you wouldn't be having your youth centre while you stopped the doors'. He said 'Why don't you let them in but don't let them play in the football match on the football table'? I said 'Why didn't I think of that'? You know, they came up with practical, thoughtful, doable answers to common problems that I hadn't solved for five years.

SF: Ah, ah.

You know, and there were times when I got stick from on high and I got, you know, rudeness from them and I thought what the fuck am I doing this for? And I'd look at them and I'd think no. And when someone said after I'd left and I was at Channel Four 'What are you most proud of'? And I said 'Well, actually one of the likely lads who used to be a real toughie now runs my youth centre'. And one of the others, his mate I said 'Why don't you do some voluntary work and then I'll recommend you go on our youth work course and then eventually you can come back and do some paid work'? And he said 'Oh do you mean deferred gratification'? And I said 'Yes'. He said 'I'm doing', ah he said 'ah I'm doing O-Level Sociology. I thought I didn't know what deferred gratification, I'd never heard the phrase in all my life.

SF: [Laughter]

[Laughter] But there was this fellow coming out and saying 'I know exactly what you mean Sue. Yes, I'll just put off any form of reward and eventually I 'll get to heaven or something', and I thought yes, that's absolutely right.

SF: Ah.

And sure enough we did it. And one of the problems I have about the professionalisation of anything is there's not enough room in then for working class kids or people.

SF: Yes, yes.

Like one of my first canteen assistants then became a senior youth worker gradually.

SF: Yes.

By building up her confidence.

SF: Yes.

But, you know, if you, if she'd come in at the beginning and you said 'You've got to take the exam to do anything'.

SF: Yes.

But she wouldn't have done it.

SF: No, no. So much depends on gaining confidence and building confidence within people. If people feel confident they feel they can do something. Apropos a bit of the future, are you doing a doctorate on the side anywhere?

No.

SF: Yet?

No.

SF: Had you thought of it in addition to writing your autobiography?

No. What I want to do now?

SF: Yes.

Is I want to set up something parallel to One, Two, Three Media. Like One, Two, Three Regeneration. This is what I really want some money to set up, I don't know how I'm going to set this up. But I'll give you an example. You can always, not always but when you get money from television it's to make a specific film.

[25:14]

SF: Right.

You can't do the things on the side that you want to film.

SF: No.

You can't. And it happened, it came about that I've been developing this idea for a bit when this woman from CEDO in Romania.

SF: Yes.

Humanitarian, human rights organisation.

SF: Yes.

Said she, she'd gone about the whole left wing circuit.

SF: Yes, yes.

She came over and saw some films that I'd done with kids, run by kids because I think they're cleverer than people think, and said she'd like me to work with kids in a human rights way in Romania.

SF: Ah, ha

So I said I'd love to. And what I wanted to do was, and we'd costed it out very cheaply, but you go to Romania and you take some very basic animation equipment and you teach the kids animation.

SF: Yes.

So they're animating over a year.

SF: Yes, got you.

And what you do, as the film side of it, you come and you film them over every two months making it.

SF: Yes.

And I know and you know that what we'll see is these kids growing in confidence, right? They don't know that's what you're doing.

SF: No.

They think you're just watching them make the animation.

SF: But you're measuring their growth in confidence?

You're measuring. But you can't get the money to set up the animation from the television company because the television company will only pay you to make the film about the animation, right? So I want to set up a linked but separate wing.

SF: Ah.

Where One, Two, Three Regeneration could raise money to set up teaching animation. And the reason why we liked that was animation can then be dubbed in any language so they could sell, they then own it. You know, if I were going to show it I'd buy rights to use it from them and then show it on a programme. So I want to develop something that run, it's almost like back to Liberation Films.

SF: Yes.

When we set up Liberation Films.

SF: What's your budgeting skill like, what do you need for such a project do you reckon?

Well…

SF: If God came down from the sky and said 'How much money do you need for this'?

I think we'd, I think for that we did about fifteen thousand pounds with very basic equipment and using students. So I was talking with Hull, with Jilly, Jilly from Animation, Leeds Animation Workshops.

SF: Yes.

Because I love animation.

SF: Oh I love her?

Yes. Who's now come down to London. But so that we'd make this a semi-graduate programme with students so they'd go over to do some basic training.

SF: Do you know Claire Kinson at Channel Four?

Yes. Well, she's nice.

SF: Can't Claire dig out some money for this?

I haven't talked to her about this.

SF: Well, talk to her. I don't mean that she'll do it, and she's not that progressive but she considers herself a great pal of mine and I used to get invited because they were always, she and her bloke the architect were always inviting Russian film people to their home and they assumed that somehow I was the KGB man in Britain.

[Laughter]

SF: Which Jeremy Isaacs thinks to this day that I'm the long arm of the KGB. Anyway the point is Claire could understand such a project as this Romanian animation thing. Why not see her, say Stanley's, no, don't even say Stanley says, just say 'I think you ought to listen to this idea Claire'.

You think it's a good idea?

SF: I think it's a wonderful idea but, and it's an idea that Claire on her own would never think of. Claire would think about buying fascinating animation films.

I know.

SF: From every, Annecy and all the animation festivals.

No, what's so interesting is that the people, what you've just been hearing me and Sky talk about, the people who've just rung, this prize that I got the money from.

SF: Yes, yes.

This year's, last time was professional this year's amateur, it was a bunch of eleven, twelve year old deaf kids.

SF: Wonderful.

Doing the most beautiful plasticine animation.

SF: Wonderful.

They won the prize, five hundred quid, they couldn't believe it. So they've now got enough to buy a camera.

SF: Yes.

And in terms of what I think politically, and what happens is we get a student from Wolverhampton now working with their school under the aegis of The Lighthouse in Wolverhampton, Barbey [ph 29:05], the Channel Four contract monitoring all the things.

SF: Brilliant.

So that you see now it won't be a blip, festival, blip and then a festival, there'll be workshops. So these kids, I said to these kids, 'You've got to run the next workshop at the next festival, you've got a year to think about this. You've got to run it, you're now grown up, you've won a prize, you're going to be running the workshop'.

SF: Get on with it?

Yes, you're going to be running it. Oh they thought…

SF: [Laughter] Great.

You know.

SF: And that's wonderful.

That's what we want.

SF: So unless Manny thinks, because Manny you are in control and Manny thinks we have left out vast chunks of your life's experience.

Mm, but there's all the development issues but, oh I can leave that out.

SF: Yes.

Because I've made films about development and King's Cross and because I care about all that.

Yes. Perhaps I should just say this recording is for posterity for students to…

SF: So it's a big nice chat for posterity.

But I think they'll get a good picture of what was going on.

Yes.

SF: Yes.

[30:00]

There and then, which is what they…

SF: At the end of the century stuff.

Good.

SF: So how, you know, thinking out aloud, how do you see your future? Just let's talk about you for a bit?

Oh God if I had a complete…

SF: How do you see your future and all the different planes. If you like on the plane of your own family, these gorgeous kids that you've got around you, and the plane of what you want to do with the rest of your life, you're a mature woman in your fifties?

You can say that again. Well, I certainly would like space and time to write, there's no question.

SF: Yes.

I'd love to make a feature film.

SF: Yes.

I'd love to write a feature film.

SF: You mean a real feature film?

A real feature film.

SF: But they cost a lot of money dear.

Oh yes. But it, so far my problem has been finding myself time because always I've been bringing up two kids.

SF: Yes.

Alone.

SF: Yes.

And working my guts out never having anybody else to help. Even setting up this next thing I haven't got enough money to pay someone to help me do the administration.

SF: No.

To put in the, to fill out the forms to get the money from Europe to do the de, dar, de dar.

SF: Yes, yes.

It's, I've got someone coming down on Friday who is a fundraiser and he's a very nice bloke and believes in a lot and I, I've said 'Look, I can't pay you, you'll just, if we raise money you get money once it's ready. I can't do anything else because I don't have money to pay you'.

SF: Yes, of course, not.

But I, I'm beginning to think some of those things that I want to do are really important and if I don't do them no one else is going to do them.

SF: No one else will, no.

And those kinds of principles that go back to all our '60s, '70s stuff have no one channel. In other words Liberation Films is about making and distributing and sharing altogether exhibition making. You couldn't indulgently just do one.

SF: No.

You know. And too many people I know in media now are in media because they think it's a sexy world to be in. I never wanted to make films because I wanted to be with film people, I want to make films because I actually want to.

SF: 'Rather of use than fame' as the motto of The William Ellis School is.

Yes. No, I didn't know that but yes.

SF: Well, there you are.

But yes.

SF: And it's true.

But I'm not very good at selling myself. I'm extremely good at selling other people or getting kids off going to jail.

SF: Yes.

Or, because I've never seen jail ever do anybody any good.

SF: You'd make a wonderful lawyer, QC when one of…

I was actually asked to be a JP at one point.

SF: A Helena Kennedy, what?

And I thought I wouldn't do it.

SF: Helena Kennedy?

No, I think she's a bit…

SF: A sort of Helena Kennedy. I mean really, you know, I'm sure if we had an interview with her it wouldn't be that different in essence…

No.

SF: From what you've been talking about this afternoon.

But you see she'd be focusing on law, that's it.

SF: Boing, yes.

And I, I've done these education...

SF: Yes.

Development.

SF: Yes.

Housing, whatever.

SF: Well, we're all different, you know.

We are different.

SF: Manny's doing his poems and his little songs and I do other things. We all do, have our own peculiar furrows to plough or whatever one does with a plough.

But I did, before we end...

SF: Yes, no there's no rush.

I do want to say, I do want to say that for us lot, I mean for, for me and Tony and Ellen and all us lot at the beginning, we wouldn't have got a lot further down the line without being supported by you and Charlie but especially you because you were always friendlier. I mean Charlie's special and we could always go down there and borrow equipment.

SF: Indeed, indeed.

And we learnt how to… But, but for you to know that we were… No, I'll tell you what was important, I've just realised what's incredibly important. When we were in our mid twenties people would pat us on the head like our parents and say 'Never mind dear, you'll stop being…'

SF: Like kid of my age?

'When you're thirty you'll wear tweed suits…'.

SF: Yes.

And you'll stop being a leftie'. And to meet people of the next generation to us who we liked, who we respected and were still left wing.

SF: Yes, [Laughter] and remain, yes.

Gave us an awful lot of hope and remain so. And it was when you're that age people looking back now like Barney...

SF: Yes.

And Sky, my kids, love and respect the '60s and they envy us.

SF: Yes.

Those kinds of songs and stuff. But we weren't ourselves respected in that period.

SF: Indeed not, no.

And I think we have to remember.

SF: Yes.

That it was a battle.

SF: Yes.

When I refused to get married when I had Barney...

SF: Yes.

You know, I got, my mother didn't speak to me for six months.

SF: Oh God.

I didn't know anybody else doing this.

SF: No.

And people think 'Why are you doing it'? If my, if I'd been abandoned by my bloke my dad could have said 'Oh you poor thing'.

SF: Yes.

But I did this on principle. It was just, and he'd say 'This is immoral', I'd say 'No, Vietnam's immoral'.

SF: Yes, yes.

'What I'm doing is moral'.

SF: That's it, that's it.

'I'm doing this because I'm not…'

SF: Right on, right on.

Oh God and I still have nightmares about going through this. And I can remember, and again this is political, them saying 'Your children will grow up to hate you for doing this'?

SF: Rubbish.

And I'm saying 'No, each generation has to accept responsibility for itself. I respect why you married, I wouldn't ever tell you not to but I'm not doing it. My children may marry, that's their choice, but I have to make the choice in my generation that I feel right now'.

SF: And once they understand their mother's stance in life they will understand themselves too.

[35:05]

And they do. And it's great having the respect of your kids.

SF: And they'll begin to understand themselves.

I mean what else could you possibly want?

SF: Yes, yes.

You know, love and respect from your kids.

SF: Yes.

I mean frankly I mean I've got it, I've got what I want.

SF: Yes, you've got that, you've got that.

So that's it.

SF: So the single parent stuff doesn't hang around your neck like a millstone at all?

No, I chose it.

SF: A liberated parent. 'What are you mum'? 'I'm a liberated parent', you should say, you really are.

But you could do, you could do with, occasionally it would be nice to be supported, occasionally it would be nice to have time off as it were.

SF: Yes.

And occasionally it would be nice not to have to be good cop and bad cop.

SF: Yes. The dilemma is, you know, it is being, I don't want to pontificate but it has been a pretty shitty century, you know. We're not even talking about World War One or World War Two or the Holocaust or what's happening at this moment to women in Afghanistan, you know, for example. Because on television there's something terrible every day and yet there is a day when Nelson Mandela comes out of jail and there is a day when someone summons up enough courage to arrest Pinochet in The London Clinic.

I'm, I'm glad.

SF: After he's had tea with Margaret Thatcher.

Because I think there's an excess of facts, and, and there are more intelligent people than there are wise people.

SF: Yes, yes.

And I actually think it was easier for us to grow up than it is for kids now.

SF: Yes, indeed. That's absolutely true, absolutely true.

You know, they're weighted down with expectation and, and almost, and not depression exactly but negativity.

SF: Yes. But of course.

And I think that's sad and I don't want… Oh I don't know, and the other thing is just the domination of America. I mean I like, a lot of my friends are American.

SF: Yes.

But the domination of American culture and the relative shallowness.

SF: Yes.

I mean Sky watches *Sunset Beach*.

SF: Yes.

Or there's the Oprahs and all the rest of it. And there is a, an aspect of something good in some of those chat shows because it does talk about some things that other things don't, but that in the end the endless wall to wallness of a culture that hasn't even got the wit to respect other people's cultures that's in permanent adolescence,. God I'm being really crude here and I don't really mean it...

SF: Be crude, be crude.

The triviality of it?

It's, it's…

SF: Yes.

Yes. All you have to do is watch a few Bruce Willis films and then a Ken Loach and a couple of foreign things and you think there is a core of deep sentimentality actually at the heart of all this gang, you know, violence, God knows what, which is, we are best. We will construct the story line and the endings that we actually want, and I think it's probably harder to make a good Indie film in the States than it is here.

SF: Yes.

A really good, alternative, thoughtful.

SF: That's probably true, true, true, true.

You know, and even the Cohen Brothers who I love dearly.

SF: Yes.

I, I don't know that I want to see any more death, guns, violence, mashed up people, God knows, it is possible to make quite quiet films.

SF: Yes.

That…

SF: Let's take Kes as a model. I think the best thing Ken Loach has ever done in his life is that beautiful little film.

That's it.

SF: So we are now, I'm going to wind up now with you, for you. We're at the end of a century, it's trite but how do you envisage, what do you hope for in the next century?

We've agreed that the twentieth century with all its technological achievement and advance et cetera, et cetera has been pretty lousy for a lot of human beings on our planet.

It has for a lot.

SF: What do you hope to see? After all the next century is a year away, you know, another Christmas, and another Christmas and we're in it?

I think that despite the shitty stuff that I just said that, that certain things go, it's like the water table rises in certain ways for good, in other words like awareness. Okay it is like a thesis, antithesis, synthesis, right.

SF: Yes.

It's like the whole overdoing the PC-ness of certain whatever.

SF: Yes.

But that's just a phase.

SF: Of course.

And people have got to grow through it. Thank God for the Women's Movement, thank God for politics.

SF: Yes.

Because in the end the general confidence, say, of women...

SF: Yes.

Is definitely higher than it was thirty years ago.

SF: Much, infinitely, infinitely.

And I suspect and I hope that our kids judge our politics by how we've raised our kids. If they make good relationships, if they treat people fairly, if they speak the truth no matter what then actually what more can you hope for?

SF: Yes.

And speak without fear. And the thing we've got to get over, I mean just think of our own industry, how many people don't say exactly what they think because they're scared of not getting a job.

SF: Exactly.

Well, bugger it.

SF: Yes.

You know, you have great respect for people who do say what they really think at the risk of not getting the next job or…

SF: Yes.

You know, anything else. And in the end have more trust and hope in ordinary human beings. I mean I think of the Taliban and I think of God know's what and I think oh. And I think the scariest thing is, is the Conrad Lawrence theory of…

[40:08]

SF: On aggression?

Well, people, people are a bit like fighting cocks in, and they've now got razors strapped to their claws because they were, they were meant to have a bicker and not kill each other and unfortunately we got the bombs and we can kill each other. What I used, my philosophy in the youth centre used to be if two equally matched kids were having a fight I would walk to break it up, if a big kid with a little kid was beating a little kid up I'd run. If that makes any sense to you at all?

SF: Yes, yes, it makes a lot of sense. Of course, it does.

But, you know, what… It is to do with nation states, not that I've got a great thing about nation states. But for example as a person who's born, who's had the burden of being left wing on me all my life I felt guilty till not that long ago, and then suddenly I thought because I used to lie and say when I was a little kid I wanted, I was Welsh because I thought Owen Glendower being Welsh was the greatest thing.

SF: [Laughter]

And then I suddenly thought I was brought up on the North Downs on chalk with deciduous trees and wild thyme and corn beans and chestnuts and I am so English it's not true, why don't I just enjoy it?

SF: Yes.

I'm not a Celt. I'm not Welsh, I've got short toes I'm not Celtic.

SF: [Laughter]

Instead of feeling guilty culpa mea, you know...

SF: Yes.

I'd go down and try out my Hindi in the market in Benares and somebody would say 'Oh good evening madam how many chapatis do you want', and I'd think oh shit, you know. And I'd say 'Don't you mind speaking the language of the colonists'? They say 'We'd rather do that than speak Hindi because we all want our own'.

SF: Yes.

We all that… And I thought stop drawing attention to it, people will give you a lead. You are what you are, and it's like blokes can't help being blokes at the beginning of the Women's Movement.

SF: Yes.

Do you know what I mean.

SF: Yes.

Like certain blokes who said 'Oh I should really castrate myself', but not very many but, you know.

SF: Yes, yes.

And I think people have to have the confidence to be who they are while recognising who other people are and giving them equal, that's all.

SF: And being aware of what might be called one's limitations and the perameters?

Yes, and a delight in difference.

SF: And how far you can go in one lifetime?

Exactly.

SF: And knowing that this is it?

Yes, it ain't a rehearsal.

SF: Yes.

And, and do you think we will win in the end?

SF: That's a good question Manny.

Well, the thing about winning in the end, I don't want to win by beating people. [Laughter]

Hah!

Does that make sense.

SF: Yes, it does.

And this is classic because I can remember with Rod Walker and he was practising tying knots, I said 'Who's this for"? And he said 'After the revolution I'm going to be

stringing up a bank manager'? And I said something like 'Supposing your brother's a bank manager'? My philosophy doesn't give me the option of stringing up anybody and I don't want to. So therefore, you know, you've almost, I could incarcerate someone for a bit but the idea that in order to win something I'd have to do someone else over means what's my winning worth?

I meant my philosophy, that's my philosophy.

I think we are.

Against the, I think we are.

I think we are.

SF: When I was firing guns, this isn't the end, I mean you've got to say something to end this, but when I was firing guns in the Army...

Yes.

Got, got another minute or two.

SF: I always was afraid that my shells would land and eliminate a German communist. Does that surprise you? I mean really, and I always, and I gave the order to four guns in a troop of guns, it was my job to give the orders to fire, one, two, three, four, you know, twenty-five pounder guns mounted on Sherman tanks. And they killed the people because as we advanced afterwards we could see the bodies that we had killed and I would always say 'Oh Christ, suppose that's a wonderful German Wehrmacht man who was called up who was a fine', you know, and…

But you really made the difference between who you might shoot whether it was a comrade or not a comrade, I mean I just know the difference in…

SF: I mean I did it within myself but I wasn't able to influence anything.

I do think the difference between men and women is profound because I realise that I've never been in a situation where anybody's ever going to call me up.

SF: Oh.

And therefore my attitude towards death or arms or whatever...

SF: Yes.

Is cosmically different because I've got a choice to decide what I, whether I support war or peace or whatever, and young men don't have.

SF: Yes.

They can either bunk off or whatever.

SF: Yes.

And I suppose because I grew up, well, one of the men down my street had been a conscientious objector, I didn't know what he was, I just knew that my dad didn't treat him with respect so I didn't until later when I knew what he was. And what I love, I mean now God I'd like to make a film about someone like that, but the courage to stand up...

SF: Yes.

As an individual against a whole bloody structure.

SF: Yes.

That said war is a way of solving problems.

SF: Yes, I know.

It can never be a way of solving problems.

[0:45:00]

SF: I know, I know. Although fascism, the climate in which we grew up...

No.

SF: In which I grew up in the '30s. I was very, half of my mother didn't want me to go in to the Army, she was afraid I'd be killed.

[45:00]

I know but Stanley…

SF: You know, a Yiddishe mother.

I suppose what you have to say to that, and I don't know what you'd do, but all I can say, and it's what, went back to that thing about being female and de-knifing kids before it gets, it escalates to a point where there has to be a battle, is that if we really believe in a political solution then we could have seen, could we not, after the First World War The Second World War would happen unless the bastards pulled their fingers out earlier.

SF: Yes.

It could have been prevented.

SF: Indeed.

Without the war happening.

SF: Indeed.

And all I'm saying is don't ask in 1939 whether I'd fight, ask in 1929 whether we could stop the fucking war happening in the first place.

SF: Yes, yes.

So that's...

That's, that's it.

SF: Yes, that's it.

It's just we're, can't fix that kind of thing.

SF: Okay well we'll call it a day.

Call it a day.

SF: Let's call it a day.

Yes, come on then let's call it a day. That's enough.

[End of Tape 2 Side A 45:48]

Transcript Queries – Susan Crockford

Page/Time		**Query**
Tape 1 Side A		
1	00:31	Manny 'Osper'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – recordist.
5	05:58	George 'Oney'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – artist.
13	16:02	'Goldruk'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – SA Civil Rights activist.
19	25:13	'Adam'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – contest uncertain.
25	31:24	Liz 'Custer'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – associate.
25	31:26	'Carol de Jonk'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – associate.
25	31:27	'Nan Fren'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – associate.
25	31:30	Liz 'Custer'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – associate.
25	31:41	Mike 'Custer'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – partner of Liz
26	31:47	Mike 'Custer'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – partner of Liz.
26	31:49	Liz 'Custer'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – associate.
32	40:15	Mark 'Harlin'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – UCM 4 Person.
Tape 1 Side B		
41	08:53	Renate 'Meilker'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – E German Peace Committee..
44	12:59	'Moosh'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – mother of Ann Ambrose.
44	13:00	'Moosh'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – mother of Ann Ambrose.
45	13:59	'Custer'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – associate.
60	33:04	'Zeigen'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – friend..
61	35:39	'Zeigen'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – friend..

Tape 2 Side A	
88 29:02	*'Bambey'? Spelling/Doubtful Word – Channel 4 Person.*