

Timecode 01:33:14:23 to 02:20:13:09

Interviewer

Ozzie Morris side three of them. Now Cine Guild is a name to be conjured with and try and tell us about your. Tell us about the first part of your Cine Guild experience.

OSSIE MORRIS

Let me just explain Cine Guild was part of what we called independent producers there was the archer's which was the mickey powell Emeric Pressburger group there was Cine Guild which was the Noel Coward . David Lean Ronnie Neame Tony Havelock Ellis group and there was one other and I can't think of it which was Frank independent though Frank Launder in the individual individual pictures I think they were the other ones and then later Ian Dow or import joined but I mean at that time it was the three I was contracted Chris Challis and I believe I've been corrected Chris was in the Air Force not the Navy I thought it was there I thought he was the Navy.

SPEAKER: M5

And the three of us were contracted to operate for these companies. I work for Cine Guild and Chris work for the Archers and. Ernie was sort of a flow between both of us. We are the first picture open studios after the war. Pinewood Studios the actual studios store it should go in one of the stages I think and they stored also these deadly Albermarles on their noses. In one of the stage without the wings because of wooden round the outside if it wasn't kept a constant term through autumn and fell apart and I could understand why and I believe they were stored on their noses

there in the main offices of wired or were away from the main studio and I think the Prudential of one of the insurance companies have the offices.

Anyway we opened up the studio with a picture called Green for Danger directed by a. Sydney Gilliat and photograph by Wilkie Cooper with Alistair Sim Starring in it and Leo Genn as well but that was my first film. After that. When I came Captain Boycott which was Frank Launder's film in Ireland and during that time very.

A. During that time. You know let me think we know we did. We did. We finished Captain Boycott and You. Know David Lean had.

We simply know there was another film star to call Blanch Fury? and. The Guy Greene was photographing that Ernie Stewart was going to operate and in fact did start and they had a terrible accident. It was a street strick camera was on a crane and they had a breakaway set. The idea was that the camera was going to track through the window of us set into a room. Now they couldn't get the blimp through the window. So what happened was once the outside frame of the window was out of the frame of the camera they were going pull the front of the set. Aside so the camera crew go on the crane through the room. Well the timing had to be very accurate and. We haven't got very good equipment of those days the cranes were primitive and cut a long story short the timing went wrong and they didn't get the section of wall pulled away quickly enough and the Technicolour blimp hit the wall and snapped the whole blimp in-camera. Off the crane and that threw the crane hopelessly out of balance because we didn't

have any safety systems in those days as they do now in modern cranes as an automatic safety lock if the balance goes the crane locks and thus they didn't have and the crane the man operating the crane had all the weight of the back he couldn't help it they drive down and it catapulted Ernie and he went right up to the studio did about three or four somersaults and came down and was badly injured I mean hurt his fingers broke his fingers and was pretty badly hurt. And. He went to hospital. And I was free I'd finished Captain Boycott and I was told to take the film over because they abandoned that set and went on with something else they had to keep shooting at artists under contract and that was my introduction to operating a three strip camera I've never even seen three strip camera before that and it was working with handles so I never worked with before and they are an. Eight o'clock in the morning plunged onto us set with. With a three strip camera. But luckily I did know a Guy Green and you Guy Green because I didn't mean to say that when I left the BIP way back in 1933 the assistant that was taken came on to replace me was in fact Guy Green and that was the first time and I didn't meet him again until.

This accident after the after the war when I was operating a Pinewood I carried on and I did the whole of Blanche Fury operating then David Lean started Oliver Twist. I think I got the order right. I'm not sure about that. It's Either way round or the other way round and I operated for David on Oliver Twist again with Guy Green and then on a film called Passionate Friends with

Guy Green. That's when David met Ann Todd I don't know whether. I. Well it's history now. I suppose one can record. David was married to Kay Walsh. Kay Walsh had been played the part of Nancy in Oliver and David was now directing Passionate Friends and struck up a very. Strong relationship with Ann Todd. Kay got to know. Used to come onto the set and asked me a lot of questions about what was going on. All very embarrassing because I think I didn't want to be involved. Sadly after that. David & Kay a were divorced David married Ann Todd.

That happened during the 1948 during the making of Passionate Friends that all started out.

I did one more thing John Paddy Carstairs who was a bit of a joke as a director. Occasionally because we were we were under contract had to do that we were just assigned to and I have to do this Jeff Unson? was photographing and I did this film for John Paddy Carstairs and then after that Ronnie Neame would I like to photograph a film Saw This Is Us. Yes I love to photograph. Gonna do a film called Golden Salamander

And you can photograph it or charge was it QUESTION before you go on to your career as an lighting cameraman or you know talk about a lot of the art and craft of the operator.

OSSIE MORRIS

Yes. The the there were two erm Two types of camera which vitally affect the craft of operating. There was a direct look through camera which was that of a De Brie camera which is the camera I used during. before the war and there was the

Mitchell camera with a side view finder which had a totally different concept which I was plunged into at the end. After the war. Now I have to tell you that when I came out of the war and went straight to Green for Danger I never operated with an Mitchell camera with an outside view finder in my life before and I had to quickly get the knack of it and it was terrifying trying to learn it because.

It was a Brady? blimped Mitchell make sure we had the blip that overlap and the viewfinder must have been a foot away from the lens so the parallax problem was crucial and very critical and I can remember. Many shots on Green for Danger as Sydney Gilliat was not the world's most creative man when it came to set ups and the masses of shots of the four people together. Panning one person from a door making it five people and I had to pan from the door on to these groups and I had to line the camera car remember if I had all of five people in the camera correctly I only had three and a half of them in the viewfinder. And I have to work out where the crossed lines was and it was most peculiar looking through view finder with only three and a half people in it and knowing that in the camera you've got five. And every time a shot was finished we always used to shout hold it hold it. And we quickly opened the view for the blimp swing the camera over and checked and we got the fire going. So there was a. Vast difference in concept between those two cameras. The Mitch the De Brie ruined your eyes very good. Compositions. The Mitchell was good for your eye it was terribly

difficult. Getting compositions in the viewfinder and you have to adopt a whole different approach you you have to forget that you were really looking at three and a half people in the viewfinder. You have to make your brain realise you've got five people in there. Although you've only got three and a half and it really was quiet tricky in quiet difficult. One.

we didn't have a crowd galas? in those days so you were a bit limited as to what you could do we can remove and all you could do was track forwards and backwards in a straight line. We had the old Velosolate ? dollies We didn't have geared heads So you had to hold this under your arm and the blimp was very top heavy if you tipped it forward it became very heavy and the directors in those days were so fond of dstarting in inserts desk on pulling back and it took you all of the time in the world to yank this thing up from the insert and there again the parralax were as you say if you've got the viewfinder set for the group in the back. Then on the insert you probably know the insert in the in the viewfinder at all big. It wouldn't work. Yes simply the Parallax was too great. So probably if we was saying using an insert of this ashtray I get it lined up in the camera. I looked through the viewfinder and that probably centred on that cut of this microphone but I didn't I knew that in the camera that was on I'm looking at the microphone in the view I knew that the camera was looking at the at the ashtray and then when I slowly pulled up. Then I had to get the group into the viewfinder all right and it was okay. I mean it really

was all next. It was a crazy way of doing it but that was the only way there was no moon and when the BNC came out they got the viewfinder much near the lens of the parallax. It's less acute. But.

I'm. In the old NC days the viewfinder was so far away from the lens that it really was quite a problem. But David. Lean was the fussiest director. And has always been the fussiest director when it comes to camera movement. The look of the lighting and I have to be absolutely spot on with David every time. He would not allow any correction on any movement I mean the list if you didn't hit it first time I had to cut the shot and he would do it again if I let it go and he saw the rushes that I crept a little bit. He retake it and. I would have been on the film. I mean you know you wouldn't allow that thought you could make that to that mistake once but never again.

And working with David was a tremendous help to me because I lost so much weight.

Somen tense about this but I was so determined to get it right because he was so fussy it made me fussy and it did me the world of good really. Good good directors are always a tremendous help to any technician they bring out the best in you. The slap happy directors are. Just bad for a technician they. Should become sloppy. But David wouldn't everything have to be absolutely rack? and I've got a videotape of Oliver Twist. and of Passionate Friends and I have I often look at it and I'm very proud of my camera operating out there. I mean there isn't a bad shot in the film but that's not me but David making me do it. So

those were the two concepts of operating which were up against the Technicolour camera had a side view finder but it was beautifully designed and it was so close to the lens there was hardly any parallax at all that you were in fact looking through a viewfinder

QUESTION to what extent did you contribute to the set up?

OSSIE MORRIS

David you didn't with Frank Launder or Sydney Gilliat you did them all. They laid a set up. With. Sure one way or the John Pady Carstairs You did the set up yourself Paddy used to sort of hold his hand very nervously and say. Let's do a shot over there and then he put his hand back quickly. I think he made a fool of himself. So do you or what you know what do you want to happen. Well no we're taking you to the door and then he put his hands away quickly. Now he let me do it all. David would get the viewfinder and mark it but having marked it was near because the movement has got to be perfect and David is very very creative and. Everything works like a ballet with David and it's got to be like a ballet. There's no one he won't accept anything other than the very best. So. You know those are the two type of directors you get and that applies all throughout my career you get you get some directors you don't know which end of a viewfinder to look through. I can tell you a very famous director Joe Mankiewicz who I worked with. If you gave I gave Joe viewfinder one Michell viewfinder to look through and I hope you're in the right way around and he took it and he was talking to

an actor and then he said. He thought well I better do some of this and he looked through the round in you know the wrong way. I mean he didn't know he could do setups at all but occasionally I used to give him a viewfinder because you have to be very careful with the director. They must never think you're taking over the film. And that's very very important. You've always got to let them feel they're in charge. And yet they say they need desperately your help. So you have to do it in a in a very subtle way. You you you say to them Would you like us to do so-and-so. In other words you're saying we suggest you do it that way. And they say yes I think there will be a good idea you will never say to a director. Let's do it that way. Would you like us to do that. Would you like us to bring him in there. And would you like us to bring you down there and then take him over to there. And they usually say yes you never say Well what we do will bring him in they are over there they of they don't like that.

QUESTION Well as you well purely instinctive intuitive in this area or did you study composition in any fashion.

OSSIE MORRIS

No I think I know I did study yes.

QUESTION In what way?

OSSIE MORRIS

Well you know when you become very conscious of composition whenever you look at a painting you look at a picture any of the award winning subject you check composition. It becomes part of you. Same with the lighting. When it's moonlight and I it you look at the street you watch it

and. You get ideas from and you see the moonlight does the colours.

It's if you if you really enjoy what you're doing. You're doing. 24 hours a day or 16. As they said when you're asleep so you do you do all them.

you do study you can't no
QUESTION youn think you can operate life as a moving camera

OSSIE MORRIS

Oh I think so yes. A good operator Yes
QUESTION Which cameraman didn't did any particular camera gte good gomposition

OSSIE MORRIS

Composition or a knot of magic composition lighting. There were two cameramen that very much influenced my way. One of course was Ronnie Neame because Ronnie did in fact light at Wembley Studios when I was operating there is a forgot to mention and I for I first met Ronnie. After his escapades with Elstree and I operated for Ronnie and I noticed the way he lit he was the first that first introduced what we call on one key light technique into lighting before most cameramen because of the inadequacies of the lights that we had used to use several lights to light one subject and we got multi shadows which are awful. Ronnie pioneered a single light source system and then Green took that up again and as I worked for both of those Then I took that up. I mean I I folowed that when I started to light

Now we come to the lighting of the Golden Salamander Well Ronnie said as I explained earlier Ronnie said if you can photograph Golden Salamander Now what he didn't say was that half the film was going to be made

on location we weren't going to see the rushes. Anybody like myself started a photograph of a movie. The one thing I want to see from day to day is the result because I want to know whether I'm making mistakes or not. But I didn't know that and I said I wanted to do the film we went out to Tunisia on a location we chose the various locations. We came back to the studio and it quickly became obvious to me that I wasn't going to be able to see the rushes. Now I wasn't about to say well I can't do the film if I couldn't see the rushes I mean there was a chance I was going to grab it. So we went out and we started the film here in Tunisia and. Ronnie had a. Brilliant. Designer as is co-partner John Bryan whom. I. Actually adored as the designer most modern designers know John and he's really he's really in the art department. The Freddy Young designer really was the doyen of designers and John was going to be my eyes back at the studio and he was going to cable out every day how the rushes were going well be my first film we started the film in my first film I was determined to make an impact and I thought I'm not going to just photograph and it's got to be different. So I try to use different filters and I try particularly to use a strong red filter to make the skies overcorrected rather like Mexican cameramen do. And we've got some cables back from John Bryan saying the rushes looked great but he said we can't see any lips on Trevor Howard. Trevor was in the film and Ronnie Didn't know what I was doing. A said.

RS Do you see this as a chance John would say we can't see Trevor Howard's lips he

said let's have a look at trade?. We had a look at him in his lips see the be fine and he said I can't understand this and he said it was so they using us to filter anything that's it yes he said what filter are you using. So I said red

I know what he is using a red filter and of course the red filter was taking the red out of Trevor's lips and I've never thought of this. Ronnie wasn't exactly very pleased with me over this. On others you want to do a thing like that for I've given you a chance you go and screw the thing up like that you should take it off. So as we were running I can't just take it off now I mean you know it's a lot different than it was filmed. He said well you've got to do something about it it's our world so I reduce the red to an orange filter and. That. Worked out alright but that was one of the things that happened. Another little incident happened Ronnie wanted a summarized effect on a jetty in North Africa now It's taken me all my time to get the ordinary stuff right. A sunrise. How on earth am I going to do that. So I said Ronnie What exactly do you want he said well I want Trevor Howard and a newt? to stand on their jetty. And he said I want to see the sun. Come up between them.

I felt god has said Well now Ron you know you know where the sun rises it look I'm directing the film to see if your photograph and if you. Go find out where the bloody sun comes up. Or Christ get up one morning go down there. Well we're an hour in the mountains a place called Hynfrahan? happy an awesome production movie manager lets his first film as if to

Bob up we gotta get up early. You come down and find out where the sun rises so we get up about three o'clock in the morning wish you to normally and we go down to this jetty and we sit there and we watch and I mark exactly where the sun is going to come up. And I've marked it so we're going to shoot the scene two days later. So I know that part of what I don't know is how on earth to work the exposure out because for one minute we've got about a dicey f2.8 and the sun comes out and we've got about f45 you see and I simply didn't know what on earth to do about that. So we go down and you can imagine and you know I totally shat myself in a shooting this I had already blown out once with the red filter I thought if I blow out with this I'm on my way home you see. So you never asked me what I did while I have to tell you I don't honestly remember exactly but it out of sheer fear and panic. Something must have come into my mind something terrible compromise and.

We shot it and it did work it did work.

More by luck than judgment then Ronnie said Now I want to cross close ups I thought. god a week's time. Now the sun's up. They've had breakfast it's now broad daylight and I've got to make these two close ups into a sunrise. How the hell do this we are on a jetty. I can't put lamps out in the sea because I've got to know the part of the wretched lamps on I don't know what I did but somehow or other

I fiddled something and did it but the mental trauma I went through on that I shall never ever forget. While it's all going on John Brian sends out.

A plan an enormous great set built on the studio lot and it's a coast road a bit of coast road he's building and it's got to be nice and it's got to be pouring with rain. All I knew was that the. Rain has to be back lit because otherwise it doesn't show. And they've been building this road eh big road Oh it's being built John Bryant John Bryant is best in these crazy is enormous great thing is building up on tubular and they want to know where the towers that go. Well I cabled back where the towers to go well I hadn't a clue where these towers a gallery thing so I thought up I'm sure Guy Green will help me on this so I said. So the message back to John Bryan and I sent a letter to Guy Guy I'm out here doing this. And John's building a coast road on the studio lot. Do you think you could be done just going to position the towers for me. In other words I was asking Guy to really show me where the towers were. So Guy I must say he did bless his heart and of course they're all in the right spot. And. Once the towers were there I was all right because I knew how I was going to do it roughly I told him of the letter. But this rain I had terrible trouble with this rain sometimes it showed up like mad and sometimes I couldn't see it.

I didn't know how to handle this. I really do and this was all of my first film but the interiors. I was determined to give it an offbeat thing and I used all sorts of strange filters and. Shidee? filters I used to give it a sort of french? qualities was a French type of film and in the end I mean I don't look back. At what I went through for that first film I should never forget.

Right that's some foolishness by the way I got 40 pounds a week for that that was the minimum ACT rate. Forty pounds a week for that. And they said to me the studio now. We haven't got anything else for you. You have to go back to operating and I was going to go back to my 25 pounds a week so I said. I don't think I want to do that. Well you know we can't we can't offer you anything more likely. You know if you like if you don't do that you better leave. So I decided I really thought it would be wrong to operate it so I took a chance and left. I didn't get anything for a little while but I persevered and I had no agent I wasn't rich enough to have an agent and I finally managed to get a job with Max Set? and Audrey Bearing? On a film which was going to Egypt called Cairo Road and it star Lawrence Harvey first. Larry Harvey and Eric Portman. and an Egyptian actress and. Once again. It was a location film. And I wasn't going to see the rushes I simply couldn't get through to the studio.

Now the from that works fine except that they wanted the film to be processed in Egypt well can you imagine me My second film is bad enough. You know they've been processed at home but they now want the film processed in Egypt that means we're going to see it somewhere in Egypt. Well I was I said I'd better go and see the laboratories so I went and saw all the laboratories and they were and here.

Is what you would you know authorities and they were near the who only know the Mena House

QUESTION They were on the road to Giza
That's right yes I mean these reforms do

that idealism Well that's that's where the laboratories were and I was introduced to the man in charge of the laboratories and he was an Arab and he only got one eye. I see. God that doesn't exactly full of enthusiasm. I didn't see visible.

Light one eye and I explained how we were shooting and we did a couple of days tests and they were all right. The negative got pretty badly treated.

But then we had some day for night to do and I know you know Dave I like that dicey are with Egypt as you know I thought I thought this is going to be a this is my swan song so we do this day for night and we go and see it in some pokey little cinema in in Cairo. And we can't literally can't see anything. I thought hard you know this is it. And everybody turned to me and I said I said our. Eyes are going to check with the studio to see what they've done with the labs and see what they've done upload and so full of confidence apparently both sweating like a pig. I comb I came out of the studio and I went back to the labs and I said. Look. I found this man with one eye and I said Look we've seen the the rushes and I said we can't see anything on it I mean there's nothing there of the day for night I can't see anything. I said is it is the negative alright. He said yes the negative is very good he said I will show you and he went somewhere and he got a roll of our negative and I swear to God. he kicked negative across the floor with his feet I'm never ever forget that.

He even held up we said Look look it's marvellous. Look. Look. Say look there's plenty of any And the negative was all

right I saw and I knew in the end when we saw it back at home they printed properly it was alright but I'll never forget this man kicking this negative all across the floor of the studios so that was my that was my experience in Italy and then we came back to Welwyn?? studios did the interiors in Welwyn and that was my second film they did the mother one of the next one was in South Africa. I could never get a film in a studio or and Kylee? there in the came.

We all wanted to break into colour. Now in those days they were about 3 cameramen who had a monopoly of colour one of course was Jack Cardiff The other was Bobby Crescer?. Guy Greene got a break on Blanch Fury but even found it difficult to get into colour. Jeff Allen's was having Started. Colour there he was to have a black and white although he come up through Technicolour school and it was just very difficult these released few of had gotten a momopoly but I wanted to try and get into colour so they were making a film called a Magic Box in 1951 the. Year anniversary means for free screenings on Jack Cardiff was photographing in one of the Boulting's was directing. Ronnie was producing it and I asked Ronnie if I could if there's any second unit if I could do it and. They let me do some thing you know I get absolutely no help from Jack Cardiff who was at his most. No gracious publicity seeking best hire He was then I am the great Jack Cardiff which he was I mean you know I don't know. Marvellous cameraman and he wasn't about to tell me how to do it so I used to watch and when they finished almost finished a set they'd go off and leave me

to come in and do bits and pieces my. I learnt a little bit about colour.

That's all. Then I finally did get. A break on a colour film and.

That was a film called I think I got the order right Saturday Island and that was taking place in Jamaica and once again no rushes you see were out there 12 weeks and all I get is a report from the editor and I get a little coloured pilot that's come out now. There was a very well-known man in those days called Frank Bush and Frank Bush was a lovely man but he was a right Charlie he really was. And his cables were always the same. You are your material All okay.

Printing like so and so so so so. Nothing else you would say. Now I had a cable out there one day saying that material all OK a print a lie so they gave you three records. Let's say it was a. 24 24 24 21 minus 2. I thought. One of the records minus 2.

Now I thought o meant there was nothing on the negative you see so minus 2. Some must have a hole in the negative I didn't realize you went to minuses anyway.

A cable. Back only took ages to cable from Jamaica in those days you know what I would later find out what they meant by minus 2 And back came a message from Frank.

No problem we are taking the green record and making a new blue record or something it was the blue records that have gone wrong I think.

And apparently they got over one of the records was faulty and they had a trick they could do it with filters they could take one of the other records and reproduce off the one you see. And they did this but I I mean I never knew that there was such a

thing in the printer light industry strip Technicolour as minuses. So that was that. I finished that film Out of the blue a little while later I get a message. John Walsh rings wants to see me and I was very friendly with Ronnie and I knew John Walsh going to do a film call Moulin Rouge which John Houston was going to direct and I rang Ronnie and said John Walsh wants to see me what I think is about a simple not obviously. A go or who might consider you photographing Moulin Rouge civilly so I go to see John Walsh and he said. I will go Johnny Houston wants to see you. can I make an appointment and I said Yes yesso he made an appointment to go and see John Houston and Houston. sitting at his dinner it was Claridges who was sitting in a settee. He was drawing sketching and I. Was Called It was my first introduction to the great man. As I said he asked me to sit out there. You know comes to the house. And he started to draw me. Looking at me he was drawn on me he said.

Or what have you done in the way of film. And I told him which wasn't very impressive

Do you know if you know anything about Toulouse Lautrec So. No I don't really. Know. You said a great many still drawing many great French impressionist painter

Yes I did know that they did wonderful things he said. I'm going to make a film about him which I did know. Yes John I did know that And you question me a lot but not offering me the film or anything So I went away and I thought well I'd blown that Didn't know enough about. Toulouse Lautrec

And also I was intrigued because Oscar Heller. Was going to photograph this film

and I couldn't understand why I was being I thought maybe there was second unit something you know or something. I can understand why. What. Happened. about Oscar Well four days later John Walsh rang up to see me again and I spoke to Ronnie again he said you've got the film I'm sure. And he wants to. Arrange a deal with you so I said well. well what would I ask well you can't ask for 40 pounds a week he said that. Would be a joke he said. ask for 100.

A hundred pounds a week suggest he'll give you a hundred pounds. John Houston wants you. John Walsh will give you 100 pounds a week ask for 100 pounds a week or. So a city said nah you know what you're getting that. He'll tell you you're only getting £40 he's not. Ignore all that say well you know working for John Houston you're worth hundred quid a week. John Walsh that exactly what happens if he moves out we were getting nearly said A. Hundred Pounds a week your only getting £40. Sid Yes I know but I think you know of a hundred. Again he gave me a hundred quid a week and they offered me the film now I found out afterwards. Long afterwards that after Heller done some tests with John and the chemistry just didn't work and I can understand I mean I know Houston now as I know ima knowing so well and knowing Oscar the way work I mean there was no hope that would ever work the mixture just didn't gel at all. And so we did these tests and.

They decided they they'd pay more for a drop in Now WHY DID I GET IT well a Very simple reason that all the other established cameramen were working. I mean Jack Cardiff was working. Bobby Crescer?

was working Guy. Greene was working. I.

That was nobody else and I got it by sort of forfeit because there was nobody else all the decent black & white cameramen were working and that was my one lucky break.

Well having got that film I thought well I'm really going oh you know I'm not going to blow this one I'm going to leave in Paris and in the studio and Houston said to me when I saw him again you know he said I want this film to look as though it is moved and photographed by directed by Toulouse Lautrec Now he said. A. Asked me again are you familiar with the Lautrec paintings so I asked him one there is if I know you want you to go down Albi? and look at all the paintings in France or all of the Lautrec paintings are and he said study them only said I want you to come up with some ideas. Well I went down had a look at them. And one thing I knew we got to do is break this wretched technicolour system down which was which was. Totally wrong for. Lautrec & Moulin Rouge. It was great for Westerns we John Wayne with bright orange faces brilliantly blue skies blue seas green pasture yellow sand. But as soft colours of. Moulin Rouge it wasn't going to work you know. So we got to break this down and used so I suggest we've got a little set bits of the sets. We got a stand in the Vec has made calls for Marcel Vesper? they have to design the costumes and we got some of the costumes we did tests. When we did this and. I I started to put. er fog filters on cameras. And I put mist in the set because that's the only way it's going to work out to kill all these strong garish colours and I did all this and the tests

started to look pretty good. And suddenly we got a deputation Houston and I from Technicolour saying they couldn't accept what we were doing we were ruining the name of Technicolour. And we got to change our ideas because it was a franchise Technicolour you didn't.

You borrowed the cameras from them you borrowed the system because their system and you have had to do it their way. I mean they have tremendous authority this awful Natalie Towers Natalie could come on the set and she say. On. It that colours no good that was being changed these curtains. No they totally wrong you have to change those carpets all right and then she'll eventually have them redo the set you know and. They certainly have a lot of weight a lot of muscle. And. Look.

At Natalie Towers was not exactly a good example. For Technicolour she wore the most ghastly hats I've ever seen I mean there are no other woman that Mrs. Schilling is the wears then at Ascot . While Natalie Cowers came in with hat well rather like Carmen Miranda did with fruit bowls on them I mean that were just awful an hour that showed a her taste she had absolutely no taste. We found out later that Doctor Cower? her husband owned Technicolour was fed up with her and shipped her over to England in charge of of colour consultancy in England just to get rid of her. We were lumbered but anyway we carried on doing this. Technicolour was still not pleased. We go to Paris to start the gilm and we done a final series of tests in England. And we bring them over to Paris to see them and we're going to start night shooting up

at Montemartre in the summer of about 51 I think it was and. We go into the theatre and we're sitting up on the balcony Houston and I and we run these tests and we noticed in the front of the balcony must have been every known name from the house of Technicolour from George Cowan Frank Bush Bernard Happy. You name it they were all there in the front row watching these tests and I thought this is a bit strange all this like coming over from West Drayton and Paris for these tests. Anyway we ran the tests. And. Her. John said always said to me at the end as like one last thing a sieve Well John I think we're pretty good you know and I really did. I think we've got it right. So lighting a bit grainy so we were just getting up to go and then all the George Guns? stood up. And Leslie Oliver. I think was there as well and they vote and they turn around they said could we have one word with you please before you leave. So we sat down they said we would like to put it on record we accept no responsibility for what you are doing to our colour system in our view. You are you are destroying everything that technicolour strive for over the years. We do not want to have anything to do with it whatsoever and it is entirely your responsibility. On with this last minute we plead with you to take all this stuff out of the camera room remove the fog from the sets and shoot it straight. And we would do it in the laboratory and John said to me if you think about. It. won't be the same if they do it in the. Laboratory. You know and also. We don't know what they do when we're not around as though we've got to go and do so

well. So he got up and said gentleman. Fuck you we are going to do it this way. And we walk out and we started to shoot the film that way. And we shot the whole film this way and I think it looks pretty good. Now it looks as fresh today as it did when we shot it off at the end of the film. It's each show visually the film didn't get a good preview as a film but visually it got tremendous notices by the way they also had letters which they gave us.

They got these letters all written. Saying they did not accept responsibility they gave us now I've given you a summons you know again John one and me one of the got letters us right the films finished tremendously. Visually acclaimed. And we both got letters from Technicolour John and I saying. What a great honour it was to be associated with such a great true breakthrough in colour photography And they're very proud that the name of Technicolour was connected with such a marvellous film as Moulin Rouge quite the opposite. Now if I had not had a director to back me up I could never have beaten the system and they they would have devoured me. But because I had a powerful director when he could do what he liked and me just finished African Queen he was right on top of the ladder at the moment because of that. He could I could go on doing it and I mean I knew it was right and he liked it and we beat the system and that was the great breakthrough in Technicolour.
END