Julie Cave
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Interviewers: Norman Swallow, Alan Lawson

Transcriber: Alexis Poole

 Julia Cave, television director and producer. Interviewer Norman Swallow. Recorded on the 23rd of October, 1996. Side 5

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Alan Lawson: We're going, [Erm]. Julia it's now 5months since we did our last session, this is the 23rd of October, much has happened.

Julia Cave: Well we've had summer holidays [Laughter]

Norman Swallow: Apart from that.

Julia Cave: Right, well, just to begin with, there were a couple of names that I had… had slipped my memory on the last occasion. I'd just like to put them down for the record, and one was a cameraman that was filming with Magnus Magnusson and myself at Abu Simbel in 1967 I think it was and his name was Ken Willicombe. I'm sure you'll remember him Alan.

Alan Lawson: Yeah, I do yeah

Julia Cave: It was Ken anyway. And of course, the Controller of Programmes, the controller of BBC1, whose name I forgot, because he wasn't on for very,

very long, was Alan Hart. And we were all busily searching for that and of course it came to me in the middle of the night, as these things do. [Laughter].

01:04 Right, so, 5 months on, I've just completed a series which is to start in November with Robert Hughes, the Australian art critic, who lives in America, whose last major series was 'Shock of the New', for BBC in 1980. And so, I've been coming and going for about 18 months between the States and the UK and it's been a very, very interesting time.

Anyway, I'll just continue for the time being from where I left off really, which is about what's going on at the moment as I see it in the BBC – in the Documentary Section- I can't really talk about Drama and Light Entertainment, but…

I finished off talking last time about the fact that some of the PAs, Directors, Researchers, whoever they might be, because what I also omitted to say is that

02:00 they're definitely using cheap labour; in the sense that if they can get a Researcher and not pay them a Director's fee to go out and do some work, they'll happily do so. And since I last spoke about it, this idea of sending out PAs, Producers, whoever they may be, to work with small portable video Sony cameras has increased. And it seems to be relatively normal now. Several programmes are being made Music and Arts departments, magazine-type programmes still yes, with this method. Now, occasionally, if they've got a more serious thing to do, they do put a cameraman in and give him this small portable camera.

Alan Lawson: Just a second. What about the sound?

Julia Cave: Ah! The sound is very much in dispute. [Erm]. I'll just tell you a story of what happened to me and my own simple knowledge of this. This is ***03: 00*** quite recent, in that I went to go and look round at the Press Show at the Giacometti exhibition at Royal Academy and there were various video cameras no film cameras, of course, there for various people. The smallest one there was a Sony, very small camera, and I can't remember its name, but it costs about £5,000. And I discovered then it was a BBC camera and it was for the 'Late Show' because in their 'Late Review' on Thursday nights, they were going to do an item on Giacometti. So, I then said to the director, who's actually a researcher being used as a director, "Can you tell me all about this?" And the chap who was using the camera at that stage was a BBC trainee. And he told me what he could do with this camera and what he couldn't do with the camera, it has a shortage of lenses and so on. But instead of dolly and tracks ***04:00*** they have, to fit this… they have a special 'steady-cam' attachment which enables you to walk around with it and steadies up a bit because it's not a good shoulder camera. It's not got enough balance to be on a shoulder, so they stick the 'steady-cam' bit on and stick in on the shoulder. So, this is obviously normal training now for trainees coming into the BBC.

So, he was doing a rekkie for the next day's shoot, where they were actually going to use Tony Bragg as a cameraman on this, but with this camera. So, I asked about the sound. Because there used to be a dispute about the sound.

Now I said, “Presumably you’re not going to do the sound with the microphone that’s on the camera?” and they said, “Well no, not on this occasion. What they were planning to do, was to have a separate sound recordist who would plug into this, but that Ealing had said that the sound that was on the top of this ***05:00*** camera… the microphone on top of this camera would be perfectly adequate.”

And I said, “But that’s a very wide-angle microphone.” Which is basically, what it is, you know, everything that’s going on, and that’s what it is designed for…

Alan Lawson: Panoramic-sounds.

Julia Cave: Anyway, so the question in dispute at the moment is: “What is going to happen about the sound?”- basically. And I can’t answer that yet.

Norman Swallow: You will [Laughter]

Julia Cave: [Laughter] I’ll answer it in another 5 months, time. But I’m suspicious about the quality of the sound.

Alan Lawson: But that also follows over on to radio, doesn’t it as well?

Julia Cave: Well, I think that you see, what they’re trying to do is to make one man do all the jobs. And it’s perfectly clear that you can’t actually have a separate sound recordist, a separate cameraman and a separate interviewer if they’ve got 3 separate machines. So basically, we’re going to lose quality; I cannot see a way around this.

Norman Swallow: Well we know that staff is being chopped down isn't it, in ***06:00*** numbers…

Julia Cave: Yes!

Norman Swallow: …every week or two, you hear about that.

Julia Cave: Absolutely! I had lunch with a cameraman yesterday, who I'll be working with next week, and who… we had this very discussion. And yet more people have been asked to leave. Film editors of course, are sitting around not working because with this portable camera situation, it's also expected that the director will go back and edit on a desktop editing machine. So, we're now thinking of losing an assistant cameraman, a sound recordist, possibly a cameraman and a film editor. So, for this particular kind of programme, you're going to have a one-man-band.

I mean, I say this isn't happening consistently all over the place at the moment ***07:00*** but it's obviously happening in news gathering type situations. So, I mean a memo came 'round, from Will Wyatt about 6 months ago saying that things had to get cheaper and that he was looking for ideas; which wouldn't of course change the quality or anything of the production but, he was thinking of things being shot in people's offices. And also, they are trying to use, for drama sets and so on, virtual reality. In other words, instead of building the set, you're going to use the virtuality studios to do it with. At the moment, that costs as much, I'm told, as building sets but supposing it will get cheaper.

I mean this is a revolution in the sense that it happened so fast, that nobody really understands quite what hit them. And it's been since the introduction ***08: 00*** really of video recorders and tape cameras. Everything has moved so incredibly fast, that I think that it's technology driven now and not ideas driven really.

Alan Lawson: The equipment-manufactures are driving the machine.

Julia Cave: Well to some extent they are, and I hear this particular Sony camera, which only costs 5,000, Sony is very cross because they made a sort of professional one at 15,000. But nobody wants to bother with it as this one is good enough.

In fact, looking at it, the quality is very good; of course, it is a very much smaller screen, but never-the-less… I mean if you don't take it down too many generations, and anyway it's digital you see, its digital, which means you don't take it down generations, in effect, you will get quite a good result from it. And it's sad to say, but I think a lot of the processes that we were used to in ***09: 00*** television, film and so on, simply be abandoned, have been abandoned.

Norman Swallow: What ultimately matters of course is the end quality isn't it?

Julia Cave: What matters end ???

Norman Swallow: I see personally as a mere viewer, no great improvement lately… on the contrary.

Julia Cave: Yes. I think if you look down the evenings viewing on most nights, you won't find anything that's too unmissable.

Alan Lawson: [Laughter]

Julia Cave: But then I mean I'm actually afraid that what I have to say… And this may sound pessimistic or it may just mean the world has changed so dramatically in the 10 years as far a technology is concerned that television is no longer of great importance in our lives. That it's there, that we can tune into it when we want; public service broadcasting, I consider to be dead. I think that it's very difficult to define what public service broadcasting is or was. But I ***10:00*** think it went out of the window when video recorders came in because you could change the planned evening's viewing. It was no longer that you had no sex and swearing until after 9, or any violence until after 11, or whatever the rules were.

But now that you could video tape it, you could put it on any time of the day or night. And you know, you could make your own programming and when that happened to a large extent public service broadcasting was in any case over, I think.

Norman Swallow: It's also the competition, isn't it…

Julia Cave: The competition…

Norman Swallow: … the number of channels you could switch on to -a lot of people, not everybody- every night.

Julia Cave: Absolutely, well there will be 5 that everybody can switch on to by the end of March, and there will be something like 3 or 4 hundred by the end of the year if you want to tune into cable or satellite.

Norman Swallow: And this does inevitably effect quality, doesn't it? Programme quality, should not maybe, but it does.

Julia Cave: I think it's inevitable that it does, yes.

11:00 **Alan Lawson:** Isn't it inevitable, and no matter, if you like, what the quality of the image is like, you cannot find sufficient new material to put out…there's a saturation point

Julia Cave: Well, you see I think that's absolutely true Alan and I think that when we started out, we were incredibly lucky because we could do anything because nothing had been done. So, I mean it was a wonderful field, open field for us to absolutely do anything we wanted to in. And now we've seen all that before; the trouble is, we **have** seen it all before. And, I mean, how you make it new… I mean I always think the Natural History programmes, somehow or other, they're always wonderful because although it may not be new, there are still bits and pieces and ways of doing it better still.

Norman Swallow: And I get the impression there are more and more of them now…

Julia Cave: Yes

Norman Swallow: … on the main channels.

Julia Cave: Yes. But they are absolutely wonderful and the new technology has helped them enormously, hasn't it? I mean that's benefitted immensely.

12:00 You know, you have infer-red cameras, you have all kinds of things that can go under water, and tiny little lenses and very long-distance lenses. So, new

technology has actually made that part, I think, a whole pile better and easier for everybody. There are plusses as well as minuses in this. I just think our whole white way of life will be changed by the end of the century. And you know, if really actually think that you're gonna have, in the end one great control-room in which everything will come through…which …

Alan Lawson: It's already there [Laughter]

Julia Cave: [Laughter]. I guess we have to learn to think differently. As far as the BBC is concerned, I mean there's valid to recognise that digital television is going to make a huge difference, and that something has to be done about that. If we can't compete in that era, we might as well be dead. However, I think the difficulty is, how to compete in it. Is it to have more, or is it to have less that ***13:00*** are of quality, and I don't know what the answer's going to be in this in the end.

Norman Swallow: Who does?

Alan Lawson: Well, it's something to do with cultivating an audience with -for want of a better word- with better values or better taste for programmes. That's a silly was of putting it but yes…

Julia Cave: Yes, but people are doing other things you see. Their working on their computers, they're on the net; television isn't necessarily what a lot of them are doing. And young people don't watch television the same way they used to. Old people watch television a lot, because they don't understand the new technology and the computers and so on. And the other things to go on

your lav??? The old people are the people watching it. And I greatly suspect the young people go further and further away from it.

Norman Swallow: True.

Julia Cave: Also with the revival of the cinema, people are going out more, I ***14:00*** think our whole culture is changing, in this sense. That's actually my view. I don't think that the BBC will ever have enough money, although it looks like Birt will get the £100 licence fee, to compete with Sky ever again, as far as Sport is concerned. And I think, you know, if we can't contribute a huge amount of what the majority of what the public want, then I don't see how we can continue for very much longer in this highly competitive field; although, we are pretty competitive I guess.

Norman Swallow: So far.

Julia Cave: So far. So, I don't know what the future holds. The thing I think ***15:00*** that has changed as well as the culture, is the way that… I don't think I can call them 'Staff' any more at the BBC, I'll say the 'People who work for the BBC,' think about it. I think what's really happened… there's a great deal of misery and unhappiness and there's no doubt there was a complete witch-hunt for the last 5 years. So, people who were going to argue with the 'New' BBC, would be deliberately targeted and got rid of. There's absolutely no doubt in my mind whatsoever that this has been very positive thinking. If you didn't go along with the new ideas, you were thought to be a moaning-mini and you just weren't given the work. Because you weren't given the work, your morale

declined to such an extent that if you didn't resign -which of course the ideal

16:00 solution because you wouldn't have to get paid to leave- and I'm sorry, I do believe this happened very positively, then you know you were persuaded to take redundancy. So, what was left, was a hard-core of people who decided to fight that, and very few did, or those who just disappeared and did other things; a lot of them haven't worked again, some worked for other companies. There's deep resentment in the BBC about this.

Norman Swallow: What about the effect of all of this on programme quality?

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

Norman Swallow: Like?

Julia Cave: I've seen some jolly good documentaries, as well as some jolly bad ones. And I mean, I don't know if I should be talking across the board or just about the BBC.

Alan Lawson: I general really…

Norman Swallow: Yeah, in general terms.

17:00 **Julia Cave:** What I really would like to say, apart… I'm not sure I want to talk about quality because I'm not really quite sure what –Quality- means. What I would like to say, is that there's an encroaching dishonesty and that's what I don't like.

I think what is actually happened is a loss of integrity and a loss of what I think is the word honour. I think that the new BBC lacks both those qualities

consequently, in the programme making, I'm sometimes worried by what I can see as the cheap and easy way of doing something or a misconstruction of something I can see is wrong. Or a misinterpretation by deliberately mis-

18:00 editing what somebody has said, and I'm afraid I think this is endemic. And I think it's endemic because people who didn't come up with the background… -and I believe there was integrity and honesty and honour in the BBC, in the old BBC- have not had that training. They come in, they've short term contracts and they have to make their mark fast. They think, that by making their mark fast, they can skate through all those things that I think matter in the integrity of making a programme. They treat people abominably, there's a shortage of staff so of course nobody writes letters of 'Thank You' anymore; nobody bothers to tell anybody anymore when their programme is going to be shown.

Norman Swallow: Really?

Julia Cave: Nobody bothers to tell them if they've been left out. This doesn't happen anymore. So, I think the relationship with the BBC and the public has

19:00 to decline because of this. I also think the honesty, which the BBC used to be able to emanate, if you like, caused a certain kind of belief in politicians and anybody else, that they would be fairly treated. Now I think the BBC is lumped with the rest of the media and nothing special is given to the BBC any more consequently, I think, we're getting the same old stories that everybody

else is, and that were not trusted any more than any other media… any more than the tabloids if you like.

Alan Lawson: But isn't this loss, kind of political interference, not within the BBC, but without the BBC… from outside the BBC… on the governors, sort of thing…

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

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Norman Swallow: Yes

20:00 **Julia Cave:** …because, I mean, Wilson interfered in the same way that [erm]… political appointment is the Chairman to the Board of Governors, yes, and obviously, Hussey was brought in to do Margret Thatcher's will; which he had managed to do quite neatly, I think [Erm] and that was endemic in the country anyway. It was happening all over the country, wasn't it, you wanted to break this kind of organization because she thought it was…[Pause]

Alan Lawson: Subversive

Norman Swallow: Sometimes

Julia Cave: Sometimes subversive, but then Wilson would have said the same about 'Yesterday's Men'…

Norman Swallow: He did. He did.

Julia Cave: …if you remember, Angela Pope' film 'Yesterday's Men.' Have you interviewed Angela Pope?

Alan Lawson: No.

Julia Cave: … just a thought. She's got a feature film just starting at the moment.

Norman Swallow: Oh, lovely. Point taken.

21:00 **Julia Cave:** Anyway, I mean that kind of accusation has taken place throughout the history of the BBC, I think, and so I don't think that one can say that's worst now than it was then, probably. I think what is worse is Birt's interference probably, although this is not for me to say for the World Service, although I did work for the World Service, so I suppose it is a valid for me to discuss, and that is that he does not… It's not the BBC licence payer that pays for the World Service, it's independent, therefore I think what he's doing to it is, kind of, out of order. His politics in that clearly that wants to achieve the £100 licence, has to look to be saving money by… but saving money isn't everything. I mean, nobody has yet shown figures where that it does save money to change the World Service in this way, but I think, we'll keep off that ***22:00*** and stay with what I feel is the lack of integrity endemic in the BBC; which means it will lose the trust of the people who matter. Lose the trust of the public.

Norman Swallow: Some of the people you and I both know and worked with are still around in high office, aren't they? I'm thinking for example, of Will

Wyatt and Alan Yentob are obvious people, I certainly worked with both of them, and there they are, but so what apparently. Both in positions of extreme high authority and yet dot, dot, dot.

Julia Cave: If you work in a climate of fear, it's extremely difficult to keep your integrity… it seems to me. I mean, many people have failed to do so, in times of war and all kinds of times, and I really do see this is a situation of war in the BBC. [Pause].

Norman Swallow: You mean a civil war?

23:00 **Julia Cave:** Well it has been like a kind of civil war. I guess you can say Birt. has won.

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes, The Guardian said the Birt broadcasting service, corporation rather.

Norman Swallow: or company

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

Alan Lawson: Not really.

Norman Swallow: Apparently not.

Alan Lawson: Not really.

Norman Swallow: I knew him years ago as a researcher. He was at Granada, young Birt.

Julia Cave: Yes, but was he… what was he like then?

Norman Swallow: A promising young researcher I would say, yes. I wouldn't have said necessarily have got all that high… but I was wrong.

Julia Cave: Well you know [Erm]…the nicest people very often don't get to the top.

Alan Lawson: Yes that's right.

Julia Cave: [Laughter]

Norman Swallow: The other thing you know…what is obviously important to what we're talking about is, Julia, is how all this has affected your own creative ***24:00*** work? Because you're still working, indirectly perhaps, for the BBC. Your latest epic is going to be shown on the BBC any day now.

Julia Cave: Well, how it has affected me is that I really don't care too much about… if it's a transient thing, I will probably give in.

Norman Swallow: Oh!

Julia Cave: Well it's not worth the fight. [Erm]. I can quite often disagree artistically because I have my particular kind of style and very often, you know, its over-ruled. Well if that happens and it's a short item, it's not the end of the world. If it's something for which my name is going to be some considerable ***25:00*** time of the shelf-life, I get slightly more positive about it, so I still fight. In fact, I've just had a fight so…

Norman Swallow: Did you win?

Julia Cave: I've won and lost. I've taken my name off it.

Norman Swallow: Oh dear… that's happened before, mind you. Not necessarily with you, but I can think of many cases; including myself, once or twice.

Julia Cave: Well, [Erm] I'm afraid that's, that's what happened. So, it was kind of quite traumatic. But it's very difficult, you see, when you're living…as I say it is a climate of fear because everybody is on short-term contracts and if they argue with the boss, they do not get employed again. It's as simple as that. You have to be nice to everybody, you have to- "Oh yes. Golly good idea" -and do it, because the whole ethos of this is not to have individuals making programmes, it's to commission what they want, done in their way.

So, if you're an individual director and you want to do it your way then you're ***26:02*** not terribly popular. Your employed if you're easy to get along with. That's how it is. So, that's the effect it's had. And that's how it will be. And I think that's how it will be in the feature. Because you're making a product now, it's a product; it has to come in at such-and-such a cost, in such-and-such a time, it has to employ so many hours. And by the way, your expected to work all the hours you're bought at anyway, that means you can work night and day for the amount of time you're being paid for.

The Unions have no power any more, as I said earlier, and I don't see if you're being asked to deliver a product –and that is what it is- how it can be any different. You make the product the way the person, who commissions it wants it. Also, because you're, dependant to a large extent, on co-production money,

27:00 it's how somebody else wants it as well, so you've got a lot of fingers in the pie. So, you know, individual programme making is virtually dead.

Norman Swallow: Maybe for some time, I don't know. You think this is a new development, or what?

Julia Cave: No! It's been getting worse for a long time, yes.

Norman Swallow: Going back a long time, yes.

Norman Swallow: Speaking personally, I left the BBC a long, long time ago and largely because, the people in command changed and I really lost faith. I mean Paul Fox left BBC1 at that time, David Attenborough was 2 and he left that and so on and round about that time, co-incidentally -and I'd worked with Granada before- Dennis Forman, boss of Granada, and not quite now, asked me if I'd go back and do certain things. And I went back, and I stayed away for many, many years after that and I never felt really the urge to go back to the ***28:00*** BBC, although I kept in contact with them.

And, you know, as a freelance I did, later on, one or two individual documentaries for the BBC, but I never regretted, to be honest leaving, despite all the years I'd been there. So, it's terrible… really.

Julia Cave: Well I… you have talked to David Attenborough, haven't you?

Alan Lawson: Yes, we have.

Julia Cave: And I mean I know what his views are.

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Norman Swallow: We talked to Paul Fox too.

Julia Cave: And his views are similar, aren't they?

Norman Swallow: Yes.

Julia Cave: But I think the loss of integrity is the most serious matter. I really do deeply feel this. That you can't trust anybody, and that you can't blame the kids who come into this; they've never known anything different.

Norman Swallow: No.

Julia Cave: And they came from the 'Me' generation anyway, and they're there with no commitment to broadcasting, they're there, to make their careers. Somehow or other, when we came into it, we believed we were doing

29:00 something important, we believed we were pioneers, we believed that it really mattered that we were honest with the public, didn't we?

Norman Swallow: Yep!

Julia Cave: I mean, the amount of times on checks facts and all the rest of it. I mean, you know it was just part of how we were brought up. I do honestly… I fear that that is gone.

Alan Lawson: We did also enjoy our work, didn't we?

Julia Cave: I think we trusted each other, but now everybody at each other's throats…

Norman Swallow: Yes. What I was going to… I shouldn't really call it that… you know what I mean, creative atmosphere existed… which is very important, very important.

Julia Cave: And people swopped ideas with each other, not because they thought the ideas would be stolen, because they thought people might be able to contribute something: that you would work together on something, to make it better, for everyone, not because it was your idea. I strongly think that the departments worked together, teams worked together, people worked together for the good of the programme. But now it's for the good of the individual, ***30:00*** whose making it, not for the good of the programme itself and for the public who have to watch it and I think that's a tragedy.

Alan Lawson: I mean on that line, you look back at the way Monitors first started, that was a most wonderful team.

Norman Swallow: Mmm. Absolutely.

Julia Cave: They were committed to popularising the Arts, to making the Arts accessible and I remember the first…when I decided what I really wanted to do was to work in Arts television, was when I saw 'Monitor'. That's actually where I came from, in the sense that I watched it every Sunday night religiously and I thought, "This is wonderful, and that's where I want to be." And in a sense, that's where I ended up because I ended up doing 'Omnibus' which was the later [Erm]…

Norman Swallow: Successor to 'Monitor'

Julia Cave: … successor to 'Monitor' and that's what it was, it was pioneering and it was wonderful…

Norman Swallow: And it was on the main channel too.

Julia Cave: And it was on the main channel also…

Norman Swallow: Never on Channel 2- 1.

Julia Cave: Absolutely. But then of course, when 'Monitor' started there

31:00 wasn't a BBC2. 'Monitor' was before BBC2…

Norman Swallow: No, no indeed! Your correct, no, no, no, correct, yes, yes, yes.

Julia Cave: …to be fair, there and 'Omnibus' is in fact on BBC1, although they've put it to Tuesday night and very late, so you can see where it's going. Going, going, gone!

Alan Lawson: [Laughter]

Norman Swallow: Yes, I remember both personally, I mean going back to the days when, as you know, I was in charge of 'Omnibus' for several years. And I remember, again Paul Fox, controller of 1, was very generous towards me and 'Omnibus' at that time. And I remember 49 'Omnibus' programmes in a year. 49 out of 52!

Julia Cave: That's amazing, isn't it? That's a real commitment to the Arts, which…

Norman Swallow: Also, if I can say, this is a personal thing; is, Paul Fox used to speak to me personally. Between Paul Fox and myself, there was a hierarchy, Aubrey Singer, was controller of the group, Stephen Hurst and then John

32:00 Culshaw, was music. They were separate at that time, and I remember that Paul Fox got rather fed-up; we had a meeting in his office once, all the

people I've mentioned, including myself, and Paul got rather fed-up with it, you know, all these little nit-picking around the table. He finally got rid of us, out of the room, got rid of us, all went. And then he rang me the next morning and said, "What I'd like to do in future…' he says Norman "…about every 3 or 4 weeks, we'll have a quiet lunch together in a little restaurant down Kensington Church St., if that's alright" And he said, you know, "Please make sure your secretary doesn't tell anybody" etc., etc., and that's actually what happened thereafter for a year or two or more. And that's what happened, I mean, Paul Fox and I had these lunches regularly, decisions were taken and the people between me and him knew nothing about it. And that's actually how it worked, and it's quite interesting really.

33:00 **Julia Cave:** I suppose one could say that might be a little un-democratic, but…

Norman Swallow: Yes. It works I think. I'm biased

Julia Cave: … I actually think that's exactly what's wrong with what happens now. That is, that decisions are made in an arbitrary way and there's far too many fingers in the pie and everyone wants something different. Only one person can make a programme in the end…

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Norman Swallow: That's right.

Julia Cave: …and it's, they're made by committees and people are so afraid of doing the wrong thing as well. Nobody will take a risk either.

Norman Swallow: I do remember one particular example of what I've just been saying. After one of our lunches, Paul Fox and I in this restaurant; one of my problems at that time was, Ken Russell's film on Richard Strauss, you remember, Dance of the Seven Veils, had been banned by Aubrey Singer and who ever between me and Paul. And on the way back in the taxi –presumably Paul or the BBC paid for the taxi- he used to drop me off, you know, at Kensington House, or nearby and just before we got there, I said, "Paul by the ***34:00*** way, what about this thing of Ren Russell's 'Dance of the Seven Veils' I think it's interesting, controversial, but you know, you know Ken, it's worth showing I think. I don't quite understand." He said, "Oh put out the fucking thing!" End of conversation.

Julia Cave: [Laughter]. Perfect!

Norman Swallow: I went straight to my office changed the billing in the Radio Times at once so it couldn't be altered after that. Went out.

Alan Lawson: [Laughter]

Julia Cave: Very good Norman, I wish it was like that now. But in fact, everything is planned so far ahead, that if you come up with a good story which is recent, it's impossible to get it on the air except in a magazine programme. So, you know, it's changed. The structure of everything is built in so far ahead that's there's no sense of freedom, or experimentation, or possibility to change things. It's very formulaic now, I think; basically, it has to be because there no ***35:00*** sort of… no chance of changing anything. And the money's, so

organized as well and there's so many forms to fill in. I mean the bureaucracy is unbelievable. I mean the paperwork, in spite of them having thought they'd get rid of paperwork, it's absolute nonsense.

Norman Swallow: Worse. Is it… worse than ever?

Julia Cave: Yes, you go through 3 people …at least 3 people instead of the 1 you would have before.

Alan Lawson: Yes. You used to have just the organiser, really.

Julia Cave: Well, I mean, there's all sorts of people from… their all management structure of a kind.

Alan Lawson: Any programme background to them?

Julia Cave: Very likely not. But that's also deliberate in my view. [Pause]. Because it's dealt with on an accountancy basis, not on a programme making basis.

Norman Swallow: How are –I'm not an expert on this anymore- but how are appointments now made? I remember the old and ancient I referred to ***36:00*** obliquely just now, but how do people get jobs now? I mean an important job like creating important programmes, what happens, how do they get there?

Julia Cave: [Long Pause]. [Laughter]. I can't answer the question!

Norman Swallow: Maybe, nobody can.

Julia Cave: [Erm]. It varies, obviously.

Norman Swallow: Well there are important strands, as we used to call them aren't there still, and there must be maybe 1 or 2 people in charge of them?

Julia Cave: Yes, there are still Boards for programmes and they're still advertised outside the BBC., and they have to be because there are so few people in the BBC. At the moment in Music and Art, they're not taking anybody on, on contract anyway because they're going to have to lose some more, so I don't think you would have got a job if had… if you happened to be me on a contract, I'm a freelance. Long-term contracts… they might have taken ***37:00*** people, but I mean there are so few people on the staff anyway anymore.

Alan Lawson: What's the length of your contract?

Julia Cave: When I did the 'American Visions'?

Norman Swallow: Yeah.

Julia Cave: I had a year and then it was renewed again. So, I had them in 6-month batches. But normally its 6 weeks.

Alan Lawson: Oh, really?

Julia Cave: Or something like that; if it was 'The Late Show' it was for an item. You're employed for the story you're doing. They're trying to get people to, you know, work just on that particular product… so employed, you're given enough time to do that product in and the day you finish that product, you go. As for clearing it up, well… [Pause] or writing your thank you letters, or anything like that, you're not on the books for that.

Alan Lawson: [Laughter]

Julia Cave: I mean this is sheer accountancy. But that's how it all is now. I

38:00 mean, it's not just the BBC, it's ITV… it's everything.

Alan Lawson: A very depressing thought.

Julia Cave: Well so if you're given a sort of contract to do that particular job, you tend to feel, or you might feel, that when that job's over, you go away and wash your hand of it. See we used to have continuity. We used to have contacts and address books and people that we kept in touch with…

Norman Swallow: Absolutely.

Julia Cave: … and knew, and found out what was coming up, from; and treated decently and all those things and we talked to each other about that. Now of course, all that is over, there is no continuity.

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

Julia Cave: 'American Visions'?

Norman Swallow: Yes.

39:00 **Julia Cave:** [Erm]. As far as I can make out, at the end of 'Shock of the New' in 1980, the BBC was keen to have Bob do… Robert Hughes do another series, but he felt at that time that he wasn't too keen to work with the BBC again, because he'd had a quarrel. I think partly through Rhyner Moritz who was the co-producer, had taken some rights, that Bob thought should have belonged to him, therefor he thought he hadn't made enough money out of it so.

This series ‘American Visions’ which is the history of American Art from the time of the Conquistadores and the Puritans through to the present day; had been suggested right back as far as then. But it had been hanging around for a long time because Bob didn’t really want to work with the BBC, and somehow ***40:00*** or other it got into the hands of Bob Geldof and Planet 24. And he bought some rights on it… I don’t exactly know the history of this, but it ended up with Planet 24 having it and then going… bringing it to the BBC.

Norman Swallow: That way round.

Julia Cave: Yes. And Alan Yentob was very keen to have Bob back working, working for the BBC, and rightly so, because he is a major figure and we need them. We haven’t got many. So, they did a deal with Planet 24, so you’ll see Planet 24 credits on the end of this series. However, Planet 24 then, had absolutely nothing…I think they did a couple of rekkies or something -Bob Geldof- flew over on Concorde to see, you know, the United States, (Bob’s not frightfully polite about this.) and the… then sort of dropped out of it but has got a credit.

41:00 So, about 3 years ago it ended up with Music and Arts department and Nick Rossiter was appointed to be executive producer of it. Nick Rossiter was a… had come in as a history graduate, on the general trainee’s scheme and had worked in News, Current Affairs, Religion and ended up in Music and Arts department. Where he directed some of Prince Charles’ film, ‘Visions of Britain’ which Christopher Martin produced. Anyway, he’d done 2 or 3 other

films in the design classic series and so on and he was given this job. So, he spent about a year going around the United States with Bob Hughes and working out how they were going to deal with these 8 hours of prospective

42:00 television. And then came back and put a team together.

I came into the team, towards the end, they'd already shot 4 of the programmes, by the time I was on board. They started off shooting programmes: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 and then I came to do 5 and 7. So, there was a team of researchers and various… the copyright was immensely complex. I mean seriously complex. We had one girl who worked on the copyright alone all the way through. And I was employed to direct 2 of the films, including other bits and pieces.

42:46 **Alan Lawson:** I'll stop you there.

End of side 5

Julie Cave
https://historyp”roject.org.uk/content/0380

Interview Number: 380 Interviewee: Julie Cave

Interviewers: Norman Swallow, Alan Lawson

Transcriber: Alexis Poole

Norman Swallow: Copyright of this recording is vested in the BECTU History Project. Julia Cave, television director and producer. Interviewer Norman Swallow. Recorded on the 23rd of October, 1996. Side 6

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Side 6 https://soundcloud.com/thebehp/julia-cave-side-6

00:05 **Alan Lawson:** Julia Cave, side 6.

Julia Cave: Could I just have a bit more coffee? So, ‘American Visions’ was big budget, big profile series for Robert Hughes well it was filmed all over America, literally.

Alan Lawson: With a proper crew?

Julia Cave: Absolutely with 16mm, not super-16 because as it’s an American co-production, Americans don’t like wide-screen at the moment; which I think is a shame because I think if you’re going to have a long shelf-life, it’s here to stay. HDTV is here and that shaped screen is here, so we ought to be doing it. Anyway. [Erm]. Yes, it was definitely shot with proper camera crew, dolly ***01:00*** tracks, lights. There wasn’t money for that really. There wasn’t enough

time, in the schedules for that kind of shooting, but somehow, we did manage to do that. And yes, in principle it was properly shot; proper sound recording, you know DAT sound and [Erm] yep, it was a proper high production, high profile documentary film series, of the kind we used to make. And, you know, I wonder if there will be another. Although there is planned to be another series on the Renaissance Art, which Andrew Graham-Dixon is going to front. So, that maybe of that kind of calibre.

Norman Swallow: Will you be involved in that?

Julia Cave: No, I think not.

Norman Swallow: Oh well. It'll be nice if it happens anyway.

02:00 **Julia Cave:** Yes, it would. [Pause] So yes it was a seriously…

Norman Swallow: Mounted.

Julia Cave: … mounted, yes, programme to work on and I think, has very high production values. Bob Hughes is of course an absolute amazingly erudite and outspoken presenter and writes brilliantly so, I mean the force of these programmes comes really from him. I mean the directors, although we had to direct it well and deal with Bob well, I mean, it's his show. They're not director's films, although of course, we had to be able to direct to get them to work, but they are from him. You know, without him there would be nothing quite frankly.

Norman Swallow: And he's happy?

Julia Cave: He is now.

Norman Swallow: Well I'm talking about the quality of the picture, not, other matters.

03:00 **Julia Cave:** Yes, I think he is pleased with them, although we've been through our 'ups' and 'downs' and temperaments and problems, and all the rest of it. But that, I suppose, happens on any documentary series

Norman Swallow: Of course. It's not unusual at all.

Julia Cave: Not unusual at all. [Laughter]. I enjoyed immensely, filming in America. It was nice to be away. But then we edited on Lightworks, which is…

Alan Lawson: Wonderful, yes.

Julia Cave: …very good. Well it does have its pluses and its minuses, in that it takes a very long time to… everything has got to be digitised in, in real-time, so every single shot that you want to use, has got into real-time. So it's very slow in some ways. It's quite fast once you've got it in. You also don't have and ***04:00*** assistant, so it's done away with the assistant film editor job, and there were times when, my goodness, when we wanted an assistant. For instance, you have to digitise all your music tracks, all your sound tracks in separately. Its plus and minus and as a lot of film editors. It doesn't take any less time, it doesn't cost any less.

Alan Lawson: It's interesting, you say that because my son has worked, and I think this is now the third film he's worked and he says it's an absolute Gods

send. He says it's so much quicker because you can transpose anywhere you like and you don't have to physically cut anything.

Julia Cave: What does your son do?

Alan Lawson: Feature film editor.

Julia Cave: Oh, he's a feature film editor. But feature films have been cut on that for years.

Alan Lawson: Well he hasn't been doing it for much, I think it's his third.

Julia Cave: Oh really, well Avid and Lightworks have been used in the industry for a long time. It probably is from his point of view. But then he's ***05:00*** dealing with drama, which is scripted, so therefore you know what tape you're going to have to digitise in. If you're dealing with a documentary, you're in a whole different ball game. But also, I was talking to a drama editor, Clare Douglas the other day, who edited all the Dennis Potter things and she and I had this discussion about Lightworks and Avid. She finds herself no faster either.

Alan Lawson: Oh really?

Julia Cave: There's pluses and minuses to this and it depends what you're working on. But with documentaries we're not very convinced. Anyway, it's here to stay and seeing as with film, what you do… I think there's no need to neg-cut any more. Feature films, yes but documentaries no. And when we came to the end of this production, who we edited this was that we copied all our ***06:00*** 'rushes', they were printed… Sorry, they were not printed. They were

developed and then they were copied directly onto tape. You never saw a print, and reverse phased through telecine onto Beta, and then you cut on the Beta, ok. However, you're never quite sure what the quality you're looking at, because it's been through that process. So, what the original exactly looks like, sometimes very problematical. That's one of the disadvantages, not actually seeing the material you're working with. You then edit on Lightworks, and you then, if you want to get it neg-cut, it is neg-cut. But it's not neg-cut in the way it used to be, it's not joined up like that; it's taken frame-to-frame. So, it's ***07:00*** a whole different ball game, completely different ball game. Telecine and the engineers have got so good now at grading it on Beta, that it's almost…and for television, in my view, it's negated the need to go back to the film again, ever and to neg-cut it. In feature film, you're dealing with different things, it's projected, which ours isn't and can never be, because it's gone through the whole of the process that ends up on tape anyway.

So, it's cut out another whole piece of film, although I greatly suspect that hardly anything else will be shot on film anyway in the future. Yes, I mean, in a sense I have now quite grown to like Lightworks, but with certain reservations on that, altogether. And of course the sound quality and the visual quality you get while you're editing, can get abysmal, really horrible and I don't like that. And it's very hard on your eyes. And it's very, very hard on you because ***08:00*** you're working in a small, confined space, looking at screens all the time and listening. It's very concentrated, you never get a break; from a director's

point of view, you have to be in there, because the decisions have to be made instantaneously once it's in there. So, from the director's point of view it's very, very much harder.

It may be easier for a film editor, once he's got used to using things digitally and being manually dextrous in in a different kind of a way, than film, but from a director's point of view, you never get a break.

Norman Swallow: Maybe, what it means therefore, sadly, is the word for the director, it means somebody with quite different qualities and experience and so on, than used to. I mean, it's not just a director in the sense that I've used the phrase in the past. You do a lot of other things and all the new technology, so maybe the actual directing seems to be pushed down the list, or not?

Alan Lawson: Are you rationed with the amount of Lightworks you can use?

09:00 **Julia Cave:** You must be joking [Long Pause]

Norman Swallow: Not exactly.

Julia Cave: It's extremely expensive. You are rationed absolutely down to 5 minutes.

Norman Swallow: Really?

Julia Cave: I am absolutely serious and what's more, you're supposed to do a 10 hour-day at it, 5 days a week, without a break.

Alan Lawson: God

Julia Cave: I tell you, coming at 10 'o' clock in the morning and leaving at 8 at night, on your 10 hour-day, if you get a break, it's for a sandwich. It's very

tiring, because that whole process is decision making, because your machinery is so expensive that you have to use it all the time. Your manpower is cheap but your machinery is expensive.

Norman Swallow: Where did you actually edit by the way?

Julia Cave: We actually edited in the East Tower of Television Centre. And they've converted a lot of cutting-rooms there into Lightworks and Avid ***10:00*** cutting-rooms. In fact, there only, I believe 3 Steenbeck cutting-rooms left in the BBC. And they're in Documentaries, and they apparently said they didn't want to work on this system and there literally about 3 Steenbeck's left; otherwise everything is turned into Avid or Lightworks and I can't believe those Steenbeck's will last much longer.

Norman Swallow: Probably not, no.

Alan Lawson: Spare parts.

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

Alan Lawson: Yes, and maintenance staff, get rid of the Steenbeck's and you get rid of the mechanical maintenance.

Julia Cave: Yes you do, but you get awful things going wrong with your Lightworks, I can tell you. Also, the other thing is, very often the haven't got enough memory.

Alan Lawson: Oh, really.

Julia Cave: Oh, well we didn't have enough memory, so it means you've got ***11:00*** to delete stuff if you're putting new stuff in. This doesn't apply to son because he's got a finite amount of stuff on his drama, but if we get new stuff in and then we have to keep digitising all our archive footage in, and you've used up your 15 hours of memory, then you have to go back and take stuff out and put new stuff in. And because they're saving money, this is always the reason for everything, there wasn't enough memory and you have to pay another £500 a week for extra memory.

Norman Swallow: Oh dear!

Julia Cave: It's all very interesting. But there's no doubt about it, it's here to stay. There wont be any Steenbeck's, everything will be edited digitally on either Lightworks or Avid. It will all be on tape, probably be on small cameras, apart from the big drama series, I, suspect, which may still remain of Beta SP, ***12:00*** or digital Beta, which is the wide-screen which is going to favourite, or super-16 occasionally. But everything else, I think is going to be on this small camera probably and edited digitally. I mean, it's there, it's happening and everything is being moved very fast in that direction.

Norman Swallow: Yeah, but you're not making this, am I right, directly for the BBC, your company etc., etc.

Julia Cave: What I'm working on now?

Norman Swallow: Well no. The thing you're talking about, about the American thing.

Julia Cave: 'American Visions' was made for the BBC, I was employed by the BBC to make this.

Norman Swallow: Ah, by the BBC directly

Julia Cave: Absolutely, but it's a co-production with Time-Warner.

Norman Swallow: We've had many of those of course. In the past.

Julia Cave: We did indeed, absolutely. And of course, Bob is the art critic for Time magazine and it's to be shown next year in May on PBS. It's been shown ***13:00*** already in Australia.

Norman Swallow: Good? Good reviews I mean…response

Julia Cave: Yes, very. This will get very good reviews because there's nothing like it on television at the moment and so, anything that's half way decent, you're so amazed to see it.

Norman Swallow: Any reviews? Has the press seen it yet? Must have done…

Julia Cave: Oh, the press is raving about it.

Norman Swallow: Oh well. You're sure, are you?

Julia Cave: Oh yes. But if you can't tell a good thing when you see it…yes, it's very good.

Alan Lawson: The Guardian had a good piece actually, in the supplement.

Norman Swallow: Sounds marvellous.

Julia Cave: That was written by Bob, but of course, I faxed it to Bob on Sunday and Bob said, "I didn't write that piece and what the hell is going on." In fact, what they did was sub it from his scripta filmate?? So he's quite cross.

Alan Lawson: Really?

Julia Cave: As it happens… it's the story of the Guardian piece on Saturday

Norman Swallow: As it happened yes.

Julia Cave: I rang him of Sunday and said… [Laughter]

Norman Swallow: I mean going on, you must have other projects in mind and if so, I wont say what they are they might be deep secret but how do you start sell them now…how do you begin?

14:00 **Julia Cave:** It's extremely difficult.

Norman Swallow: And where? Very important.

Julia Cave: Yes. Well, you have an idea and you have to know roughly where you can market it. Now first of all, unless you're going to be employed as a director by the BBC, you can go to them with an idea and they can take you on to do it. But that happens very rarely.

So, I had worked for 'The Late Show' and I used to ring them up with ideas, or fax them with ideas, and then they'd employ me for 6 weeks, or 3 months, or whatever it was, to make these things. But as they're not taking anybody on, on that basis anymore, the answer is, what you have to do is present your idea through an independent company.

So, what I did with my various ideas because I've known Deb Colison, who's one of the directors of Third Eye Productions. And I took my ideas to David ***15:02*** and I said, "I've got these, and I think, where we could put them are the following places. So, then we write a letter, we write a treatment…

Norman Swallow: On his note paper?

Julia Cave: On his note paper and we bang them off to those people, we hope, will be interested. Like Melvyn Bragg, and Channel 4 and I would send to BBC2, 'The Works' on Mike Poole's series which took over from 'The Late Show'; that's for arts programmes. And you just do that. It's a very expensive thing because you're not earning any money while you're doing this. It costs you a great deal of money to get all this together, and send it out.

Norman Swallow: Is this Third Eye money?

Julia Cave: Well, yes and no. Third Eye…

16:00 **Norman Swallow:** Yes. I know Third Eye, I mean, David, he must have decided personally to go ahead on this and therefore he must have agreed to spend a bit of money on it.

Julia Cave: He hasn't got any money to spend.

Alan Lawson: It's facilities really is it, facilities?

Julia Cave: Well, until…I don't think I should discuss Third Eye, because it's probably not fair. I'll talk off the record about that afterwards. But a lot of small production companies, who were doing incredibly well before, are now doing incredibly badly; there are masses and masses of them. And what's tended to happen is that the companies, like the commissioning companies are working more and more with the big companies and not the small. So, a lot to them have very few facilities, they can't keep their heads above water at all, and they don't have any facilities. Remember they're paying out of their own

pockets for the office they work from; they can't afford to employ staff and ***17:00*** they're working with a computer by themselves, is what's really going on. And it's not easy, it's really very, very tough. So, you take your idea to the company and, in theory, they say, "Well, I think I can sell that." Or "I can't sell that."

In the case of the one I've got, what's called development-money for I took this to David and I was extremely sure that it's a very good idea, an arguably good idea. Because it's an art expose´ story. There are few and far between of this quality, and also I have a good track record of this, because I did 'For Love or Money' and 'The Plunderers' and all those art exposés series in the '70s and I've done a lot since. So, I've a good record on that and I'm working with Geraldine Norman, who has an absolutely unmatched record on that. So, we ***18:01*** came in as two quite strong hands on this, and I suggested we went straight to Channel 4, because they have a new commissioning editor, Janey Walker. And I happen to know her and thought she might be looking for new ideas, because she'd only been there 2 weeks. So, we got in very, very quickly; long before other people had sort of caught on, and she liked the idea. And basically, she said, "I'll give you some money to develop it." So, that's what we're doing. So, with Third Eye and Geraldine, I'm developing this idea, so I going to Paris to do some filming, next week. And we have to present her a whole, you know, a massive treatment for this, including the budget and

everything else, by the end of November. And then she says, -Go ahead- or -Don't go ahead-, if she says –Don't go ahead- then of course, we've wasted ***19:00*** three months for which we haven't had any money at all. And have had indeed, considerable expense and we've lost everything. So, it's a very, very hard, nerve-wracking difficult thing.

Norman Swallow: You said that you were filming next week?

Julia Cave: I am, because I have enough development-money to do this bit because it happens to be an exhibition which is coming off, before we would get our commission. So, if we don't do it now, we've lost it; so, I insisted and we wrote in that we needed to do this and she's just given us enough money to cover that bit of filming. I don't think they'll say no at the end of this. I mean… but it is kind of nerve-wracking. And the other thing that is nerve-wracking, is if somebody broke the story before us, then we've lost it too. So, we're sitting on a bit of a hot story. And what Janey has got and I think it shows tremendous commitment to the Arts, and good for her, and why I want to ***20:00*** go along with what she's doing on Channel 4, is she's got Sunday nights at 9 'o' clock, for an hour, which is more commitment than anybody else has got to the Arts at the moment. Because the Melvyn Bragg show is on at 11:15, which is much too late on a Sunday night.

Norman Swallow: It's sad that.

Julia Cave: 'Omnibus' is Tuesday nights, so it's coped out. So, if ours goes ahead, will be for the new series, for September next year on Channel 4 at 9

Norman Swallow: It's a one off, is it?

Julia Cave: This one will be a one off, but there will be a series. I think, she's trying to compete… well I think she will do 'Omnibus', they're to be story-led arts programmes. So, that's inside information. [Laughter]

Norman Swallow: Fine.

Alan Lawson: So, the future's well…

Julia Cave: The future is, it's extremely difficult for directors. You have to ***21:00*** go…you have to keep abreast of everything on your own time and money. You spend all your own money on doing this; it's quite disillusioning to be stuck at home, thinking, nobody's answering and I'm not getting anywhere with this and what shall I turn to next and all the rest of it. It's also very lonely, you know, where we were always used to coming into the office and talking to people: I mean, I think the fact that I always find difficult, is always battling on my own. And coming up with ideas and constantly going at it and having nobody to talk to about it; it's quite hard.

Norman Swallow: Now if these does happen and hope and sure it will, where do you operate from in that case and how does it work?

Julia Cave: Ok…

Norman Swallow: In practical terms, what will happen?

22:00 **Julia Cave:** If we get it, then Third Eye will get a commissioning sum of money, which will allow them to continue with their office and a PA and so on. We have to budget absolutely everything in and then I will work, partially from

home, where I've got my study, but partially from the Third Eye offices. Basically, that's what you do. You go into the office, when you need to go into the office.

Norman Swallow: And you edit from where?

Julia Cave: Well you can choose where you edit from. You can choose who your camera crew is, I've already chosen mine really; we'll probably edit on Avid or Lightworks. And there happens to be a very good editing suite, which happens to be in the building where Third Eye operates, which is Canalot at the top end…You know it?

Norman Swallow: Yes

Julia Cave: Well, there's a good company there, so we'll probably edit there, is what I would think. So, that's what will happen.

23:00 I'm also on another story which I've sent around, but we may get Arts Council money for it, we may even get Lottery money for it. So I'm fighting for another little one, in a completely different area, which is Patrick Heron and a big work of art, that's going to be constructed to make a windshield, in Victoria. And it's going to be the biggest work of art in Europe, and it's an amazing, amazing construction and so, I hope to be making a film about that. So, Patrick Heron has got a retrospective at the Tate Gallery next year. So, we have to put budgets into the Arts Council and things like that.

So, quite honestly you have to focus on anybody, who you think will give you any money to do what you want to do. So, you have to try and keep up with ***24:00*** what's going on really. [Laughter]

Norman Swallow: Are you taking an accountancy course. [Laughter]

Julia Cave: No, but you see, over the last few years, we've had to do total costing for the BBC anyway. And I'm quite used to doing budgets, and I can tell you, in my head what a film's going to cost, if you just tell me where you're going, roughly, so you have a vague idea of what you're going to need… Sure. The answer's no I'm not taking an accountancy course and we do have an accountant. We have to have an accountant, Third Eye hires in an accountant and you pay that off the budget for doing all these sums, you see. But you have to say what you want and they break it down into…you say 15 days of filming, approximately, camera man costs you… You could look at £600 a day for camera man, gear, and you know how much your sound recordist is £200 etc. ***25:00*** So, you've got a pretty fair rule of thumb what it's going to cost you for a 15-day shoot and all the rest of it, so, you have to know these kinds of things, but you don't actually do the adding up. You might have to if you can't afford the accountant. [Laughter].

You know, it's swings and roundabouts. If you can't afford the accountant, you do it yourself because you want an extra day's shoot. So…

Norman Swallow: But your personal and professional reputation counts for a lot in all this, doesn't it?

Julia Cave: I think, probably…yes

Norman Swallow: If I can go back for a moment to talking about David Collison, the film that he and I made with Johnny Speight in Canning Town, all about Alf Garnett. We were loaded with bad language, for example, I think we had 2 "Fucks" and 4 "Bloodys" in the thing and between David and me and up the hierarchy, they were all shaking and trembling with fear and pushing it on…

26:00 In those days, Paul Fox was then for the time being, managing director, or whatever it was called. And eventually it went up to him, and I shouldn't say this, but I know Paul Fox, and I heard this story indirectly. Paul Fox said, "If it's all right with Norman Swallow, it's bloody well all right with me." He said. And that's the same with you… It went out, you know, with a slight warning at the front- You may find some of this offensive- but, it was shown at peak hour… 8:30, or something like that in the evening.

Julia Cave: Yes, well that kind of trust… I mean there is of… Reputations do matter, but very often it's not on a person… Well actually a lot of it's done on a personal basis. Yes, that is true. Yes.

27:00 I mean, the whole thing is incredibly erratic because there are so many different companies and they to advertise at different times for different kinds of directors or PAs, or production managers, or camera men, or something. You just have to keep your eyes on everything, a very fluid kind of situation, which nobody expects to be fully employed. If you get a 6-month contract, you think that's fantastic…you see.

Alan Lawson: Are the days gone when they come to you and say- this is a programme, we'd like you to do?

Julia Cave: [Long Pause] It happens occasionally.

Alan Lawson: What? Rare?

Julia Cave: Very rare. Because most of the ideas come from the people who are selling them, like me, you see.

Norman Swallow: But there must be sometimes, people who come along with an idea, outside the business if you like. But a very good idea and if this idea catches on and whoever thought it was a good idea, would then think of someone like you or whoever?

Julia Cave: Yes absolutely.

Norman Swallow: To say- do you like this? Does that happen?

28:00 **Julia Cave:** Yes, it can happen. Yes absolutely. [Long Pause.] But, I mean it's a kind of whole melting pot people, who are just looking for work. So, it's a buyers-market too because, you know, because there's too many people for the jobs. Although I wonder what'll happen when there are so many more channels. But then if you don't have to any particular skills for it you see… I mean it's the skills…I mean, I fear what's really happening is that the people who are incredibly skilled. Like brilliant camera-men and sound-recordist and film-editors and so on, all those people and the people in the film labs and all the rest of it; life is not going to be at all good for them. Because it's going to be a one-man-band situation.

29:00 Director/producer/interviewer/camera-man/sound-recordist/editor, all rolled into one. For the run of the mill stuff, that's how it's going to be. For the big productions, well, that's still going to need skilled people, but as they're going to have to fill an awful lot of air-space; with very little, very cheap ideas. I think that's how the majority of television will be dealt with. Don't you?

Norman Swallow: Yes, I'm sure.

Julia Cave: So I think the standards of [Erm]… Not necessarily the technical standards, maybe less important in the end than the actual amount of rubbish that will hit the air.

Norman Swallow: Yeah, I mean, one of the problems I assume with all these channels, and even the way things are now, obviously, a lot tiny little companies starting from scratch, must all say mysteriously, mistakenly, "Oh gosh, it's all going to be marvellous for us." "All these opportunities." And all ***30:00*** these ideas must be thrown around, millions of them, surely?

Julia Cave: Absolutely. Well what you should do, in fact, if you want in fact if you want another interview is David Collison see he spent… I mean he left the BBC, what, nearly 15 years ago, or something. And he's watched what's happened in the independent companies, and he says that when he started, there were something like 20 and now there's something like 3,000. He talks about this…

Norman Swallow: 3,000!

Julia Cave: I may have my figures wrong, don't quote me on this, but it's something a mammoth as that. See I could set up my own company, but I didn't want to, and then I'd be an independent production company.

Alan Lawson: Well you've only to look the Stage and Screen to see the numbers being blanked

Norman Swallow: I know

Alan Lawson: You never even heard of a lot of them.

Julia Cave: But these companies have a terribly difficult time, because they have to think ahead. I mean if the pay… decide to take a lease on an office ***31:01*** place or space, for how long? I mean, think about it. It'd incredibly tough. But I think talking to David would be a jolly good idea, on the independent companies front, because he's seen all sides of it.

Norman Swallow: Will do.

Alan Lawson: If you could start again, would you prefer to have done something completely different?

Julia Cave: No [Laughter]

Norman Swallow: Ah! But if you were to start again now, as against then…

Julia Cave: If… I would not regret ever having worked for the BBC. I've had the most amazing time, I've travelled all over the world. I've met the most ***32:00*** fascinating people. I've been given opportunities I could never have had anywhere else. I think it's been absolutely wonderful and the people I've met, it's been like a university, the whole of my life, and I cannot say how good it

has been; however, I don't think that I would like to be working for the BBC now. I don't like the atmosphere there, I don't like the lack of integrity, and I don't really think I want to work in what television has become. Which is a kind of massive free for all, where the products count, the people don't count. It's got a lack of humanity about it. I can't see myself…maybe I'm being an old-fogie, maybe I'm just being sad about the past. I think I had a wonderful ***33:00*** time. I can't imagine having had a better life, stressful as it was on times, and there's always been 'ups' and 'downs' but no I wouldn't like to work in television now and I don't think it's because of my age. I think it's actually because I don't like the atmosphere there anymore and I don't really like what's going on, I think it's just another product. It's nothing special anymore. I think we were lucky to work through the special years of television.

Norman Swallow: Depressing.

Alan Lawson: Great! Thankyou

Julia Cave: It's just being honest… I mean…

Norman Swallow: Yes, absolutely. Quite right too.

Alan Lawson: Many thanks.

Julia Cave: Great pleasure

33:40 **Alan Lawson:** Lovely.

End of side 6.