

# Johnny Goodman (Production manager/Producer) 15/10/1927 - ?

by [admin](#) — last modified Jul 27, 2008 02:14 PM

**BIOGRAPHY:** Johnny Goodman was born in 1927 in Walthamstow. He entered the film industry as a page boy at the Gaumont-British Studios at Lime Grove (Shepherd's Bush) at the age of 14. Working his way through various departments at Gaumont and Gainsborough, he ended at in the camera department G-B Instructional working with Lewis Gilbert on documentary shorts such as Sailors Do Care (1944). When he was de-mobbed in 1951 he went briefly to America, but returned to work for Tempean Films with Monty Berman and Robert Baker. Goodman was production manager on several 'B' movies of the 1950s, as well as The Armchair Detective (1952, The Treasure of Monte Cristo (1961) and What A Carve Up! (1962). During the 1960s he worked briefly for Film Contracts (a producer of advertising films) and then for Sydney Samuelson's film logistics firm 'Sam Freight'. Goodman moved into television as an executive producer in the late 1960s and 1970s, working with Ward Thomas at Trident films on programmes such as Robin Hood and The Four Feathers and later with Jeremy Isaacs and Verity Lambert at Euston Films, making (for Thames Television) such well known series as Reilly: Ace of Spies (1983), The Sweeney (1975-78), Charlie Muffin (1979) and Minder (1979-94). Later he worked for HTV. He came out of retirement to produce the Maureen Lipman series About Face (1989) and was also involved in the documentary series The Best of British (1987), as well as doing research work for Samuelson at the British Film Commission. Goodman has been closely involved with BAFTA throughout much of his career, and he held the post of Chairman for a period during the 1980s. **SUMMARY:** In this interview Johnny Goodman talks extensively to Alan Sapper about his career in film and television, remembering many colleagues and productions. He gives good impressions of the atmosphere at Shepherds Bush, at Tempean and of the difficulties and uncertainty of television work, particularly at an executive level. (Lawrence Napper, BCHRP)

## BECTU History Project - Interview No. 388

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Interviewer: Alan Sapper

Interviewee: Johnny Goodman

Tape 1, Side 1

**Alan Sapper:** This is the BECTU History Project, the file number is 388, the interviewee is Johnny Goodman, and the interviewer is Alan Sapper. Manny Yospa recording....Well I'm interviewing Johnny Goodman. Johnny thanks very much for agreeing to be interviewed. Could

we start right at the beginning in saying something about your parents, your primary school, your post-school, and what you wanted to be when you were in your last years of whatever schooling you had.

**Johnny Goodman:** Well that's quite easy actually. My father, like many people of the Jewish faith came over as a very small baby from Russia with his parents. My mother's parents were from Holland, and they were living in the East End. I was born in Walthamstow on the 15th October 1927. My father seemed to be moving all the time from one place and one job to another. As a result I went to over twenty different schools. I think I was beaten up more times as the new boy than hot dinners! Finally during the war I was evacuated to Bedford and I came home at fourteen years old, on holiday, and had a terrible row with my father, because my final school report at that stage said, "His cheerfulness leads to talkativeness and consequent inattentiveness. He must work harder to make up his deficiency in maths." I was about twenty-three out of about twenty-five in class, and my father said, "You're an absolute cretin. You're never going to get anywhere in life! It's not like in my days where people could start at the bottom. You don't seem to have any talent or skill. You spend all your bloody time in the cinema instead of going to work! Why don't you go down to the local film studios tomorrow" - which was Lime Grove, Shepherd's Bush - "and see what chances there are for a young man? When you leave school in two or three year's time maybe there's something you can do in films, who knows?" So the following day, at fourteen years old, I went strolling down to Lime Grove, walked through the wrong door, went up to 'Pard' the commissionaire, and pulled his trouser leg and said, "Excuse me Sir, do you have any jobs?" And I was taken up to see a very young studio manager who as I recall was Albert Fennell, who was at that time quite young. He must have been medically unfit I guess because, obviously, by that time men of his age group would have been called-up, because the war was on. And Albert offered me a job as a pageboy. And I said, "Well, fine." Except I'd come through the door and seen these characters with these ridiculous pill-box hats and brass buttons, and I said, "There's no way am I going to wear one of those!" And they waived that because of the war on and Albert said, "If you want the job, fine." So I got to the nearest telephone and phoned my dad. I said, "Dad, I'm not going back to school, I've got a job." And I think he was so staggered by my initiative, and realised that any more money spent on my education was totally wasted, and so he agreed. So I started at fourteen years old as a pageboy in Lime Grove, Shepherd's Bush.

**Alan Sapper:** How much did you get?

**Johnny Goodman:** My wages were, as I recall, seventeen and six a week, about seventy-five pence a week. And after the first twelve months I started to agitate and spoke to - I can't remember his first name - Sewell. It might have been Brian Sewell, the man who was the head of...

**Alan Sapper:** Bernard?

**Johnny Goodman:** Vernon Sewell was it? - or Bernard? He was the head of the sound department in Shepherd's Bush, Lime Grove [NB. Actually, it is Brian Sewell (B.C.Sewell)]. And I persuaded him to give me a job, I was then fifteen. And so I was told, "Yes, we're going to put you in the sound department, in the sound maintenance department, but you've got to go to

Gainsborough over at Islington." Which is a horrible studio [chuckles] opposite the 'Sunbeam' tobacco factory - but obviously I was delighted to no longer be a pageboy. So I got as far within a month or so of winding cables and learning what an Avo meter was, then suddenly I was called down to see the studio manager and there I was given a terrible shock. Apparently the ACTT, the union, had found out that I was under sixteen years of age and there was some prohibition or some agreement that you wouldn't work in a technical department until you were over sixteen. I was told that I was going to have to come out. I was shattered by this because I was, "I'm not going back to being a pageboy!" So after a discussion they found out that A.W. Robinson, who was the studio accountant would take me into the accounts department. So I went back to Lime Grove into the accounts department. There I was fairly disruptive with another bloke called Peter Peek, flicking elastic bands round the place, and we were both given the sack - which I was terrified to tell my father. But at the tenth hour the staff got a petition up, "Save Johnny Goodman!" And Peter Peek got the sack and I stayed on! And after another - whatever it was - a year or nine months, I finally got a break into the cutting rooms with Gaumont-British Instructional, on the top floor of Lime Grove. And I made all the mistakes that you do when you're training to be an editor. Dropping the centre out of a roll of film and thinking all you've got to do is to rewind it, and ending up with the whole staff stretched down the corridor trying to straighten out a kinky film for a mile and a half!

**Alan Sapper:** [laughs]

**Johnny Goodman:** And all that went on and I realised that yet was not my forte. So agitated again and with great benevolence I was finally put into the camera department of Gaumont-British Instructional Films. And it was while I was down at Falmouth doing a little film called Sailors Do Care - it was one of those two-minute films where they used to go round with a moneybox in the cinema collecting for the Merchant Navy. And it was incredible because it was being directed by a young director called um - who directed the Bond films, um...?

**Manny Yospha:** Terry Fisher?

**Johnny Goodman:** No um - oh for goodness sake! A Jewish boy, fair sandy hair, recently directed Annie in America, he directed - Gilbert, Lewis Gilbert!

**Alan Sapper:** Oh yes!

**Johnny Goodman:** And Lewis Gilbert was the director, I remember the cameraman was a man called Jack Rose. Jimmy Allen, a friend of mine was the operator and I was the focus loader. And it was I was down in Falmouth - I'd previously by the way volunteered for the army, at seventeen I decided that I shouldn't wait for them to come for me, because of my particular faith and background I always wanted to say, "Nobody had to send for me, I went of my own accord." - I got my papers, so I then left the film unit and came back to London and went to Bobbington into the Armoured Corps and - I won't go into, you're not interested I'm sure in my army career. But I did get into forces broadcasting after the war ended. The war ended [chuckling] may I say two weeks after I got into uniform! I always said that Hitler knew I was coming! [AS laughs] And I became a disc jockey in Palestine and Egypt. Then when I came out of the army I tried to get back into the film business. It was difficult at the start. So I went into the fur trade, working

for my brother-in-law, for six months. And then G-BI took me back. Because under the government rules, when you came out of the army they technically...

**Alan Sapper:** You got your job back.

**Johnny Goodman:** ...had to take you back. But they didn't have to keep you. And I felt if I forced them to take me back they'd get rid of me at the best possible moment, so I gave them the option not to take me and then at a suitable time they took me back voluntarily. So I went into G-BI and worked as a trainee assistant director, which is obviously where I was destined to be, in production, because I am better with people than I am with equipment, or with technical stuff. And I persevered there for quite a while, did a lot of children's films, working with people like Jimmy Hill, the late James Hill and um - Don Chaffey who was an art director turned director. The cameraman was Jack Parker I remember, and Frank North - I was very sad to meet Frank many years later when I went into an ironmongers in Sloane Square and the man in the white coat that served me was Frank North. And when I was a young camera assistant we were in fear of this man, you know he was the doyen and it was one of the tragedies of our business as you know. And then in 1950 I decided that - I'd always been a great enthusiast for America. To me Hollywood was wonderful and I used to adore the whole aspect of America, so I decided to emigrate. And so at just under - I think I was just under, I was about twenty-one, I know I came out of the army just under twenty-one. I was about twenty-one and-a-half, twenty-two, when I emigrated to America.

**Alan Sapper:** And what year was that?

**Johnny Goodman:** That was um - well I came out of the army in '51, so it would have been about '52 I guess.

**Alan Sapper:** '52, yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** Yeah. And I got to America with delusions or elusions of getting into the film business. Of course I was a nobody in England and I was even less of anybody in New York City. So I did the traditional - I soda jerked on a subway station, then I got a job in the Hampshire House, which is a very exclusive apartment hotel, round the cigar and candy shop. And I had customers like Frank Sinatra and all these people, it was all very exciting. And then finally I got a job with Twentieth Century Fox, through contacts. I'd met, through introduction, Rene - I think it was Rene Wilson - an editor from England years ago, was living in America, and she introduced me to a man called Jean Oser who was a documentary director. And he said, "Don't listen to the Americans, they'll tell you that you can't do anything! I will help you." Cutting it short, he got me introductions and after six months I got into Twentieth Century Fox as a dialogue editor. I was working in the subtitle department. What it was, they would give us the script to the film, split it between three or four editors, we'd have to condense the dialogue down to the suitable number of words that still made sense and made it possible to transcribe it onto the screen. So I became a dialogue editor with Twentieth Century Fox. Which was okay, I think I was on forty dollars a week at that time, which was a step up from the thirty-seven I earned as a soda jerk! And then suddenly one day there was an impending strike. And I'd saved two or three hundred dollars, my whole world was this two or three hundred dollars. I was terribly homesick,

I missed my parents, I missed my best friend. And I thought, "Well I don't know, if there's going to be a strike and I'm going to be out of work, in a matter of weeks my savings will all be dissipated. If ever there was a time to cut loose and go back, maybe this is it." Now if I'd gone to California maybe I'd never have come home, because once I went to California many years later, it was a whole different ball game. But New York City was a big city, a tough city. I'd been a part-time supernumerary policeman, voluntarily, during the Korean War and tried to amuse myself how I could! [Chuckles] I cut loose and came back to England. When I came back here it was the usual story. I worked around on various - I think the first thing was a thing called The Armchair Detective with Ernest Dudley.

**Alan Sapper:** Ah yes.

**Johnny Goodman:** ...shot at Viking Studios. It must have cost at least one and sixpence to produce! Brendan Stafford was the cameraman.

**Alan Sapper:** Yes.

**Johnny Goodman:** I can't remember - Pat Kelly, the late Pat Kelly was the first assistant. In typical British ways they dispensed with the second assistant and just employed me as the third, so they cut out the middleman. So I did the work of the second for the money of the third! And then after that film I got an interview to work for two guys called Bob Baker and Monty Berman. I went down for an interview at Riverside Studios, Hammersmith. I can't think of - Jimmy, Jimmy Shingfield, a very funny character was the production manager. It was in the days of Jack Hanbury, who was a lovely man, charming man Jack Hanbury, I don't know if you remember Jack?

**Alan Sapper:** Yes, yes.

**Johnny Goodman:** A delightful man. And I was given a job as a third assistant director, working on one of their many 'B' movies. So I started working as a third assistant and eventually I went up to second assistant. And then finally one day I went in to see the two producers, Bob Baker and Monty Berman, and I said, "Look, if I couldn't do the first assistant jobs better than some of the guys that you employ, well I'll be bugged!" And they said, "Well fine, you never bothered to ask us, we didn't know. As long as you want to go on to second we'd have you." So they put me up to first and my first film was with a man called John - oh a very old-time director who's now well since gone, I can't remember his name now. [NB. Possibly John Gilling] But Riverside Studios again, and I started - Deadly Nightshade, the film? But I worked on a number of second features as a first assistant.

**Alan Sapper:** And what year was this?

**Johnny Goodman:** Well I came back from America towards the end of '52, so it would have been '53 I suppose, 1953.

**Alan Sapper:** Yeah, yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** And I started working for Tempean Films, which as I say was Bob Baker and Monty Berman. And I went through the various phases of working on various films as a first assistant. It was great fun, I met some nice people. I've still got a cutting by um...who wrote for Screen Inational? You know, um "So What Else is New?"?

**Alan Sapper:** Yes, um - I know the...

**Johnny Goodman:** You know the guy.

**Alan Sapper:** Yes.

**Johnny Goodman:** And I've got the cutting inside, it said, "Went down to Southall and met young twenty-three year old assistant director, Johnny Goodman. An enthusiast for film, the first person that gives this boy a film to direct will be glad they made the decision." [Laughs] You know, the usual nonsense from him! Anyway I went on being an assistant director for quite a while doing this, that and the other. I went abroad on various documentaries occasionally. And then finally I got my first break as a production manager on a film called The Treasure of Monte Cristo. It was going to be made up at Pinewood. I can't remember what year that would have been now, but it would have - I suppose coming up to the middle, late fifties. And it was going to be shot in Italy on location. Once again - it was incredible in those days - no location manager! And I went out as the production manager and Bob Baker and Monty Berman were real tartars. Well Bob wasn't so bad, but Monty - it was like you know when you're interrogated by the enemy, you have the nice bloke and the nasty bloke! Bob always played the nice bloke, who today is one of my closest friends in or out of the business, and Monty was always the hard man. One very amusing anecdote for you - we were in Italy on location and the Italians were every five minutes telling you it was another feast day and they wanted extra money. It drove me mad, and you know it was my first picture, I was very green. We were up on a mountain top one day and they came to me and they said, [JG does a cod Italian accent] "Ah tomorrow is the feast of Saint Theresa," or something "If we don't-a get the double money, we take all the equipment and we go back to Rome, we leave the production!" Of course I was petrified. I went to see Mr Berman who was - on that picture Bob Baker was producing and directing and Monty was producing and lighting. So I went to Monty and said, "Look Mr Berman I'm terribly sorry, we have a problem. The Italians have said that if we don't give them double money tomorrow they're going to go back to Rome and taking the equipment with them and I don't know what I should do." He looked at me very coldly and he said, "Call their bluff and if they go, you're fired!" [Laughter] Anyway I called their bluff and they didn't go so I wasn't fired! I had problems on that picture. It was in the days when the unions were - well very strong and the behaviour of some technicians I'm afraid did not impress me. I'm a very fair guy, I've never wanted to cheat anybody or give people a hard time but they made my life very difficult. Because conditions were a bit difficult, I had no location manager, I used to cut the sandwiches up on the beach, find the locations, look after the laundry, get the hotel rooms sorted out. And they started campaigning they didn't like the tea and they had big union meetings. And I had to import two tea urns from Pinewood because the quality of the tea didn't suit them. And it was a tough time. And it was very funny that the camera operator, Jimmy - oh he's a cameraman today - he's quite a nice chap. But he kept complaining that there wasn't enough potatoes or something. So I tried to explain to the Italians and we came to lunch one day and all they served up was great big,

huge bowls of potatoes! And he got me round the neck and threatened to hit me - the camera operator! So I had to fire him when we got back to England. But it was all a bit of a laugh! I got through that picture, and in the second picture I did was What a Carve Up! with Kenneth Connor and Sid James.

**Alan Sapper:** I never saw that.

**Johnny Goodman:** Well it was on television recently, it wasn't a bad little comedy. The original book was called 'The Ghoul', and we were asked to put suggestions in the box to begin with and so everything came in from 'There's no Ghoul like an Old Ghoul' and 'Ghoul's step in' and 'The Singing Ghoul' and God knows what! [AS chuckles] But it came out as - eventually it came out as What a Carve Up! With dear Shirley Eaton and a guest appearance by Adam Faith at the end. And that was the second film I did as a PM. I went through a period of doing - I worked for Film Contracts for a while. I worked for six months for the late um - who was the head of Film Contracts in Soho Square? It was a documentary company, practically next door to ACTT. I can't think of his name now, the guy that ran it... a grizzly old character. But I worked there for six months on commercials, working with people who are quite famous today, only I'd have to get a book out to remember all the names of the directors. And I did go through a period of some decline - I don't know - my children by then I suppose must have been, yes it was towards the late sixties, something around about the late sixties, when I was out of work for a while. I was called into see Michael Samuelson one day, and Michael said to me, "What are you up to Johnny?" I said, "Well not much, trying to do this, trying to do that, it's very difficult." He said, "How do you feel about being the managing director of Sam Freight?" I said, "Sam who?" He said, "Sam Freight." I said, "What's Sam Freight?" He said, "It's our air cargo company." I said, "I don't know anything about bloody air cargo!" He said, "Well we handle all the freight for the film business." I said, "I know nothing about it!" Anyway it turned out that a 4.2 Daimler Jag went with the job, and I thought about the money I was getting from the unemployment office and I thought, "Well maybe it's better than that!" So I took on this role of managing director of [chuckles] an air-freight company! It was total chaos and I didn't know what I was doing, I had to rely upon people. But I drove around in this big Jaguar. I was in fact home one night when Sydney Samuelson called, who was the boss man of the whole company. And he said to me that there was a bit unit coming in from South Africa - not South Africa that was banned - somewhere abroad, with a load of equipment and they had to be seen through. And this was late at night and I had no contact, I couldn't get hold of any of my staff. So I panicked and drove into the airport, rushed into the office, put the lights on, got all the files out, trying to find out how you bring stuff into the country. I mean I was the managing director! [Laughs] I don't know how you did it! I couldn't find a bloody thing! I was terrified. So I shot down to the arrivals and I got hold of quite a pretty customs officer, a girl, and I said, "Listen, you're never going to believe this but I am the managing director of Sam Freight and I don't know a bloody thing about the job. I've got a load of people coming with equipment tonight and I have no idea what I'm supposed to do." And she looked at me and she said, "Well, hmm. I'm not allowed to tell you that you've got to take Form 623 and I'm not allowed to tell you that you've got to fill in the first bit by saying so-and-so, so-and-so. And I'm not allowed..." and she told me all the things she wasn't allowed to tell me. And somehow I bluffed my way through and got the unit through with all the equipment, so I saved my skin. Anyway after about a year I got to a point where I was becoming

suicidal, I really felt that I'd rather work on a petrol pump than go down to the cargo terminal of Heathrow Airport. And it was while I was...

**Alan Sapper:** You mean there's nothing really creative or fulfilling about it.

**Johnny Goodman:** Nothing at all. And I will say it's like being in a sweet shop without any money. I was close to the film industry and meeting with film people, but I wasn't doing anything. And at that stage I rang an old friend of ours Alan Sapper - I got in touch with Brian Tesler who was the boss-man at the time of London Weekend Television. And I wrote him a sad saga of what was happening. And he sent me a note saying, as you always get, "We're in a state of total reassessment in television, there's no way a film-trained person like yourself would get a job in television. However I do have a little company I've started up called 'Euston Films' run by two bright men called George Taylor and Lloyd Shirley"...

**Alan Sapper:** [laughs]

**Johnny Goodman:** He said, "Why don't you drop them a line, I'll give you a good reference. Tell them how much you've enjoyed" - he said to me, "Tell them how much you enjoyed" - I hadn't seen any of their programmes! "...say how much you admire The Sweeney and how much you enjoy it all and maybe"... Anyway so I rang up and couldn't get George, he was on holiday. I spoke to this guy Lloyd Shirley who said, [JG imitates American accent] "Yeah Johnny, thanks very much, I'll take your name." Little did I know that - I'm jumping ahead now, but - a few years later I would be the boss of 'Euston Films', but that's another story. Anyway so I was getting depressed and that and then suddenly there's a problem at BAFTA. Now I had been on the BAFTA council for quite some time. I was a very impressionable guy. I mean I got on the BAFTA council and there's all these luminaries like you know - Attenborough and Aubrey Singer and very important people. I felt very, very humble and very, you know. But I was on the council there - it was a time when suddenly at this point of my depression, working at Sam Freight - when the director of the Academy the guy that was the paid running guy of the Academy had some problem which we won't go into... And suddenly the council approached me and said, "Would you consider becoming the caretaker director of BAFTA?" Or was it then - yes it was called BAFTA, yes. So I said, "Well yeah fine, it's got to be better than working for a freight company." So I asked Sydney if I could go and he was very good, because Sydney after all was [?indecipherable?] on the council of BAFTA for many years. So suddenly I was out of the airport and suddenly found myself traipsing up to town in the mornings, going into Simpsons for my coffee and toast, which was very splendid, and then to this office at BAFTA. The only problem was at that time that office had no windows, it's totally sealed and it was still a bit depressing.

**Alan Sapper:** Yes, you come up the stairs and turn right, yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** Yeah. Anyway I started to run it and I desperately tried to improve its image. I remember on American Independence Day I got hold of a copy of Yankee Doodle Dandy, I decked the place out with American flags, had the restaurant serve hamburgers and hot dogs, sold copies of Cagney's biography. I did try to give it a bit of spice, but it was very hard going. The Academy at that time was very, very difficult, we had no sponsors and it was very

difficult. Anyway I did that for three months and it was still preferable to being with freight. And about that time, just jumping back, there was a period about two years previously when I had co-produced a film with the late Andrew Mitchell called *The Best Pair of Legs in the Business* with Reg Varney. It was a pretty um...you look at it today and you think it was made in the days of W. G. Griffiths [sic] practically!

**Alan Sapper:** Yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** We made it for a combination of the late Leslie Grade's company, EMI and um - oh the boss of - he's now the chairman of Yorkshire - [G.E.] Ward Thomas, who was running Trident Films at the time - with Yorkshire. And I'd co-produced this film. So suddenly two years on I'm now at the Academy, and I'd written to Paul Fox amongst other people, saying, "If you've got any ways you can recommend, because any kind of a job, a permanent job working in films and television would be like winning the pools. Any kind of a job I would be grateful." Anyway, cutting it short I suddenly got a phone call one-day to go and see this guy called Ward Thomas. I didn't know who he was even, so I go traipsing down to this place behind Claridges. And I got out of the lift on a very impressive floor with all the potted plants and that. And I go in to see this man who's a very languid, laid-back sort of man, draped behind the desk. "Hello John," he said, "got your name. Setting up a company called Trident Films. Just wondered whether you'd be interested in being sort of executive in charge of production?" Well of course I practically had an erection! I was sort of so totally unbelievable this man was... I said, "Well it sounds very interesting." Trying not to leap up in the air! He said, "Well we'll start you off at ten thousand a year", which was pretty good money then, I'm going back to in the sixties. "Ten thousand a year, company car"...

**Alan Sapper:** That was good.

**Johnny Goodman:** Yeah, good money. "Company car" he said, "pension, thirty-seven hours, technically, a week. You dine every day in the executive dining room." Well I couldn't believe what he was saying. So I said, "Well it sounds fascinating, yes I'd like it." So I agreed to do this and I got to the phone and phoned my wife up, I said, "You're not going to believe this, you are not going to believe this!"

**Alan Sapper:** [Laughing] I can imagine!

**Johnny Goodman:** I said, "I've got a permanent job! Ten thousand a year, company car!" So I started at Trident. Now the thing was that he had every intention of making films for television and it could have been successful. Unfortunately here we go again with unions and with people's attitudes. Apparently what happened was - now this is interesting cause I understand that when he set the company up he spoke to the unions, including the general secretary of ACT, Alan Sapper. And when he told him Alan said, "Well who's running it?" And he said, "Johnny Goodman." "Fine" Alan said. "Terrific, no problem - delighted!" Alan said, "Fine, great" you know. But apparently, up in Yorkshire the shop said, "We don't give a bugger what the union says in London, there's no way you'll show a film on this station made by Yorkshire with London people." And so I was the head of a company where we couldn't make anything! In fact we made - I started - we made one pilot for Robin Hood for America, for a guy called Sandy Frank who's

like the guard of 'What Makes Sammy Run', he's unbelievable. And it was like twenty-seven minutes of 16mm]. We had little money so we used to name it 'Robin Hood and His Merry Man' [laughs] cause we didn't have many men! I think we had one arrow, we had to keep on retrieving all the time. And it was a pretty pathetic thing, it was laughed off the screen I believe. And they did make a remake of The Four Feathers which I got involved with - with um...it was the American producer Roman Nosemont as we called him, or Norman Rosemont is his real name. But I left before the film went into production. It was while I was...I was there about six or nine or months. You know one minute you're cold, one minute you can't get a job then suddenly I was taken on by Ward Thomas, then suddenly one day, I'd seen an ad. in Screen International that said, "Euston Films is looking for a production manager to run their company." And I knew Euston Films, it was the big company that made The Sweeney and that. And I thought, oh production manager? I'm now called Executive in Charge of Production, it wouldn't be my kind of thing - feeling slightly grand you see! [AS laughs] Anyway I got a phone call one day from...I think it was, yes it was I think from Verity Lambert. I'd never heard of her at all. But she'd been recommended...

**Alan Sapper:** Verity?

**Johnny Goodman:** Yeah, Verity was recommended by my friend Aida Young. They were looking for somebody to run Euston Films. They had the title wrong, it wasn't production manager, it was - call it what you like, in charge of production, executive, whatever you want to call it, but it wasn't production manager. And they said, "Would you be interested?" So I thought, "Well that sounds all right, I'll talk." So I agreed to meet this girl called Verity Lambert and some bloke called Jeremy Isaacs for a drink at The Whitehouse. So I got there and this taciturn Scot...[Phone rings - break in recording] So this Scot's sitting there, and then in comes this woman, trailing a sort of mink coat, with a fag dangling out of her mouth. And I'd never heard of either of them you know, I thought, "Weird couple of people." I sat down, had a couple of drinks with them, and Isaacs said, "Why would you consider leaving Trident and coming to us?" I said, "Well only because you seem to have a sense of direction, your company seems to know what they're doing," and so-and-so. And we talked and after about twenty minutes or so he said, "Well I suppose if we wanted you we'd have to make an offer wouldn't we?" I said, "Well I hadn't really thought about it." With that they got up and went. So I came home and I said to my wife, "Very weird people, this bird called Verity Lambert and some Jewish-Scottish gentleman called Jeremy Isaacs. I don't know, they're very strange people, I don't think I - I was very polite and perfectly - I wasn't arrogant. But I don't think I impressed them very much." And I left it at that. Then about two weeks later the phone went one night...

**Alan Sapper:** Two weeks?

**Johnny Goodman:** Something like that, week and-a-half, two weeks, and er, "Jeremy Isaacs here. Very much like you to join us Johnny, we'll offer you another two..." - well it was two thousand or something. And so I thought, "My God, maybe this is it!" So I went to see Ward Thomas, it's extraordinary you see, we weren't doing anything but he was quite miffed about it, quite miffed that I should want to leave. And he said, "Well we'll see how you get on there then" - attitude, you know. Anyway for about a week or two this incredible dialogue going on between

the chairman of Thames Television, who's dead now - was it Lord Barnett? The one before Lord Barnett, Howard Thomas!

**Alan Sapper:** Howard Thomas, yes.

**Johnny Goodman:** Howard Thomas I think, and Ward Thomas are discussing me! You know here am I, basically an assistant director and production manager who couldn't get arrested eighteen months before, and suddenly I'm the topic of conversation. So Ward Thomas agreed to release me and I went to Euston. The first day I arrived I thought I'd made a terrible mistake, because at least at Trident I had this incredible office owned by the head of - the late, not late, he's still around. The guy who used to be head of ITN News, Sir somebody or other.

**Alan Sapper:** Yes I know him, yes.

**Johnny Goodman:** A short man.

**Alan Sapper:** Neat.

**Johnny Goodman:** Yes a very nice man. Anyway I had this exotic office, didn't do anything, but I had a lovely office, with staff bringing me coffee and that! And suddenly there was this dreadful old broken down school, the old St Paul's School in Hammersmith, with water dripping down the walls and rats and everything else. And I thought, "I've made a bloomer here!" Anyway so I joined them and I think the first thing we did was The Sailor's Return with Tom Courtney - er, not with Tom Courtney, with Tom - oh um... Oh God, my mind goes. I'll think of it in a minute [NB Tom Bell]. But with him and Jack Gold directed it. And then after a while we went on to things like Charlie Muffin and all the other stuff that Euston made - wonderful company. And then after a while we got out of the building in Hammersmith because they were going to pull it down or something, or change it all. And I found the little office in Great Marlborough Street, next door, round the corner from the London Palladium, and we were in there for about six months or so. And then finally Thames got the lease on a building on the other side of the road to Thames Television in the Euston Road, a proper building with two floors. And we all had wonderful offices and selected our furniture, and we moved in there. Whereupon then at that time as I say I was called Executive in Charge of Production and I was there all together at Euston Films for ten years. It was a fairly successful time. I did clash with Linda Agran who was the creative head after Verity left.

**Alan Sapper:** Yes I know her.

**Johnny Goodman:** ...and the press picked it up. I've got a cutting inside in which it said, "Rumours are going around town about the rift between Linda Agran and Johnny Goodman." [Doorbell Rings - break in recording] And yes we had this rift and that. But I expected to be at Euston Films in fact until the day I retired. I adored it. We had a good product, I was proud of it, my life was absolutely set on a - nothing could go wrong. And people say, "What did go wrong?" And when I say my career was literally blighted by Dallas they say to me, "What do you mean, Dallas?" Well you may remember what happened was that the managing director of Thames at that time was Brian Cowgill.

**Alan Sapper:** Hmm.

**Johnny Goodman:** And I got on very well with Brian, [JG imitates Northern accent] he was a North Country, blunt bloke, used to play football for Blackburn Rovers. He'd say, "We'd do it my fucking way or we don't do it at all!" But I got on with him and he respected me, and I liked him cause I managed to get on with him. And nothing could have - you know I got love letters every few months from the board, from Muir Sutherland, from Lord Brabourne, saying "You're running it so well and your book-keeping and your house-keeping of Euston Films..." I was in seventh heaven, right? And then one day, as you know, what happened was that Brian Cowgill heard rumours that the BBC were having trouble in renewing their contract for Dallas with the Americans, the price was going up. So, without telling his own chairman apparently, or telling the other managing directors of ITV, he secretly tried to negotiate a deal where he could buy Dallas away from the BBC. Now in America you get the congressional medal of honour for stealing another show from somebody else, but in England what happened was that apparently Michael Grade rang Paul Fox one day from the BBC, Michael was at the BBC. He rang Paul Fox who was the senior doyen I think chairman at that time and said, "Is there..." He said, "No." Of course Paul wouldn't do a thing like that - he didn't know, and Paul was quite honest, he knew nothing about it, and neither did our own chairman at that time, whoever he was, Lord Barneston[?] or whoever it was. So of course when the news broke that Brian was negotiating, it hit the fan and Brian was forced to resign, which was unbelievable! He went out with a four hundred thousand pound pay-off and Muir Sutherland was paid off as well, he at that time was the director of programmes. And a very charming man, Richard Dunn - who'd been a director of production in Thames - was suddenly promoted to being the new managing director. Now he had a close friendship [chuckling] with John Hambley. I will not elaborate on this too much except to say that Mr Hambley and I are not exactly bosom pals. And Mr Hambley managed one way or the other to eventually achieve his ambition. Linda Agran went out first of all. I was told by John that, "Richard couldn't bear to loose you but he thinks she is going to have to go." So she went first. And then within a few months after that Mr Hambley was saying, "Well of course I've spoken to the company secretary and you are coming up to sixty..." and all that, so in no time of course I was ousted. So just before I was ousted a strange thing happened. I had bumped into a guy twice in BAFTA called Patrick Dromgoole. I didn't know who he was again, except he was in charge of production or programme director for HTV. And he introduced me to - he said, "Oh this is Johnny Goodman, best production..." all this nonsense. And then I met him one day at the Television Festival and he said, "Oh if ever you want a consultancy young man, you come and see me." He seemed to like me and he seemed a nice guy. So one day I picked up The Trade Press and saw that he was about to become the new managing director of HTV, this coincided with the moment when I was about to have to get out of Thames because they were making my life obviously difficult. In fairness, when I went I was given an incredible dinner with the whole board of Euston Films, Lord Brabourne, everybody was there. And they even let me go. I mean I had a forty thousand share option with Thames Television, it's most unusual if you leave, they allowed me to go with my share option intact. So they were very decent to me and I've got no bitterness.

**Alan Sapper:** No.

**Johnny Goodman:** But I wrote to this bloke, Dromgoole out of interest saying, "Congratulations, it sounds like a wonderful job," you know it was just a conciliatory thing. And I suddenly got this letter saying - well a phone call from the secretary saying, "Mr Dromgoole would like to have lunch with you at his club." [Chuckles] The other side of Oxford Circus where they all go - I can't think of its name - it's a crusty old man's club. So I had lunch with this guy and he said, "How are you getting on with John Hambley?" I said, "Oh not too bad, why?" He said, "Well I was hoping you'd say not at all well." I said, "Why do you say that?" "Well I'd very much like you to join us" he said. "We'll give you ten thousand a year more." And so I thought, "Well I'm having a tough time at Thames. As much as I love Euston Films, this seems to be another good point to leave." I mean fortunately all he kept saying was, "We need you very badly," and all the rest of it! And I thought, "Well it sounds fine." I hadn't got the nous I hadn't got the intelligence at the time to actually investigate precisely what he wanted me to do. You know I just thought, like any civilised company, he knew what I did at Euston, he wanted to rep - you know to...

**Alan Sapper:** Replicate that.

**Johnny Goodman:** ...replicate it. So I agreed to go with him, Thames were quite happy for me to part company, and gave me my shares, I went with a good name. And I arrived at Baker Street and basically for the best part of two and-a-half years he didn't ever really want to talk to me, [chuckles] he didn't want to listen to me, he didn't want to communicate with me very much at all. And there was a very strange kind of business going on at the time. We seemed to be involved with Americans on all kinds of productions, where I never met anybody or saw anybody but my name kept up cropping up on the screen as, 'Executive producers, Patrick Dromgoole and Johnny Goodman.' I can't - you know - Alan Sapper's probably aware of all the machinations that went on with the Levy situation where you didn't really put all the money in but because you got a relief from the government you bank rolled a thing in another way...

**Alan Sapper:** Yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** I know the background but it's not worth elaborating on. But I was there for - I had a contract that would run for three and-a-half years and at the end of two and-a-half years I was really very demoralised. The only good news was that as I joined HTV it coincided with the extraordinary situation of me becoming the chairman of BAFTA. Which was extraordinary because I'd been president of the Guild of Film Production Executives, which was a great honour, I picked up an award one year. And I'd been on the council of BAFTA for years. I can't remember how I came to be on the council, I can't remember how I...

**Alan Sapper:** Elected?

**Johnny Goodman:** Well elected but I can't remember why I stood. And over the years I held various offices, I was chairman of the Finance Committee, I was honorary treasurer, chairman of the Membership Committee, chairman of the Film Committee, vice-chairman - all these various offices. But I never, ever thought of standing for chairman, because to me they were all very sort of you know, gentleman of...

**Alan Sapper:** Yeah, yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** And then one day a certain personage who shall remain - well it doesn't matter actually, it was Sydney Samuelson, he said, "Why don't you throw your hat in the ring?" I said, "Sydney, there's no way." He said, "I'm telling you, have a go." So I threw my hat in the ring, standing against Richard Price and Kevin Billington. I came home and said to my wife, "I'm going to stand for chairman." She said, "Oh God no, it would be a nightmare! And the speeches you've got..." "Darling," I said, "no way can I get elected, I'm just not that kind of - I'm too light-hearted, I'm too jokey, I'm always bringing out the jokes." Well of course when the results came out, it was no walkover, but you can't be slightly pregnant, you either are or you're not! [AS chuckles] And I was chairman! And I came home and I said to her, "You're never going to believe who's the new chairman of BAFTA!"

**Alan Sapper:** [laughs]

**Johnny Goodman:** And it was an extraordinary thrill, and for two years it was the most exciting - as I say HTV was the nightmare but because I was not under pressure I could fulfil all my engagements. You know I went twice to the Oscars as a guest of the American Academy and was treated with great respect. I had dinner parties to which I invited the Commissioner of the Police, Lord Grade - it was an incredible time for an elementary schoolboy who left school at fourteen with no academic credibility to suddenly find himself shot up into this exalted position. But I never at any time had any nonsense about believing - you know I kept expecting somebody to feel my collar to say, "We've found you out", you know. But it was great fun and I had a good time. And then at the end of that time, at the end of two and-a-half years I was so disillusioned with HTV...

**Alan Sapper:** Can you tell us the year?

**Johnny Goodman:** Pardon?

**Alan Sapper:** After that?

**Johnny Goodman:** Yes, well HTV must have been about - hang on a second... I left Thames, Euston in about '87, so I went to HTV - about '86. '85, '86. It was around '86, '87 I went to HTV. So at the end of two and-a-half years I went down to see Dromgoole, and I said, "Patrick, it seems to me fairly clear that you don't like me very much and I clearly don't like you [chuckles] and I think we should part company. Because there's a year to go on my contract and if we can come to terms, if you can, you know, if I become redundant we can - I'm prepared to..." you know. So I left. I did have one very funny phone call before I left from a headhunter. He rang up and said, "It's Colonel so-and-so here. We've got your name. There's a very big job going as the managing director of one of the laboratories." Now, I happened to know which one it was cause I knew that Ray Dutfield was about to leave Technicolor.

**Alan Sapper:** Yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** It also happens that my cousin, or my second cousin is Michael Green who owns Carlton and I also knew he owned the laboratory, but he had nothing to do with it. But I got this phone call and I said, "Oh." He said, "Yes, very interested in you. Got your name, we're looking for a chap like you with all your experience and a youngish man..." I said, "Hang on a second, you just threw something into the equation. You used the expression 'youngish man'. Have you any idea how old I am?" He said, "Well not exactly Mr Goodman." I said, "Well I'm coming up to sixty." Or I was sixty-one, sixty-two. He said, "I'm terribly sorry dear boy, I had no idea." So that was the end of that! But there was a brief moment when I was in danger of becoming a managing director of a laboratory, which wasn't my scene! Anyway I parted company with Patrick and I thought, "Well that probably now is it." And I came home, and it was very difficult. I'd had ten years at Euston, I'd been chairman of BAFTA, I'd been senior executive producer for HTV, and suddenly I was now simply out of work. And I was sixty-two, three, four - I don't know, something like that. And it was certainly very, very difficult. You find that you wake up - the first few weeks you wake up in the early hours of the morning, you come down and you read a book and you don't know what's hit you really, it's extraordinary. The trouble with our business for people like myself is, I don't play bridge, I don't play golf, my whole life had been the business. And between BAFTA and working, with what little social time I had available, my wife and I could fill very easily with movies and friends. But suddenly having all that time was a nightmare. And I thought I'd actually come to the end of the line. And I was sitting at home one day about six months after I'd been out of work, so it must have been about - well I can work backwards. What are we now? We're now 1996 [under breath] '95, '94, '93, '92, '91 - it would be about '90, 1990, somewhere like 1991. I suddenly got a phone call from dear old Ted Charles. Now Ted Charles had worked as a producer-director for me at Euston and in fact after I'd left Trident he took my job at Trident with Ward Thomas and with Lord Brabourne - with Lord Brabourne's son - Norton Knatchbull, who's now Lord Romsey, who I employed as associate producer. And Ted's on the phone - by this time we were dining about once a month. He was now the um - he was whatever you call it - managing director of Central Films. Making Morse and all the programmes they made.

**Alan Sapper:** Yes.

**Johnny Goodman:** Then out of the blue he rings me up at home one day, I'd been out for six months, I'm - you know, trying to come to terms slowly with my life. And he says, "Johnny, look, we're doing another six part series, half-hour episodes with Maureen Lipman. If you want to produce it, the job's yours." It wasn't even - unbelievable!

**Alan Sapper:** Incredible.

**Johnny Goodman:** And that's what this is - I've got about five people that I'd staked my life on in this business], and he's one of them!

**Alan Sapper:** That's incredible.

**Johnny Goodman:** I've spent my life trying to help other people but very rare does it come back! [Chuckles] So I shoot up to Town and he said, "Yes," so-and-so. So I thought, "Oh God!"

And it was to produce it up at Nottingham Studios, and I'd been out for six months. He said, "There's only one problem, Maureen's got producer" what's the word? Producer, the right to...

**Alan Sapper:** Producer rights?

**Johnny Goodman:** Yes there's another word, yes - I always forget the word. They have a right to say whether... He said, "You'll have to meet her." I said, "Fine." Well of course I met Maureen Lipman for lunch at The Britannia Hotel, we swapped about two hundred Jewish jokes in half-an-hour and there was no question that Maureen was very happy for me to produce the show. So I went up to Nottingham and I produced *About Face*. It went very well, it came in well under budget, everybody was very happy, Ted was delighted, and I was obviously very pleased about it, it was another nine months work. And I came back to London, well that's it now, now I'm finished.

**Alan Sapper:** Was it very successful? As far as the audience were concerned?

**Johnny Goodman:** Well one of the problems was, as I went on the air we started the Gulf War against Saddam Hussein. I even had my credit cut off at times, at the end, the producer's credit, cause they brought in the early news and all this stuff. And it did average - it got about eight million, but by today's standards a half-hour show it's not bad, eight million's not bad. But they didn't go again. [Break in recording] Right, so having finished the show I then came home and thought, well it was great fun. I was up in Nottingham, used to come home weekends and you know it was a very nice feeling, producer of Maureen Lipman's show and it went nicely. I had a good relationship with her and so forth. John Davis was my production manager, I took on, but he wanted to go off and do a film in the Philippines about a month into shooting, so I let him go. And frankly I found the show so easy to produce that I didn't even bother to replace him. Because it was an in-house show in Nottingham and with the staff I had I could cope with it. And a very nice man up in Nottingham called Phil Robinson, who I shall come to later on, he was called General Manager of Programmes. And he's a Derbyshire lad, came out of the oil industry. But such a nice man and he was so helpful to me that my time in Nottingham for nine months was great. Anyway, I came back and thought, "Well that's it now, it's all over again, now I'm finished." I was now sixty - I don't know - five. So I'm sitting at home about five weeks after I'd finished the film - or six weeks, and I'm painting the ceiling. The phone goes and it's Phil. And Phil said, "Look, in collaboration with BAFTA - and I know you're one of the top notches of BAFTA - we're doing a thing in Washington called 'The Best of...!' We're going to Washington to put on a big festival together with BAFTA, Central Television and BAFTA. The Queen's going to come out to the Library of Congress and at the same time we're going to make a documentary film called *The Best of British*. We think you'd be the guy to be the consultant on the whole thing. So suddenly I thought, "Hey great!" And so suddenly I was taken on again by Central. I went up to Birmingham to do some work with some colleagues and I was arranging lectures for people to give talks in Washington, cause it was all part of the whole festival. And I went out to Washington and they made the documentary film, which I have a copy of inside, called *The Best of British*. It's got excerpts from all kinds of British programmes and films. But they were terribly short of people, so when it came to interviewing they wanted somebody, [chuckles] so I ended up as one of the so-called producers, I was interviewed about the making of the *Minder*. So I'm in a great big chunk of this film. I had the dark glasses and the whole bit there, and I put on the

whole bit and talked about the Minder which was one of the shows I of course was involved with at Euston. It's an interesting thing that I mean we did have wonderful shows at Euston, you know, Paradise Postponed, the Minder, Riley: Ace of Spies. And whenever you go to parties people say, "Oh this is Johnny Goodman, he makes the Minder" or, "he makes..." you know. You have to say to them, "I don't make anything, I am part of a company that make"... But you're always associated, if you're name's up there as the Executive in Charge of Production or as I was, Executive Director of Production, you make it, you know a machine and you turn the handle. Anyway, so I came back from Washington, that was great fun. John Thaw came out and we had all kinds of wonderful things and this big function at the Library of Congress with the Queen and so forth. And then I thought, "Well that's definitely it now, I'm finished. I'm now, what, sixty-five or whatever [chuckles], it's definitely all over now!" And I'd been here just another five or six weeks and Sydney Samuelson phones up, who's one of my dearest and oldest friends. And Sydney said, "Look Johnny, we're trying to encourage Americans to come to this country to film but there's a great mystery about what it does cost in various other countries to actually perform, to make films. We want a survey done in about five or six countries. Would you like to come in and discuss it? We think you're the guy to do it." So I went in to see him up in Baker Street. He said, "We thought we'd start off with England, cost of labs, crew salaries, overtime, how it works, all-in deals, so forth. And then try France, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Canada and America." So suddenly I was on the payroll and I was off round the world and...

**Alan Sapper:** What was the name of the company?

**Johnny Goodman:** No company, it was The British Film Commission!

**Alan Sapper:** The British Film Commission, ah.

**Johnny Goodman:** Yes, The British Film Commission. It was at the time that Sydney was the chairman of The British Film Commission, or the Commissioner - Film Commissioner. So off I went. The only thing was that I'd got all the information in England and prepared it all, then I went to France and prepared it all, and then I went to Spain. And my wife came out for the weekend to join me in Madrid. And at the airport as she was going home and I was seeing her off, I was due to go on to Czechoslovakia, my briefcase was stolen with my glasses, my tape recorder, my passport, my tickets. All I had was money, and thank God, and here I mean I can't tell you, all the notes I'd done in England and all the notes done in Spain and France were all in my suitcase and not in my briefcase. If they'd gone I had no copy.

**Alan Sapper:** Right, yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** And how do you say to Sydney, "I've got to start all over again"? So anyway the British Consul was incredible. Within about three or four hours I had a new ten-year international passport, issued by the British Consul in Madrid, and I was in Czechoslovakia that night as planned. So I did the tour, I went there, to America and Canada, and I came back and I compiled - I've got a copy here and there's a copy in the British Film Commission. Each country has different coloured pages which breaks down what it costs to film in those countries. And I thought, "Well that must be it now. That's definitely it, it must be all over now." I was then - what am I now, I'm sixty-nine this year so - sixty-nine, sixty-eight, sixty-seven, sixty-six. I must

have been sixty-five or sixty-six. So I now understand it's all over. And bugger me the phone goes again and it's Ted Charles again! And Ted said, "Look, come up and see me. Peter Lucas who's our head of production, he's called Head of Production and Administration, but you wouldn't want that title. He's head of production, he's going to take early retirement. And I went to see our chairman and suggested you, and the chairman said, "Can't you find somebody younger?" [Chuckles] And Ted said, "Look if I bring some young guy in who's a production manager, he'll stay for a few months or weeks and suddenly a picture comes up. Johnny's reliable, he knows the..." So he said, "Fine, okay, you want him, fine." So he said to me, "It's a year's contract." The money was fine. And so suddenly I was now called Director of Production on the board of Central Films! And at the end of twelve months, just before the twelve months was up, Ted came into my office and he stuck two fingers up in the air! And I thought he was being rude and saying, "Bugger off!" But he was saying, "The board wants another two." So I signed another two-year contract. And it was going swimmingly. And then, strangely enough, Michael Green who I said was my second cousin, whom I've been unable to make any headway with, even though we'd been very close at one time - suddenly of course he bought Central Television, and Central became part of Carlton. And obviously they had their own executives at Carlton and within a few months it was more-or-less agreed that Ted would leave. Because Ted Charles, I don't think particularly wanted to - I mean they would have treated him very well but I don't think he wanted to doff his cap to Jonathan Powell who was the new head of drama. And so Ted agreed on a very lucrative consultancy. And they said to me, "You'll also be going" - fine. But then they did come in and say, "Well look, for the year after you leave us we'd like to offer you a modest consultancy." And so they gave me this consultancy, which I'm currently on till the end of the year - it's not a fortune but it's certainly better than a kick up the kyber, to use the expression! They haven't made many demands on me. I've done a little bit of public speaking for them on one occasion and a bit of work. I'm currently involved in sorting out the clips for the RTS Awards, which I did every year when I was there. And that, really, in terms of my career is up-to-date. I thought when I left Carlton, it's the old story you know, your wife has great faith in you, I certainly had a very high profile at one time, I had a good reputation. And you think to yourself, "Well I'm sure I'm going to get offers, it's very busy." But the truth is that um, you know, I had been out of the trenches for many years as an executive and people don't see me as a freelance production manager. I mean I'm quite happy to drop back into my - I'm not grand, I'd be thrilled to death. I'd do first assistant! I've got nothing to prove any more. But I can't break through. I've written to people but you get the usual letters, which say, "Terrific news Johnny to hear you're back and available, I'm sure you'll have no trouble at all," you know! [Chuckles] So whether I have in fact hit the buffers is debatable. I'm still talking about one or two things that may not happen to me or may happen to me, but if it doesn't happen I can say with hand on heart that at sixty-nine in October, I've had a terrific run. I've met wonderful people, had thrilling times, loved the business, and I've got no regrets.

**Alan Sapper:** Well before we just finish, I think you've had a fantastic career so far.

**Johnny Goodman:** Well...

**Alan Sapper:** Really.

**Johnny Goodman:** Yeah!

**Alan Sapper:** Before you go, I'd just like your views on one or two things that are of interest to the industry.

**Johnny Goodman:** Sure.

**Alan Sapper:** Have you got, on your opinion what was your best subject, your best production?

**Johnny Goodman:** Well it is difficult...

**Alan Sapper:** I know it's difficult.

**Johnny Goodman:** To be honest with you I would love to be one of these guys - if I could say to you that I was the production manager on 12 Angry Men or Heat of the Night or something like that, I would be thrilled because they're films I admire. The truth is that I have been...I was pleased to be the associate producer on The Tamarind Seed which I did with Blake Edwards and Julie Andrews, Omar Sharif...

**Alan Sapper:** That was very good.

**Johnny Goodman:** It got its money back, it was a good-looking production, it was quite exciting, quite fun. So on the feature film side I suppose that was um - I was very proud. I mean I worked as a second assistant on Ivanhoe, the one with Robert Taylor and Elizabeth Taylor, but that was in a much obviously humbler capacity. But in my senior years I suppose The Tamarind Seed. And also I was very pleased to have been in charge of production on The Persuaders. Because the film with Roger Moore and Tony Curtis, or the series rather, was the first time a major American film star - true, he was on the decline, Mr Curtis, but nevertheless he was still a major star - came over to England to do a TV series. And I suppose I was quite proud of that. And in fact we should have been, if that - I had a small piece of the action on that show - I did have, and if that show had been successful for more than the twenty-four episodes I would probably today be having this interview around the pool in Mexico somewhere! [AS chuckles] But we went out in America against Mission Impossible and 'Movie of the Week' and we died in America, and that's where, you know, it's the graveyard of British shows.

**Alan Sapper:** Do you think film has a future?

**Johnny Goodman:** Do I prefer?

**Alan Sapper:** A future, the next twenty years, what's going to happen to film as you and I know it?

**Johnny Goodman:** Well I don't know, I'm only sort of really aping or reiterating what other people have said. I suppose in a way it may end up that the West End will be like the hard cover of a book. You know, it will start off in the West End in a major cinema in beautiful surroundings and you'll see the film there, and then maybe subsequently it'll be picked up to be seen on video and satellite and television and have a long life in all the other medium. But at the moment the way the multiplexes are going seems to indicate there's still quite a healthy few

years ahead when people are going to go to the cinema. I think young people simply get bored of sitting at home with their parents, watching the box. And to go into a cinema, if it's a nice cinema with a big screen - and they're catering for what they want at the moment, it doesn't suit me, I find the stuff pretty moronic. I mean Independence Day I thought was a load of garbage! [Chuckling] But there's still some good movies around and I think cinema for the young people will hold an attraction for quite a while to come, so yeah I don't think it's um - the parties not over yet.

**Alan Sapper:** And television is continually developing through digitalisation, through...

**Johnny Goodman:** Yeah the trouble with television of course as I see it is that with the proliferation of outlets there's not an infinite amount of money in the world. There's a limited amount of money in the world and the more outlets there are the more the money is spread and the more the money is spread the less money there is to spend on individual productions. And I'm worried about the fact that you'll have crap being made simply because there won't be the money to make good drama. You know if you can make a game show for twenty thousand pounds who wants to spend six hundred thousand pounds? So that I think is the problem. You mentioned earlier on about the difference between film and television...

**Alan Sapper:** Yeah.

**Johnny Goodman:** I think that is one of the great fallacies. People that work in features who haven't got their feet on the ground are very grand and they make out that, "Oh of course filming for film in cinema is so different, so difficult." Bullshit! I mean the truth is that when you've got a huge budget and the time to get the best, the time to employ the people, it's much less stressful than when you're knocking out television with a limited amount of money and you've got to make it. When you've got to make five and-a-half to six minutes a day, then surely the pressures on all the technicians is much greater than when you're getting a minute and-a-half to two minutes a day. My own son who's a second assistant director certainly would bear that out. You know, he's got to race around shooting, getting the crowd together and the people for five or six minutes a day, whereas on a minute and-a-half a day on a major American movie you've got time to stop for a second and consider. Sure I mean the responsibility is much greater on a feature film, but I think that there's no difference. I think that a good technician, whatever grade, who is capable of working on a television movie is capable of working on a cinema film, in my personal opinion.

**Alan Sapper:** Thanks. You said you've got not many other interests. BAFTA is an interest - anything else that would occupy you?

**Johnny Goodman:** Well no this is a major problem. I haven't decided how I'm going to cope with it. We are talking - I'm a great sun worshipper, I mean once I get... I find the problem about being in London for me is that I'm not yet convinced that my time is over because I don't feel or look, I'm told I don't look it, I don't feel my age, I don't look my age. And I can't believe that the end is here. Now while you go on grasping at straws you can't actually relax and do anything because you keep hoping that something's going to crop up. Maybe when I finally come to terms with it that it's definitely over, that I'm definitely now pass ♦, I'm out of it, then maybe I'll end up

you know going to the War Museum on Monday and er... But we're looking at, we're toying, only toying - we're going to Spain and staying with friends in October and we're toying with getting a small pad in Spain. Because at least out there, whilst I'm away from London, I'm in the sun, I can read, I can swim, I'm more capable of mentally winding down. But I find it very hard to wind down here because I'm all the time waiting to see what's going to happen. I was recently asked to go and see the owners of Elstree Studios. They were looking apparently for a new studio manager to run it. And I went up for an interview and they were very nice people but er - Hartsmere Council, so they don't know anything about the business. And I think I was very, very truthful to them. I said to them that they may well have spent a lot of money, but they're going to have to spend a lot more money before it's in any kind of condition where you can honestly start to encourage people to come in. And they said to me that nobody had been as forthright and as open. I think that those that had wanted the job had all tried to give them the - you know. But I'd told them the truth about it and so at the moment they don't seem to be doing anything at all. So I'm still ducking and diving and still hoping that maybe something else will turn up. But if it doesn't I'm a fairly well balanced guy, I'll find something to do. I'm very good at decorating! [Chuckles] My children's homes get a good coat of paint.

**Manny Yospha:** Well you can always join in our History Project!

**Johnny Goodman:** [Laughs] Well whatever...

**Alan Sapper:** Well I think that is a very good final statement, that you're very good at decorating!

**Johnny Goodman:** [Laughing] Yes, no job too small!

[End of Tape]