SIDE 1

Norman Swallow: First of all, when and where were you born?

Lindsay Anderson: I was born on April 17th, 1923 in Bangalore, South India in the military hospital, I think. My father was in the British army in India, the Queen Victoria's Own, the Royal Engineers. My mother was half Scottish, her mother was Scottish and her father was English. She was born in South Africa and had met my father in Scotland . He was Scottish, and his family lived in Stonehaven, which is south of Aberdeen, and that is where they met and got married. Not altogether happily I don t think. There was a first son who died, a second son, my brother, who is living, who was an airline pilot and also flew in the War, and myself was born in India.

And my parents divorced, do you know I can't even remember quite when, probably 10 or 11. I never knew my father terribly well, he served in India and most of time, I was brought up in England. I went to a respectable English preparatory school in West Worthing, St Ronan's, and I went to Cheltenham College. Not through any family connections, but my brother went to Cheltenham. And he went into the army, and then transferred into the airforce. I wasnt in the least military. I went up to Oxford for a year during the war and then went into the army. I served for three years I think in the army, went to India, finished my service in Delhi. I came back and went to Oxford.

Norman Swallow: What years were you in Oxford? Myself, I was there, 39 to 42. You were a bit after that.

Lindsay Anderson: I think I must have been, I don t quite remember, but maybe I was there in 42, would it be 42, probably, doing something known as a war degree. And by a strange quirk of circumstances, by going up to Oxford, doing a war degree and being trained there and getting something called Cert B, certificate B, I actually went into the army a year later than I would have done.

Norman Swallow: Me too.

Lindsay Anderson: What college were you in?

Norman Swallow: Keeble. You were at Wadham, weren't you, just up the road.

Lindsay Anderson: That's right. And I did eventually get called up. I went into the army, got commissioned and went to India. And when I went back to Oxford I went on a B release, did you get a B release?
Norman Swallow: I can’t remember.

Lindsay Anderson: That got you out quicker, because you were a student. I went back to Oxford, but I didnt go back to classics which I had gone up on, because that seem too

difficult, and I read English literature as a sort of cop out really, and got my degree in English. And at Oxford I joined the film society and there became involved with the publication of their film magazine which was called Sequence, together with a friend called Peter Ericson, who was at New College, and later when we brought it to London, Gavin Lambert, whom I'd known at Cheltenham. Sequence flourished for a bit and I became a sort of film critic.

Norman Swallow: Now we've got on to Sequence, I think you should tell us quite a lot about it because it's extremely important. I won't ask you any questions, just talk about it.

Lindsay Anderson: Funnily enough, I've recently written an introduction, which has taken me about two years, not very long, for a project for a facsimile reprint of Sequence, which ran I suppose from about 48, something like that, to 51

Norman Swallow: I've got 47 to 51

Lindsay Anderson: It might have been 47. The earliest numbers of Sequence were not a particularly notable, it did start as the Oxford University Film Society magazine. It is very interesting in a way because, as I wrote in this introduction, the circumstances were so incredibly different in those years, and everything that we have got used to in the last 40 years didn't exist, there was no National Film School and there was no National Film Theatre, not much writing on films. Certainly the whole business of film criticism which now exists, what as a vice really, every magazine has its film critic whether or not they know anything, all trying to be a journalist, and none of this existed then. And we, Peter and I, and then Gavin whom I brought in to it, whom I knew, we wrote Sequence I think just out of a kind of desire to write a about films, and to know about films and to express our opinions, absolutely not professionally. We weren't aiming to be film-makers, but we in fact in doing the magazine and publishing the magazine, we got to know about films. We went to films and ended up knowing a bit. And the good thing about Sequence was that it was a discovery for its editors.

Also it wasn't in any way theoretical or academic, even though it did start at Oxford. So that for instance the French influence which came later to dominate English writing the about films and then this whole dreadful movement of film academicism, which didn't exist then, left us totally untouched. I mean we did not believe in the auteur theory, we thought it was a load of rubbish really but we did try to find out in a pragmatic way what were, to take the title of an article I wrote, the creative elements in a film and we did actually recognise and believe that the direction of a film was the most creative function, I would say that, although I think our attitude particularly, coming from Oxford, was very open and pragmatic. And one would certainly admit, as one does now that there are films,

which are a writer's films, there are films which are designer's films, there are films that are a co-operative work. In other words every film really has to be considered on its own merits and according to the circumstances in which it was made.
And I think it was attention to those aspects of creativity which was perhaps one of the strongest aspects about Sequence. It was also very healthily disrespectful. It knew there was a lot to be attacked in something like the Film Institute which at that time was pretty well moribund. Though through our general success Gavin Lambert was invited in

perhaps 1950, something like that, to go to the revitalised British Film Institute which Denis Forman had been appointed to and had taken over, and edit their magazine Sight And Sound, which he pretty well created. And of course it was those days which were very active and Denis Forman was a very important chap because it was he that revitalised the Institute and created the National Film Theatre, which was created as a hang on from the Festival Of Britain

Norman Swallow: 51 wasn't it.

Lindsay Anderson: Yes it was the Telekinema in the Festival of Britain. And it was Denis who persuaded whatever authority was necessary to keep the building of the Telekinema and turn it into the National Film Theatre, before the present National Film Theatre was built.

Norman Swallow: Sequence is a very famous and distinguished publication, You can't have expected that to have happened at the time. You were more modest than that.

Lindsay Anderson: We were an interesting combination of being quite modest and arrogant. We did put on the back of Sequence contributions are welcome from any source on any aspect of cinema which was absolutely untrue. We didn't really receive contributions anyway but we weren't really interested in any points of view except our own. It was an interesting, I suppose there was an arrogance there, probably an arrogance that could be traced further on to for instance Free Cinema and the Royal Court. I think there is a great deal of the attitude that is bred to in to that.

Norman Swallow: It's a running story.

Lindsay Anderson: It is a running story, although I think it is an arrogance that he is totally different from the sort of the arrogance of young people today which is probably much more careerist. I don't think we were careerist. We were really interested in films, in cinema, and in finding out about them and being opinionated.

A couple things that I have to be written about which is interesting, Sequence was not interested in documentary, and this was probably the result of influence to some degree, but it wasn't interested in the documentary primarily I suppose because the British documentary movement had died. Essentially it died at the end of the war. We very much admired Humphrey Jennings although we didn't I'm afraid respond to his post-war work

really. We didn’t admire Grierson and interestingly the Grierson people didn’t like us. There was absolutely no encouragement, help from people like well Edgar Anstey or Elton or Rotha for that matter. The only chap who was friendly was Basil Wright but Basil Wright was a friendly person. Neither Sequence nor later Free Cinema had any accolade from the British documentary movement. There was that, and the other thing was that at Sequence we were not very pro-British. And this is really because the British cinema had been, had flourished during the war but after the war it rather disintegrated I would say, there was the people who were working for Rank who then went to Korda. It was the era of Lean, Reed, and Powell and Pressburger. And then later Ealing which we were benevolent towards. But the British cinema at that time was very over praised in

our opinion. The media such as they were at that time would be, so to speak, pro-British, and as a result it was quite different from today, there was an anti-American snobbery which we didn't respond to because we did in fact respond to very strongly to American films. We responded very strongly to Ford. Probably our idea of heaven would be the appearance at the Ritz cinema in Leicester Square of *Act Of Violence* and *Force Of Evil.* And these are films which would not be hailed by the English establishment. So to that degree again Sequence was perhaps a forerunner of what was to come later.

Norman Swallow: And you still kept that view because I was thinking when you mentioned John Ford, the Channel 4 thing you did from the National Film School.

Lindsay Anderson: That's right, *Clementine. Clementine* was the film which way back in about 48, whenever it came out, that both I and Peter Ericson saw and responded to terribly strongly and we responded to it without knowing a great deal about cinema but we found out about cinema because we wanted to find out why we liked this film so much. I very well remember in Leicester Square, it was the week that *My Darling Clementine* was shown, it was billed on the Odeon, Leicester Square, and at the same time Great Expectations, I think, was showing at the Gaumont and Powell and Pressburger, *A Matter Of Life And Death* maybe was on at Empire. And I remember choosing, and I don't know why, to go and see *My Darling Clementine* which was certainly received without any enthusiasm by what were called the critics, who of course didn't know anything really, they were just journalists, and finding myself completely carried away by it and wanting to find out why. So that influence of, attachment to Ford came very early and was very much a part of the Sequence ethos. Particularly with Peter and myself, whereas Gavin I think knew more about European cinema, more about Marcel Carne or Bunuel, and that went for a very good balance.

Norman Swallow: If I remember, I was more or less the same generation, I was much influenced by Sequence, I was working in radio myself, not yet television, and I moved to television in 1950 having been reading Sequence for two or three years by that time. So I am just one of many people who were greatly influenced by it.

Lindsay Anderson: And the good thing about Sequence I think really was enthusiasm and I think the terrible change that took place was that young people became enthusiastic

about cinema perhaps as a career, whereas we were enthusiastic about cinema because it was cinema and that wasn't bad way we to start really.

Norman Swallow: And then

Lindsay Anderson: Well it isn't exactly and then. When I became a film maker you mean.

Norman Swallow: What about the bridge.

Lindsay Anderson: Well I became a film maker by accident and there wasn't a bridge. Well perhaps. I'll tell you, there were things known then as film societies which I think probably don't exist anymore. But film societies were the way that people could see the kind of films that weren't shown commercially. Probably, particularly a middle-class

movement but not aggressively so. And there was of course the Oxford University Film Society. And we belonged to something known as The Federation of Film Societies. And every year the Federation of Film Societies would have a meeting, either at Bradford or London or Oxford. And we hosted the British Federation of Film Society's meeting at Oxford in, I can't remember, in 47 or 48. I don't know, one of them. And there we put on a show, a Czech film which neither of us had seen called *The Violin And The Dream*, a very typical Czech, not new wave film. I don't remember much about it, I'm sure there were meetings and talks and all that kind of thing.

And I met a lady whose name was Lois Sutcliffe who was the secretary and had just started the Wakefield Film Society and her friend Margaret Hancock, she was the secretary I think of the film society movement and she came from Bradford. And we had impassioned talks which I absolutely don't remember. And perhaps I said I wanted to make films but I can't remember it, it wasn't a particular ambition I don't think. Equally at this time I have to say I was also, and I don't know why again, interested in theatre. I liked acting. I never really got very far with the Oxford Theatre world because it was highly competitive and I am not a particularly competitive person, not good at that. Anyway Lois who was the wife of Dermod Sutcliffe who ran a firm called Richard Sutcliffe Limited, the world the pioneers of underground belt conveying at Horbury, Wakefield. They were going to make a film to celebrate their 50th anniversary. I went back after Oxford, this must have been perhaps 49, I had come down, I had taken finals, I really didn't know what I was going to do.

I'm certainly not good at planning a career or anything like that. And suddenly one morning I remember in January, Lois arrived out of the snow in Camberley and my mother came and said to me "There is a woman here who wants to see you." and she obviously expected the worst. But really what it was was that Lois suddenly said we are going to make a film at the works and I told them I know who should make it. And I said who? And she said you. I said you're mad. I didn't know anything about films. And I hadn't had any experience and I don't know how to make film for. And she said oh you've got to start somewhere. And the only thing I will claim, I don't claim being any good at

career but I'll claim generally taking advantage of an opportunity or luck. So really knowing nothing I said alright.

So I went up to Wakefield. I met Dermod and visited the works and I found I had taken on the production of a film. Interestingly I think that the Sutcliffes had approached at least a couple of documentary companies, Film Centre and that kind of thing. And they had got from them a treatment. As far as I can make out the treatments which I wasn't shown were both much the same. It was very typical of a British documentary company that they would send somebody up to Wakefield, who would probably stay the night and come back and write the treatment. And at least Dermod and Lois were wide awake to know that this wasn't what they wanted. They didn't want that. They wanted something about the works. So that the idea of getting me to come and make a film with no experience whatever, enthusiasm, I don't even remember how much it cost but it would be practically nothing.

I was provided with the local school master John Jones to operate the camera and a friend of Gavin's who was I think third assistant third assistant at British National Bill Bindon helped maybe. He didn't really know much more than I did but he knew a bit and Lois did continuity herself and that really was the unit. If I had known what making a film meant I suppose I wouldn't have done it.

Norman Swallow: This was done in a factory what was it called — do you remember

Lindsay Anderson: The Universal Works, Richard Sutcliffe Ltd., Horbury Wakefield

Norman Swallow: Sorry the title of the film.

Lindsay Anderson: Of course I remember what do you mean do I remember the film was titled, actually as a result of the competition in the works and somebody suggested *Meet the Pioneers*. It was a very good title I think. And actually was the pioneers because they were known as the pioneers of world underground belt conveying. So that was the film.

It was 40 minutes long, absolutely, because there wasn't any alternative, I wrote the script, there wasn't a script really, it was just a list of shots, wrote, directed, edited, arranged the music, because the chaps who was supposed to do the music never did anything which was gramophone records and wrote to the commentary and delivered it. And I did all these things because there didn't see really seem to be anyone else to do it. And of course I would have been told this is quite impossible.

And I remember when we were going to dub it, which meant the music on records, speaking the commentary, there weren't effects, I don't think, there was music and commentary, for four reels I booked four hours. And we arrived at Merton Park I think and they said well fine but what are you going to do and I said we've got this is four reel film and we are going to do it in four hours. And they said have you ever done this before? And I said no haven't but I know the film very well, there won't be any trouble. And their attitude was it was totally impossible. Even just with music on records and commentary, to dub a film in four hours. But of course we did it. Because we didn't know any better or any different. And I don't think the film was good but it served its purpose. And all I can say, maybe there is something in this from the start, it wasn't a regulation production. So I never did work in documentary.

I went on because the film worked all right, I did I think two more films, maybe three I can't remember. We started one film which we had to give up because we had a classic telegram from Humphreys who were our laboratories, which said advise stop shooting. This was because the camera jammed. And the camera was one I had seen in a shop window in Wardour Street, a Vinten battle camera, it looked rather nice. It was bloody awful but we shot a 40 minute picture on it.

Alan Lawson: Tell me, the Wakefield film was a shot on 16?

Lindsay Anderson: 35. Well I didn't know any better. And you must understand in those days probably even 16 mm production wasn't as rife as it is now. So the whole thing, when I look back on it, was amazing. It was home made. They built a little hut in the yards which became the film hut. When I think of it I didn't even know how to log

anything. Nothing was logged. We did have a continuity board. But all I know is that when we what finally trying to cut the film, and I had never cut a film before, never edited a piece of film before, this film hut was knee deep in trims. And this thing had to be finished because Dermod Sutcliffe had promised it would be ready for the Mechanical Handling Exhibition whatever date it was and he would be a laughing stock with his colleagues or competitors if he didn't deliver. So it ended up with Dermod sitting in the film hut with a stopwatch saying you've got to make a cut every 30 seconds or whatever it was, desperately trying to get this thing together. Which we did. And of course you had razor blades and film cement, this was the old days and there certainly wasn't any tape or anything of that kind.

Norman Swallow: You didn't cut the negative.

Lindsay Anderson: No, the neg was cut at Humphreys, Miss Johnson who was head, and Ill tell you what was extremely interesting really, the last shot was the boat went out to sea, and then I suppose there was an optical or something, and the title came up, and when I got it back, neg cut by Humphreys, I saw that there was a jump. And I took it into Humphreys, Miss Johnson was in charge of the neg cutting room, did you ever meet her

Alan Lawson: Yes

Lindsay Anderson: She was very nice, she was extremely nice. She knew I knew nothing but I said to her look I'm sorry, but this has been wrongly cut. And she said oh I can't believe that. I said it is, look at it. And she looked at it and said yes you're quite right. She said well obviously our girls haven t been able to do it, could you do it. And they got the

negative out and I looked at it and I cut it. It didn't seem to me extraordinary particularly. But it is a looking back on it rather interesting that these seasoned professionals at Humphreys had honestly been unable to neg cut the picture properly and would have let it through. Any way that was Meet the Pioneers.

And then we had one, but then the Vinten battle camera finally packed up and we didn't shoot it. But then I shot one called *Idlers At Work*. Then I shot one called *Three Installations*. And that was Walter Lassally whom I knew because of Sequence, he shot *Three Installations*. And finally I shot a film called *Super Goliath* which was the name of a Humphreys machine. So I did four films for Sutcliffes over the next few years and they employed me. I did it for 500 year or something, it was very little.

But it was interesting also that in those days of course I wasn't a member of the Union and the union didn't care because there was this sort of odd job film Unit up in Wakefield, well they didn't mind if there was a Richard Sutcliffe Film Unit, they didn't expect me to be a member of the Union. But when I did together with a friend, Guy Brenton, who was working at that time at the BBC and I'd known at Oxford, he wanted to make a film about deaf children and he came to me with the idea and said would I help him because I had had some experience. And together we made *Thursday 's Children*.

Norman Swallow: Very good.

Lindsay Anderson: It was good. But *Thursday's Children* was made simply because Guy had visited the school.

Norman Swallow: I have 1954, is that correct?

Lindsay Anderson: I suppose so. Well there was him and myself and Walter Lassally who did the camera, and that was the unit. We had a tape recorder which of course wasn't geared to run in sync so we didn't sync the whole thing. And that was made again 35mm, it would be totally amateur conditions. The union, we didn't have enough money to put the sound on but Guy showed it to Worldwide and Worldwide took it on and put up the money for the soundtrack and the completion of the film, so it is probably a Worldwide picture, it has Worldwide on it, but that is how it was made. And the Union of course objected very strongly to me having anything to do with the picture, and I think there, the shop stewards came in the cutting room where I cutting the film, I was on one machine and Guy was on another, and there was of a big row. I wasn't allowed to join the union. And they said alright, you can stay in the cutting room, but you mustn't touch the film. It seems to me complete rubbish of course. They went out and we went on and made the film. And very surprisingly this film when completed and I was in charge, we split it that I was in charge of the soundtrack, I think I wrote the commentary, and Guy was in charge of the music, and he did the music with Walter Lee, I think, it's on the credits, and I got Richard Burton to do the commentary. I went to see him at the Vic, went to his dressing room and said will you do it. And he did it free.

We couldn't get the film shown, naturally. And then British Information Services which then existed in New York, incredibly submitted the film for an Oscar and we didn't know anything about it, they didn't tell us, and we suddenly heard one day you've won the Academy Award. So we said oh, that's very nice. And the chief result of winning the Academy Award for was that the film was taken on by a British distributor who of course was an American distributor, Republic Pictures. So *Thursday's Children* was distributed by Republic and did get some showing.

Norman Swallow: If I can add a personal footnote, you've reminded, you mentioned Denis Forman earlier, at that time I was at the BBC, Denis was still at the BFI and we did a programme about the Edinburgh Film Festival that particular year, it must have been 1954. I remember at Denis and I viewing most of the things that were shown and I do remember he and I being most moved by *Thursday's Children* and we had quite a long extract from it in our television programme about the Edinburgh Film Festival. That's true .

Lindsay Anderson: Well, I'm delighted. But when I look back, talking to you about it, it is rather interesting that I did these things, but is true that nobody in the British industry took a blind bit of notice or was in the least interested.

There was one other film I made actually as a result of making the Sutcliffe films. The local newspaper, the Wakefield Express, got on to Sutcliffe and said we hear you've got a film man there. Would he be all right to do a film for us. And they wanted a film made to show to visitors to the work's because they got bored with talking to them. And so I did make, together with Walter, *Wakefield Express*. And there were only two of us on it.

Norman Swallow: That's the second film of yours that I'd seen then. *Thursday's Children* I saw as I told you. Then I saw *Wakefield Express*.

Lindsay Anderson: That's very nice. Well I rather like it. Anybody would call it amateur. And of course then, another friend with whom I worked closely around this time was John Fletcher, another amateur, the son of a bookie, keen on films, who had got in touch through Walter and packing up copies of Sequence. John was an amateur but keen on the recording of sound. So when we made *Wakefield Express* he came up to Wakefield and we spent, I didn't know, a week up there recording schoolchildren singing and music and that sort of thing. It is very interesting to look back on because all this activity was totally outside the industry and in fact the industry did its best to bar one. I was not allowed to become a member. The only thing that was ever reported to me, I don't know if it's true, because my name came at several meetings and I think there was a director called Max Anderson, I think he made *Daybreak In Udi*, didn't he, well he was the sort of pukka documentary chap, wasn't he. And Max was a Communist, quite a nice fellow

Alan Lawson: Very nice.

Lindsay Anderson: Well quite nice. I remember he was a member of this committee that considers applicants to the union, and the attitude of the Union was, it was reported to me, it may not be true, that Max said oh, well this Anderson, he's got a degree hasn't he from Oxford, why can't he become a schoolmaster? That was the British attitude to cinema.

And then I also made about the time of *Thursday 's Children* I made a little film of my own called *O Dreamland* which was the result of being down in Margate and going to the Royal School for Deaf and Dumb children and seeing Dreamland. And I shot this and John came down, I wrote a letter of to the manager of Dreamland and said, a hypocritical letter which said we would love to do a film about Dreamland which might be of use to you for publicity purposes.

I shot this film and we recorded sound and it must have been months before I did anything, I had it all in cans. And I went up to Wakefield perhaps to make my last Sutcliffe film and while up there I cut *O Dreamland* which was 16 mm, so was *Wakefield Express* by the way, and I cut it in the evenings. But there was then absolutely no way one would ever show a film like that, I don't know what you would do with a 16 mm film for 10 minutes called *O Dreamland*. Because nobody was interested to see it. So I let it sat on the shelf until 1956 came up, 1955, 1956 and. And Free Cinema, and I thought it would do for the first Free Cinema programme because it was just there.

Norman Swallow: Yes it is associated with Free Cinema of course even though you made it earlier.

Lindsay Anderson: You're right. And again, I'm sure most professional film-makers would call it an amateur film, I would imagine, I don't know. I don't think professional film-makers ever said anything about it actually. There was a huge gulf then between the professionals, whether documentary or features, and somebody like myself.

Norman Swallow: So we've now reached Free Cinema, have we Lindsay?

Lindsay Anderson: I think we have. Very briefly, if I can make it brief, because nothing to do with the cinema ever is brief, is it really. I know there was a showing of *Thursday's Children* in the British Council theatre and present was a diminutive Italian girl called Lorenza Mazzetti. Lorenza Mazzetti had been a student at the Royal College of Art I think, and the Slade, and she had made perhaps a couple of of films including a version of Kafka's Metamorphosis which Denis Forman had been very struck by. And Denis Forman got her money to make a film which she called *The Glass Marble* which she made with the chap she was living with at that time, Dennis Horn, who was a bit of a maniac really, rather a shit. Anyway they shot this with two, I think it was influenced, I've never spoken to Lorenza about this but I'm sure it was influenced by Carson McCullers, *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*, is that the one about two deaf mutes. Well the two deaf mutes in *The Glass Marble* were played by Eduardo Paolozzi who is now a rather famous sculptor and David Andrews who is now a rather famous painter, I think they were very good.

I saw Lorenza at this showing of *Thursday 's Children*, we didn't know each of the really, and she said, she had a very good what one use to called appeal ad miseri accordium, encouraged one's pitty, perfectly justifiably actually, and she said oh, I've got my film and it's all in pieces and the British Film Institute have told me, they have given me a cellar in Denmark Street and they've told me I've got to cut it together. And she said I can't. And indeed she couldn't, Lorenza was not a particularly practical person, she couldn't join film, she couldn't cut a film and she couldn't construct a film. And she said it's all going to go to waste. And I said well let me see it. And I saw the material of *The Glass Marble* at the Telekinema, what I suppose is now the National Film Theatre, it was that building, I remember seeing it and at the end of it I said well we can't let this just disappear, I'll help you. And Lorenza of course was extremely grateful.

And I took on a the completion of *The Glass Marble* which turned into Together, and we did have a little bit of a movement then, as much as ever existed in this country, I mean Walter came and shot a couple of extra sequences for it , to pull it together and the music was done by an Italian whom Lorenza knew called Daniel Paris, who came over from Italy and was promptly put into prison I think by the immigration authorities. Anyway we got him out and he did write the music extremely well. And we made it together. And it is rather interesting now, isn't it, because I don't believe in today's climate anything like that would ever happen like that. I mean no one in my position would ever today say well I'll help you, I'll do it. I don't know if I was paid anything. I was very fortunate in having enough money from the Sutcliffes and all that, and I don't know, life seemed cheaper, just to do it, because it harks back to Sequence if you like, and we did it because it was worth doing. And we finished together, and I'm sure the BFI put up some more money because they thought it was going to be professionally finished, and I had taken responsibility for it.

Then, about that time the BFI did sponsor some films and they sponsored Karel Reisz and

Tony Richardson, who wanted to make a film about a jazz club, *Momma Don 't Allow,* Wood Green, the Chris Barber band. And we ended up, by chance or destiny, knowing each other, having these films, and not knowing what to do with them, because who cared. And it was one or other of us, possibly me, I couldn't swear to it though, who said

well we ought to be a movement. And the interesting thing about Free Cinema is that it was a movement, but it was a movement created for pragmatic reasons, it was created because we wanted to put our films together and show them and attract a certain amount of attention. And we knew that if we relied on the interest or the integrity of the press we wouldn't get them shown. So we had to, that's why we called ourselves Free Cinema. And we wrote a broadsheet and we attacked the establishment. It wasn't exactly hypocritical, we certainly believed what we said, but the reason why the show took place was in order to get the films shown. And I suppose it says something for the staleness of the whole atmosphere in those days that the Free Cinema show created a stir.

Norman Swallow: You did things that weren't being done elsewhere. You said earlier you wouldn't necessarily use the word documentary, but you earlier said documentary was pretty much dead after the war. And being a contemporary I felt at the time good something has happened again, thank God for that, it was Free Cinema I mean that's what happened. You may not have intended to do that, but that's what happened.

Lindsay Anderson: You're quite right, we didn't exactly intend to, we did not intend to, we actually just did it because it seemed to be the obvious thing to do. Now the interesting thing also about Free Cinema is that it was only one show. We got films shown. O Dreamland could not be publicly shown because I had used copyrighted music, which is the music being played in juke boxes. And of course, if we really applied for permission, paid copyright, it would cost millions. Also the managing director of Dreamland went to the golf club one day and found everyone was laughing at him, because the night before there had been on Panorama, on television, an excerpt from O Dreamland in which his voice was heard saying torture through the ages, your children will love it and he had recorded this commentary, you see, he didnt think twice about it. When his friends heard about it, of course, they all laughed at him. So he wrote an angry letter and said he had been duped and the film wasn't to be shown.

I dont know quite what happened. Britain in 1956 was in a pretty dead condition. 1956 is the year I think, 1956 was the year of Hungary, the year of Suez which politically stirred things up. Also strangely enough it was the year of Free Cinema, it was the year of the English stage company at the Royal Court and *Look Back In Anger*. So many things started happening in 1956.

Norman Swallow: And in fiction too, I'm thinking of David Storey, Stan Barstow, Alan Sillitoe, their novels

Lindsay Anderson: It wasn't 56 but it certainly came out of that, yes it did. And that was post war revolution,

Norman Swallow: We had the same view in television at that time as you know because Denis Mitchell and I were in touch with you and Karel, for example, quite frequently,

Lindsay Anderson: Probably you're quite right,

Norman Swallow: The same thing.

Lindsay Anderson: Poor old England

Norman Swallow: The mood of the day, wasn't it

Lindsay Anderson: Look what's happened

Norman Swallow: Well we will come to that later on. That was the mood of the time, wasn't it, cinema theatre, fiction, etc.

Lindsay Anderson: And Karel Reisz, as I expect he told you, got a job with, he wanted to be a film maker, I think Karel wanted to be a film maker in a rather more conscious and possibly Cambridge way, since we were Oxford, in a rather more planned way, and Karel got a job with the Ford Motor Company

End of side one

SIDE 2, TAPE 1

Lindsay Anderson: I should mention Karel Reisz whom I knew because of course he had been also around. And I had met Karel first when we shared a Moviola at Aston Clinton. We had a double booking, did he mention that?

Norman Swallow: No.

Lindsay Anderson: He's probably forgotten it actually. We did have a double booking because I was researching an article on Hitchcock for Sequence and Karel was doing some sort of research for his book about film editing.

Norman Swallow: He mentioned the book.

Lindsay Anderson: Well we found that we had both double booked onto the Moviola so he watched my Hitchcock film, whatever it was, and I watched, I think it was *Mata Hari*, and that's how I got to know Karel. And indeed Karel had finally written for Sequence, he had written an article about William Wyler, and he co-edited with me I think the last issue or the last issue but one of Sequence. Well then so we all knew each other and that's how Free Cinema came about. And then Karel got this job with the Ford Motor Company. And he got it, as I'm sure he said, but I think it's true that he would produce advertisement films for Ford, and remember this is before commercials really, there were advertisement films, on condition that he could make some films that had no advertising. And we talked about this. Free Cinema had existed for one show, then there was another show because Lionel Robison arrived in London with a film called *On the Bowery* and he couldn't get that released. And I suddenly said why don't we have another Free Cinema show and we'll show *On the Bowery*, get some more films of that kind together and show it as Free Cinema 2. So we did and it worked, I think he got a release.

Then Free Cinema 3 was about the time when Karel had got this job with Ford, and he asked me, very fortunately to make the first film in a series of what was to have been a series, but of course Britain being Britain and the Ford Motor Company being the Ford

Motor Company, it never became really a series, which was *Look at Britain*. And I had done my first sort of pukka professional film, having been invited by Sidney Cole to direct five Robin Hood films and I remember absolutely typically, I was doing these Robin Hoods, and Sid said maybe you can do a few more. And I said to Karel could I put off doing this film for the Ford Motor Company and he said no you can't, you've got to do it. So I said to Sid, I'm sorry I've got to do this documentary. And I'm very glad he did. At first we didnt know what this film was to be. And I remember I had an idea of doing a film about long distance lorry drivers, fish being delivered to Grimsby or something.

I thought long distance lorry drivers were rather romantic. Also even if Ford weren't insisting on it I thought well OK we've got to tie it to something, and maybe you've got lorries. That didn't work out terribly well. And then I went down to Covent Garden. I don't know how but I walked round there and finally without being extremely enthused I said to Karel well what about Covent Garden? He said "all right," and so I started making Every Day Except Christmas. With Walter as my cameraman, John was doing sound and we didn't have blimp

Norman Swallow: John Fletcher

Lindsay Anderson: John Fletcher, we had no blimp camera and we recorded sound and later we went back and recorded sound and another friend, Alex Jacobs, who had been in publicity and I had got to know on Sequence, he was sort of assistant director, or something. It was interesting because the first shooting on Covent Garden, which had a script like the back of the envelope, it was terrible. And I remember Karel used to come to rushes, at Studio Film Labs, because we shot at night and we would see the rushes at about five o'clock in the afternoon, because Studio Film Labs developed during the day as opposed to the other laboratories, and Karel got terribly depressed seeing these scrappy shots of the market. And I got depressed too. But I had to ask Karel not to come because

Norman Swallow: Infected the unit

Lindsay Anderson: It was, it was so depressing. And I agreed with him, I thought it was terrible. I can't tell you, somehow, I don't remember terribly clearly, but somehow we went back and one got the feel of it. And we shot Every Day. We shot a film which was supposed to be 20 minutes long, it to turned out to be the 40 minutes long when we'd edited it. Fortunately Karel and Leon Clore, who of all documentary or semidocumentary people, did actively help, didn't insist it should be cut down by half, and Johns and I spent weeks, I don't know, months, in a cellar in Wardour St and cut *Every Day Except Christmas* which is essentially a montage film really, with certain characters whom I'd chosen to concentrate on. So that was finished and then *Every Day Except Christmas* became the linchpin, how else would we show *Every Day Except Christmas* except that we had to have another A Free Cinema show. So it was shown in Free Cinema 3 together with

Norman Swallow: 1957, am I right?

Lindsay Anderson: I would think so. What did we show with *Every Day Except Christmas*, well it is all quite interesting really because we had met two would be filmmakers from Switzerland who were selling brushes at Selfridges, Alan Tanner and Claude Goretta, and they wanted to make a film, I remember they wanted to make a film about smoke, and being Free Cinema, or whatever we were at that time, I remember I said to them "for God's sake, don't make a film about smoke." "well what?"-- "well what about Piccadilly Circus?" And John went and worked with them, I think as cameraman and sound recordist, something like that, and the BFI, that film-making activities at the BFI which had developed a bit, gave them the money to make *Nice Time*. I think that was in Free Cinema Three.

Norman Swallow: It was in a Free Cinema season

Lindsay Anderson: It was

Norman Swallow: That is where I saw it.

Lindsay Anderson: And the Robert Vas who was another, a refugee from Hungary and he made a little film called *Refuge England*. I'll tell you an interesting, I think it is really interesting this, I remember a friend, Jack Gold, was working for BBC television on a programme called *Tonight*

Norman Swallow: Yes he did work on *Tonight*, he worked with Denis Mitchell and me as an editor and then he moved on to *Tonight* as an editor and eventually producer - director

Lindsay Anderson: Who was that bad tempered Yorkshireman.

Norman Swallow: Donald Baverstock

Lindsay Anderson: No, oh it was Donald Baverstock, but it is rather interesting, Jack said to me "Why don't you do something for Tonight?" I said "Great, I'd love to very much, thank you." He said "well, look, give me Every Day, give me a copy and Ill give it to Donald Baverstock and they can look at it." So I gave them a copy. Weeks, several weeks went by and nothing happened, it never came back again. Finally I said "could I have my film back please?" So I was asked to go down and -- would it to be Shepherd's Bush

Norman Swallow: Lime Grove

Lindsay Anderson: Probably Lime Grove, yes it was Lime Grove. So I went down and was introduced to Donald Baverstock who said "How long did it take you to edit this?" I said "I can't remember. What would it be, three months or something." and he said "We do these things overnight. Rubbish, there is nothing in it, it is just a reportage on" he was totally unresponsive to anything that one had tried to do, wanted to do, and he was aggressive.

Alan Lawson: That's right

Lindsay Anderson: Well he was aggressive. But it is all really when I come to think of it to do with these vain attempts to have any sort of a, if I had been more of an operator it might have worked but I wasn't a good operator, and vain attempts to have any impact whatever on the established order of things. I know that I was twice turned it down by the BBC for their course. I met, who was that woman who was a very famous, Mary

Norman Swallow: Mary Adams.

Lindsay Anderson: Mary Adams and I think I met her. Then there was. Who? Then there was a man in charge

Norman Swallow: Of the training course? Royston Morley was in charge of the training course

Lindsay Anderson: Royston Morley. I saw him at, was interviewed by him, they both turned me down. But you will have to tell me, I can't honestly say but obviously my attitude to was wrong. I can't remember exactly what my attitude was because I think it was quite spontaneous but perhaps it was too bold, do you think, not respectful enough

Norman Swallow: Probably in those days with those people, could be, could be

Lindsay Anderson: Even after, I'll tell you something, after would it be, *Thursday's Children* or the first Free Cinema show, I was in fact, there was a vain attempt to employ me in the establishment. I was given by the C O I a film about industrialism in Wales. I went down to Wales and I researched it, this would be in 56, that's right, I researched it and I came back, I wrote to her treatment for a script called *Our Revolution*. Well you can immediately see to call up a film *Our Revolution* was not on, and that was turned down.

Then I was asked to do a film about rehabilitation. I went to a rehabilitation centre and that fell through because they couldn't agree on the co-operation between the two people who were going to sponsor it, the private sponsor and the COI, or something like that, it fell through. And finally I think it was Helen de Mouilpied who was Denis Forman's wife who commissioned me to do a film, to make film about the horse on the farm. And I again went off and did this research, and came back, being a complete idiot, which I was, and I wrote a report saying "well I don't think there is much future for the horse on the farm really, what we should be doing is making a film about the tractor on the farm." So I was immediately dismissed. Interestingly before she sadly died, whenever it was, a year or two ago, Helen denied all knowledge of this but I know it was true. They're amusing these attempts, aren't they?

Another, now that was documentary. There was also an attempt, yes I remember, I think this must have been when Ken Tynan got employed briefly at Ealing. And for some reason, I suppose by Ken, but he never did anything really to support me but he got me taken on by Ealing to do at a treatment of a subject I proposed which was of a novel called Casualty. And I was asked to prepare a treatment. And I put on a white coat and went into a hospital and for five or six weeks I was in a casualty ward and I wrote a

treatment. And I think it would have made a very good film, there is no doubt it would have made a very good film.

Norman Swallow: This was at the BBC?

Lindsay Anderson: No Ealing.

Norman Swallow: Ealing Films, before it was taken over

Lindsay Anderson: I turned this in and I had a response, I don't remember from whom but it said there should be more romantic interest in it, the relationship with his wife it is rather sketchy. And I said "Well I think you're quite right actually, there should be, but in needs working on by a writer, or I'll work with the writer. I don't think I can do it entirely by myself," because I didn't think of myself as a writer. And Ealing said, or Balcon said "No we are not going to employee a writer, you've got to do it yourself. " And I thought well, if this is their attitude, they obviously aren't really serious about it. I think I was right in fact. So I said well I won't do it. They also said by the way there is absolutely no future in any films about hospitals or illness. This was I think shortly before there was that's very long-running series

Norman Swallow: *Dr Kildare*

Lindsay Anderson: No, before that. There was a very long running series about a casualty ward. And that shows the amount of showbiz know-how there was in Ealing, and this bloody man Balcon. And I said "Well, I'll withdraw, there is no point in doing it. " The only response to this was, that Balcon got very annoyed and asked for his money back. Which was about £500- £600. Well I know but I can't help feeling that all these things are of interest in a wider connotation, they're to do with Britain and what existed in Britain up to the time of, if you like not just Free Cinema but the revolution which came about through Woodfall, *Saturday Night And Sunday* Morning and a number of films which showed a social consciousness, and just very interesting, I think all this must, I've never really got it out of him why Tony Richardson, a friend who was then at the Royal Court left Britain and has lived in Los Angeles for the last 25 years. I think he knew that this place wasn't going to change. Nor has it. But anyway of those were attempts to get into, I mean nobody ever spoke to me, or Balcon never said well come and have lunch and we'll talk about bullshit, absolutely. And I don't think the Ealing people liked very much really, any more that documentary people did, do you?

Norman Swallow: I'm sure you're right.

Lindsay Anderson: They'd feel sort of "what is all this?" They're rather unpleasant these people

Norman Swallow: I never knew them so I can't comment. Not the film people.

Lindsay Anderson: Didn't you know Basil Wright?

Norman Swallow: Socially

Lindsay Anderson: He was nice, not a firebrand

Norman Swallow: I worked with him only once, at the BBC

Lindsay Anderson: Harry Watt. They were nice people but they belonged to their own era, their own class and really, they are all or away or dead or something now so one can never asked them, and I'm at not a person to ask because I just someone who can only say now I don't really know why it they're all behaved like that, and why they didn't, I mean when I went to see Grierson at Group Three in Beaconsfield, well obviously I wanted some kind of a job and all I got was a rather hostile reception from Grierson and a lot of talk about how great he was really. I remember him saying how well they were doing, he said "We've got to a film shooting here at the moment, I'm sure this man is going to turn out to be the British Rene Clair. And this was in fact a film called *Miss Robin Hood* that was being made by John Guillermin with Margaret Rutherford. That's as far as John Grierson ever got. So I don't subscribe to these British myths, because in the British myths John Grierson was a great man instead of being a clapped out drunk. Is that unkind. No it isnt.

Norman Swallow: I'm sure your right. Talking about *Robin Hood* you did some Robin Hoods for Rediffusion, didn't you.

Lindsay Anderson: Well no, interestingly the Robin Hood was again, it was it for television but it was run by a woman called Hannah Weinstein, and Hannah, together with the people she knew, and had left America because of the Un-American Activities Committee and she employed those people. So it is rather interesting again that that was only, Sid Cole, certainly was friendly, and I'd known Sid ages before when I did a book called Making A Film which I haven t mentioned which involved going to Ealing in the early Fifties, very early, beginning of the Fifties, invited by Thorald Dickinson to write a book about the making of a film, and Sid was the producer. The film was I'm afraid a disaster chiefly because the script, the idea was alright but the script was infantile. And I was there to do this book which I did as well as I could but I knew that I couldn't tell the truth exactly because I owed it to the people, Thorald and all of them, I couldn't be nasty, so I've never thought very highly of it but it certainly tells you how a film was made then in Britain. And I think it was through knowing Sid then that he invited me to do Robin Hood But remember Robin Hood was really an American venture, shown by, so I wasn't approached by Associated Rediffusion, you're joking

Norman Swallow: Well, as a mere viewer, I saw it on their Channel.

Alan Lawson: Can you tell us about Hannah?

Lindsay Anderson: Hard hearted Hannah. I'd quite liked Hannah. Perhaps I'm not, I've often wondered about these things, but I can't ask you particularly but I suppose I'm not likeable am I?

Norman Swallow: Why not?

Lindsay Anderson: I don't know. Are [not quite clear] I felt at home or been at home was the Royal Court. And that of course happened where we've sort of got to. Because

having got to Free Cinema made *Every Day*… and all that, the next thing, Karel made one more film which was *We Are The Lambeth Boys* for *Look At Britain*, and then the thing collapsed because the Ford Motor Company characteristically withdrew, nobody gave a fuck.

Norman Swallow: this was about 59-60?

Lindsay Anderson: Yes. And I would say that the BFI were heartily relieved that the Free Cinema shows were no longer going to appear National Film Theatre, the BFI didn't like them at The National Film Theatre, they didn't like this kind of publicity, they didn't like being associated with people who might be regarded as radical. And indeed I will say that my good friend Derek Prouse and I liked Derek but he was a bit double edged, and after I think the last Free Cinema show Derek resented the kind of publicity we had got as Free Cinema, and he organised a series of showings of documentaries made by Associated Rediffusion, I think, I can't remember now, and they'd called the it Captive Cinema. And it was the most amazing thing that anybody should call a programme Captive Cinema proudly but equally typically of Britain and, of course, that the name Captive Cinema never raised an eyebrow. Everyone was delighted, everybody wanted to be captive, as in my view they still do. But that is Britain for you. And what happened after that, when the Ford Motor Company withdrew, and me knowing a) I wasn't any kind of careerist and b) our efforts were not liked by the documentary establishment, there was no way I would get a film from Edgar Anstey, he would employ John Schlesinger of course

Norman Swallow: British Transport Films

Lindsay Anderson: British Transport Films. He'd employee him to make *Terminus* and *Terminus* has been shown about 25 times on television whereas it took 30 years for *Every Day Except Christmas* to be shown by the BBC, don't ask me why. You tell me.

Norman Swallow: I don't know.

Lindsay Anderson: At this time I was damned lucky because Tony Richardson sent me a copy of a play written by an author whom he knew I liked called Catherine Sully and he said "Would you like to do this? having a series of Sunday night performances." and so, in much the same spirit as I'd taken on *Meet The Pioneers*, I suppose, I said OK and I directed a play called The Waiting of Lester Abbs. I didn't know anything really about, I mean I had always been keen on theatre, so I wasn't exactly scared, but I knew I didn't know anything. And Ian Bannen played the lead, I remember. I had seen Ian in *A*

View From The Bridge, Ernest Spencer, Katharine Wilmott, Michael Hastings, Robert Stephens, Fanny Carby, Alan Owen. All people who were around then, you can tell it was a good period.

And something like a year later, and I really was sort of rather at a loose end, I think, I don't know what I was doing really. I remember I wrote a letter to Bristol Old Vic which Dennis Carey was running and said could you have any work for an assistant of any kind or something pretentious and got one of those letters back, telling me to piss off. So Tony and Oscar Lewenstein, who had bought the rights to a play by Willis Hall called I think

The Disciplines Of War, asked me if I would direct it. So I said yes and I remember meeting Willis and I said "Would you mind if we changed the title?", it had been called *The Disciplines Of War* and also *Boys It's All Hell*, it had been done at Edinburgh. The lead was played by Patrick Garland. And I said "could it we eat change the title, what do you think of *The Long And The Short And The Tall?"* And he said "You can call it what you fucking well like, you're the director so I said "Alright," and that's how we did *The Long And The Short And The Tall.*

Norman's one: And the author was happy with the title

Lindsay Anderson: I think so. He's never said anything to me.

Norman Swallow: Your career, You're now overlapping cinema and theatre from now on.

Lindsay Anderson: I was bloody lucky actually, at that time when, I must have been crazy really but I wasn't any kind of careerist and I didn't have that knack and I knew anyway, nobody was running after me to try and make films, and ironically of course the wretched Ealing Studios bought the rights of *The Long And The Short And The* Tall but they wouldn't ask me to direct it and us say wouldn't ask Peter O'Toole to play in it. And they made this rather bad film, I think, with Laurence Harvey and Richard Todd, directed by Leslie Norman. And I think it is time somebody wrote a book about Michael Balcon which told the truth. But that was my liaison with the Court. And of course through Tony Richardson, and I got on very well with George Devine. I think George is one of the few people I've ever met in the theatre who occupied a position of running a theatre and was absolutely not jealous. George really liked, looked for and wanted talent. If he found it he was very delighted. But any other theatre I've ever been in, I think people have always been jealous.

Alan Lawson: You mean because you're not of the theatre?

Lindsay Anderson: No, because one might be successful.

Norman Swallow: Dear me yes that's a danger.

Lindsay Anderson: And also there is something to do with speaking at out, talking about, as perhaps I am now,

Norman Swallow: Why not?

Lindsey Anderson: Well why not, there are very good reasons why not, really, if you want to get on in this society, it is better not to. You don t do any good for yourself. But it cant do be helped, either you're born like that or you're not, it's not a decision

So anyway I went to the Court, I did *The Long And The Short*… and then they said to me, George said or somebody said would I'd be an associate, assistant director or associate director, take it on as a job? So I did.

Norman Swallow: But that was quite later, wasn't it? 69

Lindsay Anderson: No no, no, no, no, it's

Norman Swallow: in that case I have been misinformed. I got this from some reference book.

Lindsay Anderson: Absolutely no, this was before I did *Sporting Life*. What happened, I had some experience in the theatre at a very good time when the first plays by John Arden were being done and I did *Sargeant Musgrave 's Dance* and *Christopher Low*, but this was all simultaneous, it's why the Sixties were really a very good time, and it points the absurdity of the myths that is promoted at the moment which is either to denigrate the Sixties or to make out the Sixties as essentially a time of flower power, meditation, etc . But the Sixties wasn't just, the point about the Sixties was that it was a break up and the whole political and social ideas changed.

Norman Swallow: The atmosphere, yes.

Lindsay Anderson: And there and was indeed a hope there might be a popular Front that Labour might, that the left wing might do something. It didn't in the end. It was suppressed under the characteristic English inertia but at that time it was a very lively period and the Court was as lively as anywhere else.

And at the same time Tony Richardson had said to me "Why don't you do a film for Woodfall And I remember after a show called *The Lily White Boys*, I went to Paris and I read in the paper about a forthcoming publication of a book called This Sporting Life which, there was something about the report of it that seemed interesting to me. And

when I came back I ordered the book and I got it when it was first published, from Better Books in Charing Cross Road. And I read Sporting Life and I honestly don't remember greatly that business of reading it but I did think it would be made a good film. And I took it to Tony Richardson and I said "1 think this will make a good film. What do you think?" and Tony said well

Unclear

And Tony read it about a-week later I had, I met again with Tony and he said I’ve read Sporting Life and I don’t have, think, it's a film for you really. " I said "All right, I don’t mind. " which shows how careerist I was. I said "Well perhaps we'll find something else." I wasn't going to go into the whole business of working for two years to try and set up This Sporting Life.

But then I had dinner with Oscar Lewenstein and Oscar said "oh, I've just read a book that would make a very good film" and some intuition came over me. And I said "You don't mean This Sporting Life, do you?" And he said "Yes, how did you know?" I said "Oh, I just guessed. " And then in fact what happened, of course, was that Tony bid ferociously to make *This Sporting Life* and made a dead set at David Storey.

But at the same time the Rank Organisation, inspired by Stanley Baker and Joe Losey, they bought This Sporting Life and it was given to Julian Wintle of Independent Artists. Julian Wintle for some reason did not want to make a film with Joe Losey, I think they had made Blind Date. I don't know what happened, I never asked about it, and he said to Stanley Baker "Look you can play this part fine but I don't want Joe Losey. And Stanley said "Well, I'm associated with Joe." So he bowed out. Julian Wintle then invited Karel Reisz to direct This Sporting Life. Did Karel tell you this? Yes, more or less.

Norman Swallow: Well Karel was the producer wasn't he eventually?

Lindsay Anderson: Karel didn't want to do it and he didn't want to do another North country thing - anyway he didn't want to direct a film then. And he came to me and he said, I was rehearsing Billy Liar at the time with Albert, and he said "Look, would you like me to say to them, I'm going to see the Rank Organisation tomorrow, would you like me to say" he didn't want to direct it but he'd produce it if I'd direct it. And I said to him "Well, fine, you can ask them but I don't suppose they'll agree. " The next day, I think, Karel came back and he said they've the agreed. I said well I suppose we'll have to do it then. And to cut a long story short we did. And Carol had said well he'd done *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and it it had worked very well, working with Alan Sillitoe and should we not first ask David Storey if he would do the script. And I said yes it's a good idea. So we met David

Norman Swallow: Be author of the novel of course be

Lindsay Anderson: And we met David Storey and got on very well and liked him very much. And that's how that began.

It's quite a long story really the which I'd won't go into now but David wrote the script and David at that time had an idea that he wanted the making of the film to be as creative as experience as writing the novel. So he wrote a script which really wasn't like the novel, it wasn't good. And I rather weakly went along with it, I didn't think it was very good, but we had got in touch with Richard Harris who was in Tahiti making *Mutiny on the Bounty* and in the end I said well look I'll have to go and see Richard and discuss this. They said you can't see him, he's in Tahiti.

Norman Swallow: He was your idea, was he?

Lindsay Anderson: Do you know I think he was David Storey's idea. I'd think he had seen a picture of him in believe it or not *The Long And The And Short And The Tall*. No my idea had been originally Sean Connery. But the studio didn't think Sean Connery had a big enough name. Anyway they said you can't see the Richard Harris because he's in Tahiti. I said look its 1960 or whatever it was, you must be able to get to Tahiti. And the Rank Organisation said well yes.

Anyway I went to Tahiti at I'd met Richard Harris there and I said why haven't you been in touch and he said well what's this script you've written for me. It looks like something written for Michael Craig and Yvonne Mitchell.

And I said it's better that the rubbish you're in here at anyway. And so we got on rather well and Richard very, very sensibly, we it went through it and Richard really, essentially said well this script should be the script of the book, that's what we're supposed to be making. And I went back and I spoke to David Storey. And David said he is quite right and he rewrote the script in about three weeks. And we made the film Norman Swallow: Very good film if I dare say so and successful of course

Lindsay Anderson: I don't mind you can say it all right

Norman Swallow: It was successful in every sense wasn't it

Lindsay Anderson: I think it was successful in every every sense except what I see is rather becoming my theme, it wasn't particularly successful in terms of British commerce. It certainly wasn't successful in terms of the Rank Organisation who disliked it, didn't know what to do with it, in other words it made no impact. There may have been some liberals and highbrow who said this is a marvelous film, or even ordinary people, but it wasn't in the British film tradition

Alan Lawson: You need the Rank didn't really make the proper effort

Lindsay Anderson: They didn't know how to. They did their best, they had no idea. Why would they like our film like that, there is no reason why they should. Interesting now I look back on it. I don t think I'd was asked to make another film by anybody. Why should they. If you look at it why would they?

Norman's one and: Well yes, against the commercial background you're talking about it makes sense. But on any other scale of values it makes no sense

Lindsay Anderson: Well I wasn't. So I don't quite know, I'd have to look it up, I did some plays or something. But then I was invited by Woodfall make part of a trilogy which Oscar was producing which was, I eventually titled *Red White And Zero*. But it was never shown so it didn't matter anyway. Were films by, actually when it started Karel Reisz was going to make Morgan as part of that trilogy, but when he worked on the script he realised he wanted to make it a feature. So it turned into a film by Peter Brooke, Tony Richardson and myself. And it was Oscar who suggested this story by Sheila Delaney and her book Sweetly Sings The Donkey called *The White Bus* and I met Sheila, and I liked her very much, we got together and well of course no film is simple, is it

Norman Swallow: It was set in Manchester.

Lindsay Anderson: It was, it was about Sheila's experience of youth in Manchester and Salford.

Norman Swallow: Salford, isn't it, me too.

Lindsay Anderson: It's probably a long time since you'd seen it isn't it

Norman Swallow: No having done work for Granada frequently.

Lindsay Anderson: Really. Well I know the BBC once showed *The White Bus* after showing, God knows why, *0 Lucky Man* which is about 2 hours and 50 minutes so they showed *The White Bus* at I think either a quarter to or a quarter past 12 at night. That's that famed little number. Interestingly for me was that I worked on *The White Bus* with the cameraman Miroslav Ondricek from Czechoslovakia, Prague whom I'd met when I'd gone over after *This Sporting Life*, I was invited over, and I went on the set of Milos Forman' s film

Alan Lawson: Not *The Fireman 's Ball*.

Norman Swallow: It's so famous we can't remember it. It was his last film in Czechoslovakia wasn't it.

Lindsay Anderson: The Fi… Lindsay Anderson: Anyway I do know. Anyway anyone listening to this tape will obviously know, I hope. And that's where I met Milos and Ivan. I also met somebody who became the very good friends, Ivan Passer, sorry Vladimir P xxxxx now practising as a doctor in Canada and Mirek. And I'd said to Mirek absolutely off the top of my head if there was a chance to make a film in Britain would be you come? And he'd didn't speak any English at all of course. Somebody translated it and he said yes.

And when we came to make *The White Bus* because it was a segment of a trilogy, I think from the union point of view it ranked as a short and therefore they were able to get permission for Mirek to come and be the cameraman. I had been quite sort of patriotic about it and I had met at least a couple of English cameramen, Peter Suschitsky but Peter Suschitsky is a very good cameraman but he is rather uncommunicative which doesn't suit me very well. And David, a very well known cameraman, David Watkin, and David Watkin seemed to have been chiefly interested in the possibility of using infra red stock and as I'd had a conversation with him and said I didn't want the film to look in anyway eccentric. I wanted it to have fantasy but to be shot in a very straight forward way, this didn't seem a very good meeting of minds. Anyway some instinct told me that it would be nice to work with Mirek. And so that rather cemented my relationship with the Czechs which has been an important part of my life. And we made *The White Bus*. But *The White Bus* of course was disliked. Partly because *Red, White and Zero* was a total failure.

Norman Swallow: It never happened.

Lindsay Anderson: Well it did happen, it exists somewhere on some shelf.

Norman Swallow: What the trilogy, no.

Lindsay Anderson: Yes. The cameraman on *This Sporting Life* had been Denys Coop. That it was rather interesting because Karel of course wanted it to be the cameraman of *Saturday Night And Sunday Morning*, well he's rather famous and also became a director and shot a lot of horror pictures.

Alan Lawson: Freddie Francis.

Lindsay Anderson: Well done. Freddie Francis. And I think Freddie Francis wasn't available. I was quite glad really, I don't know why. I remember we met Nic Roeg who had a sort of reputation of an up and coming chap and I think we screened *Every Day Except Christmas* for him and afterwards Nic Roeg said "Pity it wasn't in colour. " and that was the end of that.

I didn't know who to have as a cameraman honestly. I didn't remember how we got hold of Denys Coop but I think Denys Coop did a very, very good job. The only difficulty, between you and me was that Denys Coop brought with him his camera crew and particularly his camera assistant Johnny Harris who is probably still around, I don't know, *Fireman 's Ball* was.

Norman Swallow: Before that.

but he'd done pictures with Carol Reed and quite a high-up man, we didn't get on at all. And that made the job of making *Sporting Life* much more difficult than it need have been.

SIDE THREE

Lindsay Anderson: I have worked a lot in the north, you're quite right, and in fact, of course, I'd started in Wakefield. And the truth is not perhaps just that they are friendlier but also that they respond perfectly easily to shall we say an outspoken, if not aggressive, attitude. They don't mind, they'll give as good as they get. I think this is not the attitude in the south of England. I think in the South people don't want that kind of challenge. I mean Balcon certainly didn't. So I see no reason why one should be respectful of people like Balcon or Grierson, although he was a Scot. Now Grierson was rather Scottish but he was also, he had a sort of producers' complex, didn't he. He really wanted people to be disciples and when it was perfectly apparent from one's attitude that one wasn't a disciple Grierson resented one. I don't know, you tell me. We'll go on.

Norman Swallow: Poland then, 67 or there about.

Lindsay Anderson: Poland, I will tell you, after Czechoslovakia and of course English people always confuse Czechoslovakia with Poland, they think they're the same place.

Norman Swallow: They both begin at Calais, perhaps

Lindsay Anderson: That right. I'll tell you, there was a very nice chap called Victor Poole, worked at the BBC, and Victor Poole at one time did their film programme. It may not have been as, in fact it wasn't as showbiz as this frightful Barry Norman but it was much better, it was more serious. And he had employed me once or twice, three-times, I don't know, to do things for Derek Prouse. And he did give me the commission to go to Poland and investigate the Polish cinema.

I had known the Poles a bit ever since seeing way back Wajda's first film at Cannes, *A Generation*, and then Wajda's next films, and indeed in Free Cinema, that's right, we did a programme of Polish documentaries and I'd always had a

sympathy with the Poles for their progressiveness and if you like darkness and temperament. So I was happy to go to Poland.

And there was one actor in Poland I had got to know, I think I got to know him in the course of the programme which I did for Victor Poole and his name is Tadeusz Lomnicki and Tadeusz is a top Polish actor, and he had the idea that I might go to Warsaw and direct Hamlet because he wanted to play Hamlet, as all actors do. When I finally did go to Warsaw I found that the head of the contemporary theatre, and extremely nice chap called Irwin Axer, he didn't want to do Hamlet in his theatre which was called the Contemporary Theatre and came up instead with the idea of doing *Inadmissible Evidence.* And so I said alright. And we did *Inadmissible Evidence* Tadeusz as Maitland. I had not done that, of course, at the Court, but I had been around, I knew the play pretty well.

During rehearsals for *Inadmissible Evidence* my assistant suggested I come to the acting school and see the class that she was helping with, of 4th year students. And I went rather reluctantly, I thought oh God, you know, but I did, I thought I ought to go. I was so delighted by the feel and the talents involved that I said well I'll make a film about that. When I said I was invited to make
a film of course you'd have to go into who was running the documentary studio in Warsaw and of course since my mind is going I can't remember names now, you wouldn't know them would you .

Norman Swallow: No

Lindsay Anderson: Jerzy Bosak. Does that name mean anything to you?

Norman Swallow: Vaguely

Lindsay Anderson: Perhaps the people who will listen to this tape, if anybody ever does, will have heard of JB. JB was rather an outstanding man in Polish cinema but he ran the documentary studio — and he had the disadvantage of being a Jew and this was the period when, just before, in fact, anti-Semitism again raised its head in Warsaw. But anyway he'd said to me

'
'come and make a film". And as always happens in this case, you say well what would you like me to make and they say I don't know what would you like to do and I say I don't know anything about Warsaw. But I stumbled across the 4th year students and then they gave me a cameraman who spoke English, a middle aged chap and I said "you're a nice fellow but could you give me a young cameraman?" And they said well the only trouble with the young cameraman is they probably don't speak English. I said I don't mind, give me a cameraman who doesn't speak English. And they gave me a very, very nice cameraman who had only made one film, I think, that was very clever, Zsigmund Sumerchuk and I immediately liked him. There was an American who was a student translator and I got the idea then of shooting, it was rather it difficult because in those countries although you can make a film you do have to give a script in, because that's the bureaucracy and then you're paid for the script. So we cooked up some kind of a script. And I thought well together with the fourth year students I will do sequences of life in Warsaw.

So I shot this film and then I went back to Warsaw where they'd appointed one of the senior or perhaps the senior editor of the documentary studios to edit it. And she had screened some material when I was back in Britain and she came back to them and she said this film can't be edited. When I arrived there I was told that their best editor had said it was not possible to edit the film. I said this is absolute rubbish. Give me another editor. And they gave me the very nice woman and we edited the film.

That often happened to me in those early days, when people thought that the films I made couldn't be edited.

Norman Swallow: It's called *The Singing Lesson*

Lindsay Anderson: It's called *The Singing Lesson*, what did I say

Norman Swallow: You didn't, I think you told us what it is in Polish

Lindsay Anderson: In Polish it was called *One Two Three* because it ends with a waltz, l, 2, 3, and then I changed, I thought in British we would call it *The Singing Lesson.*

The White Bus without being nasty at all and I'm sure he wouldn't mind me saying this, the editor on *The White Bus* was Kevin Brownlow and Kevin Brownlow couldn't cut it. Fortunately Kevin went off, well it wasn't shot the way Kevin thinks films should be shot, it wasn't shot like Eisenstein. Fortunately Kevin went off to America to interview people or someone for his book The Parade 's Gone By and while he was away for a week John Fletcher, who was helping with the sound, and I went into a cutting room and cut the whole film. He'd only had to join it together.

Norman Swallow: So I must have seen your version obviously.

Lindsay Anderson: Of course you did, no, no.

Norman Swallow: It looked all right to me, the editing.

Lindsey Anderson: Well it was much simpler, we joined it together.

Norman Swallow: So we've reached 67.

Lindsey Anderson: So then I made *The Singing Lesson* and that was that, I came back again. And what happened then, nothing

Norman Swallow: The next thing we got is 68 is *If....*

Lindsay Anderson: No, no.

Norman Swallow: What is it then?

Lindsey Anderson: Perhaps it was. I beg your pardon, you're absolutely correct. Do you want the story of *If...* Well *If...* was rather interesting because, I was contacted by an old friend, Seth Holt. Seth had worked with a young writer called John the name will come

back to me-- who was a friend of David's and together John and David had written ages ago, they had been at school

Norman Swallow: David Storey again

Lindsay Anderson:. No David Sherwin. They had been at Tonbridge together and had written a film. And then I think they were at Oxford. Anyway John Howlett had got in touch with Seth or shown him this script, they had sent it to various directors actually, they sent it to Nicholas Ray, they had given it to Ian, who's Humphrey Jenning's producer, Ian Dalrymple , they'd shown it to Ian Dalrymple who read it and he said they ought to be horse whipped. And apparently Seth sent it to me and said would I think of directing a film with him as producer. He said he couldn't direct himself because he hadn't been to a public school.

And I had this envelope and, I do remember that on the envelope it was written, or on the script was written the name of the script which was *Crusaders* and I immediately, of course, responded

to this idea and I immediately knew that *Crusaders* would be, well it wouldn't be about the Crusades. I read it and I didn't think I could do it because it was too clever, adolescent, whatever, it wasn't me. But then Seth said to me would I meet John and David and we met at the Pillars Of Hercules pub in Greek Street. And I liked them and I liked David's and at the end after talking for half an hour to three-quarters of an hour I said alright we'll have a go.

Which is a terribly interesting thing, I mean good for Seth because you can see how someone like Balcon never went to that trouble, because if he had listened, if Balcon had taken any trouble at all, of course I would have made a film for Ealing, but he didn't really want me to.

But about that time then I went to Poland and I was in correspondence with David whom I was working with, John was working with Seth. And we started at the beginning really, David was writing bits, ideas, incidents. When I came back I remember I had to appear in a television film called *The Parachute* by David Mercer ,which a friend of mine Anthony Page whom I'd known at The Court was directing. And I well remember a rehearsal of The Parachute at the end of which David Sherwin came to pick me up and we went off to talk about If..., and then we started writing the script. Seth then, his career as a director got re-animated and he got some other project as a director. Anyway I remember that David and I went and met Seth Holt and John Howlett in Hampstead and had given them our treatment which they didn't go like. So we went on by ourselves.

We wrote the script and it is rather interesting that *If...* was written without any, it wasn't commissioned, it wasn't written for a company or anything, it was just written.

And when it was completed we gave it to, yes David would remembered this, I think we met Albert Finney who was in Wardour St, cutting his film, which he'd made with Sheila Delaney and Albert said have you shown it to Michael, because Michael Medwin was sort of running his company. So we showed the film, the script to Michael and he liked it and they took it on.

Well it was hell to get *If...* produced actually because no one in Britain would look at it, no British company would look at it. Michael took on Roy, I should have looked up these names actually, as a line of producer, he couldn't get it taken on. And in the end it was taken on by an American television company who were going to take to start making films. I remember, this is England again, it is the story of my life actually, I remember going to have a drink or lunch or whatever it was with Philip, who wrote I Claudius ?

Norman Swallow: Philip Mackie

Lindsay Anderson: Well done. Philip Mackie, because Philip Mackie had been put in charge of Granada's film section which was just starting up and I remember talking to Philip Mackie and he said well I'm afraid I can't do it because I didn't go to a public school. You know all these bloody people, you would think, wouldn't you that they might sit down and say well could you tell me your ideas about the film, how do you see it. Nobody, it's the fucking English, that's all, and in the end typically it was taken on by an American company, typical that somebody in the American company read the script I suppose, they withdrew about five or six weeks before we

started shooting. *If...* was only made because Albert was then in the New York doing *A Day In The Death Of Joe Egg* and he and Michael went to see Charlie Bludhorn of Paramount who had already turned the film down in London, quite different from what she says in Alex Walker's account of the British cinema, Bud Ornstein did not accept *If...,* he was running the operation in London.

Charlie Bludhorn, well Michael always says he said in the end, well he thought to begin with he rather liked the idea of netting Albert and thought he could get Albert to make a film for them if he was positive about If... and then he said well how much is the director getting, I can't remember what I was getting but obviously by American standards it was miniscule and Bludhorn said oh well then he must want to do the picture, he's not getting very much and said alright we'll do it. Then I had to go to see Charles Bludhorn in London and be told by Charles Bludhorn that he'd decided he'd was going to do the film.

I knew perfectly well what had happened, I remember calling at his home and Charlie Bludhorn doing "Well, you know Lindsay I've always wanted to make a picture with you and I think it this will be..." all the bullshit of course.

But anyway we went ahead and Mirek with whom I'd done *The White Bus*, I managed to get the union to agree to Mirek coming over because I'd done *The White Bus* and shooting *If...,* but of course you had to have a stand by cameraman and that was Chris Menges. Anything else you would like to know about *If...* ?

Norman Swallow: I liked *If....* Retrospectively are you not?

Lindsay Anderson: I don't know, oh god everything is such a fight really when you look back on it. I don't think If... was a huge success. I think that Paramount in Britain was scared of it, actually. I remember a meeting with Peter King and Jerry Lewis, who at that time ran the
Paramount operation and they said to me "Well, we think that," they were scared stiff of it really, they said we think it's really a Curzon type picture." And I said to them "Well

you may think it's a Curzon type of picture but you don't happen to own the Curzon, do you. "

Norman Swallow: What's wrong with that any way?

Lindsay Anderson: The Curzon. It's not good

Norman Swallow: At that time?

Lindsay Anderson: Never, no, it no, no art house picture. And I said you don't own the Curzon do you but you do happen to own two cinemas in the West End, the Plaza One and the Plaza Two and what about backing the colour of your money and putting it on. And they, amazingly enough, were rather ashamed and that they did put on *If...* but they didn't show it to the circuit because they were so frightened of it until it opened.

And when it opened it got a a huge press but a it was too late for it to get a really good release which it never did get. And I think that perhaps *If...* was a great media success, I wouldn't say

when you got to Scunthorpe *If...* would do particularly well, and you have got to remember that the English cinema has never known a how to distribute films. The English cinema has created a public which likes American pictures, partly because the British cinema has always been class structured, it's been a middle-class preserve with working class pictures with Gracie Fields and George Formby. So there isn't any public, you give them something that is like if you like a European film, you give them *If...* and they don't know what they're looking at this isn't what we come to the cinema to see.

And I think that after it Memorial did a picture by Bill Norton with James Mason, a sort of regional comedy but anyway I remember Michael saying it did better than *If....* So *If...* is a picture of reputation. It did well in a limited way abroad, it did extremely well in Hungary. I'm afraid this is rather a repetitive theme of mine but I think that you are run up against if you produce anything radical in this country, and particularly if you want to be radical and popular, you might say Peter Greenaway is a radical, he is certainly not a popular but he is a media personality, so that is something quite different really.

Anyway, what happened after *If....*

Norman Swallow: *O Lucky Man* is the next film

Lindsey Anderson: That was an amazing, wasn't it, yes. Quite quickly for me. I think it's that Malcolm after *If...* had wanted to

Norman Swallow: Malcolm McDowell?

Lindsay Anderson: Malcolm McDowell who had been discovered for *If...,* a young actor who had had some experience and he says that he wanted us to do another picture, and he said to me "Well I'm going to write a script," and I said "Well fine". He did write a script, well he started, he found it rather difficult, by the time he got to 20 or 30 pages, I said well carry on and then I said "Why don t you get hold of David Sherwin? We both know

him, we like him, we did *If...* and perhaps you could work together. " They did a script and they gave it to me and I said well it's OK, it's a bit like a Ealing picture, isn't it. It's not very ambitious. And it was called *Coffee Man* because it was about Malcolm's early days as a coffee salesman. So I thought it should be about luck and I said it should be called *Lucky Man* not *Coffee Man* and then it became *O Lucky Man*. Then I worked on the script with David because Malcolm went off to make *Clockwork Orange*.

And little by little this film took shape. It benefited enormously again, it wasn't being made for a distributor or a studio. I think Malcolm and I both put up some money, not very much, for David to live on. So the picture did grow in a completely organic way and that' s, I think, how the idea of actors playing different roles in it, the same actors playing different roles, it was just because we sat talking about it like this and not in an industry context.

Norman Swallow: Better this way.

Lindsay Anderson: Much better. And also the whole participation of Alan Price whom I'd got to

know because in the theatre I'd done, I'd met him and then I'd asked him to do music Home and I liked Alan and again I do like him, and of course the northern connection and

Norman Swallow: North-east, he's north-east.

Lindsey Anderson: Geordie, North East,

Norman Swallow: I like him too

Lindsey Anderson: You know someone one day will write about this country because after George Orwell nobody has done it much but it is a very interesting, isn't it, that Alan has not ever been quite acceptable because he isn't like The Rolling Stones who are Southern art students, aren't they?

But I'd wanted to make the film about Alan, a sort of 60 minute documentary, I couldn't find anyone interested and unfortunately, this is my lack

Norman Swallow: We did one at the BBC, Mike Holdy made it, an Omnibus

Lindsay Anderson: Yes, it wasn't bad.

Norman Swallow: It was conventional.

Lindsey Anderson: That came after all this of course

Norman Swallow: I think that was based on a particular recording, any way sorry

Lindsey Anderson: No you're right. But then Alan actually linked up with Georgie Fame and it wasn't possible to make a film about him really, and also the copyright business came in. So he grew into *O Lucky Man* and. I can't say more than that. It wasn't oh one

decided OK we'll put, because we developed *O Lucky Man* in an intimate, friendly and conversational way, the picture is what it is. Strengths and weaknesses but

Norman Swallow: Again successful on many levels

Lindsey Anderson: I don't know, don't ask me.

Norman Swallow: You must know.

Lindsay Anderson: I think, interestingly, *O Lucky Man* opened rather well, not as well as, *If...* if you like, not that impact, partly because I think we were moving into the era of the conformism. *If...* was a radical picture and *O Lucky Man* is essentially a radical picture but radicalism during the Seventies was rather out and of course the whole thing had happened really, the complexion, which we haven t talked about at all, the complexion of the British cinema had changed, Free Cinema had of course disappeared. Tony had probably gone to America by now. I link it myself from the moment when Dick Lester made *The Knack*, interestingly enough a Woodfall film,
which was very successful and *The Knack* was absolutely not Free Cinema, because it wasn't social in any way really. And so it was hailed with relief by everybody. Because the British or the English never liked the idea of a social Cinema, a radical Cinema, they're not radicals. So by the time we made *O Lucky Man* I would say fashion had gone a different way.

But actually it was well received and it ran a long time in the West End. Unfortunately we showed the film at Cannes which was a big mistake, because Cannes is a totally bourgeois occasion really and then the head of Warner Brothers panicked and insisted on cutting the film for its American release and of course it didn't make the slightest difference, it never does, and three or four years later Warner Brothers empowered me to put the cut back. And that's quite a long story but quite an indicative one because the cut, I rang the editor whom I'd spoken to at the time and I said "Well be careful about this, because I'll put it back one day." I rang the editor and he said Oh I don't know where it is, yes, was I on the picture then. And I was really furious. Then I went down to the lab and the man produced a letter from Warner Brothers empowering him to destroy the negative. So the negative of the missing sequence of *O Lucky Man* had been destroyed. Fortunately I'd kept a reel of positive with the cut and we had the missing sequence duped, or a negative made from the positive and then I did work on it with another friend, Ian Rakoff and the whole thing, we did it all and we shipped it out to Warner Brothers in Burbank and spoke to them on the phone and said this is how you cut it in. All that.

And some months later, or maybe a year I can't remember I had to go to some ludicrous event in Los Angeles, Unesco or something, it was a complete rubbish, and I went to Burbank and I was saying , oh by the way, they wanted to show *O Lucky Man* and I said well we must give them a complete copy and they looked at me with blank faces. And I looked up on the shelf and I saw the parcel which Ian and I had sent from London with everything in it, all the reconstitution, they'd never opened it. And that's Warner Brothers, that's a Hollywood.

They did in the end and now *O Lucky Man* is obtainable in two versions, and they don't know which is which, one with the sequence in it and one without. When the BBC showed it they did show the complete version, by mistake of course. And [unclear] who cares

Norman Swallow: Moving on, I've got *In Celebration*, 1975.

Lindsay Anderson: *In Celebration*, well what happened there was, I had through my liaison with the Royal Court and the very fortunate chance that at the end of editing If... , Bill Gaskell from the Royal Court invited me to direct a play they had received by David Storey and this was In Celebration which he gave to me and I read and I responded to it. And I did *In Celebration* and that started a collaboration with David which I've been extremely grateful for.

Norman Swallow: Another Yorkshireman of course

Lindsey Anderson: Exactly. It's interesting isn't it. And we did *In Celebration* and then *The Contractor* and then I did *Home* with Gielgud and Richardson. And that we did a video version of, again I have to say that although I directed *Home* with John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, Mona Washbourne, Dandy Nichols, Warren Clarke at the Court and we went to the West End, we went to New York, no British company would video it, with that cast

Norman Swallow: Extraordinary

Lindsay Anderson: The BBC, ITV no one would do it. We went to New York, we did it there successfully. Channel 13 —in New York — said they would like to video it. We came back here, The video was shot here by Channel 13.

Norman Swallow: Is that WNET?

Lindsay Anderson: Yes, WNET. The only British money in it was possibly either the Scotts or Canadians, anyway I know three weeks before we did it they withdrew it.

Norman Swallow: It has been shown here of course

Lindsay Anderson Well naturally once we'd made it, the BBC bought it for two showings but they're complete fucking idiots, if I may say so, because it has been again on some shelf somewhere. When Ralph Richardson sadly departed, they never showed it again or Dandy nor Mona, it's never been shown again. It makes you sick actually. And you would have to tell me, what is this strong, it must be a southern prejudice, what is the prejudice against David Storey, why is David Storey not as well-known as Harold Pinter

Norman Swallow: I've never heard any prejudice against David Storey

Lindsay Anderson: You never hear anything. If you see any, alright, how many of David Storey's plays have been done for television ?

Norman Swallow: I haven't seen any.

Lindsey Anderson: One, *The Contractor*, which was a rather badly about a year ago, which I wasn't invited to do of course, it wasn't very well done and the poor chap, Barry Davies, I'm afraid had become an alcoholic and has died. Now you tell me.

Norman Swallow: I'm not in close contact with BBC drama

Lindsey Anderson: You don't need to be, just a use your intelligence. You don t need to be in contact with them. Look my dear Norman if you were in contact with them you would just get bullshit, well I don t think it's exactly what I'm looking for, and I didn't bring my… it is all that crap.

Norman Swallow: Yes, there is a lot, my experience is that you do get quite a lot of personal freedom if you're in some position of authority at the BBC, and it obviously depends on who the people are who are in positions of authority, therefore it is a personal thing

Lindsay Anderson: It isn't a personal thing, old boy

Norman Swallow: I don't think it's the Corporation, its individuals

Lindsey Anderson: Of course they're all at the same thing. Who do you think puts these people in power, in positions of authority.

Norman Swallow : Yes. Continuing hierarchy

Lindsay Anderson: It is, really and I regard it as amazing, if you see any lists now of these outstanding contemporary British dramatists, who do you see, Tom Stoppard, Alan Bennett, Simon Gray, Alan Ayckborn, David Hare, Howard Brenton

Norman Swallow: Never David Storey

Lindsay Anderson: Never, forgotten completely. Although in fact I don t know I've done about eight plays of his and all the plays we did at the Court transferred to West End

Norman Swallow: And the National of course

Lindsay Anderson: The National, that's another story but we won't go into that

Norman Swallow: Well OK, I was talking about, where I saw the last David's Storey play was at the National

Lindsey Anderson: *The March on Russia* I thought it was good, didn't you

Norman Swallow: Very good.

Lindsay Anderson: The end of the year, brilliant performances by Bill Owen really, end of the year these fucking awards come up, how many people mentioned Bill Owen,

Norman Swallow: I know. However

Lindsay Anderson: I know, but that's the society we live in. Now what do you want me to say

Norman Swallow: *In Celebration*

Lindsay Anderson: *In Celebration*, we had been offered, I will admit, to make a film of by Bryan Forbes when he took over Elstree. But in fact David, neither David nor I really wanted to do it. I knew that David, he wasn't going to write it as a film. And the trouble is, I think, we were both so embedded in the original conception that at the idea of making a film script, we didn't do it.

But about two or three years later, fortunately the American Film Theatre, it's a another name you can't remember, can you, who ran The American Film Theatre with his wife.

Norman Swallow: Sorry I wouldn't know that.

Lindsay Anderson: Landau. Anyway Alan Bates had done *Butley* for them and they said to Alan Bates wouldn't you like to do another? And Alan said what about *In Celebration* and they agreed. So we filmed *In Celebration*. It is a film. It's pretty well, I mean David wrote a script, but it is pretty well the play with the one character removed. But the misfortune which has dogged my footsteps was dogged by the American Film Theatre because Ely Landau, the second season of the American Film Theatre was more or less a fuck up really in the States. Here the distribution was a terrible mess. He hesitated for ages before giving it to anybody of note and in the end *In Celebration* was given to an Australian distributor, can you believe it, who wanted to make a name for themselves in Britain. It ended up being shown at the Curzon, the company went bankrupt, I think that now *In Celebration* is in receivership or something.

In Celebration was bought for television by, I think, Channel 4 and not shown. After about four or five years I got in touch with Jeremy Isaacs, I think, and I said why don't you show, and he said we haven't got it, the BBC have got it. So I made inquiries and I rang him back and said it's not true, they haven't got it you've got it, you've got it. He said, oh have we really, well I'll see about that and eventually…

Norman Swallow: David Rose presumably at that time, Channel 4 drama

Lindsey Anderson: I don't know, David Rose was films, so I don't know that it was David Rose. I have no reason to speak particularly highly of him anyway. But it was shown on television which is why I've got a video of it. Otherwise anyone who wants to see it, as anybody who ever wants to see *The White Bus* is going to find their work cut out. It was very well received, *In Celebration,* and very well received in America, but due to the politics of the industry

Norman Swallow: Oh dear. The next ones I've got are *Britannia Hospital* and *If You Were There*, is that right?

Lindsay Anderson: I suppose it must be. *Britannia Hospital*, after that I did have some flirtations with America

Norman Swallow: Early Eighties.

Lindsey Anderson: Yes. Well I had a flirtation with America. But I've never managed to make a film in Hollywood because I haven't, as you can imagine, the temperament anyway. I did have a

development deal with Orion and we did a script, it was a script about the Indian mutiny which was never a made, I don't believe they ever read it. I had a disastrous relationship with Marshon Lassiter and Stanley Jaffe then of Columbia about a remake *of In A Lonely Place* which would have been very good but the script writer I wanted to use wasn't expensive enough. So Stanley Jaffe got rid of me and spent another couple of hundred thousand dollars on scripts and it's a never been made.

I had this idea of *Britannia Hospital* which I had wanted to make for a long time and couldn't get anybody to set up. It was nearly done by EMI three or four years years before but my Hollywood agent who was a complete idiot managed to get that fucked up. In the end

INTERVIEW STOPS FOR BREAK

Norman Swallow: We had just begun to talk about *Britannia Hospital*, you were telling us how it was set up

Lindsay Anderson: Yes, that got so complicated but I will try and do it very quickly because it is quite funny.

I had this idea of *Britannia Hospital*, hopefully it was going to be a Memorial film but they were never able to set it up, it was called *Memorial Hospital*. But I had the idea simply from seeing in the press a report of, it was Charing Cross Hospital being besieged by strikers, yelling private patients out. And battling Granny Brookstone, a shop steward. I thought it would make a very good basis for a satirical film.

Norman Swallow: It was your idea.

Lindsay Anderson: Yes, that was my idea, yes. I was out in Hollywood, I don't know what I was doing there but I know that Michael Medwin asked me to speak to Sandy Lieberson who was in a short period of looking after Twentieth-Century Fox about the finance for something that Memorial were hoping to do. And I went to see Sandy whom I know and after I had done my duty by Michael I said by the way Sandy, there is a film I would very much like to do, or to get scripted. He said what is about. And I gave him a quick resume of *Britannia Hospital*. I said it certainly wouldn't be expensive and you're not here in Fox for very long so if we did get it financed by you plainly Fox would turn it down, they wouldn't make it and you'd be gone, so it wouldn't matter. And Sandy to his eternal credit said yes alright, how much. I can't remember the figures but I said perhaps David 10,000 to script it. And he said well let's say 12,000. And he said well how much

do you'll want and I said would I get anything. He said yes, you should have something. I said 5000. He said say well 7.

And I went back with this contract with Fox. I started talking with David who wrote a completely rubbishy treatment. And it so annoyed me I said well we'll drop it. And I tried to get somebody else to write it but nobody could see things my way. Finally, I dropped the thing.

But then I came back and I rang David and I said look David, Fox have agreed to finance a script so you might as well write it, if they don't like it all right but it you might as well get paid for it. And of course David said oh yes fine. Well perhaps we could go away and work on it.

So we went down to Sussex for a weekend, well four or five days, three or four days, and in the end I dictated this first script into a tape recorder and we had it typed out by David's wife and it went off to Hollywood and it came back in about 10 days. That was all right, so they'd paid for it, a first script existed but of course they weren't going to make it.

Then amazingly Mamoun Hassan who was a friend of mine of the National Film Finance Corporation, he said well have you shown it to Clive Parsons? I said no, I don't know Clive. And
I did give it to Clive and he came back and said he would like to produce it. So Clive started on

the rocky road of trying to get the film financed and eventually he managed to get EMI to finance it. It was considerably under financed. I think in the end *Britannia Hospital* went 100 per cent over budget. But what does that mean — if your budget was 1 million, it cost 2 million, it is still nothing really. It could never have been made for a million.

Anyway we made it and I was also fortunate in getting Mike Fash to be the cameraman, whom I didn't know, I didn't really know anybody, Mirek wasn't available and I met Mike and I liked him. I don't know, instinct, and he lit the picture and he did it extremely well and he probably had higher standards. I was prepared originally to go in and do a sort of *Carry On*, maybe it could have been made like that, it would have lost just as much money probably.

Interestingly *Britannia Hospital* was absolutely hated, hated, had the worst reviews of anything I've ever done, pretty well, hated by the English. I think the English can't laugh at themselves any more, it's a myth that they laugh at themselves, only in a cosy kind of way. The picture was liked, whenever I've shown it abroad it's gone off very well, not as a satire of England of course, generally as a satire of their own establishment. It did very, very badly in Britain, nobody wanted to see it. People say it was because it was at the same time as the Falklands war that it came out, I don't believe that. I think that if you showed it now it would be just as disliked but I think that
Britannia Hospital of course if you consider those films as a trilogy, *If... , O Lucky Man* and *Britannia Hospital*, I think it is the blackest of them, it is pretty black. It is pretty despairing about the general idiocy of human beings but actually nothing has occurred which would make one change one's mind.

Norman Swallow: I would have thought that was quite right in the 1980s. But then I'm biased perhaps.

Lindsay Anderson: No, it's interesting, it isn't, and it's nothing to do

Norman Swallow: It is for me, and you

Lindsay Anderson: Yes but we're not the film going public or the critics. It is very interesting both the critics hated it and the film going public didn't understand it. So it was a total flop. I will always treasure a note that was finally delivered to me by Andrzej Wajda from Poland who said that *Britannia Hospital* was the best Polish film he'd seen for many years.

END OF SIDE THREE
SIDE FOUR

Lindsay Anderson: Where were we?

Norman Swallow: *If You were There.*

Lindsay Anderson: *If You Were There*, I went off

Norman Swallow: 1985, I reckon.

Lindsay Anderson: Yes. I went to America and I directed *Hamlet* in Washington with Frank Grimes whom I'd worked with, Irish, in the theatre and we were just putting on *Hamlet* when I'd got a call to ask me if I would go to China to direct a film with Wham who were going to be the first English group to visit China.

I was immediately interested. It was interesting to me that everybody thought I was completely mad and I said why, Wham may not be great but the visit of a Western pop group to China must be interesting. And it seemed to me extraordinarily unventuresome that people would say Wham, how awful.

And I did go to China. George Michael and Andrew Ridgely were Wham, immensely popular. I didn't really know anything about them. It was really, I think, not altogether successful because we were caught in a political situation with Wham and their management which I didn't know anything about. And George Michael and Andrew Ridgely were going to split up anyway.

I didn't terribly like them. I didn't like George Michael who was quite uninterested, I thought very foolishly uninterested in the idea of a film being made. He was an extremely conceited fellow, though phenomenally successful.

I think the film is of interest but unfortunately I came back, I edited it with Peter West, old friend, documentarist, we got it to the stage we were going to dub it and suddenly George Michael who had refused to have anything to do with the venture or speak to us, moved in and I

was sacked, and the whole thing was destroyed. It has been released but in a totally butchered version.

Norman Swallow: I haven t seen it.

Lindsay Anderson: No you certainly shouldn't get hold of it. Though I have a copy of my original film as it it was ready for dubbing but naturally no one is interested to see it. If my name had been Jean-Luc Godard they would all be besieging me. So my version of *If You Were Here* or *Wham in China* has never been shown. What have we got to now?

Norman Swallow: *The Whales ofAugust.*

Lindsey Anderson: The *Whales ofAugust,* that was an interesting project, yes, my friend

Norman Swallow: I saw that, I'm afraid, at the Curzon, the place you don't like.

Lindsay Anderson: Don't be silly Norman, you like the Curzon, there are nice comfortable seats. But if you show a British film at the Curzon, you're labelled an art picture and you don t get any kind of distribution. They were hopeless at distributing films.

Norman Swallow: Anyway let's talk about *The Whales of August.*

Lindsay Anderson: What would you like to know?

Norman Swallow: How it was made and about these two distinguished elderly ladies who were in it.

Lindsay Anderson: Well what happened with *The Whales of August* was that Mike Kaplan who had been a publicist, I'd met on *O Lucky Man* because he'd met Malcolm on *Clockwork Orange*, he's an American, emanating from publicity, but he'd for a long time had a huge admiration for Lillian Gish and he wanted to make a film with and about and for Lillian Gish. He had seen the play of *The Whales of August* and he had the idea of making a film of this and he had taken Lillian it to see it, she'd said OK. But of course it was a huge struggle to get the money. And he'd said to me years before would I direct it. I said OK. I never thought he would get the money anyway. He did finally raise the money at the period when you were able to do reasonably low budgets pictures for television release. And Lillian was worried by that time as to whether she could still do a picture because the years had gone by, and she was old. Bette Davis had earlier turned it down, perhaps on the strength of the play. By the time we came to do it, Bette of course had been ill and wasn't finding parts so easy to get, it was a good part, and the script was written and she agreed to do it.

I tried to get out of it but unsuccessfully. And I had an assistant then who now works for the BBC

Norman Swallow: Mark Sigesworth.

Lindsey Anderson: Mark's done OK

Norman Swallow: He and I worked together a couple of years ago.

Lindsay Anderson: You did that's right, he's good, isn't he?

And Mark came on that as my assistant and we did sit down I don't know for four or five days in New York more or less rewrite the script and I changed the end of the script which had ended with these two sisters separating. And I said this is ridiculous. And I had put on what was I suppose a happier or positive ending which seemed to me much more truthful.

We made the film. We were incredibly lucky, we went to Maine, we found a place, on the first day we found the house which served as our house in the film and where we shot the whole film, it was all shot on location. And I was again very lucky that Mike Fash, from *Britannia Hospital*, had emigrated, quite rightly, to America and was able to come and shoot the film

Jocelyn Herbert who'd worked with me often in Britain came over and did the art direction. We all had a pretty terrible time with the people who came from Hollywood because they were all pretty bad but my own friends, we got the film through. Well it was hard work because the ladies were old and not well but they performed of course very professionally and conscientiously, absolutely, so I can't think the film lost money.

In addition to Lillian and Bette I don't even need to say how remarkable it was working with these people, but we were able to get Ann Southern whom I'd suggested and whom I liked very very much, Harry Carey junior who's a friend and Vincent Price, who I think was very glad to be able to end his career with a performance as opposed to playing the fool in these horror pictures .

The sad thing I think about The Whales of August is that we had certainly overestimated the interest that people would have been seeing Bette Davis, because people prefer to look at Betty Davis

Norman Swallow: As she once

Lindsey Anderson: Yes, *Now Voyager* on television, and when you can see these films on television why should you go and see Bette Davis as an old lady and it made them feel spooky, they didn't want to, and I suppose the movie going public have never heard of Lillian Gish anyway .

So the film was not a huge success in America or England. The only place in the world where it was enormously successful was in Japan and perhaps because the Japanese do revere old age.

Norman Swallow: surprised when you said it was expensive because as you later said it's mostly in one, mostly interiors

Lindsey Anderson: No it wasn't expensive,

Norman Swallow: You were talking about the budget earlier on and raising the money as though it was a problem

Lindsay Anderson: It wasn't expensive, 100k it's often in Hollywood more difficult to raise money for a limited budget film than a for a big budget film.

Norman Swallow: Sorry. That's an important point

Lindsay Anderson: It wasn't because it was a lot of money, it was just because people didn't want, they looked at it and they said I don't think this is going to do anything.

Norman Swallow: Point taken. Then I've got *Glory Glory* and then you said you'd go into your television, a chapter on television.

Lindsay Anderson: *Glory, Glory*, again I went back, I think I was going to do a play and I had a

quarrel with the management, it was going to be a play with Rex Harrison whom I'd worked with of course when we did *The Whales ofAugust* in New York, I had had Rex Harrison and Claudette Colbert which was a remarkable experience. But when Rex Harrison later came over here and was going to do *The Admirable Crichton*, I was going to direct it. But the contract was so difficult and I think the management had paid Rex so much money they weren't prepared for instance to give me as a director any kind of a percentage until it came to London, I mean it was a tour and all that and I thought their attitude was particularly bad because they didn't employ a casting director and even for three weeks and I said this is a ridiculous.

In the end I got fed up and the script amazingly out of the blue arrived from Hollywood and it was a script of something called *Sister Ruth*, which was a satirical script about American TV evangelism and I thought it was exceptionally well written. And because it arrived just at this time I said alright and I was in Los Angeles within a week

And I talked to them there and managed to put on an act for HBO and I discovered I was making it. It really happened like that. Bonny Dore, the producer

Alan Lawson: What company was this

Lindsay Anderson: It was Bonny Dore, an independent producer, who had developed it for HBO and Orion Television together. I interviewed various possibilities to play the girl and I chose Ellen Green who did it very well, with a certain amount of difficulty but she did it very well. And they had already chosen Richard Thomas whom I liked very much and think is an excellent actor and James Whitmore who is a very, very good actor. And the rest I went to Toronto and sat there and we interviewed actors and the rest were Canadians whom we cast and I think did very, very well.

Again I was incredibly lucky and I did say to them I will only do this if you get Mike Fash, because I know I had to do the picture frightfully quickly and Michael was both a good cameraman who would shoot it fast and I knew him and they did get him, otherwise I'm sure we would never never have got that picture, we probably shot it, we shot it on

film, we shot about, I don't know, three hours and 20 minutes something like that in the six weeks.

It was an interesting if trying experience because we shot on film. It was then transferred to videotape and it was edited on video. It was really a pretty enormous effort actually to do it as quickly as it had to be done. But I'm glad to say it did come out well and was appreciated in the States and even in Britain. That was of course made for television because although theoretically they could have made film version of it, they transferred it to video, edited it on video, and it now exists on the video

I have done a little bit for television, not very much because I think television because I think television is pretty bureaucratic and hierarchic.

I'd done a play for television, late Seventies was it, *The Old Crowd*.

Norman Swallow: 79

Lindsay Anderson: 79. That was a script, because Stephen Frears whom I'd known from way back was producing a series of five or six plays, films, what are they, I don't know what they're called.

Norman Swallow: They just call it drama.

Lindsay Anderson: Drama for television. And he asked me if I would do one. And he sent me about three scripts I think and I read them, I didn't actually answer him I'm afraid, I think I was a bit dubious about television and all that. He wrote again, thank goodness, and I wrote back and I

said well there is one which isn't really finished, I like *The Old Crowd*, but my only hesitation is, being used to films I can't just take a script and do it as most television directors do but I could work with Alan if you wanted to, in the way a writer works with a film director. And Stephen said I'm sure Alan would want to and Alan said fine

Norman Swallow: Alan who

Lindsay Anderson: Alan Bennett. Well we did work together very pleasantly and we enjoyed it very much and I made the film. It is a very, very interesting again, there are certain, not entirely naturalistic things about *The Old Crowd*, including some shots for instance where you see the camera, it doesn't seem to me to be very venturesome but you know in this country naturalism is the be all and end all, unless, we won't go into that.

We had a very good cast whom I liked and friends like, sadly departed friends like Rachel Roberts and Jill Bennett and others whom I'd worked with it before, Sean Moffatt, Peter Jeffrey, Isobel Dean, a very good cast, Frank Grimes who got under the table and sucked Jill's toe.

It was very interesting again, it was absolutely to the reviled. I think because Alan Bennett has come to occupy a position rather like the Queen Mother or John Betjeman in this country. So anybody who touches Alan Bennett is going to get it in the neck. But all

these things come home to roost, like Clive James whom I think wrote a pretty awful television column in the Observer but all one's middle-class friends love it, and I was reminded that two or three years before I had called Clive James, I think in print, the thinking man's answer to Rolf Harris and of course you pay for it. If you say things like that sooner or later a critic will come back and say “right I'm going to get him”. I'm sure that's why I got a particularly vicious review, and who cares you may say, but on the other hand if you get those kind of vicious reviews of course London Weekend will turn round and say well never again. So I don't think I've done anything else in this country on television

I have worked on scripts in the last year. One of which was commissioned by Mark Shivas from When The Garden Gnomes Began To Bleed, they've all been turned down, and that was turned down by at least 30 people. I don't think looking back that any of the films I've made in the course of my career would be made today.

Norman Swallow: When you say turned down, I would have thought that Mark if he has the

authority to say yes

Lindsay Anderson: He has got the authority to say yes, he didn’t, he said no.

Norman Swallow: It was him

Lindsay Anderson: Oh certainly, no certainly but everybody, nobody has wanted to do it, that's where I've ended up, that's why I would have to go this afternoon to the Savoy and work on a possible film of *Hay Fever*.

Norman Swallow: Why not!

Alan Lawson A good cause.

Lindsay Anderson Well I would very much rather make *When The Garden Gnome Began To Bleed* because I think it's more relevant and more interesting, but of course it isn't wanted and if I made it I suppose nobody would look at it or they'd attack it.

Norman Swallow: Some

Lindsay Anderson: Well, I know, but that's the business isn't it. Carol's looking for a subject, looking for a film isn't he, or did he say he's got one.

Norman Swallow: He has one showing in the next two or three weeks, at the beginning of May he says which he says is no good. He wouldn't talk about it.

Lindsay Anderson: No, he is very apprehensive. That is probably one of the reasons why he is finding it very difficult to get another film.

Norman Swallow: He did say he was looking Yes.

Lindsay Anderson: Well, there you are. We're in a bad way.

Norman Swallow: Aren't we all.

Lindsay Anderson: We are, you are right.

Norman Swallow: But you're still concerned with the theatre aren't you.

Lindsay Anderson: I think everything has gone. I regret to say this, this may be age speaking, I don't know, but I think everything has gone bad. The Royal Court, now that was the only theatre I really worked in happily over a period, well the Royal Court is I think nothing now and certainly Max Stafford Clark has always disliked the classic Royal Court because he's always felt threatened by it. No I won't be offered anything by the National because Richard Eyre doesn't like me. That is what it comes down to, isn't it.

Norman Swallow: Yes in every medium, all the media I suppose

Lindsay Anderson: Well, it is

Norman Swallow: But aren't you involved, am I wrong, in a play?

Lindsay Anderson: I'm going to do a play, yes, at Croydon Warehouse. Well fine, I mean but it's not a great fun to do a play on the fringe because you're in a very weak position in casting it and financing it. So it might be better to go to Sri Lanka, what do you think, any suggestions.

Norman Swallow: Go back to Bangalore.

Lindsay Anderson: Yes, I believe it's a very pleasant town.

Norman Swallow: Make a film in Bangalore.

Lindsay Anderson: You can't just make a film

Norman Swallow: I know.

Lindsay Anderson: Today the amazing thing is that you would think that there are huge opportunities for films to be made and shown on television. But mysteriously it seems to be more difficult than ever to get anything made that if you like threatens the status quo. And I think that the younger generation, or the young generation, is chiefly interested in making a professional career rather than in saying anything. And the press and the media are pretty well the devoted to commercial success.

Norman Swallow: I agree with that, the market forces

Lindsay Anderson: But it's very interesting because if you look in the papers you will see it certain films at referred to as being on television, it was a great success. 20 years

ago they would probably have said this was very good or this is a fine film, not that this made a lot of money.

Norman Swallow: They have that wonderful phrase which is new comparatively, which I hate, they say it is widely acclaimed, over and over, it you read, this widely acclaimed... It was widely acclaimed. Two words we never put together in our time

Lindsay Anderson: I think television is a profoundly destructive force. I mean anything that afterall is shown on television again they have to say is terrific in order to persuade people to see it, so the standards are the standards of financial success, I would say

Norman Swallow: I think the quality of television criticism, I mean reviews, has certainly declined to a lot

Lindsay Anderson: There isn't any really.

Norman Swallow: There is a lot of numbers of words but in terms of quality and common sense

Lindsay Anderson: No, they think of themselves as journalists, not as critics. And they've got to write columns or pages or whatever they are, that entertain. And people are not, particularly after all we live in her philistine society, the values of art are not actually acknowledged.

Norman Swallow: Interesting. I remember, talking about criticism, and you kindly a few years ago read a commentary for me on another thing set in the North of England

Lindsay Anderson: Very nice it was, has that's being shown again?

Norman Swallow: It was a repeated once I think in the afternoon some time but why I mentioned that was that I remember the reviews which were good, referred to in which one I can’t remember, you and I together, referred to us as two elderly angry young men, we were. There you are. That is how they think of us.

Lindsay Anderson: Is that nice?

Norman Swallow: It was a good review apart from that.

Lindsay Anderson: It is, the term angry young man is used in order to dismiss you.

Norman Swallow. Actually it was good, yes looking back on it, the point being made was that the angry young man, the atmosphere we were talking about earlier on in the Sixties, it was good to have it back, was the point being made, however badly it might have been made.

Lindsay Anderson: Well, I'll tell you, listen, I think that really all these discussions are a waste of time. I think what has become clear is that Britain is on the way down and nothing can halt it. And the thing was that in the Fifties, the late Fifties, the Sixties there seemed to be a feeling or a hope that things would revive, could revive and particularly

because at that period whatever it was the socialist ideal had not been dismissed. But we're really in the shit now because with the collapse of communism, which may be a very very good thing for those countries where it has collapsed, but it also means that any kind of idealism has disappeared, so we're left only with money-making. And the trouble is that doesn't really supply, particularly young people, with any motivation. You can have greening, is it enough? I think it is very difficult without some kind of political position to make anything forceful, but I don't quite know what political position anyone could have now, do you?

Norman Swallow: You have one presumably. You've always had one.

Lindsay Anderson: My own position, but it is only anarchic now, and in a conformist society that's not popular. And it is, I think this country is a profoundly conformist and we failed, that is what makes me despondent, I can see that there has been an effort which has failed and one has to be honest about that.

Norman Swallow: True.

Lindsay Anderson: It's all failed.

Alan Lawson: Looking back, if you could start again would you want to change things, horse,

change streams.

Lindsay Anderson: I don't think one ever could really because I don t think one makes great decisions really, I just think you follow the law of your nature, so you never made decisions because you felt you were making decisions, or I didn't, I just followed the line of impulse if you like, and it either turns out well or it turns out badly.

Alan Lawson: Do you ever look back?

Lindsay Anderson: I have been looking back

Alan Lawson No, look back and say oh dear why did I do this all why didn't I do that?

Lindsay Anderson: I know why I did this, because I'm me. I mean I wouldn't say now I shouldn't have made *Britannia Hospital*. If I hadn 't made *Britannia Hospital*, I wouldn't have made anything. It wasn't a question of making other films I could mention but wont

Norman Swallow: I don t know the answers to this but have you ever made commercials?

Lindsay Anderson: I did at one time make commercials, yes. But in recent years no one who sponsor's commercials has ever wanted to employ me. Partly because I probably talk too much or I have too many opinions and they want directors who have skill but no opinions. Perhaps I have opinions but not much skill, I don't know.

Norman Swallow: You have both

Lindsay Anderson: Well I don't think I have skill divorced from opinions, I don't honestly

Norman Swallow: I think this is surely your great merit and the whole spine of your career.

Lindsay Anderson: It may be a big mistake but there is nothing I can do about it, is there?

Norman Swallow: But it is more honest than a lot of people have behaved.

Lindsay Anderson: Where does it land you?

Norman Swallow: In the history of the cinema as they say, I'm not joking, that's no joke.

Lindsay Anderson: I think Britain is tremendously interesting, you think the whole history of the British cinema is very, very interesting and it certainly can't be divorced from British politics or the position of Britain in the world, which is what most people want to do, but you can't in the end. The liberal film maker will always say well there is nothing wrong with British film

industry that some good films won't remedy, but that begs the whole question of what is a good film. We can't make American films, Michael Winner says British directors are making it the wrong kind of films, well they can't make American films, they tried to but it isnt generally successful.

Alan Lawson: What we did that before the war, the mid Atlantic stuff which was actually a load of rubbish.

Lindsay Anderson: It was, but I think John Cleese probably did it when he made *A Fish Called Wanda.* He was determined to make a film that would go with Americans.

Alan Lawson: Zany

Norman Swallow: Well he succeeded didn't he?

Lindsay Anderson: Fine. He did but who wants to spend two years trying to get the script of *A Fish Called Wanda* right. Which is what he did I'm sure.

Norman Swallow: Well, he did other things.

Lindsay Anderson Has he done anything interesting?

Norman Swallow: No, but it wasn't two year's full time exactly.

Lindsay Anderson: No, but I think he did spend a lot of time on that. Well that's about it. That is good enough for members of the ACTT, isn't it?