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CORRECTED VERSION

Rudi Cartier, television producer , interviewer Norman Swallow, recorded on 22nd January 1991

[By the time of this recording Rudi Cartier's hearing was badly impaired and as a consequence he was reading questions from a pre-prepared questionnaire, and does not always respond to follow up questions.]

SIDE 1, TAPE 1

Norman Swallow: When did you come to Britain and under what circumstances

Rudi Cartier: I was the first person as a young director to direct the first film ever made by Sam Spiegel, he had no experience as a producer, so when it was made here, Sam Spiegel went to, he said if they take me and the two stars, Oscar Homolka and Peter Lorre, he took the two stars to Hollywood and left me here. That is how it happened.

And another person of my acquaintance had come to Britain, Alfred Zeisler, an American who worked in Berlin at UFA, and I was his script writer. And he was the first person engaged by a new firm called and Clement and Garrett, and made one movie here, The Amazing Quest Of Mr [Ernest] Bliss in 1936. And apparently that wasn't very successful in America in spite of the star. And he went to America to. And lived in America. And the only person left behind was me.

Norman Swallow: You came in 1935, 1936

Rudi Cartier: Yes.

Norman Swallow: Which is it

Rudi Cartier: And owing to various restrictions on by the ACT, as it was then called, I wasn't permitted to direct. They put a ban on my directing and so I had to resort to script writing. For the Germans.

Norman Swallow: But living in London

Rudi Cartier: In London. We came to the first thing, when I went to the old Charing Cross Road post office to catch [the post for] the midnight plane to Germany. And there was a young chap I knew from the set, he was a literary agent. And I started talking to him and he kept on asking why don't you ever write anything for all television. And I said I don't know anyone in television. I'll introduce you he said and. So the next day came an invitation to meet Michael Barry at the Royal Automobile Club, not at the BBC. and we

started talking and I said and may I tell you what I think of BBC Television. He said yes, tell me. And I said I think nothing, it's just a bore. It's badly directed, it's badly scripted. He said how do you know that. I said I went to America to study American television and films and this is the knowledge that I came back. So he said what would you like to do. I said you need a lot of new writers, especially from the Continent. You cannot live only on Dickens and Trollope.

So I suggest to him a German novella written by an army padre called Arrow to the Heart and this was accepted by the highups, highup I didn't know them yet. And scripted by Nigel Kneale and myself, this is how we met the first. This was a year or two years before Quatermass started. And I was made some sort of specialist for fantastic science fiction stories. And my next production, also as a guest producer as Michael Barry, was a famous Jewish play, what was it called, The Dybbuk. And the Dybbuk got some favourable notices, particularly by CA Lejeune, who said who is this man, I've never heard of him. He has got visual imagination and good construction of script. And after that Michael Barry gave me another fantastic story, The Portrait of Peter Perron, six plays in a person who had a motor car crash and is just about to die and the highup judges say if you can produce one person who says a good word about you you can return to the living people. And the script was very interesting, it showed 10 people out of the life of Peter Perron, and not one person had anything good to say. The last person was a girl of about 12, on a swing, and when the highup judge asked her have you anything good about Peter Perron. And the girl said yes, and the judge said what was it. I was on a swing and he gave me a push. And that made him free.

So after that I became good friends with the script department, they appreciated that I had script experience and didn't just talk. And they had a good story by a French director, Gilbert Cesbron, called It is Midnight Dr Schweitzer. And I was hired for that, in the middle of my preparations I was called to Cecil McGivern,

Norman Swallow: Who was head of programmes

Rudi Cartier: Who was god, and he said would you like to be in a permanent job with us. And I said certainly. And I was glad to be in a permanent job because fluctuating between one bad German script to another wasn't satisfactory.

Norman Swallow: What year was it you first went to the BBC

Rudi Cartier: 1952. No, it was 1953, because the first production was in 1952, and the second and third also, It is Midnight Dr Schweitzer, was 1953. So I said yes. I said I cannot discuss terms with you, you have to go to Broadcasting House to the financial boss. And what they offered for a years contract made me laugh. They offered me £1118 for a year. So it worked out about £18 a week. And I said yes I would accept it if you accept my terms. My terms are that I'm in continuous work and the BBC will acquire all literary work I recommend provided they are not too expensive and let me adapt it. So

this was agreed. Very tough terms, which no one else has dictated to them, but for £18 a week.

And the next thing they asked me would you join the establishment. I said what does it mean and they said well it means we cannot give you any notice until you are 60. Alright I accept that. So I was the last person to come on the establishment, the establishment was only free for one job because the last person on the establishment had either died or retired so I was the last person to be on the establishment. Nobody since has been on the establishment.

Alan Lawson: I can remember on *Midnight Dr Schweitzer*, you asked from the technical people the impossible and you refused to take no. And everytime they eventually did it you went further. What was your

Rudi Cartier: I am coming to answer this. Michael Barry asked me what are your criticisms on BBC drama production. I said everything from the script to the technical fulfilment, one has to invent a new style. It isn't theatre, it isn't cinema, it is some cross breed between the two. On television you have to see the faces as near as possible which you cannot in the theatre, not in the cinema. So I invented so to say a new style, and the new style needed new resources and this is how I stretched resources much to the aggrivement of my superiors. But in the end I got all I wanted and it was very important.

The question here is who accepted me originally as a producer director. It was first of all Michael Barry who knew my work for the cinema as a producer director and knew nothing about what I wanted to do with television. So they were all surprised to see how much creative freedom I required and how much I got.

Norman Swallow: You got a lot didn't you.

Rudi Cartier: The most important thing is that I supplied them from the start with a whole list of half a dozen or a dozen continental writers, famous plays, they didn't even think of doing. And this half a dozen, dozen plays was on a list whenever they were in a quandary what to put in the year's schedule, Cartier's suggestion always came in as a surprise. And the public reaction to that was tremendous. All my productions were welcomed because something new, a play Cartier was something, not about nothing.

Norman Swallow: But they were your ideas

Rudi Cartier: It was my idea, I give them a list, and whenever the drama schedule is at a loss they put in me, so I was put in continuously every three or four weeks there was a Rudi Cartier production. And the reaction of the public was absolutely tremendous. Most of all, my biggest production at the beginning of my career was *L'Aiglon* by Rostand. And everybody said don't do it, it is old fustian. I said let me do it. Another thing I introduced with *L'Aiglon* was xxx, the dying people on the battle field of Vagram, in the script they all called I am dying, I am dying. I said what can one do, one cannot put this

on television. It will not be impressive. So I invented the broadcast, they transmitted the negative, so all these white ghostly figures against black background where the people were dying and this was remarkably well received. I even got in the Evening News which existed then gave me front page, L'Aiglon scores it. So that impressed them very much.

Then I met Nigel Kneale as a co-scriptwriter on my first production and Cecil McGivern said don't you want to do a science fiction. I said yes, so I mentioned this question to Nigel Kneale and Nigel reeled out of his head three marvellous ideas which became later the three Quatermass serials. And this had very little preparation because he hadn't written more than the first set of six scripts, called The Quatermass Experiment.,

So it went out in the same year, 1947

Norman Swallow: This is interesting, because you are now moving into. No 1952.

Rudi Cartier: No, 1957. Now after the first successes of The Quatermass Experiment which had marvellous notices in all the papers, because people were hungry for something else, I was called to Cecil's office. I thought my god, why does he call me. He said after the first transmission of L'Aiglon, I accuse you of unprofessional conduct because I was overrunning by 20 minutes. The 9 o'clock news came at 9.20. He said you are cutting, because every big production had a cutting policy, Thursday showing 20 minutes from L'Aiglon. I said yes, I will. So I called the cast together. And said 20 minutes will be cut here and here, and they were all crying and shouting at me. Because good actors never want to cut anything of their good lines. So at the second transmission I ended exactly at 9 o'clock. Up came the 9 o'clock news. So I was the hero of the day. And McGivern called me back and congratulated me and said would I like a go at 1984 by Orwell.

Norman Swallow: 1957 was the wrong year, because it was before 1984 which was 1954. I think Quatermass was 1953.

Rudi Cartier: No this was in 1957. Would I like a go at Orwell's 1984. Because nobody knew the novel except me, because I was a subscriber of the American Life magazine and they serialised it, so I knew what it was about. And Nigel Kneale knew what it was about. So Nigel Kneale got one year for script and preparation of it. So we came out the next Christmas. 1954, yes.

Norman Swallow: December 1954. The interesting thing here is that you're now making television dramas with original scripts created for television. Unlike the plays you had been doing. It was very important, it was new

Rudi Cartier: I direct the Quatermass Experiment was out of his head, nobody's idea except Nigel Kneale and the success prompted McGivern to offer me the Orwell play. So I accepted in. And in the meantime we had to do something else. So Nigel Kneale and I discussed Wuthering Heights. And we had as our, the girl, Yvonne Mitchell, who had

played in *The Dybbuk*. And it was a very good success, because with subject matters like *Wuthering Heights*, the public didn't expect anything sensational from it, they expected a workmanlike production and this is what I gave them.

Norman Swallow: All the drama you've talked about so far, so presumably there was no film

Rudi Cartier: On my list of a dozen plays there were only French, German, Swiss, Russian authors,

Norman Swallow: From the theatre

Rudi Cartier: I suggested a list, what we called a reserve list, and on the reserve list was *L'Aiglon* which I did, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Eurydice* by Anouilh. Of German plays *Zuckmayer the Devil's General*, *The Captain of Kopernick*, *The Court Light* of Swiss *Durrenmatt*. I gave them a whole treasure cave full of subjects which they'd never thought of. Before me they only did English stage successes shot like a stage play, none of my inventive television dreams.

Norman Swallow: A technical question, did you use any film sequences in these early productions or not.

Rudi Cartier: We had film sequences when it was impossible to be on the stage. Like on my *Arrow to the Heart*, the execution of the prisoners, had to be taken outside. And the film department, you can't do that, it's too, too long, you cannot do it in one day. I said if there is good preparation for it and a good cameraman he can do it in one hour. Because only one shot. And *Tubby Englander*, a great standby and co-worker, apart from Peter Sargent, did it in one hour, because only one shot, but it was a good shot. And when we had a repeat of it after 4 years, it was repeated, and we couldn't go to that place because there was a build up there. So we shot it on the roof of the BBC Centre. And I looked at the sky and waited for a cloud to come over the sun. And then Peter Sargent started rolling and it was a good shot.

My favourite production was *Rembrandt*, for which I got an Oscar nomination hanging up here

Norman Swallow: That was later wasn't it.

Rudi Cartier: That was later in 1969.

Working for the BBC gave me the chance of continuous production, one after the other, which I'd never get in cinema. Great film directors make one picture every 14 years

Norman Swallow: You said you made one every month did you

Rudi Cartier: Practically, when I came down, everything was done live until 1969. When I came down covered with sweat from the transmission there was an interloper who said Mr Cartier here is something for you. It was the plan for the next production, just finished one. They always put me when they needed something to transmit Sunday and Thursday twice. The thing about 1984 is the reaction of the public. We had a tremendous on the first showing. Protests and counter protests. And on the second showing we expected an even bigger showing. What happened nothing. And it was the smallest show, because everybody who wanted to see it had seen it on the Sunday. So practically the smallest audience I ever had was on the repeat of 1984

Norman Swallow: I thought it had a big audience the repeat. There was a big row about 1984

Rudi Cartier: Yes a big row, a big debate. Protests in Parliament and the newspapers screaming torture on television, rats on television. There was a big row about it. I had even threatening telephone calls. Somebody said this is a typical camouflage of Stalin, we will get you. so the BBC hired 2 bouncers, 2 tough men to guard me on the second transmission, always following me.

About the rats I must tell you, we had a rat catcher with a cage coming with the rats and in the heat of the film studio which was then Alexandra Palace, all the rats fell asleep, one had to prod them into activity, to go into that torture xxx [possibly hell or dark?].

Norman Swallow: I thought because of the row the repeat had a big audience because it was

Rudi Cartier: No, all the filming for 1984 was done in the Alexandra Palace studio but also on the place where the television centre is standing now. All the xxx water, the crumbling building, waterlogged basements, this was filmed. The filming on television had another reason, it had 28 sets and only one studio, we had studio 4

Norman Swallow: At Lime Grove. So the 28 sets were in position, but to give the cameras time, there were 3 cameras, to move from one set to the other, we had to insert the film sequence.

Norman Swallow: For technical reasons

Rudi Cartier: Another technical reason, Peter Cushing after the torture looks devastated, he looks like a skeleton and you had to give him time to redo the makeup, and the makeup said you cannot do it under half a day. So this had to be filmed, when he looks into the mirror, back to camera and once the mirror image was filmed. And everybody said my god

Norman Swallow: Is it true that the Duke of Edinburgh liked 1984

Rudi Cartier: Yes, I have even a cutting. You see here my den, all the sound tapes of my productions, all the video tapes.

Norman Swallow: It was a great success 1984

Rudi Cartier: In any case, if you ask me which production am I most proud of, it's 1984, because people are still talking about it, it was so much better than the films they made afterwards. Also I'm very proud of the 3 Quatermass serials, which also got a tremendous audience. When Quatermass and the Pit was transmitted, it was 45 minutes instead of 30, they heard from the telephone exchange, here is the telephone exchange, and I must tell you during the transmission of Quatermass and the Pit we didn't have a single telephone call. It was the time of hand operators. Of the 2nd Quatermass, Quatermass and the Pit, we had one touching letter from Ireland. It said I'm a novice nun and I'm not permitted to watch television anymore, would you tell me the end of it. I said to Nigel, this is a ploy from one of the journalists, who wants a scoop. so we talk and talk and talk. In the end our good heart conquered and I wrote back to that girl in Ireland, so and so. And we thanked me. If I go to heaven I have one good point in my favour

Norman Swallow: Nigel Kneale is obviously a very good scriptwriter

Rudi Cartier: Nigel Kneale was always with me, from the beginning. I did nothing to the scripts of the three Quatermass series, nothing at all, not one word. I just discussed everything with Nigel and he cut what I wanted to be cut and put in other things, so he was absolutely a wonderful collaborator. I cannot give him a higher praise.

Norman Swallow: We talked about the European writers

Rudi Cartier: Schnitzler I did the Liebeleil. Brecht I did Mother Courage. Mother Courage was an interesting story. My star Flora Robson said she could not do a continuous recording of the whole play in one go. Because at that time no pre filming was permitted. So I never ran a prefilm, just the scenes you cannot do. What happened was one of the cast, went to Equity and they sued the BBC, it cost the BBC a lot of money because they had had to pay the difference between film rates and television rates. From that day onwards prefilming was permitted. And the BBC is still aching from the pain of the money they had to fork out.

Anouilh, Rostand I've mentioned.

Norman Swallow: As a viewer in those days your work reminded us much more of the cinema than any other television director/producer of the times

Rudi Cartier: Let's say I combined the technique of cinema in long shots because nobody thought to extend the television studio, I had invented, because I was formerly an architect, sets which open out to another set in perspective, so everybody thought they were continuous, a flow of palatial rooms in the production of Such Men Are Dangerous.

So I take pride that I have broken the back wall of the television set, looking at another television set and then perspective another television set. This became a habit, Nowadays it is very easy because everything since my breakthrough in *Mother Courage*, on film, everything on television is now on film, or made for film, with some editor editing all the good bits together. One couldn't do that while it was live. One had to rehearse outside the studio without cameras for three weeks, but inside the studio, one and half days from 2 o'clock in the afternoon and all day Sunday. The artists were required to give a complete performance in front of the live cameras. And that is why I always used the same artists, because once I discovered they have nerves, to give a live performance in front of a camera they are not trembling or stuttering, I was alright. So I created what was laughingly called the Rudolph Cartier Repertory Company, there was always Rupert Davis and Albert Lieven, and Marius Goring, Margaret something. I am sorry, now my age shows. I have my marbles together, but names sometime escape me because I had too many productions

Norman Swallow: You had many, you had Sean Connery, Alan Badel, Donald Pleasance, Claire Bloom. All those for example

Rudi Cartier: I mentioned film inserts, there are two purposes, to film things which cannot be shot in the studio and to film sequences that enable the cameras to move from one set to the other, for example for *The Creature*, the production about, Nigel Kneale's original about the Abominable Snowman, couldn't be shot in the studio because there is snow and no mud. So I said as it was New Year's Day, we go to Switzerland, up the railway to the Jungfrau and for the public one mountain is like another. They will think it's the Himalayas. Now the air companies who transported the cast, Cushing and myself, and the cameraman was Hunt, didn't accept as a cargo the flares, the magnesium flares, because of fire. We didn't know what to do, we were up at the Jungfrau Hotel, 12,000 ft up and for a night sequence we had no flares. And one of the guides with us said what do you want the flares for. I explained, he said the factory is in the valley. So he telephoned to the valley to put in a dozen or more magnesium flares onto the train, and with the next train up came just by accident.

Another funny incident from Nigel Kneale's script of *The Creature*, one of the explorers in search of the Abominable Snowman come across a rock with some Tibetan writing. And someone says this is unknown writing, and the reply this is Tibetan religious formula, this is fantastic. So after transmission of this somebody phoned us and said I'm the only viewer who knows Tibetan writing who knows exactly what the person said, it's is xxxxxx nothing else. Can you imagine a viewer knowing Tibetan writing. Funny things out of the life of a television drama pioneer.

You ask about my relationship with scriptwriters, it was reduced to the creative relationship with Nigel Kneale, he wrote all of it himself. And the television script department, respected me that I was a script writer before. And when I said this is too long or too short, they always said alright we'll do it. I never had a quarrel with the script department. The then head of the department, Sir Basil Bartlett, had great respect for me,

and whenever something good came along, was submitted, it was always shown to me. And from me it came to Michael Barry on the list of possibles. One hour play like Andre Obey, a Belgian writer. The Sacrifice to the Wind, 2 hour plays, because the maximum duration of a play was two hours, that included commercials which until then did not exist.

Norman Swallow: You talked about Nigel Kneale, are there any other scriptwriters you worked with you would like to mention

Rudi Cartier: When we came along to cutting, very often he was very reasonable, I'll leave that out he said, put in something else much shorter. So Nigel is absolute professional. Why he fell out with the BBC over the film rights I don't know. The films of the Quatermass and the Creature were made by Hammer Company which is a very lousy company. And the financial department told Nigel Kneale the film rights belong to the BBC because you were under contract to the BBC. Nigel Kneale said I give up my contract, So he cancelled his contract and the Nigel Kneale stories belong to him.

You ask what I think is most important after 1957, the most important thing in the new era of television, shooting on film is one could edit it, one could cut, snip out bad things and put in good things. But the period of drama documentary is on top, drama documentary, not become fashionable, I introduced it, because it brings historical facts closer to the public. Like Lee Oswald Assassin, everybody believed at that time that Lee Oswald the assassin. And afterwards came Stalingrad. The July Plot, about the assassination -- they were all drama documentaries, because it brings anything, all this is only briefly in the papers, closer to the public, showing the person who planted the bomb. What the room was like where the assassination attempt took place

Norman Swallow: Who wrote the scripts for those two, for Lee Oswald and Stalingrad

Rudi Cartier: The scripts of the July Plot was by a German author whose name I don't recall who also wrote the script of Stalingrad. Stalingrad was first done on German television and then by me. And I made it completely differently from the German play and when the then head of all television, Hugh Greene, he came to Hamburg and they showed him their production. He said you should have seen our's, Mr Cartier's production was tremendous. Of course it was tremendous, they stylised it xxx

One has to make it a movie. So I improved on the German script.

Norman Swallow: Who wrote the script for Lee Oswald

Rudi Cartier: The name escapes me, I shall mention it at the end of the programme.

What is your opinion of television drama today. Not much, because I hardly ever watch television drama, because it isn't what I'm used to seeing, in my own productions or in

some selected productions which I like, Edge of Darkness. It was a television drama of my taste, why because each episode was an hour and led naturally to the next episode.

SIDE 2, TAPE 1

Edge of Darkness but also very much the Peter Brook rendering on film of the Indian epic Mahabarata which was tremendous subject and tremendous. These are the two productions I would have liked to have done, no others. You ask me here what in your view is the future of British television drama, at a time when many changes of structure of industry. The famous single play will not soon die, it has already died, there is no concentrated efforts to make the single play. Because there is so much money to be made to make a good idea into various episodes spread over a number of weeks and filling the spaces with commercials

Norman Swallow: Your work for Maigret and Z Cars, why did you do that

Rudi Cartier: Finally you ask me please look back at your long and great career and sum it up for us. Which productions are you most proud of. Is there anything you particularly regret not to have done. Some of your favourite ideas never accepted for production.

Yes, I was very fond of Edmond Rostand, because the success of L'Aiglon and I wanted to do Cyrano de Bergerac. We had Peter Cushing lined up for the lead and the nose fitted, he had learned to fence while reciting a poem and everything was prepared ready for me to show when came a message from the script department, they cannot get the rights cleared. And the rights of Cyrano de Bergerac had been cleared 20 years, 30 years later, now a French film with Gerard Depardieu playing Cyrano. And I had for example Peter Cushing as Cyrano, as Christian the young lover, I had Roger Moore before he James Bond, and I had very good people. This I regret not to have done. Now they are cashing in, the French on the fame of the original play.

Norman Swallow: You mentioned earlier Rembrandt

Rudi Cartier: I like the 1935 black and white production with Charles Laughton very much. And we talked to Zuckmayer who wrote the scripts and what can we do with old Rembrandt. I said make it the young Rembrandt. So I had a script written by Zuckmayer, just adapting his own original script, incorporating as a lead the young Rembrandt played by Richard Johnson. And this is my citation. If you ask me which is visually my best production it is Rembrandt because our, Tubby Englander made a meal of it. He had the chance to make something in colour, so after the first internal showing down below at Television Centre, the showing was over, the head of BBC2 came rushing down, shook my hands and said it is absolutely wonderful. I said every shot is a Rembrandt

I was in Stalingrad and I am very indebted to Tubby Englander. Stalingrad we did a lot of research. And I went to the Imperial War Museum to see the films the Russians made of

their siege of Stalingrad, and they also filmed the original armistice, shot when the Russians presented their terms for an armistice and it was in a plastic cover like the menu in a cheap restaurant. And this was refused by the Germans. And among the shots there was a small thick set man, with a bald head, it was a political commissar, Khrushchev, but I couldn't incorporate it into the story because our story takes place during the last 24 hours of the German siege. And the telephonist in the German headquarters had the final say, he pulled out all the plugs, all my contacts are gone, I cannot get anyone there. And this person who played the telephonist has since died, it is so long ago.

Now then, the name came back to me, Claus Hubalek, who wrote the original play, it was a stage play, of Stalingrad and then the script for Hamburg television and I rectified it. One cannot make a drama documentary stylised. I had an example of this, we made one of the later productions was about a famous trial of the Jews, called something. I had to get costumes right for Hungarian gendarmes, country police of the year 1880. And me and my researchers went to the British Museum and to all the things and we couldn't find the uniforms of Hungarians, it takes place in Hungary, country police. So my assistant said ring up Hungary, they will know. So I rang up the Hungarian Embassy and they gave me the number of the Hungarian cultural attache who gave me the number of a provincial town called Miskole. And I rang up Miskole and said this is the BBC in London, we need urgently need to the producer of that play. So the producer came onto the phone and I explained our purpose. Dear colleague, he said, we're not doing it in original, we're doing it in stylised, with all black track suits. So back we went to the Hungarian Embassy and they ferreted out a magazine from 1880 in the library. So we had the original Hungarian country police.

Alan Lawson: Rudi, one of the things I wanted to ask you about was art directors you had.

Rudi Cartier: I couldn't use any art directors who didn't agree with me because I was an art director before I became a film director. So I had of course Barry Learoyd who did L'Aiglon. I had Nova James, who did Salome for me and I had of course old faithful who did Anna Karenina, again the name escapes me. [Clifford Hatts?] [3/11/1961]

Norman Swallow: Richard Greenough

Rudi Cartier: No, but he did one of the Quatermass. I remember he had 3 daughters, they came to watch us. He made a marvellous shot of the opening of Anna Karenina. Anna Karenina in the version we produced because it was too long a story, we had a French writer to condense it to two hours. It starts in Moscow railway station where Vronsky the hero waits for the return of his mother. Now how to make a railway station in Moscow, never been to Moscow. So we had Moskva, in Russian letters, printed on a board and xxx

Was sensation of the art director, he had the studio in Ealing completely empty and filled with smoke, because the railway station at that time was filled with smoke, and Tubby Englander did marvellous work

Alan Lawson: The art director smoked a pipe,

Rudi Cartier: His memory is just as bad as mine. Now you ask me what is my pride of achieving in television, it is a simple line, I show to the public that behind this cold piece of glass, 25 inches across is another world, another world which I have never seen and will never see the original, so perhaps the real lives in the foreground and I project behind the cold piece of glass, if that is not called an achievement, I don't know what is.

Of the drama documentaries, Zuckmayers, The Cold Light which is Fuchs spy story, John Robinson [Longden] and Marius Goring in it, is also a drama documentary. Because in real life Zuckmayer got the story of this atomic spy, the cold light is a light which doesn't heat, from the newspaper reports. That the detective who tracked him in the end after months and months of trailing him made a sort of drama. John Robinson [Longden] played the detective and Marius Goring played Klaus Fuchs. In the end of the story of Klaus Fuchs we had like the beginning, a nurse goes with her little child into a park and she, the little child wants a story, and she tells her the story of the cold light, although the child doesn't know what the cold light is, she tells her the story. And in the end we come back to the nurse and the little child.

Television needs a lot of inventiveness, the director must be a good director of the actors, and I hope I was good. Because I had a different scheme of directing. I don't tell them how to do it, I tell them what to feel and they have to express it in their own terms, do you feel love, do you feel hatred, do you feel indifferent, now show me. And different directors approach, most directors, television or cinema, show the actors how to act, so every actor acts like the director which is wrong. Every actor shall use his own resources, his own feelings, this is my way of directing.

Norman Swallow: Can I ask you about popular drama, you directed sequences of Maigret and Z Cars, I don't associate you with that

Rudi Cartier: I directed 3 Maigrets and 3 Z Cars. Why did you do that you may ask. They are not on my list of favourites. As I was under an obligation to Michael Barry and the drama department for doing all my stuff, they came in the holiday season and said you have to help us out doing Maigrets and Z Cars. And how could I say no to Michael Barry who was always in favour of my list of plays. So I agreed to do some good Maigrets and some good Z Cars which I liked very much.

Norman Swallow: You enjoyed it,

Rudi Cartier: I enjoyed it. A good director enjoys everything that has some content. So I couldn't be a light entertainment director because there is nothing behind the script, and I couldn't do one of the soap operas, because every episode, week after week, is exactly the same as before.

Norman Swallow: You didn't direct very much comedy

Rudi Cartier: No comedy. Only drama, from the list of projects I gave to Michael Barry. One year, I think it was 1961 I went with Maggie on a lengthy holiday to Greece and Yugoslavia. And then I came back and now I can breathe, I've been on a long holiday, or went to Morocco I think. Then I was told these are your next productions this year, you're doing a remake of Raccoon, you're doing Anna Karenina and you're doing a story of Alexander the Great, all in one year.

Norman Swallow: Altogether, how many productions, 120 I'm told

Rudi Cartier: If you call Quatermass 6 episodes each, so 18 episodes, deduct 18 separate episodes from the 120, it is less than that. But that also includes what I call the holiday relief, the Z Cars and the Maigrets.

Norman Swallow: So what and when were your last production

Rudi Cartier: The last production was Loyalties, with Edward Fox, treacherous thief. It was easy because it was all done with Cedric Messina as a producer and he knew the difficulties of a director, to get the artists used to the cameras in one and a half days, so after a long fight, I was given 3 days camera rehearsal, I was in heaven, 3 days. And in spite of this sometimes an artist, when the red light went up and he was on camera he couldn't speak. So we had to shut down. I obviously had breakdown caption standing by, in Sutton Coldfield transmitter was, Mr Cartier's breakdown caption. I never used it. I only had the break once in Carmen. We went to Seville and I was recording the entrance of the horseback toreadors that came in, rows of 3, 9 horseback toreadors, and this was filmed. And when it came up, I cued, overture and film, and nothing came on sound, the sound had collapsed I think, so we had to break off after this and apologise to the public and came on music and pictures at the same time. Things happen on television. It is not like cinema productions, cinema production it only goes out once, it's perfect.

Norman Swallow: What year was Loyalties.

Rudi Cartier: I think it was 1969, it was a play of the month. I don't know which year that was [1976]

Norman Swallow: Then you retired

Rudi Cartier: No, I didn't retire, they didn't let me retire. They said we must use something else of him, so I was pushed for good money for the first time to Threshold House, Gunnar Rugheimer, and I was on the selection board for the purchasing of films, and there I stuck out for two years.

Norman Swallow: Did you enjoy that

Rudi Cartier: I enjoyed working and making money. But they couldn't keep me because

Norman Swallow: Television Enterprises

Rudi Cartier: Television Enterprises, the department was Purchased Programmes Department.

One of my assistants was a woman who is now a woman who is in a leading position in commercial television, Ann Harris. Have you heard the name, she was a financial genius. She would say it's no good Cartier selecting an expensive picture, I cannot pay for it.

Norman Swallow: You never worked for ITV

Rudi Cartier: I never worked for ITV, I had many, many tempting offers, which always came back yes we will pay you more. Not one commercial, nothing. And then of course I resented the interruptions of commercials, in every good production. One of my favourite operas by Wagner is Siegfried. Channel 4 showed the Ring and Siegfried, from the Metropolitan Opera, an expensive production. When it came on, my favourite opera is every five minutes interrupted by commercials, because so many people wanted to see Siegfried as a good audience for the commercials. It was a great pity because it had such a good cast, because the Metropolitan opera could pay the big salaries. This I resent.

Norman Swallow: So you're loyal to the BBC

Rudi Cartier: The Ring from the Metropolitan was made with a lot of money but on traditional lines. A month before I saw the same ring from Munich, produced by a modern producer. And he had to show Valhalla, Valhalla is in a spaceship and he was asked why make Valhalla in a spaceship. He said, quite rightly, how do you know it was not in a spaceship. People said I don't know. He said if you don't know Valhalla is like. Wagner is tied to the period, so the Metropolitan opera hired the Vienna opera's chief producer director, Otto Schenck. And he did a good job, but what did the commercials do, they put every five minutes Siegfried interrupted his hammering. For a music lover this was hell.

I always got the same crew

Alan Lawson: Yes you always insisted

Rudi Cartier: And the same cast. I had always Rupert Davis, Albert Lieven.

The future of television drama, I cannot predict, you said quite rightly it depends on commercial considerations, because some film directors only got money for their films if they presell it to commercial interests. I feel sorry for them. Only Peter Brook doesn't listen to commercials. And he shot about 24 hours movie for Mahabharata. How he could reduce it to 6 hours it was 3 hours on one channel and 3 hours on another channel, and in Glasgow he had a whole big hall to stage it.

Now I have two television sets, I can see two television programmes at the same time, and I discover that one is worse than the other. I pray that some good television drama will come soon and I can sit down in peace and observe.