

Interview with Respondent 0335/0764

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Location: UCL

Interviewer: Matthew Jones

Interviewer: I wonder if we could start by you just telling me a little bit about your life in the 1960s, about where you lived and what you were doing.

Respondent: Sure. Well in the '60s I was living in Bermondsey, when it was really Bermondsey, because my family were in the docks, we lived down towards the Rotherhithe end, and for me the '60s was the big change time, because at the start I was a child, and by the end I was a spotty teenager. And so the second part of the '60s were formative for me and of course I remember much more about that period. I was at a school in Camberwell, primary school in Camberwell; then I went on to a grammar school in Camberwell called Wilson's in 1966. It's now part of Camberwell Art School. And by the end of the decade I was fifteen/sixteen.

Interviewer: Perfect. You say in the questionnaire that you lived a typical working class life.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: I wonder if you could tell me about that. What was the typical working class life in the 1960s?

Interviewer: Yeah, that's an interesting thing that I put there really. I mean again, memories. I suppose it's to do with some sort of London heritage that I can remember really well, both sides of my family;

my mother's and my father's were in the London docks and the communities were imbedded in those docks, if you like, so the whole area was economically and socially to do with the docking industry, which of course ended immediately. The docks moved out, so I think what I mean by that was, we had no luxuries in our life, we had nothing that was sort of frivolous or expensive but we had huge amounts of love and care and a real feeling of community. And of course we had the extended family. I mean, when I was born we lived in an Edwardian terrace house with my parents, my grandparents, my great-grandmother who lived up on the top like a Victorian, I remember her long black dress, and two sets of aunts and uncles all in the same house. So I think what I probably mean by working class is that sense of belonging and understanding your place of where you live and there's a strong sense of security actually.

Interviewer: And you say in your questionnaire that you're gay. Did you come out in the 1960s?

Respondent: No, I didn't come out until the '80s.

Interviewer: Were you aware in the 1960s of your sexuality?

Respondent: Yes, I certainly was. By the time I was...yes, I would say by the time I was twelve.

Interviewer: What was it like to be a closeted gay man in the 1960s?

Respondent: Well I would say I was an un-closeted gay young man, I was a potty young teenager, I didn't really realize that I was closeted until I had a sexual awakening at about thirteen/fourteen. But I didn't see that as anything political or oppressive. I just sort of got on with it [laughs].

Interviewer: [Laughs] that's the way to do it I suppose. Moving towards cinema going, you say in the questionnaire that you most often went with family and friends. Was this a regular thing?

Respondent : Yeah, with my mum in particular. Mum was, and still is, I mean she's 81 now, huge, huge film fan. She was a teenager during the war years and just after the war, and her and all her aunts used

to go to the cinema three times a week, but they liked the big Hollywood films, they liked the big stars, they liked Rita Hayworth and Betty Davis and all of that. And when she started working when she was fourteen, she always tells me that she had to give all her money to my granddad, all of her earnings, and he used to give her back enough money for (?) and two cinema tickets. So, you know, going to the pictures as we called it was very much part of her life and she got me going at quite a young age.

Interviewer: And then you went with her throughout the '60s.

Respondent: Yes I went with her throughout the '60s.

Interviewer: Fantastic. In terms of the experience of going to the cinema, you say that you, afterwards you usually had a bag of chips. I wonder if I could press you for a little more detail on the typical night at the cinema. What would that involve?

Respondent: With my mum we'd have out tea, or our dinner as we called it, we'd get down at about seven o'clock...my memory is that there were timings of films but they weren't so spread out as they are now, I mean I think they ran back to back, and you turned up, and if they let you in, you saw the end of the previous thing...so we used to hang about a bit and get out Quora and stuff, and I remember sitting waiting. Sometimes if there was a popular film we'd have to queue. She preferred to go upstairs because it was less smoky, even though she smoked, and of course as a kid I can remember all the fog in the...being in the film. We never used to buy anything inside the cinema because she couldn't afford it, but then afterwards, we'd go to the "chippy" and it was a sort of after film treat, I'd have chips and she'd just have a bag of chips. But we always, always went to the "chippy".

Interviewer: Lovely. And then you'd go home. How would you get home?

Respondent: Everywhere was in walking distance actually. The only times we ever got a bus was if we went in the West End, which we did only on a couple of occasions.

Interviewer: Well, I wonder if we can talk a bit about that, 'coz you mention a couple of cinemas that you frequented in the questionnaire. You talk about the Odeon and the ABC in particular. Now they...I get the impression that they were local...

Respondent: They were local, yes.

Interviewer: So what were they like?

Respondent: There was the Odeon at Camberwell, which was art deco...I'll always remember that, it was a beautiful building, gone now. There was an ABC at Camberwell Green, opposite the Father Red Cap which is now...well, was a bingo hall the last time I saw it. I haven't been for ages. That must have been deco, but it wasn't in the classic deco shape, it was more red bricks, square. And then there was a new Odeon that opened at Elephant and Castle and that was really modern, because it had an auditorium like the (?), it was just a semi circle with very plush seats and there wasn't a circle and a downstairs, it was just one...and a great big flat screen. And that for us was extraordinary, so....the Elephant one was very posh, and then opposite I think there was the Corona which was a flea pit...I mean literally a flea pit, we used to come out scratching. And as a very young child living in Bermondsey, I remember a grand Odeon on Old Kent Road, and that was like an ocean liner. That was a beautiful art deco building. And I think that's probably my first memory of going to the cinema, I must have only been about four or five, and went to see something like (?) or something like that.

Interviewer: Sorry, which cinema was that?

Respondent: That was the Odeon on Old Kent Road.

Interviewer: Ah, Old Kent Road.

Respondent: Yes, which was down by Canal Bridge, which is still known as Canal Bridge.

Interviewer: Fantastic. I wonder if you could maybe tell me a little bit about the differences going to flea pit cinemas as you call them, and going to the, for instance the Elephant and Castle Odeon. How did it feel to go to the different types of cinemas?

Respondent: You felt going to the Elephant and Castle Odeon it was much more of an event and an occasion. People behaved better. I think interiors helped people to be respectful. I think design is important for that. And I think that if you visit somewhere that hasn't been cared for and isn't looked after, you behave differently towards it. And my memory is, of going to the flea pits, people were noisier, they were fidgeting, probably scratching [laughs].

Interviewer: From all the fleas [laughs]. So when you say people behaved better at the Odeon at Elephant and Castle for instance, do you mean that they were quieter...?

Respondent: Yes, yes, just a little bit more respectful for audience I think, and to the film. The other thing that could be the case is that the screen was huge and the audience were lit up more...

Interviewer: At the Elephant and Castle's?

Respondent: Yes, I think people could see each other.

Interviewer: So you think that was an incentive to...

Respondent: I think that's something to do with it, yeah. I can remember that quite clearly.

Interviewer: And you mention drinking Quora at the cinema. Did you do that at all the different types of cinema that you went to?

Respondent: Yeah, we never, I always used to hate choc ices and I still hate choc ices at 58 years of age...I never ever got on with choc ice. That was the choice really; it was either choc ice or it was

orange juice. We didn't have popcorn stuff then, that I've come across. I think some of the cinemas did lollies like (?) and I would have one of those.

Interviewer: Sure. And you say that when you went to the cinema, what guided your choice was primarily either the type or the genre of film, but also whatever was on. So, I wonder how you found out about what was on and whether there was a film from a particular genre that would appeal to you.

Respondent: For me then it would either have been mum knowing what was on and she made the choices, but as I got older in the second part of the '60s it would have just been me walking by the cinema. I probably started reading the South London Press by then...I can't remember to be truthful. But I always knew what was on in the cinemas, and of course as I got older, I made my own choices about what to go and see.

Interviewer: Sure. You talk about cinema as a social event. I wonder what you mean by it being a social event.

Respondent: Part of my working class upbringing was the pub. The blokes were all in the pub. The women—my grandma's generation—used to go around to the pub about five o'clock and sit there with a beer and prepare their vegetables for dinner.

Interviewer: In the pub?

Respondent: In the pub.

Interviewer: Gosh!

Respondent: And that was when the women got together sort of late afternoon, they'd go around and have a beer. I was too young to go in there, so I wasn't part of the pub thing, but then what happened was that my mum and her aunts for example would say "right, we're going to see such and such a film and we'll take Gary with us (sorry)...and my sister was too young, and they'd take a couple of my

cousins and things, so there's be a group of about eight to ten of us sometimes and it would be just the time when we went as a family. My sister was too young then. My dad never ever went. I was very much a women's thing in my family.

Interviewer: Gosh!

Respondent: My dad hardly ever went to the cinema.

Interviewer: And this would be in the early '60s.

Respondent: This was through the '60s actually.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Even when you were a mid teenager?

Respondent: My dad never went. I always went with my mum and with her aunts.

Interviewer: Gosh! Was that because your dad didn't like the cinema?

Respondent: Yeah, it was...it just wasn't something blokes did. They used to get home from the docks really tired as well. I mean they did a 12 hour day and mum had to have dinner ready for six and by seven he was flaked out. The last thing he wanted to do was go out again. And so probably what happened was that he stayed in with my sister who is four years younger than me.

Interviewer: Okay. You mentioned a couple of films specifically in the questionnaire. You talk about It's a Mad, Mad, Mad World and Thoroughly Modern Millie; do you remember specifically going to see those films?

Respondent: Yes, and that's another cinema. That was the Odeon Goose Green which is at the bottom of Dock Heron Hill in South East London.

Interviewer: What was that cinema like?

Respondent: That was a (?) cinema. That was a small deco cinema, I think the building is still there.

Mad, Mad, Mad World, I was...then we'd moved to the top of Camberwell Grove, I must have been about twelve years old; and that was on and in those days it was fine for you to go out on your own. I walked down the hill and I went with my sister to see that, and I think I went back about five times because it was the first film that actually made me laugh out loud, literally crying with laughter. So I've never forgotten that. And it was the same with Thoroughly Modern Millie...it was Thoroughly Modern Millie that actually woke me up to the fact that I liked musical theatre, 'coz I work in the theatre now. And Thoroughly Modern Millie is the first sort of musical if you like, that I saw as a form of art rather than just a bit of entertainment. And I never forgot Beatrice Lily tap dancing in the lift to make it work, so you know, little things. And I went back to that loads because going to the pictures was really cheap.

Interviewer: Talking about the experience of going to the cinema, we've talked a bit about eating and a bit about drinking in the cinemas. I wonder, do you remember the national anthem being played?

Respondent: Yes I do. That's quite a vague memory but I do remember. We never stayed, we left as the national anthem was being played. We weren't anti royalists or anything, but we weren't the type to stand up and stand still. But yes it was always played.

Interviewer: Do you remember if anyone else in the cinema left with you?

Respondent: Yeah, it was a total mix, you know in the '60s you're just twenty years after the war I suppose, and there was a generation who had fought in the war and they would have probably wanted to show their respect and stuff, whereas my mum was bombed to bits in Deptford and her memory of

the war wasn't quite so patriotic. So no, we saw the national anthem as time to leave, but not for any particular reason, just a practical thing. We never stayed.

Interviewer: Sure. You talk also about X rated films and going to see X rated films a few years underage, specifically kind of Bonnie and Clyde and Women in Love. I wonder if you could tell me about that. How did it feel to go and see...?

Respondent: Ah, it was a real thrill. I think then, I may be wrong, I think then X was for sixteen and above, because I would never have passed for twenty-one. I was probably fourteen when I did this. The very first one I went to see was at Camberwell Odeon and it was the old Boris Karloff Frankenstein paired with Dracula. And mum said "oh they're not that scary, you can get in, it's not going to frighten you", so that was the very first one where I got in. I did look my age at fourteen; I was a bit of a mod sort of skinny type, though you now, I had proper shoes and two tone mod trousers, so I got into that one. The other one was Bonnie and Clyde and Women in Love, both of them I saw at the ABC Camberwell. Bonnie and Clyde I went on my own I remember. I was fascinated by them, I remember I read a sort of biography of them at school at quite an early age and I really wanted to see this film, plus I'd heard there was a sex scene in it so I wanted to see that. And I got myself in, and as I said earlier, I always remember this, I walked in and it was the very end where they were shooting each other, and so I ran to the loo and put my fingers in my ears.

Interviewer: [Laughs].

Respondent: And then I could hear the credits going and I got out again and got a bit closer, ready for the film. Now Women in Love was particularly why I wanted to go because I knew about the Oliver Reed scene of wrestling on the rug and this for a fourteen year old emerging gay boy was amazing, but I'd also read D. H. Lawrence and I knew about Glenda Jackson and I do remember reading in the papers about the controversy around that film. I didn't know anything about the cameras or anything like that, was that a camera (?) film?

Interviewer: It was.

Respondent: It was. And my cousin was over from America, 'coz my oldest aunt on our dad's side, she was the only girl, she was a G. I. Bride, and they were visiting and I said to my cousin John, "do you fancy going to see that film", we were the same age, so we both went to see it, and that was at the ABC Camberwell. And I just adored it. I can remember that really well, I think it must have been '67 or '68, I would have been thirteen/fourteen or something like that.

Interviewer: Did the Boris Karloff Frankenstein and so forth, those films must have been pretty 1960s films.

Respondent: Oh yeah they were '30s but they just showed them every now and then.

Interviewer: Was that a regular thing?

Respondent: They did like a season sometimes, like you'd have a hammer in the centre, and you used to get hammer horror season. Yeah, so they must have just put it on for a couple of weeks and maybe they had a whole season of the, but I particularly wanted to see that one. I think it was also my test to see if I could get into X films.

Interviewer: I see [laughs]. And so these seasons, these were at the local cinemas, not the West End.

Respondent: Yeah, local.

Interviewer: Gosh, that's interesting. So sneaking into these X rated films, I'm sorry, I'm going to stay on that for a moment, do you remember feeling nervous about doing that?

Respondent: Oh yeah, always. But it was a thrill sort of nervous. It wasn't really a scared nervous. I've always been quite the confident type, and once you'd done it, you know, I didn't look like a kid at

fourteen, I was quite advanced. And you know, I didn't realise it then, but I was going to work in the theatre industry so I probably had a bit of attitude.

Interviewer: [Laughs].

Respondent: And never ever questioned.

Interviewer: And your mother, you say she encouraged this.

Respondent: She was fine with that. She was very protective up until about the time I was fourteen and then she realised that I was changing.

Interviewer: You talk also about film periodicals and film magazines and television programmes that you went to to get extra information about films stars. Do you remember any specific magazines or programmes?

Respondent: This is vague because they were my mum's basically. She did use to buy the equivalent of what was a listings magazine then. But it was only film, it wasn't like Time Out where it had a bit of everything. It was a cinema listings magazine. And I think it may have just been called Cinema. I can't remember, but in that everything was listed, mainly for the West End. But it did have much shorter listings for all the local cinemas. And she used to always have on what's now called Film 2013...that was called Cinema in those days on television and we just used to sit and watch that. But that was mostly about Hollywood films. I'm afraid that's a bit vague, but we definitely had publications around that helped, and I think there was something in my school library as well that I used to sit in front of and read. Probably the South London press again to be truthful.

Interviewer; And so when you went to these magazines, was it mostly for the listing information, for what was showing?

Respondent: Yes, yes. I can remember I read a review of Women in Love and that must have been a newspaper.

Interviewer: You also talk about your...we ask a question about if you whether collected anything associated with cinema, such as autographs or posters, photos, film reviews and so forth. And you said that your mother had a collection from the 1940s, not from the 1960s. What was it that your mum collected?

Respondent: Photographs. Signed photographs. She used to write to them in Hollywood and they used to send her back a signed photograph, and it just used to cost the price of a stamp. And she had a huge collection of them and they're all gone now.

Interviewer: But do you remember being interested in those things?

Respondent: I remember looking at them. She used to talk me through them, telling me who they all were.

Interviewer: And that was interesting for you.

Respondent: Yes it was. Another thing that might be useful while you're on autographs is an old boy at my school was Michael Caine, he used to go to my school, and we lived around the corner from each other, we were different generations, and he came back to the street around the corner from us to film a documentary about his life and mum got his autograph for me which I sold for ten bob at school.

Interviewer: In the 1960s?

Respondent: A lot of money [laughs].

Interviewer: [Laughs] yes. My gosh! So do you remember going to see Michael Caine's films because of the local connection?

Respondent: Yeah. Zulu, that's the one I remember.

Interviewer: Did you enjoy it?

Respondent: I loved Zulu, yes.

Interviewer: What was it that you liked about it?

Respondent: I think because I'd learnt something about history that I didn't know. We didn't touch on that sort of stuff in school. Because I always really enjoyed my history lessons, but you know it was fairly standard Tudors and Stewarts and Queen Victoria stuff. And so I saw something about a part of the world that I didn't know and I was just fascinated about this battle. I didn't particularly remember him...I've always thought he's an ok actor, but I never raved about Michael Caine. But I always followed him because we had a similar sort of background and I followed his footsteps. He went to (?) and so did I and you know, we did some actor training and stuff, but yeah, I enjoyed Zulu a lot. And whenever it's on telly now, I make sure I record it to see it again.

Interviewer: Why is that?

B: I don't know. It stuck with me. Umm...why is it? I just think it was a terribly well put together script, it's the sort of script that appeals to me which is universality I think in our place in the world and how we overcome obstacles, I mean the fact that they all died is by the...they overcame a lot of obstacles before they died. And I was also fascinated by the Zulus I think...by the bang of the drums, and I always remember that when they come off the brow of the hill and they're quite extraordinary, I've never seen anything like that, you see.

Interviewer: I agree with you, I think it's a very special moment. I wonder if we can talk about films of different countries. You say that you didn't have a particular preference of films from different countries. Did you see many American films during the era?

Respondent: Yes. With my mum more, because she wasn't into what she still calls the kitchen sink dramas, she was never into those black and white films, A Taste of Honey and all that. She just found them too depressing. She liked the glamour of Hollywood, or she liked the musicals, or she liked thrillers. So I used to go with her to them. When I started on my own, I was much more interested in British cinema, it's still the case.

Interviewer: What was it that you liked about British cinema?

Respondent: Reality, something I could relate to. I mean I don't mind being taken away for a couple of hours to another place, but I think as a teenager I was still finding my way and I just really clicked with British actors, British styles of script writing; I didn't analyze it like that at the time, I know it now. And I particularly liked stuff that was set in London of course, or in a city, because that's what I could relate to.

Interviewer: You mentioned the kitchen sink dramas; were they something that you said your mother wasn't a fan of?

Respondent: No, she still won't watch them. She still won't watch things like The Sporting Life or anything like that.

Interviewer: Are they something that you're a fan of?

Respondent: Now? Yes, I didn't know about them when they came out, I was too young. When they came out in the early '60s I was only eight in 1963, so I wouldn't have gone to see that sort of film. Now I've seen them all of course.

Interviewer: And you like them now.

Respondent: I love them now.

Interviewer: Good. Then in the late '60s there were the swinging London movies. How did you feel about them?

Respondent: I felt detached from them, because that was about a part of London that I knew nothing about, and actually swinging London and the cool sixties only happened in the West End and some parts of West London. It didn't happen in Camberwell and Bermondsey. It wasn't at all swinging. It was still post-war, frankly. So we weren't part of that at all, it meant nothing to us. And yet it was only a mile away. But you have to remember South London as still...when we crossed the river, you'd say (???) we were going over to the other side. So you know the river is a big divide.

Interviewer: So did you see many of the swinging London films in the '60s?

Respondent: Yes, oh I did see many. I'm just trying to think of the name of the one I did see...um...Julie Christie.

Interviewer: Darling?

Respondent: That's it. Thank you.

Interviewer: It's okay.

Respondent: Yes, I saw that.

Interviewer: And what did you make of it?

Respondent: Well I enjoyed that.

Interviewer: Good.

Respondent: I enjoyed that, but it I didn't think "oh wow" or "the '60s are great". This was almost another country. Our lives were very different in terms of what the swinging sixties were.

Interviewer: That's very interesting. You mentioned Hitchcock in the questionnaire and there seems to be quite a positive sentiment for it. I wonder if you could elaborate on that a little.

Respondent: Again, that was mum taking me to see those. She always liked a good thriller. But my mum also understood great filmography and great script writing, and she'd always say to me afterwards, she'd say "he did that in a way I'd never seen done before; I think it was a real window" or something, you know what she liked was originality and that just totally rubbed off on me. What I always remember as a kid is that in his films you always found out what was going to happen before it happened which made it scarier.

Interviewer: That's very interesting...I hadn't quite thought of Hitchcock quite like that before.

Respondent: It's a dilemma for murder; he spells out what's going to happen so when it happens it's much, much scarier. It goes wrong a bit, it doesn't go to plan. And in most cases you know what's going to happen. Like Real Window, you see everything happening.

Interviewer: And then you just have to wait to piece it together.

Respondent: Yeah, you see her going in the rooms having a look around, and you see him walking along coming into the building. And that builds tension. And I can remember that as quite a young kid. You see I was watching Hitchcock when I was eight.

Interviewer: Gosh!

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you remember being scared by that?

Respondent: No, I was fascinated by it. I don't think I got to see the really grim ones when I was eight. I would see the real (?) and things, but I remember The Birds from a very young age.

Interviewer: Gosh!

Respondent: I don't know what rating they would have had... 'coz they would have been on telly then. But I saw Birds when I was very young.

Interviewer: I wonder how you saw that.

Respondent: I don't know. I need to ask mum.

Interviewer: That's really interesting. Well let us know when you find out [laughs].

Respondent: I'll see her at Christmas.

Interviewer: You also talk about a few stars in the questionnaire, Glenda Jackson and Alan Bates and Rita Tushingham. What was it that appealed about these stars?

Respondent: This is this British thing again, you see. They didn't worry about how they looked. That's always been quite important to me. And I just connected with them, because they could be anybody that I knew, whereas I always watched Hollywood films with a sense of detachment, which I think is fine. I was there for a different reason. And you know, watching Rita Heyworth, she was fabulous, but I couldn't relate to her. So yeah, again, from quite an early age I was clicking in with sort of British film, sense of what was right and what worked for me. Michael Cane as well I suppose.

Interviewer: Yes, although Michael Cane was also in a number of the...well he was in Alfie, you know, one of the swinging London movies.

Respondent: I didn't see that one.

Interviewer: I see.

Respondent: I always have to make sure as well I'm not bleeding into the early seventies. Well I've got this theory anyway that decades do go across, I don't think the '60s is the '60s; I think that the '50s went on until 1963.

Interviewer: I suspect you might be right about that.

Respondent: I think the '60s went on to about '73.

Interviewer: That's really interesting. You talk about a few other films you saw when you were younger. I assume these were early '60s memories. You talk about going to the Coliseum to see Mary Poppins.

Respondent: Yes, I remember that very clearly. That was '63.

Interviewer: Tell me about it.

Respondent: I had a little Google search to get the year. I can't remember it being a sense of occasion particularly, but I do remember sitting in this most amazing building. And I can remember that we were sitting in the dress up round on the right and it was just like a cinema I'd never been to before, because you know, we'd been to the local ones. And I was eight years old so I can just remember the grandness of it and how big it was; it was amazingly huge.

Interviewer: This is in the West End.

Respondent: This was the Coliseum which is now the English National Opera just off Trafalgar Square. That was a cinema for a long time.

Interviewer: And it felt different to seeing local films.

Respondent: Yes, well apart from anything else it was vast. We were a long, long way away from the screen. But I do remember its (?). It was all sort of very Baroque in my mind.

Interviewer: Did you see Mary Poppins with your mother there?

Respondent: Yeah, and I remember my dad was there for that one and my sister, so this must have been a family outing.

Interviewer: That's really interesting.

Respondent: Yeah, it would have been the four of us, so Jam would have only been about five.

Interviewer: That's your sister?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you remember your dad's response to that film?

Respondent: No, not at all.

Interviewer: That's okay.

Respondent : Not at all.

Interviewer: You also talk about the Dominion and seeing Cleopatra.

Respondent: Yes, I went with my mum.

Interviewer: Fantastic! Can you tell me a bit about that?

Respondent: She took our own sandwiches in tin foil and I was at an age where I was really embarrassed [laughs].

Interviewer: [Laughs] what was embarrassing about sandwiches in...?

Respondent: Because of the wrap thing of getting the sandwiches out and... 'coz she said it was a really long film, and so we have to take something to eat. And also, another memory I have there is that it was quite packed and I had what she called a weird bloke sitting next to me and she made me swap seats. I didn't know what was going on [laughs].

Interviewer: [Laughs] gosh!

Respondent: That's a memory I have of that visit. She didn't like him. She thought he was going to touch me up or something, so she sat next to him and gave him a good old nudge in the ribs and apparently he strutted away and went elsewhere.

Interviewer: Goodness! That's quite a memory to have.

Respondent: Yeah and I've still got that memory. So yeah, that was the Dominion, and I can remember being really bored with that film. It just went on and on and on. Even mum said that it should have been an hour shorter. But she loved Burton and Taylor you see.

Interviewer: Big American Hollywood stars, yeah. You talk about...well we ask in the questionnaire about why or whether the 1960s are still important to you now, and you talk about keeping a collection of '60s films that you love and you give some titles in the questionnaire. I was wondering why are '60s films still important to you?

Respondent: It was a very formative decade for me. I think that the early part, the early '60 when I would have been too young to have seen those at my age, I think that style of film making fit in with my preference for British theatre because I'm particularly fond of British post-war theatre...sort of I would

say mid-'50s and into the '60s. So it ties into my like for that sort of script. A lot of these were very theatrical, these films, you know things like A Taste of Honey for example, was on stage first, and the David story stuff was theatrical—he wrote for theatre; the pin for stuff (?) and things like Accident and The Servant, and all of those films. Victim is one that I just adore as a film because I'm also really interested in archive footage of what London was like and I love location spotting. It's a little sort of fetish of mine really, when we're around Soho and Shaftesbury Avenue and seeing what shops were there and what they are now. I'm fascinated by that old London. I have very vague memories of...of course I look at the pictures now and they're really retro and I'm always reminded of how old I am. So it's a mix of that really. It's the style, I do like that very measured sort of...it would have to be black and white; the black and white comes to mind. They're intelligent, they've got a real structure. They're slightly off beat, they're not naturalistic. Because I'm not a great one for total naturalism and realism...I like something to be theatrical and a little bit challenging, so that's probably the answer. A bit of a bad answer that....

Interviewer: No, no that was fine. You mentioned Vitamin Servant. Do you remember seeing those in the 1960s or are they things that you came to...?

Respondent: No, I came to them later.

Interviewer: Sure. I was asking because of the...you said earlier that you didn't see the kitchen sink style dramas early on in the '60s.

Respondent: No, that would have been early '70s really.

Interviewer: Yeah, ok. You also talk about these films, or thinking about these films now is part of your heritage. Is this to do with the idea of old London, of seeing old London.

Respondent: I think so, yes. It's partly to do with seeing old London, because it is a London I remember. It's simple, silly things like the shape of taxis, you know and the fact the open luggage racks, things like when you see the exterior of the theatres then and I could see what was showing then and what was

playing and some of the films are to do within a city living and I'll go back to A Taste of Honey, you know, and some of them of course were very middle class like The Servant. I couldn't relate to that, but I could relate to that sort of on stage presence that those actors had, because, you know, I started going to the theatre at a very young age as well, and I was always looking for something theatrical rather than film if you like. So I think that's what it is. There are quite a lot of working class films we saw as well, or course, names escaping me immediately, but you'll know the ones I mean. I've got more of a, sort of a literary kitchen (?) about them. Mostly filmed by theatre writers, you know, written by theatre writers.

Interviewer: Was that something that you were aware of in the '60s?

Respondent: Later '60s yes. Probably '69, '70. Because I had, you know they say you have one teacher at school who you'll always remember and I had one teacher at school who was particularly good at introducing me to these things.

Interviewer: So, to what extent did your interest in 1960s film and theatricality have a bearing on your later career choices?

Respondent: Umm, that's a good question. I think I felt more at home in theatre spaces than I did in cinema spaces to be honest. I think I liked the liveness of it. But then I realized that the two are inextricably linked and there's crossover, and therefore I was interested in films that were set in somebody's home or living room. My career choice to go and train as an actor was more to do with live theatre than cinema, I have to say. Just thinking that through. It's not a great answer, is it?

Interviewer: No, that's fine. The best answer is the truth [laughs].

Respondent: The only other thing I could say to that is that cinema was more accessible then. It was much, much cheaper. So, if anything I went to the cinema because that was what I could afford to do.

Interviewer: Cheaper than theatre?

Respondent: Much cheaper than theatre, yeah.

Interviewer: Well I've reached the end of the questions that I wanted to ask you. But before we sign off, as it were, I wonder whether there was anything that you wanted to add, anything that I haven't asked about yet.

Respondent: No, I mean I think we've covered my physical cinema going in the '60s. All I'd like to say is that my ideas about '60s cinema and how I feel about it weren't properly formed until the '70s. So you know, I'm talking about memories, but any intellectual response to that came a bit later, when I went off to college in 1973; it was then that I really started appreciating the stuff I'd seen. So, stuff I actually saw as a youngster in the 60s was gut reaction, immediate response stuff. I didn't spend time analyzing it then. That came a little bit later. That's all.

Interviewer: Thanks very much. Cheers.

End of interview.