



ACTION TV INTERVIEW

ROGER TUCKER

with Werner Schmitz

WS: How did you become a director? Did you admire any filmmaker (TV or big screen) in the early days?

RT: I grew up into everything wild and way-out; rock 'n' roll, action painting, bebop, beat poetry, existentialism, you name it! But I had no interest at all in movies. Until, that is ... on my way home from school I would pass a little cinema dedicated to showing "continental" films, which, in those days, was pretty much a synonym for soft-porn. One afternoon, invalidated out from sports, I decided to check it out.

At the end of the main feature I was left in a state of shock. In fact, the movie I saw is still quite shocking today — it was *Viridiana*, directed by Luis Buñuel. Up till then I had no idea that films like this existed, but, from that moment on, I was determined to find out more. As it happened, the timing was perfect because there then followed the most astonishing period where just about every film I went to see turned out to be a masterpiece — Antonioni, Godard, Fellini, Bergman, and, then, Resnais's sublime *Last Year at Marienbad*. Some people find this a dry, intellectual movie, but for me it was pure emotion. I came out in a daze, just knowing that I had to make a film of my own.

The only book on film theory I could find in the library was Eisenstein's essays, *Film Form and The Film Sense*. I read that and then sat down to write a scenario. It was really a case of 'just do it!' The school owned a clockwork 16mm Bolex camera; from a local studio

theatre we managed to borrow lights; we then persuaded the film unit at Bristol Aircraft Corporation to give us out-of-date film stock, and I set about casting my ideal girl from the drama society of a near-by girl's school. To our own disbelief, we were soon up and running!

In the age of DVD recorders and desktop editing suites, it is difficult to imagine what a mysterious process-film-making was in those days. Film has a naturally hypnotic quality which makes it difficult to analyze technique for any length of time, during a single viewing. I find that even today. Back then, only professionals had access to equipment and, of course, the prints that made it possible to examine the detail of how a sequence was put together. Not so for us: to edit we had to stare at the frames against a naked light bulb, then cut and splice them with a cement joiner, before running the strip through a projector to see how it had worked out. It really was experimental film-making.

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The result — a fifteen-minute short, *Karst*, won a prize for young film-makers, was shown at the London Film Festival, at Expo 67 in Canada, on TV in New Zealand, and various other places. It was also seen by the pioneering TV producer, Derek Granger, and as a result I was invited to join Granada TV on a fast track production training. It seemed like a perfect outcome until I discovered that I was being used as a pawn in a game between management and the, at that time, all-powerful technicians' union. Eventually, I got dispensation to shoot for just a week, and made a half-hour documentary, *And On the Eighth Day*. This was selected as British entry to the San Francisco Film Festival, and, in acknowledgement of that, I was finally given my ticket to direct.

Which part do you like best – camera positions, interaction with the actors, or (like Stanley Kubrick) editing?

I love the early stages of looking for locations where everything is pure possibility; I also love the editing stage when everything is *fait accompli*, and the film you can make comes down to you, your skill and creativity, and the images in front of you. The bit in the middle — the shooting — is more like WAR. You can't exactly say that you enjoy it because you know that everyday you are going to take losses, whatever gains you might make. You are out there exposed to temperament, temperature, traffic, all the rough and tumble of life — in a word, fate.

Bearing in mind that you are a realist when it comes to the resources used for (episodic) TV, is there anything you are particularly proud of?

I've always considered TV to be throw-away culture. I am quite amazed to discover that there are guys like you who collect it! So, I guess the shows of which I am most proud are more in the nature of a battle won against steep odds, rather than that of an enduring work of art. Let me give you an example.

I was set to direct, back-to-back, two 50-minute episodes of the series **Fallen Hero**, starring Del Henney. About a week into the shoot, and already behind schedule, I was informed that a strike had been called. This then lasted for nearly four weeks of the time I should have been shooting. Towards the end, the producer called me up to say that it was impossible to get more than one extra week on the schedule. Not long enough — so they had decided to cut my two episodes down to one, but all the story development of both episodes still had to be covered, so that the hand-over to the following episode's shoot could remain as planned. Further, the writer was no longer available, and I had to resume shooting without delay immediately the strike ended.

— drama series could be designed to carry twice the story, twice the intensity ...

So, the challenge was, could I, on the run, smash two episodes into one, still finish on schedule, and make worthy prime-time TV? This was the first time I had played a part in scripting, but, besides getting the story across, I also managed to include an edge-of-the-seat rooftop sequence, and one of the longest non-verbal fight sequences ever shown on TV. (Later, this was featured in a programme on TV violence; I doubt it would be passed now.) There was also a heavy-weight emotional performance from the young actor, John Westley, and a

lively sound track, featuring music by Talking Heads and the amazing punk warbler, Lene Lovich.

As a result, Duncan Heath of ICM immediately offered to represent me, and there was the usual talk of Hollywood. The producers, however, were not entirely happy. Whilst they loved this episode, it effectively demonstrated that popular drama series could be designed to carry twice the story, twice the intensity of the run-of-the-mill effort, and, they just did not have the resources to handle that.



recording **Crown Court** (1973)

What does a director do with material like **Crown Court**? Is your task to make it look as usual in order not to disenchant returning viewers, or do you try to put your stamp on? I noticed a long pan during the final sermon of the judge in *Conspiracy – Regina v Luckhurst & Sawyer* which explores all of the courtroom — I don't remember seeing that in other episodes.

I was one of the original team on **Crown Court**. It was then considered quite revolutionary to have twelve members of the public into the studio to form the jury, for them to debate the evidence, and give their verdict live. For their benefit, the camera and floor crew were all required to wear suits and ties, and the director was expected to record the show, as far as possible, in real time with as few breaks as possible. The original producer, Michael Dunlop, also had the idea of giving bottles of champagne to the winning legal team, but this soon had to be abandoned because fierce competition broke out between the actors — they would refuse to say certain lines in case they might incriminate themselves or weaken their case.

From a director's point-of-view it was one giant blown-up version of, what David Bordwell has called, "the dinner-table problem". Classical film editing is based on the fundamental principle of keeping the camera on one side of a line drawn between the eyes of two people looking at each other. Normally this works fine, but when people gather round a dinner-table they naturally sit in a circle and every time a new person speaks

everyone tends to look towards them, so the eye-lines are constantly changing. This may sound obvious, but, in practice, it can turn into a nightmare.

The set for **Crown Court** was based on the fixed plan of an English high court — the only difference being that the aisles were made wider in order to accommodate studio cameras and booms — so, the barristers face the judge, him in the middle, with the witness box to his right and the jury to his left. But what this means is that, for example, every time the judge or one of the barristers turns from addressing the witness to directly addressing the jury all the eye-lines change. Further, the camera positions for the defence, on one side of the broad centre block, are hopeless for the prosecution, on the other side, rendering up only profiles.

Remember that the show was recorded in long continuous blocks, with simultaneous cutting between



Roger (c. 1980)

four or five cameras, each trailing a fat cable from the studio walls. So, around the pictures which you see on your screen, there was a continuous dance of technicians going on, often at high speed — out of doors, under cables, round the back of the set, and into doors on the other side; or, perhaps, to shoot through traps which were also simultaneously opening and closing. As a director you had to think, not only of what was going on at that moment, but of clearing cameras and equipment in time for them to be ready and waiting for what lay ahead.

To return to your question — I always attempt to put my personal stamp on everything I do!

Sutherland's Law was another of your early series - one of your first assignments for the BBC.

About all I remember of **Sutherland's Law** was being seized by the insane idea of starting the show with a

tracking shot over the sea — in close-shot you would come upon floating tissues and trinkets and all the contents of a forsaken handbag, finding a woman's hair, and then her hand, and finally her battered body bobbing on the ebb tide.

To achieve this we dropped the grips off at the beach early in the morning, at low tide, together with a lorry load of orange boxes. While we went on filming elsewhere, they set to filling the boxes with pebbles and building a pier out to the sea, on top of which was then set the track and dolly. We returned in the afternoon, and waited for the tide to come in, way past our pier, to just the right height.

The actress, Katherine Stark, playing the dead girl, then had to lie there, in mid-winter, being buffeted by the icy waves, while the camera team practiced the tricky maneuvers and made endless adjustments. At the time I felt quite nervous about asking her to do this, but I have since discovered that I need not have worried. Actors never catch cold while they are working — they have too much adrenalin pumping through their bodies — but, give them a day off — that is when they catch cold.

we felt like gangsters ourselves, about to do a hit-and- run on "Aunty"

Gangsters is like **The Singing Detective** for the 1970s - avant-garde TV. Did the actors, crew and producer feel they were involved in something unusual, in quality drama way ahead of its time?

You bet! Everyone involved was well aware that this was not your usual series. "We'll never work again" was the constant refrain on the shoot. In fact, I think we felt rather like gangsters ourselves, about to do a hit-and-run on "Aunty" (as the BBC was affectionately known). Previously, I had made a bit of a splash with a way-out single drama called **Little Fears**, featuring the brothers Tom and Keith Bell, playing old and younger versions of the same character. This had been seen by Philip Saville, among the finest of the first generation directors, and instigator of the original one-off film of **Gangsters**. Consequently, I was sent these crazy scripts ...

I well remember my first meeting with the writer, Philip Martin: script editor, Peter Anson, was in a state of high anxiety, because on a previous series Philip had taken off his jacket and threatened the director with fisticuffs. Peter knew that if I did the job I intended to change things left, right, and centre; but, he need not have worried ... We got on famously, as it soon transpired that Philip wasn't precious about changes at all — as long as they moved the drama in the direction of being more "extraordinary" and not more "normal". We agreed that was the only way to go.

Later, I was amused to discover that things I had rejected at that meeting — such as the ludicrous “W.C. Fields” character — found their way into Alistair Reid’s scripts.

Alistair Reid directed four episodes, whereas you directed two — would that have been because yours contained the spectacular truck chase? And another thing, which has always been a mystery to me: if two directors work on a serial/series, what do they do to make it match? Do you have ‘style’ discussions before shooting begins, do you communicate during the shooting — how do you make it look ‘organic’?

Nice of you to suggest that my action sequence could compensate for two whole episodes! It was simply the case that the lead time between a commission being made and transmission dates did not give enough time for one director to do the whole of a six-part serial. Here, I was very much the junior director. Later, on serials such as **The Boy Who Won the Pools** and **Bombay Blue**, I took the lead position and other directors were brought in to fill out the middle. There is inevitably a degree of rivalry in this set-up, but the situation on **Gangsters** was extreme.

When I arrived at Pebble Mill to start preproduction I discovered that Alistair, who at this time was going around in a cowboy hat and boots, had forbidden his team to speak to any of my team. One day I caught a few feet of his rushes, having been called into the projection room by the producer; when Alistair found out he flew into a rage ... (or so it was whispered to me later). However, his production office was only just across the corridor from mine, so what he was doing could not be kept entirely secret.

One day I became aware of a lot of visitors trooping in and out in preparation for the next day’s shoot. My assistant discovered that he had a giant feature-film crane coming up from London, a special effects team, stunt men, and a kung-fu martial arts expert. I thought, *WOW, must be a really big scene Alistair is shooting!* When everyone had gone home that night, I decided I would look it up. I found the schedule, the scene number, pulled out the script — and could hardly believe my eyes. The scene had one actor, no dialogue, no action, and merited a single line of description, along the lines of “Red Stick meditates in the forest at dawn.”

Slowly, the penny dropped: if this was the way Alistair was treating a pretty much nothing scene like this, and I shot all my stuff in the usual TV manner of quick-in/quick-out matching over-the-shoulder two-shots, then my episodes were going to look pathetic by comparison! From that moment on it was all out war. Anything that Alistair could do I could do bigger, better, wilder! To cut to the chase — if Alistair was going to use a giant crane mounted on the back of a lorry, then I would use one traveling up a motorway at speed.

The shot in question started on the wheels of an articulated lorry traveling along the motorway, rose up to see the driver in the cab, continued up to see the star of

the show, Maurice Colbourne, clinging to a full load of logs on the back, and then up in the air to let the lorry pass underneath, panning it round and away amidst other traffic. You have to remember that this was before the days of hot-heads, so both the operator and focus puller had to ride beside the camera on the end of the arm. As you can imagine, just the wind buffeting would cause considerable problems, and initial enquiries indicated that it would be impossible to get insurance to make the shots, it was considered far too dangerous. But the cameraman, John Williams, knew that he would never get another chance to do something like this, and was determined to do it. So, the relevant paperwork was conveniently mislaid until it was already in the can.



Chai Lee (c.1977)

This is the kind of spirit which prevailed on **Gangsters**. We were determined to push the boundaries in any and every way possible — including an extended, full-frontal nude scene.

Which leads us to two of the series’ many assets, Elizabeth Cassidy and Chai Lee.

The two leading ladies could not have been more different. Liz Cassidy hated being photographed to such

an extent that it lead her to give up acting shortly after the series ended; but Chai was in her element. She had just come from shooting a film called *The Last Madame Butterfly*, which was an arty sex romp in the manner of the *Emmanuelle* films, so I knew she wasn't shy. When we did the scene where Chai drops everything and dances round the studio set in a stylized love-making routine, jaws dropped, everyone was just left speechless. We really didn't know whether we would get away with it.

... the Programme Committee had been running the tape backwards and forwards to count the number of times our nude actress jigged up and down

The completed episode was duly submitted to the Programme Committee, which had to give its approval before it could be broadcast; producer, David Rose, was invited in to argue the case, while I waited outside ... and waited ... and waited ... and ... Eventually, David came out, very stern-faced, and drew me aside to speak in private. He said, "Roger, do you realize that Chai goes up and down twelve times?" (I must admit it amused me considerably to think that the Programme Committee had been running the tape backwards and forwards to count the number of times our nude actress jigged up and down while clinging to the top of a wardrobe.) Speechless, I shook my head. "Well," he said, "the Committee have given it careful consideration, and they really don't feel that they can allow more than eight." And that was it — one small cut, and we were through.

However, on repeat viewings the sequence was cut almost in its entirety, as was that of Red Stick being impaled on the blades of a forklift truck and then hoisted into the air. They obviously didn't get the comic book context in which all this was done.

The series 1990 with Edward Woodward was next ...

There's a funny story I can tell you about 1990 — as you know, there is a scene in which a helicopter dives down at mourners around a grave in an attempt to disperse them. Now, in "the business" everyone knew that Edward Woodward wore a toupee, but he always flattered himself that no-one knew. So, when he read this scene, he came to me, and, shifting nervously from one foot to the other, sheepishly asked whether I thought the character might wear a hat. I looked at him as if he was completely mad, and said, "It's a funeral, Teddy, how can you possibly wear a hat?" He nodded, murmured, and went away lost for words. I later heard that major special operations followed behind the locked doors of the makeup room. I don't know whether they used elastic or super-glue, but, the scene was shot and the wig stayed on!

Incidentally, the most terrifying experience I have ever

had filming resulted from that sequence. The helicopter which you see on screen was also used as a camera platform to take POV shots from the air. To make this possible, the doors on one side of the machine were taken right off, and the cameraman and I were crammed in behind the pilot. But, the cameraman then decided it would be better to shoot from the other side, so the doors on that side were also taken off, without putting the first lot back. The pilot then gleefully offered to further assist by flying the craft sideways! As you know, the action was to dive straight towards the ground, only pulling up at the last minute. So, in effect, I was now sitting in a wind tunnel being hurtled down towards earth at maximum speed. But what made it really terrifying was that, on every run, at the last moment, when the pilot pulled back on the joystick, the skids on the bottom of the helicopter would scrape the branches of the trees opposite making the most god-awful noise.

Sadly, that pilot died shortly afterwards doing stunts for a James Bond movie.

How would you explain that even people who are not into detective shows love **Shoestring**?



Trevor Eve in *Shoestring* (series 1) © BBC

A bunch of us came together, hell-bent on showing what we could do. Graeme MacDonald had just taken over as Head of Series and Serials at the BBC, it was Robert Banks Stewart's first job as producer, and it was my first chance to do an all-film drama. It was also the first big break for Trevor Eve.

I have had viewers tell me that the series had the same appeal for them as the Beatles. Certainly a large part of this must come down to the casting. At the time, Trevor seemed a very odd choice; he was too young, inexperienced, and somewhat over-weight. When I first met him I thought Bob had gone slightly mad, and Graeme even suggested that, perhaps, they could send him off to a health farm, to make him more attractive. In the end we decided to go in the opposite direction; gave him bulky suits and made the character more quirky and irreverent. It worked.

The episode, *Knock for Knock*, gave me the only opportunity I've ever had to film in my home town of Bristol, and of course, the idea of doing car stunts on the

steepest residential street in Britain was irresistible. I also had my most spectacular location for a fight scene, in the mud at the base of the Severn Bridge. For this the camera was floated on large boards. I recall that the make-up girl had prepared a little palette of muds to touch up the artists between takes; then, I called *action* and in an instant the actors were covered head to toe, like monsters rising from the primordial ooze. Her little brush and palette were hardly up to the job!

In one of the most shattering moments of the whole series Eddie gets nervous during his first broadcast. Was that all in the script, or did it work so well because of Trevor Eve's input?

It was his off-screen agenda of acting a hell-raising movie star that was the problem.

I would have broken the sequence down into beats, a beginning, a middle, and an end — but Trevor was always very competent as an actor. It was his off-screen agenda of acting a hell-raising movie star that was the problem.

What was it like to shoot a car chase or a punch up for the BBC, compared to shooting similar action scenes for an ITV series?

The BBC invented their own way of doing television without regard for the outside world. For example, a production assistant at the BBC did a totally different job from a production assistant in ITV or, for that matter, in the film industry. They even had their own set of standard colours, and (would you believe?) their own scale, with units of a BBC "rationalized-foot". The why and wherefore of this is something I never understood, but it meant that if you used a camera protractor from ITV, you would find it slowly drifting out of true.

When I first went to work, as a freelance, for the BBC, like all newcomers, I was handed an enormous, fat rule book, which, I never found the time to read. I do know, however, that this covered the correct procedure for everything and could sometimes become an insurmountable hurdle. For example, on **Sexton Blake and the Demon God** (1978) I wanted to shoot a live cobra. The rule book demanded that the snake be surrounded by a solid barrier eighteen feet in diameter and six feet high with no-one but a handler inside. So, the only way I could shoot this was by cut-ins on a long lens from a studio crane. In addition to that, I had to have stationed, actually in the studio, a first aid caravan manned by a doctor and qualified nurse. It was quite a shock, years later, during the shooting of **Bombay Blue** for C4, to discover that in India these snakes can frequently be found in open baskets outside temples, a continuous flood of people streaming past.

As to the specifics of car chases and punch-ups, there was no difference — at least, not for long, because techniques picked up at one company would rapidly be

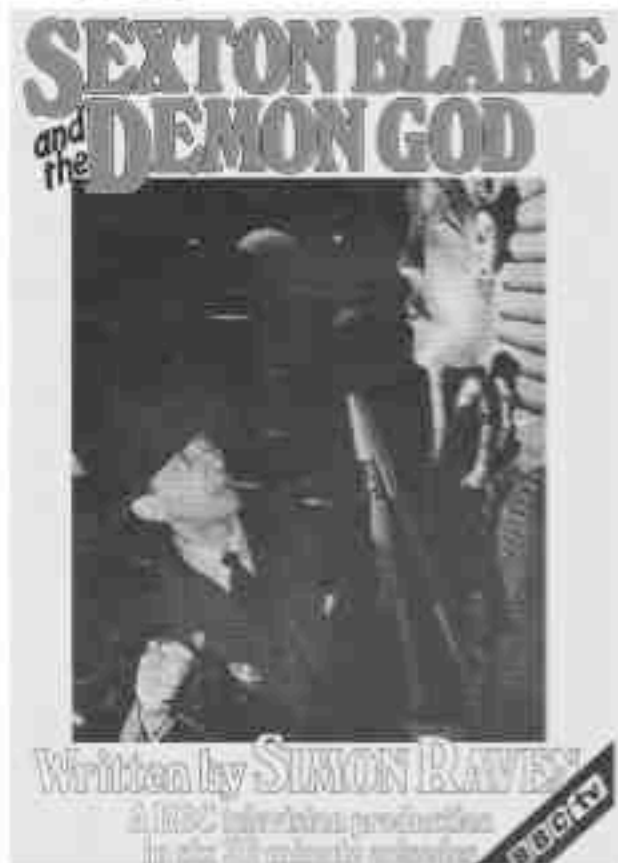
cross-pollinated to the other by freelances like myself. The use of Gzap cameras, for example — these were tiny World War II cameras, designed for use in aircraft wings to record hits, which carried about one and a half minutes of film, and could be planted right in the line of action for car stunts, etc. I really can't remember where or when I first used these, but they soon became a regular item. The language of film is universal, and far more important than the company hoops you have to jump through is the spirit and inventiveness of the individuals in the team.

A production team which did have a reputation for exactly those qualities was responsible for **The Professionals**. How were you hired for this series?

I was the new kid on the block, producer Ray Menmuir, had a spare slot and decided to put me to the test.

I'm sure the name **The Professionals** was chosen not just because it was appropriate for the series, but because this was the way the guys who ran it liked to think of themselves. It was film industry, as opposed to TV, and, you could say, was a "kick ass" kind of organization.

I arrived, and was handed a script, *Mixed Doubles*, written by Brian Clemens, who happened to be one of the executive producers. This had a solid concept at base, and some nice interplay between the two main characters, but was over-long, and in several respects did not work. Further, there were action scenes which were alarmingly vague, with directions like, *Bodie takes the*



Jeremy Clyde as Sexton Blake (publicity sheet) © BBC

guard out, without a clue as to how this might plausibly be done. Yet, to my bafflement, I found that I could get no-one there to agree to any of the script's shortcomings, or, in fact, touch a word — because of that name on the cover. Eventually it was whispered to me that if something didn't work it would be best for me to make changes on location. Once again, it was down to the director as fall guy! But it turned out okay, and the episode was among the first batch to be shown in the US.



Lewis Collins and Martin Shaw during a break in filming.

My most vivid memory of the shoot is rehearsing 'tough guy' scenes, first thing in the morning, with Martin and Lewis. It was difficult to keep a straight face because Martin's head would always be a mass of baby-pink curlers. His *mop* was invented by the make-up department, and this was the way he had to start off each day. Meanwhile, Lewis's main concern was that I should not place the camera anywhere which might exaggerate the size of his buttocks. It was whispered to me that this sensitivity resulted from the unwelcome admiration of some of his fans. I didn't know it at the time, but have since learnt, that there was a virtual underground industry going on rewriting all the stories with a queer slant.

Shortly before I joined the show, the zen inspired cult, "est" (Werner Erhard's Seminar Training), had hit London, and Martin had been one of the first of many actors to participate, and a prime mover in recruiting others. Among those was my actress girlfriend of the time, who, in turn signed me up for the training. As a result, Martin and I spent a lot of time bandying around the jargon and catch-phrases — no doubt, much to the annoyance of everyone else.

Martin was desperate to return to the classical theatre and serious acting parts, but was held by his contract. He claimed that "est" had saved him from serious

depression. Lewis, on the other hand, also yearned to break free, but in a quite different direction. He had been taken in by the action-man persona, and wanted to leave to join the SAS ... or so he said. One lunch break he came jogging past with a heavy pole across his shoulders — commando training, he informed us — but the crew just went on munching, refusing to be impressed.

During the shoot there was little friction between cast and crew, just a weariness from the relentless pressure of the schedule — which was a whole lot faster than crews in England were used to working. The regulars were all tired from previous episodes before they began on mine, and ended up even more tired. As director, I was given just two weeks to prepare what can be seen was quite a complicated action picture, and, then, another two weeks to shoot it. In England we have the expression "flying by the seat of your pants" — which just about sums it up.

Were the casting decisions for *Mixed Doubles* all yours?

On this one I simply did not have as much time to devote to casting as I normally would. Ian McCulloch and David Beames I cast immediately from previous performances I had seen, but a lot of effort went into trying to find an under-sized actor to play one of the villains. Every time a script calls for some peculiar physical characteristic the choice is severely limited (even with the many hundreds of actors we have in England), and on this occasion we hit a bad time for availabilities. Just before shooting we cast Nicholas Grace, who, while not as small as I would have liked, was, at least, shorter than anyone else in the cast, and had a charisma all his own.

Was it never an option for you to do another episode, and why?

No, in fact, I rarely did more than one or two episodes of any on-going series at this time, because I was afraid that going round on the treadmill would take away any edge that I had, and turn me into the proverbial salary-man. episodes the best of the bunch, and I think, in quite a few cases, I produced a contender, at least.



A fight scene from *Mixed Doubles* © Mark 1 Productions

Who would object to this after seeing *Knock for Knock*, *The Hood and the Harlequin*, *Mixed Doubles*, *Girls' Talk* and – you will hate me for this! – *Why Don't They Tell You These Things* and *The Full Flying Carpet Treatment*, from *The Enigma Files* ... Why did half of the main cast change after only a handful of episodes?

Half the cast couldn't act and the ones that could were unhappy about being in a show with the ones that couldn't. (I'll let you work out which were which.) And further more, no-one wanted to be in Cardiff!

I just remember my delight at discovering that the city had a wonderful array of glass-roofed arcades, which, following, the Surrealists, I have always found to be quite magical. There were straight ones and curved ones, S-shaped ones, ones with Y junctions and T junctions. I joined them all up to make a chase. Into the middle of this sequence walked an unsuspecting member of the public with a piece of plumbing over his shoulder. It was perfect.

Why would you say was the series of interest for foreign markets, bearing in mind that West Germany did not bother to buy *Shoestring* or *Bergerac*?

Hard to imagine — sales are a total mystery and frequently have little to do with artistic merit. For me, the first series of *Bergerac* was like a breath of fresh air. No-one had filmed in Jersey for thirty-odd years, and the island had the most wonderful variety of locations in a small area of anywhere I had ever been. As you know, it has long been a tax haven for the rich, but the community at that time were all so bored that I had millionaires queuing up to be extras for £30 a day. The producer, Bob Banks Stewart, had the concept of the place being half French, half British, which was hardly the case — its French history had pretty much disappeared. So, to compensate, we always went around with a lorry full of French signs, potted palms, and the like. For my episode, *The Hood and the Harlequin*, I had the main square in St. Helier completely transformed, changing chemists and bag shops into cafés and filling the area with tables, umbrellas, and a band.

The script called for a beautiful, but dangerous, model, and I think I saw just about every young girl in London. Then, right at the end, up turned Greta Scacchi, having just come out of drama school, which she had financed herself by modeling in Milan. She was quite simply the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. And, of course, I was not alone in thinking that; to be out with her was

extraordinary — men continuously falling over themselves gawking at her, or trying to touch her, or slip her notes. On set, I was, at first, quite thrown by her attitude; then I discovered that she had "paradoxical reactions". When most people become nervous they tense up, but Greta would go in the opposite direction; go slack, and appear as if she couldn't give a damn. Still, it did not take long for her to find the poise to carry off the first of her famous nude scenes, which the *Sunday Times* later described as "fire-bombing the libido". Before the episode was complete I showed a rough-cut to James Ivory and Ismail Merchant, and from that she got the starring role in *Heat and Dust*.

Weren't people queuing to slip notes to Cecile Paoli, too? I'm sure you get my drift - weren't there HUNDREDS?!

Of course, Cecile had her admirers too, but you must understand that the reaction to Greta was something else. Perhaps, because she was big and bright and had a certain insouciant air, she had even more impact off-screen than on.

Brian Clemens is quoted as saying that Terence Feely was "weak on plot but strong on dialogue" - do we agree that for *The Hood and the Harlequin* everything fell into place quite nicely?

The gestation of scripts is rarely as simple as the credits might lead you to believe. Writers in the UK, who had

come from a theatrical tradition, were used to ruling the roost, and TV at this time was a continual battle ground. On 1990, for example, the writer, Wilfred Greatorex, succeeded in getting a contract stipulating that no changes were to be made by the director during rehearsal or shooting. This I refused to obey. In the end a compromise was negotiated that any changes made by me would be logged by the PA, and sent to him at the end of each day. As it turned out, I behaved as normal, and heard no more about it.

To get back to *Bergerac*, Bob Banks Stewart was notorious for rewriting every script. However, by the time I arrived on the series, he was in a state of near exhaustion. He had done some work on Terence's script, but had left inconsistencies and certain plot elements unresolved. I took what he had done and rewrote that, changing characters, plot and locations. This I gave back to Bob, who did a script edit and polish on my version. Further modifications were then made during the location recce, to enable things like the filming in St. Malo, and the motorbike sequence on Elizabeth Quay.



Greta Scacchi, casting picture. (1981)

So, the script which we shot was four versions away from the one which Terence wrote. But, he obviously felt that it worked, because, when he saw the final cut, he gallantly sent us a telegram of congratulations.

The man who talks to Greta Scacchi in the discotheque is immediately recognizable as stuntman Marc Boyle (now deceased I believe), working here under Paul Weston. Can you shed some light on your collaboration with stunt people, on this series and elsewhere?

... these guys are all a bunch of adrenaline freaks

It was indeed Marc, who was delighted to have a credited part, and at least one scene where he did not have to drive, fight, or do any of the other things for which he was well-known. Over the years I worked with a good number of stunt men, but my favourites were Paul Weston, for organisation, Roy Alon for anything over-the-top, and Marc for precision. On *Bookie*, when I needed someone to accelerate straight at an old lady crossing the road and stop within inches of her, it was Marc I chose. Another important member of the team was the stunt engineer, Dave Bickers; he was responsible for things like preparing the car roof to be sheared off for the road sequence in *Gangsters*.

Of course, you have to understand that, despite anything they may say to the contrary, these guys are all a bunch of adrenaline freaks. I remember once going out on a recce with Paul Weston and standing on a bridge explaining the sequence I had in mind, while he did a lot of sucking in of breath and shaking his head. And, then, while my back was turned, he suddenly leapt over the rail, walked out on a narrow beam, and casually looked around, before saying, "No, it's too dangerous to do without a safety net." Damn it, he had just done it, without a net, without a camera, and without being paid!

At the time of *The Hood and the Harlequin* the stuntmen's union thought they would raise their profile by issuing all the guys with crisp white T-shirts, with the word "STUNTS" in big black letters on front and back. Unfortunately, this had the effect on the hot-heads of St. Helier of a red rag to a bull; they just had to accelerate their cars straight at the them for the pleasure of seeing a stuntman jump out of the way. The T-shirts promptly went back into suitcases and were rarely seen again. Stunt driving can, I am afraid, be infectious; after filming a big sequence you can bet there will be a lot of squealing of tyres as one and all leave the car park.

You directed an episode of *Strangers* after that – *Charlie's Brother's Birthday*.

The most astonishing thing happened on the casting of that show. The script called for a romantic interlude between Bulman (played by Don Henderson) and a woman police officer. Now, Don had a terrific following as a quirky character actor, but it took a real stretch of the imagination to think of him as a romantic lead. So, to play opposite him I needed an actress who was both tough and attractive — but not to such an extent as to make the relationship unbelievable. After a while the casting director left me to go through the giant Spotlight Casting Directory. When she came back I showed her a picture and said, "What do you think?" At first she gave me an odd look, and then asked if I was making a joke. Out of the hundreds of actresses in that directory, unbeknown to me, I had picked the woman to whom Don was actually married in real life, Shirley Stelfox. Up till that time they had never appeared together on screen.

I also struck lucky with locations. The climatic chase sequence, as written, was a dull affair, down back alleys, etc. I had an idea to do something like the end of *The Third Man*, and sent my location scout off to see if he could find any local sewers which might be suitable. For one reason or another he couldn't, but he did hear tell of



Shirley Stelfox and Don Henderson

an underground river beneath the small town of Stockport. We went out to see it, and could hardly believe our eyes. Right beneath the main shopping precinct was a vast concrete-lined cavern with metal inspection baskets running on rails along the ceiling. The only way into this was through a door in the side of a gents lavatory, and was completely unknown to the vast majority of people living in the area. (When we came to film you can imagine their startled reactions as a long line of females in anoraks trooped in and out.) It took a day to pre-light (which is not normally possible on a TV series), and the filming was touch and go. First I had an actor injured, and then his stunt double — I had to shoot

the hands of one and the feet of the other, but we got it in the can. We found the shaft where they emerge from the ground — on-going sewage works — quite by chance, at another location all together. It was, later, said that this sequence was the nearest a TV series ever came to doing James Bond.

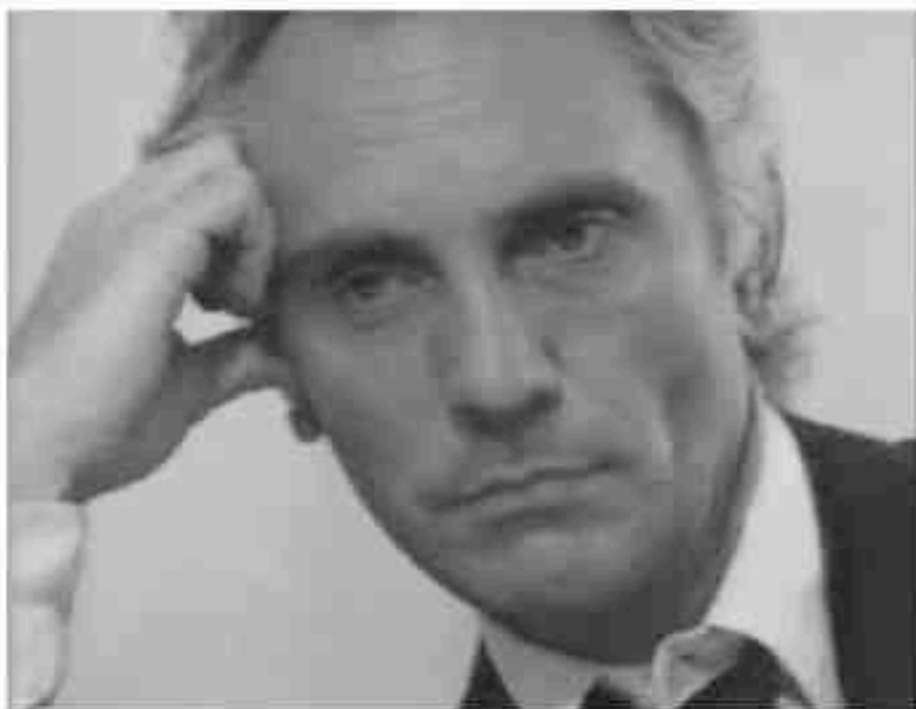
The soundtrack, I think, also adds a good deal to the sequence. Series, such as this, usually did not have money in the budget, or time in the schedule, to have music composed to picture. There was normally opening and closing title music, and a selection of links, and that was about it. Otherwise you could use tracks off library discs, which were usually a pallid pastiche, or ... Here I set out to build up a track using extracts from commercially available records. Besides effects tracks of water, industrial sounds, and the like, there are four music tracks in three layers — two different tracks by the German electro-band, Tangerine Dream, and two tracks by the way-out English jazzists, Pigbag; all mixed seamlessly together. I like to think, this was deejaying in the contemporary sense, before the term was invented.

I always find it difficult to understand Don Henderson's acting and timing — I enjoy it, of course, but nonetheless it seems very odd (quoting Shakespeare whilst his eyebrows move frantically etc). Was the idea to be different from the Mark McManus / John Thaw etc. "deadpan" school?

To direct Don was really quite a feat; not because he was at all difficult, but because one had to attune to his unique way of doing things. From a bit part player, who sent out shoals of letters to directors decorated with asterisks, wavy underlining, and the like, he turned himself, quite late in life, into a TV star with a considerable following. In Manchester people would shout out to him in the street as they might to a pop star, and this all came about through the character-part of Bulman. The first appearance was as one half of a double act in the three-parter **The XYY Man**, which was developed into a longer series; this got such a positive audience response that the character was then written into the first series of **Strangers**. At the end of its fifth run that series folded, but, Don's character was still to live on in a vehicle built specifically for him, the series, **Bulman**.

He was terribly proud of the longevity of the character, which was really as much Don's invention as Don was himself; the idea, for example, of eating a fried egg sandwich whilst wearing a pair of old woolly gloves was entirely his. Similarly, in real life Don always carried his

script in a plastic bag from the supermarket, and this is something he took with him into the character. During my shoot on **Bulman** he was thrilled to bits to get hold of another bag with a picture of a Keystone Cop on the front, and, I think, in one shot I featured it. He was always working on off-beat ideas like this. He was certainly different from Mark or John, but I doubt that played much part in his deliberations. Don just was different. You always knew the character would go his own way no matter what, but, above all, I think his appeal was in conveying an impish, but shy, spirit inside that landslide of an exterior.



Terence Stamp in *Deadly Recruits*

Two episodes of **Chessgame** followed, also for Granada. They look, to put it mildly, splendid, not least because of a good cast, and seem to have benefited from good production standards.

This was the only TV series which Terence Stamp ever did. Whenever I lined up a shot I was aware of framing a sixties icon: Terence was the most charismatic man I have ever met, and, whether he walked into a room, or into a frame, he commanded attention. Immediately preceding this, he had spent years travelling the world in the pursuit of wisdom and experimenting with diets to clear his system of the effects of drug abuse. This shoot marked his return to work, but in any scene involving physical activity, it became clear that he was still quite frail.

Once a director delivers a final cut he has no control over its fate. Some programmes, like **The Professionals**, seem to go on, constantly being shown, one place or another, forever. Others disappear without a trace. This, I thought was the fate of **Chessgame**. Then I got an email from one of the producers of Joan Collins' **The Bitch**, making cryptic comments about a feature — which I had apparently directed — called, **Deadly Recruits**. On

following up I discovered that the rights to **Chessgame** had been sold to an American company, who had cut the two episodes together, renamed it, and released it as a feature film. It was only thanks to you that I learnt that, in The States the movie has since been released on DVD.

The Boy Who Won the Pools appears to have been rather different from all those series (shame on me, I haven't seen it!).



Behind the scenes of **The Boy Who Won the Pools**: Michael Waterman, Don Henderson, Gillian Martell, Roger

For me this was a rare foray into comedy. I had previously done episodes of Alan Plater's **Trinity Tales**, and, **Moody & Pegg**, for ITV, but this was the first time I committed to a series. The concept was just so appealing — a teenage boy wins loads of money and buys himself a stately home, a Ferrari, a tiger, and a reggae band. Of course, he's too young to drive the Ferrari so he hires a Swedish au pair to do the job for him — well, wouldn't you? That part was played by the model Sylvia Sachs, who swore she was quite used to driving powerful sports cars. Unfortunately, the very first time she got behind the wheel of the Ferrari she drove it straight into a ditch. (The producer was not pleased.) The band was organised by the legendary reggae mixer, Dennis Bovell, but the lead singer had to be a girl who was also to play one of the main parts. Among those who came to audition was Sade, but she was too shy to carry off the acting part, so we cast Vivienne McKone, who also went on to make hit records. And then there was the tiger ...

When I first read the script, which included scenes with the beast in the back of a taxi, walking round a house full of people, and the like, I said that it was too dangerous. The writer and producer were crest-fallen, and persuaded me to, at least, go to see some tigers that were famously tame. In fact the handlers treated them just like pussy cats ... at least, while I was making my initial assessment.

I have learnt since that a tiger is never quite predictable. For nine days out of ten it may be a docile pet, but on the tenth ... One day we were shooting one of the tigers being walked down a country lane, when, suddenly it decided to take off. Two burly men on the end of a rope could not hold that animal back — it was down the lane, over a wall, and into a cottage garden, before they got it back under control. Luckily, there was no old lady in the garden! On another day, I noticed that one of the handlers had blood pouring out of holes in the leg of his jeans — he insisted the tiger was "just playing". But the scariest moment came when we were filming the tiger exploring an ante-room in the old house. The camera was set in the doorway on "baby legs", the operator crouched behind it, while I was sat on the floor beside him. Foolishly, someone had left an aerosol can amongst the junk in the room; the tiger bit into it, and was startled by the gas going off in its face. It turned, and in one bound flew straight over our heads and out the door. Thank heavens we were not on tall legs! The handlers were after it in a flash, their gun at the ready, but frankly, I think they would sooner have shot

themselves than their "baby", who was also, of course, their bread and butter.

Going back to action series, you briefly worked on **Dempsey & Makepeace**. Could you explain why the stakeout scene in **Mantrap** was so difficult to shoot?

It was one of those things which seemed good on the page, but in practice ... the script demanded an entire street, sufficiently urban to support hot-dog sellers and the like, with stunt driving, back alleys, parking spaces, telephone boxes, a burn-out shop and a pub where an armed siege takes place, involving the firing of guns in

... our stars were in the throes of a stormy affair ...

the street — something about which the British police are always nervous. So, this was certainly not just something we could shoot on the fly! We had to take control of a whole city strip. It was a production manager's nightmare, but this always comes back to the director, because he is continuously under pressure to compromise, to find ways of making the unbelievable believable, and still keep to a schedule that, with each new problem recedes into the *blue beyond*.

In the case of *Mantrap* we had an added complication because, shortly before filming was due to begin, the news leaked out that our stars, Michael Brandon and Glynis Barber, were in the throes of a stormy affair, and we were besieged by press. Extra guards were drafted in, but from such a large area, it was almost impossible to keep them all out. At one point filming had to be stopped because a wall started to collapse under the weight of photographers. You can imagine, this was not a great atmosphere in which to be working for artistes or technicians. In the end, despite all the added security, a girl, posing as a media student, tricked her way into the artistes' enclosure and snatched a picture of Glynis running to her caravan in tears. And, there it was the following day, splashed over the tabloids.



Dempsey & Makepeace Michael Brandon, Glynis Barber © Granada Media

Saracen, to me, is a great underrated series which just suffers from one thing - casting of the leads. Would you agree?

Saracen was stymied from the outset by a failure of nerve among the programme executives. The original concept was to do a series in the manner of the ITV classic, *Callan*, which starred Edward Woodward in the title role, and Russell Hunter, as a character called "Lonely". As I remember it, the titles ran over a swinging naked light bulb, it was as near as TV came to creating a series *notre*. But the planners of *Saracen* got worried that this might prove too dark for current audiences ... so, maybe, the series should be more like *The Professionals*? Hence, the idea of the double male lead was introduced. Then someone thought that for sales it should be more like *Dempsey & Makepeace*, so one of them was made an American. Then someone else thought that, as this was the days of women's empowerment, there should be, not a dolly bird, like *Makepeace*, but a feisty female as one of the team. So the whole thing just ended up as a hodgepodge with no clear direction.

As to the leads, they were never clear whether they were meant to be ruthless or charming, sexy or cerebral, cold or cuddly. Sadly, executives are always scared of the dark side, but these are often the shows which make most

impact: take, *Edge of Darkness*, or the stunning opening episodes of *Twin Peaks*, for example.

When you compare your work during the 1980s to action fare of the previous decade, where would you see differences - or even progress?

It's always more invigorating to be in at the beginning of something, because everything is open to creative input and not chained up to a system. From the beginning, everyone was aware that the Americans shot film series faster than we did, but this was achieved with a studio-based system, enormous crews, all sets pre-lit and equipment and resources for every eventuality kept on stand-by. By contrast, we opted to work more on location, at the mercy of the English weather, traffic, building works, what have you. Our budgets were always tight and, at least in the early days, we worked with far fewer crew. This was risky, of course, but in many ways gave us a freshness, an edge. For example, the atmosphere of the scenes with Katia Tchenko at the lugubrious Soviet embassy, in *Bulman*, or of Edita Brychta in a real Victorian mental hospital, for *Call Me Mister*, could not have been achieved in a pre-lit studio. Over time, however, it was inevitable that mainstream series would swing in the direction of a factory production-line, and I found there was more room for creativity in off-beat mini-series, such as *Bookie*, and *Winners & Losers*.

These series, produced by Robert Love, were wonderful opportunities for in depth character studies — set in the sporting subcultures of Glasgow, *Bookie* around horse racing, and *Winners & Losers* around boxing. The character that linked the two was a cigar-chomping old rogue, played by the stand-up comedian, Jimmy Logan.

When I went to Glasgow to shoot my first series, *Adam Smith*, in the early seventies, the city was deemed to be the worst slum in Europe. There were still tenement blocks there lit with gas lamps, where all the mantles had been bent out of shape in order to bubble gas through pints of milk for a quick knockout. By the time I returned to shoot *Bookie*, and *Winners & Losers*, in the late eighties, the city was winning architectural awards on its way to being designated European City of Culture. These two series were about the effect these changes had on the life of the people.

Bookie has one of my own favorite dramatic scenes, when Danny, the old-time bookmaker, played by Maurice Roëves, calls unexpectedly on the widow of his best friend, played by Isla Blair. At the last minute I had the idea that Isla should play the scene in a bath robe while combing back her wet hair. She had the features that could carry off such a severe look, and, at the same time, it gave her a presence which was both sensual and untouchable. I later set this against Villa Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No.5*, played on five cellos, which I think gave it just the right air of nostalgia for a romance that never was.



Isla Blair, in the scene with wet hair, from **Bookie**

Another scene which is memorable for me, is one in which an old tailor and compulsive gambler, played by Ian Bannen, has a breakdown and confesses his irredeemable debts to Danny. I staged this to happen during the course of a fitting so that much of the time he is behind Danny, or on his knees, or otherwise avoiding the look in his eyes. Ian carried it off to touching effect.

Winners & Losers centres around the exploitation of a young boxer, and in that role we cast a real young Glasgow boxer, John Ellis. In fact all the boxing scenes in the series are enacted by real professional boxers. But "reality" intruded a little too far when, in the middle of the shoot, the press discovered that Leslie Grantham, who plays the boxing promoter, Eddie Burt, had served a jail term for manslaughter. From that moment on our schedule became a constantly shifting game-plan to try to outwit the tabloid press who, as usual, were up to every trick — including hiding behind surgical masks, and, falsely announcing that Leslie's wife had given birth.

How did it come about that you were approached by the Dutch to do **Villa Borghese**, and by RTL in Germany to direct **Die Wache**?

The writer of **Deadly Recruits**, John Bresson, was bowled over by my off-beat approach to his script, about which he had his own doubts. For example, I introduced the cult, with its blind leader, all-white interrogation room, and sacrifice of the novice's hair. Following that, he put my name forward as director for a number of productions, but the only one to come to fruition was **Villa Borghese**. After the original Dutch writers failed to deliver John was asked to take over the scripting of the series, and, similarly, after disputes with two different Dutch directors, they decided it was time to bring in a director from the UK.

So, I returned from a break to find my answering machine crammed with messages from Holland. When I rang back, I was pitched a proposition which sounded quite improbable but agreed to fly to Amsterdam the following day just to discuss it. On arrival I was given an English-language script and sat in a room to read, but,

before I'd got even half-way through, I was taken to another room with perhaps eight people sitting around a table, including representatives from the broadcaster, and the sponsors. They immediately set to quizzing me on how I was going to treat the serial. I tried to tell them that I had not even read the first script, and, most certainly, had not agreed to direct the entire twelve parts ... but they just did not seem to hear.

I returned to London that night with scripts to read on the journey, picked up my bags, and went back the following day. There then followed the most hectic and fun-filled six months of my life. At that time there was enormous interest right across Europe in the British way of making drama series, and, especially, long-running soaps; but, in Holland, the producers had no idea of the scale of operation which was necessary to achieve that. They believed that a core team of ten or twelve people was necessary; I had to tell them that in the UK there would be, perhaps, ten or twelve times as many — with multiple directors, each with their own staff, multiple writers, a storyline department, several script editors, production co-ordinators, etc. I understand that on the Continent there was no custom and practise for this kind of collaboration, and, at that time, no-one of artistic repute would share credits. So, I ended up, in a state of near exhaustion, also writing the final two episodes (with Marja Tutert).



Behind the scenes of **Bookie**: Roger; members of the camera crew; Maurice Roëves



A break — (What do you mean, "a break"? This is us guys working! - RT) — during location work for *Die Wache*: Actors Axel Pape (left) and Gernot Schmidt, Roger (one of the Rhine bridges features in the background)

And, so to Germany: the producers of *Die Wache* were aware of my work in Holland, and also knew that I had directed a number of episodes of *The Bill* in the UK. *Die Wache* was intended to be a Rhineland version, but ended up being quite different in tone. At the centre of the British show was the character, Sergeant Cryer, played by the bony, acerbic actor, Eric Richard. In the German version this part was played by the rotund, avuncular actor, Hans Heinz Moser, because the producers insisted a German series had to have a jolly father figure at its head.

The staff were certainly more numerous than in Holland, but one thing that had not been entered into the equation was director's planning time. While, directing *The Ghost of Adelphi Terrace*, at the BBC, I had been shadowed by a group from RAI, who were astounded that we could do a quality drama with studio time of only two and a half times the length of the play. This, of course, was made possible by having everything pre-planned, and rehearsed; that's the way we were trained. Directors before my time were even more precise in specifying not only every camera position, but even what lens were to be used. Nevertheless, it appeared to come as a shock to the producers of *Die Wache* that British directors may be very efficient, but needed preparation time. Indeed, this was the reason why the system of alternating directors on a series had been devised in the first place. At the beginning, of *Die Wache*, there was intended to be but one director regardless of a relentless schedule of many episodes. Luckily for me, with rare exceptions, the German crews refused to work weekends; this was the one time I had to get ahead. But, of course, no-one could go on like that for long.

It is ironic to look back at, what I saw at the time as, "Continental craziness" — minimal crews, multi-tasking, impossible schedules, no preparation time — and realize that, to a degree, this was pointing the way forward into our present multi-channel age.

Let me ask this in a non-diplomatic fashion for a change: Isn't it a punishment for a British director to work with no-name German actors?

Not at all! It's always a privilege to work with an actor who is open and ready to share his sense of being alive. I've working with many actors from other countries, often in a language of which I had no direct understanding, and it is a joy to find that these things are no impediment. A dramatic situation is something we can all grasp, and film language is universal. It is only when an actor becomes a prisoner of his own ego that difficulties arise — when his priority becomes to project a certain image of himself, rather than something demanded by the part. A

good actor always retains a beginner's mind, in the sense that he is ready to try anything. An actor who doubts his own ability wants to cling to the few gimmicks which have proved successful in the past.

For me, *Villa Borghese*, and *Die Wache* were a great opportunity to escape my own culture, and marked the beginning of a period of some years during which I worked mainly abroad.

You already mentioned *Bombay Blue* *passim* — what else can you tell us about this production?

Bombay Blue was one of those surprise opportunities. I just got back from a rough shoot in Lithuania when I had a call from my long-time agent, Elizabeth Dench, asking whether I'd like to direct a thriller in Bombay. Of course, I would! When I arrived there in the middle of the night, I discovered that I had been booked into a place called, The Bombay Yacht Club, which must have been one of the last outposts of the British Raj. All the staff were dressed in little sailor suits with white shorts, the way that the Edwardians liked to dress their children, and you were not allowed to use money there, only tokens.

What made this production really unique, however, was not just that the story was set in this exotic and amazing



from *Bombay Blue*

city, but that it was to be an Indian co-production. The plan was to take no more than ten crew from the UK to join well over a hundred from the Bollywood film industry. Likewise, we would take only two actors, Shan Kahn and Donald Sumpter, and cast the others there.



Bombay Blue, publicity shot, Shan Kahn and Donald Sumpter

My first view of a Bollywood film set made a vivid impression. Everyone of importance had their own servant, or "spot boy" carrying umbrellas, towels and cooler boxes; there was noise with whistles being blown to cue the *action* and *cuts*; and everywhere great arcs of silver reflectors, each with its own minder stood at the base. Then, of course, there were the dancing girls, explosions and gun shots.

As you know, more films are made in Bombay than in Hollywood, but they rarely shoot in the city itself; it is such an over-whelming place that just to walk the length of the street can be an exhausting experience. To capture the feel of the city however was our whole point in going there; we wanted to film everything from film stars' villas to beggars' rat-ridden slums, from the teeming markets, to the polluted beaches. And, yes, we would even film in the midday sun!

This was culture shock with a vengeance! Early on we had to sack an Indian location manager because he refused to speak to Untouchables, several of whom we later used as extras — including one man, overcome with gratitude, who otherwise spent his life propelling his shrunken body around on a skateboard. We also shot at some of the locations which they had taken over, such as the great open laundry vats, through which I staged a chase scene. On several occasions we built our own hovels in the foreground of slums, and when we were finished these were eagerly grabbed to become real-life dwellings.

I soon discovered that Bollywood works a system, dividing each twenty-four hours into three shifts. An actor is hired for a shift, and, outside that time, expects to do no preparation at all — not even read the script. One of our main cast was Shekhar Suman, who was India's number one TV star at the time. Frequently he would be driven to our location asleep in the back of his car, having spent the whole night shift on another production.

On being woken he would not know where he was, much less the scene he was meant to be shooting. Once on the set, however, he was extremely professional, as, indeed, were most of the other Indian actors. But the performance which, for me, was most fun was the insanely over-the-top portrayal of bad guy, Ali Engineer, by Bollywood villain, Deepak Tijori.

After four or five months of heat and dust, hassle and corruption, diarrhoea and injury, all the British contingent started to go slightly mad. We developed unlikely cravings for grey rainy days and cheddar cheese ... Certainly, it was an experience to last a lifetime.

How would you summarize those experiences?

Looking back, I realize that I have spent a good part of my life locked into an intense game of which people on the outside can have little idea. Talk is easy and cheap, but to *show* something usually takes money, effort, and a great deal of tenacity. The emotion spent on creating a brief image, like a tiger in a ballroom, a severed head in a hold-all, or a moth beating against a light, is impossible to explain or justify. People have heart attacks, nervous breakdowns, floods of tears, over something which, in a moment, may pass unnoticed ...

One day, sitting with my editor for **Deadly Recruits**, I made a casual remark about the fire/water transitions. He stared at me, puzzled, and I realized that he hadn't a clue what I was talking about. I had to explain that I had designed the major transitions to go from fire to water, or vice versa, in some analogous way. For example, the scene may cut from actress Carmen du Sautoy splashing in a bath, to flames coming through the floorboards of an attic; or from a flashing red light, to ice cubes in a bucket; or from close on a cigarette lighter, to frogs beneath a waterfall. He immediately went spooling back, and was astonished to find these transitions and more were, indeed, there, in the film which he had spliced together.

But, if my editor hadn't noticed, after working on the film for months, then, perhaps, no-one ever has. Yet, still, it gives me a certain satisfaction to know that from my first notes to release on DVD, the pattern was always there. ■



Roger with Mulchand Dhedia on the set of **Bombay Blue**