

8 June 2010

Interviewer: Mike Dick

Interviewee: Joy Cuff

Camera Ruth Bolland

Roll 3

0:00:23 MIKE: Ok Joy, tell me, what was the pay like working on 2001?

0:00:29 JOY: Well, having gone from 10 and then odd jobs, my first two weeks were £16.00 a week which was more than the weekly average, if it's in '66, and then after two weeks it was raised to £20.00 and at one point, I think it was after Bob left, a few weeks after Bob left, I was talking about wages with him and he said you ought to ask for some more money because, I think I'm right, that Bob was on £100. Well, quite rightly because of his, you know... but then I was taking over the doing of the sets, not necessarily the marrying of the matte shots like he was. And how do I ask for some more money, just like that? So I was very naughty because I knew Bob and John wanted me to go work for them. I wrote to Victor Lindon, yes it was Victor Lyndon, and I said I've been asked to go on another picture and I've been offered a lot more money. And he said oh,

well what kind of money? What are we talking about? Now I hadn't really got my head around this and was thinking God, how much more do I ask for? And really strangely I was watching his hand and he was doodling and he doodled the number 30 and I said well, actually it was £30 and he went oh, ok, just like that. So maybe I could have got £35, I don't know [laughter]. But anyway by that time I'd really establishes myself as I'd made quite a few sets and I was, you know, they were all going down the right road so as a female I felt that I wasn't paid as much as the other males that were working similarly on, you know... I know that the young guy, Roger, who also was working I knew that he was getting a lot more than me and he hadn't actually done all the stuff that I'd done anyway and he was engaged to do something else but also working alongside me so I just thought I justified it. But as I said, being female...

0:03:11 MIKE: One thing that was interesting, we talked about Kubrick when you first met him and the kind of, the way that he would work with you, it sounds as though when you were working on your own, what was his reaction when he would come and look at the kind of work that you were doing? Because obviously what you were doing was actually an integral part of the film.

0:03:34 JOY: He actually... there was not much criticism there on the set but if you'd go, like you'd go to the meetings and you'd have these, like the drawings I've just seen I've done of different things, he would talk about if he wanted one we called 'The Great Wall' and he's say he wanted it quite vertical with perhaps a large feature in the foreground just like the Chesley Bonestell drawing. And well, I copied it quite well but if he'd wanted anything changed, it would go through perhaps the Art Director or the Cameraman. He didn't actually criticise you there and then to your face but he'd take it all in when he'd come and look at the set. And I remember actually most of the time what I did [laughter] it was just very lucky. It worked quite well.

[Interruption from Sound Dept]

[CUT]

0:05:15 MIKE: So you're working with Kubrick and you've gotten to know him reasonably well now. What were his attributes? What made him such a great director, do you think?

0:05:24 JOY: Well, like I've said before, I think he listens to people. And he actually discusses. There's a two-way discussion that goes on, it's not a one-

way, and he's also involved in absolutely everything. Not like... you know, lots of pictures, the director is perhaps behind the main shoot. I've worked on things where I've never seen the director. Somebody asked me what's Robert Day like to work with and I thought when did I work with Robert Day and I realised it was on 'She' but I never saw him. But Stanley actually he got involved in everything. And I think that is why. It's completely his film. Everything in it is his film and his concept.

0:06:13 MIKE: Because there's a very thin line between a director having this vision and wanting to be involved in all the different elements that make that vision but there's also a danger that you can, you know, you have to trust people, there's a very thin line there.

0:06:29 JOY: Oh yes, I mean he really... it's like was it the right time when I was in the right place to end up on 2001? You know, I'm incredibly lucky really. But then once I started working there I was definitely part of the team because I was producing stuff that was just what he wanted, just probably what he envisaged or... you know? And I think that went with everybody. I mean, he could have been the director, the special effects director, I mean he was also a producer, wasn't he? And he edited it. Well, he had to really because it was up here [points to head] and all the shots, it's the way they're all designed. They're all designed as a piece, a work of art, because they're all designed from stills.

The French bedroom set I thought was, well, it was just amazing when we saw that. And how it was lit because it was raised about 4ft? I'm trying to think... 4ft 6? And then on Perspex panels and it was lit from underneath but the lighting of it was just spectacular and I think that was his concept actually. I don't think that came from Geoff Unsworth I mean, they probably worked together. But he was always after something a bit more, you know, push the boundaries and I think that's really how he worked. But then to me he was also very quiet. Perhaps he'd shout, I don't know but you never saw... you know, the temper rages you hear of certain directors, he seems to be very controlled, calm and he was a family man, I mean, his family were often on the set.

0:08:40 MIKE: And in the film as well.

0:08:41 JOY: And in the film as well. Yeah, so where did he meet his wife? On 'Paths of Glory'. Actually Paths of Glory, I did see that when I was at art school and I love black and white films and of course it was anti-war as well but I saw it actually at MGM. He was showing it in his director's room in the lunch hour. It goes on a bit longer than the lunch hour but he used to show people that and at the time, I remember him saying at the time he thought that was his best film. Now I wonder if he'd thought after 2001 and I read recently he thought 'Eyes Wide Shut' was going to be his best film but I don't think that's so actually so I

mean Paths of Glory... Well, every single film he's made is different. You can't say, well this might be my opinion, you can't say oh, it's a typical Kubrick film as you can say of some directors. They all have a message and it's a different message.

0:09:48 MIKE: The question I wanted to ask you, because I agree with you what you're saying there, what I'm interested in is from the crew's perspective, from the production, you know, from the people. Were you aware when you were making 2001 that this film was going to have such an enormous impact down through generations?

0:10:07 JOY: I don't think so. I mean yes, he was a great director and yes, it was a big sci-fi film, but it would be oh God, we're not going to, no, no we worked yesterday and oh, you know? I mean it's always also, people kind of look skywards when it's another take or it's wasn't that one good enough? So lots of people would think well, what's wrong with that?! But I think you'll always find that, somebody who has such a high critique sometimes is not tolerated by somebody who's oh God, you know, I must get on with... Well it's like the money. The money was running out towards the end, wasn't it? And that's when we had American time in motion study people come in and we all had to write down exactly what we were doing every minute of the day and why

and blah blah blah. And it turned out that in the odd ten minutes you weren't doing anything, you actually had to go to the loo. You know? There was no time wasted. I also had to find out if anything held me up, if I couldn't get something, if I'd ordered something because it was so lovely I could say oh, perhaps I need more Stanley knives, I need another Stanley knife, and I'd get six. I don't need six, I need one. The next morning, you wouldn't see any of them [laughter]. So there was lots of filching going on.

0:11:45 MIKE: When did you see the final film? What were the circumstances?

0:11:55 JOY: Oh the final film? I didn't see the final until Leicester Square and it still makes me go cold. I mean, I'm not cold now but it makes me shiver and when I hear 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra' it gives me a tingle, it's just amazing because you sit there and you can't believe that all the little bits you've seen like you remember seeing the woman who was doing the food and she was right in the corner of the stage I was on and when Gary and Kiera are eating their orange and green food on the set [laughter] how much went into making the different colours, different textures, that was right and that was right. She was there experimenting for ages, just to get those just right. And with the square sandwiches. And I remember when they were doing the monkey masks sequence where they had to eat raw meat and I remember we were all getting

very upset about this, she spent ages injecting really good steak with... I suppose it was just food colouring that looked like blood so that they would eat this steak which was slightly done which was nice and tasty and, you know, the blood had to run down their ears. I remember we stood there once and said God, if I earned what they were earning I'd eat it raw, you know? Well, you eat raw steak anyway but [laughter] I mean, what are they getting so fussy about?! There's all these little things... And it's awful because when I watch a film anyway, I tend to be behind the camera and I still am when I watch things, how they do it. I mean, there was bits I hadn't seen like I hadn't seen this lit scan because you work such long hours and that's what you were there to do, your bit. I didn't have time to wander around and see what everybody else was doing at different times.

0:14:15 MIKE: So it's like a gigantic boat. You're busy working away at your little section and you don't see the other sections but so when you saw it at Leicester Square and you saw this complete epic...

0:14:27 JOY: Oh I thought it was amazing. I thought it was amazing. And unfortunately at the time, some of the critics... I mean, I remember one of the critics... seeing "boring" and I'm thinking what!? Because it was so visual. I mean and that's what film is, you know? And yes, well I just think it was

amazing. And just to be part of it... I often use the word, I think it's magic.

That's what film is. And I felt that is really magical.

0:15:00 MIKE: There's a couple of little elements I just want to tease out of you and one is the star child. I mean, you told me a wee bit about the making of it.

0:15:05 JOY: Oh yes, yes... Actually, and there are two little stories on this one because Stanley wanted to see me and I often used to get invited down for tea break, only a quarter of an hour, and you'd go on the next stage. And I used to wear a crocheted hat my grandma made me because I had long hair up and there used to be a lot of dust, I mean it was really filthy working on the stage and all this brown[??] and everything, so I'd take my hair down, take my hat off and go down and see him and have a cup of tea. Anyway, he did actually want to see me and have a chat this day and he said did I know of any sculptors? Yes, I know of some sculptors. Some sculptors, plural. But anyway, he knew what he'd want. And actually one of my best school friends was Liz Moore and I was a painter and she was a sculptor and at the time she was doing two busts for Leatherhead Theatre, at the Thorndike, which was a Thorndike. And it was... it's gone out of my brain who the two are but it was the two, actor and actress attached to that theatre. And she happened to be working in a vegetable shop because as you do because you have your day job if you're an artist and I

thought well, fine. And I told him who she was and her work, she does figurative work? Yes, yes... So I get hold of Lizzy and she goes to see him and I mean she's a really pretty, bouncy blonde. She actually was in a film a bit later on as a French maid so you can imagine that's what she looked like, she was very saucy-looking, she's always laughing, she's great fun. And she went and modelled the star child. So he'd got the concept of how he wanted to finish the film but actually subsequently to that, I was once by myself in the rushes theatre with Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley, seeing the rushes of what had I done the day before, and then they started chatting about the end of the film and it transpired that in actual fact he didn't know exactly how he was going to end the film. I mean, you know, you can write the book and everybody's concept of what they read, the little pictures they have, their imagination and everything, is different. So you want to make something completely different to what you think other people might have thought. This was the end of the film and he got the concept of the star child. So Lizzy had... well, she asked for photographs of Keir Dullea as a baby and also at that time, because I can remember seeing it in Life magazine, they'd just invented the fibre optics of film photography so you could see inside the womb so they had pictures of embryos, right? And the development of a child right the way through, so this was in the middle of the '60s. So armed with all that knowledge, she sculpted, she did a sculpture of the young Keir Dullea as she thought. And I think it's, especially side view, actually I think she's still got that little turned-up nose in the end. And that was

her big thing. Then she went onto, she worked in the make-up department and helped with the monkey masks as well. And then also she carried on and did Clockwork Orange with him, she did the tables.

[CUT]

0:19:04 MIKE: Did you have much contact with the actors in the film?

0:19:12 JOY: [laughter] Much contact? Oh yes, I used to go sit and chat to them on the set. I mean, in my tea break and I remember I took Keir Dullea around the pubs of Borehamwood because he, well, not really a pub crawl because we didn't get pissed or anything but to show him what little old English pubs are like and it was quite funny because he was dropped off at my digs and of course my landlady ohh! Keir Dullea ! I think he's been in a Hitchcock film that everybody knew and he's been about so he was a very lovely young man and they're all kind of twitching looking out the window, the net curtains, and then from his Mercedes we got in my little Hillman Husky which did have windows, it was a van but it did have windows in it and the seats were draped in towels and stuff because I was always so filthy coming home so I actually had to kind of change those a bit. And the first thing he said, he said Gee, this is quaint!

Because it was a 1956, which I didn't think was very old really but I suppose when you come from a big American car, it's a lot of difference. So yes, we decided to take him to two or three pubs. I can't remember the names of the pubs. I wonder if one was The Bell...

0:20:29 MIKE: What did he make of it all? And what was he like?

0:20:32 JOY: It's funny. He told me he was quite shy. He did seem quite... yes, because Gary was very cookie-type and chatty whereas Keir wasn't; he was quite quiet. And of course we get into this pub and stand by the bar and it's quite full and you know how when you're talking and you get these lulls in conversation? And he's just ordered these drinks and I look at him and I've always seen him with make-up you see and I went "Oh God, I've never seen you without your make-up!" and suddenly the pub is like quiet [laughter] and in 1966, you don't say things like that, do you? I mean, it was quite funny. I don't know how I got over that one. And I think we talked about Stanley and other films and what it was like to be over here but I can't quite remember a lot of it. It wasn't very long; it took him a couple of hours. And then I went out with Gary as well and he was quite...

0:21:46 MIKE: What was he like? Because he was West Coast and Cairn was East Coast wasn't he?

0:21:49 JOY: Yes, they were very very different. Well I'm trying to think if I went Gary first and then Keir It doesn't really matter who but the thing that Keir said to me was "oh, I felt so shy to ask you out" and I'm thinking why? Because you're the big actor! And I'm just working on the set. Anyway, I think that's just a line. But Gary actually took me to London. Yes, he picked me up in his Mercedes and up we went to London and we went to see 'It Happened Here' which wasn't really on general release, I don't think, because of the content. And he bought me a box of grapes, which I thought was really lovely. Instead of a box of chocolates or something like that, he bought me a bunch of grapes. I thought that was a nice touch. And we just chatted about all kinds of things: films, clothes, people. And then something that didn't strike me when I was up there. It was the '60s but... oh yes, I was going out with somebody at the time who got a bit "what do you mean you're going out with that..." and I said "I'm only just going out with one of the actors", you know? I don't know why people get so jealous about things like this. But anyway, while we were up there, he was staying at Diane Cilento's flat in Bayswater. Holland Park or Bayswater. Fantastic place, absolutely fantastic. And we'd get home late and I'm thinking hmm, and I've got all my good gear on and I've got to go to work the next day.

I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do about this. So we have a coffee and we sit down and he says to me "Shall I carry on with this?" [laughter]. He says to me "Gee! How would you like to make love to a big movie star?" and I said "I don't know. I'll tell you when I see one" and he went [inhale] and just got up and walked out. So I was left thinking well, where am I going to put my feet up? So I slept in my clothes and just stayed there the night. Next morning, he got up, never said anything about it, made some coffee and then the chauffeur arrives and of course, they chauffeur was all this, oh yes, I know. So we get in the car and we're going back to MGM and he puts a blanket over me for when we went through the gate. So security didn't see me and I'm thinking now I'm inside and I haven't gone and signed my name [laughter] so it was quite... I don't how I got outside again to come in. Or that I never signed my name that day. Can't remember now but that was a strange day. But I don't know. They also talk about sexist pigs lots of people are. I heard from another, a very close friend who we used to go to films together and go out to lunch and all that and he said there was a book going on me, on who was going to lay me first. That's how sexist it was, yes.

0:25:27 MIKE: I want to talk a wee bit about [interruption]. I was just interested in women in the film and television industry.

0:25:40 JOY: Yes, they're treated a bit like... Well, Wally Gentleman didn't like females on the set and although he was a special effects guy, he left before it was finished because Wally Veevers was there as well. I'm sorry. It wasn't Wally Gentleman, it was actually Wally Veevers]. Wally Veevers thinks that women should be at the kitchen sink and I was told that. Not by Wally Veevers but by somebody else who said that's what Wally Veevers thinks, he doesn't agree with having females on the set but, you see, I'd been there six months or something and by that time, Bob had been and gone, and I was working away. Anyway, he never really used to speak to me one-to-one at all and he was the special effects director but this day we had to have his set ready by just after lunch so I had all morning to get... it wasn't the one that somebody put their hand on by the way, because that's why I was so upset. They used to get the morning and they'd say the camera's going to be rolling in the afternoon. So I worked really hard and it was getting near lunchtime and it wasn't ready, so I worked through my lunch hour and I got it ready by two o'clock and he gave me brownie points. I mean, I would just do that anyway. And he just changed his attitude towards me so that was good. But you see, he comes in with a preconception about all females, what do females do. Oh, you see, they're just a distraction so I got him thinking the right way around again.

0:27:23 MIKE: I think we should move on... From '67, so what happened there? You went to work with Abacus, yeah?

0:27:38 JOY: Yes. It was the summer. Late summer. It was just finishing and all the moon sets were gone and you were just trying extra-terrestrials and there wasn't really and I felt I needed really... Bob and John set up Abacus and I really wanted to work with Bob and carry on learning from him. And they serviced films, television, they did commercials, they would do anything that was going but they were very very good at table tops models because of the pair of them. And it was just a very small crew and so I remember... they did the first action man. I mean, the action men, when you think the action men and Tracey[?] dolls. It was all shot in black and white as well. So when I used to have to do the make-up for the dolls, I painted them in black and white so they looked really good on film. And then we got a major Carl Foreman picture, Mackenna's Gold which well over a year, perhaps another 18 months, I can't quite remember now. So that started in the Autumn I think the 'Return of She', they also got bits of the 'Return of She' and we were at Merton Park Studios so Bob actually said "oh no, it's fine, you do these bits". No, sorry, it wasn't Merton Park, it was Bury Films[??] they were doing it at. They hadn't quite established themselves at Merton Park because Bowie was working there as well so I was working at Bowies and John was nipping backwards and forwards

doing stuff at Merton Park and on Mackenna's Gold. So I worked on 'Vengeance of She' – we were calling 'Return of She' by the end – so it was interesting that because I designed the set that had the temple entrance and the great big bust of Ursula Andress who was She and of course this now is a reincarnation. And we made the model set and I actually painted the sky backing for that. That was lovely. I'm very good at skies and sky backings. I like doing that. And there was a lot to do on that because there was also a huge eye which had to be split in half as the temple was splitting so that was an insert shot so it had to be much bigger. The actual bust was life-size. And then...

0:30:32 MIKE: How did you work on that? What was the process of making that model?

0:30:39 JOY: Well, I did the model at home in my own studio. You start with an armature and you drape it, a bit like the moon sets actually, you drape it roughly with scrim[?] dipped in plaster and then I build it because the thing about plaster, I remember Henry Moore used to say this: there's a medium, you can add to it and you can chisel it away. It's a brilliant, a really good medium to work in. So I roughly got it right and then I can't remember how long it took me because I had photographs; I didn't have them from life unfortunately. I had the front photograph and the profile which has just reminded me of when I worked

on 'Dance of Death'. I did the portrait of Geraldine McEwan. And I was very lucky, I actually went to her house and did sketches of her there and I didn't do that from photographs, I just did it from drawings and I had some publicity photographs to help me. And I went away and I did those two. They had to be identical on canvas because it was going to be shot a bullet through it and of course if they wanted a retake they needed two. I think they were both destroyed in the end. But it's funny seeing Geraldine McEwan then because I thought she looked younger than she ever did on the set, on pictures...

0:32:10 MIKE: This is 1969, yeah

0:32:13 JOY: Yes. No it wasn't. No, no, because obviously it was made earlier.

0:32:18 MIKE: Right, so it would be '68.

0:32:19 JOY: '68 yeah, this is '68.

0:32:21 MIKE: Yeah, this is with Laurence Olivier as well?

0:32:23 JOY: Yeah, that's right. Yes, that was in '68. Yep. And she did, she looked completely... I mean some people photograph younger, don't they? And some people photograph older but... I mean, she looks very pretty and beautiful and young in that but she looked very, very young in the flesh. So it was quite good to actually see her and then go away and do the painting. And they wanted the painting done Goya-like which I did. I did the first one like Gainsborough and it wasn't right. I did all the lace and everything like that. You know, I had to do a mock. Can you do this? Yes, I can do this. So go away, do a quick rough one and then they asked me how much and I said £45 a painting but it will be £90 for two of them. Or 45... I said £90 for two. Now, I happened to know someone called Olga Layman who used to do portraits and she told me how much portraiture is in London and it was a lot, it was about half the price. So bearing in mind I was young and out of, you know, people think oh, you haven't got the experience. And they say oh, you know, I don't think so. And what happens two weeks later? They wanted it and they come back to me, having said to them I'd need to start it quite soon and having said to them give to me quick, no, no, they come back to me saying right – I think it was ten days or something like that. I was not only working for Bob but I also had to finish this portrait. So I was working quite hard, day and night on those. But Laurence Olivier, I met him, sat next to him on the set.

0:34:09 MIKE: What was he like then?

0:34:11 JOY: Well, he said to me: “You’re quite a good little painter”. And maybe that’s supposed to be an accolade but I was bit, you know, when you’re young, taken aback with... well, what do you expected when I’m doing something with the picture? I wouldn’t bring something that was rough! [laughter] Anyway, he was quite, I thought he was a bit pompous but still, that was probably just old English. No, I was talking about, sorry, I completely...

0:34:42 MIKE: We were talking about...

0:34:44 JOY: I was talking about She. So I also designed that, I helped build it. After I’d done the actual bust, it’s then a mould taken and that’s set into the miniature set, which is like the rocks, side of a canyon. And what’s interesting, they went down somewhere like Lyme Regis. You don’t have to chisel or anything, they took vinimoulds of the rock surfaces and then put them all together. They looked amazing. Because you could get all different scales of these rocks and they picked the right place to go. And there were several shots because there was a little insert shot, which was a long shot where you saw the two little figures edging along a ledge. So we had to marry that, so we build the

set for that and then it was oh, must have an insert shot! So there was [Olinka Berova](#) who was... I can't remember... Carol, who was an ex-She. She had to have a close-up of her legs edging along and then she puts her foot right on the edge and then almost falls off. So who's the only female within striking distance? Me. So I'm busy painting one bit and then suddenly someone says oh, you need to go down by... go down to Slough and buy a khaki-coloured skirt – because it was a mini-skirt, they were all minis – and some tan cream, you know, the stuff that burns. So I rush down there in my dinner hour, come back, tan my legs. So I'm up on the gantry, and this is now, it wouldn't happen like this now. And that must be at least 10ft in the air. There's no safety harness. And they'd built a ledge and it's a ledge going off, out where there's a split in, well, the gantry and they can take some of the bits that stop you falling off away. And there's two of the Bowie boys up there to hold onto me while I walk along and then, so the camera's rolling, so I'm edging along and then I stand on the bit I'm told to stand on which is going to give way. And I must give way with it but it's alright, I've got somebody holding onto me! [laughter] Anyway, this could have been a disaster. Do you know, I still feel funny about it now. This is one thing that goes through my mind several times because it makes me feel funny. I stand on it and nothing happens and there's this oh, cut! Cut! All this shouting and getting cross, oh for God's sake, well put some weight on it! And I went like this [demonstrates stepping out motion] and it didn't give way. And I said "it's not giving way!" and I'm standing there... I don't know how, I

mean, what an idiot! So everyone has to get up there and the model-makers pull it down and they put it back quickly with another like some light, light plaster. Right, go again. They went again and I did it properly but this time I was thinking oh God, I mustn't... it's going to give way this time [laughter] and it did. Yes, you'd have to get... what with equity, that's very naughty really. But I didn't think about things like that. It's like on Thunderbirds, I used to be Lady Penelope's hand and somebody said this to me recently, they actually got into trouble later on and they had to have a hand artist but in those days I had young, beautiful hands of about a 20-year-old. But what else did I do? That's about all, there was a lot on She really.

0:38:57 MIKE: You mentioned also Mackenna's Gold there as well.

0:39:00 JOY: Oh yes, we're into Mackenna's Gold.

[interruption by camera crew]

0:39:06 JOY: Mackenna's Gold. Well, we had many, many, many shots on Mackenna's Gold. There were glasses, you know, big 6ft glasses of the canyon and the Grand Canyon. They were shot at Technicolour. We didn't have a big

enough set-up so actually we were at Technicolour for many, many months and then we moved back to Merton Park. And I remember Telly Savalas coming in for some of the insert shots. And I made the little replica of Gregory Peck's horse, just quick, edited and shot. But Telly Savalas mum was a sculptor so we had a long chat in the tea breaks. That was quite interesting. But that was quite epic but as cowboy films go, I don't know whether it's one of the best ones on record really.

0:40:07 MIKE: It's got a good reputation.

0:40:09 JOY: Has it really? Oh, isn't it funny. It's Bob's modesty again. He used to go oh, it's not on again, is it!? At Christmas. [laughter] It is a Christmas thing. Yeah, it's funny that. And you know, it's quite exciting because... actually I've got a map here. Now this is what the Hopi Indian had in his rucksack, his saddlebag. And that's how they found where all the gold was. And everywhere they went, we had matte shots to do. Obviously because you had to have these fabulous shots of the Grand Canyon and you had to put in Omar Sharif and Gregory Peck. And there again, when we were doing the insert shots at Merton Park...

CUT

END OF ROLL 3

