Dicky Leeman (television and film director) b.1912

by admin — last modified Aug 15, 2008 01:39 PM

BIOGRAPHY: Born in Shanghai, Dicky Leeman entered the film industry as child actor before developing into an assistant director at various studios during the 1930s. In 1948 he directed his only feature film, a musical entitled A Date With A Dream, also co-writing the screenplay. During the early 1950s he moved into television production for both the BBC and ATV, specialising particularly in musical variety shows. Notable credits as a producer include The Des O'Connor Show (1963) and Cliff! (1967). SUMMARY: In this interview with Roddy Giesler, Leeman offers an account of his career, beginning as an actor and later an assistant stage manager for a theatre company on the Isle of Wight. He describes his first work in the film industry as an extra and subsequently his move into television, offering insights into the different working cultures at the BBC and ATV in the 1950s and 1960s. The interview is rather unstructured, but it contains interesting details and anecdotes about Leeman's working relationships with various showbusiness personalities of the period, including Peter Sellars, Margaret Lockwood and The Shadows.

BECTU History Project - Interview No. 367

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Transcription Date: 2003-11-18

Interview Date: 1995-09-22

Interviewers: Rodney Giesler

Interviewee: Dicky Leeman

Tape 1, Side 1

Rodney Giesler: This is an interview with Dicky Leeman, by Rodney Giesler, in Bognor Regis. It's for the BECTU Oral History Project and it's recorded on Friday 22nd September 1995....When you were born and a bit about your family history.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. I was born on 22nd January 1911, in Shanghai, in China. My father was in business there. And that is about it. I was there until I was about six or seven, and then we came back to England. And I distinctly remember being in England during the war, because we lived in a place called Gravesend in Kent, and I can remember my mother pulling me out of bed in the early hours of the morning, looking out of the window overlooking the Thames, and we could see a Zeppelin coming - it was a moonlit night. And I do remember during that period I was at a dance school - I remember entertaining the troops - I was about six or seven - entertaining the wounded soldiers that had been encamped somewhere near Gravesend, singing songs like 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles' and things like that. And I was very upset at the time because I was the only boy in the school, in this dance school, and when we arrived to do the show, I was being dressed and I was horrified at having to be dressed in front of all these girls! [laughs]

Rodney Giesler: Your father was nothing to do with the theatre?

Dicky Leeman: No, no. He was a businessman.

Rodney Giesler: So obviously there was some talent breaking out of you.

Dicky Leeman: Well, my mother's father, Edward Catto[?], was a recognised Scots poet. He used to write under the name of William Porline[?], and he was a part-time journalist. But he left school at about fourteen, he was born in Aberdeen, and he had to go to work there and then in those days. And when I was living in Gravesend we were living with my grandmother and my grandfather, and my grandfather used to walk every day, summer and winter, from Gravesend to Dartford, to work in a paper mill - there and back every day, regardless of the weather because as a poet, money doesn't come very easily [laughs], unless you're one of the top boys.

Rodney Giesler: Now, from those concerts for the wounded troops, how did your theatrical career progress?

Dicky Leeman: I was always mad about the theatre. At a fairly early age I was given a toy model theatre, which I used to write the stories myself. They were mostly fairy stories. They gave you a script to work from, within a few days I had every part by heart. And I loved the theatre particularly. And also my mother used to take me to the cinema quite a lot. You know, in those days of course you were taken - things were considered to be right for a young person to go to. And I loved it. I remember seeing The Prisoner of Zenda in a cinema in Reading, about fourteen times. And my mother got fed up taking me to see it eventually.

Rodney Giesler: What were the cinemas like, and how much did you have to pay to get in?

Dicky Leeman: Well I can remember, at a later period when I was an actor, the Gaumont-British up in Kilburn - because I lived in Golders Green - if it was a very wet day, I would go round the agents looking for a job, and then in the afternoon, if I got into the Gaumont State at Kilburn

before two o'clock I could get in for sixpence. And we had a big feature film, a B film, the news, an hour's variety programme, and an organ recital. And it was a good place for an out of work actor to sit down and rest himself during the wet weather!

Rodney Giesler: When you went as a child though, that was obviously still the silent period wasn't it?

Dicky Leeman: Oh yes, yes.

Rodney Giesler: So you can remember the pianists?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, oh yes, yes - One's memory plays the strangest tricks you know at this distance, and at eighty-four it's - but I suddenly think of things in my mind, I sort of remember or I see. I mean I've been reading Mickey Powell's autobiography, and he talks in that, or writes in that about so many people that I know and have worked with. For instance, in The Man Behind The Mask, in which I was a gopher on it with Mickey, this was in about 1936, he mentions people like - in the cast - Tam Williams [NB Hugh Williams] and Ivor Barnard. Well I happened to be, as a young actor, in 'Grand Hotel' at the Adelphi Theatre, both of which had a young Hugh Williams, known as Tam, and Ivor Barnard, were two of the characters playing in the play, which was produced by Raymond Massey, who later became well known on television, although he was a Hollywood star in his own right.

Rodney Giesler: Can I go back a bit earlier though, to your first early jobs?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. I started first of all as an actor. My first job professionally was in the Isle of Wight, when I went on tour in 'Young Woodley'. And we opened in the Isle of Wight, and I played Cope, the 'fag' in it. And I was assistant stage manager as well. And that was quite an opening because in the Isle of Wight in those days, you played - Monday night you opened in Ryde, then Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday you played Sandown, Newport, Cowes and other places, coming back to Ryde on the Saturday for a matinee and an evening performance. So that was good being thrown in at the deep end. That was for a firm who used to tour the successful West End shows. And in those days you see, people of course don't realise that you get a popular play - like 'The Ghost Train' for instance - would have four or five touring companies, all touring the country. And it was a lot of work was going. And I had, eventually about two and a half years with 'Young Woodley'. And I can remember we never repeated a theatre. And later on one of my best jobs was assistant stage manager on the touring production of 'The Miracle', which was with Diana Manners and Glen Byam Shaw, in which I was the ASM, which is Assistant Stage Manager, and also I was a dancer and small part player. And the job I had, most exciting job I had was - to try and make this as short as possible - that 'The Miracle' is based on a young nun who is about to be received into the Church and she hears, she's left alone to pray all night, and she hears during her prayers the outside world calling her. So she goes into a frenzied-like dance, and goes up to the Madonna, which was Diana Manners, pulls the baby Jesus away from the Madonna, throws it away and that is the end of the first act. The second act is the nun, dreadful life she has, the orgies and things that go on, and she becomes the mistress of a prince, which was Glen Byam-Shaw. And the last act opens with her coming into the cathedral and has come to ask forgiveness. And eventually the Mother Superior conveys to

her - it's all done in mime of course - that she will be received again in the Church, providing the child, the Jesus child is returned to the Madonna. So she does this beautiful dance, and the music becomes very emotional, and the lights dim to just the face of the Madonna. And then I was standing on a plinth behind the Madonna with an aperture and a grey glove on my arm, with the baby Jesus, and to the music, so nobody could see because just the Madonna's face was lit, I'd slowly take it up to the music. And the lady Diana would take the Madonna from me - and she became quite a good ventriloquist, because only her face was visible, nobody had seen yet the Madonna [NB he means baby] was back in her hands - and she said, "That's it Dicky." And I'd take my hand away, the spotlight would widen and there the Madonna was with the baby Jesus.

Rodney Giesler: But that play of course, Diana Manners, who eventually married Duff Cooper.

Dicky Leeman: That's right - yes.

Rodney Giesler: That became quite a well-known performance and play.

Dicky Leeman: Oh yes, yes. She was in the original production at The Lyceum.

Rodney Giesler: Yes. But I mean, it's interesting what you were saying just now about say, five companies taking 'The Ghost Train' round. It's almost analogous to a film on general release.

Dicky Leeman: Absolutely, yes.

Rodney Giesler: You've got five release prints going round.

Dicky Leeman: Well they were sort of cast as "Ghost Train brown", "Ghost Train red" - they all had different colours appertaining to them.

Rodney Giesler: And which other people did you come across at that time? I suppose you knew Arnold Ridley who wrote 'The Ghost Train'?

Dicky Leeman: Well I knew him because I'm a Rugby Union fanatic and he was at one time president of Bath! [laughs]

Rodney Giesler: Oh was he?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. I never actually worked with him but occasionally when the Wasps, my club, were playing Bath, he would often be there when they were playing at home. And I was also in 'Grand Hotel', which had an all-star cast at The Adelphi Theatre, with Ursula Jeans and people - Ernest Milton, people like that, who were the top actors, dramatic actors of the West End. And then when we went out on tour with it, it was a completely different cast except myself. I was one of the pageboys in that, and I went on tour with it. And that was produced by a great guy called Komisarjevsky, who designed, incidentally, all the interiors of the Granada cinemas.

Rodney Giesler: Really?

Dicky Leeman: Yes.

Rodney Giesler: Who were the personalities of the time who impressed you?

Dicky Leeman: In the theatre?

Rodney Giesler: Yes.

Dicky Leeman: Well I suppose mostly the music hall, of course the inevitable people like Max Miller for instance, and George Robey, who was a famous comedian of his day. And I did have the wonderful thrill of working with him once much later on in television, when Bill Lyon-Shaw and I were working - Bill Lyon-Shaw was the producer, I was the floor manager at the BBC, and we used to a show called Life Begins at Sixty, and everybody in the cast was over sixty, and everybody in the audience was over sixty! [laughs] And we used to get people like Marie Kendall, which is Kay Kendall's aunty, you know, people like that.

Rodney Giesler: Do you remember any particular anecdotes surrounding these people?

Dicky Leeman: Not really, no. It's a long time ago for me.

Rodney Giesler: Because you're spanning quite an era because George Robey is theatrical history really.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. And I've worked for people like - when I was in the, I told you I think earlier that I was in the Air Force. I was called up about ten days before the war started. And I managed to get the last eighteen months of my career in the RAF, I got transferred to the RAF Film Unit at Pinewood Studios. And one day I was sent for by our commanding officer, which was Teddy Baird, and Pat Moyner[?], and they said, "The Rank Organisation are looking desperately for an assistant director and there isn't anybody available," you see, the war was still on. So he said, "What we're going to do, we're going to give you a pass that says you can be away from your duties on special service - special duties - and you can be allowed to wear civilian clothes." That's how I started, about six months before I was demobbed, on London Town as the assistant director, which had that great comedian Sid Field, who was such a wonderful person in himself.

Rodney Giesler: And Kay Kendall.

Dicky Leeman: Yes, and Kay K - well actually Kay started before we actually started the film, as one of the glamour girls in it. And Wesley Ruggles, the producer, was a brother I believe of Charlie Ruggles the comedian, he picked her out to play the leading part. And there was a little girl called Petula Clark who was about eight years old at the time, she was in it.

Rodney Giesler: What are your memories of Sid Field?

Dicky Leeman: Oh wonderful, wonderful. Such a brilliant comedian, but so, so unsure of himself. I remember, after the film was over, we - I went to see him, he was packing the Golders

Green Hippodrome - absolutely packed. And of course he had a standing ovation. I went round to see him afterwards, and tears were streaming down his face. And I said, "Sid what's the matter?" And he said, "Dicky, nobody could be that good." And he meant it genuinely. He was a wonderful bloke. And Wesley Ruggles I didn't feel was the right chap to be directing Sid, and particularly with a cast with Sonnie Hale, Claude Hulbert, Mary Clare - theatre performers. Somebody - I followed that on a film called The Master of Bankdam with Walter Forde, and I used to think to myself, "If only Walter had been directing London Town, it would have been..." Because Walter Forde was the old great director, who (incidentally, if I'm going on a bit do push me back) I got on very well with Walter and his wife Culley Forde, who was associate producer. And Walter used to always have a piano on the set. And when we were getting ready for the next set-up, once he'd worked out what he wanted to do, he used to leave it to the lighting director and me to get on with the job and he'd go and play a bit of Chopin or something until I said, "All right Walter, we're ready." And one day - in those days we used to work on Saturday morning - and this particular - Walter wanted to catch up on something so he decided we'd work that next Saturday. And on Friday night he said, "Well Dicky, you'll get on with it tomorrow, I'm not coming in tomorrow you see." I said, "Walter, supposing I make a mess of it?" He said, "Well I'll tell you that at the rushes if you have." But he let me direct one scene with Stephen Murray and I think it was Richard Amey[?] I'm not sure, I forget now, it's a long time ago.

Rodney Giesler: Tom Walls was in that?

Dicky Leeman: Tom Walls, Nancy Price - yes, it was - I thought it was a good film. I enjoyed working on it, and I learnt so much from Walter. And perhaps another man that taught me a great deal was Cavalcanti. I worked with him on a film with him at Riverside later on. But coming back to London Town, I do owe a great debt to Phil Brandon, who was an associate producer on it, who really guided me through as an assistant. To go on a big film like that after you've been out of it for five or six years - if it hadn't been for Phil I'm sure I'd have got the sack within a few days!

Rodney Giesler: But that was a very ambitious project for a British studio wasn't it?

Dicky Leeman: It was, yes. It was done at Shepperton. It was done at Shepperton and I think every musician in the world was used on it. Toots Camarata was the musical director. And to me a great lady that worked on it as choreographer was Agnes de Mille, who was the daughter of 'the' Cecil...[NB Actually the daughter of his brother William.]

Rodney Giesler: It's interesting, when you were talking about Sid Field because they had a play about him recently...

Dicky Leeman: Yes. Yes.

Rodney Giesler: ...with David Suchet, which I saw and I thought was brilliant.

Dicky Leeman: Yes.

Rodney Giesler: But it didn't survive.

Dicky Leeman: Well no, to me, I didn't think much of it. But it's only because I was so near to Sid. And I find when I see things like that, like I see sometimes repeats of something that was on years ago and I think, "No, this is not how..." one can't visualise it. But then one has to bear in mind that audiences have changed, people's ideas have changed, and you must adapt accordingly. Hence you get things like Shakespeare in modern clothes and things like that. But it's...

Rodney Giesler: I'm looking at your notes here, and to take you back even earlier than London Town, when you started in films. 1930?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, 1930.

Rodney Giesler: Carmen?

Dicky Leeman: Carmen, yes.

Rodney Giesler: What do you remember about that - the way of working and the...

Dicky Leeman: Well, I know it was a guinea a day as an extra [laughs], and I believe if it had been an evening dress job you got thirty shillings a day. But Carmen was with Tom Burke, who was an opera singer. He actually came from Lancashire I believe. And he was married to a well-known West End star called Marie Burke. I don't remember a lot about it, except I was in the crowd as one of the sort of peasants in it.

Rodney Giesler: One of the first sound films was it?

Dicky Leeman: No, there'd been sound for some time on that.

Rodney Giesler: And this was at BIP was it?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. And then I followed that with quite a lot of crowd work, including one I remember, I think it was called 'Stand Up and Sing'[?], with Jack Buchanan, which again, I was back to the old job of pageboy, dancing. And there were about forty pageboys all dancing on the film. And I did two films later on, at the rebuilt Joe Rock's, with Harry Roy and his band. We did two in succession - Everything is Rhythm is one of them I remember the title was [NB Rhythm Racketeer]. And on it we had, we used the Schufftan Process, which had never been used before as I know in British films.

Rodney Giesler: What was that?

Dicky Leeman: We had Ivor Moreton, who was one of Harry's pianists, was up on a big rostrum at one end of the studio, a twelve/fifteen foot rostrum, with a camera. And he was in the foreground. And the set was a piano, and the top of the piano and the keyboard. And Harry and the girls were dancing on the top of the piano. But when it was processed it looked as thought Ivor was playing on the keys, which he was of course. And Harry did a jump from the top of the piano, which was about six foot, onto the keyboards, and they wouldn't risk Harry doing it

because of the insurance. And apparently his stand-in wouldn't do it. But I was about Harry's size so they said, "Come on, you do it." So they put me into one of Harry's tail suits, and I did the six-foot jump for them. And I saw it, it was done on a programme some years ago - special things of film effects or something. And I think I got ten shillings extra at the end of the week for doing a six-foot jump! Of course it wouldn't be allowed today.

Rodney Giesler: What were the working conditions? You worked all hours in those days?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. It was hard for, particularly people who are in the freelance side of it, because somebody would come in to make a film, and they would rent it for a certain period of time. Well as ever, after about three days you're already behind schedule, and consequently we came towards the end of the last week or so, you would work for maybe up 'til midnight sometimes, sometimes 'til eight o'clock the next morning. And as a technician you would get, I think it was two and sixpence we got, for our supper that evening, and three and six if we managed to finish at breakfast time the next day. And you'd be back on the set at ten o'clock. And there was no continuity or guarantee of employment. And I remember at Rock's I used to walk - the entrance then was in Clarendon Road - and I used to come up, and there, if I was lucky enough to be working on a film, there'd be anything up to about a hundred guys standing outside the gate, waiting, hoping that the foreman would say, "Such-and-such wants a plasterer..." or the head chippy wanted another chippy and things like that. And I lived in Eldon Avenue in those days, because although I was freelance, I...

Rodney Giesler: This is Elstree?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. I worked, seemed to get a run of good - a few films at Joe Rock's. And I can remember that they used to have a bus go once a week from Boreham Wood to Watford, for us to sign on for our dole as it was called in those days. And the buses would be packed with chaps. It made me think because I remember another occasion, one of the first films I did there at Joe Rock's was The Cotton Queen, with Will Fyffe, Stanley Holloway, Mary Lawson, and Jimmy Hanley. And we were filming on the old Radlett Road, the A5, and suddenly a big car swooped up - and Bernard Vorhaus who was the director, referred to me you see, and this guy came over to me, I was the assistant director, and he said, "Excuse me, what are you doing?" I said, "Well who are you?" He said, "I'm Chief Constable so and so..." and he showed me his card, and he'd got three or four plain clothes policemen with him. He said, "You're not filming these marchers coming down from Tyneside are you?" I said, "No, no. We're doing a car chase in The Cotton Queen, the film." And he said, "Well that's all right." And they waited. And of course eventually it was Ellen Wilkinson, I don't know if you remember her?

Rodney Giesler: Jarrow marches.

Dicky Leeman: It was the Jarrow marchers. And they were marching along, they were on their way, they'd almost got to London and they'd come down the A5 Radlett Road. And we didn't know they were coming that way.

Rodney Giesler: And they didn't want them filmed?

Dicky Leeman: They didn't want them filmed, no. And they made sure that we didn't film them. That's - and those sort of things - when you're young they do impress upon you the future you know. And all we wanted in those days really, we didn't want the earth, all we wanted was a fair wage for a fair day's work.

Rodney Giesler: What's this about the time that you met George Elvin organising the Union?

Dicky Leeman: No I was working at Rock's still, on a film, the name of which I've forgotten. But it was with Bessie Love and Noah Beery Junior [NB Possibly I Live Again]. And this tall, gangling young man came down and talked to us, asked permission if he could have a talk to us while there was a break. And he spoke to us all and told us about this union that he was trying to form, which eventually became the ACT - Association of Cinema Technicians. And at least half a dozen said, "Right," and it was half a crown. We had two and sixpence to join. [Break in recording] And so we paid our half a crown. And if I remember rightly, I think it was at least a year that it made us members of the... And I'll always remember George, I kept in touch with him quite regularly. And when I went overseas I wrote to him, and he used to write back to me and send me little things, you know. And when we were in the desert I met a guy whose name I can't remember, but he was in the Royal Engineers doing this mine spotting thing, and we got chatting and I found out he worked for Humphries Labs and he was also an ACT member. And when I wrote and told George this, George wrote to him as well. So I have great respect for George. There was Phil Brandon, George Elvin, a guy called Irving Harris who I started, stopped being an actor and I went and saw him onto the production side - and of course a lady, who to me was the most wonderful person, unfortunately she died not long ago - Rita Gillespie, who was my first PA I ever had when I worked in television. But talking about Irving Harris, he was a public relations casting director. And he had the job of doing the whole of the casting for 'The Glowry Ghost', which later became known as The Ghost Goes West. And also The Shape of Things to Come. I think they were made at Twickenham, I'm not sure.

Rodney Giesler: It was done at Denham wasn't it?

Dicky Leeman: Was it Denham?

Rodney Giesler: Hmm.

Dicky Leeman: Well anyway, I was...

Rodney Giesler: They both were actually.

Dicky Leeman: Oh.

Rodney Giesler: The Ghost Goes West was Rene Clair wasn't it?

Dicky Leeman: That's right, yes. But I was - Irving, instead of sending me down on the crowd, he said, "Look, will you help me out, and I'll pay you the guinea a day." [laughs] And I eventually had about six months with him, getting all this cast, sending people down, phoning them up, doing the office work for him. And one day a chap called Stanley Haynes came in, who

was a producer. He was making this Cotton Queen at Joe Rock's studios. And he was in the office every day, helping - getting Irving's help over the casting. And he suddenly said to Irving, he said, "Look, do you think I could have Dick as a second assistant?" And that's how I started as a second assistant, I went onto this Cotton Queen, which was my start on the production side of films.

Rodney Giesler: Before we go on, on that one, I'm interested to know really on the union aspect - after George came down and you all joined - did the union have great difficulty in establishing its negotiating rights?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, well - it wasn't allowed to go anywhere really. I think it was a hard, hard struggle. And we certainly weren't recognised. And we badly needed it. People weren't necessarily militant or anything like that. As I said earlier, all we wanted was a fair deal, and some continuity of employment because for the freelance guys there just wasn't any at all. And you could be sacked at the - just off you go, you know, that was it, they didn't want you.

Rodney Giesler: With the number of people outside waiting for your job, it was quite easy.

Dicky Leeman: Yes, exactly.

Rodney Giesler: Anyhow, I've diverted you then. You got into features as a second assistant then?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes.

Rodney Giesler: Who did you go on to work with?

Dicky Leeman: Well there was The Cotton Queen and then I did - we used to do - Joe Rock had a tie-up with a fellow called J.H. Isles[?] who owned 'Dreamland' in Margate. And hence the Margate Pedlars which was the comedian Leslie Fuller, did a sort of what in those days was called a concert party, called 'The Margate Pedlars'. And he financed Leslie Fuller to do these series of cheap, quick, B class films at Joe Rock's, you see they had a tie-up. And I remember they were quick, really low comedy as it were. But inoffensive because in those days one didn't put anything on the screen that might offend anybody. And he had a supporting comedian called Georgie Harris I remember. And he would get the occasional guest star would come in. And I can remember on one of them one night, we were out on the lot at the front of the studio and we'd been for our supper break. And when we came out we had a shot of a horse and coach being driven off - one of these open landau things. And the lady that was being driven off was a great comedienne of the music hall called Nellie Wallace, who was a wonderful personality and a lovely lady. And as we came out we saw this tremendous glow away over in the south, in the distance, it was like lights all over the place. And we couldn't make out what it was. And the next morning we heard on the radio it was Crystal Palace had been burnt down, which was... And it was a cold night, we could have done with some of that heat there, I can tell you! And then, from that I remember doing four quota quickies - you remember the British quota quickie system? And there I worked for, I was again second assistant. Ernie Holding was the production manager, Bill Bangs[?] was the first assistant, and I was the second assistant, or really call-boy I suppose,

it really was. And Graham Cutts was one of the directors, Laurie Huntington, and George Pearson whose daughter I know had a lot to do with ACT in the early days. And it's amazing how one learnt from these people you know. And I was very interested later on when I went into television and I did a panel game when I had Patricia Cutts on it, who of course was Cutts' daughter, you know. Lovely lady, sadly she passed on.

Rodney Giesler: You mentioned the big epic, The Shape of Things to Come - now that was quite spectacular with the special effects and so on. What are your memories of it?

Dicky Leeman: Well nothing because I was merely in Irving's office all the time. I'd get the call, "Right, we want three hundred people tomorrow." [laughs] But in those days - going back to the studio - in those days when I was a first assistant, you were responsible for doing the crowd yourself. And sometimes, if you had a director that maybe was not sure what he was doing, he would suddenly say to you at six o'clock in the morning, "All right Dicky, I want fifty people tomorrow." So I used to go up to the West End and tour all the pubs, and say, "Hello Fred, you working tomorrow? No, right, Elstree tomorrow at such and such a time, certain clothes." Eventually I got my fifty people. Two or three of them would come round with me. I could always get the crowd quite easily.

Rodney Giesler: These were regular crowd actists?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. It was not a question of having one's favourite, but you usually called the guys you knew weren't going to cause any trouble, you know what I mean. Or would be on time, you know - and would do what you asked them to without any quibbling. Because you had to get on with it - because you were under pressure the whole time. Another film I remember doing there was a big musical with Lupe Velez and Ben Lyon. I think I've got, somewhere in here [looks through notes].

Rodney Giesler: Yes, Stardust.

Dicky Leeman: That's it, Stardust. There was Ben Lyon, Lupe Velez, who had her then husband Johnny Weissmuller I think it was, with her - and Jean - what was the English actress?

Rodney Giesler: Jean Colin.

Dicky Leeman: Jean Colin, yes.

Rodney Giesler: Harry Langdon.

Dicky Leeman: Harry Langdon - yes.

Rodney Giesler: The American silent comic?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, the silent comic. And I always remember when we had a lunch break I sat at the same table as Harry Langdon and Albert Whelan the Australian whistling comedian. And it was fantastic to hear these two guys talking about the early days, you know? One was

Australian but British, and the other - I don't mean British by nationality but British music hall performer - and Harry Langdon the old time comic.

Rodney Giesler: And of course he was vaudeville, wasn't he, before that?

Dicky Leeman: He was, yes indeed. It was wonderful to hear them talking. And it made me realise where Albert Whelan - what his experience was. I knew him as a top music hall star, but I didn't realise that he'd toured the States and things like that. You learn by just listening.

Rodney Giesler: Was it about this time that you went to work with Mickey Powell?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, it was in 1936. I think the first one we did was The Man Behind the Mask. Again I told you about Hugh Williams and Ivor Barnard. I was a gopher on that, as you'd call him today I believe. And then that wonderful film he made called The Edge of the World, about - on the island of Foula. Unfortunately I didn't get up to going to Foula. And just before the war, when he started The Spy in Black with Conrad Veidt, Mickey knew I was out of work so he kindly gave me a few days in his office, helping him out with the odd messages and things like that.

Rodney Giesler: But you weren't near the sets or anything?

Dicky Leeman: No, no. But then the next thing I was working back at Joe Rock's, on this film, again I can't remember the name of it, which was with Leslie Banks on it. And I just didn't finish that because a few days later I was in uniform. Because I was in the Auxiliary Air Force at the time. I do remember that one morning, war was being threatened of course, we turned up, we'd only got two electricians. [laughs] So I said to Gav, "What's happened?" He said, "Well they're all in the Territorials, they've all gone on searchlight duty." So we just hadn't got them.

Rodney Giesler: In the Auxiliary Air Force, I mean what was your job? What did you join up and do?

Dicky Leeman: I was a balloon operator in the 907 Balloon Squadron. I went to - first job, we were in Finsbury Park. Funnily enough our commanding officer was Walter Summers, the director.

Rodney Giesler: Were you there for how long? Were you there up to the Blitz or when?

Dicky Leeman: Oh yes. Then I was posted down to Dover, where we experienced the shelling from Dover. And then the next thing I was off overseas. I was in the desert and in Sicily and Italy, then came back in time to greet the doodlebugs. In fact my first overseas leave, after I'd been overseas - I think we got about a fortnight - I didn't know what this was, this noise that was coming and then suddenly exploding, and it was the start of the doodlebugs.

Rodney Giesler: Was that the time you then transferred to the RAF Film Unit?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, about the last eighteen months. It was very funny because I was working on London Town, as I told you I had been allowed to be away from my unit, and we were on location at Boulter's Lock with about two hundred extras and punts and boats and everything. And I went up to George - forget his name, the production manager - and I said, "George, sorry I can't be here tomorrow." He said, "Why?" I said, "I've got to go to Uxbridge to be demobbed." So he said, "All right, I'll have car for you." Well I arrived the next morning to start the day's work going you see, and then Phil Brandon very kindly took over for me. And of course I was in my uniform, and of course all the extras really took the mickey out of me [laughs]. And anyway, I had George the driver, it was a great big car, big Daimler. He took me to Uxbridge, and as we got to the entrance to the camp I could see the SP, which is the Service Policemen, these red caps, suddenly jump to attention. But little did he realise the guy sitting in the back was a leading aircraftsman [laughs]. And anyway, George told me he was allowed to park somewhere, and the SP went up to him and he said, "What's this LAC bloke doing in this big car?" So George put it on, he said, "Very important chap. Work at Boulter's Lock, big film, three hundred people. They can't do a thing until he gets back." [laughs]. And I was whipped around Uxbridge in no time, with my demob suit and my trilby hat. And I got a great cheer when I walked back on the set from everybody, because I'd got civilian clothes on. [laughs]

Rodney Giesler: Did you do any films with the RAF Film Unit? Did you work on Journey Together?

Dicky Leeman: No. That was just finished before I got there. But I met Dicky Attenborough there at the time. But no, I was working mostly in editing with Peter Baylis, who unfortunately died, he was a really good editor. And he was in the RAF Film Unit throughout the war, and again I learnt quite a bit about editing from him cutting.

Rodney Giesler: And he went on to make these Pathe documentaries didn't he?

Dicky Leeman: That's right. Yes, yes. He was a nice...he was a nice bloke.

Rodney Giesler: I knew him quite well.

Dicky Leeman: Did you? Charming. We were great friends before the War funnily enough. And I was quite happy to be with him then. We used to have fun actually because when things weren't too serious we'd start making our own, putting our own films together and doing the commentary, just for fun, you know, bits of film that had got nothing to do with each other. But it was good experience that.

Rodney Giesler: So that took you to London Town, which you covered, and also into The Master of Bankdam. And I remember Anne Crawford, I always used to like her, did you?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, I did. Very nice lady.

Rodney Giesler: She died tragically.

Dicky Leeman: Yes she did. And of course Tom, I'll always remember Tom Walls. He came up to me one day and he said, "Dicky, any chance of having a certain day off?" So I said, "Well Tom, it should be all right." So I went and had a word with Walter. I said, "Tom would like to have a bit of a rest." Walter said, "Oh that's all right. We'll shoot around him or something." And of course all Tom wanted to do was go to the races [laughs]. And I must confess earlier on in life I had backed his 'April 5th' running. And also, strangely enough, the second horse, which I also backed each way, was 'The Miracle', which was second in that particular Derby.

Rodney Giesler: Yes, I heard quite a lot about Tom Walls from E.P. Williams was involved in a lot of films.

Dicky Leeman: Did you? Yes.

Rodney Giesler: And after The Master of Bankdam, were you still in movies?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes.

Rodney Giesler: This was before television wasn't it?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. I didn't get into television until I did these, I was doing these Independent Frame things, which were, I think it was Dave Rawnsley, the art director. He brought this idea of no sets, everything was done with back projection, so that except for furniture it was all just pictures. And it took ages to light, it really did. I always felt it would never be a financial success because we would be three days sometimes over one shot. Because it was a terrible problem to match the lighting. And then when you did perhaps get it right, one of the projectors would pack in or something - which of course today things like that don't happen I suppose. And it was on Stop Press Girl, which I did with Sally Ann Howes and those two comedians - Naunton Wayne and his...

Rodney Giesler: Basil Radford.

Dicky Leeman: Basil Radford, yes. They were on it, which was fun. And it's through that, that I will always remember - it was pouring with rain and we were living by the Brent Bridge Hotel. And I'd seen an advert in the paper, in the Daily Telegraph, saying that BBC were looking for Studio Managers, and preference would be to people who'd been either Stage Managers in the theatre, or Assistant Directors in films. And I thought, "Well this is great, this could be me." And it was a bit of a problem because it was pouring with rain, and my wife and I had just enough money for me to go by bus - well on the North Circular to Muswell Hill, to Alexandra Palace, for this interview. I had enough money to go one way you see [laughs]. So I thought, "Right, well I'll take the bus there so that I won't be drenched." But of course I didn't realise I got off at Muswell Hill, and I had to walk to Alexandra Palace. And it was pouring down. And I sat down in the reception and the young lady said, "Yes, if you would wait a few minutes." So I said, "Well I'll just go into the toilet and try and dry myself off a bit." And I went back and I sat down, and suddenly I saw a chap coming down the stairs, and it was Roy Oxley, who I'd worked with on films at Pinewood. He was a set designer. So he said, "What are you doing here Dicky?" And I

said, "Well I've come for this job as a holiday relief Floor Manager." This was in February believe it or not.

Rodney Giesler: What year was this - about '37?

Dicky Leeman: No, the '50s.

Rodney Giesler: Oh this is after the War?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, this was in the '50s, something like that. And he said, "Oh really?" He said, "Right." And he turned back, and instead of going out as he thought he was, he went back up the stairs you see. He came down about ten minutes later, he said, "Well I've told Ozzy {Mr Osbourne, the bloke I had to be interviewed by). I've told him that a villain we know is better than one we don't." And he just walked away, and of course I got the job. And I started as a holiday relief Floor Manager at Alexandra Palace, and at the old Gaumont Studios. We used to - BBC had those as well at the time.

Rodney Giesler: That was Lime Grove.

Dicky Leeman: Lime grove, yes. So that was the start of my career in... And I made up my mind - first big show I did as a Floor Manager was in Studio G at Gaumont. And I thought, "Well if I'm not producing and directing within three years, I'm going to get out of the business all together." And by sheer chance, and thanks to Bill Ward, who was a Production Supervisor, through him - he liked to have me as his Floor Manager - and through him, he spoke to Ronnie Warm[?] and I was occasionally allowed to direct, but it was back to Floor Manager the next day. [Break in recording]

Rodney Giesler: You were talking about your days at the Compton Academy.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. Fay Compton was a big actress... you know, she was also well known in Hollywood, big theatre star. And it was run principally by her sister Viola, who was a sort of Charlotte Greenwood type of lady, who would be in musicals doing the sort of Charlotte Greenwood parts. And one of the students in my time was a lovely lady called Connie Stevens, who eventually became - she was found and discovered by Stanley Lupino, and became Sally Gray, who married into a title I believe. Also on the film was Trevor Howard and Griffith Jones, and it was directed by Cavalcanti. And it was not long after the War and it was all to do with the black market racket, and what these crooks, which were led by Griffith Jones, were running a so-called funeral parlour. And of course in the coffins were all these nylons, and that basically was the story. But another interesting person on that was the Assistant Director on the unit, and that was Guy Hamilton. But going back to Fay Compton's - basically I was always a theatre man. And I had two wonderful teachers there - one was Stella Patrick Campbell, who was the daughter of Mrs Patrick Campbell, which to me was a tie with the theatre as it was - and also a wonderful character actress called Nancy Roberts. And I must have been a pro as a kid, because I got on well with them, and they taught me so much, so much indeed. Cav as we called him, Cavalcanti, was a wonderful bloke. In fact I've got a card he once sent me. He was a wonderful Editor. He really - and he showed me a simple way, which I found so wonderful when I went into television

where you had multi-cameras. It was almost - I was editing, you know, as you were doing, but Cav taught me so much about the right line and all this sort of thing, you know - so that really he made an Editor's job fairly straightforward.

Rodney Giesler: He was a very mercurial kind of person.

Dicky Leeman: Oh yes. But of course it was rather sad some part of it really, because we started the film and we had Robert Newton playing in it. And he was trying desperately hard not to drink. And he would suddenly say to me, "Just a minute Dicky, I must go to my dressing room." And of course he was - unfortunately getting 'one', which was sad because he was a great actor. And in the end Cav just couldn't stand it any more, so they had to get rid of Robert Newton, and they brought Trevor Howard in. But the sequence that we had shot in the fortnight was taking place in Sally Gray's flat, so when we had to retake it with Trevor, 'Old Times' had sold all the furniture! So Cav was - you know - He was very good funnily enough to me, because he said, "What shall we do Dicky?" So I said, "Well there's only one thing Cav." I mean I respected this guy and he was a big name to me. I said, "Do all Trevor's stuff in close-up." He said, "Right," and he did. So we didn't see the background. And we didn't see too much of the furniture.

Rodney Giesler: Of course Robert Newton died shortly after that.

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes. It was sad because he was - And he was a very nice bloke, really was a nice bloke. But Trevor was marvellous, wonderful. I always felt, in a way, that Trevor was underestimated, particularly with the public. He was such a good performer, and his experience was fantastic, and he loved cricket too [laughs]. I think he would have liked to have been a professional cricketer as well. I used to meet him regularly because he lived at Arkley, you know. And when we were - I was later in television, based at Elstree with ATV, I used to go via Arkley to my home in Finchley because I couldn't stand the main roads. At the end of the day we'd finished about six, I used to pop into 'The Gate' at Arkley, and old Trevor there. And he used to tell me fabulous stories which I can't repeat, about some of the big stars he'd worked with. [laughs]

Rodney Giesler: Oh, why not? [laughs]

Dicky Leeman: Anyway, but it was very interesting because we'd been in the bar and a load of people would come in, and you would see them, "Ohhh, Trevor Howard!" So he'd say, "Come on Dicky." And he used to take me round to the public bar where all the locals were, who were used to him and didn't bother him. And he was like me, a Guinness man at the time, and I'd have many a talk with him. I was very sad... And of course I was very fond of Helen, his wife, who I'd used a couple of times. I used her once on What's My Line? And another game I did with Jack Train and people, in television.

Rodney Giesler: Anyhow, that's the film era. And you were just beginning to tell me about your relief job at Alexandra Palace.

Dicky Leeman: Yes.

Rodney Giesler: And the beginning of your career in television.

Dicky Leeman: Well I was again very lucky because, as I said, I found being a Floor Manager was really quite easy in view of my theatre and my film experience, handling and coping with people. Because as you know, on any production, whether it's theatre, films or television, if you have a certain amount of authority, you've got so many different types of people to cope with. Some you can drive, others you have to schmooze along. And I thought, "Well this is a piece of cake." And fortunately I eventually I got the job of Floor Manager with a fellow called Bill Ward who was a senior Producer at the BBC. And of course, when ATV started he was the man that Lew Grade picked, and Val Parnell picked to organise the television side. And of course Bill was a master technician as well as being a good Producer and Director. And he saw, respected me, and I respected him, so he eventually, through him - he went to see Ronnie Warman[?] and I eventually was allowed - occasionally they'd want a Floor Manager to direct something fairly easy and straightforward. And eventually, the first show I did was a show called - oh dear what was it called now? I've got it somewhere... [flicks through notes]

Rodney Giesler: My Wife Jacqueline?

Dicky Leeman: My - no - there was one before that, with Jimmy Young, a young, unknown Jimmy Young.

Rodney Giesler: Flight of Fancy.

Dicky Leeman: Flight of Fancy, yes. Now this is interesting - I was given half an hour on at eight o'clock on a certain Wednesday. And it was up to me what I did in that half hour. And I'm sitting in the office pondering and talking to Rita Gillespie, who had been assigned to me as my Production - or Secretary as we called them in those days. And a young chap walked into my office to see me, and I started to talk to him. And he was Canadian, and I thought he was nice chap. And I suddenly said, "You know, I've got half an hour." He'd told me he was interested in scriptwriting, you see. And then he suggested this idea, which was one we knew had been done before, but he came up with this good idea where you have two blokes cleaning windows outside a big building, and as they go up to the next level you go through and there is your variety act or whatever. And that guy was a young fellow called Alvin Rakoff, who later became a very well known director. And in that I had Jerry Desmonde, who I'd worked with with Sid of course, on London Town - and Victor Platt who was a typical British good supporting actor who could play any part that you want. And they were the two guys cleaning the windows. And one of them, this song had become very popular, called 'Too Young', sung by a young song plugger. And it was Jimmy Young of course who came and he sang the song for us. And I had - there was a wonderful lyrical of song, I think it was sung by Sarah Vaughan, it was called 'Two Brothers'. And it's about two brothers in the civil war who are on opposite sides. And I got - what's the name of the chap, the choreographer who was on the roof, on Fiddler on the Roof - Rudy...

Rodney Giesler: I never saw the show.

Dicky Leeman: ...Rudy somebody. He was a choreographer - I think he was with the ballet - the Royal Ballet - it wasn't the Royal Ballet in those days. And he did this setting for me of these two

brothers - he got me two young understudies to do this. We had somebody singing it out of vision and he did this beautiful bit of choreography. I remember that at the time. And that was my first... Then I went on, I was given a series to do, written by Basil Dearden, called Flight of Fancy. And I think this was the first time you actually had, in a fictional...

Rodney Giesler: Sorry, Flight of Fancy - wasn't this the series you just talked about?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, I'm sorry - My Wife Jacqueline - was the first time in a fictional series - it was a situation comedy - that you had your principal performer talking straight to the camera. And it was a fellow called Kenneth Cleveland who was a manager. And he heard I was doing this and he said, "There's a very good young chap in repertory in Carlisle." So I said, "Oh really? Can he come down and see me?" And he did. He came and saw me, and I thought he was perfect. And it was of course Leslie Philips, who was working in rep. And he told me many years later that he had to borrow - he had to come down by bus because it was cheaper, and he had to borrow the fare to get there to see me [laughs]. And I had Sydney - oh, Jewish actor, very good actor, I had his wife Joy Shelt -

Rodney Giesler: Sydney Tafler.

Dicky Leeman: Sydney Tafler - I had Joy Shelton as his opposite. And also a young chap supporting was the guy that was in the - oh dear, forgive me for a minute - he plays, he's retired now, he lives at Bexhill - he was in the things with Roger Moore and Sean Connery -

Rodney Giesler: The James Bond things?

Dicky Leeman: The James Bond things - I forget his name now. Perhaps I can find it somewhere. Can we switch off? [Break in Recording] Right, we were talking about My Wife Jacqueline weren't we? Yes. There was Leslie Phillips, Joy Shelton and of course a young chap called Desmond Llewellyn, who later became the character in the James Bond films.

Rodney Giesler: So that was really one of the early soaps I suppose you'd call it - would it be?

Dicky Leeman: Well no, it was only a series of six actually.

Rodney Giesler: Sitcom, yes.

Dicky Leeman: Situation comedy. Then I was back on the floor as a Floor Manager. And this went on, I used to do quite a few odd programmes. I did some children's, one or two children's things - one with Humphrey Lestocq on one Saturday was Peter the - oh Janet Brown's husband - Peter -

Rodney Giesler: Oh yes, Peter Butterfield -

Dicky Leeman: Peter Butterworth.

Rodney Giesler: Butterworth, yes.

Dicky Leeman: Peter Butterworth. Two nice guys, who I liked. In fact we had Peter, when Bill Ward was doing the Terry Thomas show we had Peter in that. And also I was with Bill as Floor Manager when he did the Arthur Askey series and things.

Rodney Giesler: Because Humphrey Lestocq used to be that character 'Flying Officer Kite'.

Dicky Leeman: That's right, yes, yes.

Rodney Giesler: [indecipherable] merry-go-round.

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes.

Rodney Giesler: When you moved into television, I mean there were certain similarities with being a Second Assistant on a studio floor in films. Except they were all wired for sound presumably?

Dicky Leeman: Well it was really a First Assistant's job you know, because you had a runner with you if you were on a major production. Sometimes if you were doing a chat show you didn't need anybody else. But we used to have - we had to have 'cans' as we called them [NB headphones], and trail - they had to be plugged into the side of the studio [laughs]. None of this mobile stuff in the early days. And it was an art, especially when we had a four camera job, you know. I always remember a Director who I was floor managing for, who I'd worked with in rep in Glasgow. I won't mention his name. And he got in a terrible muddle one day. He wasn't television, or even film, he really should have stayed as an actor. And the cables were all intertwined, so I said, over the intercom you know, you pressed a button and you could speak up to the control room you see. So I said, "I'm sorry Dougie, but if you just leave it for about ten minutes I'll sort this out for you," which was probably the wrong thing to say because he didn't know I'd heard him say, turn round to his PA and say, "I don't want a Director as my Floor Manager in future." [laughs] But however, he didn't think too badly because he gave my wife, put her in one of his series. [laughs]

Rodney Giesler: But the other thing of course on multi-camera production was the fact that you had to rehearse camera movements closely so you didn't run over each other's cables.

Dicky Leeman: Oh yes. Right, yes. Well what you did - on a four-camera job you would be - you see you would have what we call "outside rehearsal". If it was a big show you might have a week outside rehearsal. And if it was a series, say a sitcom like, say, The Arthur Haynes Show or anything like that, you would have your outside rehearsal and then you'd have, on a big show, if it was an hour's show, you'd have a day in the studio, then setting your cameras and what we call a "camera rehearsal". Then you'd come in the day of the transmission, with a further rehearsal, finishing up with a run-through as on the night, with then maybe an hour's break before you went on the air.

Rodney Giesler: And then you would go out live.

Dicky Leeman: Right, absolutely.

Rodney Giesler: No taping in those days.

Dicky Leeman: No, no, no. But in my early days when I was given a chance to direct, I had this fabulous lady Rita Gillespie who was the top Production Assistant, and a superb technician. She was far advanced than I was as a technician because in those early days we would have - there was no zoom lens. So if I said I wanted a medium close-up, she could indicate to the camera crew, put it down in the script what inch lens you had on the thing. And what I used to do, I always used to order some non-copyright music and a fog-loop. So if one of the cameras broke down we used to superimpose the fog-loop, play the music, get another camera there quickly and nobody knew that anything had gone wrong.

Rodney Giesler: What's a fog-loop?

Dicky Leeman: Fog-loop is fog, it goes round and round - it's just fog.

Rodney Giesler: oh it's just fog.

Dicky Leeman: [laughs] Yes. It's a bit of film you see.

Rodney Giesler: It's not just a bit of caption?

Dicky Leeman: No, no, it's a bit of film you see. Half the time people never realised anything had gone wrong.

Rodney Giesler: Did you have a lot of hairy moments?

Dicky Leeman: Oh yes. Yes, yes.

Rodney Giesler: Can you remember some of them?

Dicky Leeman: Well on one occasion I had a shot of Leslie Philips. He was trying to break into Joy Shelton's house, and it was a big house she lived in, in the country. And it was in the studio at Lime Grove, in G and we tracked back with him as he comes round from the front door because he can't get in, to go and climb up her window. And it was on a dolly you see, and in the action of pulling back, panning right, the camera caught his leg in the circular bit the camera's on. But of course he went, "Owwww!" you see, so there was a quick fog-loop, music, and we had to sort him out. And another occasion, if a camera - I always remember on a show I was doing, I think it again was My Wife Jacqueline, we were on an office set, and the camera started to wobble. And we had, on one of the cameras, a guy called Singleton, A.P. Singleton, who eventually became an OB Producer/Director. He saw what was happening, whipped his camera over there alongside the camera that was gradually dying, and he was clever enough to give me a slightly different shot. So I then cut to... It didn't look like a jump-cut you see, which as you know sometimes you get, particularly on chat shows and things. So you see, that's what people were like in those days. I always remember my first show on commercial television, which was the Saturday after they opened I think, on the Friday, on the 16th September - I've got a little ashtray up there. And I was on the set and we were doing this show called Music Shop. Now I

had worked - our offices were in Kingsway. We were then ABC, this was before they had to change their name to ATV. Because Thomas, you know, who was ABC Cinemas, he eventually came into television, so he insisted on having ABC, so we had to change to ATV. Well anyway, I was with Rita in our offices, and I couldn't get to Wood Green, where we were doing the show beforehand. And I thought to myself, "I'm getting very worried, Rita." She said, "Why? What's the matter?" I said, "What 's the crew going to be like? This is a new outfit all together." And I walked into Wood Green on the morning of the rehearsal of the show we were doing on a Saturday afternoon, there were only two people I didn't know [laughs], every one of them had come - which was thanks to Bill Ward, his wonderful organisers. And we had the pick of the television technicians and stage staff.

Rodney Giesler: From the Beeb?

Dicky Leeman: From the Beeb.

Rodney Giesler: So it was a very smooth transition?

Dicky Leeman: Oh it was.

Rodney Giesler: What about the general production philosophy? Was it much more, much better financed and stuff like that?

Dicky Leeman: Well we nearly went broke. Nearly went broke until one of the newspapers stepped in at one time at ATV. But it was the sort of thing that happened - you see when I was producing What's My Line at the BBC, it was a long, long time before the BBC would allow it to go out on a Sunday night because in those days Sunday night used to be the news. I'm talking as a Floor Manager. Seven o'clock would be Sylvia Peters, or Mary Malcolm or MacDonald, doing the news. It'd be half an hour of that. Then we would be either Ibsen or one of the serious Shakespeare plays, and then fifteen minutes of Yehudi Menuhin or a pianist. And that was Sunday night, you weren't allowed to laugh on Sunday. But then when Val Parnell came in with Sunday Night at the Palladium, what happened? The BBC had to put variety and light programmes on a Sunday. Competition was good in that respect. But I've always said to anybody who wants to come into television, "If you can, start with the BBC because in my day the training there was absolutely superb." Well I mean that some of the to guys came into commercial television, or independent television. But I've always been very grateful to the BBC, and I regretted in a way, eventually, that I left. But I had to leave because I never got - I could see there was no chance of promotion at all. I wasn't aware at the time that when commercial came out, or that commercial was coming up - I wasn't aware of it - that I would have had an opportunity if I'd stayed with the BBC, probably to become a Producer. But I could see no advancement.

Rodney Giesler: So you had a sort of log-jam at senior level?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes, yes. But their attitude was, "You're a Floor Manager and you stay a Floor Manager." If you'd been an Accounts Clerk you'd probably stay an Accounts Clerk you see. But I was given, because Harry Alan Towers rang me up when I went to - I had big publicity

because I resigned from the BBC because an advertising agency wanted me to go, took me over to be their, start their television department. It was C.J. Litel[?]. And it was rather like - the attitude from the BBC I gather was rather like a chap from Rugby Union going over to Rugby League. I was virtually banned you see from going back to the BBC. But the funny part was at Litel's, he had no faith in commercial television. He said it wouldn't work in England. And I thought, "Well what's he got me here for?" Only to get the publicity for his advertising. Because I was doing What's My Line at the time, which was hitting the...

Rodney Giesler: ...the ratings.

Dicky Leeman: ...and the news. I see I used to put things in that make people sit up. For instance, when Eamonn decided to go on a month's holiday, they wanted me to put all the established - any of the established front men on. And I said, "No, I want somebody different." And Ronnie didn't interfere with me you see. And I happened to see a chap at the Cambridge Theatre in a play about mannequins or something. Who was called Ron Randell. So I put him in, and he was a sensation because he was a complete contrast to Eamonn. And he finishes up the first night saying, "And to you ladies," and he blew a kiss you see. And the BBC were horrified. And the next day they were saying, "You've ruined our programme." But it was hitting the headlines, you see.

Rodney Giesler: I suppose every time Gilbert Harding lost his temper that hit the headlines as well?

Dicky Leeman: Of course! One night Eamonn introduces a bloke and says, "Oh this is Mr Jones," or whatever his name was, "from Darlington." And Gilbert was straight out and said, "Well that's his bloody fault isn't it?" And this is live! And of course I was on the carpet nearly every Monday morning. But Ronnie was so sweet, Ronnie Warman, because he was the Head of Light Entertainment. He said, "Ah well Dicky, I've ticked you off haven't I? [laughs] Would you like a sherry?" Because he was with me. And it's live. You say to people, "Don't say - don't offend." But that was part of Gilbert's image anyway. And the brilliant bloke to me, one of the best. Was David Nixon of course. Do you remember David? Wonderful. I saw David - it was pouring with rain one Saturday, and I couldn't go and watch the Wasps play rugger. So I'm sitting at home and my boy Gary, who's now in the States, was about six or seven at the time. He said, "Daddy, could I see the children's programme?" I switched it on, and there was this comedian, conjuror - and my kid was falling all over the floor with laughter. I thought, "He's got something, this chap." So on the Monday I was having a problem with one of the panel, it wasn't a success and it nearly got me taken off the programme because the programme, which had been a high, was really dropped down to nothing. So on the Monday I rang up the casting office, I said, "Can you find out who manages a chap called David Nixon?" So casting come back about half an hour later and they say, "He's owned by Phil Rount[?]." I knew Phil very well, you see. So I got on the phone to Phil, and if you can imagine in those days, to get on What's My Line was the top - it was THE programme you see. So I said, "Well I tell you what Phil... " She suggested, "Look Dicky, I'll send him down to see somebody." She can make an arrangement to see a straight - or one of the other Directors who really didn't - he'd play ball with her you see. "...And then I'll say to him while he's down there, 'Would you just pop in and see Dicky Leeman to say hello from me?'" So he eventually comes in and I have a little chat with him, and we start

talking about What's My Line. So I said to him, "Right David, would you like to be on What's My Line?" So he said, "What, as a conjuror?" I said, "No, on the panel." And I thought he was going to faint. He went white. He said, "What me on What's My Line?" I said, "Yes." And that's how he started on it. And he was...

Rodney Giesler: So you had usually two regulars didn't you? And then you had guests?

Dicky Leeman: I stuck to a - when I got David, Isobel, Barbara and Gilbert, that to me was a team, and I wouldn't shift. And I only put somebody in if one night Gilbert couldn't come on, so I had Robert Morley, who was sensational. But he wouldn't come on it any more because he knew himself he couldn't top it. The sort of things I used to do - I wouldn't believe in cheating, because I think, as Gilbert said in the book I wrote about the programme, the public or the experts think that people cheat, but he said, "It's only worse if you try and cheat." Which is true in a way. But the sort of thing I would do for instance - I used to tour the country - the local Producers at the Beeb would - I was getting four hundred letters a day from people who wanted to be on it. And if they were in a certain area, the Head of Light Entertainment, who I think was Eddie Fraser[?] who was up there at the BBC Scottish television, he would see say about a hundred of them, and bring them down to about twenty. And I'd go up there for a day and see these people. And I was up there in Glasgow and he came to lunch, he said, "All right Dicky, shall we go across to the Curlers?" which was a pub - to have a drink for lunch. So I said, "Okay." And when we got in there, there were these beautiful murals all round the wall. So I said, "Those are beautiful. Who did those?" He said, "That guy over there that's got a false moustache." So I got chatting with him, and I said, "Would you like to be on What's My Line as a cartoonist?" Because he was with one of the Glasgow papers you see. I said, "But I can only put you on providing nobody - don't even tell your wife." And he kept his word. So he eventually comes on the programme, and I suddenly thought, I said to him, "Look - if by any chance when you come on, or during the programme, Barbara Kelly says to you, 'How do you manage to kiss your wife?' Go up and kiss her." And I said to Barbara, "Barbara look, if a chap - it would be a it of fun if a guy comes on one night (I didn't say he was coming on then) has got a big moustache, ask him how he kisses his wife." I said, "You might get a bit of fun out of it." And I didn't say a word to Eamonn. And sure enough, Barbara was a real pro. She didn't ask it right away. About half way through the challenge she says, "Tell me Mr so-and-so, how do you manage to kiss your wife with that terrible moustache?" So he got up, went straight over and gave her a great smack. Front page the next day in all the papers. And I then started this thing with Isobel and Barbara wearing earrings. And these became - my wife used to go and collect the earrings - they were borrowed, we didn't pay for them - from Fior's in Bond Street you see. And these things became quite a sensation. And the women viewers were always looking at these earrings. And one day I'm walking down Berwick Market and a bloke's got a stall, "Earrings, as worn on What's My Line". [laughs]

Rodney Giesler: It's quite incredible because if you look at that programme now, it's occasionally trotted out as a piece of antiquity - it so creaks, and echoes its time.

Dicky Leeman: Yes I know. It does, absolutely.

Rodney Giesler: But it was the great centre of attention in its day.

Dicky Leeman: Well yes it was teamwork you see. And it was - I'll never forget, when it started at the BBC, the original Producer Leslie Jackson[?], made a wonderful job of it, he really got it right up there. And you can imagine the opposition he had internally because the same thing happened with This is Your Life at the BBC, originally. Because you had these things and people hadn't met anybody for years. You can imagine Blind Date going on the BBC in those days? Even in its watered-down version. It's still got the old regime. If you were doing a show in the evening at the BBC as a Floor Manager, and there was an audience, you had to wear a dinner jacket - until we all started to moan and said we wanted more money for having our dinner jackets cleaned. [laughs] So that got rid of that.

Rodney Giesler: That was still in the '50s was it?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, oh yes. I had to wear a dinner jacket if I was doing a show with an audience. I mean in those days - in sound radio of course, in the early days, the newsreaders had to wear dinner jackets, although they were never seen. And this had to - with the opposition coming of commercial television, that made them broaden. But I still think they do some marvellous shows at the BBC. I'm looking forward to this Pride and Prejudice for instance, those are the sort of shows they really do well.

Rodney Giesler: Yes. The programmes you then went on to in commercial television of course, were more 'laid-back' as we say nowadays. I mean they had people showing their emotions, which the BBC didn't like.

Dicky Leeman: Yes.

Rodney Giesler: Tell me a bit about those.

Dicky Leeman: Well I used to do a little show called Music Shop, which went out on Saturday afternoons. It was the first one I did on commercial television. And that was - but the pressure on us was very great because there weren't many people that had experience of directing and producing. And at one period I was doing Music Shop at two o'clock on - used to go out about two o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and at eight o'clock at night, live, both live, I would do a Saturday Night Spectacular. And I would do this in the same studio of course, but I would rehearse the spectacular from ten o'clock, or nine o'clock on Friday, with a band call, from nine until twelve. Two until ten/eleven at night, camera rehearsal, come back in Saturday morning - different set, Music Shop set - rehearse Music Shop in the morning having done an outside rehearsal all week of both the spectacular and the Music Shop at Cecil Sharp house because they'd got two or three rooms and I used to go from one room to the other, rehearsing the various people. And then I would go on the air, do a run-through, polish up my camera work after Music Shop was over at three o'clock, start about half past three, polish off anything I had left undone on Friday on the spectacular - have a rehearsal, a run-through about five o'clock until six, then a break until we went on the air at eight o'clock. And another occasion, I was doing Music Shop on Saturday afternoon, and then Rita my PA and I, would move to one of four Granadas, and we'd do People Are Funny with Derek Roy, live in the cinema. And it would be a break in the film programme. They would have a ten-minute break in the film programme, while the lady went round with the choc-ices and what have you, and all the cameras were in the orchestra pit. We

had three cameras in the orchestra pit, with rostrums, which couldn't be seen by the public. The crews had to put these cameras up onto the top of the rostra, and get them ready and get a picture, with about five minutes to go. And very often, we were sitting in a control van - 'scanner' they called it in those days - outside the stage door of the cinema. And Rita would be saying, "Thirty seconds studio," and I hadn't got a picture. And so instead of having film, ATV or ABC presents, they had three captions made for each camera you see. And the first bloke that had a picture would go to that caption, and the next picture would automatically go to Derek Roy, who was fronting it. And then we'd sort ourselves out after that. And very often Rita's been saying, "Thirty seconds studio" "Oh thank God, camera two's..." And those guys, getting those cameras up onto rostrum and the... reminded me of that gun turret race they have at Olympia, you know. It was incredible the way the guys worked in those days. And they thought nothing of it.

Rodney Giesler: It's a bit ominous the invasion into the sanctity of the cinema.

Dicky Leeman: Exactly. Especially when I used to think this place was designed by Komisarjevsky, you know. But...

Rodney Giesler: And you thrived on it. You didn't become a nervous wreck at this pace of work?

Dicky Leeman: I loved my work, plus the fact my recreation was watching the Wasps play rugger, you know. And I'd go there on a Saturday, even if it was only the fifth team playing at home. And I loved it. And we had quite a few people in the business who were members. But we never talked about the business. You usually said how better we were when we played, you know. Because I played rugger for the BBC, and I was over forty then. But another occasion I would be doing a Saturday spectacular on a Saturday night, then on one Tuesday I would be doing the Mantovani programme, the following Tuesday I'd be doing a Saturday spectacular, then the following Tuesday instead of Mantovani I'd be doing Geraldo and his orchestra. And this would go on for four or five weeks. We worked - on another occasion I was doing a programme on Sunday mornings at Wood Green. And in the afternoon I was at Lewis's doing what they called The Shopping Guide in those days, which eventually were banned by the powers that be.

Rodney Giesler: Was that the thing that Jimmy Handley used to front?

Dicky Leeman: He may have done, not the one I did. I had Elizabeth Allen funnily enough. And she'd go round the store. And another occasion, I suppose in those days I was the one Producer or Director that actually did a live commercial. Because in the middle of The Music Shop, after we'd been running about a year, when the second series started, someone decided that Jerry Wilmot, who was my front man on Music Shop, would do, in the same studio, a live commercial for Cadbury's or something like that. And I would direct it. And it was always - the first time it happened, just as we were coming up to - Rita would say, "All right, stand by, we're going over to camera two on the commercial," she was warning the crews and all that. In the control room walked six gentlemen, smart suits, and I thought to myself, "They've only got to have black hats on and dark glasses and I'd think the Mafia had come." It was of course the advertising agency, all the account execs had to be beside me. They had written the script, you see. And they knew

what was supposed to - insisted on coming into the control room and standing behind me, these six - all frightfully smart...

Rodney Giesler: 'Suits'!

Dicky Leeman: Yes. [laughs] But anyway, they a stop was put to that, the ITA or whoever decided that was not to be done.

Rodney Giesler: What was that afterwards? The Ruby Murray Show?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, well the Ruby Murray Show, that was the spectaculars that one. And also All That Jazz was a programme I did. It was when - I remember the period that Equity were on strike, and therefore we couldn't use actors as such. We could use - in those days the Variety Artists' Federation was a separate - so we were able to use them. So I did a programme which consisted of Jack Parnell's resident orchestra, a visiting recognised orchestra like Johnny Dankworth and his big band, or one of the big bands that were around before Sid Lawrence's time. But there were a lot of big bands in those days. And I'd also have Buddy Greco or somebody, a guest artist, and we did a sort of - I even had a jazz group from Belgium over... It was -

Rodney Giesler: By that time presumably your budgets were satisfactory?

Dicky Leeman: Oh yes.

Rodney Giesler: You'd recovered...

Dicky Leeman: Well the point was this - everything financially as far as I was concerned was all right. I was given a budget, it was up to me to stick to it. If I went over I was in trouble. Except when I was doing Golden Shot for instance, each time we did a new series we'd have a new set. Well that would put me well over budget, but once I'd got the series on the road, or on the air, the only cost was refurbishing and putting it back into the studio. You see it would split up over the thirteen programmes, so it was not too bad. Sunday Night at the Palladium, that was nice. I'd direct, dear old Albert Locke was the Producer on that, that was nice. Like me he came from the theatre, so we had a lot in common.

Rodney Giesler: There was a great infusion from the theatre really on ITV wasn't there?

Dicky Leeman: There was.

Rodney Giesler: More than the 'Beeb'? I mean there was much more - I mean the Grades for instance had a tremendous influence.

Dicky Leeman: They were superb.

Rodney Giesler: Bringing their talents.

Dicky Leeman: Well you see they owned practically everybody [laughs] you see. And it was very funny because Leslie Grade, bless his heart, dear old Michael's father, became a great friend over the telephone because I - he was always in his office. And he'd phone me up at six in the morning and say, "Dicky, not a word to anybody. I've got Eartha Kitt for you," you know, things like that you see. And I used to, if I was working on my camera script, in other words I spent four or five days rehearsing and I'd more or less set my mind up on paper. I would then work my camera script out for my PA to have it typed. And very often I'd find the best thing was to get into my office at Elstree about six o'clock in the morning you see. And one morning Leslie rings up home you see, and my wife said, "I'm very sorry, but he's already at the studio." Because Leslie was in his office at six in the morning. So he said, "In his office?" So my wife said, "Yes." He said, "I'm sure he's having it off with one of the cleaners." [laughs] That was Leslie - but he was - we became great friends over the phone because I never really actually met him. Well I did meet him, but never socially. But he'd always - then he would inform the Casting Director, Alec Fine[?], that so and so was fixed. It'd be Vic Damone, all sorts of people. But he'd always let me know first. Not a word, I wasn't to tell anybody until it was official.

Rodney Giesler: Shall we pause there Dicky?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, sure.

Rodney Giesler: Because we've come to the end of the tape and I'm sure your voice needs a rest.

Dicky Leeman: Right. [Break in recording]

Rodney Giesler: This is Dicky Leeman, reel two, side three.

Dicky Leeman: Somebody I became very fond of was Alma Cogan, who was as you know, a big name in the light entertainment world, and the variety world, and to me she was how I liked to see my musical stars - always so beautifully dressed. I always feel that Shirley Bassey is one of the last remaining of that type of performer. But Alma and I became very friendly, but never socially together. We were just great friends in the studio. And I remember one series we did of Star Time, each week we were set, it was a different setting, and one week it would be for instance a la Brigadoon, set in Scotland, and the following week be in Wales, and then we would go abroad. And one week we decided it would be a Chinese setting. So I said, "Oh great, I'll get Ernie and Eric down to do one of their Aladdin routines." So they came down and they said, "Oh Dicky, when we do this, would you book a Chinese actor, because we will go into fake Chinese in the middle of our act, and get this Chinese chap to roar his head off so that he understood the gag." Well obviously I couldn't get it into this Chinese - he couldn't understand what I wanted you see. And although I was born in Shanghai [laughs] I couldn't - So Eric said, "All right, we'll cut it out." I said, "No. I'll do it." So he said, "You?" I said, "Yes, I'll do it. I'm an old pro." So my PA got on to Bermans and said, "Can you send a Mandarin set to fit Dicky Leeman?" So he said, "Well we'll have to go into the archives, we've got his measurements somewhere." [laughs] And so we rehearsed it. And during the day's rehearsal, I had given Joyce Blair, of course I'd got Joyce and Lionel in this particular show as well as Ernie and Eric - had been at another - rehearsing another show or recording another show - so she couldn't be with us all day you see. But when we'd finished the run-through she came to the studio and she goes into the makeup

room. And I come and I'm in there you see, and so is Alma, and they're putting this Chinese makeup on me you see. So Joyce said to Alma, "What's with Dicky? What's he getting this makeup on for?" So Alma said, "It's sad really. He's gone peculiar. Every time we do a show in a different country, he has to be dressed as the..." [laughs] And she realised afterwards because I did it and of course it made her laugh, and it went down very well. But of course in those days - today one wouldn't be allowed to do it.

Rodney Giesler: Not politically correct.

Dicky Leeman: No, not really [laughs]. But anyway, I used to do loads of shows with Alma, and I believe she preferred... But another one who liked me directing and producing was Max Bygraves. I did a whole series of six programmes over in [indecipherable] with him, which was great fun.

Rodney Giesler: Alma Cogan died tragically young.

Dicky Leeman: I'm afraid so. She had leukaemia. I believe she was about four or five pounds, that's all, when she died. She would never let anybody go and see her. Because I rang her mum up and she said, "She won't see you Dicky, much as..." you know. She was lovely.

Rodney Giesler: She was such a bubbly girl, Alma.

Dicky Leeman: Oh great. She was show business to me.

Rodney Giesler: That quaky voice she had.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. She was a lovely person to work with. Another good friend of mine I enjoyed working with was Dickie Valentine. He was tragically killed of course. And we felt very saddened by his death because you know he had been playing in a nightclub and Dickie didn't drink very much. And he and his drummer and his pianist, he always took those two with him, they were playing at a nightclub in Wales, and they were going off for a week's holiday to spend with Dickie's personal manager in North Wales, at a cottage in North Wales. And they ran into a - about two o'clock in the morning, it was bad weather, and they ran into the edge of a bridge over a river. And the thing blew up, caught fire. And a lorry driver said he couldn't get near there to get - But the thing that saddened us very much was the fact that my son occasionally played the drums for Dickie if his own drummer wasn't available. And I think Dickie would have rather had my son because he was younger. But Dickie was so kind, he knew that if he sacked his drummer that he did have, who was a bit on the drink - he was getting on a bit and Dickie knew he probably would have a terrible job getting work anywhere, so he stuck with him. That was the sort of guy Dickie was - charming bloke. And he was very underrated as a performer, because when I did the big Dickie Valentine Saturday night spectaculars in the early days, I had a supporting cast of Peter Sellers, Mario Frobitzi[?], Valentine Dyall, and the odd guest like Michael Bentine, Eric Sykes and people like would come in. And occasionally Dickie was, although he was singing, it was his show, he was singing three or four numbers spread over the show, he said, "Dicky let me do this little bit." And I really should have let him play the small parts you see. And he really was excellent. I think he could have... And another performer that I

worked with a lot of course when I did the Arthur Haynes shows, was Nick Parsons, who is an excellent actor. And another one is Bob Monkhouse. The first time I really saw Bob was in 'Come Blow Your Horn' at The Prince of Wales Theatre. And he told me later on that that was the comedian - the famous one who played the slightly zany character with the little girl as his wife - Michael Crawford - it was his first West End part Bob told me. Because I said to Bob, "You know, you act Bob..." But he's not doing so badly is he really.

Rodney Giesler: No. He's still pressing on isn't he?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. And he was nice, he was a professional. He would - although some of his gags were so obviously planted - but he was very thorough.

Rodney Giesler: What were Eric and Ernie like to work with?

Dicky Leeman: Wonderful. Wonderful. They thought they were finished. They had done this series at the BBC which was a disaster. Why I don't know. But a young chap came to see me when I was doing the Geraldo show, and he wanted to write a script. So I let him - he used to do two or three odd little gags for me. And I was going to do this Winnie Atwell Show. I don't know if you remember Winnie, she was an upright pianist. Well it was the Winnie Atwell show. So I wanted some comedy supporting cast. So I got on to the casting office and I said, "Get me those two guys that were in this show at the BBC." And he said, "The show was terrible!" I said, "No matter. I'll have them." And I got this young man, with his partner, to write for them. That was Johnny Speight. And they were terrific in it. And the sort of things we did - remember this is live - we did a show at the time the Australian cricket team were over here playing the test series,[NB CB says this would be 1953 or 1956]. And we wanted to do a sketch about the cricket. So we decided - first of all we wanted an Australian cricket cap for Eric to wear on his nut - as a batsman. And wardrobe told me they couldn't get one. So I found out myself where the Australian team was staying, and they were at the Park Lane Hotel. So I got hold of Keith Miller, I said, "Can I borrow an Aussie cap?" He said, "Sure. Yes." I told him what it was for. So we borrowed the cap. And the idea is that Ernie bowls the ball and Winnie insisted on being in the sketch. So I said, "All right Winnie, you be the wicket-keeper." She padded up. And we see this ball, this is done live in the studio, you couldn't stop the tape in those days - and we see this ball travel round the world. Eric hits it, and we cut to a chap on a tug, and he goes left to right you see, cut to a bloke in the jungle with a gun, left to right, and it travels round the world. And I worked it out, we did about seventy-four shots in about a minute and a half. See, each camera had so many shots, and he only had to - as soon as I'd got off him he'd quickly move to his next shot. And eventually the ball lands in Winnie's hands, and I got the whole audience to shout, "Howzat?!" [laughs] But it was - we used to do things. We did also the old gag of the railway carriage. And there's - I'd go over the shoulder of somebody and read, "Murderer suspected of travelling to so and so" or something. And we'd keep cutting to this, and it goes through a tunnel and the scene changes. And one of the biggest laughs was we cut in with just a large St Bernard sitting in the - [laughs] And all this was done live. Everything, there was no stop and do it again business.

Rodney Giesler: Do you think that gave the performances - everyone - much more vitality?

Dicky Leeman: I think so. You see, to me personally it did because it was like the theatre. It was the first night, every show was the first night - which I tried to retain within myself when we'd record. And the first show I ever recorded I think was an Arthur Haynes show. And when I sat in the editing suite the next morning and saw it, I thought, "What the hell did I do that shot for?" And I realised what we'd been getting away with.

Rodney Giesler: I think also, when you're looking for perfection, say on film, and you go to about ten takes, everything is getting staler and less spontaneous.

Dicky Leeman: Well you see this was very much so, going back to London Town, was the fact that Sid - you see we were ending up with twenty-two and twenty-three takes. Well you can't do that to a music hall performer. And even people like Claude Hulbert and Sonnie Hale. Each shot got worse and worse you see.

Rodney Giesler: This was particularly demoralising for Sid I suppose.

Dicky Leeman: Of course it was. And there was no 'simpatico'. You see, I think, as you know, as a Producer and Director, you've got to feel for the - I always, for instance, if I was doing a band show, with the orchestra in vision, I used to make sure that every instrumentalist was comfortable because the guy can't play properly if he's not comfortable. And in the same way with women in the show, I used to make sure that they wore the clothes that they liked and wanted, otherwise no performer's going to be good if they're not happy. And you've got to pander some of them. Others will say, "Yes you're right," or - And I always believed that if an actor wasn't happy with a line I said, "Well let's sort this out." And sometime you'll probably find that his way is a darn sight better than the way I thought it should be. I felt, when I got into television and particularly when I got producing and directing, that no medium of showbiz is so essential to have a good team around you. So much teamwork, especially in the live days because very often you'd cut away from something and a prop man had to move a lamp slightly to the left or right for your next shot. Well if he didn't do that at the right time and it was live - what happens? They were just as important as the guy sitting up there saying, "Cut to two" or the actor expounding the quality of mercy or whatever.

Rodney Giesler: What year did everything start getting recorded? Was it about the '70s?

Dicky Leeman: Something like that, yes.

Rodney Giesler: Yes. And were you aware of these kind of things or not?

Dicky Leeman: Two things happened when I was in independent television was a) colour, and then editing, recording, were the two things that happened.

Rodney Giesler: Colour I would imagine, also put a damper on any live broadcasts.

Dicky Leeman: Well also you had to be - see again it was - you were so much in the hands of your Art Director. And also, I'll always remember, my greatest regret was that I never had the opportunity to do a show with Ella Fitzgerald, because she's always been my favourite vocalist. I

can remember seeing her once in a show, and she had a beautiful floral dress, but the background was floral as well. And I thought, "This is ridiculous." She should have been in front of a plain - you know. Which is simple, especially in colour you see. The dress sort of faded into the background. Things like that - And again, your Set Designer's so important. And I used to believe in really thorough conferences with people like that. Even on a chat show I'd make sure that the women coming in, I used to say, "What sort of dress are you going to wear, dear?" So that - It's not just sitting up there and telling people what to do, it's cooperation all around.

Rodney Giesler: Were you aware, I mean looking at all your credits going through from 1960 right up to - what was it, six years later?

Dicky Leeman: I retired in '76.

Rodney Giesler: Yes.

Dicky Leeman: But I was on - the shows I had to do towards the end, I guess they thought I was getting a bit long in tooth, so I'd do things like Bridge for Beginners, and Improve Your - Getting Your Money's Worth. They were important shows, but they weren't the sort of - they wouldn't be the type of shows that would cause me a great deal of stress.

Rodney Giesler: Tell me a bit about the Christmas Day broadcasts you did.

Dicky Leeman: Well I did about six of those, every Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve we used to start with a band call, or orchestra call, because there was always a big orchestra on those days, not only brass but fiddles and so on. And we'd have, again, the usual nine 'til twelve orchestra rehearsal. Then we would start rehearsing with a rehearsal pianist, and we'd rehearse on Christmas Eve again until about ten-thirty at night. Then we'd come in - by then, because of my organisation and my staff, people who worked for me, my camera script didn't have to be altered very much. I'd make quite sure - in other words it's better to have something simple and right and good than something complicated that doesn't quite work out. I always worked on that theory. My theory has always been, in television, which means I wouldn't be a success today I'm sure - is the fact that I always used to keep in my mind that the viewer at home must see, hear and understand what's going on. And we'd rehearse until about ten, ten-thirty, and then I, by now, would come on on Christmas Day morning, we'd come in at nine o'clock and we'd do a run-through of the show in costume and finish at twelve. And then the whole of the staff, the technicians, the stage crew and all the artists would sit down to a Christmas lunch with a bottle of wine between so many, provided by the company for Christmas Day. And we'd go on the air for instance, if the Queen was due to come on at three o'clock, we had no commercials, so we did a fifty-five minute show programme non-stop, live. And we would fade just in time for somebody to introduce the Queen. And I always used to end up with 'White Christmas'. You've got to give them schmaltz you see. But I'll always remember, for instance when I had a lovely Australian singer that's just retired not so long ago - not Joan Hammond, the one after...

Rodney Giesler: Joan Sutherland.

Dicky Leeman: Joan Sutherland. I said, to Joan - everyone that came on - we were doing one, this particular year we were doing a Commonwealth series you see. I had Emile Ford, who sang his latest recording, then did a typical West Indian calypso you see. So I said to Joan, "Joan, what would you like to sing as a typical Australian song?" So she said, "There's only one thing Dicky - 'Waltzing Matilda'." So I thought, "Oh if she wants to sing it - good luck." [laughs] But she absolutely shattered us when she rehearsed it. Because she sang it through once, and it went up a whole octave for the second. And even the band applauded, it was really quite incredible. It was fun. And on that particular one I had Lynne Seymour who was a prima ballerina in the Royal Ballet, from Canada. It was that sort of type of programme. It was fun. And I always had this marvellous backing group - The Mike Sammes Singers, they were great. And as a treat I always used to put them in vision on Christmas Day, the same as when I had Cliff Richard, I had The Shadows in vision as well.

Rodney Giesler: Did you pioneer them being in vision? Because The Shadows came out of the shadows didn't they on...?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes. I did. And actually I did a - with them only. I did a live show with them, The Shadows, and I started with them arriving at the studio, there was a camera out in the entrance hall, they came in big white Rolls Royce. And they came out, signed in at reception, and I tracked them right down the big wide corridor at Elstree, into the big studio, and panned down onto the floor, and there was a cut out showing The Shadows, was in the shadow. And at that particular time Cliff was making a film at Elstree. So I got hold of his manager, who I knew very well. I said, "Any chance of Cliff..." (I told him what I was doing with The Shadows) "...any chance of Cliff coming over and just doing a brief appearance?" He said, "Yes, sure. He'll be finished about six o'clock." So he came over to the studio and I told him what I wanted to do, and we had him, when we went into commercial, he came on with a tea trolley, dressed as a canteen bloke, "Here you are lads. Tea break." And that's all he did. Do you know the phone calls I got the next day? "Why didn't I tell everybody that Cliff Richard was appearing?" The whole point was that he wasn't supposed to be announced [laughs]. But that is the audience reaction. I remember doing a panel game where - it was one of these games where you give the panel a clue and they have to guess what the word is. And the clue was "last thing at night" and the answer was "put the cat out". The letter's I got - how dare I treat animals - that sort of thing. You have to be very... You see, in my day we were always brought up not to offend even one viewer. "Don't offend one viewer". Which has changed, hasn't it, since? These days...

Rodney Giesler: I think offence is a selling point now.

Dicky Leeman: It is, isn't it? [laughs]

Rodney Giesler: The more people you can get irate, the more people will tune in.

Dicky Leeman: Exactly, yes. I won't mention the well-known film star that's been in trouble lately [laughs].

Rodney Giesler: Oh yes!

Dicky Leeman: Made a lot of difference to his money hasn't it?

Rodney Giesler: I know, I know. [long pause - Break in recording]

Dicky Leeman: Right, here we go. Right...

Rodney Giesler: Jimmy Tarbuck.

Dicky Leeman: I used to do a - it was a sort of break from the Sunday Night at the Palladium. In the summer we used to do Jimmy Tarbuck from the Prince of Wales. He is a great personality, and it was great. And one night we had Alan King, the stand-up person. He really is terrific. He just talks normal like. When he goes home from a day in the office and he gets into his house and his wife says from a distance, "Is that you dear?" He says, "Well who do you think it would be?" [laughs] That sort of, quite simple gags. But very good. And I always remember we had dear old - the boxer -

Rodney Giesler: [indecipherable]

Dicky Leeman: No, Henry Cooper.

Rodney Giesler: Oh Henry Cooper, yes.

Dicky Leeman: Before he was fighting, I think it was Muhammad Ali. And the reception he got was absolutely incredible, really was. It got you completely. And we had an American comic on, he said, "It's amazing how popular this guy is." I said, "Well there you are." Of course he didn't win!

Rodney Giesler: Going back, and we're talking about comedy now. I was very interested to hear your time at What's My Line and the BBC thinking that people shouldn't laugh on Sunday nights and that sort of thing.

Dicky Leeman: Yes.

Rodney Giesler: I was a child during the War, and I was totally hooked on ITMA, which I think half the population were. And ITMA seemed to be the prototype of a great, rich series of radio comedies. All the northern music hall comics.

Dicky Leeman: And also things like Round The Horn.

Rodney Giesler: Round the Horn, Up the Pole - Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss.

Dicky Leeman: Much Binding in the Marsh.

Rodney Giesler: Eric Barker's Merry-Go-Round.

Dicky Leeman: And I did a - interesting talking about Eric Barker, because when I was a Floor Manager at the BBC, I was the Floor Manager for a series of his, which Graham Muir produced. And he used to write a part in for me every week as a Floor Manager. He always wrote me into it, which was fun. I loved doing it, being an old pro and a real old ham. But of course today you'd have to get an actor to do it. But it was fun. Things were different in those days. No doubt, I think from the union point of things, things have improved considerably. And they need to be, especially from my film days.

Rodney Giesler: But you also worked with Jimmy Jewel and Ben Warriss?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. It was a scrapbook, called Jimmy Jewel Scrapbook. That was great, they were two great performers. And no trouble at all. I always found that the older, more experienced performers were the ones that were always on time. I can remember, if I can just revert to Sunday Night at the Palladium, which Albert produced and I directed. We had The Rolling Stones on. And despite Albert and I going to have lunch with their manager, I think it was a fellow called Andrew Oldham at the time. And I explained to him what the procedure was on Sunday. Remember the programme was going out live at eight o'clock. They never turned up for rehearsal. Eventually came to the studio at six o'clock, so my camera, I had to just do it off the cuff when they did come on. And they made a big thing about not going on the circular roundabout at the end, so they got a lot of publicity for that. The following week I had Max Bygraves topping the bill. And this is the difference between the professional. Max, that week was playing in, until Saturday night, in a nightclub in Manchester. And he didn't finish until two in the morning. So I went up to see him during the week, and he said, "Well look Dicky, I don't finish until two." So I said, "All right Max. We'll do your band call very last of all. And you come in when you feel you're ready." So we're rehearsing band call, and my Floor Manager Jim Smith comes over to me, and says, "Max is here Dicky." This was eleven o'clock in the morning. "He says he's ready for you whenever you want him." I thought, "Well what a difference between..." He knew it was his job. Not my fault that he's playing at a nightclub in Manchester, because he accepted that job and he accepted Sunday Night at the Palladium, so he knew it was his job to be there.

Rodney Giesler: Isn't this a sort of image thing now, that your modern groups have got to be unconventional?

Dicky Leeman: I think so, yes.

Rodney Giesler: Because their kids won't like them otherwise.

Dicky Leeman: You see, again I keep saying to people, "Don't forget audiences have changed." It seems - in my day, the sort of singer - the Joan Regans and the Ann Sheltons and the Alma Cogans, Vera Lynns, all liked to look nice when they were on the screen. And women would take an interest in the clothes they were wearing. I mean if you watch the news here, if you've got any women present, they say, "What's she done to her hair?" don't they, when they might be reading the most important news! And this is what you have to keep in - I had to keep in mind all the time. And that's where my wife was such a help to me. She would advise me. I've got wardrobe and costume people there, but often Jenna would give me a little tip about...

Rodney Giesler: Towards the end of your time in television, you were moving into series on bridge and things like that. Was the nature of comedy changing?

Dicky Leeman: Yes I think so. Good producers and directors like Colin Clews, who'd been a cameraman with us both at the BBC and in the early days of - they took over the sort of things that I was doing, like Morecambe and Wise, or you know. It was because they were younger, it was the younger approach you see. And I think in a way it was the policy at ATV as we were then, to ease you off as you came up towards retirement, which was a bit frustrating at times. And you think, "Well I could have done that."

Rodney Giesler: Well I suppose in many ways, you were in step with the audiences to which you to which you - in real life.

Dicky Leeman: Yes.

Rodney Giesler: And as the audience aged, the people supplying the material were aging too.

Dicky Leeman: Exactly. You see also I always felt that when you were behind the camera, as I was, you are more in contact with the ordinary public because you can go into a pub where you're not known, they don't know who you are or that you're a Producer, and you can listen and hear things. I even now, when I'm in the supermarket with my wife, I can hear people talking about TV programmes and things. And this is what I did, particularly when I was doing audience participation shows, because they were my public, they were the ones that mattered, especially in independent, commercial television. They are the ones that are paying my pension now. And everybody has their own opinion. You can't...

Rodney Giesler: Yet you were the person who was concerned about genuine audience loyalty.

Dicky Leeman: Yes.

Rodney Giesler: I mean you talk to the advertising profession - as long as the set's switched on at a certain time, they're happy. That gives them the ratings. But there's no proof that they're actually taking in the programme or enjoying it.

Dicky Leeman: Well you see, if you sat here with me watching, when an advert comes on, I turn round to my wife and say, "What are they advertising?" And then you suddenly find it's a Peugeot or something. In those days the commercial was the pack, that was the most important thing was the cornflakes or whatever. And it always invariably finished with a close-up of the pack, not some glamorous girl.

Rodney Giesler: What are your feelings about the absolute proliferation of channels now, and satellite programmes and so on?

Dicky Leeman: Well, it's going to be tough I think on sportsmen unless they can afford satellite and Sky and things like that. As a Rugby Union fan I can see - the sad news I got yesterday was that Rob Andrew, our fly-half, has gone to Newcastle you see. He's been paid a load of money to

be their director. He's our fly-half who played for England, you know. And funnily enough, when I went to get the paper this morning I was thinking, "Well I can see top rugby, Wasps are one of the top rugby sides in the country, is going to be a selection of clubs that can afford to stay up there by being able to pay players." And it'll be two or three clubs from Wales, two or three from England, two or three from Scotland and maybe the odd one or two from Ireland. And that will be the British rugby, and nobody else will be there you see. Bognor run four teams at the moment, they won't be able to afford to pay it. And is it going to be a super-Europe league you see, with maybe France coming in? But the thing I used to love about rugger was you see, I could go and watch Wasps play Bath and there'd be four or five, six internationals between the two sides, and I could go in the bar afterwards and have a drink with them. But you can't in professional sport can you? And a thing that interests me too is I notice that since our athletes have become wealthy now with their running and their jumping, they're more prone to injury aren't they? They suddenly can't turn up because they're injured. Is Rugby Union - ? I suppose it will. Anyway, we're getting off the subject aren't we. [Break in recording]

Rodney Giesler: Let's go back to your film days for a minute Dicky.

Dicky Leeman: Right.

Rodney Giesler: You were telling me about recruiting crowd artists and so on.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. And I can remember people like Terry Thomas, who I've subsequently directed in a film called Date With a Dream. Used to pay him a guinea. And people like, I think it was Michael - the well-known family, Vanessa Redgrave's family - Michael Redgrave. He was understudying Rex Harrison, or he was standing in for Rex Harrison. And David Niven was another one. Errol Flynn, doing crowd work.

Rodney Giesler: This was all in the '30s, was it?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. And they were glad of it. We used to pay them thirty shillings for evening dress. And they were smart looking as you can imagine, if you were doing an embassy ball or a Savoy Hotel ballroom scene, you know. And they were glad of the work some of them.

Rodney Giesler: How did you come to direct this film with Terry Thomas?

Dicky Leeman: Well Bob Baker and Monty Berman had formed this Tempean Film Company. And I was going to go in as a co-director of the company, but my money didn't come out as I hoped by the time we started the film. So they still let me direct it you see. And that was the formation of Tempean Films, who subsequently did a well known series, Bob Baker and Monty Berman.

Rodney Giesler: Was that The Persuaders?

Dicky Leeman: Er - it was a very popular, one of these well-known series on - as a film, but was shown a lot on TV. That was the start of Tempean Films. Regretfully I was unable to keep up with it from the financial side, so I had to drop out. But we had Terry Thomas in it, and Vic

Lewis and his orchestra, who subsequently became a manager, you know. And in fact at one time he owned all the Beatles' music. Then he sold it.

Rodney Giesler: Working with Terry Thomas was fun?

Dicky Leeman: Oh he was great, yes. He was a great personal friend of mine. And he was always good fun. And if my wife ever went on a film in the crowd, and he was on it, he'd always come up and say, "How's Dicky today?" We were great friends. [Break in recording]

Rodney Giesler: You were talking about Terry Thomas.

Dicky Leeman: Oh yes. He was a great personal friend of mine. Another one who also became a great friend of mine was Peter Sellers, who I had him on this whole series with Dickie Valentine that I did at ATV in the early days. And he was wonderful to work with, absolute genius to my mind. I can remember him singing 'The September Song', dressed as a mate. And it really wrenched your heart out. And we had another wonderful sketch with him at the rehearsal. We had the Horseguards Parade, you know. And you know, usually one guardsman faints you see, and on comes the St John's Ambulance. Well we did it the other way you see. And at the rehearsal - we had all the St John's Ambulance on parade, and the guy faints and on comes the guardsman to take him off you see [laughs]. That's all the gag was. But at the rehearsal Peter was doing the commentary, and he did the Queen's voice, and in the end I sort of referred to the high authorities, and they said, "Well no, you'd better not use the Queen's voice." He did Churchill or something like that. It was brilliant. But it was live, it's not been recorded, it's gone.

Rodney Giesler: This of course was pre-Goon I suppose wasn't it?

Dicky Leeman: It was after The Goons.

Rodney Giesler: Was it?

Dicky Leeman: Oh. It was after The Goons. We used the name Fred a lot, which the Goons used, Fred. And Peter told me that when they were unknown as it were, and they were out on tour, he said in most places there was Harry, him, Mike and the rest of them, Ray Ellington and all that. He said, "We used to go to places like The Empire, York and die a death. They couldn't understand our comedy." He said, "But every time we walked into a theatre for a Monday rehearsal at the new theatre, we'd always call out Fred and somebody would always answer." But he said, "At York we went on and said 'Fred' and a voice from the flies said, 'He's on holiday this week.'" [laughs] And you always notice Harry, he always talks about Fred. I mean last time I saw Harry was years ago.

Rodney Giesler: Who, Harry Secombe?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. And I've never done a show with him, but I'd gone somewhere and he was there, at a rehearsal somewhere. And he said, "Hi, it's old Fred Leeman. Ah." [laughs] I think they called people they liked Fred, you know.

Rodney Giesler: This was before Peter Sellers got complicated was it?

Dicky Leeman: Oh absolutely.

Rodney Giesler: You know his home movies - you may have seen them.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. He was so immersed in the work, and the job. We used to have really great performers. He did a wonderful sketch, I think it was with Nyree Dawn Porter as Empress Josephine, and him as Napoleon. And it ends up by him wanting to go to sleep. It was all Johnny Speight you see. Oh we had some terrific shows. And I just feel sad that we weren't able to record them you know.

Rodney Giesler: What is even sadder were the ones that were recorded and the recordings were junked.

Dicky Leeman: Yes, exactly, yes. But that's life isn't it? But a lot of people today are unaware that these things happened. You see, I think I told you that I taught for nearly fifteen years at Chichester College, I taught television production. And I resigned when I was eighty because I felt I wasn't au fait enough with the modern technique. And also I began to realise, when I start talking, unless I was talking to students about somebody like Peter, a lot of people they'd never heard of. But I noticed these students were primarily drama students. And yet I could talk to them about Carol Reed and they wouldn't know who I was talking about. Or David Lean, people like that. They might, some of them, have heard of Hitchcock. And I thought, "Well how do these people expect to...?" Over the years there were about four, over the fifteen years, that I would say had got a chance to get somewhere in the business. But first of all as you know, they've got to get in the Union. I believe there is a way of entry now, you see. But they're so - I suppose it's localised if you know what I mean. If they're drama students, they're doing a play as part of their course, and they're a howling success in front of their own audience. But I used to say to them, "You go out and somebody's paying five, ten, fifteen, twenty pounds to see you perform, it's a different matter all together." I tried to instil in them a sense of showbusiness. And of course it just went above their heads. They weren't aware of it at all, they couldn't understand me half the time I think. I think they're probably better now because television and films have become more technical haven't they? And I'm glad to see now at Chichester they're doing courses on jazz and things like that, and pop music. I used to say to them, "There's so much work. You don't have to be in the pop group, but there's so much work surrounding pop groups, that you should have courses for this thing." Because there are plenty of good - especially on the recording side, you know. One bloke, I got him in touch with - there's an Association of Sound Recordists, to do with pop music. And I hope he's done well out if it. Because I said, "Look, contact these people. They'll tell you where to go." And if I'd had this book of Mickey Powell's, I'd have said, "Look, you've got to read this if you want to make it." Because he goes right from the early silent days.

Rodney Giesler: Going back to spontaneity and live broadcasts - it's a bit like great theatrical productions of the past, you know with Garrick or people like this. You just don't know what they were like.

Dicky Leeman: No.

Rodney Giesler: Now, you and I remember live broadcasts, and the electricity that came out of them.

Dicky Leeman: Yes.

Rodney Giesler: And yet if we're lucky, the only records we'll see are grotty old black and white films, taken directly off a 405-line monitor.

Dicky Leeman: Right.

Rodney Giesler: So that is the penalty really, that once videotape came in, there was no need to broadcast live, although you had the benefit of a perfect recording of the broadcast itself.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. But then you see there was the advantage of editing, isn't there? But one thing I've always wanted - well two things I regret - one, that I never worked with Ella Fitzgerald, and the other was, I'd have loved to have done an out-an-out comedy without an audience in the studio. Because sometimes they drive me mad. When you sit back here and you watch, and you can hear the dubbed applause and the dubbed laughter. And even I know, and even my wife who's not a technician, she says, "That awful laughter." I say, "Well it's dubbed." And I think it's terrible.

Rodney Giesler: But on the other hand, a lot of these variety programmes, you've done in front of audiences.

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes. But you see, performers, especially variety performers, are not at their best without an audience. They work to that audience, which is understandable. That's when the audience are good and you don't need to dub any sound effects on them.

Rodney Giesler: What you're talking about is a studio-bound production with no audience?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, exactly.

Rodney Giesler: And that you've got to somehow...

Dicky Leeman: And get the pace, the tempo. You see, what I tried to do with What's My Line is speed up. I changed the signature tune to a Ron Goodwin number. 'Jets...' something or other it was called. And it was fast, pacy to start off with you see. And then I kept - I used to say to Isobel and people, "Look, that's the pace we want, keep it going." And very often I would say to them on What's My Line, "Look, if within two or three questions you know, or have a good idea what the challenger's job is, if it's a good personality, don't get rid of him. In other words, make it a last minute sort of..." That is what I call production you see, which you can do on - Some of these games I see today, I really don't know what they're about. I just - it's just give away something isn't it? We used to give a certificate if somebody beat the panel. I think Patricia

Medina did when she was a celebrity. Nobody's ever heard of her now I don't suppose, have they?

Rodney Giesler: I remember her, but I'm old.

Dicky Leeman: [laughs] Well she came from a theatre family, a showbiz family, like Bonna Kellino. I remember once I had to, I was having a Saturday night spectacular, and Bonna was in it, and the star was Vic Damone. And Vic Damone arrived at the Savoy Hotel, he rang me up at Wood Green, because we were doing the show the next day, and we were rehearsing. And he said could I go down and see him? Well I hadn't got - for some reason, I think my car was being serviced or something. So Bonna Kellino said, "All right Dicky, I'll give you a lift to the Savoy." It was frightening. Of course you know he got killed in a crash eventually. But it was terrifying, this drive down from Wood Green to the Savoy in the Strand, really terrified me.

Rodney Giesler: He came over during the War and stayed didn't he?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. But he was one of a family, acrobatic, the Kellinos, they were acrobats. Chucked each other all round the stage, you know. He was a nice guy though to work with, very nice. Michael Balfour was - he also had a driving... He was with him I think when they went into this wall, you know they were playing in a show up in Liverpool I think, somewhere like that. The interesting thing was Kellino had a little boy you know, and he lived next door in Chiswick to Tommy Cooper. And Tommy had that boy educated you see. This is something you don't hear about. Guys don't - some of them don't like to let - you know.

Rodney Giesler: Let it be known.

Dicky Leeman: Hmmm. He was a wonderful bloke, Tommy.

Rodney Giesler: Because the profession looked after Terry Thomas as well didn't it towards the end?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes. Sad when you think of the money these guys have earned over the past. It shouldn't be, should it, really. It shouldn't be. I sometimes think what's going to happen to some of these footballers.

Rodney Giesler: Because they burn out a lot earlier.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. [Break in recording]

Rodney Giesler: Dicky, tell me of your time working with Maggie Lockwood at Ealing.

Dicky Leeman: Well I was playing the part of a pageboy in the court scene, with John Loder. And although she wasn't in that scene, Maggie happened to be in the studio that day. It was Lorna Doone, was the picture, which Victoria Hopper played the lead. And it was produced and directed by Basil Dean. And I had to stand at the portico as it were, entrance to the reception, where John Loder is going to meet the King. And I had to doff my cap to him. And I did actually

see it on screen a year or two ago, they put it out one afternoon, the film Lorna Doone. And Maggie was on the set, although she wasn't involved in that scene, because she played a country wench, quite a small part. And I really just fell for her right away. We never had any sexual aspect - I didn't - sexual aspirations towards her - but I was very fond of her and I used to like her as a performer. And when I became a Producer and Director, which was in the early days of the BBC, and then when I went into independent television, I always had, as a good luck token, a picture of Maggie Lockwood on the set - somewhere on one of my sets was always a picture of Maggie Lockwood. Even when I had, during a show with just a band, like Mantovani and his orchestra, or Jack Parnell's orchestra, it was usually on the piano or somewhere else - on one of the musicians' stands. I used to say, "Look do you mind? I've got to have this on the set." And of course I was very sad when she went because I was very fond of her. And she reminded me of the good old days of films.

Rodney Giesler: You had her on What's My Line?

Dicky Leeman: Yes I did indeed. I'll tell you an interesting story there. As you know, in those days we were doing it on Sunday. And we used to go on the air, I think it was about seven, seven-thirty in the evening. At midday Lady Barnett - Isobel's [NB Lady Isobel Barnett's] husband rang me up and said, "Dicky I'm awfully sorry, Isobel can't be at your show tonight. Her mother's died and she's gone off to Edinburgh to be with the family." He said, "I'm very sorry but you do understand?" I said, "Yes, sure that's all right." And I thought, "Now, what do I do? Right - Maggie Lockwood." So I got - managed to get Maggie on the telephone on a Sunday. And she said, "Yes Dicky, I'll come. But first of all I'll have to ask Herbert de Leer, my manager, if it's all right, just let him know that I'm going to be on your programme." And I'm sweating all the time while I'm rehearsing and all this. You know, "What happens if Maggie can't do it?" She rang back about an hour later and she said, "I can't get hold of Herbert, but I'll come and do it anyway." And that was the sort of relationship we had. And it was the old pro again. In those days everybody did what they could to help you. And you couldn't have done it without. She was a lovely person too - a sweetie. It was her - Ann Shelton I adored. She was such a good singer. And I felt that after the War there wasn't enough of what Ann had contributed towards the - helped the forces. And Alma of course I liked, was a great friend. And also little Dermot Kelly I liked. And another great little Irish actor - F.J. McDermott[?], who was in London Town. They were splendid. Wonderful people to work with, and just people, human people. And they loved their work, and there was an art to them. And I always feel very honoured that I've been able to work with people like that. Siobhan McKenna was another - it was on Daughter of Darkness where I became very friendly with her, particularly when we were on location and the Director found a site down in one of these coves in Cornwall. And the props and the stage hands had to build us a tubular stairway to get down. There was no way you could get onto this little beach without manufactured aid. And I used to go down with Siobhan, help her down, and stay down there the whole of the time. And sometimes she'd be the whole day until lunch time before we could get her up, and I'd stay with her. And we naturally became very friendly. And I'll always remember that she came to the Piccadilly Theatre to play the '[Play]boy of the Western World', I believe it's called, a famous play, where she played in it. And it was the first play I took my son Gary, who was then about eight or nine, that's all. And as a young man I was amazed how thrilled he was by her performance. She was married to an Irish actor, well-known actor.

Rodney Giesler: Dennis O'Dea.

Dicky Leeman: O'Dea, yes, something like that. Yes. They were interesting people you know. And I feel very proud that I - although people today have never heard of them probably - I was proud - they were just wonderful people to work with. I was always very fond of Arthur Haynes too. He was a good mate.

Rodney Giesler: They are - I don't say rare, but it's unusual to find people in that sphere of work who are genuine. I mean there are so many gushy, superficial, artificial people - insincere people.

Dicky Leeman: Well I think a lot of this I'm afraid is due to television. I think television makes stars of people that have not really had to work for it. Not that I'm decrying the younger generation, because we've got some brilliant performers, there's no doubt. And very often when I'm watching television today, nearly every show I see there's a new name to me. And I think, "Well that's a good performance." And they're unknown to me, but they're obviously known to people in the business. So it's not a question that they aren't around today, they are. But I suppose, if you're with people you've grown up with, although you may work with somebody for once, and never see them again ever, or even for years, they're like friends, and you've grown up with them. It's like the public - in my day they would talk to me about - I'd meet somebody in the street and they'd start talking to me about Sylvia, and they're talking about Sylvia Peters who was reading the news. They felt she came into their room, into their homes. And it was - they felt they knew them. I remember walking down Portland Street with Gilbert Harding, and there were some guys doing - with pneumatic drills, digging up the road. And one of them shouted to him, "Hi Gilbert! How are you?" And Gilbert said, "Get on with your work my man instead of wasting your time talking to me." That was his - you know [laughs]. He was - I don't know, I suppose Gilbert - in a way I suppose he enjoyed his fame, but he was a bit embarrassed about it. I always felt that Gilbert felt he was earning his money falsely, you know.

Rodney Giesler: How did he get into show business? He was a schoolteacher?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, he taught, I think it was at Tettenhall College near Wolverhampton, because my school used to play Tettenhall at rugger. And I can remember mentioning it to him, and he started to talk about it. I think his father was in charge of the workhouse or something, as they were called in those days. And Gilbert taught there. And then he went into journalism, and it's from journalism he got into sound radio. But he genuinely did feel that he was getting money under false pretences. Because, I mean, if he'd been around today, he would have either been unheard of or he'd be an enormous name. Things change over the years as you know.

Rodney Giesler: Did you have any desire later on, once you were in films and television, to go back to the theatre at all?

Dicky Leeman: I've always regretted that I didn't finish life as an actor. I've always wanted to be an actor. And in my day I was fine when I was young enough to play pageboys or office boys. But then the next step in the theatre world, and particularly in repertory, was that you became the handsome juvenile, the light leading man who made love to the girl, or if you were old enough, you became the old family retainer, which I did in rep you know. When I was in rep in

Wakefield, for instance, the Chantry Players - I was the Assistant Stage Manager and I played all the youths in it. But then I might play Harry, who comes on and says, "Anyone for tennis?" in a farce. The following week in a drama I'd probably be the old family retainer of sixty, and it was all done with makeup. But I used to study people as a kid, and I still do in - I mean very often in television I would put somebody on What's My Line when I would have the audacity to go up to somebody - in a Tube I saw a girl and I thought, "She's great." And I discovered, by sheer chance, she was secretary in an office at my solicitor's. So that was fine. So I went and proved I was genuine, wasn't after her, and I put her on. And I used to see people in the street, and I still do now. I say, "That's a personality." I can size people up automatically. I often - I mean there's one or two people I know living in Bognor, especially young people, who I thought, "They would be good on television. If only..." I'm not in a position to help them at all now. And I wasn't when I was teaching at Chichester, I really wasn't in a position to help people because I wasn't in the power of employing people, and therefore agents and people didn't require my services. And I'd often send somebody who I thought should be given a chance, and they would get nowhere. They would write to the people that I recommended them to, and they would get no answer. It was part of my deciding to - I mean I stopped teaching when I was eighty because I felt I was getting too old and wasn't au fait with modern techniques anyway. But it's people you see - television mattered with people, it mattered. Personally I would go for personalities first of all, because you usually find a good personality can be a good actor or actress.

Rodney Giesler: But this is something else about television and television personalities, that people identify more closely with them because they come into their own living rooms.

Dicky Leeman: Exactly, yes.

Rodney Giesler: So that if you see Gilbert Harding in the street, "Oh, he was round at my place last night."

Dicky Leeman: Exactly, exactly.

Rodney Giesler: Whereas a screen god, on a big screen, is totally remote from the audience.

Dicky Leeman: You see, when I talk to my wife, she tells me that when she was a young girl it was the Norma Shearers and the Joan Crawfords that she idolised and dressed like, like today the youngsters, they see the pop stars and they dress like them. Well Jenna my wife says that when she was a young girl, she saw Joan Crawford or Norma Shearer or somebody like that and said, "I like that dress." And she'd make it herself. And the Clark Gables were her sort of - but she had to go out to see them, she had to pay to see them.

Rodney Giesler: And there's still a remoteness with them.

Dicky Leeman: Absolutely.

Rodney Giesler: People imitate them. Whereas there is not that degree of imitation with television personalities.

Dicky Leeman: Well also Rodney, another interesting thing - in my day, any of your stars, whether they be film or theatre, never, ever, would open a political fete or anything like that. They didn't wish to be associated with any particular - Tory party. And they will tell you because, if they opened a Labour fete, no Conservative would vote for the party [laughs]. And they didn't want to be associated politically, or with religion you see. It was - And there was quite a prejudice in colour in those days. When I went out on tour in 'Grand Hotel', it was with the Mask Theatre Company, who did repertory. We eventually did repertory in Glasgow and Edinburgh. And we were on tour and we had the bartender in it was a black actor, elderly man, who played the bartender. And he came over to England with the original - Sam Henry was his name, a name I'll never forget - he came over to England with the original production of 'Floradora', in the chorus of it. And because he was black he always had to have a dressing room on his own. And two or three of us, I think on the tour there was only about three of us, four of us playing pages in it, whereas at the Adelphi there was six. And when I used to talk to a chap I used to say, "This is all wrong, Sam sitting up on his own." So we said, "If he doesn't mind, can't we share his dressing room?" Which we did. And this was my initial serious thought about colour prejudice. I couldn't see why, I mean the man was an actor. So what does it matter what his colour was, or his religion? I don't go around because somebody next door to me is Catholic or is Jewish, doesn't make any difference to me. And these things, when you're young, and if you have any sort of decency in you, they must affect you. And I've always felt anything like that is just revolting. Please God they're getting over it and they're getting - you know. I mean I'm glad to see now on television, that you get black actors in parts, not because they're black but because they're right for the part. I think, "So, why not?"

Rodney Giesler: Of course one forgets the feeling of the time. I can't remember the '30s very clearly at all because I was a very small child, but we were talking about political correctness earlier on, and you being made up as a Chinese person. I almost said Chinaman - you can't talk about Chinamen now.

Dicky Leeman: No, no.

Rodney Giesler: The vocabulary's changed.

Dicky Leeman: Well I often wonder, you may be able to tell me this Rodney, is when the Lighting Director says, "Move that nigger to a certain..." We used to have these black things which were called...

Rodney Giesler: Oh now you don't.

Dicky Leeman: No idea, I don't suppose so. I often wonder. But when that was said on the set, if you had a black actor nobody took any offence at it, that was what it was called and that was it. It was only called that because it was a blackboard, you know. But sometimes maybe it goes a bit too far. I don't know. I think probably it...

Rodney Giesler: No, I think one's sensitivity is sharpened now.

Dicky Leeman: Probably, yes.

Rodney Giesler: I find people of older generations - I mean I remember interviewing one, and he was on camera, and the material was going to be used, and he said, "The only nigger in the woodpile was..." I said, "Cut it. Re-phrase that - fly in the ointment, please."

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes, yes.

Rodney Giesler: It slips out.

Dicky Leeman: It does, yes.

Rodney Giesler: With that generation.

Dicky Leeman: But no offence is meant, none at all. But I can understand, with the prejudice that there is about, it can be resented by people because there is still a lot of prejudice, there's no doubt about it. And yet all our best athletes are usually black people aren't they? Especially the sprinters. And good luck to them.

Rodney Giesler: You mentioned that time when you were shooting and they thought it was Ellen Wilkinson and the Jarrow marchers coming down. Were you aware at the time of political unrest, in the '30s?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes, yes. But there didn't seem to be the sort of violence that you get to day with some of those demonstrations. They all seemed to me remarkably well-behaved. And they were skilled men, and hungry. And families hungry. And I felt a great respect for them. I never have been very politically minded you see. But it did make an impression on me as a young man. And of course, when George Elvin came round, I couldn't wait to sort of - But I'm not a politician in any way, you know. And I was bred up with the idea that the show must go on, whatever happens. This is with the old theatre training you see.

Rodney Giesler: That's it. You never worked in drama, so you never really had any sort of things, what they call political commitment to your work or anything like that?

Dicky Leeman: No.

Rodney Giesler: You were entertaining people, you were making people laugh.

Dicky Leeman: Yes, well what drama I did do was in rep you see. And it was because in rep you played whatever you were cast as, and it's a different play every week.

Rodney Giesler: Were there any other people with whom you worked, who impressed you, and who you remember clearly and with affection?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, well Eric and Ernie of course. There was a little comedian I was very fond of. He was very like one of the older comedians. He used to be in the Arthur Haynes shows. It wasn't Dermot Kelly, it was before him. Sadly I can't remember his name for the moment. But he

was a - [brushes the microphone] sorry, I apologise, it's old age you see - modern technique, I'm not used to it -

Rodney Giesler: It's a very sensitive machine - you scratch your shirt near it.

Dicky Leeman: I know, yes. I apologise, I'm sorry. I'm used to the old boom coming in. "Keep that so-and-so boom out of picture" [laughs]. I often wonder today, when I see a shot and you suddenly see a glimpse of the cameraman, which is meant to be - in my day it was an absolute crime, but you got paid for it. Or if a Floor Manager was seen dodging under the camera, you know. But today it doesn't matter I suppose. Or do they? I presume they get paid for it - do they? If the Director wants that set-up? You sometimes get it on Countdown for instance, they pan - which is one of the programmes I enjoy at teatime.

Rodney Giesler: What, you mean paid for appearing on camera?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes. You had to be paid by - ACT said.

Rodney Giesler: I don't know. If you accidentally appear.

Dicky Leeman: Well it usually was in our day, accidental, because you played hell to try to keep out of picture, you know. But I didn't get paid for my appearances with the comedian who used to write a part in for me each week. I didn't get paid for that.

Rodney Giesler: Did you ever - you were talking about Morecambe and Wise - was Eddie Braben about at that time, or was he later?

Dicky Leeman: No, no. Johnny Speight had a partner, whose name I regret I can't remember, who immigrated to Australia soon after that period. And Johnny wrote - I sometimes wish there was more of Johnny Speight around to day.

Rodney Giesler: There's 'Til Death Do Us Part - there wasn't many followed up after that.

Dicky Leeman: No. Mind you, I suppose he feels - don't know, he doesn't want to write much.

Rodney Giesler: You were talking about Lew Grade previously.

Dicky Leeman: Hmm. Wonderful.

Rodney Giesler: But we haven't got that on tape.

Dicky Leeman: Oh.

Rodney Giesler: Just give me a few memories.

Dicky Leeman: Yes, he was a wonderful person. And I always felt that because of his work and his position, he wasn't seen at the studios more often. But I remember once I was rehearsing at

ATV, in the studio, we had our own rehearsal rooms there. And he came in, and very politely knocked on the door, and I said, "Come in Sir Lew," as he was. And he said, "Excuse me Dicky, may I just bring my friends in to have a look?" And he had a party of four or five people that he was having for lunch that day in the studio. And I said, "Yes, certainly Sir Lew." And then after a while he said, "Goodbye, thank you very much." And he went off. And when we broke for lunch I went down the back corridor, I was on my way to the canteen for lunch, and Lew was coming the other way. And he said, "What's this thing about Sir Lew?" he said, "You always called me Lew before." And I said, "Well, you'd got friends there." And another occasion - Lew, in those days used to go to Simpsons in the Strand for his - have his hair cut on Saturday mornings. And Jenna my wife, wanted one of those old-fashioned hat boxes. And a friend of mine at Simpsons said, "Yes, I've got one for you." And as I came, having picked up the hat box, I came out, and as I came out into Piccadilly, Lew stepped out of his Rolls Royce. So he looked at me and he said, "Hello Dicky." And he looked down at the box and said, "I suppose you got that reduced ten percent." [laughs] He was such a nice friendly person.

Rodney Giesler: We talked earlier on about budgets, and budgets are always a problem, you mustn't go over them and so on. But I would imagine working in an organisation headed by Lew Grade, with his commitment to showbiz, and his understanding of entertainment and audiences, you weren't short of funds if he felt that a programme had possibilities?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, you had to - if you wanted to do anything like that you had to get permission from Bill Ward or - You see there was a finance - on the board of directors, you had your finance director, and you also then had specific heads of department like Head of Drama, Head of Comedy, Head of Music and so on. [Break in recording] Then you had your heads of departments. And of course the supreme in the studio as far as we were concerned was Bill Ward. He was the Production Supervisor, Head of Productions, or whatever you like to call him. And it would be up to him no doubt, if you wanted anything extra. I mean the sort of thing he was useful for was, in an Arthur Haynes Show, we were recording a week ahead, if you understand. In other words the show went out on Saturday night, and that Saturday the show that went out had already been recorded - right? And we had rehearsed for the following Saturday, we'd started to work on the script you see, and rehearsing. And one of the actors rang me up and said, "Dicky, you remember that scene we're rehearsing about trouble with the dustbins at number ten Downing Street, which Johnny had written?" I said, "Yes. What about it?" He said, "There's a big newspaper article today about some problem with the dustbins at ten Downing Street." So we'd recorded fortunately the following Saturday's, so I got on to Bill Ward at home, it was a week Saturday you see. I said, "Bill, can I possible have next week's show put on tonight?" And I explained to him, he said, "Yes, sure." And he fixed it so I could. Or if I'd wanted to say, supposing somebody had rung me up and said, "Look, can I do your show?" and it might cost more money. Well I would have to take a chance on that and explain afterwards if it was immediate. If not, I would have to contact Bill, and he would either say yes or no. And one always went over on regular series where you had the same set. Because the first programme automatically, you had to have a set built, and it was going to be permanent, so you'd go well over budget for maybe the first two or three programmes. But a thing like What's My Line maybe went on for thirty-nine weeks. By the time you came to the last programme you were well under because the only cost was any repairs to the set and transport from the storeroom onto the studio floor, and the sort of tarting-up of it.

Rodney Giesler: You mentioned that you were earning the princely sum of fifteen pounds a week for producing that.

Dicky Leeman: No, that was at the BBC - What's My Line. Because the budget for What's My Line was about a hundred and fifty pounds. [RG laughs] And if I remember rightly, the panel got fifteen pounds each for the performance. Eamonn got twenty, and the celebrity got ten guineas I think it was.

Rodney Giesler: Plus the publicity.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. And the set was permanent, which was two flats and an archway. And it was always Maggie Lockwood's picture in the archway, used to drive the head of design mad. He thought it was all wrong to have a picture in that archway. But I wouldn't go, I said, "No, I'm going to have Maggie Lockwood's picture there, and that's it!" And it was just two flats with an arch joining the two. One flat behind the panel, and the other behind Eamonn and the...

Rodney Giesler: That was before the BBC's monopoly was broken, when you could get away with that sort of thing.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. That's what they paid. And we paid, naturally, all the contestants their transport and if some had to stay overnight in hotels, all that was paid for - came out of the budget. And all they got if they beat the panel, they got a certificate to say they'd beaten the panel.

Rodney Giesler: And did they - I mean how did you get them? How did you find them?

Dicky Leeman: Well, they used to apply. By the time I got the programme - Leslie Jackson made an initial success at producing, he did a wonderful job getting it - because the atmosphere against those sort of things was rather anti in the BBC, amongst the hierarchy you see. But Leslie made a success of it, and I took it over when it was rising high. And they used to apply, and I wouldn't have anybody on the programme unless I'd interviewed them myself. And as we were getting four hundred letters a day, and I think I told you earlier, various regional producers would have a look at several for me, and keep them down to about thirty, and I would go up to their region and interview people. I would only put them on - and I was looking for - in addition to strange and odd jobs, I liked to get an odd personality in as well, somebody that might do it. I mean, for instance, we had a very glamorous lady Police Constable, when it was unusually to have ladies in the Police. And it was when Robert Morley was on, and the first question he asked her is, "Is your job legal?" you see. And she's having already signed in as a Police Constable, which... And I always remember on occasion, I think it was one of the big classic races, two thousand guineas or the thousand guineas, we had then what was most unusual, we had a stable lad who was a lady. Very pretty girl. Somebody had told me about this very pretty girl who was looking after racehorses down at Epsom somewhere. So I got hold of her, saw her, she is extremely pretty. So she comes on, signs on as a stable lad, I can't remember whether they got what her job was or not - but after the challenge was over Eamonn said, "Well what's your job?" So she said, "I'm a stable lad." So he said, "Do you look after any...?" She said, "Yes, I'm looking after..." and she named the name of the horse she was looking after. And if I tell you, on that

Sunday night, the horse was sixty-six to one, by lunchtime on Monday it was down to eight to one. And the result of that to me was, that the Bishop of Willesdon or somewhere had written to the Director General of the BBC accusing me of encouraging gambling on my programme. Again Ronnie Warman[?] called me in. He said, "Well I've got to tick you off again. You'd like a sherry wouldn't you?" [laughs] Well, my excuse was, I said, "Look, every time you've got the boat race on, you ask John Snagge who he thinks is going to win, so I can't see... [laughs]

Rodney Giesler: Yes. It was a very strange apparatus. I mean, of course Reith was still alive then wasn't he?

Dicky Leeman: Yes, yes, yes.

Rodney Giesler: And the Reithian law...

Dicky Leeman: Was still there.

Rodney Giesler: ...was still there.

Dicky Leeman: Yes. Yes, I mean, when they started to do a bit more on light entertainment, there were people like Bill Lyon-Shaw and myself, who came from show business. And it was a sort of, "What are these chaps doing in their shirt sleeves? Why hasn't he got a suit on?" That was the atmosphere, you know. Because we would go into our offices like that. On the floor you understand, you can't wear a suit. It was bad enough if the Floor Manager put a dinner jacket on, you know.

Rodney Giesler: Yes.

Dicky Leeman: But they couldn't understand these strange guys walking around. And I'll always remember Bill Ward - We were doing, I think it was either Terry Thomas or Arthur Askey, and we were doing a Tolly Rothwell, Talbot Rothwell of the 'Carry On' series, he was writing the script. And Bill decided about five o'clock, again it was live and we were going on the air at eight or half-past seven, that he wanted a hand mirror you see. So I said, "Okay Bill, when we break I'll go round to the prop room." So we broke at half-past five, I go round to the prop room - it's locked. It's locked for the night, half-past five they finished you see. So I thought, "God, what do I do?" Then I remembered, I'd worked The Daughter of Darkness at Riverside Studios you see, and the Cavalcanti thing, both were done at Riverside. So I rang up the prop - I said, "Harry, this is Dick here. Have you got any hand mirrors?" He said, "Yes, plenty." I said, "Well do me a favour, order a cab, put half a dozen in, and I'll pay for the cab here. And I'll bring you the mirrors back tomorrow." And I showed Bill these half dozen, and he picked one, and I hung onto them, and I took them round. See, they weren't geared to live - although they were doing live programmes, wanting a prop after five was asking a bit much. You were supposed to know what you were doing. But probably Tolly or Bill had come up with a gag, or maybe Terry had.

Rodney Giesler: But another thing. I mean you're talking about the BBC not liking you working in shirt sleeves, but the thing that strikes me, when you look at production stills of a crew on the

floor, say in the '30s at Elstree, they're all in shirts and ties, even if they've got they're jackets off, they've still got ties on.

Dicky Leeman: Right, yes.

Rodney Giesler: In some of these Hollywood set-ups, they're all wearing hats aren't they?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. But you see, at the BBC, if when you were doing your non-studio days when you were in the offices, they couldn't understand why you weren't in a suit. I would put a suit on if I was going to meet somebody for a lunch somewhere. Naturally. But we weren't used to working in - you know. And people like Bill Lyon-Shaw, was a real pro, he worked for Jack Payne for donkey's years, you know.

Rodney Giesler: You crossed over into ITV as soon as ITV started did you?

Dicky Leeman: Before it started.

Rodney Giesler: Before it started?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. I went over to C. J. Litel[?], to run their television department, and found that they weren't - he wasn't really interested, he never thought it would be a success. And one day, I think through Bill Ward, who had gone over to start up the technical side and the production side for Lew and Val. He got Harry Alan Towers, who was one of the directors of the company, to ring me up. And I went and saw, I think it was Bill I saw, I forget now. And I started, I handed in my resignation, which I think was a great relief to C.J. Litel[?], and I started there and then in the office in Kingsway, where they were re-building the building. And I had, luckily, Rita Gillespie - Bill wanted Rita Gillespie to join him as a Production Assistant, and apparently I've heard that Rita said she would come to join them providing she could work as my Production Assistant. And Rita nursed me through these hectic shows when were doing sometimes two shows a day. Three or four a week we were doing - non-stop. And I couldn't have done it without Rita.

Rodney Giesler: I ought to clarify that, because you obviously weren't around at the BBC to assess the impact of the competition.

Dicky Leeman: No, I wasn't, no.

Rodney Giesler: When ITV started.

Dicky Leeman: I don't think a lot of them thought it would last anyway. They thought that everybody would go broke, and which we nearly did at the beginning at one time.

Rodney Giesler: This was at ATV?

Dicky Leeman: Yes. [long pause - Break in recording]...or something like that, yes. I don't understand the technical side at all.

Rodney Giesler: No.

Dicky Leeman: And I don't believe in handling things you know nothing about, particularly when I was in the studio, I wouldn't touch a thing because there was a guy paid to do it. Not that I think it's his job, but I wouldn't want to mess his job up by trying to...

Rodney Giesler: Well my understanding extends to this thing, which is an idiot's machine. But Dicky Leeman, I must say thank you very much for a lovely contribution.

Dicky Leeman: Thank you for coming.

Rodney Giesler: And one which will be treasured for many years to come.

Dicky Leeman: They'll say, "Who's he?" [laughs] "What's My Line? Golden Shot? - what are those?" [laughs].

[End of Interview]