

Cyril Page (newsreel and television cameraman) 15/11/1920 - ?

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Interviewer: Alan Lawson

Interviewee: Cyril Page

Tape 1, Side 1

Alan Lawson: Right um...First and foremost, when and where were you born?

Cyril Page: West Ham.

Alan Lawson: West Ham. When?

Cyril Page: 15th November, 1920(?)...1920...so I'll be 75 next week.

Alan Lawson: Um...And schooling?

Cyril Page: Er...I went to er the er Holbrook Road School, then I went to the Pallais[?] Memorial School...er...and then there, we moved to Brentwood and I went to the Brentwood Grammar School, and then back to West Ham again, and I finished up at Holbrook Road where I...where I went...Finished there at the age of 14 and went to work.

Alan Lawson: Um...What, what do you mean by work?

Cyril Page: Well, when I was at school I started er...showing the films to the school on the Friday afternoon, so I could get out of doing lessons, and I had an old 9.5 Ace Projector, hand-turn, and we used to do the old er Keystone Cops and Charlie Chaplin films, which were quite good. Then I went on, graduated a bit, to the Pathescope Home Movie Projector, which my father bought me, and er...and it led from there that I was doing all the films for the... We used to hire films from the geographical society and various places who gave films to the school to rent and er consequently I was a very good scholar at doing films but a scholar for nothing else, and er [laughs] then I went onto the old Pathescope 200 B Projector, which was absolutely the cream

of everything, and we started to do er carnivals, and we used to go out (I was in the Scouts then) and we used to do...put up a big tent and um go out shooting stuff on 9.5 in the morning in the parade and we used to put it round a er...er 15 gallon oil drum in the gents toilet, with hypo and all that reversal stuff, and er then we used to show it in the tent and charge sixpence a time to go in and they got a free tin of Ovaltine as they came out...and we used to put the music on with a couple of 78 records, a bit of effects, and you know the old er...er...[hesitates] soft music and put it up loud when the guns went off and things like that, and er that was the start of me er...you know, really in the film...because I was bred and born with it I think...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes, but [hesitates] what were you earning your living at then?

Cyril Page: I was still at school.

Alan Lawson: Oh, I see...I see...

Cyril Page: [interrupts]...Yes I was still at school...yes, yes, yes...

Alan Lawson: At then at 14, what?

Cyril Page: Then at 14, I wanted to go into the film business, naturally. Errm...I had been to Lime Grove as er... a day trip, as an honour, and to stand in the background, and er...of course I had no connection, but my father's sister, she owned er three cinemas...Er, she owned one at Epping, Loughton and Theydon Bois and she was a very snob...she was a snob, and my father, we only had a tobacconists and confectioners that's all and er...in West Ham, so naturally we weren't...we were the poor...poor part of the family, but she said "Well, Cyril hasn't had the education to go into the film business but if likes to come over to Loughton once a week, he can go up in the projection box and rewind the film. So from West Ham to Loughton, I had er...twopence for the train and tram. I used to hang off the back of the tram to save the money, and I used to go up, and Mr Sparrow was the Manager who took pity on me and he used to give me an ice cream and stuff out of the goody box in the cinema, and I used to go up and rewind the film. Well in Dad's shop...um...I used to serve in the shop occasionally...and in the shop came a gentleman who I knew, a Mr Bevan...and er...I heard that he was with HMV...Well, all I knew was that HMV was the dog with the big...the er earpiece stuck down his nose and listening to a record...and he was the Chief Designer for HMV at Hayes...And I said to him "Do...do you know anybody in the film business?" and he said "Oh, I think I...I've got a connection somewhere..." Anyway, about a couple of months later, he said "Now, if you ring up a Mr Bunny Williams at Ealing Studios...er the old ATP..." I said "Er...yes" He said "and he may be able to help you." So I rang up Mr Williams, and of course I was always taught to say "Sir" and "Thank You," that was all...the main thing of my life, which I still retain, and I said "Excuse me Sir, I...I don't want to take any of your time, but Mr Bevan told me to ring up..." "Oh!" he said, "You're that young chap from West Ham! Yes. Do you want to go in the film business?" I said "Well..." I said, "Yes," "And what do you want to do?" I said, "I'd like to go on the camera..." Anyway, to cut a long story short, about a couple of weeks later he rang me up and said if I rang up...rang up er...a Mr Ernie Garside[?] at er...(Walton on Thames) er Worton Hall Studios at Isleworth, he'd most likely, you know, er...fix me up. So I rang up this gentleman and he said, "Yes, we want a Clapper Boy. Do you know what...?" I said, "Yes, put the board in, and bang, and get out." He

said, "Right, you can start 7.30 here in the morning." So I went home and told me Dad and he said "Er, right. Ok. So...er...on the District Line to Hounslow..." I...I think I got the train to Isleworth Studios, and er...It was Criterion Films - Marcel Hellman - and the Producer was Douglas Fairbanks Jr., and the Cameraman was Victor Armenise, and the Operator was Cedric Williams...er, the Focus Puller was Louis Stunt, um...I forget the name of the Loading Boy, and I was the boy...you know, the Clapper Boy. So I duly arrived, in a black jacket and tie and everything like that, and he said "Well, you can take that off, for a start!"...

Alan Lawson: [laughing]

Cyril Page: ...And er...anyway, I...I knew exactly what to do. Well, the first shot, I put the board in and, because in those days you put the board at the beginning and turned it upside down at the end, so the editor knew which was the start, which was the finish, and er...Anyway, all the numbers fell out, for start - That...that, you know, upset me a bit...[laughs]...

Alan Lawson: [laughs]

Cyril Page: ...[still laughing] And er...Anyway, that was mastered...And, in one shot, I tripped over a pedestal. It had a vase on there, which was hired from the Old Times Furnishing Company, which broke and...oh, and all hell let loose: "Get rid of that boy! Get rid of that boy!" I thought "Oh my God!" So, anyway, I was told to pack me bags and go. But Ernie Garside was the Production Manager and he used to wire or phone up the...the um, Commissioner at the gate and said "Give him a good bollocking and send him back again!" you see? So used to go, you know, tail between my legs. Go to the gate and the old Sergeant used to say "Now what...what's wrong with you?" I told him all the story and he said "Now you go back and say you're sorry to Mr Garside!" So I did, and I went back and he said "Oh, all right, well, you stay on, but behave yourself!" So I did, and then about...a week or so later...um...nobody noticed, but when I ran out with the board and I just stood, you know, very quietly at the side, I cast a shadow on the background, and nobody knew until the rushes the next day when someone said "Oh, my God, look. What's that? Laddie boy again! Get rid of him!" [Laughing] So, once again, I was sacked and sent up to the gate, and I got another bollocking and sent back. Anyway, Mr Garside, he said "Right! A third time - you're out!" Anyway, at the end of the film, it was called er 'Crime Over London', with Basil Sydney and Margot Grahame, and er...Anyway, Douglas Fairbanks, he gave me a fiver, and I...cor! that was like, ooh, you know, absolutely marvellous. He said "Right, I'd like to have you on my next film. So, the...the Loading Boy, he...er, Jimmy, I forget his name now...er...he showed me what to do with some waste film in the Dark Room, and I used to practice and practice and practice. Anyway, cut a long story, I should...I did two films there and er...then I had to er...filming was...coming to the close and er...I heard that they wanted a Loading Boy at er Sound City...John Stafford Productions. So I rang up, and the Cameraman's name was Jimmy Wilson. So, I rang Mr Wilson up and I said...so he said, "Yes! Ok, you can start on Monday." "Ok." "8 o'clock" "Ok" So, anyway...And I lived at West Ham. I had a hell of a job to get there, and I didn't get there till about ten! [Laughs] So I thought "Well that's a good start!" So, anyway...He was such a nice guy, he said "Don't worry, don't worry..." He said "All the mags are loaded" and we had the old er Debie, the Super Parvo Debie which was the one you lifted up the front and the two sides opened and...Anyway, er...all the mags were loaded and er...Arthur Graham was the Camera Operator... Um... I can't think who the...erm, er...Focus

Puller was...can't think...and er...Anyway, er...They shot a roll and I took it back into the Dark Room, unscrewed the lid and er took the film out of the magazine, and undid the tape on the tin of film which came from Kodak's, undid the black bag, and of course it had a wooden bobbin in the centre of the thousand feet, and you had to take the wooden bobbin out and take about three feet out, and then put the metal one in and open the cassette...and of course when I pulled the middle out, the whole bloody lot all went like a spiral, all round me feet, all round everywhere and I was in a hell of a state with a thousand feet, in a dark room, all round me. So I wound it all up, cut me fingers, put it back in the...I got the magazine loaded...put it in there, I took it back on the floor and er, when the er assistant loaded up, he said "What's wrong with this?!" He said "The emulsion's..." [Laughs] "...the emulsion's round the wrong way!" - cos he had to do a loop, from the magazine, into a loop and down, and of course, when the loop went down, the emulsion was facing backwards, instead of towards the lens! So, Jimmy Wilson said, "What happened?" So he said "Come on. I'll take you." He said "Take this thousand feet" So the thousand feet was useless anyway, so he showed me...and I did about six films with Jimmy...and he taught me practically everything, and I used to stand at the side and I think "Well, why's he doing this?" and "why's he put that black board in the front of that? Why's he put a lady's silk stocking over the light?" or "Why's he put this 'nigger' ?...this thing called 'nigger'...?" and all that...and I used to ask him, and he was...he used to say...tell me exactly why he was doing it. And er...then we went, after er Staffords, it was Universal Wainwright. We did about 7 or 8 films there...Tom Walls and Capitol Films, James Fitzpatrick, er...Baxter & Barter...errm...John Baxter, he was a...he was a beautiful man... Wally Orton...I could go on...with...ooh...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] And tell me er...and what were your um...what are your recollections er...of Fitz...Fitzpatrick?

Cyril Page: James Fitzpatrick?

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: Well, he...he rented the studio...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...yes...

Cyril Page: He was doing his travelogue at the time and er...He used to come...I only know him by going into the new cinemas and seeing his lovely colour travelogue films...And er...He was in a small studio doing some inserts and...All I knew was [Does voice-over impersonation] "And so, reluctantly, we say farewell to the lonely seas and the sky..." you see...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] You didn't work on...on any of his films?

Cyril Page: No, unfortunately I...I wanted to...and er...He...he was gonna get married. He was going to Ireland to get married, and he was going off to some...outlandish place in the world, and...I couldn't get a work permit or something, so I...I missed the opportunity of working with him. But I...I only did a few inserts, that's all, just that...er so...really I didn't...didn't know him personally, so um...

Alan Lawson: Can you remember his cameraman?

Cyril Page: [Sighs] Er...No, I can't er...off-hand...cos I...I was working in er [hesitates] the studios, you see...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...

Cyril Page: And I...I just popped in there to see what they were doing during the lunch hour, something like that, and er...Only a couple of days I worked on the inserts when they were doing other stuff.

Alan Lawson: Well what cameramen er...besides Jimmy, did you work with down at Sound City?

Cyril Page: Er...Oh, gosh! Um...er...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Did you work with...?

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Er, er...Ernie Palmer...

Alan Lawson: Yes...Oh yes...?

Cyril Page: Ernie Palmer, er...

Alan Lawson: Len Denning[?]?

Cyril Page: No...er...

Alan Lawson: Gavin Stretton[?]?

Cyril Page: Setton? No, no, no, no...Er...I'll have to think about that because I...I...um...I really can't think, er Ernie Palmer, er...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh, it doesn't matter...

Cyril Page: Jack Cox? Jack Cox?...

Alan Lawson: Oh, really?!...

Cyril Page: Jack Cox, yes. Jack Cox. And he went to Gaumont's, er...er Lime Grove and I worked there...Um...I really...My mind baffles with so many...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...yes...

Cyril Page: ...Cos I did so many films then with a lot of er...But most of them with Jimmy Wilson, because he...[clears throat] and John Baxter worked together an awful lot, with 'Old

Mother Riley' films and all that...all that stuff. And um...after that er...they packed up. I think there was er...a bit of a lull and er then...I went to Ealing...the old ATP. Yes. Er, Mickey Balcon and Basil Dean's er...outfit, and I worked with um...um...Ronnie Neame ...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh, yes...? Yes...yes...

Cyril Page: Well, Ronnie Neame was the cameraman then...er, before he turned over...and Gordon Dines ..erm...erm...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Bob Lapresle?

Cyril Page: Pardon?

Alan Lawson: Bob Lapresle

Cyril Page: No...no, no...[Mumbles] And er...erm... What was it? He was in the Navy with me during the war...I can't...Er...[Laughs] Lives out at Windsor...I...I just can't think of his name at the moment...Paul Beeson!...

Alan Lawson: Oh! Oh yes...yes...

Cyril Page: Yeah, Paul Beeson and I...um...I was still loading then. I'd been made up to Assistant, so Paul was...Paul was er focus pulling...Errm... and I did a couple of films there. Then I went back to...er Elstree, to British National...er, back to er...[sneezes]'scuse me, erm...Yes I finished Sound City, then I went back to Elstree, cos Jimmy had moved during the war up to British National, at Elstree for Lady Yule. So er...up to er then, I was doing the 'Old Mother Riley', George Formby, and all that kind of thing, and of course war broke out...and...I was...I went into the Navy, and that was the...up to then...

Alan Lawson: Yeah, yeah, I see...Um... What er...where did you go...in the Navy? - Because I know you finished up in film...in the film unit, didn't you?

Cyril Page: Oh yes. Well, actually I...I went...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] You carry on, yes, talking about the Navy days...

Cyril Page: ...Actually I put myself down for the Air Force, and er I went to West Drayton, sat through all this, that and the other, and after about three days the adjutant turns to me and he says "Oh, you've gotta go down to HMS Victory" and I thought "Well, I don't know, it's a ship..." He said "Yes, you post yourself there. Where do you live?" I said "West Ham" He said "Well have a day and go on the next day" So I went down to Portsmouth and er, it was er...Navy barracks, and they said "You're being seconded into the Fleet Air Arm because they're shooting down so many photographers and that in the Fleet Air Arm, that they're a bit short." I thought, "Well, thanks very much. I'll go home!" [Laughs] But, anyway, I went to Lee-on-the-Solent and um...then I went to Chipnall, the film school, and then down to Yelverton and er...then I went onboard

er...aircraft carriers, and I was doing...then I was commissioned, and then eventually I finished up in Hong Kong, and er...Antony Kimmins...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh yes, yes...

Cyril Page: ...he was the Captain. Gordon Dines, er Lieutenant Dines, and er Paul Beeson again, and we were all Subbies. Well, I went to Hong Kong...went out to Australia. We all met there, and then I went up to Hong Kong. Paul went to Japan, I think. We all scattered all over the place.

Alan Lawson: ...Because the Naval film unit was very secretive really

Cyril Page: Well, yes [Laughs] We had that song [sings] "We three, we're not alone!..." - well that was it, at Chipnall. I was a laugh and a giggle. There was at Chipnall. And we used to walk from [inaudible] each morning, across the gate and, with all duty free fags in our pocket...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: And then [laughs] go down to the [Gas]? school and had this one studio with the old Vinten camera, which we called 'The Iron Lung', and er...one camera. That was the film unit, and about ten lamps, the old Mole Richardson lamps and um... a petty officer as a spark, and we were just the three of us on the camera; it was Gordon Dines, cameraman and... operating, Paul focussing, and me doing loading, clappers and sweeping the floor and getting the tea...

Alan Lawson: And Hazel Wilkinson...

Cyril Page: That's right. She was editing then. Old Hazel. Yes. She was third officer. [Laughs] Yes. Old Hazel. Yes, yes...

Alan Lawson: What kind of...erm...What films were you making?

Cyril Page: Er, well, these were all documentary, like 'Dropping the Anchor,' 'Tracing an Earth' and er [laughs] venereal diseases over at Hasler Hospital. Er...we had an ordinary seaman come over to lug all the gear with us and we went to Hasler Hospital. We had to do this gonorrhoea...venereal disease and...oh, the whole lot, and er I was operating then, and I said "Well, what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna do this, so you have to be very critical on the focus so you get it up. So I...the surgeon came in and got this bloke, and I must say it was a horrible sight. They had a 3-badge...an old 3-badge Stoker, and I think he'd been in the Navy and I think he had every disease imaginable, and er when they got hold of him to sort of put this...pair of sugar tongs down his thing, and er I turned round and said "I'm gonna pull out now, so I'm gonna move" and I turned round [laughs] and this guy had fainted! [laughing] And he was on the floor!... That was my assistant! Er, it wasn't very pleasant. We did about 4 films on that and erm...went up to Scapa Flow and then I got a bit fed up at...you know, I...I don't know why. It was a cushy number; if I'd've stayed there, it would've been right the way through the war, but I felt I wanted to...being young, see more action. So I went back to the Fleet Air Arm and then um...I went out on HMS [name of ship ???]...er...flying as a photographic observer, and then I got a signal, an AFO....Admiralty Fleet Orders came and said I...I was to be sent ashore to go

to...back to London, to the Admiralty, to report to er Captain Kimmins at erm...er...NILDIV - Naval Information Liaison Division, and Tony Kimmins was there, Gordon Dines was there. They were all officers. They said, "Right. You come in...You're commissioned," and er...that was it. So that was the start of the other film unit which was...what we called NILDIV, Naval Information Division, and Kimmins was the boss of the whole op. But, there was only five of us, that's all, you know...

Alan Lawson: Was John Paddy Carstairs in on that?

Cyril Page: No.

Alan Lawson: He wasn't...

Cyril Page: No, no, no, no...

Alan Lawson: Because I remember um...I worked with John Paddy. He was seconded to us. Er...We were seconded to, I think it was...what became 'True Glory'...erm...and...Governor Stretton??...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Dudgeon Stretton! Yes. Yes that's right, yes, yeah...But he...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Very mutton Jeff...

Cyril Page: But he...Yes, that's right, but he was er up in London doing the films for the fleet.

Alan Lawson: Ah!

Cyril Page: He...he was er put in...like the cinema side...yeah...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh, I see, I see...

Cyril Page: ...yep, yep, yep...Commander, I think...he was a Commander, I think.

Alan Lawson: Er...yes.

Cyril Page: Yeah, that's right, yep, yep...Oh, it was a happy...happy gang and er...you know, I...I er went into Hong Kong and er thoroughly enjoyed it. I mean, it was excellent. We went...out to Australia. Then we went to er... I was attached to the American Fleet Train, and we were based in Mallus[?] in the Phillipines, with the American Fleet, but er...No, er, I...I enjoyed it. I think the Convoy work I enjoyed more, when I was at sea with the Fleet Air Arm ...

Alan Lawson: Really?

Cyril Page: Yeah, yeah. I enjoyed it. It was more action and all that...But er...it was a doddle, you know, really!

Alan Lawson: Really?

Cyril Page: Yeah. I got a medal for it! [Laughs]

Alan Lawson: You did? [laughing]

Cyril Page: ...But, you know...You know, one feels like that. Er, it was luxury, really, the latter part. Because when they dropped the bomb the whole thing stopped, and that was that.

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: But er...I enjoyed it, yes.

Alan Lawson: When were you demobbed?

Cyril Page: Er...'45...about '46 I think it was.

Alan Lawson: Had you got any...reinstatement rights at all?

Cyril Page: Any what?

Alan Lawson: Reinstatement rights. Back into...back into the business, I mean, um...

Cyril Page: Oh yes, back to British National.

Alan Lawson: You were?

Cyril Page: Oh yes, yes... because I left from British National and er... Loudon...(No, Loudon was at er Sound City er) ...I can't....

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Lady Yule ?

Cyril Page: er, Lock, no...no...Blattner!...Gerry Blackmer! Gerry Blattner! ...that's right. Yeah, he was at Rock's. It was Rock Studios. So I went back there, and I did a couple of films there...after that.

Alan Lawson: What as?

Cyril Page: Er as...er, I was operating then. Yeah, cos Jimmy was there...And er I think Arthur, Arthur Graham, erm...He came to British National, and I think he went off somewhere else...I didn't see him. Er, Gibbs, [Gerald Gibbs ?], was another one...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Gerry Gibbs, yes...

Cyril Page: ...He's another guy that came...So many names, I...I...you know, and when you're getting old like I am, I...I can't...Well, your mind goes a bit...Errm, so I did a couple of films and

then it all sort of folded up a bit. Er...then British Columbia started to...er Columbia Pictures started to do a British version over here or something...errm...er...I forget what it was...oh yeah...we were on location down in Brighton... 'The First Gentleman'!...

Alan Lawson: Oh yes...

Cyril Page: Jean-Pierre Aumont I think, was the leading man, and we were down at Brighton, in the Pavilion, and er...They offered me a contract which was...And I'd just got married and I thought "God, that's marvellous!" you know, "Bread and butter's coming in" instead of worrying about where you're going next and er...I finished that film and they said "Well, we're not going to make another one for, oh, quite a while, but er we will rent you out, or hire you out to other studios...errm...All right. Do you wish to...us to buy your contract off us and you'll go and be free again?" I said, "Well, no. You hire me out," I said, "I want money coming in each month, you see" - which they did and er...then, all of a sudden, BBC rang me up...er...a gentleman er who I'd never heard of, a Mr Dale Struther[?] and said could I possibly help them out to come up on a Saturday and do the boat race? Er...and we were based in Walton-on-Thames then. I went to Walton-on-Thames with Butchers...that's right, after Columbia... and... that's right, yes. I left Columbia's and I went to Butchers, and er...we were doing Harry Randall and er...another 'Old Mother Riley' I think...and er, we finished there, and this gentleman rang me up, Dale Struther[?] I said "BBC?! Oh God...BBC?! Alexandra Palace?!...Never been up there!" and he said "Well, could you do the start of The Boat Race?" and I said er "Oh yes!" and the only experience I'd had of news was going to the cinema and seeing Pathe Gaumont and all that, and I thought...and I could never, you know, never imagine myself being...doing that sort of job. Anyway, I duly went up to Alexandra Palace and..."Oh! Oh, it's very nice of you to come!..." I thought "Oh, this is marvellous!" you know and they kept saying "Another cup of coffee!..." and "We've arranged for you to go down to the start at Putney Bridge...and we've arranged for a PLA to go on their barge" and "just to get...just to get the Boat Race." So I said...So er..."Just the start!...and, you know, just...and they will go out of shot..." I said "What, and I follow them up?..." "Oh, no! No, no, no...Don't...No, nothing like that. Just do the start" and I said, "Yes, ok." I said, "Right. Ok. Well, we'll get the camera loaded up." He said "What camera have you got?" and I said, "I haven't got a camera!" He said, "Well, I thought every cameraman had his own camera?" I said "Oh, no. No, no." He said "Oh dear!..." and the time, I think, was ten o'clock, and I think The Boat Race was at two. And he said er "Oh! I see! Oh, what do we do?" I said "Well, [hesitates] what do you...er...16, 35, 9.5, 17.5, or what?" He said er "Oh no, it'll be on 35mm" I said "That's all right..." I said "Well, don't worry." So I rang down to errm...I think Hal Britten, I think was the er...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh, yes...

Cyril Page: is...Old Hal Britten was down there then... he'd left Ealing Street, yes, I think...I think he was looking after the gear...or Bill Law...one of these blokes...I said "could I borrow the Newman Sinclair?" He said "yeah!" "I said "Well, I'm, you know, doing the..." "Yes, that's all right." So, they gave me a car. Went down to Walton on Thames. Picked up the camera. Came back. Couple of hundred feet of film. Loaded the magazine, and down to Putney. Bash, bash. Out there. So, we just did the boats going away. Came back. Took it up to Alexandra Palace. "Awfully nice! Thank you very much indeed!" you know. That was on the Saturday...And he

said, "Well, we, we can't pay you [laughs] at the moment..." He said, "You'll have to put a bill in, and we'll send you the £2.50...er, you know, eventually [laughing] when it comes through!" I said "well, don't [mumbles]," "...and your expenses...and could you possibly drop it down the laboratories at Kays at Finsbury Park on your way home!" [laughing] So I took it down there, on the Saturday after...Saturday ...Well, about five o'clock...They rang me up on the Tuesday and said, "It was very, very good indeed. Thank you very much indeed. Errm...Are you free next week?" And that was the start...of me going up there... at Alexandra Palace, and I did one or two things there. I did a second 'Potters Wheel' I think, and 'The Swans' and I had to do a lot of repetition things for interludes.

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yeah, the interludes...

Cyril Page: Um...And then er...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] What camera did you use on those?

Cyril Page: Pardon?

Alan Lawson: What camera did they give you? Or did you have to do the same again and get one?

Cyril Page: Oh er...No, I had to go and get one. Had to borrow the Newman Sinclair...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Yeah...Errm...Actually I think we...had to hire some from Films and Equipment, I think, in Wardour Street. I think we went down there, or er...um...

Alan Lawson: Yes...Forrester...

Cyril Page: [Hesitates] Not Don Long. No, no...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Forrester?...Was it Forrester?

Cyril Page: Forrester! That's right. Forrester! That's right. [Laughs] Yes, indeed...Er...and of course Samuelsons and people like that hadn't even started in those days, so of course it was just er...Errm...Then we had the old Eyemo, that was another one we borrowed. Er...And then that really started it...Er...As a say, I had the contract bought off me, and then I went to Walton-on-Thames, and then Dale Struthers said "Oh, are you interested in er...you know, coming to work here?" and I said "Well, yes!" I mean, permanent staff - I thought "Ooh," you know, "Gift from Heaven!" and I had a year's contract...and that was the start, and I think the first job I did when I was on the staff, permanently, I did some stuff for Don Smith.

Alan Lawson: Oh, Children's Newsreel.

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Yeah, Don Swift, on the Children's Newsreel. Well, compiling stuff, you know. We had to...build up a library. So um...weekends, I used to go up and shoot dog shows and things like...stuff that...wouldn't date, you know the sort of, you know the thing, so he could use that anytime he wanted...And er...that was the start of it. So, for a long time we were doing bits and pieces. The news actually hadn't started then. And of course then it got larger, and then Phil Dorte came and took over... in charge, and he was our... Big White Chief... Howard Cox and er...like your dear self, Alan...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: ...my boss...and er which I have great respect for...and er...that was the start of it! And I think my first shot I had to do, for the television newsreel, with the old mast with the words going round, was to go out in the North...er into the English Channel and join the [name of ship? Pameer?], a big four-masted trading ship that came from Australia, and I came right up the Thames with that, and that was the first, first er shot really for the television newsreel.

Alan Lawson: And erm...[Hesitates] Cos I...you know, I had a go, well I was forced to have a go at doing newsreel and I hated it. You know, I'd shoot probably a complete magazine and there was still no story, but I...You know, everybody else would shoot a magazine and there were more than...you know, there were two stories...it was a thing I could never understand.

Cyril Page: No. Yep. Yes, it was quite...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] It's a different mental...a different, not mentality...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Yeah...Different aspect...in...in the way you approach it. I mean, I could never imagine me er standing in Downing Street and things like that and getting the quick, you know, like that. You know, I'd say, "Excuse me, would you mind doing that again?" attitude, "Now we'll take...Can you do a Take 2?" Well when you er...when I went out on Fleet Street, and of course we were frowned upon by all the newsreels, because we could get it on the screen within sort of er...the next day.

Alan Lawson: What was... what was your relation...you know, what was the television news boy's relationship with the ordinary newsreel boy?

Cyril Page: Very bad at the beginning.

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: I mean they used to sort of er...er say, "You can't stand here. You can't put your rostrum up here and er...[laughs] sometimes you went out, you'd find your car chained to a lamp-post or something, you know. They were up to all sorts of tricks and...like that, but eventually er they did ease up and er...you know, I think it was a personal approach to it, more than a...an opposition er for a company.

Alan Lawson: Because I can remember on one job, somebody said to me, "That's my place. You've taken my place. That's my place."

Cyril Page: Yep, yep. An awful lot was like that. They used to...Yes

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] And you know...being...being green, I said, "Oh, I'm sorry" and moved.

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Yep, yep. That's right. Yeah, they used to go about two hours before and put their camera cases in. You turn up and, you know, they used to say, "Oh, I want this space" and all that, and you had to move, or get the bad position. But...I think you quickly learn as to, you know, you set your arms out and say, "Right. That's it," you know, "Blokes, I want a bit more space." But then at times um...you had a facility and you...[hesitates] one of them, Movietone or Gaumonts or Universal or Pathe didn't, I'd say, "Come on, come with me." So, you know, it was give and take a lot of the time. Or, I was going back and they said "Would you drop this film in for us?" you know, and they'd know very well we were going to put it out beforehand but they, you know, you helped them, and at times, if your car broke down, and they'd see you at the side of the road, they'd stop and "What's the matter?" and they'd say, "Well, give us your film, we'll drop it in at Alexandra Palace for you." I mean, all things...that came eventually, but it was tough at the beginning...Yeah.

Alan Lawson: Yeah, yeah...Errm...What was...er...Now erm...you eventually went to Korea didn't you?

Cyril Page: Yep, yep.

Alan Lawson: Let's talk about that.

Cyril Page: [Coughs] Well, the um...Being ex-Navy, I wasn't very keen on army life and... the Korean War started. (I don't think I don't think we did dangerous stuff before Korea. I don't...I don't think there was anything. Belfast hadn't started, I don't think by then) I think Korea was about the...the first of it all...and er Korean started and the newsreel hadn't sent anybody out there - the Newsreel Association in those days. And Harry Cox wanted a volunteer. They couldn't say, "You are going out to the war zone". They can't send you. You have to volunteer...and nobody did, you see. And, I said "I'll go. I don't mind going" and Harry Cox said, "Oh," he said, "I think your wife's having a baby, isn't it?" I said, "Well, I'm not, so what...what's the odds? I...[Laughs] I shan't be there!" and he said, "Oh well, it's a bit difficult to send a chap out whose wife's in that condition," he said, "Well, would you mind going for, say, a couple of weeks?" I said "No. That's all right." I thought, "Where's Korea?" I said...I really didn't know [laughs] where it was! So he said, "Awfully nice of you. Thank you very much for, you know, volunteering." I said "Well, you've asked me and I said yes." So I went home and I said to the wife, I said, "Well, I'm only being...a couple of weeks. I could make a few bob on expenses, undoubtedly." Anyway, I got my bag and packed, and took a Newman Sinclair out with me, and an Eyemo...out to Tokyo... and when I got to London airport the chap I sat next to was a chap by the name of Ozzie Cochrane. And he was the...to take over the position as British Air... BOAC ... in Tokyo. So course we sat up and, him being an executive for the air-line, we were well dined and all that, so we made very

good friends. I stayed at the hotel and Ozzie, he stayed at the Imperial. I stayed at the [Maranoushi ?] Hotel. So we met up that evening and had a meal together and he said, "Well, what do you have to do?" I said, "Well, I have to report to the Americans. There's no British there at all at the moment so I gotta report to the Americans." So I went to the Americans and they said "Yeah, ok, we'll accredit you with the American Forces" and all that. So I had to go down to the Commissary and get an American uniform, which was absolutely fantastic, the best I ever had, I think! [Laughs] And er...they gave me a trip to go to the PX and er, then I had to go to the British Embassy, and I was all dressed up in this American khaki uniform, with an eagle on the top with a big press badge in the middle of it. I went to the British Embassy, and the Governor there said, "Well, um...there's nobody except down in Sasebo." I said, "Where's that?" He said, "Right the other end of Japan." "How do I get there?" He said "Oh well, go there - there's about three or four British war ships down there. So you may get a story down there." Well I had nothing to do. I thought, "Well I'm only gonna kick around, you know, up here doing nothing." So I went down on the train. It was absolutely fantastic...And, with being a correspondent, you got a...you know, you were ranked as...I was ranked as a Major through Colonel, so of course I had a very...lovely cabin, and a vistaed room on the top with all meals on this big fantastic tray. Got down to Sasebo and I had to report to HMS Ladybird...which was an old Yangtze paddle steamer. So I went aboard there and, being ex-Navy, saluted the Quarter Deck and said er "Oh, could I see the er...Commanding Officer, or have you anyone to deal with the Press, looking after the Press?" He said, "Oh yes, there's a Lieutenant Commander Brockbank..." And it didn't tumble to me 'Brockbank' I thought, you know, I thought "No, no, don't know..." Anyway, I had to go on down to the below. He said "Well he's down below. Cabin number so-and-so..." So I knocked on the door and he said [puts on a gruff voice] "Who's that?" I said er "Oh, er, BBC..." "Oh. Hang on a minute. Who is it?" I said "Cyril Page." He said "Who?!" I said "Cyril Page." And he came out, and he was in a sweatshirt, cos he wore glasses, just a sweatshirt, sweating like hell, and he said "What the bloody hell are you doing here?!" Well Brocky was in the...in the NILDIV. He was writing the stories for us when we were in the Navy!...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: ...And 'course he worked for the Daily Express, and he got seconded by the Daily Express to come out and cover the Korean War. So that's as far as he got was HMS Ladybird! "Hell, come in mate!" So of course we got in there and said er "Well there's nothing doing down here," he said, "We've not gone into action." He said "We are going into action very shortly on the Inch'On line," he said, "But er, it's a bit dicky at the moment." He said "But I'll fix you up." Anyway, to cut a long story short, I slept onboard the ship for a couple of days. He said "Then we'll put you on another ship to blind them, because otherwise the chaps will say 'If there's a correspondent coming onboard, we're going into action' so we'll mess about..." So I was onboard a destroyer and er...I got a message from Brocky errm..."We're gonna play the American's Football." I thought "Well, that's a good start!" I said "I'm here to cover a war and then I'm only playing...[laughs] the British Navy are playing the American's Football!" So, I went ashore with a camera, and he said "Oh, bring a pair of pyjamas with you and shaving kit." I thought, "Oh well, I'll do it. I won't ask questions." Anyway, got in this fifteen hundred weight lorry with about twenty officers and bit of...couple of big footballs and jerseys and...couple of cardboard boxes and...all trapped in the back. We were going about an hour and a half up the road and, all

of a sudden, we went in like a big pagoda; dragons and all that kind...I said, "Where are we Brocky? Is this the clubhouse?" He said, "Well, this is our clubhouse. We come up. This is the Geisha house." He said, "We're here for the weekend." I said, "Where's the football?" He said, "Oh, there's no football." He said, "We make a blind for that so we can get...get ashore for the night!" [Laughing]... So, that's my first initiation into a Geisha house in...in er...in...Japan!

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: So er...Anyway, that was it. So I did a couple of shots down there. Long shots of the harbour with all the ships in, and I went back to Tokyo and then er, all of a sudden, the er Middlesex Brigade came up from Hong Kong, and they went straight into Korea, and then I joined them there.

Alan Lawson: And who was with you on that?

Cyril Page: Nobody.

Alan Lawson: Nobody?

Cyril Page: No. I was alone. I had no Correspondent. No, I was...just on my Jack Jones. So er...I went over to um...[place name? Chey Goo][?], over to...with the Americans, the Americans were fantastic. They just went down and said, you know, "Correspondent. Ok. Where do you want to go? Get in." You know, that was it...and straight into Korea. And then I met Colonel Mann, who was the...in charge of the Middlesex Brigade. Made myself known to him. He said "Ok. Well, stick with us, and do what you want..." and that was that. And of course er...it was some while before we saw action there...and er, it was, you know, it was quite a bit er before we really started and...But it was purely an infantry brigade. We had no...we had er some jeeps and er some lorries, but no tanks, no nothing at all.

Alan Lawson: And how did you get your stuff back?

Cyril Page: Well, erm...The er...when we pushed up in the front, we saw one or two, you know, quite bits of action. I mean, it was er quite a distance away, still, they were. There was no hand to hand fire; lot of rifle fire, machine gin fire but er...We had mortars. And then you just packed it up and went to the nearest airbase, American airbase, and every aircraft...I must say the Americans are absolutely fantastic in that sort of thing...every aircraft, didn't matter if it was a helicopter or a Boeing, had a Press Bag in it. You just put it in there. As long as it was addressed properly, it got there. And I used to just address it, and I said to Ozzie, before I left Japan, "If I address it to you, can you forward it on for me and do all the paperwork?" He said "Yep. Leave it me." So I used to put it to er..."American Air Force, via [place name Ta'chi Ka??][?], which was the big airbase in Japan, and they used to take it. They used to take it up to British Airways in Tokyo and give it to Ozzie, personally, and Ozzie put it on the aircraft back to London...And it was absolutely fantastic. It worked perfectly. As for the British Public Relations, the Army...British Army came out with all their PR. We had a Major and er...I can't remember his name now, but they...Unfortunately er... I don't know... they had they no experience at all...And I gave them one roll of film, just the first roll. I thought "Well, that saves me shipping it. They can

do it. Back to London and War Office, and they'll dish it up to the BBC...and, blow me, they lost it! Never arrived...

Alan Lawson: Good God!

Cyril Page: Unbelievable! I cabled er...BBC on Cable and Wireless and just said, "The ship number so-and-so, via War Office, er contains stories of so-and-so, and so-and-so, and so-and-so" and I got a message back "Have not yet received. Where's film?" you know, blah, blah, blah. So after that, I...one roll, and never no more. I used to ship it through American...and I never lost...never lost one roll.

Alan Lawson: Um...What was the... Was there a good contact between London and yourself?

Cyril Page: Yes, very good. Yes. Well, Cable and Wireless, they were very good. Used to get a cable through, and letters.

Alan Lawson: What about the BBC end?

Cyril Page: What do you mean?

Alan Lawson: Well, did the BBC kind of, give you...keep you posted on reports and things?

Cyril Page: Oh, yes, yes. Every time I did a shipment: "Shipment so and so, excellent. Continue good work." Errm...Paul er...Paul er...

Alan Lawson: Fox?

Cyril Page: Paul Fox. He used to do all the scripts and that so, of course, Paul used to say "Great," you know, er "Be a little bit more explicit on so-and-so and so..." if I didn't er... Because you got a bit tired out there, keep on, same thing, you know...Soldiers looking here and, eating and all that kind of...Um...Yes, they were very informative, and especially Cecil McGivern ...

Alan Lawson: Oh yes...?

Cyril Page: ...who was the Controller at that time. He was excellent, because he used to ring my wife up every week and just say "How are you getting on?", and er "Anything you want?" and he was good. Well, I went out there for two weeks and I stayed nine months. I did a nine month stint out there, and it was hard graft I can tell you. And in that time, the first reporter I had out there was Tony Whyte, who was a BBC Correspondent, and he was to go to Singapore as the Correspondent there, but er, as he got married to...[Pauses] As he...as he got married to Nova Pilbeam, because he was er...it was a married man's post but BBC [said]: "No, it's a single man's post. But if you go out to Korea and do a good job, we'll make it a married man's post." Well, poor old chap, he was a... a bit young and er...when we went up the front, I mean, we just...got into a bit of trouble up there, in gun fire and all that...and a lot of stuff was coming over, and er...he thought, "Bugger this for a lark! I don't...No, not for me." So he...he sent a cable back: "Reluctant to be War Correspondent. I await your orders" and the message came back: "Return

Home." So, that was that. Then I had Bernard Forbes, the Parliamentary Correspondent, came out and [laughs]...dear old Bernard. He was lovely. He turned up with sort of umbrella and briefcase and said er, "Hello, dear boy. I'm here to see you, er...look after you, but I'm no way going up the Front Line. I don't want my arse shot off," he said, [laughing] "So, if you could let me know what you do, I'll be very grateful." And he was a dream. He was excellent, Old Bernard. He was like a dad to me...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: And then, from the sublime to the ridiculous, the next one I had Rene Cutforth.

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: So of course [laughs]...well, you know what Ronnie was like...so he said, "Well, you know, where's the nearest PX?" and he'd got a bottle of something. So er...But he was good. Old Rene. He was superb. We got on like a house on fire. And errm... Well, a story... Right. Well, we were up... we were all on a fiddle, and er...When I went back to Tokyo...I went back for a weekend and there was nothing. The Brits were being pulled out so they were all going on their R&R back to Tokyo. So I thought, "Right. I'll have an R&R" so I went back. and I went into...I had a PX card...the um... er 'Davy Jones's Locker', and I hadn't been there before and I went by myself and I was in British uniform then, cos I had to change over into Brits and I had American lovely smooth stuff and I went into this awful khaki rough stuff, which was bad, so er... I went into this 'Davy Jones's Locker', and it was like walking into a wine shop, like Cullens or somebody like that, and I said "Oh, that's marvellous. What can I have?" He said [does American accent] "You have wotchya like, buster!" I said, "Well, can I have a bottle of..." but I didn't drink and I thought, "Well it's always handy having a bottle of brandy for the boys or a bottle of scotch, so I said, "Can I have a bottle of scotch and a bottle of brandy, and some tonics?" He said "God, where the hell have you come from?" I said, "Well, I'm British" He said, "We don't sell bottles here!" I said, "Well, what about all those?" He said, "You can have a dozen of this, and a dozen of that," he said, "We don't open cases." I said, "I don't want a dozen." He said, "Well, we can't supply you." He said "Hang about..." The guy comes in and he said "He may give you a..." like that. Anyway, cut a long story, I stood about for about ten minutes and some Sergeant came in and he wanted this, and this bloke behind the counter said, "Can you give this British guy, or sell him, a bottle of scotch?" He said "Yeah, yeah...!" So, anyhow, I had a bottle of scotch and a bottle of gin and...tonics, they'd never heard of tonics. They just drank it neat...So I think I had a bottle of sherry, bottle of port, everything...Anyway. Went back to Korea and of course it was a godsend. Er...and then I...I had the jeep painted, just underneath the windscreen, er "BBC Television" and when I...er that broke down. So I went to the American...Well, I...I did a fiddle for the jeep, because the Brits couldn't give me transport, so I went down to the an American transport department, with a load of steak and kidney pies and some British rations, and of course they had all this corned beef hash and all that, and I said, "Can I do you a deal? - If I give you some steak and kidney pies, and some other...baked beans and all that, any chance of a jeep?" and the guys [laughing] watched the steak and kidney pies that were opened up and they said, "Sure, but you'll have to come here tonight. We'll leave one with the key in it and you can nick it!" So I...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] So I went down to this compound and I nicked this jeep...and it was very good, and of course I drove into the Brits with it and they said, "Where the hell did you get that from?" and I said, "Well, I've got in on loan. I got it through Hertz, you see," [laughing] "or Avis!" I said [laughs again] "Don't worry about that! Anyway, I had "BBC" painted underneath, just underneath the windscreen, and the next morning I came out and there was...there was rude words painted all over the canvas..."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: ...you know, "Get Stuffed..." - I won't tell you what was on it, but it was the most well known jeep er in the whole of Korea, I could tell you...

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: And er...Anyway, that was it. Everybody knew me. They saw me coming up the road and they were great. They used to come: "All right Pagey?" "Yeah, fine." Then I went back to Japan again. I went in the Commissar so I said, "Right. I'll have a crate of scotch. I'll have a crate of gin, and I'll have a crate of this..." and I came back, and the Americans were superb. They flew anything back. I used to mark it "Kodak Film. Be careful!"

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: [Laughing] And there was all these bottles rattling in these boxes! And I went back and...the winter set in. And it was cold! It was bloody cold, it was! And these Americans had these lovely big Parka jackets. So I put all the scotch in the back of the jeep and er went to the Americans and I just said, "Look, I want about er 150 Parkas, I want 100 and such blankets..." And the guy, the old store man said, "Yeah, ya got a chitty?" and I said, "No, but I've got some scotch..." "Got some scotch! Yeah! How much you...?" I said, "I've got a dozen." "How many...how many Parkas did you want?" I came back, and er I...Everyone in the Middlesex Brigade, I think, they had a Parka or blankets or...a winter warm. And I went back and I had a very good liaison with the Americans. But I won't tell you how much whisky and gin I brought back from Tokyo...But I can tell you, sometimes it was twenty or thirty cases were coming in...! [Laughs]

Alan Lawson: [Laughing] I'm gonna stop you there, if that's all right.

Side 1 of Tape 1 Ends Tape 1, Side 2

Cyril Page: Er...Anyway, I made er good relations with this Stores Quartermaster guy, the American, and er...I used to take orders. I used to say you know scotch, you know, like that, or whatever you wanted. I used to go back to the Commissary, back in Tokyo, load up with all this...and the Americans gave me a lorry actually to bring this stuff...

Alan Lawson: [laughs]

Cyril Page: ...I didn't have to get a taxi or a rickshaw [laughs] to get it home. Um...down to [Ta'chi Ka ?], put all the stuff on the plane, lorry to meet me, up to the British. And 'course then Rene Cutforth arrived, and of course... I won't say he drank half the loot I brought back but [laughs] he had.... he had...he was fantastic. Errm...Anyway, the Quartermasters were absolutely marvellous. They gave us... all this equipment, and Colonel Mann, he said, "Well, you know, the Brits would never have done this," he said "Thank God." Anyway, they all benefited out of me, and er from there on, it was plain sailing...Er...You had everything you wanted, and then we got...we went right up north...Korea, right into Pyongyang in the north, and then we got pushed back again, and at that time, it was touch and go. Unfortunately, we went up by jeep, and the Americans blew all the bridges up, and we were the other side, so consequently we couldn't get the lorries and that over. Luckily they got the Centurion tanks over, further up the road, but they blew the bridges where we were...the Middlesex were, and er...unfortunately we had to burn all the lorries and we had to...walk it. And we walked for quite a while. We walked for about five or six days, er...

Alan Lawson: God!

Cyril Page: ...away from the airfield, and the Chinks were only a few miles up the road, and we had nothing to eat, we just had to eat off what we'd picked up on the side of the road, grouse and maize, and things like that. But, as I had the two cameras; I had a Newman Sinclair and the Eyemo and during that very cold weather, the Americans, they had the er Bitual[?] cameras, which just froze up, and also the Eyemo. But the old Newman Sinclair...in the back of the jeep I put a big porcelain pot with some sand and some charcoal. I lit it, and I used to put the old Newman Sinclair, not...not with the magazine in, er put it on top of there until it got really nice and warm, well it was in there all day long, and put a blanket over the top of it, and I used to open up the side, bung in the magazine, pick up, and I used to shoot twenty or thirty feet, because it held two hundred feet, and it...and then it just...slowed up. Although I had sea oil in there, but it didn't make any difference, it still...But that was...But I think, at one time, it was about the only camera working in Korea. And one night, the American Signal Corp boys came over and said could I help them out. They got a...wanted some filming done - their cameras had all gone US - which I did. So that was another good contact I had with them. Any...anything we wanted. Errm...Anyway, we walked and walked and walked er... but fortunately I couldn't carry the Newman and all the stuff with me, but each one of the boys, the troops...of the Middlesex, someone took one roll of film...They just had to chuck everything away, except what they could carry; their gun and their haversack on their back. It was up to them what they could carry. So a lot of it was...they were missing, but they all said, "Come on Pagey, give us a roll of film..." and all that. Well, without film, I couldn't work, so, I mean that was it. So I was very, very grateful to them all because they...they really did help me out, and I didn't lose any equipment. And er, we eventually got...Er, we walked during the night-time and we walked down this road one night and we were surrounded, "Hands Up!", and no guns were fired, and we'd come in onto the Turkish troops and of course they never fired a shot. They were going to cut our heads off, only they knew we were British...

Anyway, all was well. We got back in the compound and got into Seoul. And Rene errm...we er...Oh er...Rene had gone back to Tokyo, that's right. He brought some scotch back, gave me that, and I went to the first American lot I saw and I said, "Any chance of getting a jeep?" Well,

they were so good. Yes, they gave me another jeep, and er...the guy said, "You bring a crate of scotch," he said, "we'll give you whatever you want." I said, "Right. Well, you can put a trailer on the back, if you like." So he put a trailer on the back and with all our gear. And when I left that compound of the Americans, I had an outboard motor on the back, a blow-up dinghy, I had blankets, food, er...you name it, pots and pans, in case we got stuck again, and a trailer, and a practically brand new jeep. Anyway, we got right the way down to Seoul and of course the...Chinese, er the North Koreans, were only a few miles up the road, and of course they set...alight the whole of Seoul was burning. I mean it was...really. And over the Han river, all the farmers were getting their cattle across and, you see there was hundreds of cows and all that, and they had to put sacks in the front of their paws, so...cos they were sliding all over ... all the cattle were sliding. It was a terrible sight. Just like they were being slaughtered.

So, everybody had mats and they were walking these troops across. We were going round Seoul filming these burning buildings, and I said to Ray, "Look, what's the bundle in that shop over there?" - We were walking down the street - and I said, "What's that bundle...?" and it was a baby! It was a baby in the corner, all wrapped up in like a blanket, in a sort of a box or thing, and I...and there was no danger, I mean...the place was alight, but bits were falling round...so I dumped the camera, just left it on the end of the seat, dashed in, got hold of this kid, it was in a sort of a box, a container, opened up the canopy in the trailer behind - because it had a canvass cover - I bunged the kid in there, and then covered it up, and off out. It was a snotty-nosed little kiddie. It was all er...crying, and all that. Didn't want to...couldn't put it in our jeep, so we had to put it in the trailer. And off we went...still filming the Han river, with the troops and all that. Got the other side, and all the tanks were...It was so solid all the tanks were just going across. So we thought "Well, we're staying here all night long and er...anyway, just see if we...you know, what we get in the daylight." Well, the only way we could sleep really was to crawl underneath the jeep... because um...you didn't have it Winterised, so it was so damn cold, but we had a skirting round the jeep, which we made up, so um...we put that down and we er...woke up in the morning, and of course we expected to see the sun, instead of that we saw daylight - Someone had been and nicked the jeep while we were asleep [laughing] underneath in our sleeping bag!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Because Rene and I had cuddled up and we were...we were right in the sleeping bag, you know, so it was just a bundle, no heads sticking out or anything...

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: ...and then when we woke up...there was...it was daylight! Then we went and there was the car above us, and they...What had happened, the military police had seen this, our jeep, "BBC" all over it, and didn't see us, and they thought "Oh well, someone's nicked it, we'll take it. So they towed it into the compound, into the military police, only a few hundred yards up the road. Of course we woke up and there was this burly MP directing all the traffic coming across and I asked. He said, "Oh, you'd better go up the..." and there it was. And it was three days that kid was in the back. We...Everyone had forgotten it; the baby in the back...[Laughs]...this kiddie...So we took it to an orphanage in ...I forget where it was; in Tay-Goo[?] somewhere and we kept an eye on it. We used to take it food, and all that kind of thing... And going right ahead,

Kim his name was; we called him, and it was only um...oh, er...for a long time after that. When we got into Seoul, little boy used to look out, come and do all my washing and that. Very nice. A student. We told him about it. He went up and looked after the kid. This was when I came home. He looked after the kiddie. And we were invited back to Kim's wedding. Rene and I to go to his wedding. Er, but we...didn't go, naturally. But that's the story of this kid that went...They just...We don't know what happened after that, but erm... I came home, and then Ronnie Noble came out and relieved me, and then Ronnie stayed for a while and I went back again, and I started another three or four months back there, but er...

Alan Lawson: You're still for The Beeb?

Cyril Page: Still with The Beeb. Yes, that's right. He..he goes to Wimbledon every year and does the contact there I think, yes...

Alan Lawson: [Chuckling]

Cyril Page: ...Yes, but he must be retired by now, anyway. But that was a good experience. I mean, it was an eye-opener, but erm...I think the Navy, I'd sooner go back in the Navy! It's hard graft! [Laughs]...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: I mean when you...when you...in the fr...I mean literally in the Front Line, when you can see the chaps ahead of you, the enemy, and you're putting up this damn great big Vinten which looks like the Iron Lung, with a magazine and you're screwing the top, and...It looks like a...a bloody great big machine gun!

Alan Lawson: When did you use that out there then?

Cyril Page: In the Front...er...Lesley Mann came out...

Alan Lawson: Oh I...Oh...

Cyril Page: Yeah. Lesley Mann came out to er...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] With that?

Cyril Page: Pardon?

Alan Lawson: With that...with that Vinten?

Cyril Page: Yeah, with that Vinten. Yes, the old Vint...That...that one that I showed you...that one, and of course it took two men, more or less, to lift it on the [laughs] top of the tripod...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Gosh!

Cyril Page: ...So you can imagine that big hefty tripod up in the Front Line with er...[Laughs] I...I don't say bullets flying all over the place but... you know. They must've seen it with binoculars and thought, "Now, what the hell's that...the enemy doing down there?" [Laughing] It was old Lesley and I, and struggling! And there was us doing Vox Pops, you know, with the blokes in the Front Line...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Er...[laughs]...so I mean that was it, but we did an awful lot at the back you know, behind the lines, and with the sound team...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes, sure, yes...

Cyril Page: And er...We sat one night and...Old Les and I, we shared a tent, and it was literally so cold, we had about four pairs of Long Johns on. It was...it was agony to go to the toilet, you know. I must...sometimes it was...it was easier to stand there and do it down your leg and let it freeze because [laughs]...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: ...it was so awful! Errm...then we got the idea of doing the 'Family Favourites', but doing it on film. So what we did, we got a load of blokes in the rest camp and...we said, "Look, sit down there" and we put a board up in front, "Charlie Brooks, number so-and-so, Home: Dorking" and er, just an identification, took the plate away and we just shouted questions to him. You know, "What's your name?" and he said "Errm..." "How long have you been out here?" "Oh, too bloody long!" "And er, what do you think of Korea?" "Don't like it at all. Waiting to get home." "Whereabouts do you...?" "Oh [mumbles]..." "Got any children?" "Yes, so-and-so [mumbles]" "Ok, well, send a message." "Hello Mum! Hello Dad!" and "Give my love to so-and-so" ...It was like polyphotos[?]; one after another the... "next please, next please, next please." So we shipped that back to London, and then er... I forget who it was now errm...somebody said, "Oh yeah! Continue...er doing this kind of thing, but try and get someone to, you know, er sit down with them and ask the questions, instead of you shouting them out. So we got a chap by the name of Alan Wicker... He was with our er AP. So er Alan...I said "Can you sit down, Alan, you know, and just ask..." He said "Yeah..." and of course he...he said "Oh yes, of course I will..." er...and he sat down there and politely did the interviews, and all that kind of thing. Sent it back and they said, "Great. Great. Does this chap want paying?" And I said, "Well, I don't know. I never, you know...never asked" and he said well he didn't mind...No, he didn't mind doing this, you see. Well, we did an awful lot, and every Sunday afternoon, I think for a quarter of an hour, they used to do these 'Family Favourites.' [Coughs]...Show them, in the Sunday afternoon. It helped us immensely because everywhere we went, this bloke used to jump out and stop and say, "Hey, Pagey! My old Girl saw me on the telly the other day. Absolute bloody laugh - thanks a lot," he said, "How are you fixed for petrol? Do you want any food?" [Laughs] You know, what this er...So, you know, it was carte blanche. Well, when the war had finished, about a few years later, I saw Alan, and I hadn't met him since we did that because we were, you know, separated out, and of course he spoke like I do, and of course when I spoke to him he said [Does Alan Wicker voice] "Oh hello! How are you?"...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: I said "Oh my God! [Laughs] You've got voice trouble, have you?!" [Still laughing] That was old Alan's trademark, you see, because he's changed his voice. So er... Anyway, it was good. We had... we had a good crowd out there. We lost Christopher Buckley. Er he got killed out there. Er... two or three got killed. Er the only... Colonel Mann - I... owe my life to him, in respect, and er the other Colonel. I can't remember his name now... Colonel [Khan ?]. Er... [clears throat] there was a big attack going on up a hill... and the Chinese had dug themselves way in, and there was like an underground, and the only one you could get them out was to napalm. So I got word of this. In fact, the information to the correspondents was very... very small. They didn't say "There's a press conference" or "Tomorrow, we're gonna do this..." You had to sort of find out what was going on and take a chance and go. And I went up this long road... and at the brow of a hill, an MP jumped out and just, you know, put his hand out and stopped me and said, "Where are you going, Pagey?" I said, "Down with this operation..." He said, "The old man said no one's allowed down there, especially you. He doesn't want any pictures." Well actually he couldn't stop me because I was an authorised...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...

Cyril Page: ...photographer, er no er... in uniform, in... in the army. So er I said... He said, "Well I've got orders. I can't let you go through." So er, I said, "Well all right. Well, if I go down there without the camera. Walk down. I'll... I'll see... the Colonel." So er... he said, "Well, I'll get him over the phone." So he got him on the old phone, turned the handle and... and er... He said er... I told him, I said, "Well you can't really stop me coming" He said, "I am in charge of the operation. I can stop anybody I want." He said, "I don't want a dead correspondent on my hands." I said, "Well that's up to you." He said, "I don't want a dead correspondent." I said, "Well, ok. Can I come down and do the first wave going in? And then I'll go in... I'll wait down there until you tell me." He said, "All right. You can come down." So I went down there, and I knew most of the blokes, and er... There was this big hill, massive hill, with trees all over the place... and we had to wait for the air strike to come in, and the Americans came in with this napalm, and it was, well it was like a Guy Fawkes... firework display. It was... Oh! Flames all over the place! Then the whistle blew and up went the blokes. And there was mortar fire... coming over, and these blokes were going up the hill, and there was explosions all over the place, and I... I put it on the tripod and I just shot long distance stuff. And er... the Colonel said, "All right. The second wave will go in." So er... Oh no, the Colonel had gone up. The Colonel had gone in with the first wave. That's right. And then the... the second in charge said, "Ok, Pagey. You can come up with us." So I went up... and... I was filming on the way up, and I must say I... it was one time I really sat and I was really upset because I saw blokes lying there dead, who I had only spoken to, you know, a few hours beforehand, and er... [Clears throat] It was a disaster... cos I think ninety per cent of our chaps who went up on the first wave, they got killed, and it... it wasn't very happy. And I must say, I went up on all fours, this hill, because it was so steep, and I'd put the camera ahead of me, pull meself up and go like that, and pull up... And I got to the top there and er... Colonel [Kahn?] was er leaning on his walking stick and said, "All right?" I said, "Yes, I..." He said, "Thank God you didn't come up on the first wave, isn't it?" I said, "Well, thank you Sir very much." He said, "That's all right." And they didn't get killed by the enemy. They got killed by our own mortars being... falling short...

Alan Lawson: Oh God!...

Cyril Page: And that's how it wiped out the lot, and it was very upsetting, I must say. Er...I never got over that. It...it really upset me, and I thought, "Well, here am I, filming all these blokes, all, you know...It's up to the... censor. And, you know, I'm here, and their wives don't even know. They think they're alive" and it was...it's a...reaction. I think, being in the War...and then having that thing afterwards...you're...you're there and it...it's very hard, actually, on you... Makes you think.

Alan Lawson: Because it um...from what you're saying, really, I mean, the um...Your, you know, your relationship um...Were any er other newsreels there at all?

Cyril Page: No. Errm...[clears throat] The Pathe sent out Bill Jordan, for Christmas...

Alan Lawson: Yes...yeah...

Cyril Page: And I met Bill. Er...he came in and... came into the press billets, and of course he'd just arrived and he had to do a Christmas...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...

Cyril Page: Christmas broadcast, and er...er...I said, "Right." He said, "Well, you know the lie of the land. Can I come with you?" I said, "I'll take you round" you know. That was it. There's no opposition, really, because erm...you know, I was...I was doing stuff, and we'd already made our name on...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yeah, quite...

Cyril Page: BBC, that we are the only ones who are doing Korea. So he was just doing a little Christmas Special. So I took Bill round. He went back. As a matter of fact, he took my film back for me. And then we had a chap come out...Oh! Er, just...I...I can go right back to er...er... [Tay Goo?]er...erm...back to er...Sasebo, a chap by the name of [Paddy Kingham came out there, and er...He was in the navy before - he came out to Australia with us, Paddy Kingham, I'd never heard of him]. Er, er...Langford! Sorry! Gus Langford. Gus...Gus Langford. And erm...he er...I don't know what he was. When he came out of the Navy, I don't know what he did. Whether he was freelance or not, I don't know, but he'd...he'd got a rank as a Lieutenant. He was only a Subbie. And he used to cover the...the Navy. Anyway, he got taken prisoner...and he was in the prison camp, and er...He [laughs]...I met him when he came out and er...He...he was the only other cameraman I...I came across. But then there was this other chap, Paddy Kingham, that came out, and he came out from VISNEWS. And er...I don't know what happened, but he arrived out there and er he was, ooh, you know, er...all over...You know, he was the big "I am", you know, like a wide...like Arthur English, you know, "The Wide Boy"...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: And er...He went up the Front Line and...I don't know what happened at all...er...I don't know. I never saw him, for a long time. Then I got a cable from...VISNEWS saying can I let them know where Paddy Kingham is - "Not heard of. No so-and-so and so-and-so..." Maybe he went back to Tokyo and was shacking up with a bird over there? Anyway, this is the story...So I wired back, "I haven't seen him for ages." But what had happened, that er...he'd shot some film at the Front Line and er...I don't know if I'm speaking out of turn here, but er...What had happened, he put his Newman Sinclair up, and asked a couple of blokes to borrow their gun, and put a couple of bullets through it and wired back and said, "Unable to work. Camera been shot up on Front Line." So he went back to Tokyo, with the camera, and er...that was the last I heard of him. So, that's the only other cameraman [laughs] who ever came out there, but I...I don't know, but er that was the story, cos the troops came up to me and just said you know, "That guy, so-and-so and so-and-so...." He got a very bad name. So, that...that did er put the spoke amongst the pigeons for a bit for...for the cameramen. But, as I was the only one out there, and I was recognised and appreciated by all the work that we did.

Alan Lawson: Any American coverage out there?

Cyril Page: I didn't touch the Americans at all...

Alan Lawson: Oh I see...

Cyril Page: I was only British. That's all I did. Yep, yep. That was my assignment.

Alan Lawson: I see.

Cyril Page: Um...I had to go through the American lines to get to the British when I...Cos sometimes I had to drive about a hundred miles to...get the film away, because there was only one airfield, so-and-so [inaudible ?]...the situation. So I used to stay on the airfield and then come back up the next day. Sometimes it was only about twenty miles down the road...

Alan Lawson: Yes, mmm...

Cyril Page: Then we had that jeep nicked, and we got a Russian lorry. Rene Cutforth and I had a big Russian lorry...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: ...and erm...we got rid of that quick, because er...being recognised from the air. It had all the stars and the hammer and sickle on the top! [Laughs] We thought we'd better get rid of that! But um...No, it was...it was quite an experience, and er...I came home, I think er...you know, er...well, quite knowledgeable of a real war...you know...

Alan Lawson: Yes...Wiser.

Cyril Page: Wiser. Very much wiser.

Alan Lawson: Wiser and sadder.

Cyril Page: Yeah, yeah.

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: But er...It was a tough war, and I must say I was glad to be British out there with the boys, because they were fantastic. And then er...Low and behold! - After I got back, I was invited out to er...Mill Hill Barracks - that's the headquarters of the Middlesex Brigade. And I was guest of honour...and I was on the top table, and er...Colonel Mann got up and er...he said, "Well, we're delighted to have Cyril Page here, the cameraman who spent most of his time out there with the..." blah blah blah blah "And he's the man who equipped the whole of the 27th Brigade!"...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: [Laughing] And 'course all the boys came up and said, "How many bottles of scotch, Pagey, you got today?! How many Parkas you got?!" You see, all calling out amongst this...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughing]...I just said, "I'm into watches and that, now, if you'd...!"

[Both laughing]

Cyril Page: And er...Anyway, I got a sort of a citation from them, just to say, "The Man Who Equipped the Brits" and that, which...which I cherish!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing heavily]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] It was a laugh and a...I think you had to have a laugh and giggle because er...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...yes, yes...

Cyril Page: ...if you didn't, erm...All right, I'm...I'm a bit of a scapegoat, I suppose, you know, I enjoy life and I like a good...I'm never miserable. I hate to be miserable...

Alan Lawson: Erm...How did...When you came back here, did the BBC give you some time off?

Cyril Page: Yes. They said erm, yes, you know, about...well, er I think a couple of months or whatever... "You just...go as long as you like, and then come back when you feel like it." They were very good. Very good indeed. And at that time, the wife had a baby, and er...they provided a pram, the nursing home, and all that kind of...They were good. Very good indeed. No, I...No,

they were excellent. And Cecil McGivern - I went down to Lime Grove and had lunch with him and ...I got fed up after a fortnight. I went back to work! [Laughs] I think the wife was glad to get me out of the house and go back to work...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...yes, yes...

Cyril Page: ...So I didn't stay very long.

Alan Lawson: Um who...who were you working to then? Can you remember?

Cyril Page: My sound recordist?

Alan Lawson: [Hesitates] Er, well...yeah, well...your sound recordist, but no, who was your boss actually? Who were you working to? Was it Dorte or Cox? Or...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Oh, Cox! Harold Cox. Oh yes, Harold Cox. Yes, yes. He was there right till the time I left to go to ITN. Well, Dorte was still there, but Dorte left about a couple of weeks before...er I did, because he went to start ITN up...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes, yes, yes...Um...But er...Talk about Harold Cox...was...Not a very inspiring character...

Cyril Page: No.

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: The Thin Man!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing] Very monosyllabic.

Cyril Page: Yeah, yeah. I don't know his history at all, but er...

Alan Lawson: Well, he was in the Navy...

Cyril Page: Yes, he...yes, yes, that's right...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh yes, he was a Naval man...

Cyril Page: But...yeah but er...He wasn't very inspiring on any...in er...well... He...I don't think he knew his arse from his elbow, in the way the film went, because it...you know, assignments and...He never had much enthusiasm to encourage us to do things, you know. He used to...And the accommodation we had up at a Alexandra Palace was pretty bloody grim. I mean, it was er...a part of the garage...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...that's right, that's right, yes...

Cyril Page: We had all our equipment and we had a big table in the middle with about six chairs, and old Dave Prosser and Adam Prentice, all...all the old boys...and I think there's only two or three of us left now. Er...little Tregellis, the little man with the trilby hat...

Alan Lawson: Yes, Trig, yes...

Cyril Page: Er...

Alan Lawson: The sound recordist...

Cyril Page: Yeah, that was it. Lesley Mann from Pathe...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh, and Woodiwiss[?]

Cyril Page: Pardon?

Alan Lawson: Do you remember Woodiwiss? Did you have...?

Cyril Page: Wh...?

Alan Lawson: Woodiwiss. He was a sound recordist. It was perhaps after you'd gone.

Cyril Page: No, no...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Ah...Yes...

Cyril Page: No, no...

Alan Lawson: And your sound recordist was Bill Welsh, was it?

Cyril Page: For a long time. Then Lesley and...well, Tregellis as well...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...yes...

Cyril Page: Yeah...yep, yep, yep...Though he always wanted to get back to his wife, old Tregellis, he...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: I mean he [laughs]Er...He wouldn't have stood...He wouldn't have...stayed very long out in Korea. Old Lesley did. I mean, old Les was...He was quite good. But he...of course he, Lesley, I think, was one of the few that had newsreel experience, coming from Pathe...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes, he did...that's right...

Cyril Page: And Dave Prosser came from Movietone...er, Alan Prentice came from Gaumont's, so er...you know, we had quite a good mixture. It was a good crowd at...you know, at Alexandra Palace. We had a good time. There was er...then there was Dines, er, er...

Alan Lawson: Gordon Dines...

Cyril Page: Gordon Dines, isn't it. [Laughs] The big thin...bloke...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing] Yes...

Cyril Page: I mean...No, it was good... You didn't mind working. Because another thing is, you see, we used to do - in between doing news - we used to do the ... 'Muffin the Mule.'

Alan Lawson: Yes...

Cyril Page: We did the first lot with Annette Mills on film in the carpenter's shop round the corner from...on that... And I can always remember that er... we were told we had to do this. We got the grand piano in the carpenter's shop, and er...We had no background at all except a load of wood sticking up, so we got some black muslin, hung up on a bit of string behind this piano. I hadn't seen 'Muffin the Mule,' never heard of 'Muffin the Mule' and er...Anyway, this lady came in and introduced herself and er...Annette Mills, and said, "Oh yes..." blah blah blah blah, "And this is what we do..." and er... chap over the top with the old strings and say [Sings] "Here comes Muffin, Muffin the Mule," see...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: And we said, "Oh my Gawd!" you know, "It's down the old Southend Pierrot Show!" So anyway, ok, we got down there and we framed it all up and started on her then we sort of... We didn't zoom. I mean, we had no zoom in those days...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh no, no...

Cyril Page: Er...we had to sort of say, "Stop." We'd change the lens and then...came this little wooden horse, galloping around. Well, after about four or five episodes, you know, it was "Cyril" and "Annette" and all that...we all... "Lesley"...we all got very friendly. And I said to old Les one day, I said, "Look um...Before she comes, get a handful of sawdust, then we say 'Right. Action', er, you know, you get your level first and that's it...and then go behind the piano and just ... back there... on the piano, and just put your hand over and pour a load of sawdust, you see. He said, "What's that for?" I said, "Do that." He said, "Are you sure?" I said, "Yes, just, in the middle of the shot..." So anyway, we were sitting there and said, "All right? All right Ann?" "Yes, ok." "First on the list...?" "Ok, fine. Fine" "Ok. Stand by then." One ,two, three "Action..." [Sings] "Here comes Muffin, Muffin the Mule..." and the little hand came behind it, you see. A little bit of sawdust was there. [Singing] "Here comes Muffin, Muffin the Mule..."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: "Now, what are you going to do today Muffin?" I said, "Cut! Cut! Cut!" She said, "What's wrong Cyril?" I said, "Actually er...if you look on your left Ann," I said, "Muffin's just done a shit in the corner. Look." [Laughs] And there was this load of sawdust!...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: She never forgave me. She said, "Oh my God!..." and that stuck with...and Lesley and I [laughs] that was our trademark. So from then on, we were very very great friends [laughs]...

Alan Lawson: Who was the erm...Puppeteer? Was it erm...

Cyril Page: Er...Oh!?!...

Alan Lawson: Jan Bussell ?

Cyril Page: I...I think that's...that's the...

Alan Lawson: Jan Bussell

Cyril Page: I think so...That's right, yes...Then we...then we did 'The Flower Pot Men' Er, Weed, Little Weed and er that... We'd try to get the two Queers in one flower pot with er...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: ...knocking off er Weed. And then what [laughs] was the other one? We had a lot of fun. Er...a lot of fun there. Yeah...

Alan Lawson: [Sill laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] And then we had this lovely er... We had some very good contacts we made during our period at Alexandra Palace. And of course you've got to remember that anything going on television was...absolutely gold. Everybody wanted to get on television in those days...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...

Cyril Page: And er... to see er...like Castro or Shell or Britvic or like that on the box, I mean, it was worth millions of pounds to them all, and wherever we went, we always...people used to say, "Can you do this?" and "Can you do that?" Because the BBC were very strict. I can remember the time we were down in Trafalgar Square and a bus went past that had British Airways on it, and they cut it out because it was advertising British Airways. Er...and that was...that was how strict they were. Well, we made so many good contacts... and er Lesley and I, I said, "Well, we've made some good contacts, even Lyons and...er catering, and people like that. I said, "Look." When we got there, they always said, you know, "You stay for lunch" and we were wined and dined. I mean, we had a good life. We did...A very good life. And I said, "It would be

rather nice to invite all the PR for a party at Christmas, to say 'Thank you very much for what you've done for us the last two or three years.'" "What a good idea!" So, I think we all...Dave Prosser, Bill Walsh, we all said, "Right. Well, we'll put twenty quid in the kitty each." - That's quite a bit of money! Well, we had a list of about eighty or ninety people, with their wives, to come out to Alexandra Palace. So it...it took a bit of organising. So when the invitations went out, we got permission to use the upstairs, over the carpenter's shop, and I saw the Chief Carpenter and I said, "We're gonna do this..." He said er "How about a theme?" He said, "Paris!" He said, "We've got the Eiffel Tower downstairs. We've a lot of grass. We've got wheelbarrows. We've got cafes with canopies over the top." He said, "You can make in...like a street in Paris." I said, "Marvellous!" And er...Anyway, that was it. So we got the invitations out. I said, "We've got to have a band" but we said "We can't afford a band. We'll got a piano." Well, Bob Reading, who was the Spark up there, Big Bob, errm he could play the piano. He used to play the ...organ, er...er concertina, er accordion, and he played the piano. And he said, "All right. I...I'll play the piano." He said, "I'll put the old beret on and the striped shirt and I'll go round with the old..." and I said, "Bloody much! It's like the streets of Monmartre." " Oh..." - Well...everything fell in our lap. So we sent all these invitations out, like to er...Smirnoff, and whisky and Johnny Walker, Britvics, and all those people, and would they like to come to a party up at Alexandra Palace, er, and... their ladies..." And of course they thought, "Cor! Coming up to the BBC for a party! Bloody marvellous!" Everyone said, "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes..." you see, and of course they would come. And I said well...I always remember ...er...the fruit drink...what do you call it? Er, you put...Pimms!

Alan Lawson: Pimms, yes.

Cyril Page: And I...I sent a letter to Pimms, because we met them down the Henley. Pimms invited us into their tent, to do some filming, when they gave us a very good lunch, Pimms, and er...He said er, "Yes, we'd love to come." He said, "By the way..." he said, "How are you fixed for drink?" I said, "Well, you know, well, we've got a few..." He said, "Well, we could supply you with some Pimms, if you like." I said, "Well, that's very nice of you. Thank you very much indeed. I..." you know, "Oh yeah..." He said, "On one condition..." he said, "That we have our own stand..." He said, "Because there's only a certain way to mix Pimms" He said, "A lot of people don't know how to do it so we like to send our own barman up, our own little stand and er...we'll do the Pimms for you." "Oh, marvellous!" Then Britvic rang up and said, "Yes. Would you like some soft drinks?" Well, we said, "Yes. Thank you very much. Some lemonade and orangeade and gins..." And a lorry turned up at Alexandra Palace! [Laughs]

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: [Laughing] A bloody great big lorry! And nobody knew anything about it! Nobody at reception, and the bloke in charge of the canteen he said, "No, we haven't ordered any Britvic!" and sent it away!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: So [laughs] about three days before the party, I hadn't got any Britvics, so we rang up the PR and said, "What about these Britvics?" He said, "Well, we set it up and no-one knew

anything about it. We'll send it up now." So [laughs]...but it was all like this, and there was so much booze...came up there...Watneys, Tony Handley was the PR who was...still a great friend of mine...He was the PR and he put all the er Watney er barrels up, er draft, draft and er...bottle, all red label...barrel...Red Barrel, that's right, and there was beer, there was...nothing short! And Lyons did the catering, and I must say they excelled themselves. They sent me done to Coventry Street Corner House to meet the Manager and to select the stuff that we wanted. When I said there was about ninety or a hundred people coming, the bloke was...nearly did his nut! So he said, "Right. Well you want two hundred of this, and two hundred of that and that..." Well, a lorry came up from Cafe Hall, Joe Lyons. This lovely black and white lorry they had. There was [laughs] all this catering stuff going in! We hadn't thought about who was going to serve it or anything! We was just gonna put it on a table and everyone help themselves! Well, it started!...So, we had to get a piano. No piano at Alexandra Palace. So I got in touch with some person at Broadcasting House and said, "Can you help us out?" "Oh yes. We have one in the...in Studio 5, belongs to BBC Orchestra. We could loan that to you." "Fine. Lovely." "And we'll deliver it." "Oh! Marvellous!" So "Ok." So up it came. It took about twenty-eight of us to lift it up the stairs!...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: I mean... Didn't scratch it. We all covered it with these big canvas bags. Got it in the corner. Old Bob Reading was playing away. Lovely....fine, fine. On the night, cars arrived, all that. [Clears throat] We had er, you know, erm...cocktails in a tray, "Help yourself," like that, and it was good. The food went like that, the drinks like that, and the...the only chap who really got drunk, we couldn't find, we wondered where he was, was Paul Fox!...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: And Paul Fox had [laughing] gone downstairs to the toilet, was sick, and he got his head caught in the toilet! [Laughing] We had to go and rescue him! [Laughs loudly]Ha ha ha! And that was Paul Fox!

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: Anyway...[Clears throat] Bob Reading was on the piano, and of course Bob smoked like a chimney, and he was going...walking around. I mean, he had...he had this beret on, and this er sailor's er blue and white striped shirt, and this tassel round here, red, and it was just like, you know...er...a Frenchman, and he was playing all this [sings "La Vie en Rose"] "Da da da da d-d-da!"...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: You know, all this stuff, going round there, and it was a riot. We had dancing! Everyone was so happy! Everything was absolutely marvellous. And everyone said, "Can we book for next year?!" and of course that was a good omen, and everybody said it...Well, the next morning, we...we left somewhere there all night, because there was a lot of stuff left, so we left a couple of blokes. They slept up there. Next morning, we all mustered up there, and there was so

much stuff left, so what we decided to do was to number each bottle with a cloakroom ticket and we'd draw the numbers out of a hat, so what was left was divided amongst all among us, so we all got a fair share. Well, we came... We had... I had, I had... enough booze, I think, to last me two years at home!...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: It was literally so much! And er... it was time to put the piano...and send it back. Well, on the piano...Bob Reading had taken his cigarette off and put it on the side, and of course all [laughing] along the front of the keyboard was burns!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing] Oh dear!...

Cyril Page: And someone had upset a pint of beer or something on the top. The top was open. Someone had dropped a beer and of course all the...all the keys inside, the padding, was all wet! [Gasps] Oh my God! So, of course the...the BBC sent this big green lorry up, and down the stairs it went, and [laughing] I got a phone call from the bloke and it cost us three hundred and fifty quid! ...to er...to er re-veneer it and take the...things out and that...so it cost us three hundred and fifty quid! So...anyway...After that, it was a fantastic...it was...Every year, we threw that party up at Alexandra Palace and it did more good than public relations, because anywhere you went, you know, it was "Open Sesame" and "Can we come next year? Oh, by the way, have you heard, so-and-so would like to come next year? Would you like so-and-so and so-and-so?" I mean, Motorola, when we did...when it got er quite large, Motorola erm...Smiths at Cricklewood, we invited a chap from there who was awfully nice. He was a crippled chap. Very nice indeed, and er...we ran a raffle for erm...I think it was the Lifeboat or somebody...in the evening...voluntary...and it takes a lot...awful lot of money...and he said we'd like to give some...prizes, and they sent up half a dozen Motorola er radios for the cars, as a gift, and that was some Swiss[?]. Yeah, they were very good.

Alan Lawson: And, do you know, that's the first time I've ever heard about that!

Cyril Page: Is it?

Alan Lawson: Yeah.

Cyril Page: Good heavens!

Alan Lawson: Yeah. It's extraordinary...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] And I still keep in touch with some of the people now...even Kenwood, the food mixer.

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Really...?

Cyril Page: I was walking round...I was doing the Ideal Home Exhibition and er...we were walking around there and er... I saw this machine and this guy was sort of demonstrating. I said,

"What does that do?" He said, "Well, you put an orange in the top here, put the top on and go [imitates machine noise]...like that, and it comes out as juice." I said, "Well, not bad." And he saw the camera. He said, "Are you BBC?" So I said, "Yes." He said, "Can you do a spot..." I said, "Well, I don't know. I'll have a walk around, you know..." I thought "Oh I don't know!..." I'd just arrived and there was Hovis Bread, you know, all little rolls, and er Philip Harbin doing all the old stuff with the vegetable pots and all that kind of thing. Anyway, I did what I could and the old Daily Mail Ideal Home, and on the way back I went past the stand and er I said, "I've got about thirty feet left in the camera." I said, "Come on. Put a couple of oranges in there." So he put a couple of oranges in this thing and went [makes machine noise], like that, and he poured it out, and I said, "Fine. Right. Yep." And it was Kenwood, you see, and, while we were packing up, a chap came up and said, "Who are you from?" and I said, "BBC." He said, "Oh," he said er, "Is it gonna be on?" I said, "Look, I've...I've got no idea. I only shoot it." I said, "It's entirely up to the er...the producer of the day, or even the chap he may say, "Well, I want ten minutes of the Ideal Home" and it's up to the editor to cut out and put in what he thinks. I've got no say in it." He said, "Well, if it er, if it er will go on," he said er, "perhaps you'd like one?" Well, that was like pulling the red bull to the china!...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] I said, "Well, I'll make sure it's on," you see! [Laughs] So, er...All right, I mean, we shot lots and all this...Anyway, it was on, and this chap rang me up...Mr Ken Wood rang up and said, "Thank you very much indeed. You know, I do appreciate it." He said, "We've had a lot of phone calls about this food mixer...er liquidizer." He said, "I'll let you have one. I'll send it up to the..." I said, "Don't send it up here for God's sake! Send to my home address" you see, which he did. But I said, "It's not me." I said, "I had nothing to say in it." I said, "It's the cutter and..." I said, "The Producer said..." "Well, how many would it involve?" I said, "About four..." He said, "Right, I'll send four." So we all got a food mixer...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: ...and it was Mr Ken Wood. Well, through that, Ken Wood made his name, cos that's all he had was that one food mixer. Then he went on...or the liquidizer...then he went on to the food mixer...and I still keep in touch with the chap who demonstrated it...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: ...even now. Er...I see him, you know, about four or five times a year. He's retired now. He had his own er...club in er Edgware Road. Er, quite a wealthy bloke. And he was only demonstrating, in the white coat, to say, "you put it in there" and of course Ken Wood said, you know...thanked him for getting me at the stand! He thought he, you know, did all the work, so he was Manager of Ken Wood's stand...but we still keep in touch. Er...and that's one of the perks that er came out of it, but...there was a lot of...well, naturally, everyone would... er...nobody can turn round and say they didn't accept something for nothing. I mean it talk about bribery...It wasn't bribery; It was just "Well, we'll send you something."

Alan Lawson: Mmm...

Cyril Page: Er... I did 'The Furniture Show' erm... and er...I hadn't long been married and a chap came up and said, you know, "Is there anything...?" I said, "Well, wouldn't mind that so-and-so and so-and so. How much will you let me have it for?" "Oh, " I said, "I'll pay..." "No, no, that's all right." And er, oh we had a couple of settees and and a couple of wardrobes sent...[laughs]...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: ...but everyone was having it. I mean, I wasn't the only one. Everyone was, you know, getting bits and pieces. But, I...I never accepted...A lot of people bribed...tried to bribe you for money. I said, "I'll never accept..." you know, "Don't accept...Don't bribe me with er big money, I...I object to that, but you can always send me a bottle of scotch or something, I don't mind at all." But erm...a lot of the stuff I had I used to just donate to charity or give it to charity or something like that... Barnados...I used to send all...a lot of stuff to...Went to the Toy Fair, erm in the...um...the Waldorf. Every year was er...was a...Hardy Annual to do, and we...I got to know everybody there. And er...after we did all the filming, there used to be coloured dots on, oh every toy, and they used to say, "Right. Leave the blue ones, but if you like any of the red ones, you can have two each. Two of everything you like." Er...so, you know...and I can remember blokes going, picking up cars, and taking them through the back, and coming back, and taking two or three things, which I thought was very bad, but...I always had...I always took...I'll be honest, I always took like a pedal car or something and...used to go down to er...take it down to er...Dr Barnados at Woodbridge...or er Woodford...that was their headquarters ...used to take all the toys down there.

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: And um...Er...Movietone...Ken... [Sighs] Can't think of his name now...He was a cameraman at er Movietone...

Alan Lawson: Ken...Ken...No...

Cyril Page: Yep...But anyway...I enjoyed it. I enjoyed my life, very much. I did, really. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I've only regret - I never worked with Freddy Young.

Alan Lawson: Ah, yes.

Cyril Page: Now, I looked upon him as a God, and er...I saw him on 'This Is Your Life' the other day and I thought...And I learnt an awful lot...I mean I...I have great respect for Jimmy Wilson. Erm...He was like a father to me. Erm...When I was at West Ham I used to have to get to Elstree every day, and he lived at Walthamstow, and I used to get the tram across to Walthamstow, and I used to come in his car every day, and then eventually we got a caravan, and we had a caravan at the side of the studios, and we got water laid on and that. We lived down there together...you know, in the same room. But um...the people I worked with, um... like Ernie Palmer, er...all these people...er...Roy Fogwell - another one...

Alan Lawson: Yes...

Cyril Page: He worked at the Hammersmith Studio, Riverside Studios...

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: Um...I...You know, I sort of used to stand there and look at it and say, "Why is he doing that?" I was never backward in saying, "Why did you do that?" and no-one ever said, "Mind your own bloody business!" They always said, "Well, if we do this, and that there, do that with the back light, or put this over the top, er...it gives you..." and you know, like...filters; I used to have to get graduated filters for them. I said, "Well, why are you using an OA or an OB filter for diffusion? Why?" and er everyone used to explain to me "why" and, you know, I learnt an awful lot.

Alan Lawson: I'll stop you there...

End of Tape 1, Side 2 Tape 2, Side 3

Alan Lawson: How long did you stay there, with the er Newsreel at the Beeb?

Cyril Page: About twelve years.

Alan Lawson: Er...What...How...What made you change over...to ITN?

Cyril Page: Well, I was in the building at AP, in the tower, and I had to go up and see Phillip Dorte. And lo and behold, he came into the same lift as I was going up to see him.. So he stopped halfway up and he said, "I'm leaving" and I said, "Oh," you know, bit of a shock. He said, "I'm going to commercial." Er, he said, "I'd like you to come with me" and I said, "Oh well, I don't..." you know, bit of a shock, "Commercial what?" It was very er...little well-known in those days what was going to be...what was going to happen. And er...he said, "Come up, Come up to the office." So I went up, and he explained exactly what was going to happen - That he was going to be a technically in charge of er...ITN. So I said, "Well, I'll give it great thought." Anyway, um...he did offer me the job. He said, "You can either go back as Chief Cameraman" [corrects himself] or er [hesitates] "We'll employ you as Chief Cameraman, or, do you want to go inside in the office to be Operations?" I said, "No, no, I'd rather be outside." So I went home and er it worried me an awful lot because er I was married...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...

Cyril Page: and er...got a...I think, yes, I'd got a couple of kids then, and er...

Alan Lawson: What were you...what were you being paid then, at that time at the Beeb? Can you remember?

Cyril Page: [Sighs] Oh, I don't know, about twelve hundred a year. Something like that...something like that. Yep. About twelve hundred. I was on B1 minus or something...I don't know. I never got used to the grades or...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...Quite...Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: Errm...Anyway um...I got worried and the wife said, "Well, only you can decide as to, you know, which one you want to do..." and I...I was so upset, I mean it really worried me, in fact I think it was the start of me having an ulcer, um...[laughs] er...I thought, "Well, I don't know..." And then, the...things got a little bit worse up at Alexandra Palace because the television people seemed to hand over the television news to T[RP?] Hole er...you know, and he was in charge of the radio...radio side of the BBC. And his chaps came up and...it wasn't a friendly atmosphere that we had with all the film people and the technical people of television. The radio people seemed to come in and take over Alexandra Palace, and it wasn't "Cyril Page" it was [puts on a haughty voice] "Um...Oh, I say, um, you here! Um...do that!" you know, "You here!" and all that lark, you know; plus fours and tweed jackets. And er, it didn't go down very well, and we were sort of told what to do, and, instead of being given a free hand to run the news, it was all these people who hadn't got a bloody clue what they were talking about, and there was an awful lot of cock-ups, and I thought, "Well, if it's gonna be like this for the rest of my life, I...I'm not very keen." So um...I...I said to Dorte I said, "Yes, all right. I'd like to come. Well, I'd like to know more about it" and he said, "Well, this is the salary..." and it was another...er half as much again as I was getting at the...at the Beeb, and...you know, month's holiday a year, superannuation, all that kind of thing. I thought, "Oh well, erm...Shit or Bust! I'll have a go!" So, I handed my notice in, and then I got a call from Lime Grove from Cecil McGivern and er...He asked me to go down to Lime Grove for lunch. So I went down there, and I didn't have a clue what it was. I thought he was just going to say, you know, "You've got a bonus..." Oh! Oh yes, by the way, if I can go back to Korea. Um...just go back for seconds...These things come to my mind...Um...I got an award, at the BBC, and Rene Cutforth. So we had to go and see um...the Director General...Haley...and er up to Broadcasting House, and get a glass of sherry and a...lunch and all that, and he said, "Well, on behalf of the BBC, we'd like to give this presentation because er...your reward for the excellent work you did in Korea, and I'd like to give you this cheque..." and I went...I looked down and it was fifty quid! And I looked at it [laughs] and he turned round and said, "Yes, I'm terribly sorry...by your face, you see, we've had to knock the income tax off!" I said, "It wasn't the income tax!" I said, [laughing] "It was the amount in the first place!"

Alan Lawson: [laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] So, I got two awards at the BBC. I forget what I got the other one for but [laughs] anyway, I got a hundred quid, and that stayed with me all the time I was with them. Anyway um...[clears throat] Where was I up to? Um...er...Oh yes, er...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] They were giving you...

Cyril Page: Oh, what were they were giving...So I had to go down to Lime Grove and er...Cecil says, "Come in" and had a drink. He said, "Well, we're going out...going out for lunch. We're going up to Bertorellis in The Green. I hadn't been there before..."

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Nice, yes...

Cyril Page: Well, to be taken out by him, I thought, you know...So er...he said, "I hear you're leaving?" I said, "Yes" "Why?" So I told him. He said, "Well, I...I think, you know, if you...Take my advice and consider." He said, "Stay on" He said, "There are big things happening at the time..." and he said, "And er...perhaps we can do something for you..." but he said, "I can't tell you. I cannot tell you" but he said, " Do consider it, Cyril, because" he said, "you've done..." - I'm not patting myself on the back. I mean, these are actual words...

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: "We do, you know...do appreciate all the stuff that you've done...in the service of...of the Newsreel. Anyway," he said, "consider it. I won't accept your notice," he said, "I'll give you another month," he said, "Consider it." So he said, "Go home. Have another talk about it," and he said, "Then let me know." So I left it, and er talked it over with the wife and I said, "No..." I said, "I...I don't think I could stomach this... I...I can't. I don't know what it is, and if I only knew an indication as to what it was, er...I would, you know, reconsider." So anyway, I rang up, " Mr McGivern?" I said, you know, "Could I come down and see...?" "Yeah, we'll go have lunch..." So we went to Bertorellis and er...Again! - He paid! Er...on his expenses, and it...We were having lunch and he said, "What have you decided?" I said, "Well, I have decided er..." and I told him exactly why I didn't like it - because we were under the auspices of T[RP?] Hole and the people up there...which he agreed - He said, "There's a complete change of atmosphere, but..." he said... So he said, "Well, I'm sorry, Cyril," he said, "but... alright, if that's got to be, it's got to be." He said, "By the way, did you...have you seen the mid-day papers?" I said, "No, I haven't seen..." "You haven't seen the stop-press?" I said, " I haven't seen a thing." He said, "Well, the BBC..." he said, "You are definitely leaving are you?" He said, "I take it for granted you are leaving." He said, "There's no 'ifs' or buts?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, the BBC are buying Ealing Studios." I said, "Oh!" I said, "Oh good God!" He said, "You used to work at Ealing..." because he'd looked in my... papers...

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: I said, "Yes, that's right. In the old Formby days" and er, told him this and that, and he said, "Yes, well..." he said, "We were going to ask you to take over on the technical side down there. Be in charge of the whole lot."

Alan Lawson: [Chuckling]

Cyril Page: And I thought, "Oh, shit!" Anyway, I thought, "I'm not capable of doing it..." Really, you know, it was a [makes whoosh sound], a jump, right up. Of course...old Mewett took it... didn't he? I mean, he was the administrator, wasn't he? Up at...you know...

Alan Lawson: Had you met Mewett before...

Cyril Page: Oh yes, he was in the office, up...up there. I mean, God, he was a...He...Oh...[laughs] I'd better not say. I'll be done up for libel, but er...you know...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Er...I...I met him two or three times. In fact, he rang me up, four or five times, when he was at Ealing and asked for advice and all that. Er...because Phillips...Was it? Bernard Phillips[?]

Alan Lawson: Bernard Phipps[?], yes...

Cyril Page: ...was his right-hand man, used to do all his scripts for him, and...I mean, he was, you know, without Bernard it was...Anyway, um...Anyway, Cecil was very good. He just said, "Well, you've made up your mind. I'm terribly sorry but er..." Anyway, we kept in touch for a long time, er...How was I going on at ITN and all that? - He was very good. I...I...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Now talk about arriving at ITN.

Cyril Page: ITN. Right. Well um...I...I got taken on at er York House, which is right at the top of Kingsway, and errm... Gerald Sanger...

Alan Lawson: Yes...

Cyril Page: from Movietone news - He was the President then, at that time, of ITN. Er...and I hadn't met him before, and he said, "Well...before we start, you've got the job," you know, "because you've been spoken for by Dorte" and all that kind of thing...

Alan Lawson: Yep, yeah...

Cyril Page: Um...When I used to bring George Rottner[?] home... he would...sometimes we used to walk down Charing Cross Road...old George used to disappear up an alleyway...

Alan Lawson: Yeah...

Cyril Page: and he used to go...I don't know, I think they had a sort of an office or a get-together, prior to ITN starting...Anyway, I got accepted there and um...

Alan Lawson: At? What as? What were you...you were...

Cyril Page: Chief Cameraman.

Alan Lawson: You were Chief...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Yes, I was Chief Cameraman. Yes. Er... at a very good salary, plus all the perks, and er...Then we moved down to Ingersoll House in the Kingsway, before we took er Television House over from the Air Ministry, and er...I was in charge of er...Norman Dixon was the General Manager who came from Re-Diffusion and he...Great guy... Very nice indeed...Scotsman...He said, "I know bugger all about you. I know bugger all about cameras." He said, "It's up to you to teach me. Now, come in my office. Sit down. We'll have a cup of tea..." and I spent the whole day in there, telling him about this, that, and the other; technical side, and he said, "Right, we gotta recruit..." So I knew, I mean I knew all the Newsreel boys by then, and

they knew who I was, and I used to ring them up, and they put adverts out...for cameramen. And er...boys would ring and say, "Hey, hey..." you know, "What's it like?" and I used to ring them up and I would say, "You're...you're coming up for an interview, and er...you've asked for so much..." Because the salaries...how much you're getting and how much obviously...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: "And you're asking for, you know, seventeen hundred pound a year. Make it nineteen hundred, because we're gonna pay up to twenty..." and I tipped the boys off before they came up. [Laughs] So anyone that came up, George Richardson - [laughs] all those people, erm came up and of course they upped their salaries...as they were coming up the stairs to the interview, they...I used to see them and take them up. I'd said, "George," you know, "Don't forget. nineteen hundred's the minimum, so if you want to make it twenty, they may knock you down to nineteen hundred, but keep it up!" you see! So...so I boosted all their salaries up [laughs] and they all got accepted and er...they all mustered in um...Ingersoll House and of course then we had the Oricon, the old 16mm cameras came over. It was debatable what cameras we were going to use in those days; whether we're going to the Kodak Cine Special or the Eyemos and the 16mm market was very small because everything had to come from the States; the Oregon...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yeah...

Cyril Page: and all that kind of thing, so...So we all went out and did pilots and er... we started this Vox Pop stuff, and ofcourse the sound cameras were only 50ft load er 100ft-loading in those days, the old Oricon,

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Really?

Cyril Page: before we put the magazine on the top, yeah. And er...Yes only a 50ft er 100ft-loading. And er...then we moved over to Television House and then of course then we started, and Phillip Dorte, and of course Aidan Crawley was the editor, and I must say he was a second Cecil McGivern. He was great...

Alan Lawson: Yeah...

Cyril Page: He was the best...best editor, I would say, that ITN has ever had. Errm...we've had about four or five since and...but Aidan Crawley was er...Go in there with an idea: "Okay. Okay, go and do it. No problem" "Right." Then he'll come up and he'll speak to you, man to man, er "Can you do this?" and all that. He knew it backwards and, although I didn't know Aidan before the war, what film experience he had, but er...he knew it backwards, I must say. Give him full marks. He gave everybody a free hand and if anything you did good, he used to come personally over and say, "Bloody marvellous, mate," you know, "Excellent," you know, erm "few bob extra at the end of the week," you know, "Go and tell Tony. He'll put your expenses on" and all that. He was...another...another world actually. He was excellent. Everybody had the highest esteem... and he ran the news as it should be done, and of course the...the higher-ups of the commercial world turned round and tried to tell him how to run it, and he said, "Either I do it, or

I go" They said, "You do it our way." He said, "I go" and that's why Aidan left. He did not have a free hand at ITN through the directors of other...other...er companies...

Alan Lawson: Errm...Mmm...mmm...

Cyril Page: Er and then of course we all started and Phillip...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] How long did it take you, er, you know, er ITN, to shake down before they really started operating?

Cyril Page: Well every chap, every cameraman and sound recordist that came had experience. They were all qualified...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh sure...

Cyril Page: So it was a matter of twenty-four hours. So we were like that. The only difference was from 35mm down to sixteen, and that's the only...a day on that camera and every...you know...it was all done. And we used to bundle stuff up to Humphries, up to the top of the road, get it down and, you know, within... in the afternoon, and then of course we went to Kays, and Kays moved their laboratories into ITN. We had our own labs...But it just took an overnight because all the boys was qualified, and you couldn't have had a better bunch because they all had experience, they all had the contacts, and you...you know...

Alan Lawson: On editing staff?

Cyril Page: [Coughs] Pardon?

Alan Lawson: Editing staff? What did...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] They all came. They were all experienced people, all...mostly from um...[hesitates] er School[?] Road, up in er Paramount er...

Alan Lawson: Oh yes, yes...Paramount News...

Cyril Page: Yep, all that lot um...mostly...

Alan Lawson: Oh really?

Cyril Page: Yep, most of the people came from there. Ray Perrin and people like that all...all came over. Errm...but I...Nobody...nobody I don't think um actually who came to ITN had to be trained at the beginning. Everyone was experienced. Yep.

Alan Lawson: And um did you have any contact with the kind of studio people? You know, the...

Cyril Page: No. No, nothing at all. No, no. Rediffusion were down below... of us, but er...and we used to go down there...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] No I was thinking of Bob [Beryl ?] and these people...

Cyril Page: But, Bob Beryl was with ITN!

Alan Lawson: Yes...that was...yes... an Editor?

Cyril Page: Er...Producer.

Alan Lawson: Producer...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Yeah, he was producing. Yeah, Bob, yep, yep...

Alan Lawson: Errm, what about Jack Cotter ? Wasn't Jack...?

Cyril Page: [interrupts] John?...

Alan Lawson: Er, John Cotter...

Cyril Page: John Cotter? Yeah, well he was the Assignments Manager. He used to...he had about three on the staff and he was in charge of that lot. So any big er decision that had to be made about sending a cameraman overseas, he was up there, making arrangements and all that...

Alan Lawson: I see...

Cyril Page: Yep. He's still going. He's down in Cornwall at the moment.

Alan Lawson: Oh really?

Cyril Page: Yeah. Bit bad on his old legs but...

Alan Lawson: Or an Operations Manager, really, I think...

Cyril Page: That's right, yep, yep. Well, we called him an Assignments Manager. Yep.

Alan Lawson: Mmm...Yeah.

Cyril Page: He...he did the...he did the contacts and he did the fiddles, so er [laughs]...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: I mean, he got out of it more than we do but never mind. Good luck to him. [Laughs] These are past days now. We can all look back on it and have a laugh.

Alan Lawson: Yes...yes...yes...Well, kind of looking back over...over that period er, you know, is there any kind of memorable jobs for you?

Cyril Page: Er...hundreds really, you see... On the spot at the moment...I...er...er...Just cut for a moment, can you?

Alan Lawson: Yeah, yeah...

Cyril Page: Yeah.

[Break in recording]

Alan Lawson: Right. Er I...I asked you...Any particularly memorable coverages?

Cyril Page: Well, Suez was one. Er...

Alan Lawson: Yes...

Cyril Page: We were allocated er when the Suez started. Er...There was er...We had to fly to Cyprus. I...I went out to Cyprus. No reporter, just myself. Er...We were taken over by the Army, and they would only allow er three people; three with the Army, three with the Air Force, and three with the Navy, and one was a reporter, one was a stills photographer, and one was for television. Er...So consequently there were about forty odd cameramen there, forty odd reporters and, you know, likewise er still photographers, and of course there was only three out of each to go. So they put...they got two bowler hats. They put all the names into...er all the cameramen's names in one hat, and just three bits of paper in the other. They pulled out "Ken Henshaw[?]", picked up er "Navy" and that was right, he went to the Navy. I thought, "Oh God!" you know, "This is a thousand and one chance my name's gonna come out!" And then there was "Richardson," er not George...his brother, er "Movietone" "He'll be the Air Force" and he did the airborne landing. He flew out for the airborne. And last but not least, "Cyril Page" got "The Army." I thought, "Oh bloody hell!" you know, "Bloody Army again!"...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: So er [clears throat]...It was in this big Nissen hut. It was crowded. Everyone was smoking. God, it was awful, and there was all these correspondents; everyone kicking up rough because their names weren't chosen. And, all of a sudden, a chap came in. He said er, "Can you come this way, Sir?" I turned round and it was the Sub-Lieutenant and er he said er, "I'm...going to be your Conducting Officer." I said, "Okay. Fine." So he said, "We'll go up to the mess and have a bite to eat, and then we'll go to the Quartermaster's Stores." I said, "Well...all right. Okay." So everyone else had er...He said, "We're going to get you fixed up with a uniform." I said er, "Oh! Er...Why a uniform?" He said, "Well, you're an accredited...Correspondent." I said, "Don't worry, I've got one." He said, "No, er Army uniform." I said, "Yes. I've got one." He said, "Where did you get that from?" I said, "Well, Korea" "Oh," he said, "Oh, I...I...oh, I see..." [Laughs] "Korea were you? Oh!" I said, "Yes" [?? Inaudible] I think. He said, "Oh well, fair

enough," he said, "That's it." So er...all right I...bit of bullshit. I...I naturally headed home when I came back from Korea. I brought it with me, you see, which was...which was mine.

Alan Lawson: That's right...

Cyril Page: And not only that, I had my gongs out, you know, from the last war and the Korean, where the United Nations were, I had about five or six up there. So he had a bit of respect, you see, as to...you know, cos he was only a Sub-Lieuten...He was a National Service...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: and he said, "My name's Michael Parkinson." I said "Oh." He said, "How...how does one get in this...this racket of yours? This reporting?" I said, "Well, " I said, "when you come out of the Army, give me a bell and I'll tell you," you see. Not thinking, you know...He was only a young chap. Anyway, I...I went on a landing craft all the way from Cyprus, right the way across the Suez, and I landed there and, all of a sudden, I...I jumped ashore. I thought, "Well, let someone jump ashore first..." cos I wanted the Reverse Shot and...like old um... er... Can't think of the name. Er...the chap who did the Dunkirk run, you know, the landing of that, the shot going through...Yeah, I did all that and we got up there and, all of a sudden, a chap trod on a landmine and blew himself up right next to me, which nearly...bits and pieces flew past me, which [laughs] I thought "Oh my God!" Errm...anyway, I had to walk right into Port Said and er from there on I just did all the pictures of er sort of er sniping. You had to keep your head down or run or do anything, because I had - I forget what camera I had then. Errm...and er...No I was er...Yes...Yes, and...going down the street, you had to sort of keep on dodging because the Arabs was sniping, and eventually I came out a big car showroom and I thought, "I'll nip in here" and I had no transport. The Army wouldn't give any trans...We had no transport there at all. Everyone was on foot, and it was quite a walk from the...the landing place right into the town. And the er...Marines had already been in. They were trying to get these cars going. Lovely big cars. So, I kicked the door open. A big burly Marine said [adopts gruff voice] "What do you want?" I said, "Oh...I'm sorry, Sir," I said, "Actually, you know, I want a car if possible." He said, "Well, come in here, and shut the door!" So I went in there and I...cut a long story short, I got a big Belle Air car, a convertible. I thought, "That's got wheels and I'm all right." So I got in this thing. Got it started. Broke the two wires. Connected them up, and up she started, and went out in the street, and dashing round here, there, and everywhere. I gave a couple of other blokes a lift. Er...Went back to the airbase. Got me film away, and I shipped it right back to ITN, through the Air Force. The Air Force made a mistake. It should have gone to the War Office and then...it was a pool...pool job, and they sent it straight up to ITN and ITN put it out that night and of course all the [laughs] BBC and all that did their nut because ITN put it out and it wasn't pooled!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: So 'course...It wasn't my fault. I'd had nothing...That was the other end. Nothing to do with me...

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: So anyway, things got organised and, after about three days, then all the other correspondents come. So um...we er...we were in the er apartments there, in a big block of flats the Army took over for the Press, and we were on about the fifth floor, and the Army had opened up a Mess down below for the victualling, and the food was pretty bloody grim. So er...Anyway, we decided upstairs, and there was John Rudkin, um NBC, CBS, and er ABC, myself, in a flat. We were all sharing this lovely, lovely er flat. It was all satin-lined. The bed was all satin-lined, like this...I've got pictures of it at home; eight of us all in this one bed...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: all with...all these Turk's hats on. And this guy, this Arab, was having it off with someone in Port Said but...and all the love letters, we were sitting up in bed reading this, night after night. And er...in his girlfriend's bedroom was all the powder. We had a wail of a time. So we decided to make it our own mess. So we got the sideboard, turned it round, put a white sheet on. That was our bar, because we went and got some booze off the NAAFI. And er...I decided to...And of course HMS [Forth ?], the big depot ship arrived. So I went aboard that, and er...made myself known. Errm...and being ex-Navy, I asked to be a member of the Ward Room, which they duly acknowledged. So I could get booze. So I saw the victualling bloke after about three or four days and I said, "Any chance of getting a couple of bottles of wine?" He said, "Yeah, that's all right." Well, ten bob a bottle it was, I think, for a bottle of Scotch. So, I took back, and we had our own little bar. It was very good. It worked very well of a night time, and er eventually I said I'd like to get some food, so, with the Army food which was pretty grim, and our own food from the ship, we...we lived very well. Then I went round, I nicked every Calor Gas cylinder I could find because the Calor...It was all Calor Gas... and I was the only flat in the whole of er Port Said who er had hot baths, and we were organised. And Stockwell got to know...General Stockwell was in charge. He got to know this, and he turned up one day and er...Oh no, this was at Canal Buildings. We'd...called up the first Press Conference. We arrived up...I had about nine in the car, all sitting on the hood, with the back, and on the bonnet, and I drove up and there was this big, yellow, Bell Air car, like Cliff Richard's in 'Summer Holiday' thing it was, and he said, "Who the bloody hell is this lot?" and his ADC said, "Oh, this is the er ITN car." He said, "ITN?!" he says, "The bloody [Omo ?] lot is it?" and I said, "That's right, Sir." He said, "Come on in!" So we had a Press Conference and it was plain sailing after that. Everytime there was a Press Conference I used to sit there and he'd say, "Is [Omo ?] here?" I'd say, "Yes, Sir." "Right. Good"...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: So we...[laughs] we got to know...we...we were on very good terms. And then he called me one night. He said, "Here, you got...I hear that er you've done yourself well up in your place." He said er, "You've got hot baths." I said, "Yes. Twenty-four hours a day base." He said, "Right." So he came up that [laughs] night and had a hot bath!

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: Anyway, cut a long story short...he was very good, old Stockwell and er...er we had Robin Day...he started....Robin...that was his first assignment abroad. He was very na♦ve, and

he wrote this book of er...can't think of the title, in which he said errm...boosted me up like anything: He couldn't have come away with a more experienced chap who was er...a... "a wheeler and a dealer chap, who learnt me an awful lot on my first assignments." Er...I mean, we are still very good friends, old Rob and I. And er...Anyway, that...that was er the er...Suez thing, which was a...was an eye-opener. It was hard graft for about a week, but after that it was plain sailing, and of course then Moorehouse[?] got er kidnapped and we had to wait for his body, and Stockwell would not leave 'till Moorehouse's[?] body was released er back to the UN, and UN back to the Brits, and then we came back to Cyprus. And errm...and that was the end of the Cyprus...And then Mike Parkinson, I got in touch with him and I got him a job up at the Yorkshire Post or somewhere. I gave him an introduction, and that was the start of Mike...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Oh really?

Cyril Page: Yeah, that was the start of Mike getting his job in...I forget...I met with one of the correspondents and I said, you know, and I got his name, I said, "Well, you ring up..." but it was all...once, and I forgot it, but he did a negotiation, but I gave him the introduction. And we still, you know, [pause - CP makes physical gesture] like that to each other and, you know, "Thank you very much indeed." Yeah. So we still remain friends, yeah, whenever we see each other. Yeah, it was very good. And of course um, at the end, er another thing I...I er did decide to er...um...we er had to give the car up, and then the Arabs were told to give their bicycles up... They didn't want them cycling round the streets. So outside HMS Forth[?] there was a big pile of bicycles, all piled up. So, when we went ashore, er eventually we came out of the billets and we went ashore, and we ate onboard the ship. So every time we went ashore, we got a bicycle and cycled round and chucked it on the heap, then we came back. But the Stewards and all that, they were all Maltese Stewards and Cypriot Stewards and Chinese Stewards onboard the Forth [?], they said, "Get one of those bicycles onboard for us," you see. So when we got a good bicycle, with a light and a bell and brakes and all that, we brought it on board and gave it to the boys onboard the ship, and the whole of the Torpedo Room - mind because HMS Forth[?] was a depot ship - all their workshop was all bikes [laughs] hanging up, being repaired, you see! The Captain was nearly doing his nut! But it was all good relations. Anyway, before we left the apartments, I said to the boys, "Well, we'll throw a party for all the...the transport bloke was very good. He let us keep the car for a while and er...the other...the MPs were good to us. They didn't stop us and say, "You can't go in there." All...everyone was very...I said, "Let's throw a little party to say 'Thank you very much'" I like that. Always say "Thank you" to people, cos you never know, you may have to go back, you see...

Alan Lawson: That's right...

Cyril Page: And they remember you. So er...I went aboard and I saw the Officer, the Victualling Officer, I said, "Yes...How much?" We all...clubbed in...few bob, and er...we threw this party. We invited the girls off the aircraft carrier. We invited the French over from the other side, and then we had Stockwell and...We had about fifty...fifty or sixty in this flat. Got the band off the ship. Got a piano, and the drums, and the trumpet. We had dancing and all that, and all the booze...all imaginable...And the food was absolutely...trays of little vol au vents. I mean, stuff looking like that when we'd been used to corned beef sandwiches! I mean, they came at...everyone was grabbing as much as they could! Nothing left! Anyway, that was it on HMS

For...er...on the HMS...er forget what it was...Back to Cyprus. Back to England. So er...got back then. Old Geoffrey Cox[?]e said, "Marvellous. Thank you very much indeed. Have a bit of leave" you know and that was - you know, that's it. Er...er...And it was near Christmas and er...John Harvey interviewed me when I got back, and I said er...he said, "Well, what have you brought us back for Christmas?" I said, "I think ITN have already given me a turkey." He said, "Yeah, they get the bloody turkey more like" and I never got a ha'penny from ITN, not a penny ha'penny. Anyway, I threw this party, and I put my expenses in, and we all put fifty quid in the kitty; all the lot of us; NBC, CBS, BBC, the lot..."No, no trouble. Fifty quid" and we went aboard the ship and the officer said, "Well, we'll let you have it at cost price." I said, like that, "That's five hundred quid I think. Give that to the boys. For the cooks and all that. Dish it out amongst yourselves. We don't wanna know. You...you never received from us. Just give them a drink." So, that was it, and it was good. There was all the booze, all the food, booze and everything. I mean, it was worth about two thousand quid the amount of stuff there.

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: About fifty odd bottle of scotch and that. Oh, it was...I mean, the French were knocking it back. Putting it in their pockets as well, you know; nicking it. I put my expenses in and Tommy Trainer who was the er Secretary, he called me in and said er, "Good stuff," he said, "But I can't pass this!" He said, "Fifty quid for...entertainment...to officers and, you know, for appreciation!" He said er, "And...and you shared it between NBC, CBS, ABC and all that." He said, "You must have been pissed out of your mind!" I said, "We had about fifty or sixty people!" He said, "Yeah, I know but..." He said, "In a war?! How can you charge up entertainment in a war?" I said, "Well, I dunno. It has been done." He said "....." [Makes long sigh of disbelief or risk] I said, "Well Tommy, that's what I...I paid up." I said, "Believe it or not." He said, "Well, I'll pass these." He said, "But it'll have to go in front of the Editor." Anyway, it went in front of Geoffrey Cox[?] and Geoffrey Cox[?] called me in and blah, blah, blah, blah, and er he said er, "Look," so he said, "I know you well" He said, "But er...expenses are supposed to be honest." I said, "It is honest!" And, low and behold, Neville Clark[?] was...pulled over, I think, one of the reporters called over on his expenses. And er...He didn't agree with them, and he, Geoffrey Cox[?] put the bible on the table and said, "Put your hand on that and swear to it that they're true" and he refused to do it, so he got the sack. But he didn't bring the bible out to me. I expected him to bring the bible out. I said, "I paid for that amount of money" and I said, "I'd like it to be reimbursed," although it was ITN money anyway, but I said, "That's...that's what I paid out." He said, "Well, I'll pass it this time" but he said, "Don't let it happen again, or else there'll be trouble." I said, "If that's the situation, you can keep your fifty quid. I don't want it. I'm not hard up for a fifty pound. You can keep it." Anyway, they did pay me, and it stuck in my mind. I thought, "God Almighty! Fifty quid!" you know, "For all that work and...we got a lot of facilities." Anyway, General Stockwell came out to ITN. Geoffrey Cox said to me, "Oh, there's a friend of yours over here, with his wife and children. They've come up to see the stuff you shot in Suez. He'd like to see you." So I went over to his office. You know, big [inaudible ???], [bit kinda like that ?]. I walked in there. He was in civvies. He said, "Hello, Omo[?] How are you?" I said, "I'm very well, Sir. Thank you very much indeed." He said, "Oh, jolly nice to see you...My wife and my daughters..." and he said, "Do you know, Geoffrey" he said, "this chap, I don't know how he did it, but" he said, "he threw the biggest bloody party imaginable!" He said, "Where he got the food from and all that...?" He said, "But he

entertained everybody in Suez. It was a fantastic party" and he said, "It was a wow! He got musicians...he got a..." He said, "Bloody good bloke!" He said, "Did you well." So, I said, "Oh, very nice..." He said, "No, excellent." He said, "Don't often meet them these days, chaps like this, you know, good reporters or good cameramen." I said, "No, and the whole...behind it..." I said, "They didn't like it when I got back to ITN because I put fifty quid in for my expenses and they objected to pay it." He said, "Objected?!" He said, "Fifty quid!" He said, "Blimey, it was worth a thousand quid..." he said, "the work you did!" [Laughing]

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: God dear! [Laughs] "Oh God!" he said, "Fifty bloody quid!" He said, "What's fifty pound?!" Cor! Anyway, I said goodbye and...The next day, Geoffrey sent for me. He said, "You don't embarrass me in front of the General..."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: I said, "Well, you objected." I said, "There you are, I'm verified that I paid the fifty quid and I threw the party!"

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: and er [clears throat] that was all right after that...Yeah...

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing] Then what?

Cyril Page: Well then back doing the, you know, cat shows, dog shows and, you know, erm flower shows and all that kind of thing. Another time was... We did a programme called 'Rove and Report,' which was a half an hour, you know, like a James Fitzpatrick. You know, "[inaudible??] reluctantly we are here..." and when we were hard up for money and budget... We used to have to go to Paris to do the fish market or, you know, for a day and back again. Shoot the whole story. A half an hour programme in a day. No script, no nothing. Go there. Went to Vienna with Nick Barker and er...in the aircraft we got a bit sozzled and we didn't know what we were gonna do when we got there. I said, "Vienna! Wine, women, and song!" [Drunken mumbles of agreement] So we got permission to go in the Opera House. We got er... We went down the Red Light District and did the women, and we got in the Opera House and did this...the singing, you see, and we went up to a winery up the... [laughs] up in the mountains, and we shot this thing. And er...Got into this...Imperial Hotel in Vienna, and it was a fantastic hotel, and I was the last to sign the book, and I got a little box and there was a silver medallion in there and this...the hotel used to be the old palace years and years ago, and I got the King's suite. Of course it was, "Oh, trust old Pagey to get the best...best bloody suite!" you see. So er...go up in the...going down this corridor, there was a chap pushing a er trolley with about twenty bottles of champagne, and like I am, I said, "Where's the party?" I said, "Can we follow you?" He said, "Well, it's about two doors up from you!" I said, "Oh, I see. Fine." So er...I went ahead and I knocked at the door, and they said er, "Come in!" So I went in and I said, "Excuse me," I said, "Your booze has arrived."... "But..." and he said, "Pagey! How are you?" And it was the PR guy for Canadian Pacific Airlines, who I knew quite well. [Laughs]

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: "Come in! What are you doing here?" I said, "What are you doing here?" He said, "Oh I'm seeing all the agents in Vienna...in Austria...got them all for a party." I said, "What's the party?" He said, "Oh, I've just become a grandfather, so I'm pushing the boat out." So of course old Nick and er...the sound recordist er...Archie Howell[?]. Archie Howell[?], dear old Archie...and we went in, and er...and in there was all these airline blokes and we said, "We wanna get permission to go to the Opera House and wanna get permission the other..." He said, "Oh, that's all right, I'll ring up..." and...it was...See! Contacts again! And they fixed it all for us. You could never get into the Opera House, I mean, to do that, you know, unless you... paid thousands of pounds, but we did a rehearsal there, and it was fantastic. And er... that's...that's one 'Rove and Report.' Now the other 'Rove and Report' that we were gonna do, with Bob Beryl[?], we got so tired. We'd been round the world this way, that way, and every way, and we were really tired out for stories. We didn't know where to go, what to do. It's like the Isle of Wight, you know, you... and all that sort of thing, and I said, "Well, we've never done a cruise. You know, we've done Barbados. We've done, you know all that...We've never done a cruise..." It was coming up Christmas time. I said, "Why do people go on a cruise at Christmas? To get out of cooking? Or...?" - all that, like...He said, "That's a good idea." He said, "Try and fix it up." So I went down the Lloyds Shipping and I found out which was the ships going out for Christmas er...er do. Errm...P&O were going out for a month, and I thought, "Oh, that's too long." So I got a Greek line. So I didn't know the PR. I rang this guy up and I said erm, "Oh, ITN here." I said, "We do this 'Rove and Report' programme." He said, "Oh yes. I've seen that. It's very good." I said, "You're doing a Christmas Cruise for ten days." He said, "That's right." I said, "Well, any chance of doing a story on er Cruising for Christmas?" "Ooh!" he said, "Bloody good!" He said, "Good...good publicity for us!" I said "I..." He said, "I'll put it before the Directors and see how..." He said, "How many people?" I said, "Well, there'll be the electricians... have to have lights with us...er...be four...um...Spark, Reporter, Cameraman and Sound." Came back. He said, "You may have to double up on cabins. Two of you in a cabin. I can't give you a cabin each ..." I said, "That's fine." So I told Bob Beryl[?] and er...he told Geoffrey Cox[?]. He said er, "Oh, We've fixed up a cruise going from Southampton... all round the Greek islands and all that...back again...Madeira..." "How long?" He said, "Oh, be ten days." "Oh, crikey!" he said, "I can't let you go for ten days" He said er, "Can't let you go for ten days..." He said er, "Can't you fly back?" He said, "Well, it's gonna cost money to fly back." He said, "This is all backsheesh, you know...free cruise." "Oh no" he said, "We can't...we can't er...can't let the crew go, four of you, away for ten days." He said, "Be far too expensive." So we said, "Well, it's not gonna cost anything!" "Never mind. We can't let, you know...There may be other stories come up. You could be used here." So, had to go back to the PR and said, "I'm sorry. We can't do it." Boom boom. He said, "I'll tell you what we" er...Geoffrey[?] said... "I tell you what we'll do. We'll do a Spring cruise, and we'll find one where you could go out for two days and fly back and, you know..." So that was it. Left. So we didn't go on this Greek liner. Four days later, it caught fire off erm...the Canary Isles...

Alan Lawson: God!...

Cyril Page: ...this Greek liner. Er...250 people got burnt. They were all jumping in the water. We sent 3 cameramen to er [laughing] Canary Isles to cover the story. We chartered an aircraft!

It cost us about five thousand quid. Instead of that, it would have cost about four air fares to get back! And er...the ship caught fire. Everybody abandoned it, and it was on tow to Gibraltar and it turned over and sank. That was the Greek liner, and I was called in the office because that would have been a hot - a camera crew actually onboard: "Excuse me, just before you jump, Sir, er why did you come onboard for Christmas?" [laughs] you know, "Was it to get away from the wife?" you know...Splash! In the water! I mean, it would have been...um, I mean, you weigh it...you weigh it up. Naturally if you're onboard in the situat...you don't be the first to jump over the side. You think, "I'll...I'll get a couple of stories before I do jump." Well, you weigh the situation. It is gonna be bad and, you know, you don't take the risk in your own life. You say, "Right, bugger this for a lark, I'll go, and you go" but I thought, well, you know...You would have said, "Oh, I'll hang on for another half an hour, the funnel's still smoking," and all like that, or, "There's a lot of people still here. If they're here, I'm here," so you don't do it. So, that was it. So anyway, the ship was empty and all that... So we didn't go. It was about three days later, after they shipped all these cameramen... I mean, eight people went; reporters, cameramen and all this and that...all abroad... chartered aircraft. Geoffrey[?] called me and said, "Who knew about this story that you were going on?" I said, "Bob Beryl[?] and myself and er Archie Howell[?] the..." He said, "Don't let anyone know." He said er, "If anyone knew I refused you going, turned the story down..." He said, "I'd never live it down!" and that was it. And that would have been a world exclusive, you know, a camera crew on board a burning ship, you know; not the amateur thing all over the place, like that. It would've been, you know...But, you know, they're the sort of things that crop up and you think, "Oh, well..." Do you trouble in...doing things like that? But er lots of other er...Oh I can't remember a lot of...I suppose a lot of the things I should remember but er...Er...I don't know...I love it. I do miss it. I do...

Alan Lawson: Yes, now...now... erm...on equipment, erm...did you have any changes in equipment, over the years?

Cyril Page: Er well, only when we went on the video, er...

Alan Lawson: You...you were at [??? Inaudible]

Cyril Page: Oh, yes, yes, yep, yep...and that was...that was harder. I hated it because we...were er...on 16mm we got right the way down as small as we can: the CP16, which was an excellent camera, American camera. It was absolutely superb. Er... well in between...in between time er Cyril Moorhead[?] who um was er in charge of er...

Alan Lawson: equipment, yes...

Cyril Page: He came under equipment. He left. I don't know what happened there but er...something happened and er he didn't get on with Mike Batchelor, actually, and er...He got the elbow, and er...Batchelor asked me if I'd like to take over. Well I was gamekeeper turned poacher, or poacher [laughs] turned gamekeeper, because I knew every fiddle going, so of course all the boys said, "Oh, bloody'ell! Pagey's in charge!" you know, "All the expenses are going for a burton!" So erm...I had every one of them up, one by one. I took the job. So I was inside. Big office, secretary. So I had every bloke up there, one by one, and I said, "Right. I know the way you work. You know the way I work, and I know every fiddle, but you honest with me, and I'll

be honest with you. But don't turn round and say, 'This was true' and it's not true because, one way or another, I will find out." And I said, "If you want time off, don't fall sick because it does bugger, you know, the whole assignment up - You've got people here waiting and all that. If you want to have a day off, say you'd like to have tomorrow and I'll give it you and I'll get a freelance bloke in, but don't say you're going on the sick, be honest. And if you want a week's leave, if your wife's going sick or like that, and you want a week, or a month, I'll give you it and it won't interrupt your...your month's holiday; I'll still give it. I'll get over it...paperwork...I'll have to employ a freelance. So, don't worry about that. You just be honest with me, but it doesn't interrupt your month's holiday if you want to take the wife away, or she's ill. I'll give you extra leave, but you won't lose anything" and that was it, and it worked very well. Well er...I was there, what, two years? And er...

Alan Lawson: Now inside?

Cyril Page: Inside, yep. I re-organised the whole department. Did this and did that. Errm...I'll stop there for a minute.

[Brief pause in recording]

Alan Lawson: Right. Ok...

Cyril Page: Well, when um...when I was in charge, I...I was in charge of the equipment; anything I had. And when the CP16s came out, the first one, we had her over from Samuelson's and there was a lot of wow and flutter on it. It had to go back to Samuelson's, back to us, and...it was about...oh, five or six weeks before they got it on the road.

Alan Lawson: What...what actually was the CP?

Cyril Page: It was a 16mm, very much like the Mitchell...

Alan Lawson: Aha...

Cyril Page: ...very much like. The Mitchell...the Mitchell camera was still on 16mm. They had a smaller version of the 35, but it was too bulky compared with the...they condensed the CP16 down smaller, and it was very good. Anyway, everything had to be ordered through Samuelson's. Well, I don't know...Sid Roberts was in charge of the...selling stuff from Samuelson's and he was always...He used to work for ITN in the um workshop, in the camera workshop, and he went to Samuelson's selling stuff, so he and Mike were great pals. Errm...but then errm...the order came for about 16, I think, CP16s, for every cameraman who had his own camera. So er...everything had to be ordered through Samuelson's. Well, I read in one of the books, the technical books, [?? Name of Book] or something like that, that er...Vinten - I had a great respect for Vinten's during the war and er inventing cameras, and...up in Cricklewood...and er, they were also agents for CP16. Well then I got the price from Samuelson's, what they were charging ITN, then I rang up Vinton's and I said, "Those...How much do you charge...?" and that, and it was a great difference in price. So I thought, "Well, that's bloody funny..." you know, "ITN are paying a lot more money." So then I rung CP16, over in New York, their office, and I said, "I'm in the..." - said

who I was and they...they knew exactly who was on - and I said, "I want to order 16 CP16s, and what I want to do...We've had an awful lot of trouble with the wow and flutter on them...So what I'd like to do, if I can come to some agreement with you...is to send one of my chaps from the camera workshop over to America to test out every camera before we have it, in your workshop so you can adjust it there and then so it's a hundred per cent, I can bring it back, and in 24 hours it can be on the road." They said, "Ok, well we'll look after your chap. We'll pay the hotel. We'll pay his air fare over there, and er...you know, that's it" and I said, "And how about the price of it?" "How many do you want?" So I...And the price was nearly half of what we were paying Samuelson's! So I thought, "Right." So I went down and saw Mackie[?] in the workshop and told him. He said, "Oh, I'd like to go to America." I said, "You go there for three days. You come back with four or five cameras. Ted...Ted can go out next. He can have three or four..." I was giving the blokes a perk, you see, in work... because they... they were inside, doing all the graft, and they don't get any perks. So I said, "Right" There were four of them. I said, "You can have three days each. Pan America and Teddy Bowman," who I knew, "are gonna do the air fares for us, so everything's paid..." Wasn't gonna cost ITN a halfpenny, except to buy the cameras. So I said, "Alright, I'll er... send me an invoice er, a letter as to the price that I want, and I'll put it in front of my boss." The letter came. Put it front of Mike: "What the bloody hell are you doing?" I said, "Well, look at the price I'm getting the CP16s, and they'd be on the road in ..." "You can't...you're not gonna do that!" he said, "Samuelson's are the people we get it through." He said, "We deal with them, because we can offload the price." He said, "We can spread the price over." I said, "Well, I can do that with CP16..." He said, "I don't care what you do..." So that was that. So we had to get everything from Samuelson's.

Alan Lawson: I'll stop you there.

[Tape 2, Side 3 ends.] [Tape 2, Side 4]

Alan Lawson: "Cyril Page, side 4..."

Cyril Page: Four. I hope you've got plenty of tapes! [Laughs]

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughing] I've been too long in the industry!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing] There's plenty!

Cyril Page: Anyway um...That...that applied...Going through a company to get stuff. Then Steenbecks came in. We had trouble with the Steenbecks, and they came from Switzerland, and also the spare parts had to come through Samuelson's, and we were... I think, there were a couple of Steenbecks out of action for about a week or a fortnight, which we couldn't afford to do. We had to hire them in, replace them. I kept on ringing them up and saying, "Well, are they coming?" "They'll be here tomorrow?" So I got so fed up, I rang up Steenbecks and I said, "These spare parts that I want. I think Samuelson's have ordered them." They said, "No... We haven't got any record of it, so far." I said, "Well, we want this." He said, "Right. We'll ship it out today. London airport this afternoon" and I got them within four or five hours. And they must

have rung up Samuelson's to Sid Roberts and told him that they'd shipped the stuff over to me, and he came up and he played buggery; not with me, but with Mike Batchelor. Mike Batchelor... blamed me, and I said, "Look, we've got two machines out of action" and I said, "I've got the parts now. They're working. So we don't have to hire these things, but Sid Roberts keeps on telling me that they're in Customs at London airport and er they haven't been cleared yet." I rung up London airport, the Customs, who I had a very good contact there... the Head of Customs, I knew extremely well, and he made enquiries for me. He said, "No. Nothing here for Samuelson's at all." So...that's what... And I got so fed up with this. My hands were tied on everything. Even camera tape I couldn't order this, that and the other stuff... And I thought, "Two years of this! I can't go on like this!" So, I said, "I'm sorry" and "I'll chuck it in." So I went down and saw the General Manager and I didn't say why I was throwing it in. I didn't wanna sort of blacken my book there, because I had to stay on there and I think he would have made it very awkward for me. So I just said, you know, "I'm just not the bloke to be administration, to sit down and dictate letters and things like that." I've got the wanderlust and every time I say to a cameraman he's going out to Hawaii, I'd think, "Well, that could be me." So that's why I left. That's the true story, as I've just told you.

Alan Lawson: Yes...yeah...

Cyril Page: I had people come up and...various bits of equipment come up and said, "Well, you just tell me what your bank is, Sir, and I'll put a cheque in for you." And I'd say, "You've told me that. You can get your arse out my office, because I don't want to do business with you. I don't work like that... and that's it. If you'd said it was a bottle of Scotch for me and bring it up in Christmas like..." So much booze came into ITN at Christmas from various organisations, it was unbelievable. I said, "you could have had my order." "Oh..." and they apologise...I said, "I'm sorry, you're out!" And I would not tolerate that

Alan Lawson: No, no...

Cyril Page: But I would tolerate anyone, you know, giving a present or something like that. Yes, by all means. I've had bath towels and soaps and all that kind of thing, but money, that's never been my nature and never...No. I mean I even had holidays. I've had... done one or two stories and people have said, "Would you like to take your wife to so-and-so, on an education, where all those tourist people go?" I said, "Yes! Fine." I mean I've been to Austria backsheesh and various places. Swans, I mean they were very good um...but they were good to everybody else because they said, "Oh, have you got a contact that's...?" I'd say, "Yes, ring up so-and-so at Swans." They all got twenty per cent, fifty per cent discount, you see.

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: ...That's the business. Wheels within wheels, but... that's it. I'm not sorry I didn't stay on. I mean, my salary was quite large when I went inside and of course it went down again when I went back on the road which would've helped my retirement... At the moment we're suing ITN because they haven't paid us a halfpenny since I left on our increase...

Alan Lawson: That's the pension fund?

Cyril Page: My pension fund, yes. We should have had up to ten per cent...er up to ten per cent, and I've been left, what, ten years now, and I've had nothing...except my same basic salary that I left with. So, we've all got together, all us retired people now, and we've employed a Queen's Councillor, and I think all the unions... We did approach all the unions first and asked their advice on what we should do, and they all advised us to do the same thing, as to take action, and we are doing it, but I hear through the grapevine that ITN have climbed down because one of the boys who is looking after us... who's dealing with us, who's a solicitor, or his brother is, he's taken it in hand and advised us, he's been advised that...He asked ITN who was paying the cost to fight us in court and ITN turned round...We've got this in black and white...and said, "ITN are taking it out their pension fund" to fight us...

Alan Lawson: Good God!

Cyril Page: So er...we've got that against them, but I hear through the grapevine they've climbed down a bit and they've...they're coming to some agreement. Most likely get two per cent. So if I get back pay...for ten years, on my pension, Alan, I'll take you out and buy you a drink! [Laughs] I'll buy you a bottle!

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: But that's life. You know, take the rough with the smooth, but...I've enjoyed my life. I'm very healthy. I've got a good family...

Alan Lawson: Now wait a minute! I haven't finished! [Laughs] We haven't finished!

Cyril Page: [Laughs] I can't go on like this!...

Alan Lawson: You haven't...you haven't talked about EGN[?].

Cyril Page: Who?

Alan Lawson: Er...You haven't er talked about EGN[?] cameras...

Cyril Page: Errm...Well...er...to transfer from film onto video, there's so many bits going wrong, er...the knobs you press and all that kind of thing, and not only that, the viewfinder, I could not on looking at the little matchbox, size of a matchbox, television screen, instead of looking through a viewfinder, so consequently, I've had to wear glasses. That's what started it. Even my son, now...went for...and he's done exactly the same thing - Roy's forty odd and he's had to wear glasses, and he notices most of the cameramen now who are doing video have got to wear them, because you're concentrated on this little camera...on the...this box, this electronic...and it does affect the eyesight. But er...the cameras...going from the CP16 direct onto video, the cameras were about three times heavier...what the CP16s were!

Alan Lawson: Really?!

Cyril Page: So, consequently, you had a... We used to have a harness round there to take your weight, and of course the old big... I mean they were right out here. I mean now they're the size of... a matchbox, hardly.

Alan Lawson: And what about balance?

Cyril Page: Just hard luck. That's why I'm round-shouldered!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughing] Because you leant forward, the weight of it, you know...

Alan Lawson: Really? Yes...

Cyril Page: Oh, the weight was terrific, yeah...

Alan Lawson: Yeah, but I mean er... when you got it on your shoulder, was there a decent balance?

Cyril Page: Er... well, if you had it far enough back, but then you couldn't get the eyepiece far enough forward, you see, to do that - it was very difficult. But it's like everything else, you... you say, "Oh my Gawd!" you know, put it on your shoulder and [huffs and puffs], you know and you've gotta keep it on there until... You get so used to it...

Alan Lawson: Yes...

Cyril Page: and... and you've got a pistol grip, to... sort of hold it like that, and when you gotta work it, you pull it down, and you know, you shoot... But when you're actually looking through it and working, you don't realise the weight and that, because you're so concentrated keeping the thing in the middle of the picture, that you don't realise. But generally you switch off and think, "Oh Jesus Christ!" and "Thank God for that!" you know... when you put the camera down. But, with a CP16, you used to pick it up like that and work, but with these videos you used to have to swing it, and catch it as it came down, and put it on your shoulder. And you notice, I mean a lot of people, my wife says, "Oh, for God's sake, hold your shoulders back!" Well, I think it started from the early days when I was operating in the studios that... there's never any camera in that they position the camera 6ft3" up in the air, it was always on a dolly and you always had to sw... look through that, everybody looks through the viewfinder, so consequently, [laughs] every cameraman's got round shoulders!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: I notice Freddy Young is nearly crippled! [laughs]... But er... No, I... It didn't take you long, but they've got smaller and smaller and smaller now, which I think the advantage is but...

Alan Lawson: And... and of course the zoom? - Which is, you know... you never had before, really...

Cyril Page: Well, we had zooms on the CP16s...

Alan Lawson: Ah right, yes...

Cyril Page: I mean, they were a God-send, you didn't have to keep...I mean when I come to think, the old Newman Sinclair, I had a turret on mine. I had three lenses...

Alan Lawson: Yeah...

Cyril Page: And it was so overbalanced, you know, you used to fall forward...and that was so heavy it was just unbelievable. And I used to have a Pogo stick - I had a belt with a [Poko/Pogo ?] to hold it up...Well, even that was bloody awkward, You try to run with it, you know and...you know, it's so difficult. Yeah, [laughs] I know, I was telling you about that! But er...it is so...But it's like everything else. You get so used to er these sort of...the heaviness and that. I mean, when you come...when you come to think of the old er...er Vinten Visatone we had at the...Alexandra Palace years ago! I mean, that was so heavy...it took two of you to lift the case in the car!

Alan Lawson: Yeah, that's right...

Cyril Page: I mean it's...I mean there was nothing else around in those days, you see.

Alan Lawson: Well, there was, what...Well, there was the Waugh, wasn't there?

Cyril Page: Yeah, but that was so heavy, I mean it was...

Alan Lawson: Yes, that's another one...

Cyril Page: Yeah. That's right, yeah...

Alan Lawson: Mmm...mmm...

Cyril Page: Yeah, the Waugh. Yes, that's right, yeah...And Newell[?] - There's another one!

Alan Lawson: Well, yes...

Cyril Page: Yep, the Newell[?] camera...

Alan Lawson: Well, there was virtually...virtually a Mitchell...

Cyril Page: Yep, that's right. Yep, yep...

Cyril Page: only tighter! [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Yep...But I...I did a stint at...Pathe. You know, er, I worked on Pathe Pictorial with George Stevens

Alan Lawson: Oh really, did you?!

Cyril Page: Yes, yes, yes, yes. I did the old Wilson, Kepple and Betty things up there. Yes er upstairs...

Alan Lawson: When was that?

Cyril Page: Er...before the war.

Alan Lawson: Oh I see...

Cyril Page: Yeah. Yeah, before the war. This was in between films, you see, because we had about a fortnight left...And another thing is er...when I was with er... down at Sound City...and of course they had a Sound City News - Do you ever remember the Sound City News?

Alan Lawson: No, no, never did that...

Cyril Page: Oh yes! Now, it's funny, at the Society meeting at er South Bank, nobody mentioned that. But there was a Sound City News, and they all had Humber cars and they had Newell[?] cameras.

Alan Lawson: Good lord!

Cyril Page: Yep, yeah...there's a picture...You look in the archives here. Sound City News, they called it. Yeah. I think Charlie [N.B. Norman] Loudon was one of the organisers there...

Alan Lawson: What, well the man was....Well, he started er Sound City.

Cyril Page: That's right. Well, he was the instigator... on Sound City News - because I can remember all the cars by the gate there at er...the picture...

Alan Lawson: Really?!

Cyril Page: Um...Oh, what was I gonna say about er...? Er...

Alan Lawson: Equipment. We were talking about equipment, really. When you...when you had the Newman, what were you...what kind of big lenses did you have? Can you remember?

Cyril Page: We had about a 24, 35, 50, 75 and er...

Alan Lawson: What...a 6?

Cyril Page: Yeah. Yeah, it was about a 6. Yep, yep...You know, you couldn't have too er...Well, the trouble is, that you couldn't have them too long because, if you switched over on the wide angle, you got the lens in on the...on the long one, so you were very...very careful as to what you were doing.

Alan Lawson: But the...the Newman you had, was it a look-through, or was it a...that horrible [laughs] viewfinder on the top...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] What? What? Sit on the top? No, on the side...on the side...

Alan Lawson: You had the...you had the look-through...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Yep, yep, yep, yep...and of course it was looking through the emulsion!

Alan Lawson: I know...Yes...yes...

Cyril Page: I mean, when I was operating in the studio, looking through the old Super[-??] or Debie, you used to have to get underneath the black cloth about ten minutes before you saw the image! [Laughing] And people say, "You didn't look through the film?!" I said, "Impossible..." You had to!...

Alan Lawson: That's right, yes...

Cyril Page: And you think, "Oh God!" you know. I used to sit there and think, "Oh Jeez I...get out!" you know, but er...

Alan Lawson: Did, erm...One of the things I found, you know, I happened to be in...I was in Spain er during the Civil War and I, you know, I had an Eyemo and...I found that I could do all kinds of things with a camera in my hand, that I wouldn't dream of doing without a camera in my hand. Did you ever find that?

Cyril Page: Such as what?...

Alan Lawson: Well...looking at things, you know like, as you say, people being blown up and that kind of thing, or...

Cyril Page: Well, when... I always had one eye. I never closed one eye at work. I could always see, left or right, what was going on, so I could pan quickly round like that. I never closed left eye.

Alan Lawson: No. No, I mean I agree with you, but it's a different little world, that little world you're looking at...

Cyril Page: [interrupts] Yeah, yep, yep, yep...

Alan Lawson: It doesn't relate to the world outside...

Cyril Page: No...

Alan Lawson: not really.

Cyril Page: It's...it's a...[pause] I...I don't know, it's a funny thought really, when you...you're seeing it, you are seeing it in a different aspect to what...what, you know...It strikes you, you've got to do that, you know...

Alan Lawson: I can remember going up a, you know, enormous factory chimney...to film from the top!

Cyril Page: Yeah...

Alan Lawson: I did all that, and went...and then went down, and kind of looked up and think, "Good God!"

Cyril Page: I did that - when I got to the top, looked down and thought, "Oh shit! [laughs] What am I doing up here?! [Laughs] How did I get up here?!" you know, "Stupid!" Yeah...Yeah...I um...I can remember on the Paneer[?], I wanted to go on the top of the mast, and they put a rope round me, and there was no sort of ladder up, I just...I had this Newman Sinclair, and of course to get that up there is a...effort! And they hoisted me up! And we were swaying left and right, like that, and er...Oh God! I got to the top there and of course I opened the...the...No Crow's Nest up there. I just sort of...I just had to dangle, and I put me legs round the back of me and held on the mast like that, and I tried to film down. And looking through the viewfinder, I thought, "Oh my Gawd Fathers!" like this. "If the lens drops off now, what..."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: And I was frightened of any...something dropping out of me pockets and say, "Oh my God! The film's gone! I gotta go down again and pick it up!" [Laughs] You know. Oh! Errm...errm...People say to me, "Why don't you write a book?" I say, "I've got the title." They say, "What's the title?" and I say, "Fuck it! I've missed it!" [Laughing].

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

CP: But many...many a time's "Oh my God! Can you do a repeat?" you know, something like that, but er...

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: No...No, I [laughs]...Oh, I don't know. Yes, it was a lovely life. I...I can't think of a better life where you get paid to do it, you know, really.

Alan Lawson: That's right, yes.

Cyril Page: Yes...I say to my son, er Roy, er...because he er... he was as daft as I am when he left school. You know, he just wanted to follow in his old man's footsteps. I said, "Well, there's only one way to start - by getting the tea" and er... "I don't know anybody..." I said, "I started the rough way," I said, "and you're gonna start the rough way. You aint gonna go straight in..." In

between schooling, I used to go to Barking, to er...the Barking Technical College for optics. I used to...do the optics...

Alan Lawson: Oh, really?

Cyril Page: Yes, in between my homework... Well, homework! - I didn't do it, I used to...copy the bloke next door. I used to earn a few bob by selling papers at Plaistow Road Station, calling out: [inaudible newspaper-seller cries!], you know [laughs] and erm...I used to go to Beckenham School, er...for learning...optics and all that kind of...concaves and convexes and all that kind of thing and...and er...Another thing is I was going to say, when I was er in between studios in the early days - this was before the war, I thought, "Well, when I put it into Humphries or Kay's or something like that, what happens to it?" You know, "I just chuck it in, and I'd like to know..." So I wanted to go into the labs and er tried, but they said, "Well, the unions..." you know, "the unions...you can't do this, and you can't do that..." and the um...er...British Ondicolour, I think it was, in Wardour Street...Doctor...Doctor Somebody and er...I think, I don't know how...contact, this guy er...Austrian bloke he was, and he said, [imitating an Austrian accent] "You want to come up here? I cannot pay you, but you can come and work and get ze tea." I said, "Well, that's all right." So I went down there. And I worked in the Drying Room, and his son was in the Chemical Room, and... it was a family concern, this Ondicolour, and this stuff was coming through... I had to clip it off and put the space thing and all the bloody stuff was going up and down like this, you see... and water was coming all through the floor. His son, he used to let the rinse bath overflow and I used to have to mop that up with a bucket. Oh, God Almighty! That was it!...Doctor Krampser[?] I think his name was, I don't know...Anyway, erm...he had this colour. He was processing colour, and they shot it in the studio...in the Crown Theatre...

Alan Lawson: Oh yes?

Cyril Page: The Crown Theatre in Wardour Street...

Alan Lawson: Yes, just across the road...

Cyril Page: Anyway, we had a Trade Show...and er, he said, "Do you want to come in the Trade Show?" and I sat there then um...and of course I hadn't been...I'd only been and seen rushes, you know, in the studio. I hadn't been in with all these other exhibitors, and I sat there and there was this colour came up, and of course, I don't know if you remember, the first colour film that was ever shot was 'Sons of the Sea' in Dufaycolour. It was shot in er...in the studios at er...at...near Elstree. 'Sons of the Sea' - shot at Dartmouth - and it was processed by Dufaycolour in Elstree...

Alan Lawson: Yes...

Cyril Page: nearly opposite the old B&D Studios. Erm...Anyway I sat there, and the colour was marvellous! Absolutely fantastic! You know...And...I don't think Kodachrome was even in on 16mm then. I don't think it was, and er...I thought, "Oh superb!" The colour was beautiful! Anyway, I worked for this old guy...the odd days...I used to ring up and say, "Can I come up tomorrow, Sir?" "Yes. Ok, you come up..." and I...always in the Drying Room or mixing the chemicals and... or taking the measurements... and I learnt an awful lot, you know... and also the

grading and... I did all that. Went right the way through so... I knew, roughly, when people were talking, I knew what they were talking about, because I think it's silly to say, "What do you mean by this?" and, you know. So I always think it's good...you know, get the knowledge of...what happens to your film. And then I hear that Natalie Kalmus came over from Technicolor and bought him out.

Alan Lawson: What...what was the colour system called? Can you remember?

Cyril Page: Yes...[sighs] British Ondicolour...Ondicolour...

Alan Lawson: Ondi?

Cyril Page: Yeah, Ondicolour, and he was a Doctor...I forget his name now. I read it somewhere, about this guy, and he got bought out by Natalie and that was the start of Technicolor. Actually in Wardour Street. Yeah.

Alan Lawson: Good Lord!

Cyril Page: I've got...I don't know whether I've got a record of it somewhere. Doctor...Yeah. Yes, I was...Oh, oh...I used to go up two or three, sometimes four or five days at a time, when I was in between films...

Alan Lawson: Yes...yes...

Cyril Page: It was very hard, really, to get in those days... because the ACT... I think my number is 475, I think when I joined it, and er...er...Arthur Graham, he was the one that started me at er... because he said "You in the Union?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, you are now!" I think it's a penny a week I paid, as a Clapper Boy jolly old Arthur, of course he was a red-hot Communist, wasn't he, old Arthur and er...of course he was at Bowaters[?].

Alan Lawson: Yes, that's right. Yes.

Cyril Page: He applied...he applied to ITN for a job, through me.

Alan Lawson: Oh really?

Cyril Page: Yeah, yeah. I said, "You can't stand in the bloody street, Arthur, you know, with a camera up, at your age, and..." He had a good number though...I went down to lunch with him one day...

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: Yes. Errm...yes, so er...Yeah, I hadn't seen him for a while. Of course he was Jimmy Wilson's operator, you know, for a long time, so I knew Arthur quite well...But errm...No, it's er...But I...I think anyone starting, as I said to Roy, "Look, you go and get the tea..." And he started at UMP, United Motion Pictures...

Alan Lawson: Oh yes?

Cyril Page: Yeah, up there. He started there with the tea and all that kind of thing. Er...and then he did quite well up there. Went out with the crew, and carried the bags, made the tea. And then he got a job at Movietone, doing the tea and all that kind of thing...And er. This is true, because I'll... ermm...not Jack Ramsden, I forget the chap at Movietone, the boss... boss back there... in charge of the cameramen. I think the submarine had gone down...the Thesis[?] or something, in the Thames, and all the cameramen were out, because this bloody submarine had gone down and there was nobody...Well, in the...in the camera was a box of old bits and pieces, you see...an old Arriflex evidently, and er... Roy was fiddling about with it. Because Roy had his own 16mm camera. I mean he was... had quite a lot of bits and pieces...and he got this Arriflex and put it all bits and pieces...I think Norman Fisher helped him, gave him bits and pieces. Eventually, he did a bit of work on this and shot the bit of film, bunged it in the labs upstairs into Kays, and it came out. Anyway, he didn't tell anybody about it and just left it in the box, but put it all together. Anyway, this submarine went down or something, or an air crash or something, and there wasn't a camera around about. It's doing their nuts: "Oh, a camera!" and of course they had no 2-way communications... No radio, no telephones to contact the crews, and er...He said er, "Right, soon as...one of the cameramen comes in, send him up to me straight away!" So Roy said, "Well, what's happening?" So he said, "Well, I've got a camera downstairs." "Oh that's no bloody good! That's a load of old rubbish!" he said, "That doesn't work. That's been chucked out." He said, "I've got it working." He said, "What do you mean you've got it..." Anyway, he told him the story. He said, "Well look, you know where to go..." So he told him where to go. He said, "You go down there, and do what you can, and if...if nothing happens..." he said, "I've lost nothing. But as soon as a cameraman comes back, I'll send them down to you," you see. Well, Roy went down there and...and I think it was quite a while before a cameraman turned up to do it. But what Roy did (and it was Ken Henshaw[?] came down. Ken Henshaw[?] [laughing] came down. That's right). And Roy had this old Arriflex, you know, with the motor down below the...[mumbles]

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Lovely old ones, yes...

Cyril Page: And, yeah...and er...and er... Oh, I think it was the Camiflex as well, the old er coffee grinder, and er...Roy shot this stuff, like that. Ken came down, and blah, blah, blah, blah. And um...[Laughing] Sent it back. Went into Kay's, and, getting it in the theatre, and there was Ken...and all that kind of thing, and sat down there... I think it was Jack Ramsden I think it was, I'm not sure. Sat in the theatre, said, "Oh, that's good, yeah. Done well...Ken. Nice stuff" like that. And he said, "I didn't do that. That's Roy shot that." Of course...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: "Roy?" [Laughing] Thought, "Ooh," you know, "Bloody good!" and...he got promoted up to cameraman after that. And that's the start of him actually, you know, ermm...He was still inside, but he went out as a relief on that, and then he never looked back. Yeah. That's how...that's how he got the experience of it. And I says...

Alan Lawson: Are you pleased that he's kind of following on in your shoes?

Cyril Page: Oh yes! Yeah he is. Yes. Yeah.

Alan Lawson: It gives you...gives you a lift, doesn't it?

Cyril Page: Oh, yes. I mean it, yes... It's a rat race, as far as he's concerned. That's why he doesn't mind this travelogue now...But, when I see it now, Alan, I see er...Say, the Queen's birth...er, the Queen Mother's birthday: It used to be nice. We all used to...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...

Cyril Page: ...stand there, gentlemanly like. And not only that, we were all in suits and ties. You know, lounge suits - all dressed respectably. And there was no pushing or shoving, and the Queen got to know you, and she always used to come over, or Queen Mum, and give a little bow and a little, you know, look straight into your eyes, and we respected it, but now you see all these cameramen, pushing and shoving. In Bosnia and all that! - I mean, how many cameramen got killed? But they weren't official cameramen. They go out. They buy a cheap camera, and the chance to give them the story.

Alan Lawson: Mmm...

CP: When the Queen came out to ITN to open up the new building, and we were all presented to her, and I stood there and I don't know who... he introduced me... and said, "Oh, yes, we have met..." and blah blah blah. And afterwards she was up there, eating peanuts and having a cup of tea, and she came round, she said, "I don't see any of the old boys about now I used to see." So I said, "Well, Ma'am, really we're all around but," I said er, "you know, we're all getting old." She said, "Well I went to Covent Garden the other day, to the Opera House. I looked round to see if I saw any of the old boys," she said, "But all I saw were these long-haired boys in jeans," she said, "Not right, is it really?" I said, "Well, Ma'am, you know, I..." [Laughs]

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: What could I say? But "I...I do agree with you." I said, "The Royal...There's no Royal Rota now" And she said, "Oh, isn't there a Royal Rota?" Because there used to be a Royal Rota, you see...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] That's right, yes.

Cyril Page: One year we had it, and the next...next year the BBC had it, and we changed over. And she said....I said, "Well, it's up to you to, you know, to organise it again" and she said, "Oh, I must do that." And Colville, I think, was the...the...

Alan Lawson: Yeah, Colville, yeah...

Cyril Page: Queen's er...yeah...er...but...nothing happened. But now it's a free for all, you know, and I think it's all wrong...And all this...all this pinching pictures of Diana and all that kind, if it was organised properly it wouldn't be all this...and I hate it - chasing after people like that.

Alan Lawson: When...when did you retire?

Cyril Page: Retire?

Alan Lawson: Yeah.

Cyril Page: Er...10 years ago.

Alan Lawson: Really?

Cyril Page: Yep, yep...10 years ago, yeah. I'm seventy-five next...next month, 15th of next month...seventy-six, seventy-six. Born 1920, yeah. Something like that. Yep...yep. [Laughs] Good life, isn't it?! [Laughs again] I don't know how long I shall go on for but I'm all right at the moment. Lovely thought the other day, was on my Golden Wedding and er we having...I entertained all the family. It was only the first time we'd all been together, about sixteen of us; two grandchi...er two grandchildren, two step-grandchildren - That's Roy's wife's second marriage...errm...She's the girl with the gong with errm, you know, The 'Yes or No' Programme. She's in television. The other one's in the film library at somewhere else. They're all in the business...except one who ...Roy er Nigel...he's in Kuwait at the moment in computers, selling er software. And er...we were just having our cup of coffee and Roy got up, amongst us, he said, "What are you doing on Tuesday?" This was Sat...er Sunday, Sunday lunch. "What are you doing on er Monday er Tuesday, Dad, Mum?" and Mum said, "Oh, I don't know. I think I'm playing bowls." My...my wife, Nicky she plays bowls. I don't. I said, "It's an old person's game..."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: "I don't wanna play that" and er...she said " Oh this..." Gave me an envelope and he says, "There's a ticket in it for the two of you to go to Turkey. There's the hotel, and that's a hundred quid for you to spend." So that was the Sunday, and of course she nearly did her nut, she said, "Oh I can't go!" She said, "I've got the bowls..." "Bugger the bowls! - We're going!" So on Tuesday we went to Turkey for a week...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] ...and got back last Tuesday. Oh, very good...like that! Yes, the only decent gift my son's ever given me! [Laughs] I'm sure I've paid for it in one way or another!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: But, nice thought, but errm...No, I don't know, Alan, it...Things come to you which errm...you know? Er...It's like...well um...I mean, AC...AC...well ACTT was in Soho Square. I remember it was ACT. It was George Elvin and all that...And of course then there was Ken...Big Hat Ken of er...

Alan Lawson: [interrupts] Yes...Gordon

Cyril Page: Ken Gordon! Of Pathe News! [Does quick impression of a mumbling voice] [Laughs]. When ITN started, um...after...about two years after we started, I think...oh no, less than that, I think...the Sunday Night Palladium was on, and we made all these contacts, extra contacts, and the contacts I met at the Beeb I wanted to bring over to ITN, so we decided to throw a party again. So I put a notice round all the ITN, and I said, "Look erm...it's a fiver a head, man and wife, a dual ticket and you can drink and eat as much as you like. All right?" So, "Ooh yes!" - all the tickets went. And Charlie Forte, er Lord Forte, who was very nice, and he gave us the Elizabethan Rooms, which were in the corner in Soho Square. Er, free of charge. Didn't charge us at all. And er...I said, "Ok. Well, Lyons are gonna do the catering" [laughs], you see. He said, "Fine. Ok." So anyway. Lord Forte invited me up for lunch, up to his penthouse, in the Caf  Royal. Had a very nice lunch, and he said, "Anything we can do..." he said, "The staff are free. They'll look after you. They'll do all the waitering, everything, providing you provide taxis home." I said, "No problem about that." Anyway, we threw a party. Er, once again, Smiths of Cricklewood gave us presents to give away, lot of people did, and all the booze we got for nothing. Lyons did the catering, but er...and all the booze was lovely. But ITN, well, it wasn't like the BBC. The boys all came in you see, and they were taking trays up to the bar, just a husband and wife, and saying, "Right, I'll have six scotches and six gins," you see. Getting their money's worth! And I thought...you know, I didn't know all this. And they sat down there and they had all this gin and...And when the party had finished, the amount of stuff that was left in glasses was unbelievable. You know, they were...gutted. So anyway, when we... I organised the party, so I thought well, "We'd better have someone to do the raffle." Well, Bruce Forsyth was doing the Sunday Night Palladium. I didn't know him from Adam. So I just rang up the Palladium and I said, "When is Mr Forsyth going to be there?" "Sunday night" I said, "Well, if I drop a letter round the stage door, could you possibly give it to him?" He said, "Yeah, ok. Fine" Anyway, I wrote this letter... "Dear Mr Forsyth..." said who we are, "ITN Television...and we are doing our...our 1st Birthday..." first year, that was it, first birthday, "And we'd like you to come along to do the draw for charity for our, you know, our tickets." Anyway, he rang me up at ITN and said, "I'd be delighted! I'd be delighted!" he said, "But I am working, " he said, "I won't be able to get along till about eleven o'clock. Er, will that be all right?" I said, "Yeah. That's fine." Told him where it was. I said, "We'll send you a car for you." Anyway, sent him a car and he came in and I hadn't met him at all. Met him at the door. He said, "Oh, terribly sorry to be late!" he said, "I couldn't bring the wife. She got stuck in a tram car! But I brought the..." you know...brought...It was Ag...Antha...or whatever her name was, the girl he first married...and this was his bit of crumpet, you see!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] Old Bruce, you see! And of course he came up and he did his squeal, you know, did a bit of a laugh for us, and did all the draw. And it was the first bloke we ever sort of er...got to do our draw for us at ITN. And then I did about two parties after that, and I thought, "Oh, the new order, but nobody wanted to take it on after that. It was a bit of a hassle. There was...A lot of work goes into it.

Alan Lawson: Well, this is...Yes, with this one always finds...

Cyril Page: That's it, yeah. But we had a...that was the start of our...our party at ITN, and of course good contacts again we had.

Alan Lawson: Mmm.

Cyril Page: But er...Well, where it leads to now, Alan, I just don't know, but I think we had the best years, I think...

Alan Lawson: Yes, I think so...

Cyril Page: Definitely the best years...

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...It's very rough out there.

Cyril Page: Yep, yep.

Alan Lawson: Very rough.

Cyril Page: I think they, the chaps on the road now, they earn their keep and er... I think, the older ones... They could still learn off the older boys, I think technical wise. It's nothing in...So much is done for you - Just to press a button. Er, ITN sent us all down to the Bromley School, to be taught... video cameras. Now this is the funny part about ITN. We were all sent down to the college, Ravensbrook College, near Bromley, Kent. Well, it was on my doorstep, so it was a doddle. Got to be there at ten, and we finished at four... to be taught the art of filming in video... on cameras. And we couldn't understand this. I forget how many hundreds of pounds it cost each person. Anyway, we went into this classroom and this guy was saying...oh, you know, "Welcome..." here, there and everywhere, and blah, blah, blah, "We're gonna do this" and we were taken into a room and there was a dummy laying on the floor, and we stood there. He said, "The first thing, in television is to learn the First Aid and... in case you get electrocuted...And there was about five cameramen. We all looked at each other: "Electrocuted?! What the bloody hell's he talking about?!" He said, "Well, of course a lot of stuff doesn't come with 13 amp plugs on. If you have to put 13 amp plugs on and got wet hands and," he said, "you may electrocute..." [Whispers] "What the fucking hell's he talking about?!" He said, "Now you're all gonna give the Kiss of Life..."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: There was this dummy down there you see, and they said, "Right. Now you've gotta [makes breathing out noise] 'oof' like that, and open the mouth, and breathe like that..." and of course the first bloke came... [laughs] and you can imagine the comments! - There was a load of cameramen who'd been round the world... and of course the first bloke got down and started to breathe, and another bloke said, "I don't wanna get down and kiss her - I don't know where he's been with his mouth!" you see. [laughs]...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: you know...that was the start of this session! And then er...it went through, and we just er... you know, we were taking the Mickey out of this guy. Poor bloke who was the teacher! And what we should do and all that...He said, "Now, tomorrow, we shall have a camera" and he said, "Well, perhaps one of you chaps could, on the way through, pick one up from ITN?" We said, "Well, we are from ITN!" "Oh, I see. Well, ok. Well, if you could pick one up..."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Anyway he said, "Well, what do you mean? What are we here for?" He said, "Well, we've gotta do this, gotta do the optics, gotta do this and..." Anyway, I forget who picked it up. He called in at ITN in Kingsway to pick up his own camera to be taught how to use it... in this school!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: We just couldn't understand this! And he was talking about this... about how to dismantle this tape... how to take the tube out, and any of the spare parts, and all that kind of thing. So he said, "Right. You're in the middle of the desert, Sinai Desert, filming, and it goes wrong, electronically. "Ah!" he said, "Therefore in your kit, you must have a soldering iron, and you'll have this, that and the other..." I said, "Right. Soldering iron. What do you plug it in a camel or something?" He said, "No." "Or stick it up his arse or something?" "No, no. You run it off a 12 volt battery." "Oh I see. That's good," I said, "And suppose you want a spare part?" "Ah! That's different. If you haven't got a spare part which is broken down," he said, "you'll have to get back to the office and ask them to ship one over." I said "You're in the middle of the Sinai Desert! What do you do? Get your flags?!" and like that. "It is difficult, but you'd have to go back to the nearest, you know, nearest town." I said, "That's two hundred miles away. How do you get it sent...?" And that's how it went on! That lasted, I think, five weeks...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] Then ITN jacked it in. It was a Mickey-taking thing! And this poor bloke! And ITN paid Ravensbrook College something...hundreds of pounds, thousands of pounds to do...I don't know who organised it. Nobody's ever seemed to know. But we all had to go down. It was a doddle for a week. I mean, a whole week we were down there! Every morning and afternoon! Yeah. I mean [laughs]... that was the sort of thing that happened! I didn't mind but... It was a good laugh!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: But, you know, when they said, "Well, you..." you know...I mean, in the field, you know, with a film camera, you can usually go do something with a pair of pliers and, you know, if you get a sprocket torn or, you know...get a pair of pliers on the gate and, you know, or...do something. I mean, it normally sort of...

Alan Lawson: Unless of course [laughing] it's the Newman's spring goes!

Cyril Page: Yeah, well, well, that's...that's the...No, you know, if you've got a spare one but I...touch wood! Er...I...I don't think I've ever had a spring go on a Newman.

Alan Lawson: No.

Cyril Page: I must say that was a marvellous old chaffing box, it was really. And when you used to take that off that burner, in the back of the car, back of the jeep in Korea, I mean, the bottom was red-hot on...on charcoal. I used to have these thick gloves and then hold it like that... Oh...Yeah, David Samuelson, he always held his like that, you see. He never used the strap at the top, but I did, I used to take the weight. And I used to put my hands underneath, "Oh, it's lovely and warm...Hold that. Right. Lovely. Beautiful it was."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: But if...Without that...without that burner, I couldn't have worked...

Alan Lawson: No.

Cyril Page: But the old Newman, I mean, it was absolutely a superb camera. I think it was 721, I remember I had. I think it's in the museum, so somebody said, Samuelson said.

Alan Lawson: What, what...in MOMI?

Cyril Page: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I haven't...haven't been over there and seen that exhibition.

Alan Lawson: Oh, you should actually.

Cyril Page: Yeah, I should go over there. Yeah. But er...No I er...As I say, I er...I regret getting old, because I like to do a lot of things again. I do really, I um...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs]

Alan Lawson: Well, dye your hair! [Laughs]

Cyril Page: Dye you hair?

Alan Lawson: [Laughing] Dye your hair black, and start again!

Cyril Page: [Laughs] No...No...What I do now...I do Father Christmases! [Laughs] With my white hair, you see!

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: No. I do charity now, I work in a local theatre. I do the Front of House for the Stag Theatre is er, the only theatre we've got converted Odeon Cinema in Sevenoaks, and I do Front of House, and I do carpentry for the scenery. Er...then I do the Guide Dogs. I'm a great believer in the Guide Dogs.

Alan Lawson: Yes, yeah.

Cyril Page: Er, except for when they published the paper they'd got ♦169 million pound in the kitty which upset me immensely, so I've come off the committee. I didn't do that. So I do Lifeboat instead. I do the Lifeboat.

Alan Lawson: Mmm hmm.

Cyril Page: So, I collect er for that. I do the Christmas Draw, and also the Draw for the Veterans, selling their raffle tickets every year. I think when you retire...I mean, I don't feel seventy five, seventy six. I really don't feel like it. I mean, people say, "You wanna ease up a bit, you know. You'll kill your bloody self! Have a heart attack!" It's just in me. I can't...you know. I just can't ease up. And I've got to do something, I couldn't sit...I spoke to a couple of blokes from ITN, poor old Alan Downs who died the other week, I mean, I trained him at ITN. He came there as a tea boy, and he used to come out with us. I'd say, "Alan, you do this, and do that." Errm, you know, and when we weren't working, I used to take another camera out. I'd say, "Right. You put that one up and shoot alongside me, and we'll, you know, compare." I taught him. He's 58 years of age. He died the other week, you know, with a brain haemorrhage. Poor old Alan! And the blokes I see now, ...BBC and ITN, when we do get together, occasionally, not very often, I say, "What do you do?" "Oh, you know, I get up in the morning and read the papers" he said, "And then have a cup of tea and have breakfast," he said, "And then I go down to Sainsburys with the old girl and I push the...push the barrow round and er, you know. And then we have a snort in the pub on the way back, you know. Have lunch, and then have a bit of a kip, another cup of tea." He said, "Have something to eat. Then we go down the pub of a night-time and have a game of darts." I said, "Yeah, that's all right Monday. What do you do Tuesday, Wednesday...?" "Well, we push the trolley round...Tesco's and..."

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: "and then that..." He said, "Then we go to Asda, and then we go to this..," He said, "Then we have a drink..." I said...He said, "What do you do?" I said, "Well, I work in a theatre, or I do a bit of..." "Oh, bummer that, for a lark, you know..." I said, "Well, you know, it keeps me occupied."

Alan Lawson: Yeah. It's the same with me, yeah.

Cyril Page: Yeah. And there they are. They're, you know...They look ten times older than I do. How do you keep...I mean, we meet every month, you know, ITN in the pub, just behind Selfridges...

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: all the old com...Errm...But it's...we're upstairs for nothing. All right, they do quite well on the drink and the food up there, but we all meet...the first Monday in each month. Just a...just a get together for a couple of hours, that's all. And we all compare...Someone says, "Oh, I've been on the holiday so-and-so..." "What's it like?" "Good" and, you know...it's a chat. It's the only...the only communication I have now...with anybody. I like to go up to Alexandra Palace on this yearly thing when they have a reunion of the old er... Sylvia Peters, Mary Malcolm, and...all that...you know.

Alan Lawson: Yes. They did have one last year.

Cyril Page: Last year, that's...well I...

Alan Lawson: It was very good.

Cyril Page: Yes.

Alan Lawson: All kinds of people appeared.

Cyril Page: Yes, yes. I like to...sort of er...go up there and see them, because we had a lot of fun up at the...with those people.

Alan Lawson: So...

Cyril Page: I can always remember we did a, when I was at the BBC, er...[laughs] we had to go and do er Gilby's gin at the other side of Regents Park somewhere, er...Smirnoff...the launching of Smirnoff Vodka...and er...we had to do some...I don't know...the BBC had some connection with it, and we had to go...and the BBC had a table. They gave us a table purely for the BBC people that were there, radio and television. And we all sat down at this round table. It was the first time I met Gilbert Harding...and he was there, and he was half pickled, you see, and I hadn't...I had only seen him on 'What's My Line?' which we had filmed...sometimes on film. I don't know whether you knew that but sometimes we had to do it on film because there wasn't an OB camera or a camera available up in the studio. And er...Yes, Steve McCormack I think it was that was...

Alan Lawson: That's right.

Cyril Page: That's right...And er...Anyway, Gilbert Harding was there and er [CP does an impression of Harding] "Who are you? Who are you?" and I said I was Cyril Page, "Oh you're a cameraman are you? Oh yeah..." I thought, "Oh you miserable old sod!" you know, I thought to myself, and I said, "Why are you so rude to people on 'What's My Line?'" I said, "You're awfully rude at times when people come up as guests on it." He said, "Did you ever hear of Gilbert Harding before I was bloody rude on 'What's My Line?'" I said, "No, Sir." He said, "Well, that's my bloody trademark! Right?"

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: And that was it! [Laughing] That was all I said to Gilbert Harding. So...and that was it. I thought. "Oh, I hope I don't say any more!" [laughs].

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: But then we...then we did another session with Eric Robinson, do you remember, the band leader?

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes, yes...

Cyril Page: And we used to have to cut the disc...That's where we had the old iron...er the old Vinten camera with the old big...big er blimp.

Alan Lawson: The Everest!

Cyril Page: Yeah, yeah. And then we used to cut the disc on a wir...on a wax, and all the...all the ...thing used to come up. On sound, we...because it was a silent camera, you have used to have to match it.

Alan Lawson: Good Lord! Good Lord!

Cyril Page: Yep, yep, yep. Yeah, I remember that. And...I can't think of either of the names the recordists had. Yeah, that's right, we had this big Everest and we had this...on this tripod...we had all the orchestra with Eric Robinson playing, and we were cutting it on the disc, with this...this thing. We had to keep on having a brush to wipe off the...

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...

Cyril Page: The wax cuttings. Yeah, yeah...[Laughs] All the things that...We didn't mind working. We had no hours as you know. I mean, we used to come in, say, nine o'clock, and everyone was there, and then...used to say, "Oh well, six o'clock. Anything to do?" "No. Oh, can you hang on for another half an hour?" But it wasn't a question of a half an hour's overtime! And it wasn't a question, "Oh, I've stayed till seven, I'll come in an hour late tomorrow. We all turned up, you know. It was all...And another thing, Alan is, er though...Not padding myself...but I always turned up in a suit...and I always had a black tie in my locker, because you never knew when you came in of a morning what stories you were going to cover.

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: And I always think if you went to a funeral, you put a black tie on, as a mark of respect. And you always wore a suit because you didn't know whether you were going to Buckingham Palace. But I had a pair of overalls and a pair of dirty trousers in my locker, and when I used to start work on the Monday or on the shift, which we did work on the shift, I used to have a...like a holdall in the car, with a pair of wellies and a dirty shirt and a pair of thick gloves, cos you may need it wherever you go. You never know whether you're gonna walk

through a ploughed field or what. So you always had to be prepared, but I always, as a mark of respect I think, you always wore something to the type of story you were going on, I think.

Alan Lawson: Now hold it.

[End of Tape 2, Side 4.] [Tape 3, Side 5].

Alan Lawson: "Cyril Page. Side 5. Part of the, if you like, the change of atmosphere has come through between, you know, the early days of television newsreels, ITN or BBC television newsreels. Can you compare it with what is...you know, what was actually going on just before you left? Could you...Was there much difference, do you think, between ITN and BBC? Or wouldn't you know?"

Cyril Page: Not... I don't think so, no. I think BBC worked on very similar lines to ITN. Now I think there's a lot more co-operation between the two now than what there was in the early days...the type of stories which are covered...I think there's a lot of co-operation, and...I think there's very little difference. Actually, really, quite honestly, since the day ITN started...We started about Vox Pops in the street, this...interviews and all that kind of thing...that was it...I mean, we did actually, we did Vox Pops...I've got pictures, still pictures, of myself outside the Mary Lloyd pub in Fleet Street interviewing people with the old Vinten camera on a tripod. I mean, we couldn't walk round with it. It had to be on a tripod, so we brought the people to us, but that was Vox Pops. I mean, that was on 35mm. So, really, ITN was not...not the start of Vox Pops, it was the BBC. But erm...that...that got in...you know, running after people with microphones now and ...the difference in type of equipment with the different types of stories you cover. I mean, you see these chaps now, running alongside with a microphone on the end of bloody great big Pogo/Poco[?] stick, with a big tube hanging down. Well that never happened in our day. So, things have got much more ahead and I think, not only us, but BBC do it. You know, it's all the same the pattern now. It doesn't matter whether it's outside the White House or whether it's outside 10 Downing Street, it's all the same format now. I don't think anyone has come up with some glorified idea...I think eventually the cameraman will have an aerial stuck up his backside, and up in the air, and it will be going live back with a little portable thing like a little Box Brownie. It's gotta come.

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: I mean, the video cameras are getting smaller and smaller and smaller now. So, you don't even...maybe just bounce it off the satellite straight in...

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: And they'll be recording at the other end, just like that, but with very small equipment. You gotta remember that the larger the equipment is, the more hindered you are by running around with it, but the smaller...you know...

Alan Lawson: Yes, but er surely there is a...there must be a minimum weight before it becomes very unsteady?

Cyril Page: [Pauses] Well [sighs]...when you say "unsteady," it's very hard to decipher what you mean by "unsteady," because once you get a bit of equipment, you...you get so used to it er... You don't see cameramen walking around with a Pocol[?] stick...with a belt round there with a Pocol[?]stick...

Alan Lawson: No...

Cyril Page: It's all hand-held stuff.

Alan Lawson: Yeah.

Cyril Page: Errm...

Alan Lawson: Or with Steadycams, yeah.

Cyril Page: Yeah. That's right, the Steadycam, but the size of the Steadycam is very large...I mean, it sticks out a mile. Well you...you couldn't imagine about ten newsreel cameramen stuck outside Downing Street with those things... I mean, it would all get in the way when they turned round, or fight and push and shove. I mean, in Belfast, do you think you could run down the road with it, like that...? I mean, you know... It's very difficult. It's got to come - that you'll find things will get smaller. I mean, the Steadycam is a fantastic thing... but you'll find, you know, someone will come out with a bright idea that, you know...There'll be a bubble on the end of a stick down there, like a giro and, you know, you'll be able to balance it on there.

Alan Lawson: Did you ever use the Steadycam?

Cyril Page: No, no, no...Wish to God I had've done, I mean, at times...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: 'Specially being at sea or something like that. Be marvellous. Oh, no, no, they weren't I mean Steadycam's only been in, what, four...last four or five years.

Alan Lawson: Yes, well, they've been around I think a bit longer than that. Still, yes...

Cyril Page: Do they? Ah...well I've, you know, been out of touch with it, but er...no, no. No, that was a...But it was the weight of the equipment. I mean, as you got older the equipment got lighter which was marvellous, the all of sudden video came in and bang! - we were back where we started from, you see. So really um...No, I don't think there's a lot. But the change from one to the other, from BBC to ITN, it's very little these days...you know, difference. It's just a question of who gets there first. And not only that, it's not a question of "You're going off tomorrow to er...Indianapolis," or something like that, and "Take two days." "You're going off and you'll be there in the afternoon."

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: You know, that's...that's...

Alan Lawson: The other thing I wanted to ask you is erm...Did you ever go out with just the zoom on?

Cyril Page: Oh yes. Oh yes....Yes, the CP16 only had the zoom on.

Alan Lawson: It did?

Cyril Page: Oh yes, just the one zoom. Yes, yeah, yeah. Yes, just the one lens.

Alan Lawson: Yeah, but I mean, very light.

Cyril Page: Oh yeah. Well, yeah, but er...I mean, they got them right down...I forget what the focal length of half of them were now. I forget...170, 230, something like that, but they were very good. No, they...the CP16 was a Godsend. It was a fantastic camera.

Alan Lawson: Because I can remember the first erm...zooms, you know, which was the Cookvario[?] which were...

Cyril Page: Oh, Cook...those...yes...

Alan Lawson: ... weighed a ton... and they went... you know, even its most wide open was about f16 [laughs].

Cyril Page: Yes, that's right. [Laughs] True, yes. Yeah, that's right. Yes, yes...

Alan Lawson: Yes, yes...And stuck on the...Well, the camera was stuck on the end of the lens [laughs].

Cyril Page: Yeah, yeah... We had one in the Navy, an old Vinten Visatone thing, and we were doing the rockets going up, and the Commander, who was looking after us, he wanted the camera put behind the rockets...High speed camera, I think it was a thousand frames a second, is what we were running... and Gordon Dines and Paul Beeson and myself, we were down at Portland, doing these rocket projectiles. Commander [indecipherable??] insisted that we have the camera behind the rockets, you see, because they went up like that and they banged each other, and instead of hitting the aircraft it's...all over the place. And we told him, we said it was no good, they were too near, because the blast would blow...and he said [mutters and scoffs] "...put it there, anchor it down and...lump of rope and a lump of rock down here..." Anyway, we all stood back and they fired the rocket, and the camera went right in the oggin! [Laughing] Yeah.

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughs] That's the Vinton Visatone gone for a Burton. Straight in Portland harbour! But er...

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: We do see life! [Laughs] This Is Your Life! Yeah. I...I can't think of anything...I...Another good thing, we used to...do the channel swim and...Billy Butlin used to...we'd go on his boat, and we used to row across the channel, with all the newsreel...half of 'em were sick, and we used to fish all the way across, you know, and...Fred Upton used to be the Coxcomb of the Lifeboat at er Deal and we always used to have him there to...row us across and...That was a party! - Can you imagine about ten newsreel cameramen, all in one boat, and one bloke rowing...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: You can just imagine the...filth and the dirty stories that used to be told and the snoring and...someone wanting to go to the toilet and...Another thing was the...the er...when we did the Cup Final...I say, here's a story...um...the Cup Final, years ago, at the BBC...

Alan Lawson: Yes...

Cyril Page: We had a...used to go right to the top of the stand...er, just underneath the roof...

Alan Lawson: Was this pirating?

Cyril Page: Pardon?

Alan Lawson: Were you pirating?

Cyril Page: Oh no, no. Not pirating. No, no, no, no, no...This...That was before. Er...No, that was before the BBC actually, the pirating, really...And we used to be...er, put this terrific ladder...You used to bounce up and down getting the equipment up. You used to have to take the equipment up by pulley, and all the cases, and they were just planks, held up by four rods, two rods at each end, from the roof, like that, and the planks, and no backing at all. We used to have to sit on the camera case and put a low level tripod up, and...that was it. We had...When we covered the Cup Final...no OBs at all, we used to have to do it on film. So there were two er...thousand foot cameras up on the top, and two hand-cameras down by each goal. So...the year that I was at...or one year...particularly - the time this happened...I had Alan Prentice, who was a cameraman. He was a...he was an ardent football bloke. You know, this kind of thing...

Alan Lawson: Yes.

Cyril Page: And er...We used to say "Right..." when you got up to...a thousand foot magazine...when you got up to about 970, you used to look at the old betacounter coming up, you know, and then tap him, give him a knock and say, "Ok, Alan" like that, and he used to switch on, so you got about 30ft over, like. Well, old Alan used to sit there and look at the match, you see. He bunged a magazine on, like that, and he used to sit and watch, and "Oh! Go on! Go on! For Christ's sake!" you see, and I'm doing this and I look at the old betacounter and say, "Right. Ok, Alan" Bang! like that. And I switched off this time. The football match had started

and er... well prior to that, of course we used to have to get in about ten o'clock for the start at three, so it was a long time up that...up that thing... Well, all the boys had been in the pub, and they'd all had about ten pints of beer and they all wanted to go to the toilet. Well, we used to have a big...er, not a jerry can, but a big er...five gallon oil drum at the end, with a funnel...

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: So, if anybody wanted to have a leak, they used to sort of go on their knees and just...lean over the top and have a wee in this thing, you see. Well, after about five of them had been [laughs] in this thing...it used to be full up! [Laughing]

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: And it used to be overflowing! Well, of course, if you're breaking your neck half-time, you gotta, you know... You didn't have a leak while you were working. You used to have to crawl up there. And of course it all went...and of course it used to go down below, through the wood, which was...And of course the blokes down below thought the roof was leaking! [Laughs] But it was the newsreel pee coming down from the top! [Laughs]

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughing] So, of course that was that. That was one episode. And then, I was doing this panning backwards and forwards with a board, you see. I came up with 970 and I touched old Alan and I said, "Right, Alan!" and I switched off. Took the magazine off. Put another one...And I sat back there watching the match, and old Alan was going, "Go on!" like that. I said, "Alan! I nudged you!" "Oh! Did you? Oh! I forgot all about it!" [Laughs] And we lost about...Oh, about three hundred feet of the Cup Final...But luckily, all the play was up one end, the goal, so of course the silent bloke up the other end, he covered for us! So, if ever you want to cover a story properly...send a bloke who knows nothing about it, because he'll cover it from arsehole to breakfast time... so he won't miss anything! [Laughs].

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: [Laughing] You see...So, that's the only way to do it! So, Alan never forgave...you know...Nothing...nothing was ever said, you know. And when we got back, nobody said anything...Nobody, nobody

Alan Lawson: Nobody noticed it! [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Nobody noticed there was about six hundred feet missing of the Cup Final!

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Oh dear! The funny things come in your mind at times...They come...

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Of there's the lovely story of er... Well, perhaps you know it already...of er...Ken Hanshaw covering the submarine that went down in the Thames. You know that story, do you? Is it Paul Wyand? Paul Wyand was a very good cameraman with Movietone News...

Alan Lawson: Oh yes? No, I don't know...

Cyril Page: Well, you know the story. Well, this submarine was sticking out of the Thames, so everybody had to hire a boat to get out to... Because you couldn't do it from the shore, except with a long lens, because you had to get, you know, close-ups. So Ken went down and er... This is a true story, see... Er, Jack Adams, that's right... Jack Adams, the Producer... and um... Ken had to get... hire a boat out to... get a motorboat to go out to, you know... to do the shots. So of course there was Pathe, Movietone, Universal, Paramount, all the... all these boats going round, you see, and old Ken hired a boat and went out there. And er... Came back to Movietone. Put it in. Saw it in the rushes. "Absolutely fantastic. Very good stuff, Ken." Well, old Jack Adams, he went to the ABC Cinema to see what Pathe and Gaumonts had er... what their stuff was like, you see. So watching this submarine, you see, and all of a sudden in the foreground was a bloke going past, in a rowing boat, you see. And old Ken Hanshaw up the front there with his Newman Sinclair, filming. He thought, "Bloody rowing boat!"

Alan Lawson: [Laughs]

Cyril Page: And he got back and he looked at his expenses: "Hire of motorboat to go out to the submarine... twenty..." twenty odd quid, you see. So, he called Ken in the next day and said, "Oh, Ken, your stuff on [thingmy], was very, very good" he said, "By the way," he said, "er, your expenses..." he said, "You put down twenty pounds for hire of a motorboat on the Thames for so-and-so and so-and-so..." He said, "Is that right?" He said "Yeah, that's right." He said, "But I saw you." He said, "I went to the cinema and saw it on Pathe News." He said, "And you went in the foreground." He said, "You were in a bloody rowing boat! Rowing across... You weren't rowing but you were... a bloke was rowing you..." "Oh yes! That's right..." He said, "I had to hire the rowing boat to get out to the motorboat because the draft was too short so I... That's another fiver. I forgot to put that down!" So... [laughs]

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: So that was... [laughing] Oh!... If you want a good book to read, you wanna read Paul Wyand. It's a paperback called 'Useless of Delayed', and then Ronnie Noble wrote one, 'Shoot First!' - that's two books that... you know... you get to know all the er, the er...

Alan Lawson: Well, that's rather like er 'Tip for Man With Ladder' isn't it?

Cyril Page: That's right, or 'Tip for Cable... [laughs] For Carrying Electricity' [laughs] or 'Left Out Your Screwdriver' [?] you know, "Get me a packet of that..." Another thing, I was at the studio... I was always sent off for... Oh, another things is er, when I first started, the second day I was there er... of course I turned up in shoes and all that, and I had to put rubber shoes on, squeaking round the studio floor, and I used to have to... The first thing I had to do when I got there, the old Debrie dolly, the crab that used to have three arms, and you steered it with a thing

like that, and I had to polish that with Cherry Blossom boot polish. The dolly that was, that crab. I used to have to polish that, and I used to have to do the cameraman's shoes, brown or black, up in the camera room. And...that was...It was only to put the cameraman's feet on, er but...and it all got scratched...but I had to polish it every day. And then, when we'd finished, we used to have to put the old Super-Parvo in this big brown box and lug it up, and it took two of you to take it up to...up to the camera room. And I got up there, and all of a sudden about five blokes came in. And I don't know, they were...chippy, and a painter, and all that kind of thing...and stripped me completely, and got hold of my, [laughs] my old John Willy and held it up...[laughs] I was only small...and they painted it red, white and blue. [Laughs] And I was crying me eyes out. I was only...I was only fifteen years of age. I was crying me eyes out. And there was me little dickie standing out there, like a...[laughs] like a wart in a desert, and all painted...Of course it was only water-colour. I didn't know, I thought it was real paint.

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

CP: And er...they left me there. And not only that, the last bloke to go out got a handful of car grease and flopped it on the top and it looked like St Paul's Cathedral stuck up in the middle of a mud-bank! And there it was!

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing]

Cyril Page: And, oh God, I cried me eyes out! And of course I had to go home...and it was all round me trousers, all down. I was in a hell of a mess, and eventually, I got to the toilet somehow and I wiped it all off. I couldn't wash it off because there was this handful of...car grease it was, all flopped like that like a load of jelly, and I had to scoop it off, all round me...things....and um...I got...got it all cleaned up, and I went home, and I got some paraffin to get all this stuff off, this grease, and mum sat there, we were sitting down having a meal, and she [sniffs]...she started to smell...She said, "Cor, can you smell paraffin or petrol?" I said, "Yeah, I've had it all round me dickie," you see, like that, and of course [laughs] that was my initiation into the film business! [Laughing].

Alan Lawson: [Laughing]

Cyril Page: Oh, God Almighty! [Laughs] Gotta laugh, haven't you?!

Alan Lawson: Oh...[Still laughing]...I think [Unable to stop laughing] A good note to finish on there !

Cyril Page: [Laughs] Oh well, I wish everyone a merry Christmas. Still alive...you know. Give me a call anytime you want wedding done...[laughs].

Alan Lawson: [Still laughing] Thank you, Cyril!

END OF INTERVIEW