’Tis All A Chequerboard: Early ABC Documentary Filmmakers Tell Their Stories

Christina Kaye Hunt

B.A. (Dist.), B.Comm (Hons.)

A Thesis submitted as requirement for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts, Business, Informatics, and Education

CQUniversity Australia

1 JUNE 2011

Declaration

I certify that to the best of my knowledge this thesis submission is my original work and that all sources used have been duly referenced and acknowledged.

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently submitted for other degree or qualification.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

This thesis may be freely copied and distributed for private use and study. However, no part of this thesis or the information contained therein may be included in or referred to in publication without prior written permission of the author and/or any reference fully acknowledged.

Signed:

Date:

TABLE OF CONTENTS **PAGE**

Table of Contents ……4

Abbreviations…….….. 7

Acknowledgments…….. 8

Chapter 1:……..…. 9

Statement of Argument...…….....9

Methodology……..…….12
The Documentaries…….……14
ABC Documentary Tables……16
The Institution…….….. 20
The National Context……. …. 24
The Filmmakers……..... 28

Literature Review……..….....47
Under-documentation of Australian Documentary……..…...47
Documentary and Politics…….…...50
Documentary in Australia…….…...58
Documentary and Social Activism in Australia……...64
Documentary Filmmaker Identities……..…...70
John Grierson's 'Documentary Film Movement'…….…...74
Joris Ivens……...…..78
"Cinema Verite"/ "Direct Cinema"……..…80

Chapter 2:……. 84

A Description of the Programs……..……..84
Snapshot of the Era…….. ……87
Chequerboard's Bardic Function……..... 91
Chequerboard's Inception…….97
Chequerboard's Cinema Verite/Direct Cinema..……109
Chequerboard's Themes and Topics…….....119
A Big Country's Bardic Function…….. 144
A Big Country's Inception……..146
A Big Country's Themes and Topics……..148
Who were the audiences for *Chequerboard* and
A Big Country……..…….....162

Chapter 3:……..166

Making Documentary Programs – the filmmaker's view……..166
Weaving Walton's Words……..169
Making Contact……172
Tom Manefield – documentary filmmaker...……....174
Political Beliefs…… 181
Filmmaking Heroes…….. 189
Making *Chequerboard* Films ……. 191

Chapter 4:…… 218

Making Documentary Programs – the filmmaker's view……...218
Making Contact……..218
Bill Steller – documentary filmmaker……220
Political Beliefs…….. 226
Filmmaking Heroes…… 232
Making Documentary Films…….. 238

Chapter 5:……. 274

Making Documentary Programs – the filmmaker's view……274
Making Contact……... 275
Max Donnellan – documentary filmmaker…….. 277
Political Beliefs..……...281
Filmmaking Heroes…….. 283
Making Documentary Films …… 289

Chapter 6…… 314

Conclusion:…….. 314

Reference List:……. 326

Filmography:……. 337

Appendix A: *Chequerboard* shot lists
Appendix B: *A Big Country* shot lists
Appendix C: *The Soldier* documentary – shot list
Appendix D: *Chequerboard* - episode titles list
A Big Country - episode titles list

Appendix E: Photographs:

Pic 1 - Bill Steller 2007.

Pic 2 - When in Rome…*Chequerboard* film crew filming an episode about a nudist colony titled "There's nothing to be excited about, is there?" (ABCTV 1970).

Pic 3 - Filming a scene from *My Brother Jack* – Frank Parnell, Eric Lomas.

Pic 4 - Filming scene from *Over There* with Jack Thompson.

Pic 5 - ABC Cinecamera Department men – early 1960s.

Pic 6 - Max Donnellan 2007.

Pic 7 - Max Donnellan with Vicki Hammond when he was floor manager in Melbourne on the Vicki Hammond Show circa 1966.

Pic 8 - On location on Mt Macedon in 1961 shooting scene for *Macbeth*. Max Donnellan holding the megaphone on the right hand side of photograph.

Pic 9 - Shooting scene for *A Big Country* episode "*Just Another Race"* in 1975.

Pic 10 - Storry Walton 2007.

Pic 11 - Filming scenes for *My Brother Jack* (ABCTV 1967).

Pic 12 - *My Brother Jack* on location (ABCTV 1967).

Pic 13 - Filming scenes in Sydney for *My Brother Jack* (ABCTV 1967).

Pic 14 - *Across the Equator* one of the ABC's first live satellite programs (ABCTV 1966).

Pic 15 - Filming *Across the Equator* (ABCTV 1966).

Pic 16 - Filming scenes for a program on artist Jon Molvig in his studio in The Valley, Brisbane for *Six Australian Painters* ABCTV circa 1963.

Pic 17 - The documentary *This Dreaming Spinning Thing* (ABCTV 1967).

Pic 18 - Location shoot *The Stranger* (ABCTV 1964).

Pic.19 - The Steenbeck 16mm editing desk used as part of the author's research process in viewing and shot listing episodes of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*.

Appendix F: Interview Transcripts:

- Tom Manefield, June 5, 2006.
- Bill Steller, June 4, 2006.
- Storry Walton, June 6, 2006.
- Max Donnellan, June 5, 2006.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC – Australian Broadcasting Corporation

PM – Prime Minister

MCU – medium close up

CU – close up

ECU – extreme close up

GV – general view

MS – medium shot

WS – wide shot

LS – long shot

PAN – panning shot

H/S – head and shoulders

VS – various shots

T/S – tracking shot

L/R – left to right

R/L – right to left

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My mum Kathleen and my dad Reg.
My sons James, Christopher, and Alexander.
My sister Margaret.

Documentary filmmakers - Bill Steller, Storry Walton, Max Donnellan, Tom Manefield.

Doctoral supervisors - Associate Professor Errol Vieth and Dr Jeannette Delamoir.

Mentors and colleagues - Professor Denis Cryle, Professor Alan Knight, Wendy Borchers, Dr Kasun Ubayasiri, Dr Liz Huf, Dr Marilyn Fisher, Dr Margaret Rogers, Associate Professor Bobby Harreveld, Salvatore Russo, Kerrie Thompson, Cathy Dennis.

CHAPTER ONE

Statement of Argument

Although the place of the Australian Broadcasting Commission/Corporation (ABC) in Australian television history is acknowledged in a number of texts (Lansell & Beilby [1982], Inglis [1983 & 2006], Masters [1992], Raymond [1999], Luck [2005], Place & Roberts [2006], Moran & Vieth [2006], and Bowden & Borchers [2006]), individual ABC documentary makers have not been recognised. This dissertation begins to redress their omission, by looking at the work of four early ABC filmmakers: Max Donnellan, Tom Manefield, Bill Steller, and Storry Walton, who variously produced, directed and created the early ABC documentary series, *Chequerboard* (1969-1975) and *A Big Country* (1969-1992).

The period during which these four worked is significant because it begins with the introductory years in Australian television when everything was so new that it had to be learned from scratch, and reaches into the years of full documentary program production. It can be shown that these programs not only exemplify the groundbreaking work of these four filmmakers but demonstrate the role played by the ABC in shaping Australian culture and identity.

Inasmuch as the validity of Moran's argument regarding "institutional voice" and "collective anonymous authorship" (1989, p. 151) from which programs like *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* emerge is taken into consideration, there exists another level of involvement. The individual filmmaker working within the institution is an involvement worthy of substantial

recognition. Institutional documentaries attract little attention to their themes, style, sound/image qualities, or to their aesthetic qualities (Moran 1989, p.152). However, it is these themes, styles, sound/image qualities, and aesthetic qualities within ABC documentary films such as - *Chequerboard* "which attempted to penetrate a wide range of human experiences" (ABC Annual Report 1968-1969, p.24) or *A Big Country*, which "spanned the Australian continent" (ABC Annual Report 1972, p.37). The stories told in these two programs act as signs and reflections of Australians and Australia, and contribute to the institution's significance as a producer of documentaries. Many issues of social and cultural significance within Australia are represented within the stark black and white hard edged filmic images of *Chequerboard* and the early episodes of *A Big Country*. Similar issues presented in later colour episodes of *A Big Country* seemingly create less confronting filmic images. Importantly, the creative filmmaking skill of ABC filmmakers brings Australian social and cultural issues to the small screen. Moran argues that, "institutional documentaries speak with the collective and often anonymous voice of the body that gave rise to the film or program (the ABC, Film Australia, Crawford Productions and so on)" (1989. p. 151). In contrast, Moran explains, independent film "circulates in the name of its director" (1989, p.151). In redressing the issue of Moran's collective and anonymous documentary institutional voice, insights into the perspective, approaches, and techniques applied by the institutional (ABC) documentary filmmakers, as revealed in this thesis also contributes to the history of the ABC.

An integral part of my dissertation is the personal narratives of ABC television documentary filmmakers and the part these filmmakers play in the history of ABC television documentary. Using oral histories, my dissertation records the beginnings of the careers of these four filmmakers before they began working at the ABC, their work in early ABC television, and their work in the changing genre of television documentaries. My dissertation also combines oral histories from each, with content analysis over the run of two programs on which they worked - *Chequerboard* (1969-1975) and *A Big Country* (1969-1992). A number of individual episodes are then used as case studies to explore in detail the techniques and approaches used.

The 23 years over which these two programs were broadcast coincide with sustained changes in Australian society and culture. Donnellan, Manefield, Steller, and Walton engaged with many of the most important issues of this time. They tackled, for example, themes of marginalisation, displacement, exclusion, and social difference, looking at issues such as poverty in Australia, the conditions under which Aboriginal people lived, alternative lifestyles, personal relationships, migrants, health, and women.

The thesis establishes the connections between these programs and earlier Australian and international documentary making, as well as the filmmakers' innovations and influence on the development of an 'ABC style' of documentary. In addition, the importance of the ABC is revealed through its role as a training institution, a series of structures, and an evolving ethos. This exploration confirms the significance of their creative and technical contributions, both

within the institutional context of the ABC as well as in the broader context of Australian documentary history.

Other areas investigated in my study include the development of ABC's social documentary and its evolutionary diversion towards investigative journalism. Questions also arise of objectivity, political perspective, national role, representation, and identity. The ABC's investigative journalism program *Four Corners* for instance was established by the time *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* began production in 1969. In their work each episode of *Chequerboard* or *A Big Country* concentrated in great depth on one issue or theme at a time, enabling Steller, Manefield, Donnellan, and Walton to capture telling images and tell stories that revealed intimate and significant insights into confronting realities within Australian society in turbulent decades.

Methodology

In order to understand the nature of these social documentaries, this thesis explores four interlinking areas—the documentaries; the institution of the ABC; the national context of the time; and the filmmakers themselves. The methodology, therefore, must adopt separate approaches that illuminate each area but which, in addition, can mesh with each other to understand the influences of the four areas on each other. This results in a multifaceted understanding of the filmmakers and their productions, grounded in their institutional and cultural/historical contexts. It acknowledges their personal contributions simultaneously with showing how the filmmakers also reflected their era. It

explores how these elements interacted to produce the thematic and aesthetic characteristics of these programs, as well as the restraints and positive influences of the organisation. It also allows an assessment of the impact this combination of elements had on the public sense of what it meant to be an Australian.

This investigation uses both qualitative and quantitative research approaches—including oral histories, content analysis, and textual analysis—in order to look at the separate areas as well as their interconnections. The personal narratives of ABC television documentary filmmakers Tom Manefield, Bill Steller, Storry Walton, and Max Donnellan and their contribution to Australian film and documentary making are of primary importance for my study. Oral history methodology is used in documenting their stories, and is used in conjunction with quantitative research methodology.

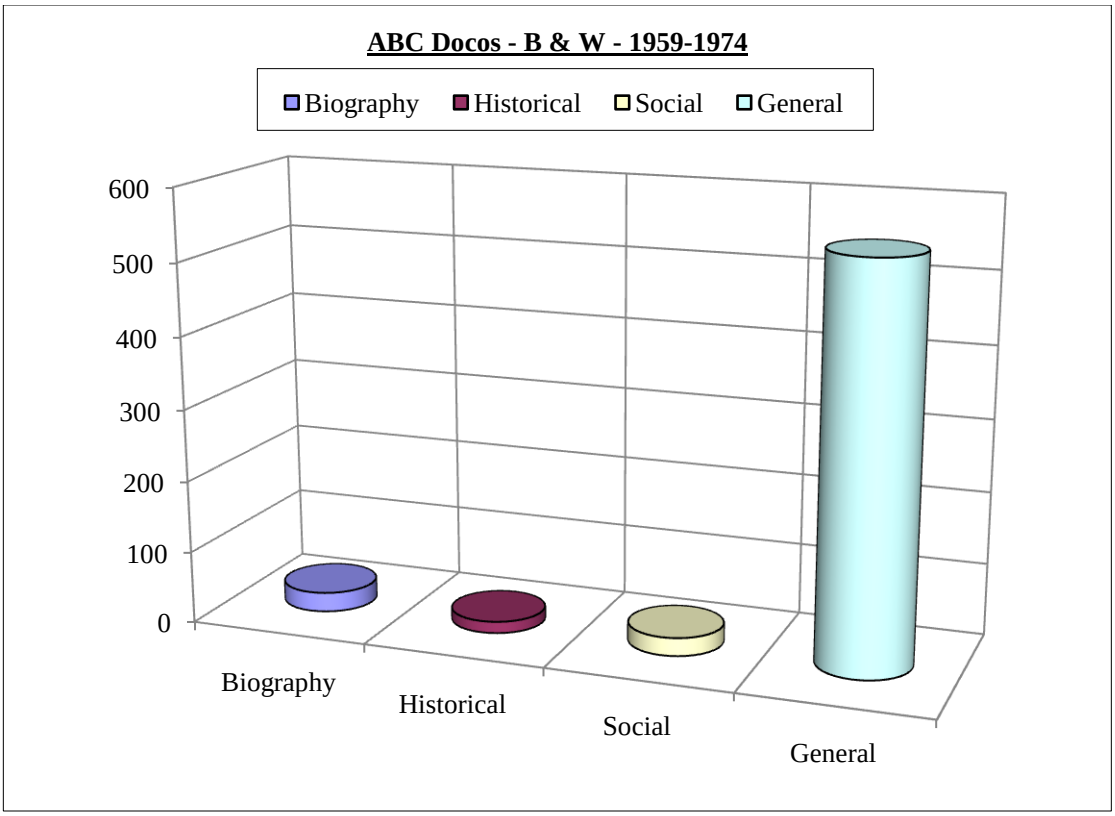
The tape-recorded semi structured interviews with the four ABC filmmakers reveal core evidence for my study. Corroborative research data accessed from previously recognised archival documents and accumulated using a qualitative research methodology approach supports this evidence. This approach allows relevant data to be gathered encompassing a comprehensive range of sources on the field of documentary filmmaking. Triangulation of analysis of previously documented archival evidence, together with new evidence emerging from new oral histories, enables the emergence of a new narrative.

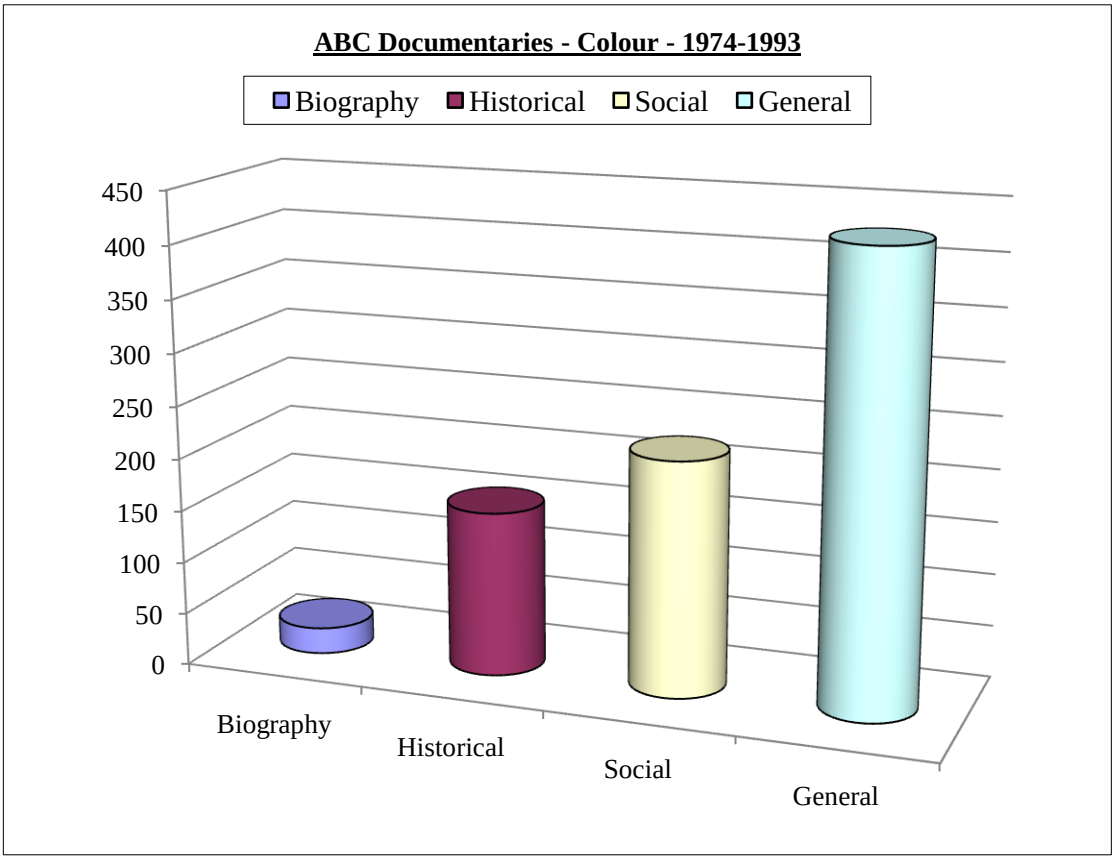
The documentaries

This study focuses on *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* primarily because those were two programs with which the four filmmakers were most closely identified, having been involved in establishing the formats. In addition, however, the two shows—although different in style and content—were ground-breaking Australian television, and can be seen to complement each other thematically and visually. The programs addressed similar topics involving Australian people and society from contrasting urban and rural perspectives, and presented images and stories reflecting differences and similarities between them.

Multiple episodes of the two programs were analysed in two different ways. Firstly, content analysis was applied to the ABC Documentary Catalogue as supplied by them, and to available episodes of each program. This enabled me to firstly determine the scope of the collection, secondly to ascertain the documentary categories, and thirdly to document the production information for documentary program or program episode. The catalogue was arranged into biographical, historical, social, and general documentary categories. Initially, spreadsheets were created detailing all information for each documentary program and episode extracted from the catalogue. Catalogue information includes program & episode title, series number, year of broadcast, duration, episode number, transmission dates, medium, program number, director/ producer, writer, producer, reporter/narrator, and talent/voices. Episode synopses were also part of the catalogue. This showed that between 1959 and 1974 the ABC produced 27 biographical, 16 historical, 25 social, and 547 black and white

general documentaries. Importantly, nearly half of the "general" category includes the 116 *Chequerboard* episodes from 1969 to 1974 and the 104 *A Big Country* episodes from 1968 to1974 series. The catalogue content also showed that between 1974 and 1993 the ABC produced 25 biographical, 157 historical, 223 social, and 426 colour general documentaries. Again importantly, more than half the "general" category includes 281 *A Big Country* episodes from 1974 to 1993. It is interesting to note that both the *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* series are not categorised as "social" in the ABC catalogue and have inexplicably been grouped in "general" documentary category. The task of categorising the several hundred episodes produced over a 25 year period comprising these programs possibly proved too large a task to be undertaken during the catalogue compilation processes in 1993. As a matter of expediency and because *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* addressed issues and themes involving urban and rural Australian people, society and culture, they have been identified as "social" by my thesis. The following charts show the changing and vast disparity between the four categories as attributed by the ABC. With more care taken in classifying their documentaries the huge disparity across the four ABC documentary categories, as shown in the following charts, might be lessened.


ABC Docos - B & W - 1959-1974
Biography
Historical
Social
General
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
Biography
Historical
Social
General


ABC Documentaries - Colour - 1974-1993
Biography
Historical
Social
General
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Biography
Historical
Social
General

Between 1968 and 1974, 220 of the 547 “general” black and white documentaries comprised episodes of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, and between 1974 and 1993 281 of the 426 “general” colour documentaries comprised *A Big Country* episodes alone.

Secondly, analysis of the content of episodes of both programs enables detailed documentation about what was filmed, about those filmed, or about what those filmed in each episode said. In addition to this, shot analysis of episodes enables documentation of how issues were approached within the frame and filming techniques. Information about the subjects and topics addressed in these programs was contained in documentation provided by *Chequerboard* Executive Producer Tom Manefield and the ABC Program Archives Department. As a result, this information sheds light on themes of both programs, which—because of the frequency with which subjects and topics recur, can be assumed to have been linked to issues of cultural importance, relating to social conditions and social justice in Australia.

Accessing and viewing ABC television archival programs is problematic, particularly for a viewer living outside the major metropolitan centres. The costs of accessing and viewing ABC archival programs through their facilities either in Ultimo in Sydney, or indeed in Brisbane are prohibitive. However, the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) in Canberra provided a more cost-effective viewing arrangement, dispatching 16mm film copies of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* episodes to CQUniversity. Unfortunately, the NFSA collection of this material was incomplete, and not all episodes were available. This impacted on

the scope of the episodes able to be analysed and allowed a sample selection only to be viewed and assessed. This sample selection however encompassed the period during which these programs were developed, produced, and directed by Manefield et al. During their interviews these men spoke about making many of these specific episodes and about behind the scenes production processes and activities. All *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* episodes in the NFSA collection were analysed. Hence, I analysed the 25 episodes of *Chequerboard*, and 14 episodes of *A Big Country* listed here.

- It's a Big Day in Any Girl's Life (Chequerboard) 1968
- A Fair Innings (Chequerboard) 1968
- We're All Good Mates and That's It (Chequerboard) 1968
- I Could Get Married and Have a Family (Chequerboard) 1969
- I'm Dealing in Emotions... (Chequerboard) 1969
- It's Amazing What You Can Do with a Pound of Mince (Chequerboard) 1969
- A Palace..a Fortress..a Tomb (Chequerboard) 1969
- What Do You Get Married for (Chequerboard) 1969
- The Policeman Told Me to Go to Bed (Chequerboard) 1969
- To Err Is Human ... (Chequerboard) 1969
- All My Memories Are in Newtown (Chequerboard) 1970
- At Londonderry (Chequerboard) 1970
- Everybody Wants a Plug...(Chequerboard) 1970
- I Don't Like to Look in the Mirror (Chequerboard) 1970
- It Can't Last Much Longer... (Chequerboard) 1970
- A Matter of Supremacy... (Chequerboard) 1970
- My Brown Skin Baby,...They Take Him Away (Chequerboard) 1970
- On the Spiritual Telephone (Chequerboard) 1970
- Part of Life (Chequerboard) 1970
- Same Dose of Treatment (Chequerboard) 1970
- She'd Flown the Coop... (Chequerboard) 1970
- Well Worth the Effort... (Chequerboard) 1970
- Who Am I ... What Am I (Chequerboard) 1970
- Once Bitten, Twice Shy (Chequerboard) 1972
- I Can't Seem to Talk about It ... (Chequerboard) 1976

- The Buck Runners (A Big Country) 1969
- 10 000 Miles from Care (A Big Country) 1970
- Barossa Deutsche (A Big Country) 1970
- Be It Ever So Humble (A Big Country) 1970
- Ben Hall (A Big Country) 1970
- Camel Catchers, the (A Big Country) 1970
- The Desert People (A Big Country) 1970
- Everything What We Belong (A Big Country) 1970
- I'll Never Change Sides (A Big Country) 1970
- The Land Fit for Heroes (A Big Country) 1970
- Right Through the Shearing Time (A Big Country) 1970
- Sleeper Cutting (A Big Country) 1971
- Forgotten People (A Big Country) 1978
- A Winter's Tale (A Big Country) 1984

Part of the research process included the viewing and assessing of 16mm copies of program episodes listed. Because of their archival nature and fragile film format, the NFSA allowed only four to five of these episodes to be borrowed at a time. The duration of each program episode was approximately one hour, and over a period of six months three or four episodes were requested and shipped from the NFSA at fortnightly intervals to be viewed and assessed. The NFSA required them to be returned before the next few episodes would be despatched.

These were viewed and analysed on a Steenbeck desk. The fortuitous discovery of the barely used Steenbeck in CQUniversity's Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Education enabled me to resurrect skills I had acquired during the 1970s and 1980s while working at the ABC's Sydney Television Archives, where the Steenbeck was a tool used on a daily basis. I assessed the *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* episodes for this study, using the Steenbeck to shot-list each available episodes using the same techniques I had used when employed by the ABC. Scene-by-scene, sequence-by-sequence, I noted who is on-screen, the mise-en-scène, and other significant visual and audio details,

including descriptions of individual shots (medium shot, close-up, and so on). (See Appendices A, B, and C.) This was done in order to achieve a meticulous knowledge of the visual content and filming techniques.

This system aids in identifying the visual language of the programs created through changes in camera angles, camera focus, lighting, placement within the frame, editing, or the significance given to scene length. For example, one of the signature shots for the program *Chequerboard* is the extreme close-up whereby the faces of those filmed inhabit the whole frame. The shot-list explored the patterns of how and when this shot was employed, and its impact. It can be established, for instance, that the use of this shot was not one individual filmmaker's style, but was used across the whole series, but was always used to produce a powerful emotional impact.

In addition, my familiarity with ABC archival categories meant that my analysis of themes was informed by the ways the organisation saw itself and the programs it produced.

The institution

The institutional context is crucial to this study, because these documentaries were produced and broadcast by the ABC. Furthermore, as the filmmakers reveal, they received much of their training from the ABC. The filmmakers also reveal it is their belief that the training, the organisational support and funding, and the collegial encouragement and opportunity to further their careers, meant they were able to produce documentaries that would not have been possible otherwise.

The ABC maintains its own archives which contain material from radio (from 1932 onwards) and television (from 1956 onwards) selected and catalogued by them that preserve an audio and visual record of the history of the ABC as well as Australia. According to the ABC, "not all material on film or tape is worth keeping: the aim is to select the best" (ABC 2010, p.1 of 3). Categories stated by the ABC as determining the material retained for the archives are: 1. to document the history and activities of the ABC, 2. to document Australian history, and 3. to document world events and major achievements. The ABC also maintains that "from an archival perspective, ABC produced material documenting the history or activities of the ABC is the single most important category" (ABC 2010, p. 1 of 3).

An assessment of official and historical institutional documentation supplemented the production information. I explored the ABC's Code of Ethics, the ABC Charter, Editorial Policies and Annual Reports in order to understand the ABC's early organisational structure and ethical stance. In its 1969 Annual Report for instance, the ABC details its responsibilities to the Broadcasting and Television Act to ensure balance and quality in their output. The Report states:

> The Commission is mindful of the fact that the ABC exists to serve all Australians, and a wide variety of programmes is therefore essential; but however wide this may be, the problem of securing a proper balance of programming still remains.
>
> (ABC 1969, p. 4)

What is determined as 'proper' is not part of this study's scope. However, the ABC's responsibilities to balance and quality of programming are shaped by demands of restraint, self-control and a sense of social responsibility, and where ABC programs are concerned with comment and opinion, that they "should do

more than merely reflect social pressures without adequate interpretation" (ABC 1969, p.5). In relation to the ABC's attitude towards news and current affairs programs in particular:

> Broadcasters must bear in mind always that ours is no static society; that indeed, what makes the system under which Australians live strong and enduring is the freedom to change, and the freedom to express new and differing points of view.
>
> (ABC 1969, p.5)

As such, it is these demands and responsibilities that were among the strictures imposed upon the filmmakers of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, and which will be discussed in the following chapters where the focus is on the behind the scenes experiences of the filmmakers.

However, information about an organisation that has been gathered from one source runs the risk of presenting a one-sided picture. This danger is heightened when the source of information is the organisation itself. In order to ensure a balanced view of the ABC then, I gathered additional corroborative evidence, including autobiographies of the late Robert Raymond, and investigative reporter Chris Masters, biographies of cameraman David Brill, and actor/producer/director the late Charles (Bud) Tingwell, as well as conference papers and personal communications from documentary filmmaker Judy Adamson. Other evidence included previously documented interviews from contemporaries of the four ABC documentary filmmakers such as the late Ken Watts who had variously been Federal Director of ABC Education Programs in the current affairs and talks areas in 1962, and Head of Television Programs in1964, and then Assistant General Manager Television by the early 1970s, and Johnathon Holmes, the ABC's Head of Documentaries. These documents provide

insight into the milieu in which these filmmakers worked and contextualise some of the filmmaking issues faced and overcome during the early days of ABC documentary production. These are discussed in more detail in the Literature Review.

In relation to data collection processes for my study, and in keeping with issues raised by Bertrand and Hughes (2005) and Berger (2000) about the influencing of interpretation and validation of evidence, my research processes began in early 2005 by collecting and data basing corroborative evidence which forms the foundation of my study and informs my research directions. Bertrand and Hughes state:

> In all cases, documents must not be read as transparent records of the activities, finances, and organisation of an institution. Rather they are representative of how the institution (and the people who work within in) wishes to present itself to the reader of the document.
>
> (2005, p.153)

And that:

> The nearer your evidence is to the original person or event, the more valuable it is likely to be. At the same time, the status of a source is relative to the question being asked.
>
> (2005, p.153)

In the case of this thesis, at the core of my study are the stories and lived experiences of early ABC documentary filmmakers told through oral histories. The use of the study of archives as a research approach is validated by Corti (2007, p.37) who contends, “Archived qualitative data are a rich and unique, yet too often unexploited, source of research material”. Qualitative is defined by Corti (2007, p.38) as “any research material that is collected from studying people”. Furthermore:

> Qualitative data are collected across a range of social science disciplines and typically aim to capture lived experiences of the social world and the meanings people give these experiences from the own perspectives. They offer information that can be reanalysed, reworked, and compared with contemporary data.
> (Corti 2007, p.37)

Quantitative data however, can also be collected from studying people. Consequently, in relation to Corti's (2007, p.37) contention about the unique richness of archival qualitative data and in order to understand the world in which the four filmmakers worked, many archival research sources across social, cultural, and political fields underpin my study, and primarily include the ABC's television archives collection with the aim of accessing and obtaining specific visual and audio information about the ABC documentary programs *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*. Additional sources include other ABC drama and documentaries made during the early days of ABC Television, for example *The Outcasts* (1961), *I, the Aboriginal* (1964), or *The Soldier* (1968).

As part of my qualitative research, and in seeking to reveal the place held by the four early documentary filmmakers within early ABC television, inevitably, the search led to me to the ABC's Archives and Libraries Department in Sydney.

The national context

To ascertain an appreciation for the political, social, and cultural landscape of Australia's history during which *Chequerboard* and *A Big Count*ry were produced and broadcast, information was gathered from historical encyclopaedia such as *The Australian Encyclopaedia* (1988), *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Australia* (1994), and *The Oxford History of Australia* (1996).

The social tides were changing in many countries around the world, including Australia. Political upheavals overshadowed the visions of social harmony, the structure of the post-WWII period, and the promise of a better world. The decade of the 1940s that had engendered a period of fear and mistrust throughout the world, and which was "typified by the glorification of war" (McKnight 1986, p.3), had just ended. Ansara and Milner (1999) describe the first years after the end of World War II and the post-war construction as playing a part in increased production of films focusing on society and social changes:

> Filmic preoccupation with nation-building, and continue[d] through a time of low unemployment, intensified industrial and political conflict, a rising standard of living, the establishment of consumerism and its apotheosis in the family television set.
>
> (Ansara & Milner 1999, p.30)

Despite post-WWII prosperity, and some positive social changes brought about by improved technologies and manufacturing, the 1950s left a bitter taste in the mouths of those people affected by that decade's anti-communist atmosphere. Further to this, O'Regan writes that the early part of the 1950s "belongs to a post-war reconstructionist imaginary of nation building in a socially (even socialist) oriented community" (1987, p.1 of 21). Many of those people who were affected and who held radical political and social views, or those who were perceived by zealots as a threat to social stability, were among the most creative and gifted working in the film and television industry. Cunningham (1987, p.1 of 5) writes that social and political circumstances during this period also meant "the start and deepening of conservative rule under Menzies and its attendant cultural black-out and mass exodus of film and other cultural talent from Australia; the direct and more mediated effects of Cold War anti-leftism on the

government film unit [and those who worked for it]" (1987, p.1 of 5). In the United States in particular, McCarthyism's anti-Communist agenda, and the insecurities brought about by the Cold War, accompanied by the fear of the emerging nuclear age for some, meant victimization, and isolation for those who took a different political and social perspective to the established conservatism.

Alomes (1988) points out that Prime Minister Menzies' moves to have the Communist Party banned in Australia were defeated in the 1951 election and that:

> Although the referendum's defeat by a mere fifty thousand votes saved Australia from a decade of intense American-style witch-hunt (minor ones would have to do), a focus on the enemy at home and the communist tiger in the jungles of Asia helped win the election.
> (Alomes 1988, p.143)

Adding to the political turmoil of the 1950s in Australia, anti-communist warnings further heightened in 1953, with the Petrov Affair. In April 1954, Alomes (1988, p.144) maintains, Menzies continued to use the threat of communism to further Australian nationalism. In that year:

> Vladimir Petrov defected from the Russian Embassy amidst numerous accusations of a Russian spy ring. Menzies appointed a royal commission to keep the pot boiling for as long as possible. On 29 May 1954 his government was re-elected by the skin of its teeth, the Labor opposition winning 50.03 per cent of valid votes.
> (Alomes 1988, p.144)

Movietone and Cinesound newsreels covered the spy scandal. For instance, their dramatic film footage of the arrest and deportation of the Petrovs, covered from the time police apprehended a Russian embassy staff member attempting to ship a crate to Moscow at Canberra airport, to footage of the manhandling by Russian KGB agents from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs of Mrs Vladimir Petrov across the airport tarmac and into a plane. As well, Movietone and

Cinesound newsreels covered her husband's defection (National Film and Sound Archives Cold War listing 2007, p.6). Documenting the rough treatment given Mrs Petrov by the Russian KGB agents on film in this way emphasized the brutality of the Russian Communist regime, thereby, graphically, and indirectly cementing perceptions of Menzies' point of view and political stance. Author Robert Manne summarises the events that occurred in the aftermath of the Petrov affair and the split in the ALP:

> In October, 1955, the Petrov royal commission delivered its report. Its most important finding was that in the period between 1945 and 1948 the KGB had two spies operating inside the Department of External Affairs. At the end of the Cold War the decoded cable traffic between Canberra and Moscow was released by the FBI. The royal commission's conclusion turned out to be true.
> Dr Evatt [Leader of the ALP] not only dismissed the entire report. He informed the parliament that he had written to the Soviet foreign minister, Molotov, and had been reliably informed that all claims about Soviet espionage in Australia were false. The house was in uproar. Dr Evatt's colleagues could scarcely believe their ears.
> [Prime Minister] Menzies saw in Evatt's Molotov reference a splendid political opportunity. An election was called. With the help of DLP preferences, a Coalition landslide was the result. The geography of Australian politics had been reshaped.
> (2002, *The Age*, p. 3 of 4)

In Australia in the 1960s, radicalism went hand-in-hand with politics. McKnight argues that:

> It was the Left that was the first political force to take up the Aboriginal cause, to move tentatively towards multiculturalism and to warn of the dangers of nuclear testing and the stationing of foreign bases in Australia.
> (1986, p.3)

Sir Robert Menzies was Prime Minister, and remained so until 1966, when he retired (Bolton 1996, p. 89). Menzies' post-World War II Australia was a country of "stifling conformism" (McKnight 1986, p.3), and was economically prosperous and politically stable, and presented a strong stance against Communism. Australia was pro-British and pro-American. Bolton argues the

"Menzies era enjoyed in retrospect a nostalgic reputation for prosperity with only a few to cry it down as a time of 'limited personal affluence and public squalor'" (1996, p. 89). Although living standards and wages were on the increase, Bolton reports that critics argued:

> The increased ownership of consumer durables and housing was at the expense of increased leisure and was achieved by substantial increases in indebtedness, and indisputably too many Australians, not all of them Aborigines, missed out on the good things in life. (1996, p. 90)

Issues and events such as these shaped the political, social and cultural environment not only of the 1950s but also the 1960s onwards. These texts also provide overviews of the development of radio and television broadcasting in Australia, and noted criticisms received by the ABC prior to this about how its funds were spent, its structure and accountability, and relevance of its programs to the community. Many of the issues and events covered in these texts were those addressed by the *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* filmmakers. Their insights into making documentaries about issues affecting Australia and Australians at the time they occurred revealed how deep their involvement became with each subject and theme they addressed. As revealed through the filmmakers' recollections such insights, whether objective or subjective, add to the value of the filmmakers' lived experience as oral history because of the sense of humanity that emerges from their stories.

The filmmakers

Direct contact with the four ABC documentary filmmakers was through a series of personal and professional connections that have remained since I began

working in ABC Television in 1975. All four had known each other for over 50 years, and I had worked with Steller and Donnellan. Interviews with all were tape-recorded at their Sydney homes at their invitation, and transcripts later produced for analysis.

The transcription process took into account work by Davidson (2009) that draws upon Duranti (2007), Green, Franquiz & Dixon (1997) and Jaffe (2000) describing transcription and transcripts as cultural practice and activity possessing dimensions of particular times in history reflecting political bias (2009, p.37). That is to say, transcription is influenced by the transcribers' interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of the interviewee's words. I included cues relating to nonverbal actions, body language, the relationship with the person conducting the interview, and the place and time (Davidson 2009, p.37). This attention to detail in transcription preserves the actuality of the interview and the feelings revealed through the words of the interviewee. For example, recalling his experiences filming stories examining poverty in Australia for *Chequerboard*, or in India for *Four Corners*, Steller's emotions welled up as he described the harrowing living conditions and the desperation of those affected that he witnessed.

Along the way, Manefield et al provided extra filmmaking and career data, personal information, as well as black and white photographs that have proved a significant inclusion and benefit to my study (see Pics.1-18 Appendix E).

All four interviewees answered the same set of questions, including inquiries into their earliest pre-ABC television careers, their first entry into ABC

television, and their early work experiences. Subsequent questions probed the filmmakers' political beliefs and any possible influence these had on their filmmaking, as well as who their filmmaking heroes were and what was it about their heroes' films and filmmaking that was inspirational for them as early ABC documentary filmmakers.

There is no better way to capture the untidy, sometimes contradictory lived experience of the fast-paced creative environment than through personal narratives of those who were involved, especially when several are collected. Oral history as a methodology captures memories, opinions and even the way language is used in a specific situation: "It can convey personality, explain motivation, reveal inner thoughts and perceptions …" (Staff 1997, p.4).

This ability to document personal perspectives and an "insider's" view makes it a valuable tool with which to explore the work and values of the four documentary makers of this study. However, given the limitations of oral history include the slippery nature of memory and the very human tendency towards social role-playing, these oral histories have been placed in the context created by the explorations, described above, of the films, the organisation, and the nation during these years. The filmmaker's recollections are thereby contextually correlated and given greater credibility and substantiation.

Corti argues that a crucial characteristic of oral history is that it reflects both "lived experiences of the social world" and in addition reveals "the meanings people give these experiences" (2007, p.37). Thus, when the filmmakers detail

their traineeships and career paths, they also disclose a deeper level of meaning recording their feelings, values and world views.

These four filmmakers were part of the institution of the ABC, and worked within its strictures; the thesis is therefore also about the organisation and its collaborative creative yet structured environment. Bertrand and Hughes (2005) write about the advantages of oral histories as a component of research into institutions:

> In institutional research, personal testimony has the advantages that it adds a human dimension to the written record, it allows people at all levels within an institution to have a voice, not just those decision makers whose names appear on the written record, and allows people to speak for themselves, and to reflect at leisure and with hindsight on their actions and decisions.
>
> (2005, p.141)

Through the filmmakers' personal testimony this interaction of individual and organisation is reflected in other questions involving the ABC training scheme and technologies of the period and how these filmmakers used them, the ABC documentary program making processes and case examples of their documentary filmmaking, and importantly, as Bertrand and Hughes (2005) contend "adds a human dimension" to their memories of working behind the scenes as a cameraman, director, or producer. ABC documentary filmmaking restrictions were also queried by me, as researcher, as well as the filmmakers' thoughts on the ABC's corporatisation, and ABC documentary filmmaking politics with the aim to understanding the institution's internal political atmosphere. Finally, to gain an appreciation for how the filmmakers' viewed the quality and development of ABC social documentary today, questions also sought the documentary filmmakers' thoughts on the future of ABC social

documentary and on the concept of radicalism in ABC social documentary during those early years.

It could be argued, however, that Manefield et al are not the voiceless individuals mentioned by Bertrand and Hughes above. The filmmakers after all, do have their names in the written record of the ABC, and their "voices" are represented in the films they made. However, the extent to which their films can be considered "theirs" is one of the themes of this thesis.

Oral history has, since its earliest uses, been criticised, most frequently for its perceived lack of reliability. Sharpless, for instance, notes "a prejudice against oral history that remained strong for more than fifty years" (2007, p.10). Because an interviewee can really only speak about one person's experience, their view of a complex situation can be only partial. Naturally, each person—consciously or unconsciously—shapes their stories around their own agenda or to conform to cultural pressures. Furthermore, oral history relies on memory, which is notoriously subjective and declines over time: "memory is fallible, ego distorts, and contradictions sometimes go unresolved" (Starr 1984, p.4). This is a particular concern with this project, because the events about which the four subjects are speaking took place up over five decades ago, in some cases.

However, for this project, the use of four different subjects, and asking the same set of questions, provided a platform for cross-checking each oral history. In addition, the information gathered through the oral histories was triangulated, using the methodologies—described above—that were applied to the films, the organisation, and the historical context to corroborate the level of reliability of

the oral histories, and provide a rich interpretive context for understanding the personal memories.

Huggett, conducting oral histories for a project on filmgoing in Newcastle, identifies "the complex social negotiation that takes place during an oral history interview … what can and should be said and how, which is governed by accepted codes of behaviour" (2007, p.1 of 10). It is understandable that subjects wish to shape, to some extent, an historical record of their lives that allows them to feel comfortable about themselves. As Thomson puts it:

> In one sense we compose or construct memories using the public languages and meanings of our culture. In another sense we compose memories to help us feel relatively comfortable with our lives and identities, that gives us a feeling of composure. In practice these two processes are inseparable.
> (cited Huggett 2007, p.6 of 10)

The individual's need to present a social performance during an oral history interview is recognised as an ever-present concern in oral histories. Hamilton writes of:

> Issues relating to self-dramatisation and performance which may be central to the invention of the particular self in the oral form and which remind us that it is not written text but a form of acting; a fictional performance of self.
> (1990, p.130)

For the purposes of my study, I believe that the period when I worked as a television archives researcher at the ABC's Sydney office was advantageous because the subjects knew they were speaking to a colleague, to someone who inherently understood the world of which they spoke. I shared their language, knew other colleagues, and was even familiar with their workplace.

As mentioned earlier, the filmmakers' homes became the place for the interviews [at their invitation], which further put them at ease. I approached them with evident respect by assuring them about my dedication to telling their stories

from their perspective, that their stories were important to the ABC's history, and about my sincere appreciation for their career achievements. I believe this also contributed to setting up an environment in which they were able to express themselves.

At this point, problematic issues that play a part in my role as researcher and interpreter must be acknowledged. On one hand, issues of personal bias and subjectivity require an imperative for me to distance myself in order to attain an objective perspective and successful analysis. On the other however, this same subjectivity allows an acute empathetic appreciation for the aspects of "difference" and "other"; both significant and important aspects of my study.

In examining the resulting interviews, however, I found that my own values had influenced the "complex interaction" that underlies any oral history. Although my motivation for this study was my interest in filmmakers who have represented those marginalised and excluded from society, I realised that I had almost totally avoided broaching the topic of political beliefs in my interviews with the ABC documentary filmmakers. Nor had I asked about filmmaking influences, an avenue of questioning that would potentially reveal the filmmakers' convictions regarding art's ability to have a social impact. After this self-reflective assessment of the transcripts, I reapproached the subjects with further questions.

How do I interpret this "blind spot", and its impact on my efforts to remain as objective as possible? My decision to research the stories of documentary filmmakers who examine Australian society and issues of social and political

injustice evolved because of personal experiences that shaped my own sense of exclusion and difference. My father's tough working class upbringing as the son of a timber cutter during the first three decades of the twentieth century in country New South Wales also shaped his perspective on life. There he began his stonemason apprenticeship at Granite Town near Moruya where he worked cutting granite blocks that would eventually be used to form the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. As a young man during the Depression, he moved to Sydney in the 1930s to find work, began his search for answers to questions about politics, class struggle and social injustice. In Sydney's Domain, he listened to the passionate anti-Establishment orators of the working class who gave voice to radical and alternative political and social ideas. In reaction to personal class and social struggles in the early 1950s, my father moved our family away from the city and from other people to start a new life in Sydney's sparsely populated northern outlying bushland. Sydney's bushland environment may have been a place within which idyllic childhoods evolved, and certainly the isolation, separateness, and marginalization has allowed me the freedom of mind and spirit to challenge and question. However, words such as "isolated" "separated" and "marginalised" always seem to describe my world, and my personal defensiveness remains.

I also have a persistent fear of being seen as "different", as coming from an alternative political and social familial background. This fear was confirmed by research for my Honours thesis on Cecil Holmes, self-confessed Australian

Communist, and Dalton Trumbo, both of whose careers suffered during the 1950s and 1960s because of their political persuasion.

When I began this project, I avoided asking the ABC documentarians—champions of social justice—about their politics. I worried that such questions might be damaging, painful or embarrassing—though whether to them or to myself, I am not sure. When I re-contacted the subjects, however, and asked additional questions to fill the gaps in my original interviews, their answers were frank and comprehensive; proving that indeed oral histories are complicated social interactions in which both interviewed and interviewer are active players.

Concerns over issues relating to accuracy, documentation, and interpretation have meant some historians consider the use of oral history problematic. Thompson (1988) asserted the term oral history was "new, like the tape recorder; and it has radical implications for the future" (1988, p.22). Implications are that interviewing implies "the view of power relations implicit in the 'victim's voice' perspective is challenged" (Hamilton (1990, p.130) and that questions remain about the reasons for agreeing to be interviewed and what was to be gained (1990, p.131). Rather than challenging the filmmakers, however my interviewing approach was to inquire and probe their memories, to document their personal stories and recollections, and to record their words and language. The subjectivity of interviewer and interviewee come into question. Other implications are that rather than taking authority away from traditional paper historians, the new technology using tape recorded interview and its descendents, in fact "gives history a future no longer tied to the cultural

significance of the paper document. It also gives back to historians the oldest skill of their own craft" (Thompson 1988, p.71). In view of this, and because interview transcription is integral in telling these early filmmakers' stories, an appreciation for transcription's place within qualitative research is required.

An oral history approach and the use of transcription achieves one of the main aims of my study's qualitative research strategy, which is to document not only the words, but how the words are used, the language, the emotions, the terminologies, the nuances, encompassing the personal perspective of the four early ABC documentary filmmakers. In documenting and acknowledging these filmmakers' involvement, their perceptions, and their feelings recalling memories of the creative environment in which they lived and worked during the second half of the twentieth century in this way enables their words and emotions to bring to life their memories of their day-to-day behind-the-scenes experiences working as early ABC documentary filmmakers.

As mentioned previously, the oral histories of the four ABC documentary filmmakers are significant and inform the basis for my study. Howard (2006, p.14) asserts, "More and more scholars want to tackle the kind of history that one can hear about from the people who participated in it"; to hear or read about lived experiences.

As a further significant aspect of my study, the lived experiences of the four ABC filmmakers as evinced by their words and their language provide a window onto the creative environment of ABC documentary filmmaking in which they worked.

Thompson (1988, p. 39) points out the benefits of this "lived experience" approach when he writes about an alternative model of historic oral history documentation that resulted from newspaper investigations by Henry Mayhew into the cholera epidemic of 1849. For instance, Thompson contends that during Mayhew's investigations, rather than "a door-to-door survey he [Mayhew] therefore analysed a series of trades through a strategic sample" (1988, p. 39). Thompson explains that Mayhew interviewed representative workers at each job level and that evidence was obtained from correspondence and by direct interview (1988, p.39). In view of Thompson's contention about using strategic examples and in employing a similar investigative approach using direct interview and correspondence, my study focuses on a strategic sample of the four specific ABC social documentary filmmakers, Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan. Direct interviews with the filmmakers capture their perspective as trainees, directors, producers, cameramen, and draws upon correspondence and interviews with their contemporaries. In relation to Mayhew's approach, Thompson further contends:

> He [Mayhew] gradually developed a detailed schedule of questions. Most striking was his actual interview technique. He seems to have felt a respect for his informants …. His comments show both emotional sympathy and a willingness to listen to their view.
> (1988, p.39)

Like Mayhew, I [as researcher] must also acknowledge a respect for Manefield et al and their work, and that I developed a list of questions that guided my interviews. Again, Mayhew's approach which is significant for his "unusual concern with their exact words" (Thompson 1988, p.40) is evidenced and essential throughout the research and interviewing process for my study, and

is integral to its success. Like Mayhew, “one can hear the ordinary people” (Thompson 1988, p.40) speaking. While not ordinary by Thompson’s description, the four documentary filmmakers of my study were ordinarily part of the culture of the institution of the ABC from the early 1960s to the mid-1980s working with the organisation’s strictures, and as such, were not singled out for particular recognition or acknowledgement. My thesis redresses this omission. Importantly, Thompson reveals further that Mayhew’s approach was unique in that he “had no direct successors” (1988, p.40), meaning few others immediately adopted his approach. Subsequently however, a new understanding emerged for the plight of those he interviewed, the working class. Similarly, the four filmmakers in my study are those people who worked in early ABC television behind the cameras and behind the scenes as producers, cameramen, directors, or floor managers. Again similarly, it is this unique aspect of Mayhew’s approach of revealing the stories of ordinary people, which is a core component of my study.

My study’s use of oral history is not only to rediscover, but also to recover the stories and perspectives of these early ABC documentary filmmakers before they are lost altogether. I acknowledge that some consideration in relation to the issue of memory and reminiscence and their impact on oral history is required in that “memories are not simply a communication of the past, but to a high degree the expression of the past in the present” (Stogner 2009, p. 208). An additional implication of the my study’s use of oral history means that as

documented lived experiences their stories and their work "can be reanalysed, reworked, and compared with contemporary data" (Corti 2007, p.37).

Archival researchers interpreting historical documents and texts inevitably encounter problems in respect of the evidence uncovered. Berger (2000, p.135) asserts, "All of this material that historians use must be considered suspect". In addressing this issue and as mentioned previously, the personal narratives of the four ABC filmmakers are a central element of my study as they tell their stories in their words.

> Every historical source derived from human perception is subjective, but only the oral source allows us to challenge that subjectivity: to unpick the layers of memory, dig back into its darkness', hoping to reach the hidden truth.
>
> (Thompson 1988, p.150)

Here again, it is through these early documentary filmmakers' subjective reminiscences those certain personal hidden truths emerge.

Gordon et al. (2007, p.327) however, contend the role of archival researchers is to enable a:

> Way of recounting, constituting, representing and constructing the story. Using story and narrative as research is a situated activity that locates the researcher in a particular place and time as narrator of events. The role of researcher here is to describe, question, tell, and show.
>
> (Gordon et al. 2007, p.327)

Despite these personal issues, my role as researcher is to not only describe, question, tell, and show the stories of the four documentary filmmakers, but in using oral history, to document their work and careers and to gather data corroborating their stories. In this way, as researcher and interpreter my role is to facilitate a fair and balanced telling and validation of their personal stories. Corti (2007) contends oral histories "can prove to be a significant part of

our cultural heritage and become resources for historical as well as contemporary research" (2007, p.37). In light of this, yet another level of validation is added for my use of oral history to achieve the aims of my study. These filmmakers' personal narratives and their remembrances contribute to bringing recognition to the part they played in the establishment of early ABC television and perhaps shed light on the point of view in relation to those who work behind the scene. Moreover, these filmmakers' personal narratives provide/reveal a wealth of experience, knowledge, innovation, and experimentation told as only those who worked then can remember, at a time when Australian television documentary was in its infancy.

An important part of my study is addressing the "unfashionable question" of the ethics of the documentary filmmakers, and the "personal conscience" (Rosenthal 1980, p.5) of the filmmaker and its influence on their filmmaking. Ethics in documentary film entails the duty of care balanced with the public's right to know and right of privacy. These are important problematic interconnected aspects of documentary filmmaking and, as Rosenthal states (1988), have been discussed at length by Pryluck, Winston, Katz and others. Ethics in relation to film practice "is one of the most important yet at the same time one of the most neglected topics in the documentary field" (Rosenthal 1988, p.245). Essentially, ethics in documentary filmmaking means the extent to which the filmmaker avoids exploiting the people he films and ensuring they do not suffer humiliation, shame, or embarrassment as a result of their involvement. The documentary filmmaker's duty of care entails the responsibility of the

filmmaker to ensure that the people they film "realise what is really going on, what the implications and possible consequences of being portrayed on the screen, or of being interviewed, are?" (Rosenthal 1988, p. 246). While the public's right to know and right to privacy are again problematic in that "the known and unknown hazards posed by direct cinema suggest the necessity for extreme caution on the part of filmmakers in dealing with potential infringements on the rights of subjects" (Pryluck, in Rosenthal 1988, p.260). The filmmaker's personal conscience can influence reasons certain topics are examined in their documentaries particularly if the filmmaker's passionate concerns are behind the film's production. Pryluck (1988) explains that with direct cinema/cinema verite's use of lightweight equipment in particular "the relationship of the filmmakers to the people in their films became more amorphous" (in Rosenthal 1988, p. 255) meaning it became not clearly differentiated. As a result, Pryluck (1988) contends direct cinema/cinema verite filmmakers "have shown us aspects of our world that in other times would be been obscured from view; in this there is a gain. In the gain there is perhaps a loss" (in Rosenthal 1988, p.255). In view of Berger's (2000) influence and interpretation and Rosenthal's (1980, 1988) question of ethics and personal conscience, the recollections of the four ABC filmmakers gathered through oral history and personal correspondence, reveal their personal political beliefs in relation to their work as documentary filmmakers, their experiences and struggles in relation to ethics in documentary as well as personal conscience. At the same time, their recollections include many behind the scenes highlights and

insights of working on programs *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* as well as other films. As mentioned previously, part of this examination into the filmmaker's personal conscience, or perspective, are the words of those they filmed. The filmmakers reveal their thoughts and feelings about some of the awkward moments filming people telling their stories in their words. The issue of ethics and right of privacy in relation to the telling of their stories is important when the guarded or unguarded emotions of those filmed are shown emerging by the filmmakers as captured on film. It is through their words that another perspective exists of people talking about dealing and struggling with their circumstances.

The words and language of Australian and international filmmakers who are contemporaries of the four ABC filmmakers help to established and correlate similarities of terminologies and language. Therefore, archival text and audio evidence available of those filmmakers has been sourced and as such allows an understanding of relevant meanings and perceptions. International documentary filmmakers include Robert Maysles, John Grierson, Alan Rosenthal, while Australian documentary filmmakers include Cecil Holmes, John Heyer, Judy Adamson, and actor/producer/director Charles (Bud) Tingwell. Other archival textual sources of evidence derive from ABC management staff such as Ken Watts, and ABC television documentary filmmakers, investigative journalists, and cameramen such as Robert Raymond, Tim Bowden, Jim Downes, Jonathan Holmes, Ron Iddon, John Mabey, David Brill, Peter Luck, Chris Masters, presenter Bill Peach, and senior researcher Wendy Borchers. Each provides a

unique point of view of being involved in early ABC television documentary filmmaking during the 1960s to 1980s. Additional archival evidence includes photographs obtained from the private collections of the four ABC documentary filmmakers, personal correspondence in the form of personal letters and emails, and articles gathered from newspapers, magazines, journals, conference papers, and books containing additional corroborative information informing the contemporary historical background of my study.

Media and communication research methods are outlined in the works of Bertrand and Hughes (2005) and Berger (2000). As such, these methods provide further validation for archival evidence collection and for the research processes used in my study in gathering information about ABC documentary filmmaking and filmmakers. The continual flux in relation to understanding the past from the present is an important consideration for researchers who are themselves shaped by history. Moreover, issues of bias, errors, and factual distortion all create an interpretive minefield for the qualitative researcher. This relationship is particularly so in relation to my use of oral history where these documentary filmmakers' memory, personal experience and interpretation are its core. So too, this flux influences research interpretation and is a significant aspect of archival research. Berger (2000) writes:

> It is natural to use our knowledge of the past to try to understand the present because we believe the past has influence the present. That is one of the things that history teaches us.To the extent that future developments in social thought shape the consciousness of historians, we can also argue that the future influences the past as we learn to interpret and understand it.
>
> (Berger 2000, p.137)

The advantages of accessing and using institutional documents, for instance, those produced by the ABC such as their Editorial Policies and Charter documents, provide evidence of what Bertrand and Hughes (2005) term "a particular moment, thus allowing a researcher to follow changes in policy and practice" (2005, p.133). These documents provide a perspective into the organisational structure of the ABC during the careers of the four ABC filmmakers. Furthermore, these documents are "written in the institution's professional language, which may well be part of what the researcher is studying" (Bertrand & Hughes 2005, p.133), and as archival documents in this case, "can be consulted repeatedly" (Bertrand & Hughes 2005, p.133). Disadvantages may arise however, if, as Bertrand and Hughes (2005) suggest, the documents are difficult to locate or being incomplete, in that they do not tell the whole story (2005, p. 133). The ABC Editorial Policies cited in this thesis, published in 1993, do not directly relate to the early years of ABC Television, they do however reflect and reaffirm the ethos adopted by the early ABC filmmakers. The ABC's Annual Report 1969-1984 provides additional information about earlier editorial policies.

My overriding research question explores the nature of social documentary as evinced in the work of four ABC documentary filmmakers: Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan and examines the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's (ABC) collection of social documentary television programs. Using oral history methodology together with qualitative research, my study records the beginnings of their careers before they began working at the ABC, their work in early ABC

television and their work in the changing genre of television documentaries. Their narratives reveal insights into the changing techniques of filmmaking, the nature, and future of documentary and the place of such filmmaking in the ABC at the time.

An important element of my study is recognition of the work of the four documentary filmmakers working with the institution of the ABC. Through oral histories they tell their stories as they remember them, and in their words. Personal experiences and remembrances such as these hold value in allowing validation for existence as well as offering intimate opportunities to understand the past.

Cross correlation of questions and answers provides corroboration of experience and memory. Colour coding sections within and across each transcript aids in achieving this corroboration. Random colour choices for the interview transcripts were chosen. “Green” for answers to questions about their early careers, “Pink” for those about technologies of the period and how they used them, and “Yellow” for those about ABC documentary program making processes. “Grey” was for those about case examples of their documentary filmmaking, and “Blue” was for those about ABC documentary filmmaking restrictions, or for those about ABC documentary filmmaking politics, or about radicalism in early ABC documentary filmmaking. In practical sense, this open colour coding process of the interview transcripts not only enables cross corroboration of evidence, but also enables the selection and retrieval of relevant quotations from each of the four ABC documentary filmmakers overall.

Literature Review

This literature review explores the history of documentary in Australia, and in particular the notion of documentarys social impact. This necessarily involves looking for the ways in which Australian documentary has been used as a tool of social activism. In looking at the different forms this has taken, it is also necessary to investigate influences on Australian documentary from overseas documentary makers and Australian producers' up-take of new technologies and filmmaking styles.

Under-documentation of Australian documentary

Fitzsimmons draws attention to the under-documentation of Australian documentary practices, in particular those through historically informed detailed monographs (2000, p.66). According to FitzSimons (2000), monographs about the pre-1980s period in Australian documentary reveal the "links that existed between the form and content of documentaries, the concerns of practitioners, and the organisational and independent sectors respectively" (2000, p.66). She cites Lansell and Beilby's 1988 *The Documentary Film in Australia* and Moran's 1991 *Projecting Australia* as the "only two books devoted exclusively to the Australian documentary" (2000, p.66)**.** More recently, however, three other texts have emerged. Summerhayes' *The Moving Images of Tracey Moffatt* (2007) looks in particular at Moffatt's work in film, performance art, documentation and photography, and Screen Australia's *Documentary production in Australia,*

2010: A collection of key data described as an "annual collection of statistics profiles the state of documentary filmmaking in Australia. Statistics include production, employment, funding and release data from 1996/97 to 2008/09" (2010, p. 1 of 2), as well as Williams' *Australian post-war documentary film : an arc of mirrors* (2008) which looks at realist film production and Australian documentary. These texts inform my study by providing historical information and establishing suppositions and foundations about Australian documentary.

Moran and Vieth (2006, pp.150, 151) briefly mention the "powerful institutional support" given by Film Australia and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to "documentary type stories involving social issues and problems". Also mentioned is the contribution these institutions made through their training systems to "the direction of the social realist genre" of Australia's feature film industry whereby a sense of detachment similar to observational documentary exists (Moran & Vieth 2006. p.150). The support and training given from within the institution to the filmmakers in this study is revealed through their interviews. Inglis mentions briefly the emergence of ABC documentary programmes as part of the development of the ABC's Television Features department "created on [Ken] Watts' advice in 1969" (Inglis 1983, pp. 287, 288).

Moran and Vieth (2006, p.155) stress the institutional perspective noting the stimulus given by the ABC and Film Australia to "setting the parameters of a cinematic social realism" and its impact on Australian documentary.

> Beginning in the mid 1970s and accelerating from the early 1970s, economic forces and social impulses have frequently been at variance. Over these years, deterioration in social conditions has turned the perception of Australia into

> that of the Unlucky Country. This, together with the increasing diversity of the social fabric, has proved to be fertile ground for film makers with an inclination towards social realism. This has helped create and sustain the space for an Australian cinema of social realism.
>
> (Moran & Vieth 2006, pp, 155,156)

Moreover, the "changing nature of Australian society" (Moran & Vieth 2006, p.155) during the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, was a period central to the work and careers of the four documentary filmmakers.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, the ABC had outsourced the production of documentary, but still maintained control of content and style. This constraint resulted in documentaries that lacked the passion and courage of the early period when documentary filmmakers such as Manefield et al who worked at the ABC. Leahy and Gibson (2002) suggest that the repression of the documentary filmmakers' voice in the way the filmmaker "creates the argument in a documentary" (Leahy & Gibson 2002, p. 90), or in the stance taken in the documentary to the topic (Leahy & Gibson 2002, p.92) remains in particular television documentary; that "almost all documentaries made in Australia since the late 1980s have had to tailor themselves to the television market here and/or overseas" (2002, p. 90), and call "for filmmakers to regain their imaginative voice" (2002, p. 90). This "voice" Leahy and Gibson explain:

> Is something like the filmmaker's point of view, and is expressed by all the techniques the documentary-maker uses to create meaning: sound, picture and their relationship, narrative, visual style, editing, music, art direction, and overall structure.
>
> (Leahy & Gibson 2002, p.92)

This repression of the filmmaker's voice or ability to create an argument is in contrast with, the earlier period during which the four filmmakers had a degree of creative freedom to innovate and experiment with techniques and approaches.

In his exploration of the "neglect of Australian documentary film" Moran (2000, p.34) asserts this detrimental effect eventuated because of "a revival of the Australian cinema in the late 1960s" (2000, p.34). Interestingly, during the late 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s however, there is a similarity between themes addressed in feature films and themes addressed in, and emerging from, *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country.* Feature films with similar documentary themes include *You Can't See Round Corners* (1969), *Walkabout* (1971), *Gentle Strangers* (1972), *Stone* (1974), *Petersen* (1974), *Sunday Too Far Away* (1975), *Caddie* (1975), *Don's Party* (1976), *The Irishman* (1977), *The Man From Snowy River* (1985) or *The Shiralee* (1987). Variously the themes for these films range from personal relationships in modern Australian society, rural and urban Aboriginal conditions, alternative lifestyles, shearers and shearing, working class single women issues, politics and society, and Australian character and history. This suggests that filmmakers in both film and documentary found inspiration from the same sources.

Documentary and politics

In this thesis, I will examine the politics of the series *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* as well as the politics of the documentary filmmakers. Such a linkage has a strong pedigree; politics and documentary have been often intertwined. At the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Russian documentary filmmaker Dziga Vertov "saw the great possibilities in cinema as an effective weapon in the social struggle" (Issari & Paul 1979, p.23). Another

view is that the function of the documentary is "to clarify choices, interpret history, and promote human understanding" (Rosenthal 1980, Introduction, p.1).

Documentary film in the form of newsreels played an important role in documenting the Russian Revolution of 1917. The political, social and cultural changes that occurred in the aftermath became the focus of "Kinonedelya" (Film Week), a newsreel that "was made and released by the Moscow Film Committee's News Department in 1918 and 1919" (Drobashenko, in Pronay & Spring 1982, pp. 249-251). Over a period of two years Russian documentary filmmaker Dziga Vertov and journalist Mikkail Koltsov produced 43 issues of the newsreel which documented "revolutionary demonstrations and parades, Civil War battles, portraits of political figures, the emergence of a new way of life" (Drobashenko, in Pronay & Spring 1982, p. 252). In another more progressive and innovative newsreel produced at this time, "Kinopravda" (Film Truth), Vertov:

> Made use of retrospective montage that linked the present with the past, and retraced the road of the country's history. What was qualitatively new was not only the great amount and stricter selection of facts, but also the way these facts were put together in accordance with the author's concept.
> (Drobashenko, in Pronay & Spring 1982, p. 253)

Kinopravda was the "first film magazine, not only in Soviet Russia but also in world cinema" (Drobashenko, in Pronay & Spring 1982, p. 256), and was significantly "characterised by an actively imaginative approach to the reality which it reflected" (Drobanshenko, in Pronay & Spring 1982, p. 253). Drobashenko draws comparison for Vertov's work with John Grierson's work in that "the appearance in films of close-ups of the worker and the peasant, the

common people, even if they only represented generalised social types, signified a new state in aesthetic perception of reality" (in Pronay & Spring 1982, p. 260).

Vertov alludes to the idea that the representation of a particular perspective of truth be it the filmmakers' or not, ultimately contributes toward whose "truth" emerges. Vertov arranged individual shots to show a "truth" which contributed to the whole truth (Barnouw 1993, p.58). Of the camera, Vertov wrote, "I am cinema-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you a world such as only I can see" (Vertov, cited in Barnouw 1993, 58). Vertov used techniques not actually used before. He used original techniques to create "a new perception of the world. Thus I (the camera) decipher a new way a world unknown to you" (Vertov, cited in Barnouw 1993, p.59). That is, Vertov (the cameraman) approaches filmmaking as if he and the eye of his camera (the lens) are seemingly together; he shows audiences what his camera sees. In this sense, he and the camera were one and the same. However, the camera could go where the human eye could not. Vertov shifted the focus of his documentaries so that different elements of reality, or indeed a differently constructed reality, could be placed before an audience. Vertov focuses attention in on the rhythms, the movements, the intensity before him (and the audience) thereby offering them another reality. Through technical tricks and symbolic moments, Vertov created highly emotive films (Barnouw 1993, p.59). Lansell and Beilby (1982) suggest however, that Vertov's film *The Man with the Camera* (1929):

> Questions the assumption that the documentary is a window on the world by drawing attention to the fact that what is on the screen is merely an image: the true reality is not the reality of what is shown but the image itself. This conscious subversion of the documentary makes the focus of the film not the real world but the cinematic language used to transcribe that world. (1982, p.15)

Whether or not what the documentary shows is reality or actuality, image or window, the concept of showing a window on reality is at the core of documentary filmmaking.

Vertov's filmmaking approach was to hand out film assignments to various cameramen and require them to capture events as they happened or while "on the run" (Barnouw 1993, p.55). This is a familiar approach of documentary filmmakers and news cameramen today. Echoing Vertov's approach, cinema verite filmmakers also used concealed camera positions and filmed the actuality of moments, or events as they happened. Vertov's ability to invent and apply groundbreaking and timeless filmmaking techniques is that essentially his integral techniques still inspire documentary filmmakers and news and current affairs cameramen today. Decades of technical developments in equipment have meant that, unlike Vertov, today's cameramen are unencumbered by weighty equipment of times past. The flexibility, manoeuvrability, and portability of cameras are vastly different characteristics from those once used (Barnouw 1993, pp. 55-57). Walton (2006) comments on the flexibility of camera technology in times of change and suggests that the social and political changes of the sixties and "their resonances in new approaches to social and historical interpretations of polity were the main drivers of program change - just as they revolutionized the study of history and society" (Walton, S, per.comm., 22 March 2006). Furthermore, it is his belief that there was a "serendipitous convergence of new social attitudes with new cinematic tools with which to express them - a

convergence of the May Revolution and Éclair if you like" (Walton, S, per.comm., 22 March 2006).

> We should be careful to note too that Arri had a 35mm hand held – though not professional camera by the late 1930s, and Djiga Vertov was throwing his big old camera around in the 20s as if it were a box brownie.
> (Walton, S, per.comm., 22 March 2006)

Until the 1960s and the advent of the French handheld Éclair 16mm camera, filmmakers required a camera assistant. The Éclair camera in particular became integral to the work of the *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* filmmakers. Walton admits he never knew the pre-hand held world at all, but "anyone coming to documentary for the first time in the late 50s and early 60s was a child of the revolution" (Walton, S, per.comm., 22 March 2006).

The documentary film industry expanded along with the realisation that film could be used to record lives and events in all their uniqueness and similarity. Coincidentally, the British Board of Film Censors was set up in 1911 "almost exactly with the establishment of the War Office Admiralty Press Committee" (Pronay 1982, p.15). Newsreels were receiving negative audience reaction to an abundance of commentary (Harrison, in Pronay 1982, p.239), when the images alone of World War I more effectively told the story of the global upheaval. Harrison argues "much of the public did not really want that [commentary]; they were more interested in the pictures themselves" (in Pronay 1982, p. 241).

Film and its use as a propaganda tool emerged prior to World War II. Film's ability to communicate an understanding of the world to audiences inevitably led to its use as a propaganda tool because propaganda had become "a

recurring topic of top-level and even Cabinet consideration" (Taylor, in Pronay 1982, p.25). Moreover, according to Taylor, propaganda "did not cease entirely" after World War II when peace returned, but was employed creating a better image for making Britain "more widely known and understood abroad" and as a "new phase described as 'psychological rearmament' with the growing conviction that Britain might soon find herself involved in another major war" (Taylor, in Pronay 1982, pp. 25, 26).

Barnouw argues, "The politicizing of documentary was not a Grierson innovation but a world phenomenon, a product of the times" (1993, p. 100). As stated earlier, Vertov began documenting the Russian Revolution of 1917 in newsreels. Another is the highly gifted but radical female documentary filmmaker German, Leni Riefenstahl. Riefenstahl's films documented the Nazi regime during World War II. Today the visual excellence and brilliant filmic qualities of her work receive praise but also still attract the harsh criticism that has continued since the 1930s. Critics widely agree that her film *Triumph of the Will* (1935) is the greatest propaganda film of all time. Adolph Hitler commissioned Riefenstahl to film the 1934 Nazi party rally in Nuremberg, which "was to be the largest ever staged-announcement and demonstration, to all the world, of German rebirth" (Barnouw 1993, p. 101). Premiering in 1935, the film *Triumph of the Will* was a massive undertaking considering the vastness of the Nuremberg Nazi rallies and the logistical implications of cumbersome cameras and equipment, but it is also one that history considers an immensely overwhelming propaganda film (Barnouw 1993, p.103). It is extraordinary, that

whether unconsciously, Riefenstahl was seemingly oblivious to her manipulation by Hitler, and his political agenda. Barnouw also reports that with the following words, Riefenstahl paid tribute to Hitler and his recognition of "the importance of cinema. Where else in the world have the film's inherent potentialities to act as the chronicler and interpreter of contemporary events been recognized in so far-sighted a manner?" (1993, p. 103). Riefenstahl's film *Triumph of the Will* "had no spoken commentary", as Riefenstahl considered any commentator an "enemy of the film", significantly the film does however, incorporate one voice, Hitler's, through his speeches and those of other Nazi officers (Barnouw 1993, pp.103,104). As a result of these issues, her career remains framed and shaped by extreme derision and worldwide condemnation and exclusion.

In an interesting example of reverse propaganda, Barnouw argues that as "Riefenstahl's cameras did not lie; they told a story that has never lost its power to chill the marrow"; and he also states, the film was used by the opposition forces and as well as other nations who "arrayed against Hitler" (1993, p. 105). *Triumph of the Will* was filmed between September 4 and September 10, 1934 at the Nazi Party Nuremberg Rally (Dasblauelicht.net 2009, p.1 of 2), and premiered in March 1935 (Barnouw 1993, p.103). This film documents one perspective of a time in world history as it happened, and a time that should never be forgotten. Just a few words tell of the reality of that time and the harrowing truth behind this documentary's story and its perspective. The truth behind the film's story was revealed in an interview for the BBC News Report (9 September, 2003) when Riefenstahl revealed that she "was unaware that Gypsies

who had been taken from concentration camps to be used as extras in one of her wartime films had later died in the camps". In looking back the enduring legacy of Reifenstahl's documentary *Triumph of the Will* is that it is a film remembered as the most effective propaganda film of all time. The film used and incorporated is undoubtedly some of the most powerfully evocative and emotive images filmed (Internet Movie Database.com 1994, p.1 of 2). Filming techniques used by Riefenstahl include placing a camera "at the precise spot where they [troops] would give the Fuhrer an 'eyes right' salute" (Barnouw 1993, p.102), wooden rails were placed to enable cameras to be able to film the troops up close and personal within the ranks, as well as many and varied camera positions on rooftops, church towers, and roadside ditches (Barnouw 1993, p. 102). Riefenstahl later made the documentary *Olympia* (1938) in which she filmed the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, and which is the film that documents the historic and controversial snubbing by Adolph Hitler of champion African American athlete Jesse Owens. Techniques and approaches such as those used by Riefenstahl bring audiences closer to events as they happened which makes the images more powerful and more memorable.

Similar outcomes were achieved by two major American documentaries made during World War II that stand out significantly as cinema verite documenting the lived experiences of the United States military personnel involved in battle, and of the filmmaker's courage under fire. John Ford's *The Battle of Midway* (1942) documents the battle as it happened on June 4-6, 1942. As a war cameraman, Ford directed the film working with naval photographers.

The film was produced by the United States Navy. The other is John Huston's *The Battle of San Pietro* (1944) produced by the United States Army Pictorial Service.

Documentary in Australia

To appreciate the milieu surrounding the Australian film and television industry into which the four ABC filmmakers ventured and began their careers as young men, the following provides an historical perspective on the pre-1945 period and the years after 1945 following World War II through the 1950s and into the early 1960s.

The initial Australian government production of documentaries occurred from 1901 to 1912 when "the Australian government had hired various production companies to produce films" (Moran 1991, p.1). During this period, production of government documentary film concentrated on "promoting Australia's national image overseas (to encourage trade and migration) and of promoting within Australia the project of 'nation building'" (McMurchy 1994, p.179). Then in 1912, the Commonwealth Government appointed an official "cinematographer and still photographer who, together with a small staff and limited equipment, constituted the Cinema and Photographic Branch" (Moran 1991, p.1). From 1921 to 1939 a permanent branch was located in Melbourne, however with the outbreak of World War II production ceased (Moran 1991, p.2). The documentaries produced during the 1920s and 1930s, such as the series *Know*

Your Own Country were screened as feature film supports (McMurchy 1994, p 179). McMurchy describes these documentaries as showing:

> A strictly official account of life in Australia and ignoring what life was really like for most Australians during the Great Depression (when Australia suffered an unemployment rate second only to Germany's).
>
> (1994, p.179)

The history of documentary appears to divide at 1945 when the focus of documentary in Australia moved to nation building and to positioning Australia and Australians in the world in the years after World War II. Moran (1991) argues prior to 1945 only sponsored documentaries were made and that after 1945 "there was both a sponsored and a national program" (1991, p.1). Australian documentaries produced between 1945 and 1953 were "nationalist in a particular way. As well as promoting a general civic consciousness, these films could also help to overcome regionalism and parochialism by mounding the Australian nation" (Moran 1989, p.155).

The Film Division of the Department of Information was established in Sydney in 1940 "as a means of coordinating and controlling film information for and about the war effort" (Moran 1991, p.2). This move acts as evidence of the Government's concerns about national security, wartime censorship imperatives, as well as an acute appreciation for the power of film to communicate and for its use as a propaganda tool. At this time, films were being produced for the Department by Cinesound and Chauvel Productions (Moran 1991, p.2).

Following John Grierson's 1940 visit to Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, the Film Division underwent changes, one of which was instigated by Grierson in his role as "an institutional entrepreneur on behalf of documentary"

(Moran 1991, p.2). Grierson's involvement in establishing institutional documentary in Australia paved the way for the early careers of the four ABC filmmakers in ABC documentary filmmaking. As a result, and as their interviews reveal, Grierson's cinema verite/direct cinema documentary filmmaking style consequentially influenced their filmmaking approach. His idea for change involved film sponsorship, a concept that was greeted well in Canada and New Zealand, "but less so in Australia" (Moran 1991, p.3). As in Canada and New Zealand, Grierson's role during his Australian visit was "to advise on the role of film in national life and in strengthening empire ties" (Moran 1991, p.3). It wasn't until 1945 however, that the Australian National Film Board (ANFB) was established along similar lines to the Canadian National Film Board (CNFB). That is, the ANFB's purpose, "was to establish Australian film policy in the area of documentary rather than to actually produce films itself" (Moran 1991, p.4). Williams points out, the establishment of the ANFB "must also be understood in relation to a number of war time initiatives" (1999, p.6 of 15) of the Curtin Government's Department of Post-war Reconstruction, and that this initiative runs parallel to "both the Roosevelt [U.S. New Deal] and the Curtin/Chifley governments [that] had at the heart of their platforms the promise of social reform" (Williams 1999, p.6 of 15).

After much bureaucratic repositioning, the ANFB "lost the capacity to act executively and became an advisory body only" (Moran 1991, p.5) and as a result, its Film Unit strengthened its position. By 1954, filmmaker Stanley Hawes had been appointed the Film Unit's Producer in Chief and "took on the

administration of the organisation in addition to his production role" (Bertrand 1999, p.120). As well as this role, Hawes "personally supervised hundreds of films" (Bertrand 1999, p.120). Prior to this appointment, Hawes, who had been influenced by Grierson's work, had also been invited by Grierson "to join him at the National Film Board of Canada" (Bertrand 1999, p.120). Furthermore, Hawes' belief was that he "tried to preserve the Grierson philosophy and to continue the Grierson spirit" (in Moran & O'Regan (eds.) 1985, p.83). Hawes' admiration for Grierson and his contribution in establishing documentary film and filmmaking in Australia at the time, foreshadowed the role ABC television played in the early training and extensive careers of the documentary filmmakers in this study, in that, the ABC made it possible for them to "work in film with self-respect" (Hardy, 1979, p.108).

According to Lansell & Beilby (1982), in contrast to overseas cinema, the Australian cinema [feature and documentary] during the 1950s was "virtually moribund" (1982, p.43), and the "deciding factor in this decline and fall" (1982, p.43) was not because of television's introduction into Australia, but the "simple capitulation to Hollywood production, distribution and exhibition" (1982, p.43). On the other hand, rather than verging on becoming obsolete Ansara and Milner (1999) contend "the fifties appear to have been a vigorous time in Australian political, social and cultural life, and a period of dynamic change and growth in Australian film production" (1999, p.30). Furthermore they:

> Place the upsurge in filmmaking of the fifties within a period that begins in the late forties with post-war reconstruction and its filmic preoccupation with nation-building, and continues through a time of low unemployment, intensified industrial

> and political conflict, a rising standard of living, the establishment of consumerism and its apotheosis in the family television set.
> (Ansara & Milner 1999, p. 30)

One of those for whom work *was* difficult to find during the fifties was radical filmmaker, writer and director Cecil Holmes. Holmes found it difficult to continue his career, not only because of the anti-Communist feeling that was felt in Australia during the 1950s, but also because of the enormous concurrent impact of American films on the Australian film industry. During 1951 and 1952 Holmes directed only two documentaries. They were *Careers for Young Australians* (1951) a 10 minute film for BHP made by Cinesound about the steel industry's training scheme, and *The Food Machine* (1952) a 23 minute film for Shell Film Unit about petrol's part in the growth of mechanised farming in Australia. Two other short films he directed were *Safari* (1952) and *Terrific the Giant* (1952) for Associated TV, which were puppet films running 10 minutes each (Adamson, pers.comm.18.02.2004). Apart from these small films, Holmes' made two feature films during the 1950s which were *Captain Thunderbolt* (1953) and *Three In One* (1956). Holmes continued to struggle making documentaries for the Methodist Mission and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Examples of the Australian film industry's reaction to the milieu that existed survive in the form of Cinesound and Movietone newsreel coverage and various documentaries of the period. Moran (1989, p.155) points out that, "because of the influence of the Cold War, the unit [Australian National Film Board] tended to avoid contentious subjects" such as *Mike and Stefani* which was shot in Europe in 1949/50 "telling of the wartime and post-war displaced

people of Europe and in particular of the Ukranian couple, Mike (Mycola) and Stefani" (Moran 1987, p.11 of 16) who wanted to emigrate to Australia. Similar contentious subjects became the basis for many *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* episodes. The Australian News and Information Bureau produced an anti-communist propaganda documentary film entitled *Menace* (1952). The film traces the:

> History of communist conquest in Eastern Europe and Asia after the Second World War. The film, a fictional dramatization presented in the form of a newsreel, enunciates the harsh conditions experienced by people under communist rule, and warns of the threat that communism poses for democracy in other countries, including Australia.
> (National Film and Sound Archives Cold War listing 2007, p.6)

The Shell Film Unit was established in the 1940s and is recognised as producing one of Australia's most renowned documentaries, *The Back of Beyond* (1954). In making documentaries promoting both Australia and Australians, Shell's primary objective was to promote Shell in Australia. In the 1950s, according to the then Shell Australia CEO J.R.C. Taylor, the reason Shell made documentaries in Australia is because they believed in Australia and in an Australian identity and in the people and spirit of outback Australia and "above all, we make them because we recognised that Australia's future is Shell's future" (Shell Australia 2010, p.1. of 2). *The Back of Beyond* (1954) is described as "one man's resolution and tenacity in carrying mail and supplies along the track from one remote outpost in the heart of Australia to another" (Shell Australia 2010, p.2 of 2). This Australian documentary film tells the story of outback postman Tom Kruse, and shows his journey as he goes about his mail run on the Birdsville Track in Australia's centre, and according to Shell, the film "captures an entire national ethos and its enduring values – fortitude, resilience, resourcefulness and

friendliness" (Shell Australia 2010, p.2 of 2). The film was directed by filmmaker John Heyer and is one example of the Shell Film Unit's success (Barnouw 1993, p.213).

Documentary and social activism in Australia

Grierson's 1940 visit to Australia [and Canada in 1939] and his influence on Australian documentary are documented in works by Bertrand (1989), Bertrand & Collins (1981), Lansell & Beilby (1982), and Hardy (1971) and others. As the British Film Commission's first film officer, Grierson's task was "to study the question of production and distribution of educational and documentary films of the Empire" (Bertrand & Collins 1981, pp. 97, 98). During his visit, Grierson encountered difficulties initiating moves to establish an Australian National Film Board similar to the Canadian Film Board established the year before (in Hardy 1971, p.25). Conservatism and anti-left concerns at the time:

> Had an impact on the creative climate for government-sponsored documentary filmmakers who had hoped to create in Australia the sort of tolerant mandate for documentary film which John Grierson had enjoyed in England and Canada.
>
> (ed. Bertrand 1989, p.180)

The Films Division, established as the production arm of the proposed Australian National Film Board was eventually:

> Transferred to the Department of the Interior when the Department of Information was abolished by Menzies in 1950 – some say because of 'socialist' leaning permitted by Arthur Calwell, its minister under the Chifley government.
>
> (ed. Bertrand 1989, p.181)

Moreover, Bertrand argues (1989, p.180) the Films Division "regressed by the mid fifties into a period of safety-first filmmaking", but notes there were some, for example Cecil Holmes (*Captain Thunderbolt* 1953), a feature film, and John Heyer (*The Back of Beyond* 1954), a Shell-sponsored documentary, who remained "socially-committed" (1989, p.180) filmmakers making social comment through their films. Again, importantly, as asserted by Moran & Vieth (2006, p.155) humanity and realism were emerging key elements in Australian film and documentary. Cunningham argues "the integration of classical documentary methods and approaches to material" (1987, p.2 of 5) and the impact of international art cinema on Australian filmmaking influenced "a more explicit social humanism" (1987, p.2 of 5), and "produced two of the most politically and stylistically innovative reworkings of nationalist archetypes". One, *Captain Thunderbolt* (1953) directed by Holmes, was an Australian Western incorporating iconic Western images of the man on the horse with a gun and a hat, robbing coaches and having gun battles with the authorities. The film tells the story of Australian bushranger Captain Thunderbolt and his mate Alan Blake, and presents an alternative view of his life, exploits, and death, and the other, *Three In One* (1956), also directed by Holmes, is a hybrid of drama and documentary style. The film depicts three stories each with the common theme of the spirit of Australian mateship (Holmes 1986, p.41). The three stories are: *The Load of Wood* by Frank Hardy, *Joe Wilson's Mates* by Henry Lawson, and *The City* by Ralph Petersen. In telling these stories Holmes' film adopts the element of detachment found in social realism film and the dramatisation

element of feature film. Moreover, Heyer's documentary *The Back of Beyond* (1954) made during the same period by the Shell Film Unit, is described as "arguably one of the two or three important films made in Australia in the 1950s" (O'Regan, Shoesmith, & Moran 1987, p. 1 of 8).

Other issues affected plans for an Australian National Film Board. As Bertrand & Collins (1981, p.98) explain, "when [Prime Minister] Menzies finally did see Grierson briefly, they did not get on well: Grierson became convinced that nothing would come of it and that his whole visit to Australia was a waste of time". Among the arguments about the demise of the Australian film industry during the 1950s is that television's introduction in 1956 "usurped the feature film's audience thereby rendering it a less important culture form" (O'Regan 1987, p.3 of 21). Alternatively, at the time, the probability was that the Menzies government "was just not concerned" with film making [feature or documentary], "rather than being dead against it" (O'Regan 1987, p.3 of 21). However, Bertrand and Collins contend that whatever the reasons were at the time, "this opportunity for a comprehensive national body was lost" (1981, p.98). State documentary film councils were eventually established in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Canberra, with the most successful being the New South Wales body (Bertrand & Collins 1981, p. 98).

During the 1950s, bureaucratic conservatism affected Australia's Commonwealth Film Unit, and by the mid-1960s "a spark of something less conservative" (McMurchy, in Murray ed.1994, p.180) began. The documentary film at this time was:

> An artistic and cultural transformation of the old 'actuality film', and as a term which signalled a new understanding of the form and purpose of the non-fiction film. In England, the social and ideological parameters of documentary were established in the Great Depression, discovering as its subjects the so-called 'common man', celebrating his work – and it was most often a 'him' in those time – and putting his problems on screen in the interests of social improvement. This was seen not only in the work of British government film units, most famously those headed by John Grierson, but also in the rise of a workers' film movement, which resulted in the production of hundreds of films and newsreels, screening throughout the country.
> (Ansara & Milner 1999, pp. 5, 6)

A challenge to Australia's conservatism emerged in the documentary work of the Realist Film Association and the Waterside Workers' Federation Film Unit between 1952 and 1958 that "implemented Lenin's ideal of 'art as a weapon'" (Ansara & Milner 1999, p.34).

Business and industry also used documentary to promote their agendas, equally so "the Christian churches, who likewise produced and screened films, most notably through a well-organised Religious Film Society" (Ansara & Milner 1999, p.34). In the process "a series of forceful agitprop [agitation and propaganda] documentaries" (McMurchy, in Murray ed.1994, p.189) were produced focussing on many socially difficult confronting issues such as workers industry conditions, they offered a different point of view of Australia's society. For example, *November Victory* (1955) "was made to give a history of industrial action in Australia and to provide background information on a current issue (the proposed changes in 1951 to the Stevedoring Industry Act)" (Milner 1999, p.138) from another perspective or *The Hungry Miles* (1955) about poverty and workers' rights during the Depression.

In 1957, following the introduction of television into Australia, Australian documentary filmmaker John Heyer questioned the future of the image of Australia. Heyer warned of the need for television to "give the Australian audience a greater opportunity than cinema ever did to voice their appetite for the sight and sound of things Australian" (1957, p. 97). He saw Australia's very isolation as being an advantage for Australian filmmakers (Heyer 1957, p. 97). Moreover, he warned that television and what it brought from overseas—for example, from the United States--was a dangerous influence on the Australian image on screen, and that it was:

> Abundantly clear: while the (Australian screen) image has certainly been affected by a variety of factors, the two principal forces that have moulded it today, are the physical isolation of the island continent from the rest of the world and the fact that it is easy, cheap and convenient to import almost anything.
> (1957, p.96)

Heyer questions the image of Australia and the need to give a voice to "things Australian" (1957, p.97). It is interesting to note that, whereas the earliest ABC Annual Report accessed [1969] does not include mention of Australian content specifically, by 1972 however, the Annual Report specifically addresses this issue in a separate section suggesting the importance given it by the ABC, stating:

> Public discussion about the Australian content of programmes has grown during the year. Section 114 of the Broadcasting and Television Act requires the Commission and commercial licensees to use, as far as possible, the services of Australians in the production and presentation of radio and television programmes; and it has been the Commission's policy, since its inception in 1932, to encourage Australian talent. In television this year locally produced programmes represented 51.41% of the total ABC output. The ABC showed 150 hours of locally produced drama, which was 13.27% of its total drama programmes.
> (ABC Annual Report 1972, p.6)

Heyer ‘s 1957 comment about the Australian image, suggested quite prophetically the direction Australian documentary took. He described the range and use of background images of Australia as being “from the burning glare of stony deserts to frozen gum trees to snow-covered high plains; ranges through lush pastures to dust-bowls and back against across endless plains of waving Mitchell grass” (1957, p.92). He again emphasised key Australian images when he wrote, “the foreground of the image is always essentially the same – always new and always concerned with day-to-day problems and adventures of living rather than with traditions” (Heyer 1957, p.92). His prophetic words essentially encapsulate the filmmaking approach and content of the ABC documentary programs *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* programs that present and represent the Australian image, culture, and society at a time in the 1960s and 1970s during which American film and television product had been flooding the Australian film and television market.

In 1963, the Vincent Report, which looked into the workings of the Broadcasting and Television Act, apparently included few references to documentaries (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p.70). The report did however include the thoughts of radical Australian documentary filmmaker, Cecil Holmes. Holmes was a champion of the Australian documentary. He had been a Communist since 1939, and was a self-described “unrepentant old radical” (1986, p.1). Holmes directed one of the first ABC documentaries, *I, the Aboriginal* (1964), which looked at the indigenous people of Australia, from the perspective of the story of Phillip Roberts, or Waipuldanya. The issue of the

Aboriginal condition regarding health, education, and social welfare remains controversial. Shortly thereafter, Holmes went on to make documentaries for the Methodist Overseas Mission. However, in the Vincent Report Holmes states "one point…I would like to raise is that, on the non-dramatic documentary level, much more should be done…The ABC is an obvious venue, but the other channels can surely be available too for this type of production" (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p.70; McMurchy, in Murray ed.1994, p.189).

In relation to the continually expanding diversity of Australia's multicultural society, the Charter also states that "its programs should contribute to a sense of national identity by countering racism and by exposing discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity" (1993, p.22).

Documentary filmmaker identities

Barnouw (1993, p.29) argues the documentary filmmaker has different kinds of identity and that "the documentarist is always more than one of these" kinds of identities (1993, p. 30). The filmmakers' approach to *Chequerboard* in particular, reflects Vertov's inclusive filmmaking approach in documentary. Other aspects such as producer/director editorial input and as their interviews reveal as filmmakers they enabled debate to be played out in each episode of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* were equally part of the filmmaking processes in producing these programs. Following are various descriptions and insights into some of the documentary filmmaker identities.

The first identity type is the *Promoter* – Companies such as Revillon Freres the fur merchant, Citroen the car manufacturer, and Shell Oil formed their own individual film units and began sponsoring filmmakers.

The second identity type is the *Reporter* – As noted earlier, Barnouw contends (1993, p.55) documentary filmmaker Vertov's approach to his filmmaking was as a film journalist and a reporter in as much as his approach to his work was in handing out film assignments to various cameramen, and requiring them to capture events as they happened or while "on the run" (Barnouw 1993, p.55), not unlike the news journalists and cameramen of today. Highly innovative, creative, and fearless in his filming techniques, Vertov also used concealed camera positions and worked to film actuality.

The third identity type is the *painter* [or art] - Swedish filmmaker Viking Eggeling, an admirer of Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein, experimented through changes in lighting and texture within film. He began experimenting with film producing in the process dream sequences for Fritz Lang's film *Nibelungen* (1924) (Barnouw 1993, p.73). Another is Joris Ivens from Amsterdam. Ivens' film *Rain* (1929) shows a rain shower in the streets of the city of Amsterdam and the progression from gentle downpour through to violent downpour and its impact on the objects it touches (Barnouw 1993, p.78).

The fourth identity type is the *Bugler*, a *war reporter*, or a *war propagandist* - Footage captured or filmed and produced in times of war and seen in the newsreels of the time elicits high audience emotion. Cinema verite

grew exponentially because of wartime audience's demands to know what was happening.

The fifth identity type is the *Explorer* - Legendary documentary filmmaker Robert Flaherty is described as one of the first of the explorer documentary filmmakers. Evidence of his tenacity and determination is found in the story of the making of his first and most famous film *Nanook of the North* (1922), which tells the story of Nanook, an Inuit, going about his daily life, hunting and fishing, and just living. Flaherty's creative dedication and drive is evident in the story behind his filming of Nanook's story. In 1916, after undertaking hours and hours of filming and in accumulating 30,000 feet of film of his expedition to the north of Canada, Flaherty accidentally set fire to the footage destroying his work (Barnouw 1993, p. 35). Devastated and having only a work print remaining, Flaherty decided to return to film just Nanook and his family and lifestyle, later intercutting, or editing, in this new footage with what little remained of his original film. Barnouw argues that Flaherty's ability to "master the grammar of film" set him aside from early documentary filmmakers (1993, p. 39). Interestingly, debates continue as to Flaherty's filming techniques as one critic writes about "the methods of a man who has been called the father of the documentary, whose films are masterpieces, and yet whose realities were admittedly assisted" (Ebert 2005, p.1). Flaherty's technique of filming from different angles and distances "seen in quick succession" totally changed the audience experience and perception; "he was applying it to material not invented by a writer or director, nor performed by actors" (Barnouw 1993, p.39).

Grierson's concept and description of the documentary as "a creative treatment of reality" (cited in Rothman 1997, p.109), is a derivation of Flaherty's visually manipulative technique. Both Grierson and Flaherty used filmmaking techniques to create documentary reality that require an amount of editorial input by the producer/director in the final cut. Editing documentary or newsreel film helps the filmmaker by removing certain shots in order to move the pace of the sequence forward more quickly or to emphasise at particular aspect of the scene. For example:

> One shot might show a cannon firing, and another shot might show a shell hitting its target; we infer that the cannon fired the shell (though the shots may show entirely different battles). Again, if a shot of a speaker is followed by a shot of a cheering crowd, we assume a special coexistence.
> (Bordwell and Thompson 2004, p.305)

The sixth identity type is the *Advocate* - The documentary filmmaker is able to present both visually and textually the essential underpinnings and fabric of society, making an argument either for or against social and political theories, for clarifying social issues or for reaffirming established political viewpoints.

The seventh identity type is the *Prosecutor* – Today as in times past, documentary filmmakers have been in the thick of the turmoil on the front line of battle to document for history the visual evidence of the atrocities of war, and of the repercussions resulting from bad government, and the persecution of peoples. Well-known around the world are the harrowing documentary and newsreel images of gaunt emaciated human figures staring back into the camera lens their eyes filled with questions, the faces of men, women and children frozen in fear while fleeing in terror from bombs, the images of the mangled bodies of the dead, and the devastation left by bombings and terrorist attacks. As has been the

case since those terrible times of World War II, history is destined to, and inevitably does, repeat itself. Examples of the inability of man to rid the world of war are numerous, and found in particular in Vietnam in the 1960s, in Bosnia, Sarajevo in Europe in the 1990s, and today in the first decade of the 21st century, with the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism. Then there is the genocide and atrocity of Rwanda, which is a different kind of war altogether. It is here and now, where documentary filmmakers are once again documenting the same kinds of images and terrible events which inevitably continue to stand as evidence of man's inhumanity to man and his seeming inability to learn from the past.

Other identities put forth by Barnouw include the poet, the catalyst, the observer, the guerrilla, and the chronicler.

John Grierson's "Documentary Film Movement"

Rothman argued that Grierson defined documentary as the "creative treatment of reality" (1997, p.109), and that Grierson's understanding of documentary was "as primarily playing a social or political role" (Rothman 1997, p.109).

Aitken (1992) argued that the documentary movement was "not associated with groups which advocated a socialist transformation of society" (1992, p.167), and that "the demand for socialism" came from the Communist Party, the Independent Labor Party and the Socialist League which were undergoing "a

transitional state during the 1930s" creating opposition and indecision from all sides (Aitken, 1992, p. 167).

Both Aitken (1992) and Rothman (1997) highlight Grierson's belief that documentary played a social or political role. However, Aitken (1992, pp.167, 168) points out Grierson also did not believe "that socialism as we have thought of it will come at all…given the conditions of modern technocracy, workers' self-management represents an unpractical and inefficient…(ideal)". Grierson did however "maintain close contacts with filmmaking organisations on the left throughout the thirties" (Aitken, 1992, p.181) setting up the Workers Film Society with Ralph Bond in 1929 (Aitken, 1992, p.181). Grierson's approach to documentary filmmaking was to work "within 'the system' [government] and using sponsorship as a framework within which to insert alternative interpretations" (Aitken, 1992, p.182). This particular aspect aligns with the system in which Manefield et al created their films. Moreover, these four filmmakers worked in a period during which similar social and political contexts to those experienced by Grierson and his contemporaries were emerging. For example Aitken asserts:

> The documentary film movement was associated with, and was mediated by, these contexts [the changing intellectual, cultural, political, and economic contexts in a social democratic society]….. the period was one in which ideological and political boundaries became less clearly defined, and this makes it difficult to pinpoint the exact ideological location of the documentary movement in relation to other contemporary ideologies.
>
> (Aitken, 1992, pp.182, 183)

As a way of ensuring continued government funding for British documentary filmmaking as well as a defence against commercialisation, Grierson argued the word "documentary" be kept and used even though some

considered it ugly (Sussex 1975, p.3). Grierson told a reporter from *The Observer* that keeping the so-called ugly word "documentary" would virtually ensure that nobody would steal it and as he further pointed out, he said, he was correct, in that nobody had (cited in Sussex 1975, p.3). The word "documentary", Grierson stated, "became associated with my talking about this kind of film, and with me and a lot of people around me" (Sussex 1975, p.3). During the many decades since its first use, filmmakers have accepted the word "documentary" and adopted it as a key descriptor for their filmmaking. Today, documentary is significant as a social and cultural creative vehicle through which important and relevant issues debates occur.

John Grierson's view of the work of the documentary filmmaker is that it de-familiarises banal everyday life because it involves "finding documentary material on one's doorstep: in events which have no novelty of the unknown or romance of noble savage on exotic landscape, to recommend them", that documentary represented "the return from romance to reality" (in Hardy 1971, p.149). Grierson further defines documentary as photographing "the living scene and the living story" (in Hardy 1971, p.147). At the same time, however, the documentary maker must create art out of the banal materials: the "realist documentary, with its streets and cities and slums and markets and exchanges and factories, has given itself the job of making poetry where no poet has gone before" (in Hardy 1971, p.151).

In addition, though, Grierson also writes about the British "films of social reconstruction" (in Hardy 1971, p.217) of the late 1930s stating that, they

"became a powerful force for the public good" (in Hardy 1971, p. 217). Here too, *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* find parallel in their examination of Australia's social structure and reflecting the changing face of Australian society, both urban and rural, and of Australians during the 1960s and 1970s.

Grierson describes the British Documentary Movement of the 1930s and its social documentary focus in 1939 as unrivalled in the world, and that:

> No documentary movement anywhere was so deliberately constructive in public affairs, or had so many powerful national allies as ours. Above all, its continuous and unremitting description of Britain's democratic ideals and work within those ideals, has a special pertinence at the time.
> (in Hardy 1971, p.216)

During a trip to the United States in 1924, Grierson's research and communication with American scholars, politicians, and journalists, led him to an understanding and perception that the "expectations" that the American people once held for democracy "were proving illusory" (Barnouw 1993, p.85).

Whether or not the American people had lost sight of their history, and therefore their democratic ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity, and of justice for all as envisaged by America's founding fathers, is debatable. Whether these ideals were not readily evident in the early part of the twentieth century, or in fact whether they had lost their import for Americans, is also debatable. However, putting himself forward as an *advocate*, Grierson's "mission", was his use of documentary filmmaking "dramatizing issues and their implications in a meaningful way". In so doing, he worked to clarify, reiterate, and reaffirm the basic underpinnings of American democracy for Americans (cited in Barnouw 1993, p.85). Barnouw explains that Grierson's approach could be considered as

that of a propagandist filmmaker in this particular instance; and the word "propaganda" was not something of which Grierson was afraid (1993, p.85).

However, Barnouw also suggests that Grierson saw his films as not only working to explain, but also working to inspire the American people (1993, p.85). Inspirational rhetorical content of propaganda films influences the thought and conduct of their audiences, not only in the form of language and discussion, but also in the form of imagery or metaphorical implication. On the one hand, are the historical implications and negative connotations relating to propagandist film, and on the other hand, is Grierson's so-called propagandist inspirational film. Whatever one's perception of a propaganda film and its content, these films can be good, or bad, depending on the audience and the messages contained in them. Propaganda is defined as, "official government communications to the public that are designed to influence opinion. The information may be true or false, but it is always carefully selected for its political effect" (Dictionary.com 2009, p.2 of 3). Therefore, as advocate documentary filmmaker, Grierson's inspirational propaganda films according to this definition had implications for American politics.

Joris Ivens

As noted earlier, Joris Ivens was an early art documentary filmmaker. His film *Rain* (1929) shows the impact of progressive and ever increasing heavy rain on the city of Amsterdam (Barnouw 1993, p.78). The filmic style and attention to the intricacies of nature are the forerunners of today's natural history

documentaries, such as those made by David Attenborough and others. Ivens believed in the filmmaker's practical connection to the object of his documentary, but also in the necessity for an emotional connection.

> I think in such great problems as life and death and democracy and fascism, there is no objectivity for an artist. He gets very weak if he attempts this. You ought to let the artist hate and love, agree and disagree, because that will reflect his work. His work has to be very emotional. I think you might say that the documentary film is an emotional presentation of facts. The audience can try to be objective, but not the documentary film director.
>
> (Ivens, J 1939, unpublished lecture Museum of Modern Art, n.p)

Iven's words reflect the early ABC filmmaker's continual struggle to remain objective while creating highly intimate and emotional social documentaries telling the stories of ordinary people. The interviews with Manefield et al reveal some of their struggles and how they managed to overcome them, or not.

More well known in Europe than the United States and elsewhere, Ivens later "came to be regarded as one of the fathers' of modern left-wing filmmaking, producing such works as *Spanish Earth* (1937) about the Spanish Civil War, and *The Four Hundred Million* (1938/9)" about the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1937 (Rosenthal, 1988, p.126).

Bakker (1999) argues Ivens, rather than documenting history, instead was "a conscious part of the history he was filming" (1999, p.25). Bakker draws on Hobsbawn (1995) and sheds light on the historian's position of responsibility and the ability to distance themselves from the history they document. Hobsbawn (1995) states:

> Religious and ideological confrontations, such as those which have filled this century, build barricades in the way of the historian, who major task is not to judge but to understand even what we can least comprehend. Yet what stands in the way of understanding is not only our passionate convictions, but the historical experiences that has formed them.
>
> (Hobsbawn, in Bakker 1999, p.5)

Bakker further argues, Ivens' personal historical experiences "fed his passionate convictions in a way that the will to understand the world around him was replaced (some might say 'blinded') by a belief" (1999, p.26) in a better world shaped by socialism. Ivens' documentaries, according to Bakker (1999, p.26) were not objective, but highly subjective, because of his belief in his work and his perspective on life. This is something Bakker contends is "probably true of all documentartists" (Bakker 1999, p.26). In relation to this, issues regarding their objectivity or subjectivity emerge from the interviews with the four ABC documentary filmmakers.

From my perspective in undertaking this study, as mentioned earlier, it has meant dropping defences and facing personal fears embedded within me from childhood that shaped my social, political, and cultural perspective. Hobsbawn's statement, without a doubt, crystallizes my journey as a researcher in understanding how that perspective impacted my ability to remain objective and to ask without fear or favour difficult questions of my interviewees. As well, Bakker's contentions about Ivens' documentary filmmaking also frame my reasons behind undertaking this study.

"Cinema verite"/ "direct cinema"

Cinema verite in particular challenged accepted filmmaking practices. Its exponents "vigorously preached that cinema should aim at capturing life at it is lived rather than as it is re-enacted or re-invented in the old traditional way" (Issari & Paul 1979, p.5).

The cinema verite or direct cinema style grew in acceptance and popularity during the 1950s, in particular with the introduction of television into Australia in 1956, because of its affinity with television techniques. The four filmmakers discuss this aspect later (see pages 114, 235, and 301) and how it influenced their work on *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*.

Vertov's living camera techniques and Flaherty's use of real-life experiences and actual people influenced the work of cinema verite filmmakers like Albert Maysles, and like Donnellan for instance who describes his filming technique as "shooting from the hip as it happened" (p. 298) and Walton who recalled how he was:

> Introduced to Denis Kaufman (Djigz Vertov) pretty early, and couldn't believe the way he and his brother Michael threw the huge old cameras of the 1920s and 30s around. Such mobility! Such energy in the editing! And so many layers of meaning! Film was huge exciting.
> (Walton, S, pers.comm., 21 January 2010)

Documentary filmmaker Albert Maysles, who both with his brother David and on his own made groundbreaking documentaries between 1962 and 2009, reveals Soviet filmmaker Vertov's cinema verite/living camera technique influenced his work. Inspired by Vertov, Maysles travelled to Russia with a 16mm hand held camera and made two films, *Psychiatry in Russia* (1955) about Russian mental health care, and *Russian Close Up* (1957) a "visual diary of the faces and places encountered along a cross country motor scooter ride through the Soviet Union in the late 1956" (Maysles, 2010, p. 2 of 5). Like Vertov's "I am camera, eye", Maysles uses the camera as an observer, and believes:

> That only one camera should be used in filming because the viewer becomes the one camera; the camera eye becomes the spectator's eye. He photographs in one continuous shot and does not believe in reaction shots.
>
> (Issari & Paul, 1979, pp. 132, 133)

Maysles "believes that the filmmaker must always remain a mere observer; for this reason, Maysles' approach is considered to be the "purest" in the American cinema verite school" (Issari & Paul, 1979, p.131). He believes in going direct to the sources of nature and of life for his documentary material (Issari & Paul, 1979, p.131). An insight into why Maysles' makes documentaries appears on his official Maysles Films website. In the following statement, he reveals his philosophical approach to and close connection with his filmmaking:

> As a documentarian I happily place my fate and faith in reality. It is my caretaker, the provider of subjects, themes, experiences all endowed with the power of truth and the romance of discovery. And the closer I adhere to reality the more honest and authentic my tales. After all, the knowledge of the real world is exactly what we need to better understand and therefore possibly to love one another. It's my way of making the world a better place.
>
> (Maysles 2010, p.1. of 4)

The Maysles Institute also lists six important aspects to making documentary films each of which are techniques and approaches used by the four documentary filmmakers of this study.

> 1. Distance oneself from a point of view.
> 2. Love your subjects.
> 3. Film events, scenes, sequences; avoid interviews, narration, a host.
> 4. Work with the best talent.
> 5. Make it experiential, film experience directly, unstaged, uncontrolled.
> 6.There is a connection between reality and truth. Remain faithful to both.
>
> (Maysles 2010, p.1. of 4)

Maysles states in an interview that one of the exciting parts of making documentaries is that, "we're trying to get with exactitude, the heart and soul of what's going on" (in Tobias 1998, p.343). This is contradicted, however, by his statement that he sees documentary film as "really a surface phenomenon because

it's filming reality" (in Tobias 1998, p.343). His approach however, is to "get as close as you can to that, with exactitude; everything relevant to what's going on, with a keen sense of humanity" (in Tobias 1998, p.343). It is in this way that Maysles' films "seek out the unusually gifted, eccentric, and compelling individual; they are interested in revealing character and in social comment" (Barsam 1973, p.280). In the 1960s, together with American filmmakers such as Richard Leacock, Don Pennebaker, and Gregory Shuker, Maysles "photographed the early classics of the American cinema verite films" (Issari & Paul, 1979, p.125) and were "among the pioneers in the cinema verite movement" (Issari & Paul, 1979, p.29). Maysles' revealing and intimate documentary *Grey Gardens* (1976), which has become known as a cult classic and more recently made into a feature film, and its filmic influence on the *Chequerboard* program in particular, is discussed in a following chapter.

Chapter Two explores the development of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* series from their inception and through their years of production. In addition, it explores the place of these series in ABC documentary production, and where within Australian social contexts audiences for these programs were perceived to be situated.

CHAPTER TWO

A description of the programs

The previous chapter's discussion focussed on the emergence of cinema verite and its impact on social documentary film and filmmakers, both internationally and in Australia. Similarly, this chapter's particular discussion focuses on cinema verite's impact and influence on Australian social documentary filmmakers, Tom Manefield, Bill Steller, Storry Walton, and Max Donnellan and their work and careers within the institutional environment and structure of ABC television. In describing *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, this chapter looks at the role of these documentary programs in shaping Australian identity and their bardic function in influencing Australians' understanding of themselves. This chapter also provides an examination of the themes and issues addressed in both programs and how Australian society and culture is reflected and represented by them. In addition, it suggests how the milieu at the time together with the changes in technologies influenced those themes and issues covered. In their diversity *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* show life in urban and country Australia at its best and its worst during the 1960s, 1970s, and the 1980s; as well, they represent the two vastly different, yet essential and mutually beneficial, sides of Australia's national purpose and identity – urban and rural respectively.

Insights into the sometimes-controversial themes and topics covered during this period, and the circumstances of those involved emerge in front of the camera. Because of their different but equally creative filmmaking treatments and techniques, these two Australian documentary programs exemplify the ABC's responsibility which is, as stated in Chapter One earlier, that the Commission "exists to serve all Australians" through a wide variety of programs, but that "securing a proper [programming] balance" remains a problem (ABC Annual Report 1968-69, p.4).

Much written about the history of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation is from the point of view of the institution itself, or from the point of view of those examining the institution as a whole. Most notable, is historian Ken Inglis, whose texts *This Is the ABC* (1983) and *Whose ABC?* (2006) document in prodigious detail a substantial history of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation from its beginnings in 1932 up to the present. Albert Moran looks at institutions such as Film Australia and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and their long established foothold in documentary filmmaking, and argues that institutional documentary speak with "an institutional voice" in contrast to an independent one (1989, p. 151). In *Australian Screen* (1989), Moran addresses the concept of institutional documentary, and refers to it as "a particular type of film, differentiated not so much by subject matter as by a specific context and approach" (1989, p. 150). In another publication, *Inside Australian Media* (2000) Moran provides comprehensive historical information regarding the development and diversity of

Australian media, part of which focuses on television's introduction, and adoption of established radio program scheduling, genres, artists, advertisers, resources, "and most especially its family audience" (Moran 2000, p. 51).

Others such as Lansell & Beilby's *The Documentary in Australia* (1982) take an historical perspective providing, in part, an overview of ABC documentary film. Individual former ABC television journalists and filmmakers have also contributed to the institution's history by publishing their own memoirs. Robert Raymond's *Out of the Box* (1999), for instance, provides one insider's view of the development of current affairs and documentaries in Australian television, while Chris Masters' *Inside Story* (1992) tells of his career and experiences as arguably Australia's most significant investigative journalist. John Little's *The Man Who Saw Too Much* (2003) tells the engrossing story of ABC combat cameraman David Brill, and his experiences filming in many of the world's trouble spots. A visual historical documentation of ABC television over the past fifty years is provided through archival photographs, fact listings, and chronicles of selected highlights from each decade contained in these texts. Other significant texts also represent a considerable contribution to the historical narrative of ABC television. These texts incorporate archival records, interviews, and photographic evidence as they document each decade from the 1950s to present day. These texts are Tim Bowden and Wendy Borchers' *50 Years: Aunty's Jubilee, Celebrating 50 Years of ABC TV*, Peter Luck's *50 Years of Australian Television* (2005), and Nick Place and Michael Roberts' *50 Years of Television in Australia* (2006). At different levels, these texts focus on

organisational management growths and changes, corporate politics, visual presentation, and personality creation, through archival photographs, individual experiences, and anecdotal side bar information. A detailed focus however, on the perspective and experiences of ABC documentary filmmakers, is missing.

Snapshot of the era

Events and issues emanating from Australia in the years *Chequerboard* went to air between 1969-1975, or *A Big Country* between 1969-1992, served as a backdrop to national and world events, against which are focussed the themes and issues addressed in these documentary programs. They reveal that many of these issues held significant personal import for Australians, some serious and some not so serious.

Major issues that impacted and shaped Australia and Australians during this period include urban planning and redevelopment, social morality, politics, mental health, wages and conditions for workers, women's liberation, anti-war sentiments and moratoriums, as well as papal visits, mining exploration and development and aboriginal land rights. Sydney in particular, was undergoing controversial urban planning and restructuring during the 1970s with the modernisation and re-development of the inner city areas and buildings causing displacement of long time residents and changing the face of the city. Demonstrations were held at The Rocks in Sydney in opposition to the proposed redevelopment of the historic area. At that time, The National Trust moved to protect and conserve Sydney's historic buildings, particularly Customs House

and The Rocks area located near Circular Quay, as well as churches, cathedrals, and what was in 1831 a whaling station – The Barn at Mosman (Quint 2005, p.11).

Controversy arose again with the disastrous collision between HMAS aircraft carrier Melbourne and U.S destroyer the Frank E. Evans with a loss of 74 of its crew. Australia's social moralities were tested when the opening of entrepreneur Harry M Miller's controversial stage musical *Hair*, and protected, as a result of the unsuccessful attempts to stage *Oh Calcutta*, a musical with naked sequences, in Australia.

The Harvester Case of 1907, "mark[ed] the origin of the concepts of a minimum wage and [basic] wages based on the economic needs of employees rather than a market for labour" (Sir Richard Kirby Archives, Harvester Case, 2010, p. 1 of 1). The basic wage was influential in federal award wage decisions until 1969, when it was replaced by the minimum wage. Equal pay for women eventuated during this period, however it is interesting to note that in relation to the issues of equality and women's liberation, a disparity existed in the basic wage for men and women prior to Arbitration Commission rulings in December 1972 which ensured equal pay specifically for both men and women doing equal work (The 1969 Equal Pay Case 2010, p. 1 of 1). Up until 1967 women's wage rises had reached only 75% of men's wage rises, however, in 1967 "the Commission introduced the total wage and at the same time awarded the same increase to both males and females" (Commonweatlth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission Act 1904-1969, p.1153). Changes to the female rate of

pay began being introduced from October 1969 at 85% of the male rate of pay, in January 1970 it rose to 90%, in January 1971 it rose to 95%, and by January 1972 the female rate of pay had reached 100% parity with the male rate of pay (Commonweatlth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission Act 1904-1969, p.1159).

Mental health issues attracted attention early in the 1960s when a Royal Commission was held into the Callan Park Hospital. The outcome, according to Judge Frank Walker, then President of the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc., meant that "many good things came from this damning report – notably the huge walls around our asylums were dismantled" (Walker 2003. p.5). Walker further stated, "The 1970s saw public debate on mental health heat up considerably". Furthermore, he stated it was because of review of the Mental Health laws conducted by the Edwards Committee, that in 1976:

> Magistrate Letts conducted an inquiry into the quality of patient care in psychiatric hospitals notably Morrisett. It recommended that a Mental Health Council be established and that the cases of all involuntary patients be regularly reviewed.
>
> (Walker 2003, pp.5-6)

Political issues and events that made significant news impact during the tumultuous period included Bob Hawke being elected ACTU president, the Liberal Party election of William McMahon who replaced John Gorton as Prime Minister, Neville Bonner becoming the first Aboriginal member of an Australian parliament, and Gough Whitlam leading the Australian Labor Party into office for the first time in twenty-three years and the first official delegation to visit China by an Australian Prime Minister. During this period, Prime Minister Whitlam named Advance Australia Fair as the national anthem; anti-Vietnam

war demonstrations held outside the United States Consulate in Melbourne numbered 3000 people; and Australia's combat involvement in Vietnam comes to an end (ABC Archives 2007, p.5 of 5).

The Western Australian Ord River Irrigation Scheme was officially opened by PM William McMahon and the Snowy Mountain River Scheme in NSW was completed. Meanwhile the Australian mining boom began, but experienced uncertainly along the way as a result of Poseidon Mining's rise and fall and the discovery of huge bauxite and uranium deposits. Tullamarine Airport opened in Melbourne, the West Gate Bridge span collapsed in Melbourne and killed 35, seatbelts became compulsory, and Pope Paul VI arrived for a visit. The first Sunbury Music Festival was held, and Shane Gould won three gold medals at the Munich Olympics (ABC Archives 2007, p. 2-5 of 5).

The first legal casino (Wrest Point) in Australia opened in Hobart in 1973, as did the Adelaide Festival Centre. Other notable happenings that year were the purchase of American artist Jackson Pollock's "Blue Poles" painting by the National Gallery of Australia for $1.3 million; the winning by Australian author Patrick White of the Nobel Prize for Literature; the official opening by Queen Elizabeth II of the Sydney Opera House; and Papua New Guinea became self-governing (ABC Archives 2007, p. 2-5 of 5). Other events of significance were the death of Australian media giant Sir Frank Packer, the thalidomide compensation settlement of $1.7 million made to disabled children, and the Woodward Report that recommended handing all Northern Territory reserves and mission to the Aborigines. 1974 ended tumultuously when Cyclone Tracy

demolished Darwin on Christmas Day, as 65 people were killed. Colour television was introduced in Australia in January 1975 (ABC Archives 2007, 2-5 of 5).

While not always addressing the same topics, both *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* addressed controversial issues during these changing social, political, and culturally turbulent times by showing the personal stories behind the bigger issues and how ordinary Australians were affected. In so doing, these programs provided debate about such issues and gave opportunity for the voices of those ordinary Australians affected by them.

Chequerboard's *bardic function*

The word "bard" is derived from the Welsh term for poet. Bards in ancient times preserved culture by telling people through music and poetry about events that happened in history (MacLir 2010, p.1 of 5). Whereas "the bardic ideal is about the elevation of the human spirit through art, music, story, and the understanding of the human faculty of imagination" (MacLir 2010, p.5. of 5), the bardic function is to act as "a mediator of language" in order to organise messages "according to the needs of the culture", to be at the "centre of its culture", and to provide the "cement" for "discourse for a culture" (Fiske & Hartley 1987, pp.86-87). Moreover, it is to "draw into its own central position both the audience with which it communicates, and the reality to which it refers", and finally to communicate myth (Fiske & Hartley 1987, pp.86-87). In relation to television's bardic function Fiske and Hartley further argue that, "television

functions as a social ritual, overriding individual distinctions, in which our culture engages in order to communicate with its collective self" (1987. p.85) following in the tradition of the "bard".

The bardic function of *Chequerboard* emerges in an examination of episodes. One of the results of examining a selection of episodes is evidence of the bardic function of *Chequerboard.* The filmmakers' approaches and treatments in relation to this bardic function are also uncovered and assist in revealing how issues are debated and how meanings emerge about different perspectives in relation to traditional perceptions in society. These functions, approaches, and treatments emphasise the effects of the harsh realities of life on those who struggled to live within in the Australian urban city environment. The effective use of graphic, highly engrossing, visually emotive, and hard-edged confronting images, as well as the use of the extreme close-up style of the *Chequerboard* interview in particular, etch firmly on the mind many harsh realities of life lived in these environs.

According to documentary filmmaker Albert Maysles, filmmakers should use their "presence to get close to people; as close to the heart and soul of the scene, of the people, and so forth. You're not just a fly on the wall" (Tobias 1998, p.353); to film life "that's what you're after" (Tobias 1998, p.352). Considering this, the themes and issues addressed in *Chequerboard* have not only affected the filmmakers' approach and techniques, but they have also affected the culture of early ABC documentary by questioning the status quo and challenging for change.

In this thesis I will show how as a significant example of Australian social documentary, *Chequerboard* acts as promoter, reporter, bugler, and advocate identities to promote Australian social culture and Australian life. Reflecting Grierson's approach, *Chequerboard* documents what has been happening under the noses of Australians, as well as Maysles' approach of getting as close as possible, with exactitude and a keen sense of humanity. The program uses filmic techniques that virtually remove any sense of the camera's involvement acting as social advocate and shows Australians as they may not have seen themselves before, as well as showing the diversity of Australia's social and cultural landscape.

The fundamental production ethos and documentary filmmaking process and approach of the early filmmakers of *Chequerboard* reflect the ABC's willingness to accept and implement innovative and creative new ideas and visual concepts. One of the strongest concepts of *Chequerboard* was in taking a compassionate view of Australian people and life. According to Walton (2006) the program's non-judgemental compassionate view became the program's ethic. Walton believed that Manefield's:

> Enduring influence was that the program was made with a scholarly understanding of Australian society, a passionate interest in ordinary Australians and the way their lives and circumstances illuminated the national picture of ourselves, a deep knowledge of the documentary process, and a rigorous concern for the ethical implications of privacy and the dangers of exploitation.
>
> (Bowden & Borchers 2006, p. 142)

In view of these controversial aspects and because of its cinema verite/direct cinema style, non-judgmental compassionate view, lack of

narration, use of hand-held cameras, and the extreme close-up shot, the question arises about the issue of possible humiliation of subjects by too intrusive questioning or filming techniques of *Chequerboard*. Rosenthal for example, addresses the difficulties for cinema verite filmmakers in this regard using the example of Ellen Hovde and Albert Maysles' documentary *Grey Gardens* (1975). Briefly, *Grey Gardens* documented the intimate daily lives of two reclusive aging women, mother and daughter, who lived in an old dilapidated mansion which had gone into decay. The cinema verite style of Maysles meant that the two women told their own stories while Maysles filmed. Edith Bouvier Beale, and her 55 year old daughter, lived in the East Hampton, Long Island home, and in 1973 were embroiled in a scandal when it was revealed that they were related to Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and were living in desperate poverty, seemingly unable to care for themselves adequately (Rosenthal 1980, pp. 372-373). Ellen Hovde denied accusations she humiliated Edith Beale and her daughter in the film, and Rosenthal believes "that there was no question of humiliation and that the real discomfort arose from the audience which could not face itself" (1980, p.6). This documentary met critical acclaim and has become a cult film. As evidence of the film's cult status and of the continuing controversy created by the making of the documentary and the story of the Beale women, as mentioned earlier, a recently produced made-for-television feature film *Grey Gardens* (2009) directed by Michael Sucsy (IMDB 2010, p.1 of 3) tells the story surrounding Maysles' documentary.

Chequerboard attracted similar criticisms to those levelled at *Grey Gardens*. In an article for *The Australian* in 1971, journalist Denis Pryor sought to criticise *Chequerboard* when he questioned not only the kinds of subjects covered by *Chequerboard* but also the way in which the program asked and presented questions. Pryor questioned whether giving public exposure to private lives was right, and that the program appeared to be "dealing with the symptoms and ignoring diseases" (1971, p.18) in stories dealing with poverty. Pryor further criticised the program's use of camera and that "simply recording the subject's facial expressions" (1971, p.18) was "a waste of the medium's visual resources" (1971, p.18). Such criticism completely misunderstands the unflinching and courageous approach to address topics and themes and importantly, it misunderstands Manefield's intention from the inception as producer of *Chequerboard* which was to show Australians who they really were, to show them what they were made of, to show them their strengths and weaknesses, and to let them tell their stories in their words. Evidence of this emerges as Manefield tells his story in Chapter Three. It also misunderstands the visual power of *Chequerboard*'s signature-shot concept of the extreme close-up of the human face and its telling geography. Former *Chequerboard* researcher and producer Robin Hughes explained that while making the episodes dealing with poverty, the team felt they were "participating in the kind of social change that was occurring in the early 1970s" (Hughes, cited in Moran 1989, p.164) and that the program was bringing a voice to the underprivileged.

Chequerboard not only attracted similar criticism from journalists (Pryor 1971, p.18) but also from the older generation of ABC filmmakers (Steller 2006), for its style of questioning, and for its intrusion into the private lives of Australians. These non-subtle filmmaking techniques may have produced documentary films that brought discomfort to Australian audiences, but more pointedly, like *Grey Gardens*, these films questioned and challenged Australia's social conscience. Social documentary film, particularly the cinema verite/direct cinema style, examines in-depth the heart and soul of humanity through a creative treatment of reality, as humans struggle to live and survive within societies and communities. *Chequerboard* fulfils these criteria, so too *A Big Country* which will be discussed later in this chapter; each program reflects and examines different sides of Australian society. Importantly, urban and rural Australian societies carry equal import in relation to their significance as integral parts of Australia's social and cultural tapestry since settlement, and require equal documentary representation.

Through the medium of television, and in these programs, the displaced, marginalised, and excluded of Australian society attain a voice and a vehicle. In the tradition of Bardic television, the themes, and topics represented in *Chequerboard* during its time of production revealed alternative truths, realities, issues, and events that happened under the noses of Australian society. In their own way, the themes and topics addressed by *Chequerboard* filmmakers represented a challenge to government and society in the period from 1969 to 1975. Grierson's influence on Australian documentary, and in this instance

documentary made by within an institution [the ABC], is evident in the program's approach in filming and examining people's everyday life. The program's approach is also represented in Grierson's words decades earlier in 1932 about "finding documentary material on one's doorstep: in events which have no novelty of the unknown or romance of noble savage on exotic landscape to recommend them" (Hardy 1971, p.149). Again, the over-riding theme given attention over the lifetime of *Chequerboard* was Australian social and community identity and representation. Grierson's comment about British documentary film in 1937 and his later support for the development of institutional documentary [such as the ABC], offers another insight into *Chequerboard*'s developmental evolution from its embryonic *Man Alive* womb, as being:

> Less aesthetic and more social in its approach. The shape of *Drifters*, the first of the British documentaries, was, for all its difference of subject, closer to Eisenstein than to Cavalcanti or Ruttmann. Though each chapter was a deliberate study in movement, the film took care to lead up to and stage an event. More important still, as I have come to consider, it has a theme in social observation – the ardour and bravery of common labour – and simple themes of the same sociological bearing have served us ever since, giving each new slice of raw material a perspective and a life, leading us in each new adventure of observation to a wider and more powerful command of medium and material alike.
>
> (Hardy 1971, p. 205)

Chequerboard's *inception*

As discussed later, early ABC social documentary programs, together with influences from the BBC's *Man Alive* program, paved the way for the production of *Chequerboard*. When television channels ABN-2 Sydney and ABV-2 Melbourne first opened on 5 November 1956, they competed with the already operational commercial television station TCN Channel-9 (ABC 1984,

pp.2-10). It took several more years before Australian television documentary filmmaking came to fruition in the 1960s (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p.43). Prior to 1960, the Talks Department at the then Australian Broadcasting Commission was "one of several departments involved in the making of documentary programs on film" (Inglis 1983, p. 224). It was during the early years that ABC television used staff from the production pool to produce documentaries. The production pool comprised trainee and production staff placed as and where needed. By 1960 however, a film unit had been formed which was made up of three Divisions – Programs, News, and Administration – and which had "its own staff and equipments" (Inglis 1983, p.225). Inglis labels this arrangement as "cumbersome" (1983, p.225) and which was compounded by failing to require producers to be involved in any planning (Inglis 1983, p. 225).

Inglis also contends that in the early years of ABC television, there were few documentaries worth mentioning. Some of ABC television's individual documentaries from those early days had themes ranging from historical to lifestyle films. Their documentary titles also hint at a wide variety of subjects. Those exceptions worth mentioning were "*Faces in the Street* (1961) based on Henry Lawson's poem, *The Land That Waited* (1961), about the early European settlement of Australia" (Inglis 1983, p. 225) and *I, the Aboriginal* (1963) which was produced by Kip Porteous and "written and directed by Cecil Holmes, one of a number of outside film directors engaged by the ABC" (Inglis 1983, p. 225). Each of these documentaries exemplified the direction and impending future of ABC documentary programs such as *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*. *Faces in*

the Street (1961), directed by Douglas White and produced by Kip Porteous, was a twelve minute documentary based on Lawson's poem about Sydney in 1888 (National Film and Video Lending Service 2008). Steller worked as an assistant on *Faces in the Street*.

The Land That Waited (1961), directed by Gil Brealey, was a documentary that looked at Governor Phillip's arrival in Botany Bay and examined the settlers' attempts to establish the colony. The only visual materials used by Brealey in this fifty minute documentary were paintings, etchings, and sketches selected from libraries and art galleries in South Australia, Canberra, Victoria and Tasmania. Brealey also "filmed some material from the Rex Nan Kivall 15,000-item collection, which is on permanent loan to the Canberra National Art Gallery" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 4). This documentary won an Advertiser Award Gold Medal in the Documentary Category at the Adelaide Film Festival of 1963, as well as other awards at the Melbourne Film Festival of 1963 (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 4).

Steller also worked as second cameraman with Brealey on an early documentary, *The Pipes of Para* (1963), which was "set in the Barossa Valley on the Para River in South Australia. The 'pipes' refer to old church pipe organs built by the Lutherans who lived there more than a century ago" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 124). Steller recalled that Lex Allcock was the cameraman on this documentary, and while Allcock was filming the night shots, Brealey and he "would go out and do the 'pretty pretties'" (Steller 2006), or second unit filming.

Finally, the third early documentary worth mentioning was, according to Inglis, *I, the Aboriginal* (1963) directed by Cecil Holmes which won an Australian Film Institute Gold Award in 1964. This documentary tells the life story of an Aboriginal medical orderly and full blood Alawa tribesman, Phillip Roberts, or Waipuldanya. The ABC held full broadcasting rights for this film, however, the fifty-five minute documentary carried restrictions because it "contains explicit footage of a sacred traditional aboriginal male initiation ceremony which tribal law forbids an aboriginal woman to see" (I, the Aboriginal unpub. 2006, p.2). Roberts fascinated Holmes, who described him as:

> A man who, apparently, within a few brief years, had hoisted himself out of the dust of a remote mission station on the Roper River banks, and into a comfortable Darwin suburb with a well-paid position in the public service.
> (Holmes 1986, p.76)

The earliest ABC documentaries mentioned in the ABC's documentary catalogue are, *New Look at Papua Guinea* (director unknown) in 1959, and *Report from Queensland* produced by Geoffrey Powell in 1962. The ABC also lists the films *The Solitary Ones* directed by Daryl Hill and *Living on the Fringe* directed by Gian Carlo Manara, both from 1965 as its earliest individual social documentary (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, pp.11, 19). It was documentaries such as these that paved the way for the inception of *Chequerboard* in 1969.

One of those people key to *Chequerboard*'s inception was Ken Watts. Watts became ABC Federal Director of General Programs in 1963 and by 1965, he was Federal Director of Programs for Television. Inglis (1983, p.202) describes Watts as someone who "gathered a reputation for being ruthless, for

encouraging, drinking with and promoting clever young people, and for caring about the quality and popularity of programs". Later, in his role as executive producer, Watts was instrumental in the creation of *Chequerboard*, and in selecting Tom Manefield (one of the four documentarists) as the program's first producer.

Watts, as ABC Controller of Programs, believed the function of the ABC was to break new ground, "to know its audience and to go for it" (Watts 1988). By 1969, a new Television Features department was created by Watts "to make documentary programs about Australia" (Inglis 1983, p.287). Documentary programs were "trickling in" from the Program Film Production department, and included programs for Intertel, such as those used for the *Impact* program that aired on Tuesday evenings (Inglis 1983, p. 287). In light of this, and following on from the demise of the program *Impact*, "a weekly series made up of imported and Australian documentaries" (Inglis 1983, p.287), Watts needed to fill the timeslot. The timely meeting between Watts and Manefield in England in 1965 set in motion plans for a series called *Man Alive*, "after its BBC prototype". This program was renamed *Chequerboard* (Inglis 1983, p.287). The *Chequerboard* program emulated *Man Alive* "by peering more closely into private places than ABC cameras so far dared" (Inglis 1983, p.288). The executive producer, Geoff Daniels, had previously worked for the Rank Organisation, and the program's producer Tom Manefield, had worked on *Man Alive* in the United Kingdom for a time. ABC programming director Ken Watts

supported the program, promoting and supporting those working on it and "was never off side with us" (Manefield 2006).

From those early days at ABC television, filmmaker Storry Walton remembered that it was The Gladstone Pub in William Street, Sydney where discussions occurred about the viability and possibility of producing such a program.

> Tom was on fire to do a social documentary series, there was nothing like it on television in Australia at the time. The big discussion in the pub with Tom Haydon, Ken Hannon, and Ray Menmuir and Bill Bain, was whether a program which focused basically on close ups of people talking about their lives would be of any interest.
>
> (Walton 2006)

The times at the William Street "Gladdy" held fond memories for Walton. People such as Tom Hayden, an ABC producer at the time, and director Storry Walton and reporter John Power would go there after work (Walton 2006). The Gladstone Pub also held memories for Manefield who admitted a program could almost be made about the Gladstone Pub "because not only was it the *Chequerboard*'s mob, but it was the news department's hangout. They were great days" (Manefield 2006). Manefield confessed, "I suppose I drank too much" (Manefield 2006). Fuelled by alcohol and by the camaraderie and intellectual sparring that ensued, a highly animated and impassioned Manefield would state emphatically as he thumped the table in the Gladdy that there was nothing more interesting than the geography of the face, and that there was nothing more compelling than the person who passionately believes in what they are saying. Walton added that images such as those ensure riveting cinema and riveting television (Walton 2006).

The Gladstone Pub get-togethers and the resultant heated discussions were augmented by what Steller termed *Chequerboard* parties. These production parties were held at the end of each series, and were marked by the inclusion of what eventually became known as the "Chequerboard Cheesecake". It was "just a how's-your-father cheesecake" (Steller 2006), that always appeared at every *Chequerboard* party and was made by Laura, the wife of reporter John Crew. Laura had opened up a small restaurant called "Laura's" at Crows Nest in Sydney not far from the ABC Gore Hill Studios, "And we used to go there for lunch" (Steller 2006). The simple recipe for the baked *Chequerboard* cheesecake combined nothing more than crushed Granita biscuits and melted butter for the crust and Philadelphia Cream Cheese, sugar, eggs, and vanilla for the filling. However, in its own way this simple "how's-your-father" cheesecake dessert symbolises the blending of different aspects, approaches and techniques that created the bonds that held together the familial environment and the filmmaking collaboration between all those who worked on *Chequerboard.*

Lansell and Beilby (1982) argue that in the mid-1970s documentary filmmaking at the ABC began to enter a period of "cautiousness", whereby hard-hitting social documentary, like *Chequerboard*, gave way to "safe" documentary (1982, p.46). These "safe" documentaries involved the use of a well-known presenter to front the documentary whose role was to guide viewers through the documentary story. The role of presenter [as in the role of teacher] also exists as a link between the themes and issues addressed in the documentary episodes, and the viewers. Presenter Bill Peach was the first to front the early current affairs

program *This Day Tonight* in 1967. Following *This Day Tonight*, Peach's role as a known ABC presenter and personality continued with his involvement in major ABC documentary series and is significant as evidence of the level of import held for him at the time within the ABC, to his image, and with his audience. He later appeared as the presenter/personality in twenty-six half hour episodes of *Peach's Australia* (1975-1976), and he appeared again in five one-hour episodes of *Peach's Gold* (1983). Other programs that began appearing at that time include Harry Butler's *In the Wild* (1976-1979) and *Don Dunstan's Australia* (1981) both using the presenter/personality approach. From that time on, other developments began to impact on Australian television documentary filmmaking. The use of "star" presenter "was founded in the belief that Australians needed a star to attract them to documentary film" (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p.46) suggesting a perception of, or lack of, closeness between program and audience evident in a need for a more personable "face" to documentaries; faces such as the Bill Peachs, or the Harry Butlers, or the Don Dunstans. This emerging perception in the 1970s and 1980s foreshadowed the level of intimacy and intrusion offered through the medium of television today. The introduction of a "star" presenter dominated developments in a new style and format adopted, not only by ABC documentary filmmaking, but also by commercial television. The development of the "star" format was designed to attract and sustain an audience. Another development was the introduction of overseas documentary programs (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p.46). The emergence of the "star" concept in documentary film is also intriguingly reminiscent of, or a reversion to, the period

when feature film and documentary approaches separated. At that moment, the "star" concept embodied another filter through which the documentary stories and images were required to pass. At that moment, the "star" concept signaled that a demarcation occurred between reality and performance, inasmuch as it defined forever the difference between filming fiction and filming actuality.

With the production of this style of documentary, possibly unknowingly, ABC documentary filmmaking harkened back to the documentary style represented in Flaherty's *Man of Aran* (1934) and *Nanook of the North* (1922). Rather than simply documenting actuality, these two Flaherty films document and tell the stories [narratives] of the harsh life experiences of those people living on the wind swept island of Aran, and in the wild northern regions of Hudson Bay and Unqava Peninsula in Canada. Flaherty used the people of Aran and the Inuit of Quebec as his "actors", and in the process; each film is a "good yarn".

Further concerns about developmental changes in documentary filmmaking and their ramifications were highlighted the year before *A Big Country* ceased production in 1992. Australian documentary filmmaker, film historian and a contemporary of the four documentarists, Judy Adamson outlined her concerns regarding the state reached by documentary filmmaking at the 1991 "Big Picture" conference on documentary filmmaking in Australia held at the Australian National University in Canberra. She drew attention to the continuing state of decline of the documentary industry and filmmaking, and the lack of documentary substance and recognition received. Adamson wrote:

> The documentary slots of television and film festivals alike are becoming more and more laden with boring prestigious informational and reportage films–by no means particularly Australian–plodding their dreary well-paid way to oblivion, mechanically reproducing state-of-the-art techniques with little understanding and little interest (despite all the technological wonders we have been promised for the future, they still do it), it might be worth reiterating that good films are not always shown, as many of you know, and that too many bad ones may, in time, kill the market.
>
> (Adamson 1991, pp. 3-4)

She warned further, the "proliferation of technical ease" (Adamson 1991, p.3), allowed to documentary filmmakers had been detrimental overall, suggesting this proliferation meant that just about anybody who could use the new technologies could create a documentary film without consideration for ethical or professional boundaries or for narrative structure within documentary film. Her concern was that influences such as those of cinema verite or living camera, [like *Chequerboard* or *A Big Country* for instance] which presented observations and recordings of the actuality of "crucial interactions" (Breitrose 1964, pp.36-40) between people, were non-existent [in the new emerging style of documentary] and that what remained was only "strung together current affairs shows" (Adamson 1991, p.3). Adamson further criticised the state of Australian documentary at the time stating:

> Filmmakers who know what they are doing can be copied by filmmakers who do not. A film style which depends on editing can be copied with no attention paid to editing. What was once cinema verite can be travestied by stupid and superficial presenters.
>
> (Adamson 1991, p.3)

This outcome was despite documentarist's inherited traditions of:

> The first discovery of film, the documentary impetus, living camera, cinema verite, tape recorders, the Nagra, easy sync, lightweight cameras, the growing use of video, of historical compilation footage and the acceptance by public figures of long interviews.
>
> (Adamson 1991, p.12)

Today, the suggestion is that "the tradition of the social documentary is under attack" (Thomas 2002, p.152), resulting in the production of hybrid forms of programs and docudramas, and the enormous expansion and development of reality TV shows (Thomas 2002, p.152). According to Thomas, Commissioning Editor for Documentaries at the ABC, Geoff Barnes, called for documentary filmmakers "to stop navel gazing" and get on with telling "cracking good yarns" (cited in Thomas 2002, p.153). Further that Barnes suggested documentary "had a new role to fill, as a cheap alternative to drama" (Thomas 2002, p. 153, 154). At this point, ABC documentary moved from actuality and reality film to narrative style documentary. For example, the ABC filmed the documentary *Sylvania Waters* in 1992 which followed the lives of Noeline Baker and Laurie Donaher and their family. *Sylvania Waters* (1992) "set a benchmark and became the blueprint for scores of fly-on-the-wall TV documentaries built around real-life events, a legacy that continues to this day" (Kalina, 2010, The Age, p.3 of 6).

Taking into consideration the introduction of the "star" presenter, and Barnes' attitudes about the need to tell a "good yarn", for good or bad, this new format produced and virtually paved the way and "heralded a new documentary format on the ABC, that of the half-hour series which is also of course, the format of TV soaps" (Thomas 2002, p.154).

The ABC defines its documentary films as films that "inspire debate, challenged everyday preconceptions, tapped into the national agenda or simply revelled in the everyday but in essence they each speak to issues that face us today" (ABC 2007, p.1 of 2). These same ideals were very much part of the

documentary filmmaking approach of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* in capturing the "crucial interactions" (Breitrose 1964, pp.36-40) between people living within Australian society. Both programs exemplify cinema verite or direct cinema in ABC social documentary in that in their style of cinematography and sound employ techniques which enable the camera to "penetrate the private" (Winston, 1995, p.205) using video tape or 16mm film with synchronized sound enabling "coverage of intimate domestic topics" (Winston, 1995, p.206). Other elements of the cinema verite or direct cinema style used by *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* are the thorough research of subjects, the use of a narrative style of interview, and for the most part ignoring the presence of the camera. Another technique of American cinema verite/direct cinema filmmakers also used is *Chequerboard'*s so-called signature shot, the close up, used to great affect in Maysles' 1975 documentary *Grey Gardens* and injecting "a strong element of the confessional" (Ellis 1989, p.225). Similarities in direct cinema's techniques used in *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* to that of observational documentary techniques appear to exist as discussed by Leahy (1996) with extended shots leaving "space for audience participation in the creation of meaning" (Leahy 1996, pp.41, 42) where there are sections of the documentary in which "not a lot happens, and people go about mundane parts of their ordinary life or work" (Leahy 1996, p.45); a key element of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*. As a result, these "breathing spaces" (Leahy 1996, p.45) allow what's termed an "overall effect of 'openness'" (Leahy 1996, p.45). However, as Beattie (2004) points out in theory the reduction of direct cinema's

"claims to unique observational status" (Beattie 2004, p.95) means, "In its interventions and manipulations and interpretations of subject matter [direct cinema] is closer to the practices of cinema verite" (Beattie 2004, p.95). Considering these arguments in relation to *Chequerboard*, as well as *A Big Country*, these programs have adopted much from cinema verite, direct cinema, and observational documentary filmmaking.

Chequerboard's *cinema verite/direct cinema*

Like other cinema verite or direct cinema documentaries, *Chequerboard*'s documentary treatment in its examination of urban city Australian society reveals evidence of the program's radical, or liberal, approach. Furthermore, as will be discussed later, because of the increasingly urbanised Australian society, any representation or reflection of rural Australian society would indeed offer the alternative perspective and might well have challenged or debated the concept of what is more important – city or country? *A Big Country* offered that alternative perspective.

The philosophy of the cinema verite documentary maker is that "if cinema is to be a representation of life itself, then the filmmaker must submit to the "truth" within the framework of his own approach (Issari & Paul, 1979, p.5). Assertions by Issari and Paul, help the documentary film audience to understand "what is truth in documentary" and pose questions relating to whose truth and whose reality are contained within documentary. Issari and Paul's argument is that truth is relative to the individual or filmmaker at the time filming takes place

(1979, p.6). The style and aim of cinema verite or direct cinema, which is to "capture life as it is lived rather than as it is re-enacted or re-invented" (Issari & Paul, 1979, p.5), is incorporated into the *Chequerboard*'s filmic style. In light of Issari and Paul's arguments discussion later examines the interplay between the objective, the camera technique, and the ability of *Chequerboard*'s filmmakers in relation to the program's themes and issues.

Cinema verite has differing interpretations and understandings. These variations emerge in describing or defining *Chequerboard*.

Chequerboard producer Manefield (2006) contends *Chequerboard* is direct cinema rather than cinema verite. While not providing a succinct definition of what direct cinema meant to him, he explained however that he, "thought of it as free camera techniques that the camera could move freely and zoom freely, and it was on their shoulders and they walked into the action" (Manefield 2006). The term "direct cinema" relates to an approach taken by American filmmaker Robert Drew Associates where "the relationship between filmmakers and subject persons must be relaxed and trusting in order for the filmmaking to fit into ongoing action without affecting it" (Ellis 1989, p.223). Referring to *Chequerboard*'s style as living camera, McMurchy argues that *Chequerboard* employed:

> A 'living camera' style and intrusive close-ups as a social probe…opened up issues such as homosexuality, divorce and personal relationships in a new and powerful way for television audiences. Although it's initial, electrifying impact waned over time *Chequerboard* continued to influence Australian documentary filmmaking over the years as its alumni moved into other areas. (1994, p.181)

Derived from cinema verite and direct cinema is living camera. American filmmakers Richard Leacock, Donn Alan Pennebaker and Robert Drew used the

term “living camera” to describe their documentary film style of unscripted and unrehearsed films that “have a definite dramatic structure” (Barsam 1973, p. 256) which “comes from within” rather than being imposed upon them (Barsam 1973, p.256). With this in mind on further reflection and considering descriptions provided by Winson (1995), Ellis (1989), Breitose (1964), Leahy (1996) and McMurchy (1994) and as I asserted earlier, it is evident that in this case *Chequerboard* adopted techniques from direct cinema, living camera and observational documentary. Techniques which include elements of critical interaction, an ability to focus on the private and personal, thorough research of subjects, a narrative style of interview, of ignoring the presence of the camera, of the close up and extended shots, of leaving space where nothing much happens, of being unscripted and unrehearsed, and of being able to create a trusting relationship between filmmaker and subject. In doing so a unique Australian documentary program, *Chequerboard*, was created.

Further, it is interesting to note that while some filmmakers use the term “cinema verite” to describe their work, others call it living camera depending on their approach and style. Jaffe contends that, “The key to the development of direct cinemas was a revolution in equipment that allowed for greater flexibility and the use of direct sound” (cited in Issari & Paul, p.152). Others still call it direct cinema, mobile camera, realistic camera, film inquiry, synchronous cinema, or cinema of common sense, cinema of behaviour, personal documentary, tele-verite, film journalism, truth film, direct shooting, candid-eye, or free cinema (Issari & Paul, 1979, p.7). Moreover, the flexibility of

Chequerboard's original hand held16mm format suited Manefield who revealed he had "little interest in the technical side of videotape production because I was then a film man" (Manefield 2006). Although admitting that people perceived him as a difficult person to work with, Manefield credits *Chequerboard* executive producer, Geoff Daniels, with recognising and encouraging his passion for the program. Daniels "was first class, and we couldn't have done better" (Manefield 2006). He believes that although there were many arguments, they were largely constructive rows that led to better programs (Manefield 2006).

It was not until the first few episodes aired that those in ABC administration were convinced of the viability of a program such as *Chequerboard* (Manefield 2006), thereby validating Manefield's argument, that Australia and Australians could talk and that they love to talk and to see themselves in such a documentary program.

Moran argues for documentary film as "an instrument for civic education" (Moran 2000, p.22), in that documentary film has an active part in reflecting social duties and citizenship and "promoting general civic consciousness" (Moran 2000, p.22). Documentary can also transport one "to live with the people whose lives and problems it portrays, and by revealing the common humanity of its real characters, compels your sympathy and understanding" (Stout cited in Moran 2000, p.22). Concepts such as these are at the foundation of the ABC's *Chequerboard* program.

Moran argues further for the valuable contribution *Chequerboard* made to documentary film describing the program as "the toughest, grittiest

documentary series made by the ABC in the 1960s and early 1970s" (1989, p.141). Other documentary programs like *A Big Country* and *Four Corners*, Moran argues, were more "free ranging in subject matter" (1989, p.141). Moreover, *Chequerboard* also had "a particular social flavour", and because the program was made at a time of political and social turbulence and change in Australia it "could not have been made at any other time" (Moran 1989, p.141. This study for the most part substantiates Moran's thesis. However, in relation to the last point, at some time during the twenty-two years since *Chequerboard* ended Australian society and culture changed, and consequently, so too the need and appreciation for the *Chequerboard* style of social documentary and its signature gritty social flavour. It is a flavour infused into reality television as discussed earlier in relation to "safe" documentary (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p. 46) and "cheap alternative to drama" (Thomas 2002, pp. 153, 154) and exemplified by the particular explosive contribution such a format makes to social documentary, which is to inform and to entertain.

Another key concept of *Chequerboard* was that it was to be a compassionate view of Australian people and life; this, according to Walton (2006), was one of the program's strong qualities. Walton contends *Chequerboard*:

> Was non-judgemental, it's a way of putting yourself in the shoes of other people. That's what compassion is about. To Tom's great credit, he never allowed that strong ethic to wane, it never became sentimental, it never became romantic, and as a result, I think it dignified many strata of Australian people and many strata of Australian life in a way that they have never been dignified before.
>
> (Walton 2006)

In addition, *Chequerboard*'s key concept of the unseen interviewer attracted criticism when Inglis wrote that the program's interviewers:

> Followed lonely housewives from room to room, attended weddings of a rich couple and a pair of factory workers, explored the world of two young people who were blind, and showed docile poverty under the title 'It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince'.
> (Inglis 1983, p.288)

Superficially and from a purely visual sense, this concept carries some weight, however, closer inspection reveals far more. Inglis further argues:

> The achievement, or trick, of *Chequerboard*, as of *Man Alive*, was to gain the confidence of subjects and to film them sympathetically and unobtrusively that they acted out their lives for viewers – or was the word voyeurs?
> (1983, p.288)

Walton disputes Inglis' criticism of the unseen interviewer style, and defends the program's style and format. The use of an unseen interviewer, according to Walton, posed no problem at all. In fact, it took "the marvellous invisible skill of *Chequerboard"* (Walton 2006), to ask questions in such a way as to allow people "to start talking about things in a way that you could edit and cut" (Walton 2006). In effect, it removed the intrusive third party, "the interlocutor", giving the appearance that people were speaking for themselves (Walton 2006). The next step would have been to remove the interviewer altogether and hand the camera to the community. The Canadian social documentary program *A Challenge for Change* used just such a technique (Walton 2006). Launched in 1966, *A Challenge for Change* is a series of documentary films that began as an experimental project of the National Film Board of Canada that "was part of Canada's 'War on Poverty'" (*Public Access TV*, History, The Canadians 2007, p. 1 of 3). The series sought to "create in Canadians an awareness of the need for

change in order that (people) may achieve a better quality of life" (*Public Access TV*, History, The Canadians 2007, p. 1 of 3).

> The director, and sometimes another person who would have otherwise been the interviewer, stood along side and to help technically as a guide, so they weren't completely free of the interference, if that's the right word, or the influence of the filmmakers and the community made their programs.
> (Walton 2006)

Moreover, Walton argues, *Chequerboard* was a revolution, "The Australian population tuned into *Chequerboard* to see themselves being portrayed unselfconsciously, and without all the apparatus of the media around them" (Walton 2006). Again, this comment validates Manefield's contention that Australians could talk and that they love to talk and to see themselves in a documentary program such as *Chequerboard*.

Moran loosely describes *Chequerboard* as being "symptom and part of its time, the late 1960s and early 1970s" (1989, p.165). If the filmic aspects of Moran's "particular social flavour" (1989, p.141) and Inglis' voyeuristic style (1983, p.288) are only relevant to the era in which *Chequerboard* was produced (Moran 1989, p.141) then, the irony is that in the past decade or so a re-invention and acceptance of these aspects has emerged. Aspects similar to those implemented by *Chequerboard* such as extreme close up shots of people's faces as they experience difficult personal moments and talk introspectively about their inner personal feelings and emotions, all under the gaze of multiple cameras and all voyeuristically viewed by audiences, has been recreated and expanded upon in the highly successful reality television format. Whereas the purpose of reality television is primarily to entertain and inform, social documentary [like *Chequerboard*] is to challenge and debate social and cultural issues. Even today

however, this style of program has its detractors and critics. This being the case, and from this perspective, I suggest, *Chequerboard* was not only a groundbreaking program but also a controversial program style thirty years before its time. In the 1960s and 1970s, criticism levelled at the program is evidence that sections of Australian society, moreover sections of Australian television industry, were unwilling to venture far into or accept *Chequerboard*'s revelatory style that showed our fundamental human strengths, frailties, and similarities. Now three decades later, while at times still attracting criticisms, other less confronting challenges offered by reality television programs appear to fill a voyeuristic societal need to look within and to examine behind society's curtains and beneath humanity's veneer.

The kinds of equipment and 16mm cameras used by the early ABC documentary filmmakers inevitably influenced their ability to film, and their ability to create. Access to the new television technology also meant the freedom to innovate. As a result, the filmmaking freedoms created are significant factors in the development of cinema verite and the early development of ABC television filmmakers.

The introduction of 16mm cameras meant a "new mobility" that fundamentally changed documentary filmmaking, and "made the development of the *cinema verite*, or as we called it *living camera* technique and style, possible" (Walton, S 2006, pers.comm., 22 March). The term *cinema verite*, or "film-truth" (Barnouw 1993, p.254), also encompasses the direct cinema technique; however, there exists a differentiation between the two. Whereas the cinema

verite documentarist's technique is one of "provocateur" (Barnouw 1993, p.255) to provoke, the direct cinema documentarist's technique is one of invisibility or "uninvolved bystander" (Barnouw 1993, p. 255). Barnouw further clarifies his definition of the differences between cinema verite and direct cinema with the following:

> The direct cinema documentarist took his camera to a situation of tension and waited hopefully for a crisis; the Rouch version of cinema verite tried to precipitate one. The direct cinema artist aspired to invisibility; the Rouch cinema verite artist was often an avowed participant. The direct cinema artist played the role of uninvolved bystander; the cinema verite artist espoused that of provocateur….Direct cinema found its truth in events available to the camera. Cinema verite was committed to a paradox: that artificial circumstances could bring hidden truth to the surface.
> (Barnouw 1993, pp.254, 255)

French ethnographer/documentarist Jean Rouch's approach to documentary was that through his "subjective eye" and his camera the audience saw what he believed happened (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p.16).

Barsam however, asserts cinema verite and direct cinema also have similarities such as the advantage of using:

> Lightweight equipment; to a close relationship between shooting and editing; and to producing a cinema that simultaneously brought the filmmaker and the audience closer to the subject.
> (Barsam 1992, p.303)

Barsam points out that another important development for direct cinema was synchronized sound (1973, p. 247). Synchronized sound became possible with the development new types of recorded sound. Formats for 16mm film synchronised sound for instance are, a fine black line running along the edge of film, which refers to "optical sound" track on film, or a thick caramel coloured stripe running along the edge of film, which is referred to as "mag stripe" track or magnetic stripe. A sound format referred to as "sep mag" or separate magnetic

contains a film's synchronised sound track and as suggested, is separate to the film altogether and can be synchronised with the image from the 'start' point of the film.

As mentioned previously, and as evidence of the interchange of terminologies, Manefield (2006) refers to *Chequerboard* as direct cinema, while Walton (Walton, S 2006, pers.comm., 22 March) refers to the program as living camera. Considering the underlying relationship of each program's participants with the camera, and the sometimes confronting issues examined by these programs, it is not difficult to imagine there existing a symbiotic relationship of both un-involvement and provocation. Furthermore:

> In the early days, camera veritas was the sort of buzz thing around. I never thought of cinema verite as what we were doing, I thought of it as free camera techniques, that the camera could move freely and zoom freely, and it was on the shoulders and they walked into the action.
>
> (Manefield 2006)

In 1956 for example, 16mm film rather than the 35mm used in feature filmmaking was deemed the most economical recording format for television. Essential manageable operating costs facilitated the production of film prints of news stories for syndicated to each state. Not until 1960 was experimental videotape recording introduced where both the vision and the sound were recorded on magnetic tape (Borchers 2006, p.2). In 1962, "The first two-inch videotape machines installed in all state capitals in 1961 are in operation. The use of videotape will enable improved technical standards to be realised", which meant better technical program qualities (Borchers 2006, p.2). Walton recalls the impact hand-held camera had on documentary filmmaking in the 1960s as:

> The new cameras freed filmmakers from the industrial weight and presence of the huge cameras and lights of the past arranged before the subjects with all the subtlety of an artillery battery. Hand held cameras were not small, but they became an extension of the human frame. They were light, playful, casual, and less intimidating to subjects. The camera now could also be insidious, covert, or intimate. Filmmakers could get up close, crawl, run and follow. They could go down drains and up stairs. They could make long unedited sequences in real time.
>
> (Walton, S 2006, pers.comm., 22 March)

Further that the new cameras meant:

> You could work faster, and do more set-ups in a day. It meant that the camera was less intrusive to subjects, and that crews could be reduced to two plus a sound person. Of these, only the cameraman often needed to be visible to the subject. The sound recordist, if not using a pole, and the assistant cameraperson could place themselves out of sight behind furniture or whatever – creating a more intimate and less threatening presence. The development of new fast 16mm film stocks meant that filming did not necessarily have to depend on elaborate lighting. Now, the camera could follow the action wherever it went, and filmmakers could indicate through unedited follow shots that, inasmuch as the camera ever tells the whole truth, they were showing at least the sequential truth of things.
>
> (Walton, S 2006, pers.comm., 22 March)

Chequerboard themes and topics

Up to now discussion has focused on describing *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* and their place as examples of cinema verite or direct cinema Australian documentary. As well, their social documentary role and bardic function in shaping Australian identity and showing Australians themselves has been examined. In the following, an examination of a sample selection of episodes of *Chequerboard* discusses the themes and topics addressed by them. A similar examination of *A Big Country*'s episodes appears later in this chapter. The examination entailed a process of shot listing and interpretive assessment through a visual content analysis. Each episode is a constructed representation of

differing themes involving the many social issues facing Australian society and community reflecting the social advocacy present in ABC documentary filmmaking. Information gathered from the official ABC documentary catalogue and from the program's episode and transmission information lists provided separately by the program's producer Tom Manefield, significantly aided this interpretive process. In addition, comments from Walton, Manefield, and Steller, have been included in order to provide further substantive information about the lived experience or the reality of making of specific episodes.

The thematic scope of the *Chequerboard* series is wide ranging but essentially, the program's focus is showing and telling the stories of Australians living in Australia's urban society and culture. Themes include women and health, general health, politics, sport, poverty, law and order, culture, immigration industry, history, national security, as well as travel, the military, business, education, religion, the media, land development, children, Aboriginals, national identity, and unemployment. The most frequent themes involve women, health, the media, children, religion, education, poverty, personal relationships, and national identity. Deliberate attention is devoted to issues within the framework of these themes because they remain themes of considerable social significance in Australia. The pivotal points to each issue/topic investigation play-out before the cameras and are dissected and examined through the filmmaker's skill which help in the creation of compelling and emotive images combined with thought-provoking, incisive, and probing questions.

For the most part, *Chequerboard*'s 1969 themes were health, women, politics, and poverty, with some significant and challenging issues emerging. From the outset, and for the program's first groundbreaking episode, *Chequerboard* brought attention to the issues of marginalisation, women, and health, by personalising them. Key elements in the program's approach were personalisation and intimacy, both of which are evident in the point of view and approach of each episode. The *Chequerboard* program shone its first beam of documentary spotlight by focusing in on a very private issue.

The first episode of the series, "Gina - They don't even say hello" (1969) highlighted and confronted a young girl's seeming marginalisation and social exclusion due to her sight impairment. Whether Australians were prepared for it or not, such a direct fact-to-face approach definitively presented an undeniable empathetic perspective, and was in lineal or point blank opposition to the way other more confronting topics that were evolving within Australia in that year were presented, such as the Vietnam War and the moratorium protest marches. The images of Gina's face possibly considered confronting by viewers, in reality at issue were society's inadequacies in relation to people with disabilities. In "Gina", filmmakers Manefield and Steller drew attention to the difficulties of a young sight-impaired woman in her daily activities. The episode revealed how prepared or unprepared she was for womanhood, let alone any social involvement. In what became another key *Chequerboard* element, a quote from Gina was used as the episode's title – "they don't even say hello" – and suggested her presence was manifestly unacknowledged, even in passing. As the

episode revealed, Gina was a teenager at the time and her family had neglected to educate her about changes her body was about to undergo. Gina revealed that she found out on her own about her menstrual period. To her terror, one day at school she felt blood running down her leg. Manefield explains “we asked questions about how embarrassing it was, and she talked about being at school and the blood running down her legs and not knowing what was happening to her, thinking she was dying” (Bowden & Borchers 2006, p.141). This first episode undoubtedly questioned and challenged issues of basic human and familial communication, dignity, and trust. Steller’s (2006) words are emblematic in relation to this and other issues in other episodes, “We made people aware of situations”. Steller (2006) explains later how he overcame the difficulties he encountered in filming Gina’s eyes, and how his filming presented the reality of being blind.

The role of women in Australian society was the focus of the episode titled “What do you get married for?” (1969). It posed questions about the purpose of marriage and issues of women in marriage, whether positive or negative. At the same time, the episode acknowledged the contribution made by women who chose stay at home rather than seek work outside the home. Several different women from different lifestyles revealed their recreational activities and their daily occupations following marriage and children. None of the women were working mothers, however, all the women created their own lives within marriage. For instance, one woman told of her exclusion from her husband’s life, “He’s always excluding me but I’ve accepted that role; I have been excluded but

I've accepted it". She further explained that she waits for the telephone to ring and that she keeps herself "Very much to myself", confiding only in her husband (*Chequerboard*, "What do you get married for?", 1969). Other women revealed that they preferred to raise their children, while still others kept themselves busy with charity work. In contrast, however, one woman explained, she did not do housework and she was happy she had no children. She explained that her wedding day was her happiest day. "I want to be the bread winner myself", she explained, but "my husband pays the bills". Furthermore, she revealed that her trotting racehorse had won four county races and she was financially independent, but her husband ran the house financially (*Chequerboard*, "What do you get married for?", 1969) (See appendix A). Whereas this episode focused on stay-at-home mothers and the choice available to women generally up until then, the fact was that in that same year, 1969, the Arbitration Commission granted women equal pay (ABC Archives 2007) suggests that more women were choosing to find paid work outside the home on the one hand, and that more work or career opportunities were emerging for women on the other. The purpose of the episode challenged and questioned issues around the purpose of marriage, women's liberation and equality in Australia in 1969. Looking deeper, the focus in this episode was also on the difficulties of living on the basic wage and the impact of that on the family unit. This episode of *Chequerboard* presented a range of women's stories encouraging debate about perceptions of choice or duty for women in Australia through their personal stories about their

marriages, their children, their experiences in their daily lives, and their hopes and dreams.

A much earlier awareness of women's issues however, was evident in a *Four Corners* program in 1964 *The Little Woman*. This *Four Corners* story is described as a landmark documentary on the subject of women's rights (75 Years of ABC 2007, p.1 of 1). With their investigative and documentary fingers on the pulse of society so to speak, both *Four Corners* in 1964 and *Chequerboard* in 1971 foreshadowed the launch of The Women's Electoral Lobby in 1972.

Another episode which looked squarely at difficulties associated with low income living was "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince" (1969). Interestingly, a clip from this particular episode is used as part of the interactive section of the ABC's 50 Years of Television timeline website to highlight and exemplify *Chequerboard*'s documentary style and filmic contribution to ABC television's history. This episode explored the strictures of living on the basic wage; by following working class couples who had to make do with less than others in society, and doing without altogether. "It was not, said Manefield, a program about poverty as such – although audiences saw it that way – because the families were supported by a worker, a wage, and it was basic" (Bowden & Borchers 2006, p.141). One of the family's concerns was the issue of what they saw as a bleak future for their children. As one of the women in this episode explained, "I was just twenty when I got married", and now had

difficulty in making ends meet, especially when her children became ill. As she explained:

> Hospital bills, doctor bills, that sort of thing…every penny I saved went on paying the hospital bills…. (Here the camera lens zooms in to medium close up to Close up to emphasise her words) … I just hope there isn't anymore children…yes I am taking the pill now…it's $1.75 or something a month, I do smoke and if I haven't the money for the pill, or the cigarettes, I go without cigarettes...I have to go without cigarettes if I run out of anything for the children…although I'd love to smoke 30 cigarettes a day…I suppose I'll make sure there are no more children, and that's it.
> (*Chequerboard*, "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", 1969)

In this episode, issues of class arise, as well as the question of heredity or environment producing or perpetuating poverty. The episode shows evidence of issues that changed the lives of those concerned, and which inevitably shaped their futures, such as lack of money and education. The episode looked at the stories behind the story, that is, in telling the stories of families living on the basic wage, the episode also looks at the impact changes in employment, the birth of a child, or lack of education have on the family's ability to keep food on the table. The desperate situation experienced by those framed by this episode evokes a stoic determination by them not to buckle under, but to continue to survive no matter what life threw at them. Offering no answers, the episode instead questioned the drive, ambition, and sense of purpose in life of these families by putting the focus on the daily monotony of their lives, and challenged their choices and state of existence. (See Appendix A)

Still a major issue is the rehabilitation, assimilation, or repatriation of mental health patients into communities. "I could get married and have a family" (1969) investigated a group of ex-psychiatric patients and their re-introduction into society. The patients told their stories of mental illness, their exclusion, their

institutionalisation, and their attempts to re-enter society through halfway houses and monitored medication. All revealed their need to create happy and meaningful lives for themselves into the future. The episode challenged mental health care practices at the time by highlighting through the patient's personal recollections their past treatment by both family and mental health institutions rendering them unable to re-enter the community smoothly. In doing so, the episode revealed, the ex-psychiatric patients were aged in their fifties and sixties, and faced issues of displacement, betrayal by families unable to cope with their behaviours, and apprehension on their re-entry into social communities. To help alleviate some of this uncertainty, they lived in halfway houses in which they looked after themselves, and other sufferers through a support system and medication. Some of them returned to jobs and a working life while others remained in that liminal space between hospitalisation and repatriation and continued to be medicated. Their apprehension was evident in the tentative self-confidence that described their transitional life. Former patient Len Hitchens, 64, explained his daily routine:

> My actual job in the house is, I do the cookin', and I go down and get the food, I set the table, do all the washing up, and then if there's any washing, wash the sheets, the only thing I don't do I don't do the ironing, they do that…..oh well, it's helpin' them anyhow, they're workin' hard, and when they come home they just don't like feel like gettin' into cookin' tucker.
> (*Chequerboard*, "I could get married and have a family", 1969)

Vince had been a patient for six years. Now thirty-eight, he wanted to be a journalist, but said he faced difficulties getting a job because he is seen as an "outcast as it were because of being in a psychiatric hospital…oh you're just not wanted sort of thing" (*Chequerboard*, "I could get married and have a family"

(1969). Ex-patient Jeff revealed he still suffered from bad nerves. He told about the time he attacked his mother because he lost a card game. When he hit his mother again, his father sent him to Morrisett Psychiatric Hospital. Today, the Salvation Army administers Morrisett, which is now the Endeavour Community Farm, in New South Wales (ACT Government Health Information 2007).

Sadly, in Jeff's case, he had already been hospitalised for years and all re-entry into the community was still to eventuate. The episode reveals that Jeff's father left him in Morrisett Psychiatric Hospital even though, after a time, the doctors said he was fit to re-enter society. Jeff said his parents did not want him to come out. His only friends were those he met in the psychiatric hospital. Jeff wanted to get married to "a girl who would come to Morrisett to see the other less fortunate people".

The episode presented other people's stories. Laurel and Max for instance, met in Morrisett Psychiatric Hospital after both suffered breakdowns; they married in the City Mission in Newcastle in the non-denominational chapel. Laurel's wedding veil was from the Smith Family and Max's suit was from the Mission. Max explained he was looking for a job while working in the Newcastle Sheltered Workshop, he said he was happy there, and that he was "happy the way things are". The impending changes in approaches to mental health care to provide ease of access to mental health services, as well as specialist treatment and rehabilitation services that were put in place as a result of lawyers having the ability to "explore patients rights by suing doctors and hospitals" (Walker 2003, p.5 of 8) include:

> The decision by the Supreme Court in Allen v Superintendent of Callan Park in 1970 forced hospitals to have cases of involuntary admission brought before a magistrate for approval as soon as feasible; A review of the Mental Health laws was conducted by the Edwards Committee in 1974 and 1976.
>
> (Walker 2003, p.6 of 8)

Also in 1976, an inquiry was done into the "quality of patient care in psychiatric hospitals notably Morrisett" (Walker 2003, p.6 of 8). This timely and somewhat pre-emptive 1969 *Chequerboard* episode challenged society's acceptance, or lack, of psychiatric patients and raised concerns about their future social and community integration and assimilation. It showed the difficulties faced by those who begin re-entry and some of the positive outcomes of proper and on-going successful treatment, like Max and Laurel. (See appendix A)

At the end of the 1960s and at the time when the flower power people of the hippie generation were blossoming, *Chequerboard* focused on issues about alternative lifestyles. Its focus was not, however, directed at the hippie generation and their alternative lifestyle specifically but rather on an alternative lifestyle that had been in existence in Australia from the 1930s as revealed in "A palace, a fortress, a tomb" (1969). Artist and colony leader Justus Jorgensen ran an artist colony called "Montsalvat". Construction of the colony began in the 1930s. Since then, Montsalvat had become a tourist attraction and a source of curiosity for many outsiders. Entrance fees enabled and supported its owner and inhabitants. The colony presented challenges to socially accepted moral standards and values. Looking beneath the tourist façade, *Chequerboard* delved into Jorgensen's beliefs and seeming tight control over the colony and the

impact, if any, on those who were his "disciples" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.60). A comment in the film from one long-time original colony member who went as a pupil to Monsalvat in 1935 to help highlights this:

> I think most of the controlling of Montsalvat came from him [Jorgensen], in relation to the children at Montsalvat. They sat around the table at night listening to him. Everyone had to work, that was the reason they were allowed here.
> (*Chequerboard*, "A palace, a fortress, a tomb", 1969)
> (See appendix A)

By 1970, issues include loneliness, stage kids, Aboriginals, sub-normality, poverty, extreme sports such as sky diving and climbing sheer rock faces, lonely heats, dropouts, girls, prisoners, Newtown housing, nudists, birth, death, New Guinea planters, the body beautiful, parents without partners, Oedipus complex, marriage under stress, spiritualists, housewives on drugs, and social columnists.

In "The same dose of treatment" (1970), *Chequerboard* examined loneliness in the city. This episode reflected some the effects of living in Australia's rapidly developing social and cultural structure. Loneliness is not the same as being alone. This difference is in the negative connotations of "loneliness" contrasted with essentially positive connotations of "to be alone". Loneliness is the lack of companionship, to be without company, friendless, or forlorn, any one of which relates directly to the effects of marginalisation. To be alone is to be by oneself to the exclusion of all others, solo, or unassisted. The episode evokes a sense that for some people, overcoming loneliness and attempting to become involved in big cities is very often difficult to achieve. As a result, sometimes they feel excluded or marginalised. This episode revealed the perspectives of three people and looked at how and what each of them did to

cope with their circumstance and how they struggled to overcome the loneliness they experienced as a result.

Paula was an unmarried mother of twins, who, as she grew up, found it difficult to discuss women's issues with her mother. The difficult mother-daughter relationship continued, as Paula revealed, because after a period in a detention home with barred windows, Paula's mother sent her to a convent after Paula stole money. A fourteen-year-old Catholic girl at the time, Paula spent four years as punishment in a convent and said she found no answers for herself there, "I wasn't allowed to read anything except religious subjects". She stated she was housed with "very old ladies, mentally retarded girls, and physically deformed people" (*Chequerboard*, "The same dose of treatment", 1970) and that years later at twenty-eight, she had her first physical relationship with a man, after which she ended up becoming pregnant with twins. Paula viewed her life as still being "messed up" and believed the convent treatment distorted her development. Unable to deal with the man on an emotional level, Paula admitted she told him to go away, which he did, to England, which left her with two infants to care for.

Another person dealing with loneliness in the city was Ted. Ted's wife completely dominated him. He believed his loneliness stemmed from the lack of communication within his marriage. For example, he revealed he did not want a divorce because his wife had been the only woman with whom he had been intimate. Moreover, and seemingly to compound his acceptance of his dominated

situation, he revealed his mother told him, “Look Ted, I know you’ve put up with a lot, but she’s the only woman you’ve ever known”.

The third person in this episode was Karl, who described himself as a drifter. At the prospect of loneliness, he explained that he was “frightened of it…five years ago I began to feel loneliness”. He spoke further of his sorrow over his divorce and of how he missed his children, especially Stephen: “I love him so much”.

In their own way, each of these three people says that they want someone who makes them feel special. Paula’s emotional development had been repressed from when she was young, Ted was dominated by his wife and mother, and Karl had been spurned by his wife. Paula however, revealed a determination to remain unchanged tinged with trepidation, when she added, “I think if you change too often, or if changes are too drastic, you can lose yourself”. (See appendix A). Along with the issue of loneliness whether through marginalisation or separation, the episode also questioned parental rights and divorce procedure outcomes. There is a sense of disparity evident in the emotional and legal outcomes for each of those framed by the episode. Moreover, it questioned the cumulative effect of the increased social pressures in an increasingly pressurised society on those involved on both sides and their ability or not to move forward and begin again, to build self-esteem, to have self-worth, and to begin new lives.

Today, the Aboriginal condition is a significant and controversial issue, even more so in light of the Australian Government’s initiative to protect Aboriginal children from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. In the 1960s

however, overshadowing debates about Aboriginal health, poverty, the loss of culture, and assimilation, is the issue of "the stolen generations".

> The term Stolen Generations was originally used to describe the separation of Aboriginal children from their families, communities and country by government policy aimed specifically at breaking down Koorie communities. Now the term has been extended to include the descendants of those that were removed and sometimes children removed for other reasons seemingly unrelated to their Aboriginality such as families forced to give their children up because they were unable to support them.
> (Stolen Generations. Koorie Heritage Trust 2006, p. 1 of 3)

Two *Chequerboard* episodes focused on the Aboriginal condition and the impact and trauma of separation and removal of Aboriginal children from their families. "Children with any blood other than Aboriginal were removed so that they could be assimilated into the wider community" (Stolen Generations. Koorie Heritage Trust 2006, p. 2 of 3).

Here again, *Chequerboard*'s approach elicited empathy and awareness through its challenging images and through the words of those involved. Bob Randall was one of those "stolen generation" babies whose story unfolded in these episodes; not only his story, but also the story of his wife and her sister. The two episodes involved are, "My brown skin baby, they take him away", and "Who am I? What am I?" (1970). These episodes present attempts to communicate between the now-adult children and their Aboriginal family members. Initial communication between the Aboriginal families and their "lost children" comes through broken words and phrases, then later through a physical proximity punctuated by shy glancing smiles and touching, later still, an emotional connection becomes evident as each acknowledge their shared history. Although making first contact, there existed an irrevocable cultural chasm

seemingly impossible to cross, which evolved because of the original forced separation between mother and child, or between parents and children. These episodes stand as an indictment on past Government policies. Nominated for a Prix Italia Award, judges revealed, “My brown skin baby, they take him away” (1970) would have won had it been shot in colour rather than black and white (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 61). However, in looking and listening to these episodes today, it is that very starkness and richness of contrast and tone created by the episode’s black and white images that present a far greater visual impact and poetic imagery than any images shot in colour ever could. Visually and photographically, the use of the black and white film footage creates a sense of distancing that emphasises the relative issues of marginalisation and displacement. As well, the words of those separated tell of their anguish and confusion and of their unshakeable understanding of familial bonds. Bob Randall’s plain speech he tells of his childhood and those of the many other Aboriginal children. Randall talks about how he got his name – he thinks his father’s name was “Randall something… So they kept Randall and they just put Bob on it”. He says, “All contact was broken, absolutely broken” with his real family once he was taken away…“No record was kept of where we were from even; it was a complete break away from our family”. (See appendix A).

Moreover, in this case emotive imagery contributes to the sense of disconnection, marginalisation, separation, and the resultant cultural divide between the “children” and their families; for instance, the juxtaposing of footage of Florrie and her young son when they both met her mother for the first

time since she was a baby. The sequence is filmed from the beginning shot in medium close up, and shows Amy as she introduces her mother, her sister Beryl, and her Aunty Peggy and Aunty Maggie, then her father. Then, seen in wide-shot, Florrie's young son remains "stand offish" and apart. Raised in the white society of Darwin, the young boy is unsure of things, and is apprehensive because this is his first experience with outback Aboriginal life. Then again, in close-up, Florrie is embraced by her Aboriginal mother Ruby. Ruby wraps her arms around Florrie who smiles shyly, but is slightly unresponsive. Ruby holds Florrie close to her. Then, in close-up shot again, Ruby's husband, Tommy (who is blind), stands with Ruby and Florrie. They are together once again as a family; however, the reality of the distance in time, place, and culture that exists between them becomes palpable as they all stand apprehensively, silently, and close together before the camera.

Another episode documents poverty in Australia at a time of significant social, cultural, and technological development in Australia. "At Londonderry" (1970) presents stark black and white images and documents the lives of two poverty-stricken families struggling to live on the outskirts of Sydney. It focuses its scalpel-like camera on people living without running water, without electricity, and without enough money with which to purchase the very basic foodstuffs such as potatoes, bread, and jam. Although such images and predicaments prove to be disheartening for a viewer, the episode reveals the ingenuity and stoic determination exhibited by both families in their struggle to make ends meet from day-to-day. In questioning how such a level of poverty

existed in Sydney at that time, the implication is that there may well be other such examples in other Australian cities. The episode looks at the reasons behind why people become poverty-stricken and how they cope with little or nothing.

Chequerboard looked at the implications and impact of changes to urban environments and re-development programs on those who have lived in those areas sometimes for all their life. “All my memories are in Newtown” (1970) reveals the emotional impact on elderly women living in Newtown of their removal and rehousing against their will. As a brief outline of Newtown’s history explains:

> Newtown’s community has undergone a number of transformations since 1862 when it began life as a bourgeois suburb. By the 1900s, it was working class, by the 1950s a migrant hub laying the foundations for its contemporary cosmopolitan feel. The 1970s saw more change with Newtown attracting a young, educated and politically active population. Today, Newtown community life is built on this foundation of free speech and ideas, progressive and green thinking. Many who came in the1970s never left, while generations of students have come and gone, and new cohorts continue to hang out in King Street Newtown.
>
> (City of Sydney 2007, p. 2 of 4)

Contained within the sub-text of the above statement is the difficult situation of removal and issues of disorientation confronting the elderly women of Newtown. Somewhere between the words “*The 1970s saw more change*” and “*many who came in the 1970s never left*”, there exist the stories of Mrs. Tomlinson, Mrs. Cooper, and Mrs. Crocker, all in their seventies at the time. The poignant wisdom of Mrs. Crocker’s words, “You’ve still got your memories haven’t you?” belies her fear of disorientation and removal. (See Appendix A)

Frank and open discussion about the issues of birth and death was presented in back-to-back 1970 episodes detailing the preparations for both the

time of the events of death, and reactions to the events. Each issue presents questions of the possibility of being the father (or someone) in the delivery room at birth.

Bringing themes and topics of birth and death into homes through a program like *Chequerboard*, denotes that attitudes and perceptions were changing in society toward open discussion about the personal areas regarding birth and death thereby they lose some of their taboo aura and discomfort.

The first of these episodes was "Well worth the effort" (1970) which followed two couples, Malcolm and Jane, and Helen and her husband as they each await the birth of their first child. Malcolm and Jane left university because they could not afford to continue. The husband planned to be very much part of the birth process and wanted to help with breathing practice. The couple revealed that they believe that if the father was there at the birth from the very beginning, then he was bound to be more involved later on. Malcolm, the father-to-be felt the baby moving and kicking. Eventually, their first child is born within a "silent birth" environment, which meant there was little or no sound in the delivery room (even from the mother).

As far as the other and older couple was concerned, Helen revealed she wanted to be on her own at the birth. She explained that it had taken seven years and many fertility treatments for her to become pregnant. Helen has visited the doctor on her own before her confinement. Eventually, she had a healthy baby girl; however, while Jane's husband was at her side through the whole experience, Helen's husband waited outside to hear the news and saw his first

child later in the hospital nursery. At a time of social change, when the emergence of women's liberation and the Pill, this episode presented two contrasting approaches to the levels of involvement of husbands in their child's births. The episode signaled a move away from the traditional birth experience for the father, where he had been excluded from the birth. Fathers' had the choice of becoming more involved in a nurturing, inclusive style of birthing experience, mother's acceptance assured.

The second of these episodes, "Part of Life" (1970), looked at differing attitudes and perspective of three people facing the prospect of their own death. The forthright attitude of the three people was revealed through their words. One of those was a forty-five year old mother of school-aged children. She was suffering bone cancer. She explained that she had talked to her children about her cancer in order to prepare them for her death. She believed death meant "passing from this world to the next I suppose…I go to heaven when I die and that's it". She was philosophical when discussing her impending death. She explained that from her point of view it was a cultural thing and that she was from an Irish background and was used to seeing death, "People die at home". The next person was a twenty-six year old female nurse who diagnosed her own condition of Hodgkin's disease and who had already undergone two years of radiotherapy. She revealed that she did not accept she had only two years to live. She had not told her regular doctor, her husband, or anybody else, because as she explained, "There wasn't any point…because it didn't concern them". According to her beliefs, her peace of mind came from knowing that she will live on in the

memory of others left behind. The final person was a bespectacled middle aged man, who was a doctor. His kidneys were affected by cancer. He revealed that as a doctor he “had to face it head on”. “I feel liberated,” he exclaimed. He did not believe in God, and offered his acceptance of his death as being “the end of me”. These episodes not only exemplified the level of intimacy involved in *Chequerboard* stories, but it also exemplified the reality of what it is to face one’s own death. Each person involved in these episodes had their own way of dealing with their situation and which included or excluded those closest to them. (See Appendix A)

Other *Chequerboard* episodes highlighted some less serious then, but equally significant, issues within society at the time, and in some cases have become more controversial now. For instance, “I don’t like to look in the mirror” (1970), addressed issues relating to body image and bodybuilding which were discussed through the perspectives of a young body builder and a forty-four year old overweight woman. The son of a migrant, David loved bodybuilding and his grandfather encouraged him. David explained that he took $20 - $30 per month of vitamins and that he was a dedicated body builder, but did not believe he was a fanatic. His father disagreed. At the other end of the spectrum was Mrs Atkinson, who suffered from obesity. Mrs. Atkinson told how she would not like to see her daughters go through what she had to go through. Some of the difficulties with being fat were things that most take for granted such as bending down and getting things from cupboards, or getting on and off the bus and train. She preferred to take the car rather than enduring getting on and off the bus and

struggling to find a seat. The episode showed her in a bus and a train, and waiting until she is the last to go through turnstiles at the station, or taking a long time to walk up or down stairs. She explained that supermarkets were also difficult because she cannot go through turnstiles. This episode underlines the continued struggle to find personal happiness for people living within an affluent modern society.

Spiritualism is addressed in two *Chequerboard* episodes. This topic too has grown becoming the focus of various television programs more recently. "Fortune teller – I'm dealing in emotions" (1969) and "On the spiritual phone" (1970), focussed on the issues of spiritualists and spiritualism that was "on the increase in Sydney" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.67), and "looks at the spiritualists' world and attends one of their séances" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 67). In a curiously intriguing segment, the latter episode concluded with an infra red film segment showing a séance, with people in a trance and others grouped together in circle, also in a trance. The purpose is unclear, but whether sceptic or not, its inclusion heightens expectation of the unexpected in both participant and viewer. In filming and including this sequence *Chequerboard* moved beyond filming reality to attempting to film unreality; an intriguing concept. Cinema verite or direct cinema or living camera filmed actuality or reality, however, the concept of attempting to capture unreality stretches the imagination about what might be possible given the light, the film speed, the camera lens, and the courage of the filmmaker.

Personal relationships became the focus of two episodes addressing marriage and its breakdown. The plight of the single parent was the focus of "She'd flown the coop" (1970), which examined the difficulties that face either the deserted wife or husband in raising their children and the impacts on home life and work commitments. This episode drew attention to a sole father caring for his four children. He had been a sole parent for "just over two years" as his wife left him while he was in causality ward at Sydney Hospital. He explained "they wanted to let me wife know and sent somebody home, and she was already gone, she'd flown the coop". As well, "A matter of supremacy" (1970) examined the complexities of human relationships within marriage, and how conflict and crises come to cause stress on both parties. The episode comprised couples discussing the marriage conflicts; some were able to discuss their problems civilly, while others were unable to control their arguing even in front of the *Chequerboard* camera. (See Appendix A)

Unfortunately, access to view and assess *Chequerboard* programs from three tumultuous years from 1971-1974 was not possible because the episodes were not part of the National Film and Video Lending Service viewing catalogue. However, evidence from ABC catalogue records revealed that in 1971 the program's focus of looking at the lives of the Australian people remained. *Chequerboard*'s issues included stories about Tasmania, migrants, swimmers, little people, nuns, chums, John Proctor -Papua New Guinea plantation owner, private eyes, women's lib, rural poverty, and pet animals. In particular, the issue of women's lib received attention in the episode "Sisterhood is powerful"

(1971). The episode questioned whether women should "fulfill a potential outside motherhood and housewife, or is the traditional role the most satisfactory and natural one?" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 73). Three women offered "new ideas about the role of women in modern society" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.73). *Chequerboard* sought out the underlying social issues and the program's producers, directors and researchers were aware of those issues.

Continuing the program's complex examination of Australian society, *Chequerboard*'s 1972 issues included the working class, military college, politics and politicians, troubled youth, love and hate, unemployment, migrants, non-conformism, astrologers, and the disabled. In "I reckon I'm an average Australian" (1972), *Chequerboard* framed the changing face of the working class in Australia as it looked " at a typical day in the life of a working class family and the story of a husband and wife who both work to gain the extras which make life more comfortable" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.76).

Chequerboard's examination of current issues continued into 1973 and included Australia's national health scheme for Australia, the homeless in cities, royalty visits Australia, migrants returning to England, children – nature or nurture, itinerant workers, and urban development and change. "Once bitten, twice shy" (1973), for instance, posed questions about how successful Australia's immigration program was, or was not. In this episode which examines a different side of immigration to that examined in the *A Big Country* episode "Ten Thousand Miles from Care" (1970), a young couple chose to return

home to Lancashire two years after emigrating from England. The episode examined their reasons for leaving, their disillusionment with Australian life, and their inability to fit into an Australian way of life. Their choice to return was especially difficult as other family members had followed them, also as migrants, and bought houses in Glenelg, Adelaide. They too would have to decide to return or not. The issue of reverse migration presented further questions about Australia's social and cultural acceptance and inclusion of immigrants. This is an ongoing and sometimes controversial issue, even more so in recent years as people attempt to escape war torn regions and use methods to enter Australia illegally. The couple revealed that they felt "kind'a out of place" and that "There isn't enough to keep us, Australia can't give us enough to make it worthwhile giving up the things that we had back home". Although they had made some friends here in Australia, they explained that, "The things that we miss are just not in Australia…it's not the Australians' fault, it's not *here*". (See Appendix A).

> Disillusioned, they sell their car and their house with its swimming pool and return to Lancashire and the friends they grew up with, back to a landscape of grey stone cottages and grey drizzling weather and a community where everyone knows what the neighbours are up to, and where the highlight of the week is a visit to Blackpool pleasure beach - a far cry from Adelaide's Glenelg.
> (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.85)

"'Tis all a chequerboard" (1974) looked back and reviewed the previous ninety-nine *Chequerboard* episodes and recalled and revisited "some of the more memorable characters and looks at the extent to which their lives are different" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 95) in 1974. For *Chequerboard*, 1974 marked the penultimate year for the program and its topics included the increase in burglary in Australian cities, migrants, religion, prisoner rehabilitation, and

adolescence. On the national stage however significant achievements for recognition and social and cultural progress regarding issues of identity and representation resulted. In that year for instance, Cabinet accepted Woodward Report recommendations to hand over all NT reserves and missions to the Aborigines, and Prime Minister Gough Whitlam announced *Advance Australia Fair* as the national anthem following the results of an opinion poll (ABC 2010, p.3 of 5).

Unfortunately, little information and/or documentation remains about *Chequerboard* episodes from 1975, apart from a few episode transmission notations, précis, and shot lists. Towards the end of 1975, the program's production ceased. In addition, during this year the program's format changed from black and white, to colour, as part of the introduction of colour television into Australia on March 1, 1975.

However, issues in 1975 covered the following: - police graduates on their first duties, juvenile delinquency, domestic violence, crime and violence in "Charlie 16" (1975), the recovery process after Cyclone Tracy hit Darwin in "It's one of the better pieces of wreckage" (1975), family organizations, social problems and human relations in "Your feet are aching from dancing all night" (1975), circuses and the people who work for them in "What, and give away show business?" (1975), the Australian Army in "You can put Sir on it like the rest of them" (1975), the Roman Catholic Church and discipline in "The spirit of the rule" (1975), secondary school education and discipline in "Just telling them

won't stop them" (1975), marriage, women and home economics and living in new housing estates in "Bob and Shirley and Frank and Lorraine" (1975).

Until it ceased production in 1975, *Chequerboard*'s issues, topics, and themes reflected the changing face of Australian society and presented frank discussion about many difficult subjects. The program never shied away from confronting subjects for which no other vehicle existed for communication. One in particular that proved to be quite a revelation during the visual content analysis process was the episode entitled "I can't seem to talk about it" (1975). This episode addressed sexual problems, sexual therapy, and impacts on sexual relationship in a matter of fact clinical approach and incorporated the expertise and explanations of psychologists and doctors, and the participation of some willing actors and a surprisingly frank and visually revealing debate is presented in the episode.

A Big Country's bardic function

Images and stories created for *A Big Country* not only document less confronting more pictorially illustrative, yet equally emotive images, through scenes of the landscape of Australia and its people, but also present challenging views of Australian rural people and society. The interplay between the filmmakers' editing and intercutting of pastoral scenes of country and drought affected outback Australia together with images of the faces and scenes of people living on the land, creates a sense of their continual struggles to make a living from the land. The uses of landscape shots that are interspersed throughout

each episode's interview suggest an intrinsic connection between man and the land.

In the same way as *Chequerboard*, the Bardic function of *A Big Country* is to mediate discussion and carry messages to society acting and being at the at the "centre of its culture", and to provide the "cement" for "discourse for a culture" (Fiske & Hartley 1987, pp.86-87). Like *Chequerboard*, the function of *A Big Country* is to communicate with audiences "the reality to which it refers", and finally to communicate myth (Fiske & Hartley 1987, pp.86-87). Again, similarly, following in the tradition of the "bard", *A Big Country* "functions as a social ritual" communicating in a cultural level (Fiske & Hartley 1987. p.85) with rural Australia and Australian.

A Big Country's bardic functions emphasise the effects of the harsh realities of life on those who often struggle to live within the Australian rural environment. The filmmakers' approach and use of the close-up interview style similar to that used in *Chequerboard* interviews in particular, allow insights into many harsh realities of life on the land.

Similar to *Chequerboard*, *A Big Country* episodes also represent the bardic tradition, and direct it towards country Australia. For reasons of accessibility, examination of the themes and topics covered by *A Big Country* has been less productive than that of *Chequerboard*. However, those episodes of *A Big Country* (1970 to 1992) that were accessible have proved revealing of the influence of cinema verite because of the filmic style and approach, and attention to detail that became integral to the work of early ABC documentary filmmakers.

Information included in the ABC Documentary Catalogue of 1993 aided in achieving similar appreciation regarding the representation of significant themes, issues, and topics relevant not only to rural Australia but, in light of their inter-dependent relationship, to urban Australia. Produced concurrently, *A Big Country* and *Chequerboard* programs played a part in communicating understanding between urban and rural Australia and Australians in relation to their similarities and their differences as they exist and as they are contrasted against similar national and international events.

A Big Country's inception

A Big Country was not a copy of an overseas program model, it was "more leisurely than *Four Corners*, less intrusive than *Chequerboard* but no less personal, stirring the coastal fringe dweller's curiosity about life in the outback" (Inglis 1983, p.290).

As different as they are in content, in many ways these programs reveal, as discussed in following chapters, similarities in innovative and creative documentary production perspective and approach. As noted earlier, *A Big Country* focused on rural Australia, whereas *Chequerboard* focused on urban Australia.

The concept for *A Big Country* came from a group of Melbourne Rural Department staff with the idea of "developing a program which would bridge the void of understanding between country and city dwellers" (Abbott 1974, p.7). Describing the title of the program as "an inspiring name", ABC presenter Jim

Downes stated that thereby it declares the "parameters of the show", as well as its purpose, its character, and its workplace (Downes 1988, p.3). Downes continued, revealing that before production could commence, the program planners had first to overcome "two obstacles" (1988, p.4): firstly, "the increasingly inert bureaucracy of the ABC", and secondly, "a bureaucracy within a bureaucracy of the Rural Broadcasts Department" (Downes 1988, p.4). Downes argued the incongruity of such a bureaucratic stratagem nevertheless produces "program-makers who produce collectively most of the original ideas in Australian television" (Downes 1988, p.4). Budgetary concerns raised by "ABC bean counters" (Downes 1988, p.7) might have stopped the program in its tracks; the first program cost twice its "allocated budget of $1200" (Downes 1988, p.7).

Echoing opposition to *Chequerboards'* inception, and "undercurrent" of opposition came from "divisions between television and radio, between the old guard and the new talent" (Downes 1988, p.7) as well as already established program people, all of which "threatened to make *A Big Country* the shortest series ever, a series of one" (Downes 1988, p.7). Solid executive support for the program came from a former rural broadcaster, Graham White, who chose to ignore the in-house opposition directed at *A Big Country*, and "chose instead to see what the audience thought of it. In those days, that was a revolutionary approach for a senior ABC executive to take" (Downes 1988, p.8). As discussed earlier, Ken Watts and Tom Manefield showed similar courage in relation to *Chequerboard*'s inception.

From these tentative beginnings and with support from White and the program's audience, production of the groundbreaking ABC documentary program *A Big Country* began. The filmmakers of this program would eventually produce hundreds of *A Big Country* episodes from 1968 to 1992. *A Big Country* began production in 1968 and first went to air on the night of September 5 of that same year (Downes 1988, p.7).

A Big Country themes and topics

A Big Country addressed significant issues relating to rural Australia. Those issues included migrant assimilation into country areas, and the way they embraced the challenges of different Australian farming and agricultural practices. Others addressed the changes to the farming industry caused by technology and its impact on rural unemployment. Episodes explored issues involving identity, politics, unions, and union history by showing poetic imagery that at times evoked a sense of Australia's history, of Australian shearers and shearing, of timber cutting and camel farming, of wild horse brumby roundups and correlations with the poetry of the poet of the bush, Banjo Patterson. Like *Chequerboard*, *A Big Country* episodes also explored controversial issues of belonging to the land linked to Aboriginals' relationship with this land and those white Australians who opened up the outback for development for grazing and mining.

Australia's history of acknowledgement of returned soldiers and the bittersweet reward given them of seemingly harsh and unworkable land in the

arid and desolate Mallee region of Australia became the focus of a particularly revealing *A Big Country* episode, "Land Fit for Heroes" (1975). Signals about the new environmental concerns were evident in the episode "A Winter's Tale" (1984) about the benefits or otherwise of the then embryonic biodynamic farming approach. The episode showed those few forward-thinking farmers who were prepared to change their farming procedures in order to work towards an environmentally sustainable Australian future. Their adoption and incorporation of controversial biodynamic farming principles represented a radical perspective on agricultural and farming processes. *A Big Country*'s subtle approaches to themes and issues that related to the rural perspective were embedded in each program episode. These episodes also help to focus attention on those who lived on the land and on personal stories of their struggles and their triumphs. In so doing, many episodes laid bare the human face of both urban and rural Australia which was one of resilience, diversity, and ingenuity.

A Big Country offered a different view of immigration to that presented in *Chequerboard*. "Ten thousand miles from care" (1970) addressed the issue of immigration and examined British migrant farmers and their experiences farming in Albany, Western Australia. This episode's précis stated that "In the last five years over 200 British farmers have left the economic troubles of Britain to take up a new way of life and an easier way of farming in the Albany district of Western Australia" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 17). One middle-aged farmer, who commented on subsidised farming in Britain at the time said, "A man can get more money not working in England than he can working. Now

there's something wrong with that". This episode revealed that space for farming in Britain was becoming a scarcity and that there was no room for farm expansion. The farmer's family revealed that they had settled in well and that many of their British farmer friends visited them in Australia. They felt very happy and were welcomed "almost with open arms, very glad for them to join in and discuss the different things they do in England" (*A Big Country*, "Ten thousand miles from care", 1970). The vastness of Australia initially concerned them.

One farmer revealed that he believed incorrect information given in England about Australia, through uninformed English agents, was providing the wrong impressions. He believed "They're not doing a good job at all". Another farmer praised Australian farm workers for their diligence, while another's wife already felt accepted and at home. The farmer's wife explained that she liked the Australian "lack of class consciousness, very much indeed…we've been made to feel in this area as if we've been living here all our lives". (See Appendix B). Overall, this *A Big Country* episode represents an example of the positive outcomes of immigration, as opposed to the negative outcomes portrayed and exemplified in the 1973 *Chequerboard* episode "Once Bitten, Twice Shy" discussed earlier in this chapter, which told the story of reverse English migration.

It is significant at this point to note that in 1969 a program to assist the Australian film and television industry was announced by the then Gorton government (Tingwell & Wilmoth 2004, p. 212). This assistance enabled the re-

birth of the Australian feature film industry. In a possible reaction to developments in a resurgent film industry facilitated by the government assistance, television was not to be outdone, and in the next year, *A Big Country* produced the episode "Right through the shearing time" (1970). This episode revealed the day-to-day life of Australian shearers, and the social changes from 1891 to those of the 1970s. These changes included those made to the shears themselves – from shearing with manual hand blades to shearing with electric hand blades. Some scenes showed traditional Australian shearing shed action and close up shots of shearers shearing sheep. In an example of the iconic Australian shearing shed scene, one sequence begins with a close up shot of the shearer's hands, to others of the shears, the sheep, the shearing process, the boss, the tar boy, the ringer, and the fleece as it's cut and sorted. According to this episode, three hundred and twenty merino sheep daily was the record for shearing in 1892. General views of shearing with blades contrast between electric hand blades, hand blades described as being slow, and taking up to two hours per sheep from start to finish of process. Shearing described as once being quiet, lonely and with the "click of the shears all day", now had the buzz of the electric shears. The episode makes the point that shears, not blades, sheared sixty percent of sheep. These sequences, overlaid with the Australian song "Click Go the Shears", foreshadow scenes from the Australian feature film *Sunday Too Far Away* produced four years later in 1975. These television and film productions and those that followed resonate with an Australian rural identity. Whether signalling the resurgence of the Australian film industry and its re-discovery of

Australian scenes and characters, that had been overshadowed and all but annihilated for decades by American feature films and television programs, or not, *A Big Country* evinced an emerging interest in Australian people and Australian themes, an interest which was imperative for and contributed to the emerging film industry. Bell (1998) points out that for the first two decades of Australian television "one finds little evidence for a distinctive, local voice, American programs and formats dominated commercial channels' schedules" (1998, p. 194). In his biography, the late Australian actor/producer/director Charles (Bud) Tingwell recalled what the 1970s resurgent Australian film industry was like, revealing:

> It was an age of excitement and experimentation. Our stories were starting to be told and the subjects hitherto regarded as too difficult were being explored. Australian youth culture and society's darker side were starting to be seen on screen in films such as the biker movie *Stone* (1974); the outback was the setting for two very interesting and disturbing films, *Wake in Fright* and *Walkabout* (both 1971); the experience of Vietnam was explored in *The Odd Angry Shot* (1979); and social mores and class were tackled in films like Tim Burstall's *Petersen* (1974).
>
> (Tingwell & Wilmoth 2004, p. 214)

Chequerboard and *A Big Country* reflect many of the themes and topics of Australian feature films at the time and vice-versa.

Like the exploration of the shearers and the shearing industry, the episode "Right through the shearing time" (1970) highlighted the revolution electricity brought to the shearing industry. "Sleeper Cutting" (1971) framed the effect of electric power on the timber cutting industry and examined the issues of unemployment through technological change, and the changing work of the new timber sleeper cutters who used power saws, tractors, and trucks. "Sleeper cutting is as old as the steam train. During the depression of the 1930s sleeper

cutting thrived at Mendooran about 260 miles north-west of Sydney" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.30). Mendooran timber cutters of three decades, Bill Frost and Roman Manarky, discussed their work and how it has changed since they first began cutting. Comments from the men revealed a resignation, or at least acceptance, of industry changes beyond their control. At the time, Bill Frost commented, for instance, "Timber cutting is a dying industry", while another commented, as he debarked a log, that he thought the new technology was "marvellous" (*A Big Country*, "Sleeper Cutting", 1971). (See Appendix B).

Camels have been part of the Australian historical landscape since the late 1830's. A portion of *A Big Country* episode "The Camel Catchers" (1971) précis reads, "In the days of early exploration, camels were used in the Australian outback as heavy transport" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 15). "The Camel Catchers" (1971) focused attention on what happened to those camels once their use as transportation ended, or to those that escaped into the outback to form wild herds. The episode opens with footage shot in wide shot of camels being rounded up by bike, followed by travelling shots of chasing the camels, and wide shots of the same, followed by general views of catching camels on horseback. It then follows Dick Nunn, station manager at Anna Creek Station, and his day-to-day running of a camel catching operation. At the time, once captured the camels would sell for around $1000 each in the United States. Nunn said he believed "there must be thousands of them" (*A Big Country*, "The Camel Catchers", 1971), while another camel driver described them as being

"very bad tempered" (*A Big Country*, "The Camel Catchers", 1971). (See Appendix B).

Issues of displacement and a sense of belonging are the focus of "Everything What We Belong" (1972). This *A Big Country* episode presents the perspective of Mary Durack and her family, as well as of those Aboriginal people who lived and worked on the Durack's Kimberley property in Western Australia. What emerges as a result is that they both hold a mutually strong sense of each other's perspectives. Documenting the official sale of the Durack property to the then Liberal Government lead by PM William McMahon, this episode records the beginning of the development of the Ord River Scheme. The episode highlights the impact of the development of the Ord River Scheme on the life of Mary Durack. The Aboriginal community who lived on the Durack property also felt the impact of the Ord River Scheme development severely. The reality of this impact on both Mary and the Aboriginal community is implicit rather than explicit in that it appears to be part of the episode's subtext. Mary recalled the effect her father's selling up and leaving had on the Aborigines on the property and herself, with something an old Aborigine called Buller said to her, "We feel we lost everything what we belong" (*A Big Country*, "Everything What We Belong", 1972). (See Appendix B). The episode précis reads, "Much of Argyle is flooded by the Ord Dam, and the Aborigines' land is gone completely" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 19). A sequence in the episode showed Durack speaking about her family's history and their development of the outback regions, their follies, the selling of their land, the

changes, and the regrets. It incorporated travelling shots from a small boat on the Ord River and included shots of the shoreline and the submerged trees. Durack described what lies beneath as her homestead. Footage shows roofs of buildings, water tanks, and windmills, all submerged or partially submerged. Durack speaks about her family and growing up in the outback, while her mother sits alongside her listening. At the time this episode was produced, "Mary Durack was researching her second book on the history of the area - a sequel to 'Kings in Grass Castles'" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 19).

Migrants, religion, and culture are issues of "Barossa Deutsche" (1973). The episode explores one migrant family and their journey to be part of Australian culture, to assimilate. "The Barossa Valley was originally settled by German immigrants. Today it produces one-third of Australia's wine, but the German traditions remain" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.20). Featured in this episode are members of the Schiller family, in particular, Grandfather Ben and his son Rex, who was then chairman of Kaiser Stuhl, Australia's largest co-operative winery. Interwoven into the development of the South Australian Barossa Valley wine industry is the story of those Austrian and German migrants who not only brought with them their grape growing and wine making skills, but also their Lutheran belief system. In the episode Mrs. Schiller explained how, within traditional Lutheran families, women are taught their place and that men are "more or less the main one" (*A Big Country*, "Barossa Deutsche", 1973). However, the younger generation believed otherwise, as her daughter revealed she would like to change this but still realised she had to accept this when she

marries. (See Appendix B). Signifying a challenge to tradition the younger generation of German Lutheran women appeared to want this to change, however, there was an expectation that the young men would take over from their fathers. The episode's concluding sequence included footage that emphasised the importance of tradition and cultural identity and began with black and white photos of pioneers intercut with scenes of a street parade at the vintage festival of Barossa Valley. General shots of festival floats and people in traditional dress are followed by shots of a grape-picking contest in a vineyard, and a tug-o-war and a maypole dance. The episode includes close up to medium shots of traditional grape treading by two men in bare feet. Other scenes show folk dancing, and late-night beer hall scenes, showing dancing, singing, and beer drinking. Scenes of a church service follow general views of the aftermath of the festival. Footage shows close up shots of faces in prayer, of an organist playing, and of the church congregation singing a hymn. The sequence cemented the representation of a love of growing grapes and making good wine, religion, and strong family values, and made evident the story of migrant success, integration, and contribution.

Union issues and state and local politics are at issue in the *A Big Country* episode "I'll Never Change Sides" (1974). As the then head of the Australian Worker's Union, Bill Ludwig, together with Errol Hodder, worked for industrial reform in western Queensland and to, "control a district of 100,000 square miles, policing over 70 wage awards. They are dedicated men, committed to the cause, and see their role as essential in the outback" (ABC Documentary Catalogue

1993, p. 21). The episode documented Ludwig as he travelled out along the country roads visiting shearers to talk about wage problems, and representing them in court in order to achieve wage reform.

Presenting a romanticised look at Australian identity and its importance to the town of Forbes in New South Wales, is *A Big Country's* dramatisation and re-enactment episode of the story of "Ben Hall" (1974). The episode's précis described Hall as:

> Second only to Ned Kelly in Australian mythology, dies at the age of 28 in a hail of police bullets near Forbes, and his grave is the area's main tourist attraction. Described as both an underdog, and a hooligan, Ben Hall was a man whose life was important to Forbes.
> (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.21)

Presented as a re-enactment, the episode is of the capture of bushranger, Ben Hall, and in doing so graphically illustrates Australian imagery and identity. Folk songs were overdubbed and people reminisced about Ben Hall with fondness. Various black and white photographs of Forbes in the 1860s were included as well as footage of street scenes of Forbes today. Black and white photos of other bushrangers of the 1860s were contrasted against an old man speaking fondly of Ben Hall as he told his father's story about Ben Hall, who said he was "a wonderful bushman". (See Appendix B).

As is the case for most of the episodes mentioned here, such as "Right through the shearing time" (1970), "Ben Hall", (1974), or "Sleeper Cutting", (1971) the issue of national identity was also often a sidebar. Significantly, a location shoot for the program to Omeo in the Snowy Mountain region of Victoria highlights these aspects through their poetic imagery of the Australian

bushman, the bushranger, and the man working the land. The task for the episode "The Buck Runners" (1969) was to talk to those remaining mountain riders who actually knew the real Man from Snowy River, and trace the narrative of the Australian poem of the same name by Banjo Patterson.

Aboriginal tradition and culture is the focus in "The Desert People" (1975). This *A Big Country* episode, together with two highly personal and intimate *Chequerboard* episodes, "My Brown Skin Baby They Take Him Away" and "Who Am I What Am I?" represent particularly significant exploration of two sides of Aboriginal life, rural and urban. The former focuses on the tribal traditions and tribal law that remain as integral parts of Aboriginal culture and society, and the latter focuses on the repercussions of external forces on that Aboriginal culture and society. "The Desert People" focuses on the people from the Yuendumu Aboriginal settlement "180 miles north-west of Alice Springs, and home to the Walpiri people, known to anthropologists as The Desert People" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.24) and presents a telling story of initiation and tribal law. Told through the perspective of a thirteen-year-old Aboriginal boy, a married man, and "an old warrior who has been responsible for more than one death in his time – all of them justified by Walpiri law" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.24). A significant scene was a sacred Aboriginal ceremony. Mindful of the restrictions regarding the sacred Aboriginal ceremony and ensuring no disrespect to Aboriginal culture, the intricate detailed information regarding the sacred ceremony was not revealed in the episode. However, the following is evidence of one young Aboriginal man's courage

regarding his initiation experience, and his willingness to have his story documented. The sequence began with general views of Aboriginal men around a campfire. Then came a medium shot framing an interview with an adolescent male as he discusses initiation. He explained the process of initiation for young boys and he acted out movements at beginning of process of initiation. Later, he sat down and continued telling his story, but also explained that he could not reveal some points because traditional tribal law prohibited him from doing so. At this point, a voiceover explained some of the other main issues and about the fact that women were forbidden to know details of the initiation process. Then, in medium shot, the young man continued explaining what happened once the boy (now man) came out of the bush following initiation. The closing shot is of general views of women singing and dancing. (See Appendix B).

War and soldier resettlement issues revealed in “Land Fit for Heroes” (1975) told a story of the harsh reality of what resettlement land actually was for 30,000 returned servicemen after World War I and World War II. The episode stated this was “one of the greatest agricultural and social tragedies of Australian history” (*A Big Country*, “Land Fit for Heroes”, 1975).The episode’s précis reads:

> In areas all over Australia, returned soldiers from the First and Second World Wars were given assistance to take up farming land as part of the repatriation programs which became known as Soldiers Settlement schemes. This program deals with servicemen who honourably discharged their commitment to a battle against the far more elusive enemies of time, poverty, flood and heartache. It also deals with some the casualties of this "second battle", and the harsh realities that lie behind the concept of handing out Land Fit for Heroes.
>
> (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.29)

One of the soldier's wives recalled what it was like when they first arrived, and tried to start working the land, "it was like the beach without the water….and this little first was company to a lonely person" (*A Big Country*, "Land Fit for Heroes", 1975). The episode included footage of a representative of the Department of Agriculture who revealed during a tour of the Mallee, the hardiness of virgin Mallee, and the overgrown fences. He exclaimed "Look at it, wretched stuff…the administrative heads in Sydney had no idea of the privations of these people" (*A Big Country*, "Land Fit for Heroes", 1975). (See Appendix A). Images and the words of those filmed construct a picture of steadfast strength and determination to succeed on the land with given them by these returned soldier settlers. To emphasise this point, included in one sequence were general views of old machinery decaying, dead trees, rusty lamps, old signs, timber houses in disrepair, and a gaggle of geese flying right to left in a panning shot. These shots were intercut with an interview with one of the soldier's long suffering, now elderly, wives who stated "it's been a hard life, but it's been a good life" (*A Big Country*, "Land Fit for Heroes", 1975). She told how she has had no running water until that year, 1975. One old former soldier revealed that hard work had kept his aging body supple. One of the elderly wives however, revealed the deprivation she felt because of having to live on such harsh land in such a harsh climate. This episode highlighted a harsh reality of Australia's social history, and the lack of adequate and appropriate aid for repatriation of returned military personnel.

The final two episodes are “The Forgotten People” (1978) and “A Winter’s Tale” (1984). “The Forgotten People” was about the contribution made to the sugar cane industry in Australian by the Kanaka people. The episode explored the descendents of the Kanaka people who were black men and women who were “virtual slaves, hijacked from the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides to work in the sugar plantations of Queensland and New South Wales” (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 54). “A Winter’s Tale” (1984) was the story of a man whose method of farming, unusual beliefs, and practices could change agriculture throughout the world. The episode examined biodynamic farming in its infancy and those who believed it to be the way of the future for agriculture (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.91). A farmer’s story was of his development of a new biodynamic farming method. The farmer demonstrated and explained his practice of burying cow horns filled with manure to produce a substance called “500”. Close up shots showed the product and the farmer as he shovelled cow manure into a specifically built processing machine. The farmer then is shown with bags of horns after he filled the horns with the manure by machine. Finally, the farmer buried the 130,000 stuffed horns in the ground in order for them to undergo the fermentation and development process of “500”. The product “500” is described as follows:

> Horn Manure Preparation (500) is used to enliven the soil, increasing the microflora and availability of nutrients and trace elements. Through it the root growth, in particular, is strengthened in a balanced way, especially the fine root hairs. Horn Manure 500 helps in developing humus formation, soil structure and water holding capacity. Horn Silica Preparation (501) enhances the light and warmth assimilation of the plant, leading to better fruit and seed development with improved flavour, aroma, colour and nutritional quality. Compost Preparations

> (502 to 507), known collectively as the compost preparations, help the dynamic cycles of the macro- and micro-nutrients, via biological processes in the soil and in material breakdown.
> (Biodynamic Agriculture Australia 2007)

Today, this somewhat unconventional style and approach to farming has become a major factor in the field of environmental farming and diversification.

Biodynamic farming produces healthy soil and helps in the growth of healthy plants, animals and people. This episode underlines the foresight of the *A Big Country* program's production team regarding the future of rural directions. In addition, its ability to understand that its Australian audience would be interesting in an intriguing investigation of a cultivation technique that might be considered by conventional farmers and primary producers, as being far fetched. Further investigation revealed however, that the eventual development of this unique product was its adoption by some Australian farmers. The product "500" is a significant ingredient in the organic farming processes which have become accepted and used today.

Who were the Audiences for Chequerboard and A Big Country?

Chequerboard and *A Big Country* programs went to air at 8.30pm once a week, which was and remains the start of adult viewing time on television. Both programs served to communicate across and between urban and rural Australia to urban and rural Australians. As social documentary programs about Australia and Australians, *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* were not targeted at children or as light entertainment, nor were they drama or natural history documentary, they were about real people and real lives. Their format of an hour per episode

for *Chequerboard* and half an hour per episode for *A Big Country* allowed for more in-depth investigation than a news or current affairs program, as well as allowing the use of longer and more emotive and graphic image sequences to illustrate those topics and themes addressed. Both programs showed the people behind the stories, thereby personalizing impacts resulting from national and international issues involving Australia and Australians. In accordance with the time *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* went to air, the themes and issues addressed, and the in-depth investigations undertaken by both programs, the viewers of these programs were typically adult audiences who wanted more than just the news, or to those who wanted the stories behind the people behind the news.

For both *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, the topics and themes emphasised the dedication of the filmmakers to examining difficult topics as they affect the Australian people, both in the city and on the land. As well, both programs illustrate a depth of understanding and ability to identify issues and themes impacting Australian society and culture, and to reflect and represent, its many walks-of-life. Equally so, is the programs' recognition for significant contributions made to Australian social and cultural diversity, by those who are not born here, but chose to live here. While the evidence presented in the analysis does not include all episodes from both programs, suffice to say this selection provided a broad overview of the focus and ethos of the programs.

To know "yourself" is a vital part of personal development and in many ways, and in the Bardic tradition, *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* allowed

Australians to know themselves as being a vital part of their country's development. In their exploration of Australian issues and topics, these programs reflected the changes and diversity associated with Australia's social and cultural developmental progress during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. However, at the heart of each program lay the stories of some of those for whom that progress, whether because of lack of education, because of lack of income, or because of lack of a stable social environment, meant exclusion or displacement or marginalisation.

In investigating the visual and contextual aspects of a great variety of episodes between 1969 and 1985, this chapter has drawn attention to the Bardic function of both *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* as representing the voices and issues of those without, or unable to have a voice. In addition, in investigating the themes and topics explored by the four documentary filmmakers in a selection of program episodes, derives an appreciation of their attention to, and exploration of, Australian social and cultural history and identity. As well, this chapter has highlighted how their filmmaking techniques showed and allowed insights into otherwise unfamiliar Australian social and cultural worlds. This chapter has concentrated on the themes and the interviews of the people themselves in Australian society during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

In Chapters Three, Four, and Five, the skills of institutional documentary filmmakers are recognised and discussed specifically, as well as their creative expertise and their passion for their craft. The four filmmakers under review tell their stories through interviews, and reveal some of their memories of making some of the selected episodes of each documentary program. These filmmakers,

who began their careers at the beginning of television in Australia, and who worked within institutional organisations such as the ABC or Film Australia, were also part of the development of the institutional culture and history. The words of the filmmakers, Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan, and of those they filmed, incorporated in the following chapters reveal not only a closer interpretation of their documentary storytelling, and present an understanding of the people and issues they documented, but also acknowledges these filmmakers' significance as part of Australian television history, and of recognises their groundbreaking and creative filmmaking approaches and techniques.

CHAPTER THREE

Making Documentary Programs – the filmmaker's view

The previous chapter explained the establishment and inception of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* as social documentary programs that focused on Australians living within Australian society during the late 1960s and into the 1980s, and described their role and function. The chapter also looked at a selection of the themes and issues addressed by *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* and examined the challenge for change these programs presented through confronting images, revealing in-depth interviews, and the different perspectives thrown up by those images and interviews.

In this chapter and the following chapters, the filmmakers' views about early ABC documentary filmmaking are presented. Documentary filmmakers Bill Steller, Tom Manefield, Storry Walton, and Max Donnellan recall their memories of producing, directing, and photographing various episodes of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* and reveal their political beliefs, their filmmaking heroes, and their personal insights about making ABC social documentaries.

Their memories are paramount to documenting their behind the scenes stories in their words and through their lived experience. Their stories tell of their dedication to their work, their innovative filmmaking approaches, and their personal struggles as social documentary filmmakers. Through their stories

emerges a part of ABC television history and culture that until now has not been recognised.

In the mid 1950s, Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan were young men at the beginning of their life's work. Each found themselves at personal crossroads and with an offer of involvement in the new frontier of Australian television. Accepting that offer essentially shaped the rest of their lives. Their youthful enthusiasm rendered them willing participants eager to enter the early Australian television industry virtually unmoulded and open to the prospect of a new adventure. In telling their stories and looking back on their behind-the-scenes memories making various episodes of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* programs, these men offer validation of their contribution the "consciousness-raising" (Rosenthal 1980, p.17) element their films exhibit. Of equal import, they reveal how their creative expertise, their humanism, and their passion for their craft influenced their films. These filmmakers worked within the institutional organisation of the ABC and were also part of its institutional culture and history.

This chapter, and those following, also offer a closer examination and interpretation of the words and images of those they filmed. This interpretive examination, together with the filmmakers' interaction and creative involvement in each circumstance, provides an understanding of the people and issues explored in their documentary programs. These chapters also acknowledge and recognise the part these filmmakers played in initiating groundbreaking creative

filmmaking approaches and techniques. (Note: For detailed episode shot lists see Appendix E).

As mentioned in Chapter One, in my role as researcher and as someone who has only very recently faced a long embedded fear of being seen as "different", and with an acute personal awareness of the problematic nature of my study into social documentary and the challenge for change embodied in them, I believe it necessary to include a description of what transpired at the time of contact with each filmmaker. In this way, I hope to show how an existing familiarity between me, as a former ABC television archives researcher, and each filmmaker enabled a level of trust. Establishing relaxed communication with them was a vital element in enabling them to reveal more of themselves rather than purely presenting a performance. That trust is evident in that all interviews were conducted in the filmmakers' homes at their invitation. Over the months and years following first contact communication and correspondence continued between the filmmakers and me. During the interviewing process the recording device used was placed unobtrusively in order to allow a natural flow of conversation to occur. Considering the filmmakers' obvious extensive expertise with using sound equipment, I will admit to some apprehension at this point about the necessary presence of the recording device. Additional information and personal photographs from their private collections has been provided by them for inclusion in my thesis. More recently too, that trust became evident when I faced personal fears about addressing politically sensitive areas in my own background which had prevented me from directly asking the

filmmakers about their political beliefs in particular. My fears were allayed however, when I approached the filmmakers and asked questions about their political beliefs and filmmaking heroes, and they offered many insightful responses.

Weaving Walton's Words

Before continuing Manefield's story an explanation is required about how Storry Walton's story will be told. Walton's story and career parallels the other filmmakers' and offers the perspective of someone who has worked both inside and outside the ABC. I have chosen to weave Walton's story throughout Manefield's, Steller's, and Donnellan's stories to provide an important cohesive aspect to my thesis. Interweaving his story in this way provides added substantive links and corroboration within and between each of the filmmaker's stories.

As an early ABC documentary filmmaker, Walton recently spoke of the connection former ABC staffers felt with the ABC. Walton, who today among other things teaches film studies at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, recalled that he reflected some years ago, that it was years since he had worked at the ABC, and that he had:

> Done a hundred things since then, and yet, I still think of myself at the age of seventy, as an ABC person. That's still the definition I have of me, and I've done so many other things. So it marked me indelibly, and I suppose it was a place in which you invested a great deal of your young beliefs and altruism as well of course. Don't forget that!
>
> (Walton 2006)

Filmmaker Walton, who at one time had been a clerk in the Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, but whose heart was in theatre, music, and art, was recruited by ABC television in 1958, from Perth, Western Australia, as a Specialist Trainee (Drama and Features) to work in Sydney. He was 23 years old (Walton, S 2006, pers.comm., 22 March). Walton explained that the Drama and Features Department in 1958 combined both radio and television, and that his training was a one-week course in Melbourne with the BBC director Royston Morley (Walton 2006). Walton described Morley as "an extraordinary presence" amongst the older generation of program directors who were*:*

> Rather taken aback at being 'darlinged', even though they'd been in the theatre, but after about three days they'd all fallen for his charm completely.
>
> (Bowden & Borchers 2006, p.34)

Put straight into live production for up to seven programs a week, Walton's first program was *The Critics* (1963), which was live to air from Sydney's Studio 23, and featured Leonie Kramer and Jean Battersby (Bowden & Borchers 2006, p. 34). *The Critics* went to air January 1, 1963 and was "a fortnightly discussion program, produced in four states for distribution throughout Australia" (Borchers 2006, p. 3).

The ABC's first children's drama, *The Stranger* (1964), was produced by Walton, as well as the critically acclaimed *My Brother Jack* (1965) adaptation of George Johnston's novel, (See Pics 3, 13, Appendix E) and was the Australian producer/director of the first world live satellite program *Our World* (1966) for BBC TV. Walton left the ABC in 1969 and went to work for the BBC as a

director. He began the next part of his career that included working in film production, management, policy development, and professional training. From 1969 to 1971 Walton was a director for BBC TV of social documentaries. Back in Australia in 1972, he became executive director and head of training for the Interim Council for a Film and Television School to 1980 and was then director of the Australian Film and Television School until 1985. More recently, Walton lectures on film studies at Charles Sturt University (National Film and Sound Archives, 1995, S.Walton profile, pp. 4-6) and is working for the National Film and Sound Archive "on their oral history projects" (Walton 2009, pers.comm 25 October 2009, p.1). Significantly, when he's not working in academia, Walton continues making social documentary films working as researcher and story consultant, "and a sort of associate producer" (Walton 2009, pers.comm 25 October 2009, p. 1). Still a cinema verite filmmaker, in 2009, Walton began working with Israeli-British director Alan Rosenthal on his drama documentary *The First Fagin* which is:

> A look at the British criminal justice system at the beginning of the 19th century against the backdrop of the transportation system to Van Diemen's Land [Tasmania, Australia] and the various emerging movements for penal reform.
>
> (Walton 2009, pers.comm 25 October 2009, p. 1)

Also in 2009, Walton began working with Australian-Czech director Barbara Chobocky, assisting her in a documentary on the Ashraf refugees in Iraq, "a physically dangerous assignment and another brave project by Barbara" (Walton 2009, pers.comm.25 October 2009, p.1).

Making contact

I first contacted Tom Manefield by telephone one day in May 2006. I asked him if he would agree to talk to me about his career and work as an early ABC documentary filmmaker. Manefield was one of the four early ABC documentary filmmakers with whom I had not worked; he had moved on to work at Film Australia in 1971, nearly four years before I began working at the Gore Hill Studios in 1975. Now, decades later in 2006, I was apprehensive about approaching Manefield because I was not sure of his reaction to being contacted firstly by a stranger, and secondly whether he would agree to tell me his story. I explained to him that my thesis was on ABC social documentary, in particular *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, and that I was concentrating on telling the stories of early ABC documentary filmmakers and that I was interested in telling his story. Because my telephone call had come out of the blue, and I was a stranger, he sounded a little reluctant at first, and could not conceive why anyone would be interested in him now that he was retired. As we continued to talk, I explained that I was a former ABC television staff member who had worked as a researcher in the ABC television archives library at Gore Hill and who believed the stories of ABC documentary filmmakers had not been told and were missing from the history of the ABC. I assured him I would send my list of questions prior to our meeting in order that he could be prepared. Eventually, he warmed to the idea and agreed to meet with me on 5 June 2006 during my proposed research trip from Rockhampton in Central Queensland to Sydney.

Late in the afternoon of 5 June 2006, Sydney was beset by torrential rain, flooded streets, traffic jams, and packed buses and trains rushing in every direction. I was on my way to interview Manefield at his home in Artarmon, not far from where I was staying in Crows Nest. Already anxious about the impending interview, my anxiety increased as the afternoon progressed. The taxi I ordered never arrived to collect me. It was getting late and past the appointed three o'clock meeting time. After several apologetic telephone calls to Manefield to ask if he would still receive me [much to my relief he was very pleasant and told me not to worry and that he would be ready whenever I arrived], I struggled on to a bus in the midst of the torrential downpour loaded up with all my notes and recording gear to make the short trip along the Pacific Highway to St Leonard's train station. The train was late and packed, but I squeezed in and made the brief journey one stop away to Artarmon Station to discover again no taxis were available. I had no choice but to walk the distance to Manefield's home arriving complete saturated three hours late and in darkness. I hesitantly knocked on his door worried about my first face-to-face meeting with him in the midst of such a wild wet night in Sydney city. Again much to my relief, Manefield graciously welcomed me into his home and offered a warming cup of tea before we settled into his dimly lit office to get know each other better and begin the interview.

I began the interview not expecting too much, mindful my late arrival must have inconvenienced Manefield's evening. Still, I was determined to begin and I asked him if he could tell me when he first started at the ABC and was

Chequerboard the first film work he had done. He was highly amused at my question and replied "Oh lord no! No, I stared to work at the ABC in 1957!" (Manefield 2006). This at least broke the ice, we both relaxed, and he began recalling his early filmmaking experiences during the years of television's arrival in Australia. After talking for a couple of hours, there was still much Manefield wanted to say, however, we agreed to meet again in Manefield's home the next morning when he would continue telling his story as well as provide me with personal documentation of his work on *Chequerboard*. On returning to my hotel that evening, I felt exhausted but reassured about my research and about approaching the filmmakers for their stories, and about the interviews ahead of me in the next few days.

Tom Manefield – documentary filmmaker

Adding to the development of a diverse collective of emerging ABC television filmmakers was scientist, Tom Manefield. By the age of thirty, Manefield was highly dissatisfied with his career path in the academic and scientific field having begun to make his mark as an entomologist, and yet he yearned for a career in the theatre. Despite mounting social and family pressures to succeed professionally and to conform, despite being awarded a university medal and despite disapproval from his father, he decided it was "now or never and I was far enough away in Queensland in Innisfail for my parents not to worry and I upped and resigned [as district entomologist for North Queensland] and I came to Sydney" (Manefield 2006). Originally from Epping in Sydney,

biologist Manefield, was once a member of a 1948 Antarctic scientific team, and describes himself as being "the only entomologist in the world who loathed insects" (Manefield 2006). Following a very brief time working at Channel 7 Epping, Manefield contacted Jim Hall at ABC Gore Hill Studios, and received an invitation to meet Talbot Duckmanton, the then administrative head of the ABC. It was following this meeting, that Manefield began his filmmaking career as a floor manager in training in March 1957. He explained:

> It was before it [ABC TV] went to air. They [the ABC] were recruiting to train me as a producer. They put me in as a floor manager to just know the way studios worked. I was making programs at the ABC from the time they started. I'd be considered one of the original producers.
> (Manefield 2006)

Initially, anyone who wished to work in ABC television was required to participate in the ABC's early training scheme. Because of the innovative environment surrounding early Australian television in which everyone was learning on the job, the ABC filmmakers' creative and professional development was made possible. Productive working relationships coupled with creative experimental filmmaking at the ABC brought about groundbreaking television, and, relevant to this study and its examination of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, groundbreaking television documentary filmmaking. Those very early days of the late 1950s were some of the most important for Australian television and like the commercial television stations, ABC television "started from scratch" as television was completely new to Australia, technicians and filmmakers alike learnt everything from the ground up. ABC television developed a sound and fundamental training ground with on the job training where many "cut their teeth" and gained their confidence to grow and eventually

move on, as so many did, to work within the industry as a whole. From 1954, for example, “land was acquired, accommodation built, and studios set up” followed by the commencement of television training courses in 1955, and with the arrival of the first trainees in 1958, the ABC Technician-In-Training Scheme began (ABC 2006, p.2). The scheme is described as “probably the most successful traineeship scheme ever” (Borchers 2006, p.3), at Gore Hill and at Ripponlea studios. As has been the case over the years, and as noted in official ABC Review submissions, a recurring theme of the ABC was that it “has been and should be the natural training ground for journalists, technical staff and other media practitioners in Australia” (ABC 1987, p.12).

Walton described his duties when he first began working at the then Australia Broadcasting Commission as a specialist trainee as follows:

> In the 50s, the ABC, like a lot of other organisations in industry and commerce, had traineeships and there were pretty serious affairs. They were advertised nationally and in the case of the ABC, you came in as a specialist trainee in a particular field, so you came in as a specialist trainee in drama and features, or you came in as a specialist trainee in Talks.
>
> (Walton 2006)

Once assigned to a department, that department then had the responsibility of training the trainees to become producers or directors. A traineeship generally lasted two years. On-the-job training began immediately and:

> We all galloped through much quicker, and one of the reasons for that was, I mean there was no idea of a long period of discussion, lectures, theory – we were actually in the studio I think three days, it might have been four days after we arrived at the department.
>
> (Walton 2006)

With little or no previous training, trainees went “straight to the microphone, and straight to script editing, straight away being assigned the film censor” (Walton

2006). To satisfy requirements for both party's legal obligations and production deadlines:

> The Chief Censor allowed the ABC to attend its screenings so that the ABC departments would know very quickly, they'd know within an hour of the classification, how to program the following two or three weeks.
>
> (Walton 2006)

Everyone was bound to secrecy regarding classification outcomes [for example, G – Suitable for Children, or PG – Parental Guidance], and soon after being given classification, advice given to Presentation departments enabled programming procedures to commence.

"The traineeships were prized jobs to be in broadcasting, there weren't a lot" (Walton 2006). Similar to an apprenticeship, the trainees attained on-the-job training in the craft of broadcasting. However, while not actually receiving an apprentice's ticket, trainees received postings to jobs in the beginning, and were later able to apply for jobs themselves. Initially, no choices were given, and the pool of trainees worked in every area of ABC television programming, "except the most elite, which was drama and opera, and you had to earn your spurs to do that" (Walton 2006). The production of drama and opera programs essentially entailed bigger budgets, longer shooting schedules, and involved a greater number of people both behind and in front of the cameras, and therefore necessitated the more experienced and qualified producer and directors. Trainees were however, given excellent opportunities to learn within the industry and "you really had to be pretty bloody stupid not to fulfil your possibilities" (Walton 2006). The "pool" was where trainees were graded, and began work as a Grade One producer doing everything. Walton explained that at one stage he did "six or

seven live-to-air programs a week, and you got a fantastic amount of experience" (Walton 2006). Some of the first programs Walton worked on were for example, "*Mr Squiggle*, two religious programs on Sunday, rural programs *In Your Garden* and *Roundabout*, so you dealt with snakes and children and puppets and icing cakes in women's programs, and music" (Walton 2006). The first *Mr Squiggle* children's program went to air in early 1959, followed soon after by *In Your Garden*, which first went to air on July 1, 1959 (Borchers 2006, p.4).

Career progression for Grade One trainees was to move to become a Grade Two specialising in children's programs for example; Grade Three meant the intermediate stage; and "Grade Four was fantastic to get to, and Grade Five some never got to. Grade Five was the top" (Walton 2006), doing most drama and opera. This effectively meant that only those most proficient at their craft would work on programs of productions of major significance and expenditure. Earning his "spurs", Walton became assistant director to an established director named Ray Menmuir and worked on the "three studio, live to air, Richard II" (Walton 2006). The live telecasting of *Richard II* "used all three of the ABC's television studios at Gore Hill", and went to air October 5, 1960 (Borchers 2006, p.1). Walton recalled that he was not confident with his performance as assistant director at that time, but that one of the characteristics of the ABC in those days, was that "once they made the investment in you, carried you, and I got better" (Walton 2006). Pressurised learning conditions and an air of urgency made people work quickly in order to do better next time. It was not long before Walton was making both film and documentaries, and live-to-air television

drama, in parallel. This was a procedure allowed by the flexibility of those early television years (Walton 2006).

Like most starting in the industry, Manefield was keen to begin working as a drama producer; “I wanted to be a drama producer, and it was only when I got mixed up with documentaries that documentaries took me over” (Manefield 2006). On the other hand, he was also of the belief that the ABC “pushed” him into making documentaries (Manefield 2006).

During his thirteen years with ABC television among other individual documentaries, Manefield produced thirty-four hour long *Chequerboard* episodes. Around August 1971 and towards the end of series four of *Chequerboard*, Manefield left the ABC. His recollections of working behind the scenes on various important and challenging *Chequerboard* episodes follow later. Hardly losing a beat, Manefield went on to a significant career producing and continuing his filmmaking in social documentaries for Film Australia until he left in 1982. His productions at Film Australia include, *Jenny* (1977), which looked at a young girl who had decided to become involved in a homosexual relationship, and *Maria: Going Home* (1978), which looked at the story of a Spanish migrant choosing to return to Spain after migrating several years before. Others were *Honie* (1978), which looked at the story of a half-caste Aboriginal woman living in urban Australia and *Working Soviet Style* (1979) with Dean Semler (the now renowned Academy Award Winning Australian cinematographer working in American feature films) as Director of Photography (National Film and Sound Archives 2008, p. 1 of 1). Manefield also produced *I,*

Myself (1982) for Film Australia, which was a documentary series directed at young adolescents and issues of self esteem (National Film and Sound Archives 2008, p. 1 of 1). The title of the latter series is described as suggesting "the sense of a pluralist society, atomised into individuals and individual experiences" (Moran 1991, p.110). Like the *Chequerboard* series, individual experiences were again the focus of another documentary series Manefield produced while at Film Australia, *Putting A Face To An Issue* (1975) (Moran 1991, p.110). The series showcases short stories about individuals. Moran (1991) argues that once again the title suggests "that truth resides only in particular examples and experience and not in abstract general argument" (Moran 1991, p. 110); something that is a key element of cinema verite. Again, each of these series echoes Manefield's work at the ABC on *Chequerboard* where the episode emphasis was on the personal individual experiences of Australians living within Australian society. As evidenced in Manefield's earlier assertion that he wanted to show Australians who they really were, to show them what they were made of, to show them their strengths and weaknesses, and to let them tell their stories in their words, the personal stories of individuals living within social and cultural structures are not only the historical basis for social documentary that challenge for change, but also the seed of inspiration that germinated for Manefield as a documentary filmmaker in 1957 when he first began working in ABC television.

Political beliefs

Each of the filmmakers was asked about their political beliefs [and their filmmaking heroes] at the time they made their documentaries. As mentioned previously, because of personal fears and defensiveness in this regard, I was apprehensive about any responses. While Steller, Walton, and Donnellan have responded to my enquiries about their political beliefs and provided many and various valuable insights in this regard, it is interesting to note that to date for reasons unknown Manefield has not.

Manefield, Steller, Donnellan, and Walton's social advocacy, founded on a wide spectrum of life experience, spanning continents and social divides, brought with them to early ABC documentary, enriched their ability to tap into issues of social injustice.

Tobias asserts "Social advocacy is just another expression for subjectivity, and it is essential, I think, to good documentary filmmaking" (1998, p. 192). The subjectivity or personal perceptions, as noted in Chapter One, of social documentary filmmakers are driven by personal conscience, that is, "a conscience that says this story must be told and these facts must not stay hidden" (Rosenthal 1980, p. 31). Their films reflect a consciousness; the belief that "somewhere out there the witness will be heard and the message will find a response" (Rosenthal 1980, p.31), which fuelled their dedication to their craft, and to their creativity through the subjective use of cameras and the close up framing of interviewee's faces. Adding to this contention, Tobias (1998) argues that the stories of documentary filmmakers reveal "the passions, intentions,

ruminations, and excitement of filmmakers themselves, whose words come from the heart of their own rich experiences as documentarians" (1998, p.1). An undeniable influence on the work of the four filmmakers in my study was the interaction involving their personal conscience, their social advocacy, and their belief and dedication to their craft. This interaction enabled them to show the harsh intensity and gamut of human emotions, the subtle beauty of Australia's wide brown land, and the stark reality of Australian society and culture.

In his 2006 interview, Manefield reveals his conscience, advocacy, belief, and dedication. Manefield for instance, did not view *Chequerboard* as a radical social documentary program saying "the word radical never came to our minds" (Manefield 2006). Interestingly though, he had no criticism if the program was viewed as radical. In fact, "we were seen by a lot of people that wanted to question that we were being 'lefties'. But I don't think we were being lefties at all" (Manefield 2006). Like Ivens and Maysles and other social documentary filmmakers before him, Manefield was of the belief that in making the program:

> We certainly wanted to look at issues that often shouldn't be thought about or shouldn't be done, and we wanted to go in depth into things in questions much further than other people in program making.
> (Manefield 2006)

Manefield was also of the belief that *Chequerboard* took "the most critical look at society that had been done on the ABC…a lot of the ABC's programs have been pandering to the Government" (Manefield 2006), and the program posed questions about the status quo and tried to show Australian society at the time (1969-1975), and its values. Walton's view of *Chequerboard*'s role also sheds light on its creation and production. His similar belief was that:

> *Chequerboard* was able to keep going because little bit by little bit the public and the reviewers particularly began to applaud the courage of some of the topics on sex and sexuality in marriage, and poverty and all those sort of things.
>
> (Walton 2006)

Equally, he also believed there were "no restrictions in topics, but a great deal of weariness about them" (Walton 2006). In fact, he contends *Chequerboard* "pushed the boundaries and went way beyond conservative views or conventional ways of reporting" (Walton 2006) and points out that it was difficult to recruit journalists who were *not* radical, and television drama people who, according to Walton, were *not* interested in:

> The social aspects of life, and who were interested in the drama of the streets and of life [Grierson's approach], and who hadn't been influenced by the long school of social realism in Australian drama for instance. There were so many you couldn't help but recruit such people, and to the extent that they were good ideas people, you brought them on.
>
> (Walton 2006)

In addressing the description and association with the word "radical" and the question of *Chequeboard's* possible radical approach, Walton suggested a point of semantics. If one replaced the word "radical" with the word "liberal", which is seemingly more accepted today but that is imbued with similar meaning to radical, then connotations and perceptions regarding moves to question and to challenge the status quo, appear to change appearing more acceptable. Walton contends, somehow, miraculously, these perceptions are immediately relieved of their once burdensome misnomer [that radical views represent misleading perceptive], thereby essentially and theoretically allowing freedom of expression and thought. This perception change means that:

> The great problem today with filmmakers is, that in their political debate, that just to ask questions is thought to be left wing, I mean, once it was the essence of liberalism, but now just to ask a question people think, oh he's a left winger.
>
> (Walton 2006)

Walton, who came from a conservative middle-class family in Perth, describes himself as someone holding liberal humanist beliefs and a maturing socialist outlook. He was politically active and social engaged and participated actively in the Anti-Vietnam War movement (Walton 2009, pers.comm.25 October 2009, p.1). He continues to hold a belief in the assertion that "the ABC's freedom from commercial influences, its independence, its combination of statutory autonomy and Parliamentary responsibility", as well as in "its overriding ethos of fair and balanced programming, and its duty to represent the widest range of political and social currents of the nation, to provide programs which inform, educate and entertain" (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.2). He further reveals that he was:

> Very conscious of it [the ABC's commercial free autonomy], and realised early on that this "charter" gave [him] a unique and exhilarating environment in which to produce programs with the real sense of purpose and responsibility that [his] background had prepared [him] for.
>
> (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.2)

Underlining his particular political perspective Walton reveals that the counter-culture [of the 1960s and 1970s]:

> Reverberated through every aspect of our personal and professional lives, and although I was not living life as a "member" of it – (I was happily married, with a young family and living in a suburb!) – its causes and ideals suffused my political view.
>
> (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.1)

In the case of *Chequerboard*, the program undoubtedly "caused a stir" (Walton 2006) at the time it was produced because it did challenge and question

and show people and society, foibles and all, and, it could be defined as radical or liberal. Walton contends, as Australia's first social documentary series, *Chequerboard*:

> Was a great success, but it attracted a lot of criticism. And indeed, because it portrayed and dignified the lives of ordinary people through their own words, it complied exactly with a socialist ethos.
> (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.3)

Manefield invited Walton to help him "pitch" his idea for the series to the ABC and the two attend meetings with ABC management "to determine whether it went ahead of not" (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.3). Walton corroborates Manefield's earlier interview statement that there was difficulty obtaining ABC management's approval for the series and that they had to be convinced "the voices of ordinary Australians [would] be acceptable to the public", or whether Australians would "open up about their lives as the British did [for Grierson's films for instance]" (Walton 2009, pers.comm.25 October 2009, p.3). Manefield's determination and passion to create and produce the *Chequerboard* series is also corroborated by Walton who emphasises that:

> At no time during the long discussions were questions of left-wing or right-wing orientation raised or even hinted at. The series got the thumbs up from a conservative management on the basis of what the bosses saw as its intrinsic merits, including, I believe, its potential value as important documentation of Australian life and times.
> (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.3)

In the tradition of cinema verite documentary, the topics that the program investigated and explored are as current today as they were some thirty-seven years ago. Walton emphasised that all episodes were "painstakingly fair presentations of people's lives" and that controversies airing from them were short-lived (Walton 2006). According to Walton, none of the ABC filmmakers

"had the power to radicalise programs on our own or as a group" because unlike independent filmmakers "we operated under editorial supervision of vigilant program heads and with the powerful ethos of Reithian public service with its ever-present emphasis on fair and balanced broadcasting" (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.3). Lord John Reith, who between 1922 and 1938 became known as the father of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), instilled strong educational and cultural public service ideas and responsibilities on the then BBC national radio service (Sterling 2010, p.1 of 1). However, contradicting this view, this study suggests that because of the filmmakers' examination of controversial and confronting topics, and the stories and voices of the people involved in those stories, *Chequerboard*, and to a less extent *A Big Country*, represented radicalization in ABC social documentary; these program's liberal stance challenged for change.

Walton's sense of the ABC's political voice is "that on balance" it "was liberal" (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.3). The fertile environment for political debate for ABC filmmakers found in pubs:

> Meant that discussions about the left wing and the right wing were always on. I mean, we had discussion as to whether some of the drama's in (David Goddard's) *Australian Story*, the half hour one, whether our bosses were worried that they were in fact too radical, showing radical views, I don't think that they particularly were.
>
> (Walton 2006)

The ABC's conservative approach also impacted Walton's filmmaking when he produced the drama series *My Brother Jack* in 1965. Walton recalled:

> My main brushes with conservatism were quite predictable, for instance with *My Brother Jack*, there was first of all a concern that the book had been written by an extremely left wing writer (George Johnston), that caused a great deal of concern in political circles, but Neil Hutcheson (then Controller of Programs) always won out on behalf of his producers.
>
> (Walton 2006)

For instance, the ABC was worried about language "in a way that is incomprehensible today" (Walton 2006). While producing the series *My Brother Jack*, and:

> After a lot of discussion, I was rationed to I think it was two 'bloody's' a half hour, and there was a ration on the number of 'damns' that we could use, and I was forbidden to use the word 'mick' to describe a Roman Catholic…I disobeyed the last one.
> (Walton 2006)

Both Manefield and Walton describe ABC management, "the suits", as conservative, and producers and directors with whom they worked as a mixture of radicals and conservatives. Manefield likened those who worked on *Chequerboard*, as being a melting pot of different people from different fields of interest, from different social backgrounds, and from different political perspectives. There was he recalled:

> An academic thrust to the programs all the time, and Robin [Hughes] and I, would be on a different plane to most of them there, and from Geoff [Daniels – executive producer], but Geoff brought an everyman's right wing [an ordinary person who holds a conservative view] perspective to what we were doing. I don't think he ever stopped us, because I think often Geoff was quite entranced with working with these quite academic people as well. And the young David Roberts, who was a brand new graduate, a bright boy, and Jenny Pockley, a top graduate. There were others coming so that he was in a melting pot mixing with these people. But Bill [Steller] brought the emotionalism to the program.
> (Manefield 2006)

Similarly, Walton described the people that he worked with at the time in the ABC, and in programming departments as:

> Generally [as] conservative, I don't mean politically conservative, but they were suits, they were conservative people and the producers and directors were probably a fifty/fifty mixture of highly radical and conservative people.
> (Walton 2006)

In describing the milieu surrounding *Chequerboard*'s creation Walton argues:

> There's a thing about a conservative organisation that's big, and it has a noble ideal as the ABC did, is that sometimes out of the stability of a conservative, a stable and conservative organisation, sometimes is able to allow a number of radial experiments and radical views to be portrayed. The ABC did that.
>
> (Walton 2006)

Furthermore, Walton was of the belief that:

> Forces in television as a popular medium and visual medium were operating to force it to be less middle class, the general opinion that grew up with was that we (the ABC), were a middle class organisation, and that the radical elements in the ABC were always fighting against it. Hence, the constant debates politically, and in the media, about left wing bias and so forth. The ABC was overwhelmingly conservative.
>
> (Walton 2006)

Manefield's view of *Chequerboard*'s documentary style was holistic, meaning that he viewed the importance of the whole program and the interdependence of its parts, its conceptual format, and those who worked on it. In the same way, the program reflects similarities that can be drawn in relation to how many perceive Australians and Australian society and culture. That is, Australia's uniqueness [like *Chequerboard*'s] is derived from the fact that Australians come from many different countries and cultures and Australia is [like *Chequerboard*] a melting pot mixture of these.

Chequerboard was a documentary program before its time. In many ways, this program set the example for what good investigative exploration or radical social documentary filmmaking should be. Paradoxically, and perhaps something that is more relevant to ABC television now, is as Walton argues, that something screened by Aunty is:

> By definition not radical in the extreme sense – or to make a more semantic point, that any film or program from any source ceases to be radical at the moment the ABC screens it.
>
> (Walton 2006)

Alternatively, he argues that viewing the ABC as a "hotbed of left wing socialism" will lead to programs that question and challenge being labelled as radical (Walton 2006). Whatever the case, rather than viewing the ABC as a "hotbed of left wing socialism" (Walton 2006), *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, when viewed in the context of the times in which they were produced do, as significant social documentary, involve questioning and challenging for change.

Filmmaking heroes

Manefield provided few insights into his specific filmmaking heroes during his 2006 interview. Interestingly, though those who are mentioned are those with whom he worked with on a daily basis. For instance, one name that stands out is Geoff Daniels, executive producer of *Chequerboard*. Daniels, as noted in Chapter Two, recognised and encouraged Manefield's passion for the *Chequerboard* program and is described by Manefield as "first class" as an executive producer (Manefield 2006). Manefield believed that their heated arguments about the production of the program helped create a better program in the end (Manefield 2006). Manefield's view suggests that as a consequence of these difficult but fruitful arguments Daniels essentially paved the way for Manefield to challenge himself as a filmmaker from the earliest days. By 1972, after producer Manefield left *Chequerboard*, executive director Daniels "took over the role of watching the rushes and then was very much with the directors" (Manefield 2006). Normally, the director structures the [*Chequerboard*] films,

"but Geoff [Daniels] was making critical input to them, very heavily all the way through the rest of the series. Geoff played a very important role in the structure" (Manefield 2006).

Another who appears to stand out in Manefield's estimation as someone of significance for him is former ABC and *Chequerboard* cameraman, director and producer Bill Steller [his story follows in Chapter Four]. According to Manefield, as discussed in further detail later, it was Steller's emotions and his ability to empathise and to continue to film that Manefield believes were major contributions to *Chequerboard*'s success as social documentary.

Once he left *Chequerboard*, Manefield tried not to be involved in any way with the program, "I didn't want to be seen…so I kept myself apart from criticism of programs to them…I was so close to them all…" (Manefield 2006). Feeling that his influence over the program finished once he left, Manefield revealed he would only watch the program on air, "sometimes thinking oh no, or oh great! But I never enjoined [discouraged] that debate" (Manefield 2006). When those he respected called him about the program, he would give them some criticism, but tried not to be able to be quoted in any way:

> I didn't want to ever be seen as in a situation where I was being quoted critically, that's just not me, that's not the thing to do.
> (Manefield 2006)

The impact that both these filmmakers had on Manefield and the continued collaborative understanding that existed is suggested by Manefield's recollection of their connection to *Chequerboard*'s creation and success and his belief that

without their support and contribution his passion and drive to create such a program might not have been met.

Making Chequerboard films

"The documentary film was constructed on the assumption of a universal humanism: people everywhere are human, "just like ourselves", and they are therefore inherently deserving of our curiosity and interest" (Moran 2000, p.22). Manefield was of the belief that this concept of universal inherent curiosity about us was something Australians were interested in and this was the very element he wanted to build into the *Chequeboard* series.

This element became the foundation for the making of *Chequerboard* episodes. Recalling those early days in 1965 before the inception and creation of *Chequerboard,* Manefield remembered how his meeting with ABC Federal Director of Programs Ken Watts came about. He was working for the BBC in England, "In the music and arts department because that, to my mind, was sort of the Mecca or where the most forward looking programs were being made", however he really preferred to move into documentary making (Manefield 2006). While living in Hampstead, Manefield recalls he was watching television one night with his wife and mother, and saw the *Man Alive* program, "and as soon as I saw it I thought 'that's it!' that's where I've got to work!" (Manefield 2006). Shortly thereafter, during Watt's visit to England, Manefield met with him to discuss the *Man Alive* program. Manefield told Watts that *Man Alive* was

just the kind of program he wanted to make back in Australia. Watts immediately asked, “When are you coming back?” (Manefield 2006). Six months later, and after Manefield returned to Australia, a *Man Alive* based documentary program started in Australia. That program was *Chequerboard* and was “a direct derivative of *Man Alive*” (Manefield 2006).

The *Chequerboard* program went to air in 1969, and according to Inglis, was promoted as “finding humour and drama in the reality of life” using “unseen interviewers” (Inglis 1983, p.288). Producer Manefield revealed there was a certain amount of resistance to the concept from administration. Others still complained that Australians could not talk and that they could not communicate. During a graphically impassioned speech, Manefield impressed upon those in administration that there was more to Australians than the stereotypical laconic Australian. He announced that “they had verbal diarrhoea” and that Australian audiences would want to hear what Australians were saying (Manefield 2006).

Manefield (2006) contends, that from the beginning he worked hard to gather the best in filmmakers in early Australian television and documentary for the program. People were highly motivated and wanted to work on the groundbreaking program. Executive producer Geoff Daniels made sure the *Chequerboard* program got the best (Manefield 2006). “I picked out the best cameraman, Bill Steller, and his assistant was Geoff Burton” (Manefield 2006). Both men went on to become directors before the end of the first series. Steller brought emotionalism to the program through his empathetic sometimes subjective, filmmaking approach and was able at the same time to keep his

cameras rolling. This aspect is discussed further by Steller in Chapter Four. Manefield (2006) described Steller as, "A very brave man, and of course as a cameraman he was an artist". Echoing Maysles' filming approach of the camera remaining as observer, Steller's bravery as a cameraman was evident in his ability to continue filming and to hold the shot in the interests of sensitively capturing on film people as they related information about their highly personal moments and private issues. Steller used his camera to reveal the honesty of reflections of people's inner emotional turmoil as etched on their faces as they experienced the heights of happiness or the depths of despair and anguish.

> We didn't want the program to be appearing to take a point of view. I wanted it to be the point of view of the participants, but I will admit of course, that editorial policies, that was me. I was frequently structuring the film that was making clear academic points. So that it's naïve of me to claim that it was just the point of view of the participants.
>
> (Manefield 2006)

Today, Burton is a top Australian cinematographer/director of photography whose work is seen in films such as *Sunday Too Far Away* (1975), *Storm Boy* (1976), *Sirens* (1987), and who also directed the Australian feature film *The Sum of Us* (1994) with Ken Dowling (Internet Movie Database 2008, p. 1 of 3).

Chequerboard's form and structure were crucial in delivering its strong emotion-driven episodes. Right from the start "one of the strong points I made about *Chequerboard* style….I said it would have a dramatic form and a dramatic structure" (Manefield 2006). Manefield built the drama during the structuring of the film "and it sort of took me over" (Manefield 2006).

Techniques that *Chequerboard* implemented that were different from *Man Alive* included the faceless interviewer and the lack of a script. “This was the great difference to *Man Alive*” (Manefield 2006), “we had to get the story, this is the ‘B’ thing to all of them, out of the mouths of the people we were interviewing, no script was to happen” (Manefield 2006). Following in the footsteps of Grierson and Maysles in presenting perceptions of reality, another innovation was the close up which was a key *Chequerboard* filmmaking element.

Manefield explained that as the early rushes for each episode arrived from the processing lab to be viewed and assessed by him, he emphasised to the cameraman and the directors all the time that “you’ve got to get in close we’re not really seeing what their soul is about, you know, unless you get in close” (Manefield 2006). Manefield was of the belief that:

> You’ve got to look at the eyes to see what people are thinking. If they are going to lie it’s going to show in their eyes straight away. So you’ve got to be in close up, so that big close up in “Gina”….she was blind and we went right in close in Gina. As a matter of fact, I think that a few of the close ups on Gina were too close.
>
> (Manefield 2006)

The signature close up shot synonymous with *Chequerboard* was used in an episode which broached a particularly controversial topic. The first episode of the *Chequerboard* series in 1969, entitled “Gina – they don’t even say hello” (1969), produced by Manefield, was about a young 16 year old blind girl, Georgina Hinds, and was concerned with how Gina coped with everyday life. The interview centred round Gina’s life with her grandmother and her aunt and around issues that arose for her. As the production progressed, one particular issue during the course of filming proved confronting. The issue was the delicate

one of the young girl's monthly period, which to Gina's astonishment, arrived while she was at school. "She had no understanding of it" (Manefield 2006). Tackling Gina's blindness up close and personal together with this difficult and highly personal issue is an indication of the willingness of the filmmakers to ask anybody about anything thought to be important: a radical concept at the time. A girl's menstrual period was something she usually discussed only with family. *Chequerboard* however, in exploring Gina's daily routine, found that this vitally important issue was not discussed within Gina's family. The program questioned and challenged this omission by revealing that even though Gina was living with her grandmother and aunt, nobody had told her what to expect and "we thought it was a very important point, that this person had never been properly educated in the normal ways" (Manefield 2006) of female hygiene. Commenting on this episode Manefield recalled, "Well, that caused a great stir, of course, that we would dare to ask a girl – never mind a defenceless blind girl – about her first period, and maturity" (Bowden & Borchers 2006, p.141).

The episode of "Gina" was not the first choice for the first episode to go to air in *Chequerboard*'s first series in 1969. According to Manefield, another episode "It's a big day in any girl's life" (1969), directed by David Stiven with John Power reporting and Bill Steller as cameraman, had been considered for the first episode. The episode looked at two opposing approaches to marriage ceremony: one wealthy, the other working class looking at two brides from different social backgrounds. The contrasts examined in this episode revolve around those involving the build up and planning for their weddings as one bride

spares no expense purchasing everything from a bridal boutique and having the reception in a banquet hall, while the other bride has her wedding dress and reception made and arranged by her family and friends. Manefield recalled that the plan was that this episode would go to air first "because we really thought this one was going to tell people what *Chequerboard* was about….it would be definitive for *Chequerboard*" (Manefield 2006). However, because of the intrusive questions in "Gina" and the use of the close up shots of her eyes "we put that one on first because it was more startling: it would knock people about" (Manefield 2006).

A moment that showed the other side to human nature happened during the making of "It's a big day in any girl's life" (1969). Manefield revealed that much to the amusement of those who watched the rushes as they came in each day; it had become obvious that the girl in the rich wedding "really took a shine on the director, David Stiven. David Stiven is a beautiful man and he's easy to take a shine on. I always felt very close to him myself!" (Manefield 2006). Describing the episode as marvellous, Manefield explained:

> It was the poor people versus the rich and they all end up doing exactly the same thing, but the stars of the program [episode] are the poor people. The mother of the poor people who threw the wedding herself and did all the cooking, the other one was the Hotel Australia.
>
> (Manefield 2006)

Manfield was of the belief that because of its powerful subtext, the episode clearly made a socio-political statement in that "poor or rich or anything, they can just enjoy themselves just as much as anybody else and you don't have to be rich to be showing basic human values" (Manefield 2006).

Manefield, along with other people such as director Stiven, and Mary Covington who had worked in England on *Man Alive*, and who had researched and interviewed the first *Chequerboard* program, "Gina" (1969), as well as Robin Hughes who had worked for the BBC, were all instrumental in forging a sound researching ethos into the program. "I grabbed those people and made them researchers…and the researchers to my mind were the backbone of the program" (Manefield 2006). Manefield helped to bring forward others who had shown some promise and gave them a chance. One of those was researcher David Roberts, who worked on the first *Chequerboard* series. He came to the program after he graduated as a new ABC trainee, and whom Manefield considered "one of our star performers" (Manefield 2006). Neil Munro was another early director who also edited the *Chequerboard* episode entitled "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince" (1969). Manefield attributes this first series episode, as establishing the program and making politicians stand up and notice (Manefield 2006).

"It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince" (1969), looked at how families existed from week-to-week on the minimum wage then of $44.00 per week. The episode, directed by David Stiven, questioned whether their circumstances were as a "result of heredity or environment" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993). Inglis negatively refers to this episode as showing "docile poverty" (Inglis 1983, p.288) without further explanation. To be docile means to be complaisant, compliant, or passive, therefore docile poverty embodies people who have resigned themselves to not fighting against their poverty. On closer

investigation by this study, this episode revealed it was complacency bred out of continued and entrenched social and financial deprivation. The episode questions people's drive, ambition, and sense of purpose in life and challenges their choices and state of existence. In their own words couples reveal their often-desperate financial situations as they struggle to live on the minimum wage. Family members are filmed in close up as they reveal their anxiety and concern for future, and their attempts to seek government assistance which appeared inadequate. The episode challenges the issue of working class poverty. In the same episode, another family struggle financially; through their words, they show a resolute determination to make the best of what they have and remain happy despite their struggles. Ongoing effects on the family unit are not only not having money for a family's weekly needs, but also that the children are at times kept home from school due to lack of food for lunches. The unseen ramifications resulting from gaps in children's education suggest possible future difficulties and failures to achieve; thereby perpetuating the status quo. This circumstance engendered a lack of self-esteem, or motivation, and a sense of acceptance. Underneath Inglis' so-called docile poverty exists strength and a stoic determination of the people involved to make the best of what they had. This strength and determination is reflected in the words of Mrs Charles in the episode who reveals:

> It's no good trying to hide from reality; you've got to face up to it, if I hadn't wanted children we wouldn't be in the mess we are in now, but if I hadn't had children, possibly we wouldn't be as happy as we are now, you know in a peculiar sort of way, although we don't have anything, we are happy.
> (*Chequerboard*, "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", 1969). (See Appendix A)

Mrs Charles says her main source of happiness is children and a good husband. This episode followed couples during their daily life living on the minimum wage and existing from pay packet to pay packet. Mr. Charles was a factory worker to earn an income supplemented occasionally by working overtime. He gave his pay to his wife each week and he stated, "She runs it from there" (*Chequerboard*, "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", 1969). Financial problems put pressure on people's ability to make ends meet, especially when hospital and doctor's bills for the children eventuate, which as Mrs Charles described as "cost for eczema ointment she says is $20.00 per month, they have $1.50 in the bank, bills are – gas $16.00, doctor $5.00 per week, and dinner last night was camp pie and chips". Mrs. Charles explained how fine a line existed between success and failure in relation to her family's future. She hoped there would not be any more children, but to ensure this she was now taking The Pill:

> Its $1.75 or something a month, I do smoke and if I haven't the money for The Pill, or the cigarettes, I go without the cigarettes. (*Chequerboard*, "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", 1969). (See Appendix A)

The camera lens zoomed in on her face and eyes as she spoke these words, and visually emphasised and underlined what she was saying. She explained that at one stage Mr. Charles found himself out of work, and because they did not know where their next meal was to come from, it became necessary for Mrs. Charles to go to Family Welfare for assistance. She explained that as a result, she felt at fault and that the experience left a bitter taste in her mouth, "I'd rather shoot myself before I went into Family Welfare again. They thought I was

an animal!" (*Chequerboard*, "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", 1969). However, the dehumanising aspect remains to a certain extent whereby people are perceived, or perceive themselves, as numbers in a huge computer operated management system. The title for this episode is drawn from discussion about weekly meals - "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince". During the episode, Mr. Charles revealed he could not remember when he last had a steak and that chops, were virtually a luxury food for his family. Mrs Charles also commented, "I couldn't say when I last had steak…mince on weekend…chips are virtually a luxury…it's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince!" Her husband added, "You can spoil yourself with rich foods, I like plain things" (*Chequerboard*, "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", 1969). (See Appendix A).

One particularly shocking story contained within this same episode was that of a young woman seemingly severely affected by her desperate circumstances. The young woman explained that she has an inferiority complex and that she had come from a history of abuse. She revealed her fear of her father who "used to get the stock whip out" if she did not go to school, and because of the beatings she received, she was eventually "put into a wheel chair…he belted me up so much I couldn't walk anymore". (*Chequerboard*, "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", 1969). To escape from home she married and now felt she had been a burden to her husband. Attempts at suicide and drug overdose had also affected her overall. On viewing this episode, I was shocked by her physical appearance. The images of the ravages of all her life experience

etched into her thin, lined face were framed by straggly, unkempt hair. The realisation which I, as observer and researcher, found difficult to come to terms with is that she was only 22 years old! Finally, she stated resolutely that she felt unlucky but had no regrets (See appendix A). The stories involved in this episode illustrate the resilience of the poor and the working class of Australia to make the best of what they had, and to do the best could with what they knew. Rather than an entirely negative perspective, this episode contains elements of optimism that despite financial problems, despite health and medical issues, and despite struggling to put food on the table are reflected in the happiness each family found in their children.

Another series one episode entitled "A palace, a fortress, a tomb" (1969), was produced and edited by Tom Manefield and directed by Neil Munro, and is significant in its socio-political statement rather than subtext. This first series episode made during the 1960s era of hippies and communes focuses on alternative lifestyles. However, the alternative lifestyle examined in the episode was originally founded during the 1930s, and focused on artist and philosopher Justus Jorgensen's artists' colony situated at Montsalvat in Victoria. Built by Jorgensen in the 1930s, over the years the Montsalvat colony had attracted rumours and scandal relating to the promotion of free love, and that of being a nudist colony. Jorgensen countered these "free love" rumours in the 1969 episode, by stating that he believed this to be untrue, and that that they were not a free love colony "not really, I don't think so….not any more than other communities are". Curious tourists now visited the colony by paying a fee and

filing through turnstiles in order to enjoy the surrounding picnic grounds. Whereas Inglis barely gives adequate insight into the content of this particular episode (1983, p.288), he does however incorporate a less than constructive critical comment attributed to broadcaster Phillip Adams. Adams' criticism of the episode "A Palace, A Fortress, A Tomb" in particular was that, "*Chequerboard* seemed only concerned with bedrooms…perhaps the most riveting documentary sequence that ABC has ever filmed. But in applauding the team, let's remember that we're approving its philistinism" (cited in Inglis 1983, p.288). Whether labelled vulgar or uncultured by Adams, or not, the *Chequerboard* production team explored and revealed a different face of Australian society, a different and compelling view into areas and topics that were taboo. Uncultured or not, this episode looked at the alternative lifestyle created by one man's vision, his belief system, and those like-minded people who followed his example. Here again, journalist Denis Pryor's article criticised the style of questioning in this episode as being a "scattered stream-of-consciousness effect which last year reached its lowest point in the squalid domestic brawl of the Montsalvat program" (1971, p.18).

In one way, this incident in "A palace, a fortress, a tomb" (1969), detracts from the initial harmless and innocuous focus of the episode on life in an artists' colony. However, in another vitally significant way, the incident highlights the impassioned nature of those who lived there and their loyalty to Jorgensen and his beliefs. In yet another way, the camerawork is evidence of *Chequerboard*'s filmmaking approach with the use of incisive close up and extreme close up

shots of the faces of those being interviewed that thereby “underlined” and emphasised what they were saying (Steller 2006). In this case, the *Chequerboard* camera acted as a witness and not just as a recording device documenting questions and answers, to the mistrust and desperation emanating from one of those most close to Jorgensen. The mistrust was directed towards the questions asked and their implications. The camera witnessed the honesty of the emotions of that person in dealing with the situation. Opinions will always vary and while Adams asserted that this episode contained “perhaps the most riveting documentary sequence that ABC has ever filmed” (cited in Inglis 1983, p.288), Pryor labels it as the “programme at its worst” (1971, p.18) because people’s private lives were made public. In this particular sequence the director Neil Munro and cameraman Geoff Burton continued filming as the interview with Jorgensen was angrily interrupted by Helen, Jorgensen’s carer. Director Munro allowed the camera to continue to filming and thereby to document the volatile exchange between Helen and Jorgensen. The camera glimpsed the heart and soul of Helen’s relationship with Jorgensen and her deep-seated mistrust of outsiders and their entry into the world within Montsalvat. At that moment the camera no longer looked only at the calm exterior image presented of the Montsalvat colony and of Jorgensen himself. In those moments captured by the lens of the documentary camera were the true passion and the pain experienced by those people living an unconventional lifestyle apart from accepted social conventions. Moreover, Helen’s primal instinct to protect their lifestyle and to protect Jorgensen and their relationship became evident through her words and body

language (See Appendix A). Helen protests the questions asked of Jorgensen saying the filmmakers' were:

> Trying to reduce Jorge to a completely conventional thing, you were, you have right from the beginning of your interviews here, tried to reduce the whole thing to a completely conventional common place relationship.
> (*Chequerboard*, "A palace, a fortress, a tomb", 1969) (See Appendix A)

Another perspective suggested allows an understanding of the philosophical approach behind Jorgensen's creation of Montsalvat and is reflected in the episode's title and revealed by Jorgensen in an interview during the episode:

> Well it's just an idea as a sort of a dreamer architecturally, wanted to build myself according to Phillip II of Spain – a palace in which to live, a fortress in which to defend myself against the world, and a tomb in which I will eventually be buried.
> (*Chequerboard*, "A palace, a fortress, a tomb", 1969) (See Appendix A)

To clarify, rather than an atmosphere of joy and happiness that might surround general perceptions of an artist colony, the episode actually revealed undercurrents of dissatisfaction and a modicum of hostility toward Jorgensen by those who lived and grew up at Montsalvat. The hostility emerged in comments about a life filled with friction, about not being married to his wife, and about Jorgensen being perceived as a controlling dictator. All highly personalised criticisms; however, exploring the personal and the private was at the heart of *Chequerboard*. Essentially, some of those who lived there viewed Jorgensen as a cold person who focussed mainly on architecture and who did not seem to like people, rather, that he was more interested in creating something from nothing or from the scrapheap, even architecture. Colony member Matcham revealed his antagonism and disappointment towards Jorgensen and in doing so sheds light on

Jorgensen's obsession to create and on the unconventional and possibly not so idyllic lifestyle experienced by those living in the Montsalvat colony:

> I think he can't bear a sort of situation that he isn't manipulating, and you know, he walks over a scrap heap of materials and he's thinking, you know, what can I do with this, what sort of order can I create in all of this. And if he meets people, he thinks he sees their lives as really a possibility of using them to do something for himself. I think in this way he might have fallen down as a teacher….I think he was interested in teaching them his beliefs, and his methods, and his ideas.
> (*Chequerboard*, "A palace, a fortress, a tomb", 1969)
> (See Appendix A)

Images show Jorgensen walking around the grounds of Montsalvat, in the Great Hall within the compound grounds, and later in his gallery with his paintings. He appears as a man unaware of the hostile atmosphere surrounding him. It was during the interview sequence with Jorgensen in his gallery that the highly revealing exchange between Jorgensen and Helen, mentioned previously, occurred. Questioned about the label of "dictator" given him especially by those around him, Jorgensen's reply revealed his single-minded, seemingly distant and detached, unswerving approach:

> Well the point of the thing is, you never know you are a dictator, you see, and you think clearly, you think that that's how things should be, and then you find out that people don't seem to all together agree with you, and that shouldn't be like that at all.
> (*Chequerboard*, "A palace, a fortress, a tomb", 1969)
> (See Appendix A)

At this point of the episode the volatile and highly revealing sequence involving the woman Helen covered earlier occurs, ending the episode abruptly.

"We're all good mates and that's it" (1969), focused on three famous Australian champion boxers, Tommy Burns, George Barnes, and Vic Patrick, and asked what happened to them and what were they like after retirement.

Manefield recalled that Walton was the interviewer on the episode and that it was directed by Mike Wolveridge. “Mike Wolveridge didn’t think that Storry was handling it well, and Mike was right” (Manefield 2006). Corroborating this view, Walton recalled with regret some of the difficulties he experienced while making this episode. Walton revealed he made a very significant mistake at the time. The interviewer Mike Wolveridge knew a lot about boxing, however, “I thought that he was interviewing too slowly, that he wasn’t asking the hard questions of the boxers, and I stood him down in one interview and interviewed myself” (Walton 2006). In fact, Wolveridge was doing better, “he knew that these people were not quick with words and that if he stuck to his quiet questioning he’d get what he wanted. I had a greater sense of urgency” (Walton 2006). Furthermore, Walton admitted he also committed the serious mistake of commenting on their answers, “I think I even finished a sentence at one stage, so I quickly retreated to my world behind the camera where I was better” (Walton 2006). To this day, Walton confessed, he has not seen the episode because by the time it went to air in May 1969 he had left Australia for England.

Viewing “We’re all good mates and that’s it” (1969) provided glimpses into the post-boxing lives of Burns, Barnes, and Patrick, as well as some of their personal recollections about their individual careers as three of Australia’s foremost champions. Sequences involving the feisty banter between the three fighters as they remembered past fights reflected the camaraderie and mateship that had developed as a result. In 1969, as the episode revealed, boxer George Barnes was working in a restaurant kitchen as a cook. Later in the episode he is

shown at home enjoying a beer and showing off his old scrapbook of memories and photos while discussing his career, “I’d say the night I knocked Tommy Burns out at Sydney Stadium in the eleventh round, that would be the biggest thrill I ever had” (*Chequerboard*, “We’re all good mates and that’s it”, 1969). Barnes’ wife had seen every one of his fights and allowed an insight into his superstitious nature through one of his sayings, which was that an unfit champion could always lose a fight to a mug any day. She also provided an example of Barnes’ self-confessed pre-fight temperamental attitude:

> If you were cooking an egg for him, and you happen to break the egg as you were cooking it, he would look at it, he wouldn’t say anything, but he would just pick it up and throw it out the back door!
>
> (*Chequerboard*, “We’re all good mates and that’s it”, 1969)
>
> (See Appendix A)

Born Jack Murphy, Burns stated he changed his name to Tommy Burns for fights so that he did not lose his real job. He believed the name “Tommy Burns” had more appeal. Apparently, at the time the episode was made, now broke and living with two cats in a harbour side flat, Burns admitted money was no longer important to him, “How can a bloke be so bloody broke and yet be so happy, that’s how it is?” (*Chequerboard*, “We’re all good mates and that’s it”, 1969). Looking back on his boxing career, Burns named the O’Neal-Bell fight as his “fistic shining hour…one of the bloodiest fights…both fighters seemed to have reached their peak on that same night, and they, both of them, wished not to be destroyed or defeated” (*Chequerboard*, “We’re all good mates and that’s it”, 1969). Vic Patrick, who finished his boxing career in 1948, was happy now just to run his pub with his daughter, Vicki. However, Patrick stated that the boxing

business gets into one – he saw it more as a business, rather than as a sport. Moreover, he recalled that when as referee he stopped the fight between Burns and Barnes:

> I did think that Tom had reached the end of his tether…. he was gettin' hit with punches he shouldn't have been hit with, and I stopped the fight, he'd got knocked down twice so I stopped it.
> (*Chequerboard*, "We're all good mates and that's it", 1969)
> (See Appendix A)

This episode allowed a view into the little-known personal world of Australian champion boxers and their families. It questioned whether there was a life after boxing and sought to discover how they had moved on into other avenues of life outside boxing. For some the transition had been smooth and profitable while for others their futures were still unknown. Whether they found success depended on their approach in dealing with their success and the loss of fame. In this aspect, Vic Patrick appeared to have succeeded on all counts at least.

"At Londonderry" (1970) looked at the lives of two desperately poor families, one Catholic and one Protestant – the Carrolls' and the Milsons' respectively, who lived at Londonderry on the outskirts of Sydney. The ABC précis of this episode begins "to many of us the word 'Londonderry' conjures up scenes of poverty, bitter fighting and religious enmity in Northern Ireland – but there is a Londonderry in Australia" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 62). The hard lives of the couples in the episodes had impacted on their physical condition whereby their tired and strained appearance resulted in them looking far older physically than their actual mid-thirties. This episode remains

significant for Manefield. According to Manefield, this episode came about because of responses received regarding the earlier program "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince" (1969) and is named by Manefield as his favourite. Manefield recalled that "It's amazing" was described by some as "a great expose of poverty", but Manefield recalls he was incensed by this at the time. With an equally impassioned comment during my interview with him in 2006, he explained he was incensed because the episode was "was not about poverty!!! It was about people living on the basic wage, and people living on the basic wage are not poor, and the concepts of poverty" (Manefield 2006). He recalls thinking at the time, "They're not poor, now we'll show 'em poor people!" (Manefield 2006). The episode "At Londonderry" (1970) and Manefield's passionate reaction exemplifies Ivens' belief about the necessity for the documentary filmmaker to have an emotional connection to the object of the film. Comments about perceptions of poverty in "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince" (1969) drew a response from which resulted in him producing this visually harrowing film [and according to him his favourite] documenting what real poverty was in Australia in 1970. According to Manefield, he sent *Chequerboard* researcher Jenny Pocklie to find poor people and eventually

> She found those two families who were really poor. They were as poor as people could be in an Australian context these days, because the second family I'm talking about, they didn't even have the sense to claim what social welfare they were entitled to claim.
>
> (Manefield 2006)

The episode employed innovative filmmaking techniques and used jump cuts in between interviews:

> That was apocryphal to filmmakers then. But I said bugger 'em, you know we're just interested in the content and we are going to move it along and jump cut it as we like, as long as we are moving along with the content.
> (Manefield 2006)

Manefield who prides himself on being a filmmaker [working with film rather than videotape] explained that in the way he "cut and got 'Londonderry' together, it was a film, there was not just the roughness of all other *Chequerboard*'s, it was like a film" (Manefield 2006). Further, because he had also made many good documentary films before *Chequerboard*, with or without jump cuts, he was confident in his ability to craft and create a film. Manefield explained that "At Londonderry" (1970) was also a favourite because "the husband [interviewed in the episode] was just so mind-blowing! The honesty of what he was saying. He was a simple-minded defenceless fellow, but I don't think that we exploited him at all" (Manefield 2006). This last comment suggests Manefield was aware of the fine line walked by the *Chequerboard*, program between revealing examination and exploitation. The *Chequerboard* close up helped Manefield show what real poverty in Australia looked like. He explained it did not matter that the families in the episode were educationally poor; they were culturally poor, "everything about [their] lives was culturally poor" (Manefield 2006). Further, it did not matter that these families had no cultural background:

> I'm not talking about going to operas and that, I'm talking about they were culturally deprived. That was what the program was about when I said we were going to show people that were really poor. I wanted to show the culturally deprived people who also didn't have any money.
> (Manefield 2006)

In Australia in 1970, these Australian families were living in poverty. Both families had come from poverty and had known nothing else and were living hard under-privileged lives on the fringe of society. Despite this, they were quiet and unassuming families who appeared not only resigned to their plight but also appeared proud, humble, and realistic when interviewed about their circumstances. Both families, however, appear ill equipped to understand how to use what little welfare monies they receive. For instance, one of the families bought an old inoperable car with some of the welfare money. They then removed three pounds (about 1.5 kilos) of copper and lead from the car and sold it for forty cents per pound in order to buy ten or twelve loaves of day-old stale bread. On the one hand, some may describe this practical recycling approach as being an example of necessity being the mother of invention or ingenuity; on the other hand, others might determine that such activity was ill conceived. In either case, it is significant to understand that for those families living desperately poor day-to-day lives not knowing where, or when, the next meal would come, a primal survival need is food and shelter. Therefore, the copper wire taken from the inoperable car held more immediate value for the family as a means to buy the loaves of day-old sale bread to feed the children. Day-old bread meant that it was very cheap and that consequently their meagre income would buy more and feed more mouths.

Interviews in the episode are mostly with the women, the mothers. They talk about the crowded sleeping arrangements for their children of two to a bed, about their lack of electricity because of broken power points, about the lack of

sewerage, about the lack of water in the house, and about their many children (Mrs. Carroll has seven, Mrs. Wilson has five). One mother is filmed unselfconsciously breastfeeding her child outside while she is interviewed, an uncommon and radical scene for television at that time. Scenes of the family's children happily playing with water from a tap on a hot summer's day are intercut and juxtapositioned with the mother's frank discussion about being deserted by her husband. She says she did not expect the father of her child to return. However, she says she was not worried at all and was living from day-to-day. This episode sequence changes between reflections of innocence and reality, between scenes of the children playing seemingly carefree and happy and their parents talking about their harsh and difficult circumstances living in poverty, and as a result create stark and emotive visual contrasts.

There is honesty about the images and the people in them as the camera reveals and documents the unaffected behaviour of both the children and the adults in front of the camera. How seemingly oblivious the children are to theirs and their family's circumstances. The images presented in this episode are at once harrowing and sad. Other scenes show Mrs. Wilson carrying water in a bucket to her house, Mr. Wilson working on an old inoperable car, and a small toddler drinking out of a tin can. Mrs. Wilson explained that her father was a seasonal or itinerant worker who earned money trapping rabbits, fruit picking, cherry picking, and who travelled around in a caravan. She explained that she went to school only until she was fourteen and a half and that she learnt to read from comics. Many images show the family at night and, as mentioned earlier,

because they had no electricity, some of the darkened images show the children taking their bath by kerosene lamplight. This particular sequence unfolded and revealed scenes reminiscent of life in the 1800s and showed the mother as she filled the old metal tub with hot water heated by a fuel stove, using a bucket because there's no running water to the house. The mother bathes the baby first and then the other children bathe in turn up to the eldest, all using the same water. Dinner that night was baked potatoes with bread and jam for "afters" and then all the children were put to bed, again by kerosene lamplight. When asked why they had so many children Mrs. Carroll replied, "I think it just runs in the family" (*Chequerboard*, "At Londonderry", 1970). As a Roman Catholic, Mrs. Carroll explained she did not believe in taking the pill, or in abortion. Philosophically, Mrs. Wilson believed there was no prospect for change in their future, "As I said before, we've been down, right down in the dumps before, and we've come up again, and we'll probably do it again" (*Chequerboard*, "At Londonderry", 1970) (See Appendix A). As shocking as the scenes in this episode were, they were in fact the reality for those families involved. *Chequerboard* showed that even in modern day Australia, there were families living a seemingly intolerable existence and without the ability to initiate change for themselves.

At times, according to Manefield, the difficult and confronting issues addressed by *Chequerboard* meant there was some resistance encountered by the program's researchers. In "A matter of supremacy" (1970) from series three, directed by Russell Toose, the program looked at what marriage meant from the

perspective of different couples. The researchers needed to locate people who would argue all the time in front of camera but that this aspect was difficult (Manefield 2006). Researcher Joanna Penglase eventually:

> Found these people, and as soon as they started to talk they started to argue I thought the whole thing was hysterical, seeing the rushes whenever the camera started rolling they were at one another.
> (Manefield 2006)

The interviewer was journalist Peter Grose who, according to Manefield (2006), was a "provocative sort of a fellow who would have stimulated them to argue quite easily". Shot mostly in extreme close-up, documenting the geography of their faces and recording the minute detail of their emotions, couples voiced their thoughts on their respective partners and their involvement or non-involvement in their respective marriages. Discussion centres on whether their marriage had turned out the way they expected, or not. Eventually, one couple is filmed arguing in front of the camera about everything. As their argument continued, those involved don't appear to be able to stop themselves as filming concluded. What became clear after viewing this episode in an example of the battle of the sexes was the difference in perspective of the women to that of the men in relation to their perceptions of their marriages. This was especially so in relation to the difference in the expectations of marriage between them, and marriage in general. On the one hand, the battle of wills exhibited in this episode revealed possible mismatches, but on the other hand, the question arose: Are the couples kept together because, or in spite of, these mismatches and differences? Communication issues appeared to dominate arguments that were framed by factors such as children, religion, physical relationships. The frankness presented

in this episode is evidence of *Chequerboard*'s radical approach to tackle any topic and ask any question.

Death and dying are inevitable; however, many people find it difficult to discuss these eventualities particularly when someone close to them is affected. From series three, "A Part of Life" (1970), produced and directed by Manefield, looked at this difficult and sometimes-confronting subject of death, which was explored from the perspective and in the words of those people who were dying. The controversial aspect of dealing with death is reflected in Manefield's initial difficulties actually getting the episode made.

> None of the directors wanted to direct it, so I said oh bugger, I'll direct it myself. Robin (Hughes) was exactly the same, and she said well I'll interview it, so we were the guns, we took the program over, and I think "A Part of Life" is one of the top programs too.
> (Manefield 2006)

The three people told their very personal stories, and revealed their intimate thoughts about their own impending deaths. "A Part of Life" (1970) focussed on the stories of a mother dying of cancer who had already come to terms with prospect of her own death and who during the episode is shown preparing her children for her death, a twenty-six year old woman with Hodgkin's disease who had only two years to live, and a bespectacled man who is a doctor dealing with being unable to heal his own cancer. Emotions ran high in this episode as the ailing mother explained that she continued to keep activities at home as normal as possible, and that her husband had taken on more of her responsibilities in the home. As a mother she explained, "My thoughts are for the children" (*Chequerboard*, "A Part of Life", 1970). The signature *Chequeboard* extreme close-up shot was used for the most part; the mother did not want sympathy and

was just getting on with life. The young twenty-six year old woman dying of Hodgkin's disease revealed she had not accepted that she had only two years to live. She explained that she had begun using all her good possessions and did not keep them packed away any more. In so doing, she revealed her fatalistic attitude and her resignation about death. She believed "there wasn't any point" (*Chequerboard*, "A Part of Life", 1970) and that she might as well use them instead of keeping them for the future. Then, shot in extreme close-up and making a visual point underlining her deep personal struggle to deal with her own mortality at such a young age, she explained that she did not tell her husband or her doctor "because it didn't concern them" (*Chequerboard*, "A Part of Life", 1970). The doctor's story revealed that he was in continual conflict within himself about his impending death. In his matter-of-fact way, the doctor was facing his own death head on. He knew that death, for him, was inevitable and that he could do nothing to save himself. He revealed he had rationalised his illness by self-analysis of deeper emotions; not a religious man, death to him he explained simply, "is the end of me" (*Chequerboard*, "A Part of Life", 1970). These three stories reflect three different perspectives on death that are shaped by acceptance and looking to the future, by internal struggles with the reality of early death, and by a sense of ultimate termination of life. (See Appendix A).

Tom Manefield's vision of the kind of social documentary he wanted to make and that he believed would show Australians who they were "warts and all", came to fruition with *Chequerboard* in 1969. Manefield's story shows how his drive and determination as a filmmaker to make the kind of social

documentary he wanted to make meant that, for better or for worse, his films were able to reveal the personal stories of Australians as they had not seen themselves before. His story suggests that as *Chequerboard* creator and producer and working within the institution of the ABC, he strove to gather together the best ABC directors, cameramen, editors, and researchers to work with him. His story suggests that he held an egalitarian approach to politics and that he chose not to be drawn on the issue. His story shows that rather than naming those well known in documentary film and filmmaking as his heroes, his filmmaking heroes appear to have been those with whom he worked each day. Like many filmmakers Manefield let his films speak for him, and for others, through his treatment of their themes and images.

Adding to this study of early ABC documentary filmmakers and their stories, another filmmaker comes into focus as cameraman, director, and producer Bill Steller tells his story in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Making Documentary Programs – the filmmaker's view

Filmmaker Tom Manefield was somewhat reticent when speaking about his personal political beliefs. He spoke instead about political aspects that he believed played a part in influencing the creation and production of *Chequerboard*, and about the influence of cinema verite on the program's style. He identified his filmmaking heroes as those with whom he worked on a daily basis.

In this chapter, documentary filmmaker Bill Steller speaks openly and frankly about his political beliefs, his filmmaking heroes, and his memories working as cameraman, director, and producer in early ABC social documentary and investigative journalism programs such as *Four Corners*. Steller's narrative reveals a deep emotional connection with the subjects and themes addressed in his films. Here again, the words of Storry Walton and Tom Manefield are woven through Steller's story as a way of corroborating and validating particular aspects.

Making contact

This project involved reconnecting with filmmakers I had met some decades previously. Twenty five years had passed since I last saw Steller at the ABC Gore Hill Studios in Sydney, and as a consequence I was anxious about interviewing him. The following paragraphs describe my thoughts about the impending interview, what transpired during the journey to his home, the atmosphere in which the interview was conducted, and documents his story.

In my role as a researcher in the ABC's Television Archives Library during the 1970s and 1980s, I became acquainted with Bill Steller's emotionally charged yet professional approach to his work. I reconnected with Steller by telephone on 1 March 2006. I explained to Steller the reasons for my call. His initial reaction was one of curiosity and later one of interest that someone would want him to tell his story especially after such a long time. He quickly began recalling memories and experiences from that earlier time and generously agreed to be interviewed during my research trip from Rockhampton to Sydney in June.

Early on the morning of 5 June 2006, I made my way from my Crows Nest hotel to North Sydney railway station and boarded the North Shore Line train to Hornsby. Another train took me along the Newcastle and Central Coast Line to Woy Woy, and to my interview appointment with Steller. The hour-long train ride allowed me time for some last minute preparation. Along the way I enjoyed the changing scenery of late autumn as the shiny silver train sped through Sydney's northern suburban sprawl and out into the bushland region of the New South Wales Central Coast.

I wondered if Steller would recognise me, and I him. We met at Woy Woy train station and any apprehensions I might have had about our meeting soon dissipated. During the car journey to Steller's home we talked about our years in ABC Television and about my research project.

His family home was warm and comfortable and well-loved. Steller's wife, Isobel, greeted us on arrival, and made morning tea and cake. My interview with Steller took place sitting around his dining table in his home surrounded by tangible memories of his family, his life, and his work in the form of photographs, awards, and other

mementos. Easing into the interview, I set up the sound equipment around our cups of tea and cake while we talked about the directional microphone I was using. The presence of tea, cake, and a microphone did not seem at all strange in fact; it was a natural and effortless way for the interview to commence. Discussion began about the *Chequerboard* cheesecake and what it meant to the program's production crew. In essence, the cheesecake became the catalyst for Steller's recollections.

Bill Steller – documentary filmmaker

Having quite a different beginning to his career than Manefield was filmmaker Bill Steller. Born in Bombay, India, to a German father and a Portuguese mother, he led a "very, very protected" (Steller, in Shirley 1990) life in the European part of Bombay. At boarding school his teachers were Jesuit priests. Steller's interest in photography began from the age of twelve. He credits a man named Cyril Oscar, from the American firm Westrex Sound in India, as nurturing his interest. Under Oscar's guidance the young Steller cleaned the photographic enlargers after school, and he was able to learn the photographic enlarging processes, which was quite a change from the little box camera that he owned:

> That's how I got my love for it because you know the magic of putting a piece of paper that was exposed in a negative form and you'd put it in this juice, the developer, and then slowly see the magic effect, always used to happen…. Yes Yes !!! You know, especially if you gave it the right exposure.
>
> (Steller 2006)

Following in the footsteps of his brothers Tony and Larry, at age 18 Steller had left his family and the political turmoil of India in 1948 to come to Australia.

India's political turmoil culminated in its gaining independence from Britain in 1947 after one hundred years, while the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 added further to the unrest (BBC Historic Figures 2010, p.1 of 1). Steller arrived in Australia on December 31st, 1948, with his mother and a Senior Cambridge Certificate qualification (similar to the Leaving School Certificate in Australia). He brought with him his first love of still photography. His natural talent for photography meant he was working as a professional photographer within two years of arriving in Sydney. Further schooling became impossible due to continuing family difficulties, and the illness of his father back in India. The family needed him to find work in order to send money back home.

Steller recalled that during a less than fruitful visit to the Granville vocational guidance office, he told them his preferred career was to be a radio announcer or a projection engineer. Much to his frustration however, the vocational guidance office sent him to be a fitter and turner's apprentice with Warren Engineering in Marylands, Sydney (Steller 2006). Thanks to a quick mind fuelled by drive and determination, he avoided signing a seven-year indenture as a fitter and tuner. Had he done so, his earnings would have been as little as seven pounds a week; any career hopes he might have had at the time to become a photographer would have been dashed. Shortly thereafter, he took a job as a cadet darkroom assistant as well as a cadetship in photography for a company called Commercial Advertising - "that's when I started in photography" (Steller 2006).

Around 1949, Steller began work at a camera repairer with Scales and Matthews. There he met people like Bob Dyer, and for a period he ran the Royston Fairfax Studios in King Street, Sydney (Steller 2006). Sometime later a friend suggested he approach the Water Board for a job. In the early 1950s Steller began work at the Sydney Water Board Photographic Section. The Water Board had two ex-RAAF photographers who would be able to teach him all that he needed to know about photography. “They ground in all the basics”. Training started at a Grade 1 level and in order to progress further “you had to sit for a written exam and then do a practical test”. As a result, Steller’s first major work as a photographer was to document the building of Warragamba Dam in Australia which began in 1948 and was completed in 1960.

This career move lasted for nine years, and up until the late 1950s. There were hours of painstaking work involved photographing plans and accidents. Eventually Steller became the resident photographer on Warragamba Dam’s development, building, and construction project (Steller 2006). The Water Board provided a Bolex camera, and as Steller recalled:

> Now they wanted to do a movie report. Rather than the Board just sitting down and handing out the pictures looking at one another, they could sit back and look on a screen and they could get the report of what was happening at Warragamba Dam.
>
> (Steller 2006)

Steller began to teach himself how to use a movie camera. He credits his time at the Water Board as enabling his gifts of innovation and experimentation in photographic work to grow. As he explained:

> In my spare time, I did high-speed photography to see how a rat would behave when it was going to be caught in a trap. I used to set all these contraptions up, experimentation I used to do that,

> but I learnt so much there, because over there I was on like a grade three photographer. Then I had to go up to different grades, and every time you went up a grade, you had to do a theory test and a practical test. The practical test would be photographing this tape recorder, or go and photograph these nuts and bolts, and things like that you know, which I did very well. But, I was struggling through the theory let me tell you, because I was very into a chemistry thing about the juices you had to make up the developer and all these kind of things, but I managed.
>
> (Steller 2006)

The Water Board then planned to make a film of their own with the working title *The Dam Builders.* This film, which includes 1953 footage and stills of the dam construction, appears later to have had its title changed to *The Warragamba Story* (Sydney Water 2007, pers.comm. 10 January 2007). Eventually, having shot much of the footage for the film, and as construction was nearly completed, Steller realised it was time for him to move on. He spotted an advertisement in the paper for a cameraman and a camera assistant for the then Australian Broadcasting Commission. Steller explained that at his interview for the position, either:

> Kip Porteous, or Burt Nicholas, said to me, 'what have you done there?' I said, 'Oh well I've done a lot of photography, and I did some movie work, and some of my movie work is a thing called *The Dam Builders'*. They said, 'strange you should say that, there was a gentleman here before you that said he was the cameraman on that'. I said, 'Well I was the resident at Warragamba Dam, so I'll leave it to you who would have been'.
>
> (Steller 2006)

In October 1960, already with a history of filmmaking, Bill Steller began working for ABC television as an assistant cameraman.

Since beginning his career with ABC Television in October 1960, Steller's photographer's skill and cinecameraman's creative eye are evident in many individual ABC documentaries. As second cameraman to George Hobbs, Steller

worked on one of the Intertel/ABC programs in 1961, which was entitled *Ten Million Strong*. Intertel eventually became part of the Transdifussion Network which originally developed in 1964 from a school-based tape-recording club known as the Transdiffusion Networking Association (TNA), and that facilitated association members communicating by sending letters to each other on reel-to-reel tape (Transdiffusion Broadcasting System 2007, p. 1 of 1).

Steller worked again as second cameraman with Brealey on the early documentary, *The Pipes of Para* (1963), which was "set in the Barossa Valley on the Para River in South Australia. The 'pipes' refer to old church pipe organs built by the Lutherans who lived there more than a century ago" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 124). Steller recalled that Lex Allcock was the cameraman on this documentary, and while Allcock was filming the night shots, Brealey and he "would go out and do the 'pretty pretties'" (Steller 2006), or second unit filming.

In addition to his documentary work, Steller also worked as first cameraman on news and current affairs programs such as *Four Corners*. His documentary filmmaking included some of the most significant documentary programs and series created by ABC Television. For instance, between 1969 and 1974 he directed forty-two hour-long *Chequerboard* program episodes. He filmed the seventy-five minute dramatized documentary called *The Bernard Heinze Story* (1974), which traced conductor Heinze's life and music. Between 1975 and 1979 he produced and directed thirteen half hour program episodes for *Peach's Australia* (1975-76), and a one hour documentary special *Peach on the*

Mississippi (n.d.) which looked at the Gulf of Mexico from an historical and a contemporary perspective.

He was an on-site instructor for the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association's first television production course in Kingston, Jamaica, for Caribbean producers and directors, and produced and directed four half hour nature and wildlife documentaries called *In The Wild* (1976-78) and was executive producer on thirteen more of this same series. In addition, Steller produced three documentaries in Japan called *Journey Into Japan* (n.d) with Keith Adam as the presenter. As executive producer, Steller produced seven similar documentaries about the Himalayas, and three documentaries that looked at the effects of new technology on the work force entitled *Work That Was* (1980). Between 1980 and 1981 Steller had moved to drama and directed three fifty minute episodes of *Sporting Chance* (1981), and several sequences of the series *Coral Island* (1983) in Samoa. Between 1982 and 1984 Steller returned to television features and as series producer worked with Bill Peach on five fifty minute documentaries called *Gold* (1983), then another ten thirty minute episodes of the series *The Explorers* (1984). By 1984, Steller had moved back to social documentary as series producer on thirteen thirty minutes *Open File* (1983-85) and twelve thirty minute *Focal Points* (1986) series episodes. He then produced a sixty-minute documentary on rainforests and produced and directed an episode of the *In Real Life* (1988/89) series. In 1989, due to ill health, Steller retired from this very creative career as a photographer, cameraman, director,

producer, executive producer, and series producer (B.Steller, pers.comm.,October 2006).

Political beliefs

The stories of Steller and Walton provide insight about different perceptions and implications relating to political views. The following paragraphs detail instances each filmmaker believes exemplify these different perceptions and their implications during the political and social turbulence of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and the impact, or not, of that on their work.

Steller believed that there were implications attached to revealing personal political leanings particularly in the ABC. He spoke candidly about them, saying:

> Well, this is a curly one. Firstly, one was not encouraged to wear your political leanings on our shirt sleeve, not in the ABC, no way. But then again, I was not a political animal, but I was soon labelled a 'Pinkie'…Not quite Red! My approach was always to see that one got a fair go with my Christian background and Christian ethics, they might of appeared as Socialistic, hence…Pinkie!
> (Steller 2009, pers.comm, 1 November 2009)

He commented further, that when filming, he always went in with an open mind, tried not to have preconceived ideas and to let the story reveal itself, "and tell it as truthfully and honestly as I could". Sometimes however, "to get to the heart of a story you had to get in there and ask some intrusive questions, which we did in *Chequerboard*" (Steller 2009. pers.comm, 1 November 2009). In terms of the extent to which his political beliefs impacted the way he approached issues, themes and people his films examined, he explained that there were "quite a few sticky programs" that he did that he had to "clench" his teeth when:

> [He] had to tell the interviewer to ask 'the' question. As a director/producer, I can't say I had to wrestle with political problems, most of the time it was social problems. It did not matter to which party was in power you just went in and did the story as truthfully and honestly as possible.
> (Steller 2009. pers.comm, 1 November 2009)

With this statement Steller reveals his inner struggle as filmmaker in relation to his subjectivity and his emotions which ironically, as Manefield contends, are key elements in making and filming *Chequerboard*. Steller's deep emotional connection to his filming, in focussing on people's eyes and faces and expressions enabled him to reveal the honesty of reflections of people's inner emotional turmoil.

The scope allowed the program meant that:

> There were no sacred cows in *Chequerboard*. If there was something that had to be done to bring to the notice of people, because most of it was hidden under the carpet, and you want to drag it out and say hey! And we would put it to them in such a way that they would have to ask the questions why, why is it so?....we never really ever put the boot in, but it was a soft shoe shuffle.
> (Steller 2006)

This statement suggests that from his point of view Steller believed the reality of Australian society and culture, of people's different living circumstances, and of the difficult lives of Australians was not readily or visibly apparent and that *Chequerboard* represented a radicalisation or challenge to accepted ideas and perceptions within Australian society and culture. It also suggests that in making episodes about difficult topics and themes the challenge for *Chequerboard* filmmakers was to address confronting issues indirectly rather than directly: to challenge and question through implied rather than overt means, by "a soft shoe shuffle".

Walton contends, the personal political beliefs of individual program makers, "were not a marker of the left-wing or right-wing bias of drama or documentary as a whole" (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.1). Furthermore, that as documentary filmmakers working within the institution of the ABC with its emphasis "the powerful ethos of Reithian public service", noted in Chapter Three, on fair and balanced broadcasting, they "operated under editorial supervision of vigilant program heads" (Walton 2009, pers.comm. 25 October 2009, p.3).

Walton's (2009) self-described liberal humanist beliefs which he defined as being framed by his maturing socialist outlook, noted in Chapter Three, meant from his perspective, that once, to be liberal and to ask questions was to be considered left-wing. In essence liberalism meant to be left-wing, "but now, just to ask a question people think, oh he's a left winger" (Walton 2006). Liberal humanism constitutes belief in the concepts of truth, individuality, honesty, compassion, empathy, and of human nature not to change (Barry 1995, p.17-20).

Walton's experience making *My Brother Jack* (1965) further suggests the ABC's social and political concerns. The ABC raised concern for the use of language, perceived by some to be radical, such as "bloody", "damn", or "mick", again as noted in Chapter Three, as it had been written by the left-wing author George Johnston. Viewed from today's perspective the main concerns appear almost inconsequential.

Walton also suggests another example of social and political concern for the ABC as an earlier *Four Corners* story in 1963. Produced by Allan Ashbolt

the story questioned the Returned Servicemen's League then president, Sir Raymond Huish, about "whether the RSL exercised party political influence at all" (Pullan 1986, p.38). The episode drew fierce criticism for its content and as, Walton recalls, this particular episode:

> Was a *cause célèbre* because the view of many politicians in the RSL, was that it was a slur and shouldn't have been made, but it was made. No one stopped it being made. I don't know how many programs were stopped from being produced, but a lot of controversial programs were made and the ABC took the flak.
> (Walton 2006)

As to the implications of holding radical or liberal humanist political belief within the ABC and the perception that they influenced the work of ABC filmmakers, or not, Walton believes program maker and ABC broadcaster and journalist Ashbolt was:

> A great example of a political radical in the ABC who had terrible problems as a person and as a broadcaster in the ABC, but still succeeded in doing terribly important work with *Four Corners* and with his one-off dramas and documentaries.
> (Walton 2006)

Robert Pullan (1986) argues that Ashbolt:

> Was conscious of his reputation within the ABC as a 'bit of Lefty', and knew the ABC Commissioners had been concerned about the program's [*Four Corners*] line since (Michael) Charlton's and (Robert Raymond's) departure, but "Ashbolt did not allow this to inhibit him".
> (Pullan 1986, p.40)

The suggestion is that the direction radical contexts took after *Chequerboard* ended was that it transitioned to *Four Corners* and investigative journalism:

> Sure it did. I think that was a slow kind of transition from radical documentary filmmaking to handing it over to current affairs. And that kind of handed the baton over to them, just like now I think the ABC's handing the baton over to SBS.
> (Steller 2006)

In relation to radical issues and ABC coverage, Walton suggested a distinct lack of the portrayal of Aboriginal life at all on the ABC at the time. He

argued that this reflected the fact that "there was no great consciousness of Aboriginality in Australian life at the time" (Walton 2006). However, the exception he believed was that *Chequerboard* "pushed the boundaries and went way beyond conventional views or conventional ways of reporting" (Walton 2006). He believed strongly that:

> The ABC should have been looking at Aboriginal life and politics, years and years and years ago. The political voice of Aboriginal life in Australia was emerging with an organisation called Federation of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the 60s.
>
> (Walton 2006)

Walton criticises the ABC for the lack of a "vigorous program" (Walton 2006). Furthermore, Walton argues that in contrast to the ABC's past lack of the portrayal of Aboriginal life in recent years SBS Television has run "simultaneously two weekly programs of Aboriginal life with Aboriginal broadcasters" (Walton 2006) for example *Everyday Brave* (2003) and *Living Black* (2006). He suggests the move by SBS to specifically produce programs for Aboriginal Australians has enabled the generation of "what I think is only the second film movement in Australian history, that is the Aboriginal film movement at the moment", adding that the first was the Waterside Workers' Federation Film Unit, which "was a movement in the sense that all the films were shaped around a common ideal and philosophy" (Walton 2006). Walton is of the belief that Aboriginal filmmakers create some of the most exciting, original and challenging films of today (Walton 2006). Award winning Aboriginal director, screenwriter, and cinematographer Warwick Thornton's feature film *Samson and Delilah* (2009) exemplifies Walton's belief. Thornton is from;

> The Katej people of Central Australia and grew up in Alice Springs. He began his career as a cinematographer in 1988 where he trained at the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association in Alice Springs. In 1994 Warwick moved to Sydney where he undertook a Bachelor of Arts specialising in Cinematography at the Australian Film Television and Radio School.
>
> (AusLit 2010, p. 1 of 1)

Walton also sees an enormous chasm between outback and rural life and the cities and that instead of "sentimentalising the bush", programs showing the people and what's happening to them today in the same vein and approach as *Chequerboard*, is what is required to be produced (Walton 2006).

Walton's contention that the ABC did not portray Aboriginal life at all might have been true of ABC drama productions; however, this is possibly a misconception in the case of news and current affairs programs. Much belated recognition and acknowledgement was imparted when 662 individual news, current affairs, documentary, educational and rural programs, and some play film items relating to the life, history, and identity of the Aboriginal people, were uncovered in the ABC archive collection (Borchers 2003, pp.1-13). The collection had been lying dormant in the ABC vaults and:

> Represented the largest single body of television-produced material on Australian Aboriginal and Islander peoples of the past three and a half decades. It was acknowledged that unless something was done very quickly, this priceless collection was in great need of Preservation attention as much of it was inadequately stored and catalogued on obsolete formats.
>
> (Borchers 2003, pp.1)

The AIATSIS/ABC Research Preservation Project was undertaken between 1991 and 1992 with the project focus on "the early material, which was not catalogued in enough details, or in the case of documentaries and dramas, not catalogued at all" (Borchers 2003, pp.1). In supporting the AIATSIS/ABC project Aboriginal

Senator Neville Bonner argued that the project outcomes would assist in the "enrichment of program output and the gain for better opportunities for Aboriginal Australians" (Borchers 2003, p.1).

Filmmaking heroes

Manefield's filmmaking heroes are identified as coming from those with whom he worked, and in some ways this was also the case for Steller and Walton. However, Steller's, and indeed Walton's filmmaking heroes, also include many renowned Australian and international filmmakers across feature film and documentary.

While working at the Sydney Water Board Steller was encouraged by his supervisor, Jim Nicholson, to join the Sydney University Film Society where he first saw John Heyer's *The Back of Beyond* (1954). The film, which tells the story of mail carrier Tom Kruse and his outback mail run along the Birdsville Track, spurred Steller's filmmaking aspirations. "Hey! That's what it's all about" (Steller 2006). Heyer, "told it like it is", and had a great ability to handle the talent, many of whom were not actors (Steller 2010, pers.comm.1 February 2010).

> This helped me when I started *Chequerboard* and had to direct people and get them to be natural. Although it was in black and white, he [Heyer] brought documentary alive with clever use of camera angles.
>
> (Steller 2010, pers.comm.1 February 2010)

According to Steller, one film that strongly influenced his approach to filmmaking was Orson Welles' film *Citizen Kane* (1941). *Citizen Kane* (1941) "blew me away" (Steller 2010, pers.comm.1 February 2010).

> Orson Welles was a young man then and directing his first film. The use of lenses was before his time. There were wide angle shots taken from low down and distorting the image none of that had been used before. That taught me to be adventurous when I started to do a lot of handholding (camera verite), and always looking for an unusual shot or angle and the dramatic lighting to enhance the tension in a scene.
> (Steller 2010, pers.comm.1 February 2010)

Butch Calderwood was another who influenced Steller's work. BBC trained Calderwood worked for the ABC for a time. He was "meticulous and a hard task master. A lot I learnt I passed on. His lighting technique was unique" (Steller 2010, pers.comm.1 February 2010). For example, "Where others would use four or five lights to light a small scene, Butch would use two, but placed in such a way that one light would do two jobs like key and back light" (Steller 2010, pers.comm.1 February 2010). Key lighting provides the dominant lighting and creates strong shadows, while back lighting provides lighting from behind the filmed subject and can be placed at different angles (Bordwell & Thompson 2004, p.192). Steller also learnt about dolly usage from Calderwood, (a dolly involves a tripod mounted on a moving rail platform which can be pushed forwards, backwards, or sideways enabling the camera to follow the action smoothly). As well as these skills, Calderwood instilled in him the meticulous care approach for daily cleaning cameras and lenses after use. Steller recalls every night after a shoot he broke the cameras down, and cleaned them to keep them in good working order (Steller , in Shirley 1990). From Calderwood, Steller also learnt the art of detailed photographic analysis, "I was a stickler for the start of the pan and the end of the pan" (Steller, in Shirley 1990).

Gil Brealey is yet another filmmaker Steller cites as influencing his filmmaking. Steller worked as an assistant on *Faces in the Street* (1961) "based on Henry Lawson's poem" (Inglis 1983, p. 225), and *The Land That Waited* (1961), directed by Gil Brealey, which was a documentary that looked at Governor Phillip's arrival in Botany Bay and examined the settlers' attempts to establish the colony, and *The Pipes of Para* (1963) which was about Lutheran church pipe organs. Brealey produced films such as *Say Bow Wow* (1964) a satirical and surreal film about "a businessman who turns into a dog and subsequently produces works of art to great critical acclaim" (Gervaz 2008, p.32) only to be proved a fraud; and *Sunday Too Far Away* (1975) a feature film telling the story of shearers and shearing and relationships between shearers and property owners. Steller also worked on two Intertel documentaries with Brealey, one in Israel and the other in Malta. "He had a lovely way of telling a complex story in a simple way and what can be more complex than Israel" (Steller 2010, pers.comm.1 February 2010).

The significance of Heyer's documentary film *The Back of Beyond* (1954) in the development of the Australian film and television industry and in giving a "voice to things Australian" (1957, p.97) is noted previously. Like Steller, Walton cites Heyer's 1954 film as influencing his filmmaking approach in showing him "the poetic possibilities of Australian stories" (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2). Like Steller, Walton cites his colleagues, as well as those internationally lauded filmmakers of feature film and documentary, such as Dziga Vertov:

> I couldn't believe the way he [Vertov] and his brother Michael threw the huge old cameras of the 1920s and 30s around. Such mobility! Such energy in the editing! And so many layers of meaning! Film was hugely exciting.
> (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2)

Or Ken Loach, who "married documentary approaches to drama with *Cathy Come Home* and we were exhilarated by the blurring of the stylistic edges" (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2). The story of *Cathy Come Home* (1966) is:

> A young family's slide into homelessness and poverty was a defining moment in 1960s television, demonstrating how far drama could influence the political agenda. The controversy generated by *Cathy Come Home* led to public outrage at the state of housing in Britain, and gave a welcome boost to the (coincidental) launch of the homelessness charity *Shelter* a few days after the play was first broadcast.
> (British Film Institute Screenonline 2010, p. 1 of 1)

Or, John Grierson, widely regarded as father of the documentary:

> All my filmmaking ideas were naturally affected by John Grierson, and his notion of the '*drama of the doorstep'* and his definition of documentary as *'the creative treatment of actuality'*. I devoured his films and those of the group around him as they became available to see in Australia.
> (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2)

The Italian neo-realists "opened my eyes to a new cinematic candour" (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2). Italian filmmaker Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) "was a remorseless look at real life - and with real people playing the roles!" (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2), and as such echo Robert Flaherty's documentary approach in *Man of Aran* (1934) in which real people acted the roles. Other filmmakers having an influence on the work of Walton were members of the Free Cinema Group. During the 1950s the Free Cinema Group rejected conservative mainstream British feature film as well as Grierson's earlier documentary style "as completely detached from the reality

of everyday contemporary life in Britain, and condemned their stereotypical and patronising representation of the working class" (British Film Institute ScreenOnline 2010, p.1 of 3). The Group viewed British cinema as class-bound and:

> Still rejecting the stimulus of contemporary life, as well as the responsibility to criticise; still reflecting a metropolitan, Southern English culture which excludes the rich diversity of tradition and personality which is the whole of Britain.
> (British Film Institute ScreenOnline 2010, p.1 of 3)

The Free Cinema filmmakers on the other hand believed in freedom, in people as being important and in the significance of the everyday. "Their films attempted to rehabilitate an objective, critical, yet respectful and often affectionate portrayal of ordinary people at work or at play" (British Film Institute ScreenOnline 2010, p.1 of 3). The Free Cinema Group created feature films that "had the same sense of recognition of a real world and an accompanying British zip - Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life* (1963) and many others" (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2) both of which "made a major contribution to the 'British new wave' of social realist cinema in the late 1950s and early '60s" (British Film Institute ScreenOnline 2010, p.1 of 2).

> At the same time, I was inspired by the vitality of documentaries from USA. Pare Lorentz in 1936 for instance, for the way he took the epic tragedy of the American dust-bowl in *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936), and expressed it as a great anthem - documentary as a threnody. Most influential was that spate of documentary films that emerged from the USA from the late 50s onwards, especially from the filmmakers who gathered around Robert Drew. Here were people events and institutions under the unblinking eye of the camera and held in its gaze for long enough to let the subjects reveal themselves. *Primary* (1960) was an eye-opener to me as to how much a sustained surveillance of the camera over many weeks could reveal of people - in this case the Presidential candidates John F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey. Of direct relevance to my work were the films of Fred Wiseman (including *Titicut Follies* (1969) and *High School* (1969)) and of the Maysles brothers (including

> their *Salesman* (1968)) - all of which reinforced my belief in the power of direct cinema to reveal aspects of our lives otherwise elusive to the traditional 'voice-of God' narrated documentary, and even to fiction film.
> (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2)

According to Walton, the one filmmaker who most inspired him was Jean Rouch, the French ethnographer/documentarist noted in Chapter Two, and his treatment of what Rouch termed his "subjective eye" and his use of his camera through which the audience saw what Rouch thought happened (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p.16). Walton met Rouch in Paris in the 1970s. Film for Rouch, Walton contends, was an:

> Expressive craft and the tool of his life-long enquiry about the role of film and film-truth. He was embedded within film and he placed the people who were in his films beside him - in the quest and as participants in expressing their own truth. And he was a wonderful experimenter.
> (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2)

Both Steller and Walton began their careers during the 1950s, and made documentaries continuously during the ensuing decades, and whose filmmaking drew inspiration from the world in which they lived. Those filmmakers who inspired Steller and Walton's filmmaking were integral in influencing filmic elements integral to their work as cinema verite or direct cinema documentary filmmakers. Steller and Walton were filmmakers whose approach to filmmaking was also influenced by those with whom they worked on a daily basis, as was Manefield. So too, were they influenced by the work of groundbreaking filmmakers like Orson Welles, Jean Rouch, John Grierson, John Heyer, Robert Drew, Albert and Robert Maysles, Gil Brealey, and Ken Loach.

Making documentary films

Steller's lived experiences inevitably shaped his subjective point of view. From his early childhood growing up in a very protected environment in Bombay, India, to leaving his home at 17 years of age and migrating to Australia during tumultuous times in India as that country gained its independence from Britain in 1948, to learning to assimilate into a new and different society and culture, to finding a way to earn a living and to learn more about that which he loved most – photography. He became a photographer, but then expanded his knowledge of the still image by diversifying his practical camera skills and adapting by teaching himself to use a 16mm movie camera, eventually transitioned into working in film.

A detailed episode examination follows into the behind the scenes environment of documentary films for which Steller was cameraman or director. The examination reveals Steller's personal connection to his craft as a photographer and filmmaker and to the subjects of his films. As a result Steller's approach to filmmaking and for his film treatments, as well as the innovations he employed and the collaborative efforts involved in making ABC social documentary are revealed.

Steller matured as a filmmaker with the ABC's growth and development. He explained he believed in public broadcasting and the ABC, and that in his years as a filmmaker he had "been very productive, and made the programs I wanted to make, which I thought were worthwhile in the ABC" (Steller, in

Shirley 1990). This was an opportunity he believes would not have been available had he worked in a commercial atmosphere (Steller, in Shirley 1990).

When he first started working as a cameraman, the cameras were cumbersome and inhibiting of freedom of movement by the cameraman. As a stills photographer he found the 16mm cameras frustrating because he was used to getting in between things to get a better more interesting camera angle, or lying on the ground to get his shots with his still camera, "but with these big cameras you couldn't do that.…the Arriflex, the ST Arriflex, was a very noisy camera" (Steller 2006). To alleviate this, Steller created a kind of blimp, which he made out of carpet and feltex to lessen the camera noise, and by using a long lens, he could stand back:

> And, if the sound recordist moved in there, you could here it going like a zzzzzzzzzz like a silent sewing machine, but very silently, and I used to do some of that because I was sick and tired of carrying these big Pro600s and big cameras with me.
> (Steller 2006)

Further innovation occurred at the time of the Harold Holt and Arthur Calwell 1961 election. In order to get as much coverage as possible, *Four Corners* producer John Power wanted to have one cameraman following Holt and another to follow Calwell, then later to swap them to get the same sort of shots. Realising this would be a immense task with the available cameras, Steller suggested using the new hand-held camera called the Éclair from France. After some reluctance by the ABC in allowing their use, the Éclair became available, thereby enabling greater flexibility in handholding camera techniques. However, certain obstacles arose to the use of these cameras. When requests came from the *Four Corners* production office for the camera to be on a tripod Steller

complained that the potential of the camera would be compromised; that this would restrict the unique aspects of the camera:

> You can't get in there, go down and….do all these kind of things …..and I said why, has someone…and he said no you're using it like a fireman's using a hose! I felt like saying but I've got to do it with purpose, if you don't pour the water in the right place you don't put the fire out.
>
> (Steller 2006)

The kind of handheld techniques, for instance, employed by the Éclair camera perfectly delivered the look in the production of *Four Corners*' investigative journalism. For the first time, the freedom of mobility provided by the camera enabled the cameraman to get in there close to the centre of the action.

The immediacy of documentary filmmaking requires that the film crew be ready when the camera rolls. As Steller recalled:

> We had ten-minute loads. The film runs for ten minutes, especially when we're doing all the hand held stuff and things are happening in front of you. I was pretty handy with a camera on my shoulder.
>
> (Steller 2006)

The 1968 documentary *The Soldier* incorporates hand-held camera techniques as well as the cinema verite or direct cinema style used in *Chequerboard.* The documentary is about a young Australian, Guy Holloway, conscripted at age twenty to fight in Vietnam. A précis for the documentary reads:

> *The Soldier* is the story of Guy Holloway - his change from civilian to soldier, his break with his family - set against the harsh background of the endless debate on Vietnam. It is not the definitive story of the Army, or of all soldiers, or of the war in Vietnam. Filming began at Canungra, and continued over the next thirteen weeks - in Sydney, where Guy became engaged, in Tasmania on pre-embarkation leave, then in Vietnam for his first weeks there. It is the story of one young soldier - it could be the story of anybody's son.
>
> (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.127)

The director of *The Soldier* was John Power, and the cameraman was Bill Steller. Throughout the film there are camera angles that appear inspired by Steller's admiration for similar techniques used by Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) such as low angle shots below the eye line with the camera pointed upwards which suggest "looming power" (Bordwell & Thompson 2004, p.263) as the soldiers march with close ups shots of their boots as they hit the pavement. Steller's point of view shots from inside a military helicopter as it lands in Phuk Tui Province in Vietnam and deploy soldiers "give a greater degree of subjectivity" (Bordwell & Thompson 2004, p.85) to a perception of military strength and force. Grierson's claim that "in documentary you do not shoot with your head only, but also with your stomach muscles" (Grierson 1939), is exemplified in Steller's filming of the marching feet. From the beginning of the film the scene opens with soldiers at Canungra marching in double quick time. Steller shot their feet by opening the back door of the vehicle, he then lay on the floor between the front seat and back seat, his 16mm Éclair hand-held camera hanging down at ground level (See Appendix C for shotlist). Furthermore, the sound recordist had to just about lie on top of him to "get the noise of their boots. I chose it where it was running down hill so we didn't have to have the engine running" (Steller 2006). Simultaneously, director John Power got into the vehicle:

> Released the handbrake, rolled, and just gently braked to keep in time with these fellers running down….and that's how I got the shots… these are the things we had to use because we didn't have dollys.
>
> (Steller 2006)

A dolly, tracking or trucking shot means "the camera as a whole does change position, travelling in any direction along the ground" (Bordwell & Thompson 2004, p.267). Cameraman Steller shot with both eyes open, a technique that required his assistant cameraman to guide him through scenes by pulling on his belt (Steller, in Shirley 1990). Steller elaborates on this approach further with an example of the differences between a stills photographer and a film cameraman. A stills photographer, he explains, uses the cheek and nose to control the camera, whereas with the hand-held 16mm Bell and Howell, a cameraman uses the head and neck to "keep it really steady" (Steller, in Shirley 1990). To achieve pan and tilt shots, the neck is not used, but the waist is used because it is thickest and stronger (Steller, in Shirley 1990). A film cameraman out on an assignment takes a hundred feet of film and shoots a hundred frames. As a still photographer working at Warragamba Dam Steller explained, when he would go and photograph an accident, he had to tell the whole story with one picture. "So you had to really think about where you're going to….you won't believe how much that helps you when you are doing camera work" (Steller 2006). Described as a style of choreography by Steller, this filming approach allows cameramen:

> To know where to be at what time, for example, the cars arriving there, you can see the equerry standing there and he's going to open the door, so which will be better, this way the sun's coming, bang, that'll be the best spot, so you get there, with car coming and bang, sure enough the door opens and its right next to you, you've got to think that kind of thing, and that's what came from being a pretty good still photographer. It keeps your thinking process going.
>
> (Steller 2006)

Reflecting the same economy in filmmaking, Steller explains that filming *The Soldier* (1968) he used mainly four clip lights, that is, four 500-watt lights,

which were clipped on picture rails for instance, and he used fast stop which measure the amount of light allowed onto film, “that’s how we got away with it….and that’s the training we got in the ABC” (Steller 2006).

The documentary filmmaker identity, discussed in Chapter One, associated with this documentary was as bugler and reporter. This documentary posed many questions about duty and challenged the sense of war implied through sequences showing scenes of Australian soldiers marching in double time, to close up shots of their army boots as they pounded the pavement in unison, to scenes of family gatherings before the soldier’s embarkation for Vietnam, to the tranquil beach scenes of the soldier and a friend walking along the sea shore. Sequences filmed in The Domain in Sydney followed Holloway, as he spent a Sunday afternoon with his fiancé. Simultaneously, Holloway’s voiceover revealed his personal thoughts about his future and on being sent to war by his country. The sequence unfolds and incorporates an anti-war protest segment as follows:

> A panning shot as Holloway and fiancé mingle with the crowd.
> Holloway voice over: “I feel sorry for the people of Vietnam; they’ve been involved in war for over twenty years. There doesn’t seem to be an end to it”.
> Then the camera zooms in to close up of the face of a protester at The Domain who is being heckled. He shouts: “Well ladies and gentlemen, is the United States concerned with the lives of individuals?”
> A heckler answers: “Yes”.
> The protestor replies: “He said yes, he said yes! But I say no!”
> The heckler asks: “Why?”
> The protestor continues: “Because the Untied States has shown by its very actions, by the type of weapons it uses in Vietnam, that it isn’t the least concerned about the Vietnamese people’s lives”.
> (*The Soldier* 1968)

This could be a scene from any present-day news footage. Both sequences further debate the Vietnam War. Holloway's admission in the sequence revealed that in spite of, or maybe because of, his imminent departure as a conscripted soldier to fight in Vietnam he had his doubts about Vietnam, questioning the seemingly endless war and its cumulative effect on the people of Vietnam. Nevertheless, like so many other young conscripted Australian soldiers at that time Holloway faced the future with strength and courage. During filming of *The Soldier* Holloway was promoted to platoon commander in the field.

The program included air-to-air filming which meant using a camera in one airborne helicopter to film another flying alongside. This technique allowed Steller to film Australian soldiers being deployed from helicopters on-the-move on the battlefield in Vietnam. The sequential coupling, or juxtapositioning, of the two scenes involving Holloway's introspective admissions, and the protestor's impassioned statements in The Domain, presented a challenge to the Australian government, to the Australian people by documenting people's feelings and emotional reactions to war, and questioned Australia's involvement in Vietnam by documenting the personal doubts of one Australian soldier.

Steller honed his filmmaking techniques and skills while training on the job just like others beginning their ABC television careers. Like apprenticeships, the trainees attained on-the-job training in the craft of broadcasting. The ABC traineeship attention to detail and conscientious application of skills learned in relation to economies in filmmaking was evident when Steller recalled his trip to the United States to visit to fellow filmmaker and long-time friend,

cinematographer Don McAlpine. McAlpine was once a stringer cameraman for ABC television who worked alongside Steller, and who has achieved international respect for his expertise as a cinematographer working on feature films. McAlpine was shooting the feature film *See you in the morning* (1989) in New York, for American director Alan Pakula. Economies in filmmaking became the topic for Steller's conversation with Pakula during which he revealed his reasons for choosing to use McAlpine over big American name cameramen. According to Steller, Pakula explained, "well he's economical, he's quick, to do some of the things I've asked Don to do the American would hire thousands of dollars of extra lighting, Don does it without that" (Steller 2006).

Beginning work on *Chequerboard* from its inception in 1969, cameraman Steller quickly moved into the director's chair that same year with the episode "Fortune Teller – I'm dealing in emotions". This episode focussed on the issues of spiritualists and spiritualism that was "on the increase in Sydney" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.67). This episode must have seemed the perfect way to begin directing because as Manefield contends, Steller "brought the emotionalism to the program" (Manefield 2006) and like the episode title states it dealt in emotions. Like Manefield, in recalling the creative collaborative environment that was fostered amongst the *Chequerboard* production team, Steller remembered the support and contributions of those involved and the fervour with which production team meetings occurred:

> We used to sit down whenever we could, everybody, the researchers, the cameramen, Tom, and all of us, Robin Hughes, we used to sit at a big table, and there'd be arguments galore for the whole morning, and things used to come thick and fast - the ideas.
>
> (Steller 2006)

Steller recalled *Chequerboard* received criticism about its style of questioning. However, he explained this questioning style describing it:

> Like a bloody surgeon's scalpel; that we went in there and we were looking for the vein. It was not like that. The questions were there for you to get the feeling. The premise of the whole show was, people and the situations that are shaping their lives, these people who are poor how does it affecting them, but more than anything else how is it affecting you. We've got to go into you!
>
> (Steller 2006)

Incisive style of questioning that sought to reach people's inner most feelings and emotions, coupled with the close-up camera techniques, in those days meant that *Chequerboard* documentaries were "all new and different, we broke completely new ground, and it was a program that rated really very, very well" (Steller 2006).

According to Steller, a key concept in documentary filmmaking is to know what emotional buttons there are to reveal feelings such as love, hate, sorrow, joy, and desperation for instance:

> Once you get emotionally into the viewer, then you can start to tell him, and that's one of the things we tried to do. Tom was a great teacher. He knew what he wanted and he guided us into that kind of air.
>
> (Steller 2006)

Another key concept coined by Steller for *Chequerboard* was the 'hey Ethel' concept. This key concept illustrates what he found essential to each episode's success and the impact of its theme or topic, for instance:

> It was like that, boom, boom, boom….no matter how the pressure was, you hadn't to forget the premise 'how its shaping their lives' look for the 'thing' you know. I remember when I was working only as an assistant, Rola Gamble said to me, when you're making something 'my little love' (he used to call me 'little love'), a piece of gold, you've got to place a piece of gold in there'. But I used to call it 'the Ethel', saying 'hey Ethel get a load o' this!', so it's 'the Ethel' element you have to have in your documentary.
>
> (Steller 2006)

Steller explained what he meant by his “hey Ethel” moment when he recalled a particularly poignant moment in a scene in “At Londonderry” (1970), the *Chequerboard* episode on poverty in modern day Australia. The episode showed confronting scenes of the desperate poverty of an Australian families living in an outer Sydney suburb in dilapidated dwellings without running water or electricity and with little food to eat. For example, at the end of a long day, one of the mothers was filmed bathing the children and putting them to bed. This scene was a culmination of a number of sequences during the episode that showed the long process for the mother each day beginning with carrying cold water in a bucket to the house in order to heat it on a fuel stove. After heating the water the mother then filled the free-standing bathtub that was situated on the floor in the kitchen, she then began bathing each of her children in the same bath water on after another and putting them to bed by lamp light because there was no electricity to the home.

Steller brought emotionalism to the *Chequerboard* program through his empathetic subjective filmmaking approach and was able at the same time to keep his cameras rolling until he captured what he saw were people’s real feelings emerge before the camera. Manefield (2006) described Steller as, “A very brave man, and of course as a cameraman he was an artist”. His bravery as a cameraman was evident because of his ability to continue filming rather than cut short scenes and to hold the shot in the interests of sensitively capturing on film people as they related information about their highly personal moments and private issues. Thereby, Steller used his camera to film in extreme close up

people's faces as reflections of their inner emotional turmoil was etched on their faces as they experienced the heights of happiness or the depths of despair and anguish. Manefield and Daniels were hard taskmasters but they kept the adrenalin flowing:

> They might bollocks you like mad, but they always stood by you. And that's the kind of thing that you need. You needed that protective thing, so that you can go out and do what you have to do. You know, Tom was always there, he'd stand, belt the shit out of you, but he'll take the blows when they came.
> (Steller 2006)

Even for documentary filmmakers continually facing confronting issues, emotions are sometimes difficult to control, especially when faced with extraordinarily sad and harrowing circumstances. For Steller, particularly working on stories about poverty involving children, the reality of situations was sometimes overwhelming. Steller recalled a particular story he filmed in 1966 for *Four Corners* on the Patna Bihar famine in India. Even though he was born in India, he explained he was protected for the most part, so in 1966 when he went to India for *Four Corners* he "saw poverty like I've never seen it" (Steller 2006). Even as Steller recalled this moment emotions welled up within him. Manefield credits Steller's feelings and his ability to empathise and to continue to film capturing the highs and lows of people's feelings as major contributions to *Chequerboard's* success as social documentary. In this instance, as a *Four Corner's* cameraman, Steller had filmed two little girls in the evening and the next morning he returned hoping to take them some food from the place in which he was staying some twenty miles away.

> A bloke that was taking us round, a 'Ghandiite' fellow, was talking about the lack of food and the supply and all of that. There was a women sitting in the front of hut with a child, and he bends down and

> he grabs the little child, a little baby, it was not a child, it was a baby, with its feet between his thumb and his forefinger, and the other foot like that, and he lifted the baby hanging like that. Then he held the head and put it towards my lens, and he said look at the dips and the bulges in this baby's head, he said that's lack of protein, he said even if you give it all the protein in the world now, it's going to grow up a moron, its already damaged, he said I ought to hit the skull against the rock, and then he gently put the baby back…..I was crying.
> (Steller 2006)

Memories of this harrowing moment revisited Steller while working as a first-time director in 1970 on the second series of *Chequerboard* and filming the episode entitled "At Londonderry" (1970) which was produced by Manefield. Steller explained however that while he felt sorry for the people in this particular episode:

> It's not the same sorrow I felt [in India filming for *Four Corners*]: because this poverty wasn't the same *kind* of poverty. I mean, how can you have two different kinds of poverty, if its poverty its poverty…..I mean in your heart you feel it you know. I mean these people aren't dying here, *those* people were dying, and that's the kind of thing you have, and the same thing when you go into a war zone. This kind of took its toll on me.
> (Steller 2006)

Nevertheless, the story of "At Londonderry" (1970) remains one close to his heart because it was shot "exactly how it was, they had no electricity, they didn't have any running water and I had to kind of direct it that way so that you can see it as is" (Steller 2006).

For Steller, one bright ending to this story came several years later. About a week after the show went to air, the mayor of Penrith phoned accusing the program of doing "the wrong thing by them" (Steller 2006). The mayor believed the program had picked only one or two couples "and shown them up in a bad light" (Steller 2006). Steller offered to get a Commonwealth car and drive him around to show him "anything up to forty couples there that are living like

that, he didn't take it, he said, 'No'" (Steller 2006). A couple of weeks later, *Chequerboard* Executive Producer Geoff Daniels contacted Steller. Daniels told him a real estate agent had called claiming that one of the families in the *Chequerboard* program were looking for "somewhere nice to live, and they told me they're on *Chequerboard* and the authorities came and took all the children away from them because of that *Chequerboard* " (Steller 2006). Steller still remembers the day and how shocked he felt, "Well Jesus, I was so upset, I got straight into a car and I drove up to the old house. There was no-one there, it was really derelict at that stage" (Steller 2006). Eventually, Steller located the mother and her baby living in a chicken shed nearby:

> She came out with that toothless smile and said, 'It's so good to see you', and I've got bloomin' tears in my eyes, and I'm tight in the chest, and I said, 'Look I'm terribly sorry', she says, 'Don't, it wasn't your fault'.
> (Steller 2006)

Steller asked her what she meant. The woman told him that when she sent the children to school with only dry bread for their lunch, their school headmaster had called in the authorities who then took the children away leaving her with the little baby. Some clouds do however have "silver linings". All was not as it seemed in the end because as Steller explained sometime later:

> Andrew Clark, God rest his soul, he was working for *Four Corners*, and he came up and he said, 'Billy were you looking for that family'. I said well they should be around Londonderry… Anyway, I meet him in the canteen again and he says, 'You won't believe',…. he says, 'One of the boys hit the jackpot lottery, and they're all doing fine!'
> (Steller 2006)

In remembering the making of *Chequerboard* episodes one that stands out in the minds of both Manefield and Steller is "Gina - They don't even say hello" (1969). This was the first episode to air of *Chequerboard* and, as

discussed in Chapter Two, was chosen because it was "more startling, it would knock people about" (Manefield 2006). This statement suggests a premise for *Chequerboard* was not only to challenge for change but to shock audiences into taking notice of issues and topics that until then remained out of sight out of mind. From a technical point of view, as she was blind from birth, Gina's eyes raised concern over just how to film her. Consequently, cameraman Steller devised to film her "practically in profile, and in a subtle, what I call a kind of half tie shot" (Steller 2006). This was deemed as unsatisfactory. Next, Steller filmed Gina by "practically putting the lens on her shoulder looking past her right ear, and I thought, 'Bugger it', her eyes were rolling around, but after a while that's irrelevant; you're listening to what she's saying" (Steller 2006). In order to emphasise important points that she raised, Steller used the zoom lens "as a red pencil to underline, go in there, this is important, listen to it, and the human face is the best piece of geography, you know it tells you so much" (Steller 2006). By zooming in, Steller went to within about an inch above the eyebrows and about half an inch below the bottom lip and held it there. "Bob Ellis called that the *Chequerboard* close up" (Steller 2006). Steller was breaking new filmmaking ground in Australian documentary. This kind of close-up was met with considerable derision and mirth by the more conservative members of the ABC film department, and as Steller recalled, he often received biting comments such as "Oh, filming another set of nostrils today are you?" (Steller 2006).

The volatile incident filmed at Montsalvat in the *Chequerboard* episode "A palace, a fortress, a tomb" (1969), and discussed in Chapter Three and described by Inglis as "perhaps the most riveting documentary sequence that ABC has ever filmed" (Adams, cited in Inglis 1983, p.288), is a prime example of the power of film to reveal people's deepest emotions and the truth behind them. Justus Jorgenson, Montsalvat's creator, is challenged about being labelled a dictator by members of his artist colony at which point he appeared detached and distant. Crucial editing at that point of the episode where a heated argument occurs emphasises a heightened sense of the volatile and highly revealing sequence, and ending the episode abruptly underlines the emotional element. The program's exploration of, among other things, the sexual relationships within the colony was met with mistrust and anger by those closest to Jorgensen who were protective of him and their lifestyle. *Chequerboard* thereby allowed a view into another lifestyle and into another social and cultural structure that had developed within Australian society. With a premise of non-judgement, the program presented Australians with a window into another perspective.

The production process for *Chequerboard* was a like a finely tuned machine, for once filming was completed, the editing (by Steller) of a long cut would then be carried out, then a consultation with Manefield who would work on a fine cut of the episode. While that was happening, Steller was doing filming for the next episode.

As another key concept of all *Chequerboard* episodes, the title for this one "My Brown Skin Baby, They Take Him Away" came from the episode

content. This time, it came from the song composed by Randall describing the "trauma suffered in Aboriginal communities as a result of the government policy of taking a light-skinned baby away from its Aboriginal mother so it could be brought up in white society" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.61). The story of Bob Randall began with him growing up on a Croker Island settlement where he met his wife, Amy. Now living in Darwin, Randall is a lay preacher and folk singer. The episode shows scenes of Randall speaking in a hall about Aboriginal women losing their babies to the white man. It was the first time the media focussed on the issue of Aboriginal children taken from their mothers. Highly visually emotive sequences show Randall singing his poignant song, "My Brown Skin Baby, They Take Him Away", intercut with shots of Aboriginal babies alone. Images of a baby, any baby, but an Aboriginal baby in particular, alone and without any visible evidence of care or protection connotes the clear message as to the defencelessness and loss of innocence of an Aboriginal child alone and unprotected who is at the mercy of government policy, and begs the question, why? The words and images combine to reveal the resultant anguish and pain caused by such decisions so long ago and which still echo today. In the song's story, Randall tells of how his mother tried to hide him from the authorities. This *Chequerboard* episode is evidence of Randall as a man now between two worlds trying to make sense of the circumstances that shaped his life.

Chequerboard narrator David Roberts' explanation of the government policy towards Indigenous people is overlayed with footage of Darwin scenes.

Other scenes showed Randall supermarket shopping with his wife, Amy. Randall once worked as a gardener, as a hospital driver, and in administration at a mission. He wanted to be a social worker, but his education held him back. Randall does not drink, smoke, or gamble, "I try to practice what I read….I think it's because I live by the power of the Bible". Contact with his real family was all but broken once he was taken away and as he explained earlier, "no record was kept of where we were from even; it was a complete break away from our family". In reference to this, according to the Reconciliation Network, a network of indigenous and non-indigenous young people interested in reconciliation and indigenous issues:

> No-one knows how many children were taken, as most records have been lost or destroyed. Many parents whose children were taken never saw them again, and siblings who were taken were deliberately separated from each other. Today many Aboriginal people still do not know who their relatives are or have been unable to track them down
>
> (Reconciliation Network 2010, p.2 of 6)

Randall explained that his wife Amy was taken from her family in Aileron, near Alice Springs, while Randall was taken from the nearby Coniston Station area. The lack of accurate recording keeping relating to the familial links of the children taken created a major concern as to issues of relatives marrying each other. "From what me and Amy know now, she and I are distant cousins, we could have been brother and sister and we wouldn't have known" (*Chequerboard*, "My Brown Skin Baby, They Take Him Away", 1970). (See Appendix A).

Steller recalled his involvement in this episode that he described as breaking "completely new ground, we broke new news" (Steller 2006) by

showing and examining the reality of ramifications of separating Aboriginal mothers from their babies, furthermore, “after you see ‘My Brown Skin Baby’ you’re goin’ to say, “Why?” (Steller 2006). After filming the first part about Randall, program narrator David Roberts located Amy’s mother at Aileron. Steller immediately realised that a second part to the episode would show Amy’s search for identity. Amy’s cousin, Florrie, would also meet her mother for the first time. Steller recalled his amazement regarding the Aborigines’ ability to be highly receptive and perceptive, and to be seemingly aware of matters without physical communication. Having made the decision to go to Aileron “on the spur of the moment”, Steller wondered if people would know if they were coming. Randall said they would. After driving overnight from Darwin to Aileron:

> I said to Geoff Burton, ‘You drive in there quietly and set up, not close, far, so you can use the long end of the lens. Set up there and see what happens’. So, I gave him about ten minutes start, and I said to Bob Randall ‘Let’s go’, and as we entered, there under the big tree they were all waiting for him, somewhat like a Twilight Zone moment.
> (Steller 2006)

On arrival at Aileron Station, the last known place for their families Amy’s family greeted her, and both Amy and Florrie met their mothers for the first time. Amy also met her sister and father. Scenes showed an emotionally wrought Florrie meeting her mother Ruby, a shy, silent, grey haired Aboriginal woman. Florrie appeared overcome with awkwardness as she sat quietly with her mother. She had difficulty speaking about how she felt meeting her Aboriginal mother. So too, Florrie’s young son found it difficult to interact with his Aboriginal grandmother for the first time. Scenes showing Florrie’s first meeting with her

Aboriginal mother were, and are, evidence of the enormous cultural chasm dividing both Florrie and Ruby. As Steller recalls:

> Sitting there amongst the dogs in the humpy, David Roberts (interviewer) asks her 'would you like to stay with your mother?' Look at her face, she doesn't really say no. That asks a lot of questions. Are we right or wrong taking them away?
>
> (Steller 2006)

Chequerboard left it up to its audience to think about this question. Steller shot these scenes in close-up, thereby focussed on and underlined what was filmed, and what was said. Florrie says in her interview:

> It seems very strange. I didn't expect anything like this. Well, I thought they would live in little cottages, not in humpies like this. I think they are only fit for dogs to sleep in, not for people to live in.
> (*Chequerboard*, "My Brown Skin Baby, They Take Him Away", 1970)
> (See Appendix A)

The irony is had she not been taken away from her mother Florrie too would be living in these humpies not fit for people, but the tragedy is also that the mother who gave birth to her is a stranger to her now.

Steller used the extreme close-up shot to emphasise or "underline" (Steller 2006) specific and revealing parts of interviews. In this way and to give greater emphasis to Florrie's emotional reaction to what she had seen, Florrie in extreme close-up stated that she "won't be staying here", and that her little boy was frightened. Again, in extreme close-up, Florrie revealed that she was happy but, "I wouldn't like to have been brought up like this". (See Appendix A). Clearly, Florrie appeared greatly troubled by what she encountered that day. The result was that Florrie was not only torn between two cultures, but she was also separated by language in that she did not speak or understand her mother's Arunta language. She could only communicate with her mother using pidgin

English. Florrie was brought up in the white man's society in Darwin. Her sense of belonging had become confused and different (*Chequerboard*, "My Brown Skin Baby, They Take Him Away", 1970).

Producer Manefield and director Steller once again addressed the particularly controversial issues of displacement, marginalisation, separation, extreme poverty and cultural deprivation in a follow-up episode. The episode was given the title "Who am I, what am I?" (1970). The episode title was originally a phrase taken from Randall's song of the same name. The song, which is sung intermittently throughout the episode, is used as a subtext and thread thereby linking the images and interviews throughout the episode. The episode further personalises the issues and gives greater focus to the meeting between Florrie, Amy and their families at Aileron and to documenting reactions both visually and orally. For the most part shot in close-up and extreme close-up, this episode documents the private moments through the capture of poignant images showing the bewildered Ruby and a confused Florrie trying to communicate with each other and to find some remembrance, some connection. These images together with the recording of the disjointed words spoken between Amy, Florrie, and their families, illustrated their shared struggle to communicate and bond against a background of years of enforced systemic separation. The episode not only illustrates that even without the need for the spoken word, even through years of enforced separation of mother and child and displacement of their family structure, there remained an innate bond between mother and child. It also illustrates the difficulties facing people separated by

culture. The moment of reconnection is graphically illustrated in a harrowing sequence. In these scenes, the actions and body language of Florrie's mother Ruby attested to the fundamental reality of the unbroken bond. A momentary gesture between the two was a moment imbued with much tenderness. In her shy, quiet, and softly spoken words, Ruby gently touched Florrie's forearm and declared Florrie to be her daughter. Ruby said, "That's mine". (See Appendix A).

By way of attaining some understanding about his own experience of being taken from his mother as a baby, Bob Randall found solace in the Bible. Steller's work on *Chequerboard* sometimes resulted in long-lasting relationships with those he filmed. Bob Randall, for example, kept a continuing letter exchange with Steller over many years. These letters were sometimes intensely personal and documented the progression of Randall's working through his past.

After the *Chequerboard* episode "My Brown Skin Baby They Take 'Em Away" went to air, Steller recalled:

> We expected a political reaction or backlash, none occurred. That was then, now with the Stolen Generation it's a different story.When I was a cameraman one did have to be careful especially with *Four Corners*. You stuck as close to the story as possible and worked with the reporter, but I kept my nose clean and never had a story pulled out.
> (Steller 2009, pers.comm. 1 November 2009)

Steller suggests these episodes are a measure of the program's failure to get their message across. In this instance, Steller wished to "bring to people something they hadn't thought about or they didn't know about, and to submit it to them in an honest, simple way and then make them – think" (Steller 2006). In the "My Brown Skin Baby They Take Him Away" (1970) the message that he suggests failed to get across is that it had been government policy to take

Aboriginal babies and children away from their families which was an accepted way at the time to attempt to give Aboriginal children a better life and future (Steller, in Shirley 1990). This episode marked the first time people were made aware government policy was behind these forced removals and the first time the experience of the Stolen Generations had been shown. Rather than making things better, the removal of the children caused further and more harmful damage to occur resulting in the complete breakdown of familial relationships. The story of Florrie and her family exemplify the disconnection between mother and child in particular, the loss of cultural heritage in Florrie's feeling of alienation when she found her mother, and the loss and confusion over a sense of belonging in Florrie's sorrow obvious in the silence of her experience making first contact with the family she had never known.

During his long career as a documentary filmmaker there were those moments of anguish experienced by Steller, for instance while on assignment for *Four Corners* in India. As Steller discussed earlier in this chapter, one of those moments of despair was when he saw for himself, the devastation caused to the lives of babies and children by the Patna Bihar famine. Another was the moments of incredulity and sadness he felt, when filming Australian families living in desperate poverty within the Sydney city limits. There were also those moments that left him asking why a generation of Australia's indigenous people suffered such seemingly irreparable dislocation and forced separation engendering a loss of familial bonds. There were however, also those moments that were ignited by the heightened stress under which these filmmakers would

find themselves. Filmmaking was not all serious business, however, there were moments which as Steller admitted allowed a release of pent up feelings, a release of tension, a release from fear of being in a warzone – at least for a moment. None more so than a time in Vietnam in 1965 when Steller recalled the camaraderie and fun of filmmaking with his long-time friend Don McAlpine, who was then his assistant, and the tricks they would play on each other and others in order to relieve pent-up tensions on difficult location filming. Steller recounted one night surrounded by an atmosphere of political turmoil and impending hostilities in Vietnam:

> We met another bloke called Peter Layden, who used to work in the ABC, but then he used to work for the American Broadcasting. We met in the Caravelle Hotel, and Frank Bennett (*Four Corners* journalist) was talking, and Peter and I, we kept drinking and drinking, and we were a little bit full, I think it was about 11p.m. We were in the hotel around the corner past the Continental, the Alfarna Hotel, and we get out of the hotel and a bloke says, 'No, no, white mice, white mice', and I said, 'what's that?', and he said, 'Police, its curfew night you can't go'. I said to Don, 'We've got to go, I've got to get my cameras ready to film tomorrow morning', because we were doing the coup! So anyway, he said, 'I'll tell you, wait, wait, wait', and then a white jeep with these police in white, that's why they were called white mice, they went past, and then he opened the gate for us. I took off, and I had to run across the square to get to the site of the Continental, and I couldn't hear any footsteps behind me, and there's like pools of light from the lights from the top, like a chequerboard of lights down on the little square, and I'm half way in it (the square), and I stopped, and I was just about to turn around when there (was a noise) 'BANG', and I took off. It was Don, (playing a trick on Bill), he put his hands to his mouth, and went 'BANG' like that. When I get to the Alfarna, its gates are closed. I'm trying to get in, I'm shaking, and he comes around the corner laughing, and he said, 'Steller you looked like those cartoons where Goofy goes up and his legs go diddlely diddlely… and you hit the ground and zzzhhhooo and there's a pile of dust', he said, 'You took off!'
>
> (Steller 2006)

He laughs about it now, but Steller's reaction to McAlpine's simulated explosive trick was triggered by the fact a woman on a bicycle had been shot by the "white mice" police the night before because she would not stop when the police told her to stop.

Some of the other *Chequerboard* episodes in which Steller was involved include “To Err Is Human” (1969). Directed by John Worral, this episode looked at the life of a travelling salesman Keith, who, after being on the road for almost forty years tells of his experiences and adventures in an episode that also tended to be controversial in its subject matter. Keith who is described as a womaniser and a boozer (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.59) was highly successful at his job. His wife longed for him to stay at home and get a proper job. Keith’s livelihood was in jeopardy because of changing times, but he was also reluctant to stay at home. He preferred the freedom he had on the road. Because of initial production difficulties Manefield doubted that the story idea had merit. Steller thought otherwise however, that it was:

> A terrific story, and I said I know because my brother Tony, who I love so much, had become a travelling salesman, and he used to tell me they used to call themselves the knights of the road.
> (Steller 2006)

The production difficulties resolved, the crew were given an extra three thousand feet of film and went back to re-shoot the story. During the course of the story, Keith talked about the people he met on the road, the friendships he had made over the years, as well as the women he had met over the years during his journeys and the problems that had arisen because of his constant absence from home. He appeared unrepentant about the effect his career had on his wife when he exclaimed with a laugh, “I suppose there are temptations that come along to a traveller that don’t come to other people you know…to err is human”. Here again, the episode title emerged. David Roberts interviewed Keith and extracted from him details about the women he had known through the years.

Keith explained with amusement that he enjoyed travelling over the "three-mile limit", which he explained meant that there was an understanding within the realm of travelling salesmen that once you were three miles from home, you were considered a single man again. The "three mile limit" aspect of travelling salesmen is one interpretation taken from the episode (*Chequerboard*, "To Err is Human", 1969). Steller recalled:

> David asked him about the women, was it 140, he says it wasn't 140, it was 200! He corrected him. He said he had a bet with another bloke to see how many women they could have in a year.
>
> (Steller 2006)

For Keith's wife, her children were the centre of her life and she believed that "more or less it had to be" (*Chequerboard*, "To Err is Human", 1969). (See Appendix A). Serious objections about the womaniser angle to the program came from Keith immediately after it went to air. He questioned the episode's lack of attention to his skills as a footballer or his prowess as an army marksman. Steller recalled being somewhat unsure about including the angle about the women but that Manefield, although initially doubting the merit of the story idea, believed that was the angle of the story. The episode inevitably questioned and challenged the world and morals of the travelling salesmen, and their place in and imminent disappearance from, the rapidly expanding consumer society of Australia in the 60s and 70s.

"It's a Big Day in Any Girl's Life" (1969) from series one was directed by David Stiven. Steller recalled being the cameraman on this episode and that he tried to bring out the happiness of the occasion. As discussed earlier, the episode looked at two different weddings, one an ordinary working class

wedding and the other the wedding of a grazier's daughter. It showed two entirely different approaches to the weddings from two different social levels, one working class, and the other upper-middle class grazier. One wedding, held in the local church, entailed the bride's mother making the wedding dress and the family provided the catering for the reception that was held at home. The other wedding was a upper-middle class society wedding held in then 130 year old Garrison Church in Sydney. The bride's dress was purchased from a bridal boutique, and the reception was held at a special reception banquet hall. One couple would be honeymooning at Curl Curl Beach and living in a caravan later; the other couple would be shearing sheep after their honeymoon and living in a large twenty-four room house on the family sheep property. The speeches from both weddings showed a stark contrast between the informal and formal wedding festivities and illustrated the social divide. Part of a speech given by one of the bridal party at the reception for the grazier couple follows:

> Don't mistake my words here, but being born and bred in the bush, I've always believed in breeding…whether this be horse, or dogs, sheep or cattle…and don't worry yourself, this works out in life….drink to the happiness of Kevin and Sandra.
> (*Chequerboard*, "It's a big day in any girl's life", 1969)
> (See Appendix A)

Their reaction to this statement, shot in close-up, showed on the faces of the bride and groom who look decidedly embarrassed and uncomfortable. During the speech, the bride is seen dissolving into tears and the groom gives her his handkerchief. Steller recalled his bemusement at the whole situation, "I'm filming this thing and thinking, you silly bugger you're being sent up here mate" (Steller 2006).

Displacement and the elderly was another issue explored by *Chequerboard* during the 1970s. Steller directed the 1970 *Chequerboard* episode "All my memories are in Newtown" (1970) that looked at the issue of elderly people displaced by modern urban planning. These were people who lived all their lives there and now they were going to be uprooted (Steller 2006). Steller remarked that once again this episode bought out the premise of *Chequerboard* that of revealing realities of people living and struggling within Australian society.

The episode told the story of Mrs. Tomlinson, a seventy year old widow, who was waiting to be evicted from her home in Newtown after living there for many years. Her home had ceiling damage and water leakages, and she had to catch drips of water leaking from the bathroom above. Much to her consternation, her home had also already been reclaimed in order to build extensions to the Sydney Teacher's College. Her appearance is that of a proud, strong grandmother who will not move unless absolutely forced to go. Scenes showed Mrs. Tomlinson walking around her home, dangerously leaning out a window and raking leaves from the guttering with a makeshift rake so that the downpipe remained clear. It showed her family photographs and the urn in which she kept her husband's ashes as it rested in a special basket on a lounge chair. She had a friend in her pet black cat but she was not going to be able to take her beloved cat with her when she moved. She was waiting for the court order to get a Housing Commission house. Mrs. Tomlinson worried:

> At my age, and on my own, I want to be considered too. I want to be left in the city, where I've got all my own interests, my companions, and near transport, my own doctor, and so forth.
> (*Chequerboard*, "All my memories are in Newtown", 1970)
> (See Appendix A)

Without her interests, without her belongings, and without her cat around her, Mrs. Tomlinson feared she would die, “I am alone”. Another elderly woman, Mrs. Cooper, was in the same situation and was packing her belongings as well. She was unable to stay with her daughter because her daughter’s home had too many steps. She did not want to be evicted because she had been living in her home for forty-seven years and was worried about becoming disorientated. Mrs. Cooper was being moved into a flatette for which she had to pay fifteen dollars a fortnight rent. Her pension was only thirty-four dollars a fortnight, leaving her very little on which to survive. Both women frequented the local Community Centre. The sentiments of both women were expressed by one of their feisty comments, “I’ll go when I’ve got a thousand pound, and not before! Put that in your pipe and smoke it! I’ll fight ‘em”. (See Appendix A). Parallels exist with the Aboriginal situation, in that against their will people were being displaced by government decision, decisions about which they had no voice, and were being marginalised and disoriented as a result of being taken from their familial surrounds and from their home and friends and from the place where they had always felt safe.

It saddened Steller to see such treatment, “They were such sweet people” (Steller 2006). He added that he experienced similar issues involving displacement in India years before at the time of Independence and the Quit India riots, “You see this runs in my veins” (Steller 2006), adding that he believed every kind of documentary touches a little bit of life (Steller 2006).

Another contentious and controversial issue is the use of illegal drugs and their devastating effects on young people in particular. This issue was explored in a particularly difficult and sensitive *Chequerboard* episode. According to the ABC précis for the *Chequerboard* episode, "It could have gone either way for Timothy" (1972) the program reconstructed "the life of Timothy Robertson from his school days until his death at the age of twenty" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 75). The précis is as evasive as Timothy appeared to be to his mother, his employer, and his school friends, and states that "*Chequerboard* tries to find the real one and explain in some way why Timothy died so tragically young" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 75).The episode later revealed the truth behind Timothy's story and his deep involvement with drugs. The issue of youth and drugs remains highly controversial and is a difficult matter to deal with on film and would have been an especially difficult and radical issue to investigate in 1972.

Steller interviewed Timothy's mother for the *Chequerboard* episode and as he explained, she told him she had an appointment to take Tim to the psychiatrist, but then she received the news that Timmy had died. Steller recalled how he managed to continue to capture on film the mother's raw emotions as she spoke to him about her son's death. She said:

> 'So I had to ring up and cancel the appointment'. And she started to cry. And I just squeezed Telfer's hand to say 'keep rolling', and I ended with that – that was the last shot on the screen. And now, it kind of leaves a bad taste in your mouth, and says hey what are we doing about this.
> (Steller 2006)

This statement reveals Steller's continued personal and moral struggle as a documentary filmmaker as he voices doubts about filming moments just like these if in the end it only documents a mother's pain and changes nothing.

Challenges are made and vital questions asked through filmic inference in many *Chequerboard* episodes. The value of social documentary is in asking those difficult questions not always overtly, together with the power of film and the skill of the program's filmmakers.

> You know if you see your son with drugs: What are you going to do? What are you going to do? What did she do? She (Timothy's mother) rang the police. And that didn't help her son, if anything, it threw him further into it. Now you've got to think is this payback to Mum or what, you have to think about it. We didn't say it.
> (Steller 2006)

The extent to which controls on program content eventuated and were overcome, are exemplified in "It could've gone either way for Timothy" (1972). Directed by Steller, he describes the story of Timothy as compelling because while researching stories on suicide it became unclear whether young Timothy had committed suicide, or died of a drug overdose. At one point, a directive came from the Head of Television, Sir Humphrey Fisher, to bring the episode transcript to him for checking. As a result, a portion of the transcript is crossed out. Initially, no reason was given Steller for this action. However, he revealed, later he learned it was apparently because of concerns the episode worked to strengthen people's prejudices and that it appeared as a "hand book for school boys tip-toeing through the drug scene" (Steller 2006). After further discussion with Sir Humphrey Fisher, the two reached a compromise. Episode sequences filmed at Yatala jail in South Australia in true *Chequerboard* close up style, record conversations between the inmates about how they got into the drug scene

and the kinds of drugs used. Steller is of the belief that the different levels within the drug scene are revealed by the actions and body language of the inmates while being questioned during filming. In a similar way to his work on *The Soldier* (1968), Steller's use of low or high camera angles in this episode again emphasises the subjective point of view and the power of film reveal more than what is just being said. Steller explained that during questioning one inmate looked up stating, "We take barbiturates", looking down the other replies "Yes" ; then in reply to another question about shooting up the first inmate looks up and answers "No we don't shoot up". It was this sequence, Steller explained, which attracted Sir Humphrey Fisher's objections. However, Steller revealed he still managed to get one or two "ups" and "downs" shots, "Because as I said, it's important to the story that we say this" (Steller 2006).

Another episode that touched on controversy was the episode entitled "Something Don't Seem Right" (1973) which looked at the "lives of children growing up in different environments" and different socio-economic backgrounds and examined how their lives were shaped as a result (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.85). The episode was about "a little poor boy from Alexandria, near Redfern, [another] Timothy" (Steller 2006). This particular episode, Steller recalled "was a very, very touchy one to do…because the father was neurotic, absolutely neurotic" (Steller 2006) and because Timothy's two older brothers were "in trouble with the police" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p.85). His involvement as a filmmaker in this episode eventually moved Steller to seriously question the depth of his personal

involvement in the problems associated with those stories and people in *Chequerboard.* Consequently, Steller made a decision to involve the welfare department and remembers being told to "piss off out of the way Billy, you don't know this is not your field, hand him over to us, where is he, you know this kind of thing" (Steller 2006), and admits "that's when it started to tell on me, and that's when Isobel [his wife] said I think you've had enough" (Steller 2006). He remembered the little boy in the episode:

> Timothy, made phone contact alerting me to inappropriate behaviour he had experienced with an older man, saying "'he's a cat', I said, 'Tim, I don't know what a 'cat' is', he said, 'he likes little boys'. I said, 'Timmy have you told your father', he says, 'yeah, dad wants me to keep going out with him because he brings in money and fruit and things like this'. Anyway, so, I handed it over to the welfare. (Steller 2006)

The memory of the circumstances surrounding "Something Don't Seem Right" (1973) remains with Steller, and is echoed in his words as he told of how he struggled to retain objectivity, "But then you're looking at yourself and saying, well shit, what am I doing with these stories, you know, am I really ruining lives instead of helping them" ….."That goes through your mind Christina" (Steller 2006) he admitted. As he spoke, Steller struggled to suppress his feelings, but it was obvious the memory of Timothy's story and what transpired at the time still deeply affected him.

Looking back, he believed that documentary was his life, that since he first began taking photographs as a young man in India he had been documenting what he saw around him. Right up until some sixty years later, his life had been one of documenting moments involving people and cultures, and issues and

events that thereby allowed others not only representation, but also insights into different perspectives. He described how it affected him.

> The blood rush you get. The adrenalin when you are in there and there it is, and you say I hope she's going to say this, this is going to be the piece of gold, she's got to say it, and the things that are happening – and that's what I loved about documentary making.
> (Steller 2006)

In the world of the feature film, audience emotional reaction to a film is one of the major components resulting from the creative processes of filmmaking. In feature film "It is the director who makes crucial decisions about performance, staging, lighting, framing, cutting and sound. On the whole, the director usually has most control over how a movie looks and sounds" (Bordwell & Thompson 2004, p.41). The feature filmmaker injects emotion and commitment into film through direction and the manipulation of the film's form and style, therefore, "both emotions onscreen and our responses depend on the context created by form" (Bordwell & Thompson 2004, p.54). An expert director can elicit feelings from actors (and audiences) of love, hate, outrage, sadness, helplessness, indignation, pity, hope, nationalism, patriotism, anger, exaltation, and fear and much more; so too, by the director of documentary film.

Highly emotive often hidden feelings can also be felt and experienced by the ones behind the documentary camera. Unlike the feature filmmaker, the documentary filmmaker deals in actuality, in reality, not in make believe. Like Steller, ABC combat cameraman David Brill exemplifies a filmmaker deeply involved in his subject, and is an incarnation of, the bugler documentary filmmaker. His story of working on programs such as *Four Corners* and of his work as an ABC combat cameraman for forty years in places such as Saigon, the

Middle East, the Soviet Union, Asia, Africa, and South America, is retold in John Little's *The Man Who Saw Too Much* (2003). Brill is described further by his colleague and investigative journalist Jeff McMullen with these words, "Great cinematographers, like David Brill, become inseparable from their life's work. The price they pay for opening our eyes is that sometimes it is hard to close their own" (cited in Little 2003, p. x). McMullen, who for many years has worked for the ABC and the Nine Network, as well as independently, also writes a personal observation about the role adopted by cinematographers [like Steller] and David Brill in particular, both in documentary and current affairs programs. McMullen writes:

> Beyond the edge of the familiar world there are images that await discovery by the greatest cinematographers, to startle us with beauty, stir our hearts deeply with emotional power, challenge our consciences through sheer moral force and, always, to leave indelible message about the complexity of life. They travel to the end of the road and then struggle to find a way forward to a moment of history, trying to follow their sharpest instincts, control their fears and overcome challenges that would turn most people back towards a safer place.
>
> (cited in Little 2003, p.viii)

Then, there were other times Steller remembers. After a short break from our interview Steller was able to continue and spoke about one day putting something down on paper with his life-long friend Don McAlpine:

> Don and I did think about should we write a book, but we definitely decided on the title, and the title was going to be (it was going to be about our camera time, not about me producing directing, our times as a cameraman), and we were going to call it 'You Should Have Been Here Yesterday Mate!'.The amount of times we'd be there driving through the dust and everything and you get to this fellow and you knock on his door and the farmer comes out and its raining and he says g'day I know you were coming, but you should have been here yesterday mate, it was a beautiful day! And you think oh shit I need to know that like a……
>
> (Steller 2006)

In true social documentary cinema verite style, the title Steller suggests would be good for writing about his (and Don McAlpine's) life as a cameraman, *You Should Have Been Here Yesterday Mate!,* is, like the titles of *Chequerboard* episodes, drawn from the everyday lived experience of the drama of the doorstep with emphasis given to the heart and soul of human experience.

With very tight production schedules on *Chequerboard*, "you never had time to glow in, or as some would say bask in a success if you had one, and most of those *Chequerboard*s were a success" (Steller 2006). Because as a filmmaker "you were getting through to a certain extent what you wanted to say asking [for instance], whether poverty is not a lack of money you know, and that's your premise and that's what you go with" (Steller 2006). The tight shooting schedules and little time to appreciate a successful story which meant "you're off on the next story and because you were getting the research" (Steller 2006), also made it necessary for Steller to devise ways he could test episode content:

> I learned a trick that I used to watch television with Isabelle and maybe one of my sons, and I'd be reading the transcript as well and marking up here, or I'd be reading the research for the next one. And Isobel would be asking me a question, and I'd look at my son and he'd tell me whether to nod yes or no, because I hadn't heard what Isobel was asking…..trying to do too many things at the one time. *Chequerboard* to me was the most fruitful years both as a cameraman, although I only did five [years], but to me we set…..and we won awards…..the *Chequerboard* awards…. there's one somewhere here a Penguin…..[as he mentions this, he proudly shows me where the award is on his bookshelf].
> (Steller 2006)

As a man and as a documentary filmmaker Steller's emotions are never too far from the surface. He was not afraid to show the depth of that feeling either through his interview with me or through his sensitive approach to filming through his techniques and camera use. Steller is recognised by Manefield and

Walton as an integral part of *Chequerboard* in particular. Steller's ability to capture some of the most intimate and revealing moments filmed in ABC social documentary is linked inexcusably to Steller's moral integrity and exemplifies Iven's contention that good social documentary filmmakers have a necessity to have an emotional connection to the object of the film, and Bakker's (1999) contention that documentary filmmakers were not objective, but highly subjective, because of their belief in their work and perspective on life.

Next, in Chapter Five, the fourth of the early ABC documentary filmmakers interviewed for this study, Max Donnellan, tells his story. Donnellan reveals his thoughts about beginning his ABC career at 17 years of age, about the training he received because of the ABC Training Scheme that allowed him to develop as an ABC filmmaker and about his work as a director on a wide range of programs, and another of ABC social documentary in particular, *A Big Country*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Making Documentary Programs – the filmmaker's view

Chapters Three and Four documented the stories of Tom Manefield and Bill Steller as early ABC television and documentary filmmakers. Manefield and Steller shared many behind the scenes moments that shed light on the creative environment that existed during the inception, creation, and production of *Chequerboard*, as well as memories of other early ABC productions. Their stories tell of the commitment of both filmmakers to their craft and of their cinema verite or direct cinema filming style. Manefield and Steller also revealed how the work of other filmmakers influenced their filmmaking techniques and treatments. They discussed their political beliefs and their thoughts about the influence, if any, of these beliefs on their films and filmmaking. In addition, the words of one of their filmmaking contemporaries, Storry Walton, woven through the stories of Manefield and Steller corroborated their stories.

In this chapter another early ABC documentary filmmaker, Max Donnellan, tells his story. By contrast however, while Manefield and Steller discussed their memories and involvement with *Chequerboard*, Donnellan's memories include his involvement working as director on another ABC social documentary program, *A Big Country*. Donnellan's memories also document his early career in ABC television and the on the job training he received through its training scheme. His story further details and corroborates those by Steller and Walton about the supportive creative environment that evolved during the early

years in ABC television. Like Manefield, Steller, and Walton, Donnellan reveals his filmmaking heroes and talks about those who he believes influenced his work as a filmmaker. Similarly, where Steller and Walton revealed their political beliefs when they worked at the ABC, Donnellan talks about his political beliefs and their influence on his filmmaking.

In my role as researcher and as someone who has, as a result of research for this study, recently come to terms with long held personal fears of difference, making contact with Manefield, Steller, and Walton proved challenging. Making contact with Donnellan was just as challenging, but for different reasons.

Making contact

As a point of clarification, Max Donnellan is one of the subjects in my study in addition he is married to my friend and colleague, ABC senior archives researcher Wendy Borchers. Ms Borchers has been instrumental in assisting my research of the four filmmakers through her continued encouragement of my research and through providing some of the ABC archival information that informs this study. For ten years, I worked along side Ms Borchers in ABC Television Archives, and came to know Donnellan both professionally and personally as a result. It is for this reason that in my role as researcher I faced more of a challenge of maintaining objectivity in documenting Donnellan's story. As has been the case with each of the filmmakers of this study, the documentary filmmakers' emotional connection to their films, as suggested by Ivens (1939) and Bakker (1999), is a key element. Emotional connection has also

proved to be a key element in my research into the work and careers of the four filmmakers. At times, this emotional element emerged in my analysis of their films which sometimes became subjective whereby a closer empathetic analysis emerged. That is, my emotional connection heightened my sensitivity to the lived experiences of the four filmmakers and to their skill as filmmakers to evoke an emotional reaction to their films and to the lived experiences of those they filmed.

I first contacted Donnellan by phone in March 2006 and asked if he would be interested in telling his story as an early ABC documentary filmmaker. Like Manefield, Steller, and Walton before him, Donnellan was at first a little hesitant, but also curious. Eventually, he too warmed to the idea and consented to be interviewed during my proposed Sydney trip in June 2006. As before, I forwarded a list of my proposed questions as a guide and to help Donnellan prepare for the interview.

I met with Donnellan on June 5, 2006, in his [and Wendy's] home in Chandos Street, Crows Nest in Sydney. I had been invited into this home many times over the years and enjoyed the warm hospitable atmosphere it always offered and which was evident still that morning. In many homes the kitchen is considered the heart of the home and the kitchen table where most discussions occur, Donnellan's was no different. Before the interview commenced and as we chatted about everyday things and began reminiscing Donnellan prepared a pot of tea for us. I placed my tape recorder and notes as unobtrusively as possible nearby and we sat down at the kitchen table to a cup of tea and biscuits. Adept,

obviously keen to be ready for the interview, and having taken lead from my list of questions, Donnellan had written up notes prior to my arrival. These notes helped him to recall and to put in order his experiences as trainee, floor manager, director, producer, and executive producer during his years in ABC television. I began the interview by asking Donnellan how he came to work in television, this question took him back to when he was seventeen and living in Melbourne.

Max Donnellan – documentary filmmaker

At seventeen, Donnellan found himself living in a Melbourne boarding house. He had a job at a company called Jarvis Walker Fishing Rod Factories in Deepdene making fishing rods, but he was tired and bored with the work. In his spare time, he played football for Bourne. Echoing Steller's filmmaking pathway to ABC television, an opportunity for Donnellan's future to change arose. For as Donnellan recalled:

> Two of the chaps in the football team were working at the ABC, (one in building sets and the other one in staging), and they gave me the name of someone and suggested I give them a call, that someone happened to be head of staging.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Working as a stagehand sounded very interesting, fun, and exciting to him. Two weeks after his job interview, Donnellan received an answer, "we want you to start on Monday, at 7.30. So that was pretty exciting" (Donnellan 2006). August 17th, 1959, the day he got the job, is still remembered by him as if it was yesterday, "because it changed my whole life, it gave me direction" (Donnellan 2006). On his first day, he met his now long time friend, Barry Crook. Looking back, Max Donnellan (2006) recalls that the "first twenty odd years [working in

ABC television] was such a challenge and it was adventurous, every day was a different adventure".

After successfully completing the ABC's training scheme, Donnellan began work as a floor manager in 1963 in Melbourne, until 1967, when he went to Townsville as the senior presentation controller.

> In 1964/65 I applied for a job in Brisbane as a presentation officer, it was a 16 month temporary appointment, I was single, I was 23 years of age, what a great opportunity. I could do the work with my eyes closed and they paid my way up there, they covered my cost for living mainly up there, not all of it, but some of it, and I got to work there for 15 – 16 months. During that period the program director was an ex Rural officer from Melbourne, Peter Dell, and he realised what I was capable of doing and within two or three months of doing the presentation job he gave me a job as a producer which I never had before which immediately opened the other door of doing studio programs. Making programs there, doing outside broadcasts, motorkhanas, church services, doing cricket. So that was a wonderful opportunity. It was incredible! Then a vacancy for three months came up in Townsville. A senior presentation officer up there was taking long service leave, and I was asked if I'd be interested in doing that for three months, which I did immediately, because again it was a paid holiday, and I had a wonderful time doing my own thing up there and loved it and again it was a team effort everything was a team effort. It was like a big family. The whole ABC during that period and the early days of 59 when I was there right through for the next 10, 15 to 20 years was a big family. And we learnt from each other and we helped each other.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

From 1969 to 1972, Donnellan worked as a director on documentary and multi-camera studio productions in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Hobart.

> Working for something we were very proud to be with. You never worked for the ABC for money, that's for sure. You worked there because you believed what it was doing and you loved the people that you were doing it with. I had three months there I then returned I went back to Melbourne, got bored very quickly in Melbourne, but the word had got around that I'd been producing in Brisbane and a vacancy came up down in Tassie for three months. Meanwhile, I'd applied for a permanent position in Townsville, I went down to Tassie and worked on a current affairs program down there called *Line Up* as a studio director/producer alternatively. Did

> the show five nights a week, which was again family effort. Tremendous stuff, ground breaking material. Then, I was appointed to the job in Townsville so I went up there and worked there for the next 18 months. And then I came back, they were short of a director in Brisbane and I went down there directing on TDT (*This DayTonight*), where there was Kerry O'Brien, Andrew Olle, Alan Hogan, so many chaps who were on the brink of making their own way into the television industry.
> (Donnellan 2006)

In 1972, he was seconded to BBC TV 2 in London for colour experience. Donnellan recalled this time in his career:

> I decided to take 12 months long service leave because colour was coming in '74 and I wanted to go overseas to see if I could get some colour experience before it came here. I then put in for 12 months [leave]. I had two weeks attachment to the BBC which was arranged by management here, and found my way over there stayed with some friends for the first couple of weeks. Did my two weeks attachment which was marvellous, conned another two weeks out of the BBC rather than the ABC. The ABC paid me for two, but I got an extra two weeks from the BEEB [BBC].
> (Donnellan 2006)

Donnellan began working on a BBC program called *Late Night Line Up* which he recalled "Was again an open ended type program that went to air at 9.30 at night and it discussed everything. It was opened ended [which meant] people could phone in" (Donnellan 2006), similar to today's interactive television. The program had seven directors for seven nights a week and it was difficult to get a job on the program. However, as Donnellan recalled he ended up being in the right place at the right time when:

> One afternoon they wanted to do a quick interview in the Studio and there was no-one around, so they said to me 'you've done this sort of stuff before', I said 'yes I have', they said 'would you mind directing this one for us', I said 'not at all'. I thoroughly enjoyed it, obviously they were pleased with what I did, they said 'look there's nothing around at the moment, but put your details and send them to us you never know'. So I gave them my address etceteras and a friend who I was living with, he was an editor with the same program, film editor, about three or four weeks later he came home and said 'I've been talking to so and so they're short of directors and he wanted to know what happened to your application…I said 'why?'…he said 'well they need somebody and realised that you work for them'. So, I immediately raced my application down and was working with them a week later. Now when

> I got there, there were four directors, they'd lost three, I had a month's contract, in that month three more directors went off and that left two of us directing for seven nights a week.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

How Donnellan found his way back to Australia is further proof of the adage being in the right place at the right time and having the right experience. During his time with the BBC, Donnellan recalled:

> Colour was slowly inserting itself here [in Australian television]. It wasn't being transmitted then, but they were building colour studios and the person responsible for that was called Ray McDonald, who I happened to run into in the BBC Club Bar. He looked at me and said 'what the hell are you doing here!?' Because I worked with him, he was a studio supervisor in Melbourne years ago…I said 'I'm working for the BBC'…he said 'my god! What are you doing? …. I said 'I'm directing …' he said 'that's fantastic! .... you'll have a job in colour as soon as you come back [to Australia]'. So, the right person at the right place at the right time….so it opened doors and I did it all on my own to gain that experience. I took a gamble, but I just happened to be there at just the right place and right time and it worked. So when I came back here I'd had colour experience, I had documentary experience in a form, live studio commitment. So I was on the list of sort of saying well we need this done we know who to get.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Following his return from England, Donnellan then worked as producer and director using multi-camera and film in news and current affairs from 1974 to 1980. As measure of Donnellan's expertise, flexibility, adaptability, and versatility as an ABC filmmaker from 1980 onwards, and because of his sporting background and multi-camera experience, for the next fifteen years he moved into sporting programs as Executive Producer. As such he was Executive Producer of Saturday Rugby League between 1981 and 1987 and the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982. He produced showjumping; polo; Australian Surf Lifesaving Titles; the pentathlon program; the Women's World Cup hockey between 1984 and 1986; highlights of the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh in 1986; ten-pin bowls between 1986 and 1988; Test Cricket between

1985 and 1990; baseball, snooker, and boxing between 1986 and 1987; netball coverage between 1989 and 1991; the World Netball Championships in 1991; and the Super League between 1990 and 1993. He also produced the Papal Mass, the Anzac Day marches, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial March, the Coral Sea Commemorative Service live from the *U.S.S. Blue Ridge*, and an eight-hour live music festival from Broome in Western Australia called "Stompem Ground". During the last few years of his career Donnellan was also kept busy as producer/director for ABC Marketing (TV) producing commercial and corporate videos between 1995 and 1998.

> Oh I'm glad I had the variety shows, no, no, I had a lot of fun. I liked the mixture. And it was all learning, everything was different, and watching others, how they operate. You learn from watching others. And what you do is you see people that don't handle a situation well, and what you do is you don't….you watch how other people handle that well and you say I must remember that next time maybe that will happen to me.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

Political beliefs

Donnellan's political beliefs and his approach to his documentary filmmaking, are separate and unconnected entities. He spoke candidly about his political beliefs and suggested that a strong moral and ethical foundation underpinned his view of his role as filmmaker. However, when asked if these beliefs influenced his work, he stated:

> My political beliefs have always leant towards the Australian Labor Party. However, this has never, ever influenced my policy when making a documentary, which would have been improper and immoral. As a producer of a documentary, it is necessary to tell the true and honest story of the chosen subject, nothing whatsoever to do with any personal sympathies or philosophy's
>
> (Donnellan, pers.comm, 18 November 2009)

Like Manefield, Walton, and Steller, making documentaries was about telling the stories of Australian people and their lives within Australian society through an honest and frank approach to filming that showed the truth of their situations. Manefield suggested that *Chequerboard* was non-judgemental and that any judgement was left up to the audience. A similar perspective is reflected in Donnellan's statement that, producing documentaries had "nothing whatsoever to do with any personal sympathies or philosophies" (Donnellan, pers.comm.18 November 2009, p.1) and that he left it up to people to form their own opinions about the stories of those he filmed.

However, this aspect of non-judgement not withstanding, the radical and often controversial approach regarding program content and the kinds of issues covered by *Chequerboard*, Donnellan recalled *Chequerboard*:

> Was different. That was a radical sort of change, a challenge, and very confronting. I mean the issues were drugs, sex, and rock and roll, all those sorts of things, and that was excellent stuff because a lot of the networks wouldn't go near it, too dangerous for them.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

The danger lay in the risk of loss of income in terms of the reliance of television networks on advertising sponsorship and revenue required to fund commercial television station production output. The ABC's Government funding on the other hand allowed a freedom and flexibility, as Steller (2006) contends, which was not possible to commercial television documentary filmmakers.

Donnellan corroborates Steller's contention that without perceived government interference or influence journalists and filmmakers had:

> A lot more freedom, a lot more political influence, meaning people like managing directors …I mean MD's must have hated *TDT* and

> *Four Corners* because a politician would be on the phone to them next day and he'd be saying I felt that was biased. Being managing director would have been a hell of a job.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Further, Donnellan argues that the ABC's lack of advertising and income that it attracted had an impact which meant that ABC filmmakers enjoyed a freedom unencumbered by sponsorship. ABC reporters realised that they had to be as balanced as possible, but that:

> How you say things, how you influence something or phrase something, can be an affront to someone who doesn't agree with you. So it's that influence all the time. When the Liberal Party were in power they put their own people in to be chair people, the Labor Party did it when they were in power.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Donnellan corroborates Walton (2006) and Pullan's (1986) comments in relation to the issue of political belief and early ABC filmmakers and filmmaking. Challenging and confronting and radical issues began emerging from social documentary and transitioning to current affairs as early as 1964, with the controversial sacking of the *Four Corners'* executive director, Allan Ashbolt, the producer, John Power, and reporter John Penlington, Donnellan reflected on the incident as he recalled that in those days:

> You would read the headlines of the paper every morning [and there] was something out of *TDT*, just about, I mean we were making news not just reporting news, in those days the ABC was making news.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Filmmaking heroes

Commensurate with those of Manefield, Steller, and Walton, Donnellan's primary filmmaking heroes were those with whom he worked. They came from across various areas of filmmaking technique and skill, from feature films and

documentary, from directors and production crews, and from the Australian and international film industry.

Those who have influenced Donnellan's approach to filmmaking and the treatments he employed include in Australia - ABC TV producer/director Godfrey Phillip, ABC TV drama producer Allan Burke, ABC TV sports presenter Norman May, ABC TV technical producer Ted Reynolds. In England, they include BBC TV executive producer Rowan Ayers, as well as British journalist Joan Bakewell and renowned British natural history documentary filmmaker and broadcaster David Attenborough.

Godfrey Phillip was producer director of the ABC children's series *Adventure Island* (1967-1972) on which Donnellan worked as floor manager in Melbourne after returning from Queensland in 1969.

Described by Donnellan as one of the cleverest directors he'd ever met, he explained that for Phillip:

> It [what and how he wanted filming to proceed] was all in his mind. He used to be able to run a ruler down a script and know exactly where his cameras were on the floor, and just exactly go to which particular camera was going to cover that particular action. The speed with which he used to do that at was absolutely phenomenal!…..He was seeing it in his mind before he even got on the floor. The story was there, he knew the set, he knew what part of the set, and he used to just tick off exactly which camera was covering it, and what lens that camera had…..He was incredible, absolutely amazing. Never saw him get flustered. Never saw him get confused or upset, or angry. He used to thorough enjoy it and he did four programs in two days.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

Phillip influenced Donnellan through the amount of work he put into filming and his attention to detail. Donnellan explained that he learned to understand and know if and when something went wrong where the scene had to be picked up from and that he needed to be ready for redirection from Phillip.

> We were standing by ready to go, rather than him telling us where he wants us to be, you know they want to transition and all that sort of stuff. But he was a genius, he was just so clever.
> (Donnellan 2010)

Another to influence Donnellan was Alan Burke who worked as an ABC drama producer in Sydney.

> I worked on [an ABC production of] *Macbeth* with him; he came from Sydney down to Melbourne to do *Macbeth*. And he was another very cool, totally controlled customer…..Again, never got worried or concerned or upset or angry or uptight. He just knew exactly where he was and exactly where he wanted to pick it up from…Absolute genius too, they were very rare people.
> (Donnellan 2010)

ABC sports presenter Norman May was yet another of those who influenced Donnellan's approach to his work and filmmaking. Donnellan described May as "One of the most professional commentators I've ever worked for…..He did his homework". May presented the ABC Sports Award and according to Donnellan "knew more about the people and their career than they knew about it themselves" (Donnellan 2010).

> He was just so professional, never swore in front of a microphone. Every microphone as far as he was concerned was open, even though they weren't. He just never lost his cool, total control again.
> (Donnellan 2010)

From another area of influence came the late Ted Reynolds, an ABC technical producer in lighting. As Donnellan explained:

> I just recently went to the funeral [of Reynolds]. He was just so cool with light, he was just such a gentleman and such a pleasure to work with, the priority was the program.
> (Donnellan 2010)

Technical people, according to Donnellan, "were difficult because a lot of them didn't like production". He recalled that they'd make things difficult for the producer and upset a production. Furthermore, as he recalled "some people just

weren't production types, they were mechanical type people and they weren't artistic" (Donnellan 2010).

> As someone said there's one guy [whose name I won't mention] who was known as the cork in the arsehole of progress. He was terrible, absolutely terrible. He did everything he could to make life difficult for production.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

"Not Ted. Ted would bend backwards trying to assist any production and would take any requests from any direction", by contrast, Ted was "very positive all the way, even upsetting his own TPs [technical producers]" (Donnellan 2010).

Others who had an influence on Donnellan came from the British film and television industry. He was seconded to work for the BBC just before colour came to Australian television in 1975. While there he became acquainted with the late Rowan Ayers who was executive producer on BBC TV2 on *Late Night Line Up* (1964-1972), *The Old Grey Whistle Test* (1971-1987), *Film Night* (1972), *Up Sunday* (1972-1973), *Open Door* (1973) all of which were programs that went live to air five or six nights a week. Donnellan explained that at any one time Ayers was in charge of six crews of about seven people each. Ayers was highly respected and regarded by those he worked with and was "Just a superb man to work with" (Donnellan 2010).

BBC journalist Joan Bakewell worked on *Late Night Line Up* (1964-1972) and is described by Donnellan as "the thinking man's crumpet….. She was stunning and brilliant in her research and her interviews and very highly regarded right throughout the BBC and right throughout England as a presenter" (Donnellan 2010).

Finally, David Attenborough who during the time when Donnellan worked there, was head of BBC 2. Again, Donnellan's estimation of Attenborough was that he was a man who:

> Commanded and had respect, in a quiet calm manner. He was as you see him on air today. The same coolness regarded extremely highly by his crew and his team, but just got tired or administration and wanted to get out of the management system and go back to make programs which he did, and most successfully.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

The primary element of each of these people was that "all had cool calm, never lost their temper, total control, regarded by all, highly regarded and respected. They were something special" (Donnellan 2010). As for himself, Donnellan admitted "Oh, I've lost it now and again that's for sure, but these guys, I never saw them lose it, never saw them, if they did, never in public that's for sure" (Donnellan 2010). He further emphasized that the people he talked about had:

> A massive impression on your career and the way you operate. You see how well they're regarded so you try and do the same thing and behave in the same manner and gain the same respect. [For instance,] Well you are basically there to handle whatever may happen, and when you are live to air you've got to be prepared for anything and we learnt on being live to air. I think when you are recording and things go wrong you can tend [to] I suppose [let] other people sometimes upset you when they show incompetence or inability to understand or communicate. Because that's what this game's all about, communication.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

In the case of Walton, his influences are similar spanning Australian and international filmmakers. The influences on his filmmaking of things Australian, "were few, but very strong" (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2). Walton first saw the film *The Overlanders* (1946) when he was a schoolboy. This feature film told the story of a cattle drive across Australian during World

War II and was produced by Ealing Studios, England, and written and directed by Scotsman, Harry Watt. A similarly themed story was told more recently by Australian filmmaker Baz Luhrmann in his film *Australia* (2008). Each film depicts their producer/director's sense of things Australian. *The Overlanders* (1946):

> Was however the first time I had seen my own country on the screen and the first time I heard the Australian accent in a film. I was captivated. I already recognised the dichotomy of the familiar bush in which I was growing up and the English films we saw on rare visits to the cinema - exotic fare, and not wholly owned.
> (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2)

Canadian filmmaker Ted Kotcheff was another who influenced Walton's approach to filmmaking. Kotcheff "entered my pantheon of heroes" with *Wake in Fright* (1971). For Walton, this film was "the truest expression of an Australian ethos in a contemporary film I had seen - and made by an amazingly perceptive Canadian" (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2).

Other filmmakers that influenced Walton include, Desmond Wilcox and Richard Thomas both of whom Walton worked with on *Man Alive* for the BBC. These filmmakers were among those "who influenced me deeply" (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2). As Walton explained:

> Desmond Wilcox was the creator and boss of the celebrated BBC TV social documentary series *Man Alive* on which I worked for three years when based in London in the late 60s. Wilcox was the finest story editor I ever worked for, with a quick and unerring eye for the story structure of documentary, and an unswerving supporter of his directors' and reporters' work in a series that often generated controversy with the BBC hierarchy and among the public.
>
> Richard Thomas, the British filmmaker to whom I was assigned when I started work as a director at *Man Alive*, has been a lasting influence. He is a meticulous filmmaker. Every aspect of a film required detailed attention - painstaking research and analysis, hours with his editors crafting the structure. Memorably, I never worked with anyone who wrestled so hard with the reality-altering

> nature of the act of filming, to preserve and express the integrity of the people who were his subjects. Well into his seventies, he is still making films and battling with the truth of things. That concern for the truth I cherish above everything.
>
> (Walton 2010, pers.comm. 21 January 2010, p.2)

Making documentary films

Donnellan's experience learning on the job and through the ABC's Training Scheme as well as influences from other filmmakers shaped the filmmaker he became. Like his colleagues, Donnellan's involvement in this training scheme meant that he received training across a range of film and television production skills which developed an adaptability, flexibility, and professional approach required in the process of making documentary films. The training scheme "was a brilliant training ground. It was the best teaching/training ground you could possibly get. You couldn't learn that sort of stuff out of books" (Donnellan 2006). Donnellan reiterates his fellow filmmakers' comments about the valuable training ground offered by ABC television, and its Training Scheme in those early days, when he explained further that:

> There was a pool of floor manager. There was a pool of staging people. There was a pool of stagehands, a pool of props men, all doing rosters and all doing a variety of shows. It was quite a large crowd, I mean there was something like ten or fifteen floor managers. There were that many shows going, there were two major big studios, one smaller studio that used to look after news and children's programs, and then the two big studios looked after light entertainment, drama, *Women's World* [1956], you were continually changing sets 24 hours a day almost seven days a week.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

The training offered meant that at any time Donnellan and others like him, were required to be ready to adapt to the different production needs as they were presented at any given time of the day or night. One night on the final show of a

light entertainment series *The Annette Kluger Show*, the crew was short one man. Echoing the well worn entertainment industry tradition of "getting a big break", Donnellan without much warning and who had started at 7.30 am that day, was called upon to work until 11.30 pm. "I did, and worked the show which was the first experience I had on live entertainment" (Donnellan 2006). This moment proved to be the most exciting thing he had ever done, "it was just great fun, I realised that I'd found my niche….I couldn't wait to come back to work the next day" (Donnellan 2006).

The versatility instilled from the beginning in ABC trainees, is highlighted as he recalled on-the-set training. He explained much of the training comprised bringing in sets, putting sets behind people, and flying in screens with different lighting on them; basically putting the set in, working the show, and pulling the set out again. Everything was live; rehearsals would be for a couple of days beforehand. Twenty-four hour rotation shift work became the norm. Working from 7.00am until 3.30pm, the studios would be set up for the day's jobs such as children's programs. The shift from 3.00pm until 11.30pm would come in and work the shows through the afternoon and evening; and the shift from 11.00pm until 7.30 am the next morning would come in and take out the sets during the night and put in those for the next day (Donnellan 2006). Some of the skills learnt included rigging the studios, putting the sets in, dressing the sets, and working with props. Donnellan validated Walton's early comment about trainee support, as he recalled "If you showed any potential in any particular field you were given open opportunity to go and do that" (Donnellan 2006).

For the first three or four years of ABC television, both Melbourne and Sydney were stand-alone stations meaning that they were not part of an interconnected network because there were no coaxial cables yet in place. In order to progress a career, trainees worked through a training system. Donnellan (2006) explained that training progression meant that for example from beginning as a staging trainee one could go on to learn props, and then on to opportunities to learn to be a floor manager (the person in control of the studio on the floor). Acting as the producer's mouthpiece on the floor, the floor manager directed talent and set changes. From being a floor manager one could progress to becoming a presentation controller, which meant putting programmes to air and running some of the station at night; from being a presentation controller one could move up to being a studio supervisor in charge of the whole network transmission. Like Walton and Steller, Donnellan also emphasised that as trainees they received much encouragement all the way through their traineeship. Trainees could for instance, act in a particular position for a twelve month period before applying for permanency, or, one could be placed in a position while someone was on leave. This might occur many times, but all the while, trainees gained knowledge of the whole system, which thereby increased job prospects within the institution. At the end of his first four years, Donnellan had reached the level of Floor Manager – "running incredible amount of different sort of shows, education, children's, dramas, light entertainment, news, gardening, women's programs, *Women's World*, *Panorama*, religious, *People* programs, interviewing people live in the studio" (Donnellan 2006). *Women's*

World first went to air November 8, 1956, its presenter Mary Rossi (Borchers 2006, p.1).

There were also, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, enormous opportunities offered by placement in regional areas such as Rockhampton or Townsville, which in those days had both radio and television. As a result of decisions made because of ABC policy changes, and technological developments such as satellite telecommunication and the introduction of a new current affairs program *The National* that went to air March 4, 1985, after twenty-two years of broadcasting ABC television closed its Rockhampton television operations in 1985. When vacancies arose, or when someone was appointed to go to an overseas ABC position, "they'd bring them down [to Sydney] first up, and put another potential trainee who showed potential in behind that person" (Donnellan 2006). Sent for a period of ten to twelve months, many reporters and production people were doing their own thing, "you were basically the regional producer, working with a three camera studio or a two camera studio" (Donnellan 2006). ABC reporters who have come out of this kind of experience include, Andrew Olle (Townsville), Alan Hogan and Chris Masters who worked for a time for the ABC in Rockhampton.

The industry technologies were continually changing and developing, almost on a daily basis. Donnellan recalled it was:

> Fun making the programs although we were very committed to what we were doing we enjoyed it thoroughly and you couldn't swap it for anything else. It was just better than working as a clerk in a bank and driving a taxi or driving bus or, every day every single day you never knew exactly what was going to happen in those first twenty or thirty years.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Improvisation became part of ABC television filmmaking. As a direct result of the creative environment within ABC television, “we even brought about the change at times” (Donnellan 2006). As mentioned earlier, the style and format of ABC Television was based on the BBC style of television. For example, “ABC television used a lot of improvisation particularly in sporting coverage we became very, very adventurous in our coverage of sport, we had coverage everywhere” (Donnellan 2006). In television’s early days, commercial networks bought programs from overseas, rather than making them. In contrast, the ABC had a mandate to produce shows with Australian content. Sport played a significant role in this and according to Donnellan:

> Had a monopoly on basically all the sport in this country, from Australian Rules, to rugby league, to rugby union, to swimming championships, to surfing carnivals, to golf, ABC television was the master of coverage of sport throughout Australia.
> (Donnellan 2006)

Eventually, commercial stations “realised the potential” of sports coverage to address their broadcasting responsibilities, as well as to attract “damn good ratings” (Donnellan 2006). This in turn, led to attracting sponsorship and the ability to “go over and beat out offers for contracts” leading over almost a thirty year period, to ABC television losing the cricket coverage to name just one (Donnellan 2006).

Again, in the early days, the multi camera system was all that was in use. Everything was live-to-air, there were four or five cameras in the studio, and editing live-to-air was common. For instance, anything happening was of visual interest and newsworthy as exemplified by the kind of events covered live-to-air

by the ABC included in January 1957; one the first OB [outside broadcast] telecasts was covering repair work done to one of the Sydney Harbour Bridge pylons (Borchers 2006, p. 2). At other times, OB vans used to have six cameras in them in order to cover the football. Every camera had a responsibility. They used rack lenses, and it took time to switch lenses around to another 40" lens in order to create a close up, and to get a tight shot:

> Sometimes they did it when they were on air so you saw accidentally many times the camera lens going round to a proper lens, and this happened on live dramas continually, happened on live entertainment shows because all the studio cameras were rotating lenses as well.
> (Donnellan 2006)

The width of lens was relative to its use. For instance, the 2" was fairly wide, the 3" was tighter, the 5" was a bit tighter, and then and the 8" was a close up, and were used without moving the camera. Dollying the camera which involved a tripod mounted on a moving rail platform that can be pushed forwards, backwards, or sideways smoothly enabling the camera to follow the action, was never done using an 8" because it was too tight. Instead, a 2" would be used, which would give a wide shot and allow for more flexibility. Essentially, the multi camera experience allowed editing of the program as it was going to air (Donnellan 2006). Different needs required different camera techniques.

The multi camera was well suited to sporting programs. However, Donnellan revealed that while multi camera work became second nature to him, he was petrified when told he was going to do an *A Big Country* documentary called "The Buck Runners*"* (1969). "I only had one camera, and I thought, how the hell am I going to do it!" (Donnellan 2006). Donnellan's concern about the

editing process and about how he would be able to film the documentary emerged with the making of this episode.

It was new territory for Donnellan as he explained:

> With single camera, I'd never been used to single camera I'd always had half a dozen cameras and I used to edit it as I went along, you just cut at the shots you knew were right. But when you go out on single camera that when you've got to work a lot harder, a lot more hard yakka. ….But everyone helped, sometimes the stories fell through….everyone threw their weight in behind the program.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

After speaking with the editor on the program, he decided to film cutaways for later editing into the program. Therefore, he set about getting shots of rider's legs going into stirrups, close-ups of horse's hooves, and everything that the editor might need, using the heavy 16mm Arri camera, (Donnellan 2006).

Filming was "a lot harder with one camera, because you've got to put in cutaways". For instance, Donnellan explained further:

> You may get an interview with somebody, but you've got to work out what we'll get a shot of if I don't want to listen to everything he's saying. I need to get a cutaway of the person that's interviewing him so he can get a 'noddy' [a nodding head shot], or you need to get his hands if he's nervous or something like that.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

Changes in cameras, such as the previously mentioned Éclair, freed up the cameraman, and contributed to a more realistic and aesthetic visual production. In the studio, the new 2-8 inch lens was a zoom, and it did everything that the four lenses could do on that camera, but never needed to be changed; it was a zoom-in and zoom-out. This new lens enabled the cameraman to come out to a wide track and zoom in. It stopped a lot of the turret turning on air. One of the cameras in the studio always had a 2-8 inch lens. As a result, shooting patterns changed at times, giving much more flexibility and freedom, which helped the

process of production and direction. Later, cameras became smaller and easier to handle, and slowly as the dolly machine improved, it was easier and much more flexible, in that it was easy to push, and easy to manoeuvre (Donnellan 2006).

All these new changes and developments meant that producing programs became much quicker, thereby speeding up the whole production process:

> Everybody had to be tied to the wall. What I mean by that is, all cameras had a cable running into a wall somewhere, anybody that had earphones had to have a lead going into the wall and when you've got cameras running across a studio floor many a time a camera would go over out lead which would bounce the camera and you'd see that on air it would happen to be tracking on air, and also nine times out of ten it would cut your lead and you'd lose communication and the only way to talk back was to go to a squawk box on the wall. Eventually they got compact hearing so that there was no lead required.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Radio earphones and walkie-talkies enabled compact hearing; however, cabling was still required for the cameras. The new lightweight cameras needed cable and a human, known as a cable-dragger, to drag the cables. The cable-dragger was responsible for looking after the cabling during and after program production making sure there was no criss-crossing of cables. Originally, there was one person as the cable-dragger; sometimes however, depending of the size of the crane used, two would be necessary. There were also people who just wound the cable back in and out again. Another piece of equipment used was the vision mixer. At the touch of a button, this machine enabled views of about ten pictures for selection. Yet another would allow editing on-air live. Over twenty years, and with computerisation, the size of these machines decreased markedly. Starting out at about four feet long and two feet wide, eventually they were two feet long and one foot wide, "and yet they could do twice as much as the one that was four feet, so you were learning all the time" (Donnellan 2006).

The concept of learning on-the-job had even greater emphasis and meaning as technological developments increased in number. According to Donnellan, who worked in a studio everyone had specific contributions to the eventual outcome of programs. The technical producer was responsible for the overall technical quality of the show, and there was a lighting person, a sound person, a vision mixer, and a person in control of the camera video unit. The camera video unit, or CVU, enabled light manipulation and picture quality adjustment. Everybody had a responsibility, those on the studio floor, the cameraman, the assistant; all came together as a team. The producer/director was the only one who could "call the shots", the floor manager was in charge of everything on the floor, and he had to make sure the floor functioned exactly to plan. Planning was essential. Outside broadcasts were the only things not particularly planned because "you were never too sure what was going to happen" (Donnellan 2006). Cameras covering a football match would go in certain positions, one with the long lens on it for getting the close ups. Planning meetings were a regular occurrence involving technical people, technical producers and sometimes senior cameramen if it was for drama or a light entertainment show, as well, lighting and talent (the lead talent of the program), the director, and the floor manager. Depending on the complication of moves required during a possible two-week rehearsal period with the talent in a hall, the props person would need to attend meetings. A hall would be used for rehearsals with the set marked out on the floor with tape, after which the set out be put into the studio on a Saturday/Sunday. By Monday, for instance, the set was available,

and a rehearsal with the talent in costumes would occur. Work on lighting and camera arrangements continued all day Monday and Tuesday; Wednesday afternoon there would be a last rehearsal, a full dress rehearsal of the whole show. “Then you’d go live to air at 8 o’clock that night” with little margin for error and under immense pressure (Donnellan 2006).

Donnellan was one of the first to do a producer’s course which was conducted at the old ABC studios in King’s Cross, Sydney. Others on the same producers course included “Ric Birch – the guy that did the opening of the Sydney Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games in Brisbane” (Donnellan 2010), as well as Alan Bateman and Tony Wheeler. Being involved in the producer’s course meant that everything that was done:

> Was as if it was live to air. You’d be doing an interview with a couple of people and someone would walk through the set, deliberately. And you just had to handle it. Or someone would just get up out of chair and walk off the shot. And you just had to think do you follow them or don’t you follow them. And of course, learning in live television was the only way to learn real television…….Even if you are recording you treat it as live. You treat it as if it’s going on air always, that’s they way you do it.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

As in Donnellan’s case he learned by observation how to handle certain situations and to remember that:

> If anything like that happens to me I’m going to handle it the same way rather than losing your cool, or not knowing, you learn from other people. And also you learn what not to do….
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

In Donnellan’s estimation, the people he has mentioned in telling his story that have had an influence on his approach to filmmaking were “exceptional”. However, he also points out that there were those people he often worked with who were not very competent, “that weren’t that good, and did lose their temper

and did swear on air" (Donnellan 2010). For example, an incident of this happened to him in Melbourne:

> A guy called George Trevair, I think it was, and he was doing the World Championship Ballroom Dancing and I was the floor manager with ten thousand people in the stands and he lost his cool a couple of times and swore. I'd never heard anybody swear so much in a van. Foul language. But he'd lost it, he had buggered it up because he lost his cool. That was an appalling exercise.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

Quick to state his admiration for those cool, calm, and controlled filmmakers who influenced him he emphasized that he believed that: "You lead by example basically, and that's when you get cooperation" (Donnellan 2010).

Not always did everything go to plan. However, on certain occasions, this was beneficial to the program in the end. For instance, Donnellan recalled a plan one year during the 1980s for the four-hour coverage for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial March down Anzac Parade in Canberra. It involved up to one thousand people, eleven to twelve handheld cameras, and an aerial camera in a helicopter piloted by Gary Tieshurst. Tieshurst was the original ABC helicopter pilot from 1981 in Sydney, and "was still flying for the ABC in 2006" (Bowden & Borchers 2006, p. 194). Along with the basic coverage of the important events of the parade, an unplanned opportunity arose when Donnellan decided to have camera boys riding on the back of the Veteran's motorbikes. Donnellan thought that a director needs always to be open to suggestions from cameramen who, during times between the important commitment shots, were "free to create as much as they wanted to" (Donnellan 2006).

The collaborative effort of the team effectively worked to allow everyone's eyes to look for that shot, that special shot as seen by the producer,

director, or the floor manager for instance. Handheld cameras allowed amazing flexibility and were most suited to close up shots because in zooming in to a close up with a handheld meant that there was a magnified detectable wobble. Today, the steadicam has been developed from the experimental cameras of the 1980s and 1990s, "nearly every handheld camera's got one and they've worked out straps for them" (Donnellan 2006). However, even with all the technological developments the filmmaker needs always to understand that the story is the most important thing, and, "you can use every effect under sun, but if you don't get the message through, then you've lost it. All effects in my opinion are there to enhance, not to distract" (Donnellan 2006). Donnellan argues that technology is there to improve and enhance the story:

> The cutting of rock shows and the moving of cameras that is now a style that has been accepted. You did that forty years ago, you'd be shot, or twenty years, even thirty years ago!
> (Donnellan 2006)

Another suggested example is the once popular music program *Countdown* (1974-1987), which came out of Melbourne, and where cameramen "could to just about do anything they wanted and it was acceptable, the wilder the better" (Donnellan 2006). Compared to his first working experience on the *Annette Kluger Show*, which did not allow such techniques, doing just about anything had become accepted (Donnellan 2006).

Donnellan argues that the people, the audience, make the final decision on whether something is acceptable or not, not the producers. As part of their responsibility, the producers/directors will try out different techniques, but if those do not work, the public recognises that. With the introduction of colour

television in 1975, Chromakey emerged as special technical innovation, enabling:

> The removal of colour from one image to reveal another 'behind' it. The removed colour becomes transparent, and is otherwise known as colour keying, colour separation overlay, green screen or blue screen. It is typically used for weather forecasts.
> (Bowden & Borchers 2006, p.47)

The three basic colours are yellow, blue, and green and any colour can be keyed, but "the blue and green are mainly used because they are stronger definition" (Donnellan 2006). The importance and impact of television technologies created a heightened appreciation for the projected image of politicians and people in the public eye. Before television there was radio where you could hear but not see the person speaking; television became radio with pictures. With television, politicians realised their image had become vital to their persona:

> They had to look better, they had to dress properly, and some of them even had lessons on how to speak. One of the terrible failures of Arthur Calwell; a brilliant wonderful politician, but terrible for television! He spoke through his nose, and he was up against a man like Menzies who was a wonderful orator, not necessarily a brilliant politician, but a wonderful orator.
> (Donnellan 2006)

Along with all these technical changes came the responsibility of the filmmaker to cohesiveness between his production and his production team. Working in a stressful, pressurised film production environment, requires versatility and adaptability, not only in documentary, but also particularly in drama production. Donnellan offered amusing insights into the kinds of filmmaking experiences that inevitably occur, and that are part of the documentary filmmaking learning process. Unpredictable moments in

filmmaking tell of the need for versatility and flexibility as an ABC documentary filmmaker. Donnellan recalled a time in 1961, before he moved on to directing *A Big Country* episodes, when not only his filmmaking adaptability came to the fore but also his ability to enjoy the unpredictability of filmmaking processes. While he was undertaking a correspondence course for the Leaving Certificate in English literature, and as fate would have it, studying Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, an opportunity came his way to be floor manager for an ABC drama production of this historic play. (See Pic. 8, Appendix E).

> Often during rehearsals, because they were only small scenes, the floor manager would play that particular role. So, we'd get an idea of timing, I played many of the particular roles like the three witches, all that sort of stuff. You'd be playing various roles because you couldn't bring these people (actors) in to read two or three lines, it was just too costly. Well, we shot the battle scene between the English and the Scots, we needed an outdoor scene so we took an OB van up to a place called Mount Macedon in Victoria. There was a wonderful area that had these huge pine trees where we set up a track with a camera, where we had forty odd English, forty odd Scottish, everyone was choreographed. We're looking down this archway of trees and mist, and just out of shot, on the right hand side were the English, and just out of shot on the left hand side were the Scots. I had a loud hailer to speak to them, and I said, there will be two cues, one will be for blood curdling calls, and the next cue will be for action, choreographed action, does everyone get that!, yeah fine....everyone understood. So, what you saw was the picture came up, Alan Burke went back into to the OB van, up came the picture, he said stand by to cue, and there's this magnificent scene of this mist and these huge pine trees, this vast area, and I cued once, and there were blood curdling calls of one Scotsman who came running to the centre and stood there and realised looking around, so you had this scene of a hundred people screaming yelling murder, and this one chap with a sword and a skirt, and no one to fight…it was the funniest sight we'd ever seen in our lives, everyone broke up in the van, Alan Burke laughed himself out of the van.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

In the following pages Donnellan discusses some of the episodes of *A Big Country* and some of the experiences he had making them. *A Big Country* used 16mm film rather than videotape, it ran on a budget around about ten thousand

dollars a program, and adopted a ten-to-one shoot (Donnellan 2006). A ten-to-one shoot meant:

> That a half hour program was approximately about eleven hundred to twelve hundred feet final, to get all that material you'd shoot ten to twelve thousand, and cut out all the other stuff that you didn't want – that was a ten to one shoot.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Donnellan provided an example of the procedure involved. If for instance, an interview was not going well and was without progression, he explained, one could begin again by editing the interview down. If the first part is good, and the middle is rubbish, but the end bit is terribly important:

> You would have to cut that bit in the middle out, to work out some way and let it flow, you'd either put commentary into it or you'd jaunt it by putting a different shot in or a cut away or whatever. So you are looking at a ten to one shoot.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Some shoots ran fifteen-to-one and had to be like that because it was all vision, and with no control of the organising of that vision, "you just had to shoot from the hip when it happened [direct cinema and cinema verite style], you got it, and that is all you could do" (Donnellan 2006). Consequently, the thousands of feet of unwanted footage considered of no value to the program and of no value to anybody were "junked" or destroyed (Donnellan 2006).

As is the case for most of the episodes mentioned here, such as "The Buck Runners" (1969), "Right through the shearing time" (1970), "Ben Hall", (1974), or "Sleeper Cutting", (1971) for example, the issue of national identity or an Australianess mentioned by Walton earlier was also often a sidebar in *A Big Country* episodes. The significance of this aspect is underlined:

> The society which this television program *A Big Country* was setting out to report, while considering itself egalitarian and homogeneous, was a diverse as a program-maker could wish for. By trading on people's

> natural interest in and curiosity about other people, by finding storytellers who could first time, then tell, good stories, *A Big Country* staked a claim of its own, and set about mining the rich fields of Australia: its People and Places, Heroes and Faces, Winners and Losers, Families and Failures, Eccentrics, Anachronism, Mysteries, Myths and Legends.
> (Downes 1988, p.15)

Moreover, like *Chequerboard* and in the Bardic tradition of telling people about their world and what was happening in that world, episodes of *A Big Country* told Australian audiences about who they were and where they came from not only a rural perspective, but also often from an historic rural perspective.

In this regard, before he went to England, Donnellan made an episode of *A Big Country* entitled "The Buck Runners" (1969), which was filmed in Omeo, Victoria. The episode told the story of the horsemen who pursue wild brumbies in the highlands of Australia's Snowy Mountains and followed them on their journey. The episode's inspiration came from Banjo Patterson's *The Man From Snowy River* and:

> The producers of *A Big Country* joined the tried and noted riders of the Omeo High Plains, as they gathered for their dangerous weekly round up of wild horses, and discovered that these bushmen really do love hard riding 'where the wild bush horses are', and learned a great deal about Johnny Riley, the original man from Snowy River, from local identities.
> (ABC 75th Anniversary Timeline 2007, p.1)

Significantly, a location shoot for the program took them to Omeo in the Snowy Mountain region of Victoria highlights whereby aspects of national identity and an Australianess evoked a sense of Australia's history. The task for the episode "The Buck Runners" (1969) was to talk to those remaining mountain riders who actually knew the real Man from Snowy River, and trace the narrative of the Australian poem of the same name by Banjo Patterson. Literally putting

words into pictures, and with the aid of a reading of the poem dubbed over the images, director Donnellan was able to bring to life this poem from opening sequence of the episode. His use of poetic imagery exemplified, in particular, what this poem means to Australia's national identity and what it engenders on an emotional level in the hearts of many Australians. This poetic imagery is seen in the episode's opening sequence which began as follows: a wide panning shot of the Omeo Dargo Range of mountains and countryside, then a wide panning shot of men on horseback galloping through the trees and over rocks with dogs, shouting as they rounded up the horses. Filming this episode was a logistical nightmare, "We had four days up there with them, and it was the most exciting moment of documentary making that I'd ever been involved in"… "I ended up having to shoot with more than one camera because of course when you drive wild horses down through a gully you don't get a second chance" (Donnellan 2006).

Filming single camera action shots increased the difficulty for the filmmaker. As Donnellan explained, "With action shots a lot of stuff are things you can only get once, so you've got to work out exactly where it's going to go. Sometimes you can do multi camera" (Donnellan 2010). For instance, when filming a sequence for "The Buck Runners" (1969), Donnellan ended up holding the camera himself. He explained that he "had three cameras on horses going through the Omeo Plains, with about twenty horses coming down the hill. But you work out what shots are there and you just cut it in" (Donnellan 2010).

> Well, with something like that I had three cameras. I had the cameraman, I had his assistant on another camera and I held a Bell and Howell under a log and the horses went over me.

> And we got probably about ten seconds of that shot, but that's all, but those ten seconds was wonderful!…That was good fun…..We only did that one race down the hill, but we got it all.
> (Donnellan 2010)

The official ABC description noted earlier reverberates with the rhythmic patterns of Banjo's famous poem. *A Big Country* had heard about, "a bunch of chaps" (the experienced horsemen) (Donnellan 2006), who get together and venture into the Omeo Dargo Ranges for three or four days and catch wild horses, or brumbies as they are known.

According to Donnellan, the logistics of this episode were enormous and necessitated an initial survey carried out by him and reporter Colin Munro. Munro was "marvellous! Wonderful sense of humour, got along with everybody, absolutely everybody" (Donnellan 2006). Spending three days at the Omeo Hotel getting to know the people who go out catching wild horses, they explained they were interested in making *A Big Country* documentary, and all were "very keen" (Donnellan 2006). The three Omeo horsemen involved in the episode were, resident Merv Pearson (who knew Johnny Riley - the name of the man from Snowy River), Snowy Mountains pioneer Togo Pendergast, and horseman Jim Flanigan. While he was there making arrangements about dates for the actual brumby roundup and the need for a film crew to be with the horsemen, advice was given the *A Big Country* crew that a four wheel drive was required to drive into the mountains, along with the need for some form of accommodation with the horses (Donnellan 2006). Once these arrangements were made, cameraman Bob Feeney and his assistant Colin Thompson arrived from Sydney, along with Johnny Borne in his first exercise as sound person. For the first day, the crew

met with the people and got to know them better, then after two days of preparation they travelled into the mountains (Donnellan 2006).

> We had four days up there with them, and it was the most exciting moment of documentary making that I'd ever been involved in, and also for Bob Feeney who'd shot a lot of stuff as well. I ended up having to shoot one of the cameras because of course when you drive wild horses down through a gully you don't get a second chance, and so we realised they'd got a few horses, they'd captured them up there, and I set up a camera behind a big log, Bob put his camera somewhere else, and the assistant cameraman, so we had three different angles from everywhere, we got this massive charge of these horses coming down the mountain, a helicopter would have been brilliant, but there was no budget.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Donnellan suggested shooting the episode in colour "because it was absolutely beautiful, but it was before colour and they (the ABC) just couldn't afford the cost of colour" (Donnellan 2006). Working with batteries and generators to power their filming equipment, the crew had the most brilliant adventures of all (Donnellan 2006).

A Big Country episode entitled "36 Wheels" (1975) looked into the world of the road-train truck drivers. Described by Donnellan as a very hard shoot, it was brilliantly photographed by cameraman, Preston Clothier. The episode was filmed along the Sturt Highway, between Katherine and Mt Isa. The story involved filming nine road trains in a row. The road trains pulled "two very long trailers with anything up to a hundred cattle" (Donnellan 2006) each, in a row.

> Noel Buntine, a former truckie, now has 33 road trains valued at $60,000 each operating out of Katherine, traveling west to Meepothana, east to Mt. Isa, and sometimes a far as Brisbane. The men who drive the trucks tell of the work and effort involved in transporting cattle over such a long distance. Hughie Clough was one of the first road-train drivers, who started in 1934 when he had to sometimes make his own roads through the rugged Northern Territory.
>
> (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 24)

Donnellan explained that the episode was shot on a 20/1 zoom, along a road that was at least up to four miles straight and described the photography as superb, "the difficulty we had, the people that drove these trucks we not very good in conversation. You'd ask a question and you'd either get 'Yep!' 'No', 'Dunno" (Donnellan 2006). Problems arose as a result. The interview with owner of the Buntine Roadtrains was "good value" (Donnellan 2006). However, returning with footage, most of which could not be used, Donnellan was faced with the possibility of not having a completed episode. As a way of alleviating the problem, someone suggested a particular Victoria Downs man described as a great conversationalist:

> So we brought him down [to Sydney], he was an ex-road train driver, and he was a great conversationalist, we set him up in camp put a few tinnies there a fire, had some of his mates sitting around and he started telling us experiences that they'd had on road trains and we stopped after a minute and a half… and I said to him look this is going to go out on air and I'm going to have trouble cutting out all those 'F' words.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

As it turned out, the man could not express himself without swearing; it was the humour of his stories. After another try at filming the man telling his stories without swearing, it became obvious to all that filming needed to stop again. Then one final try, but unfortunately:

> Every second word was "f…" you name it! There wasn't a word he didn't know about. He was very entertaining. Preston (Clothier) pulled the eye out of the view finder and said do you want me to keep shooting and I just said forget it…cut the throat…but we sat around there and had one of the best nights we ever had of our life.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

On return to Sydney, with wonderful footage and one good interview, Donnellan had to think of what to do next. "I couldn't even send the tapes to be

transcribed because of the language on it" (Donnellan 2006). Devising to bring in writer Marcus Cooney in order to create a fictional character, Donnellan arranged for Cooney to sit down and listen to all these people and their stories, or pieces with all the language:

> He wrote a character that you never really had to see. So the voice was… 'well when I first started driving road trains I was only 18'….you know, and all these things….he told the stories, but I put different guy's faces up.
> (Donnellan 2006)

The narrator was an actor [unknown] who was brought in because his voice fitted the story. After integrating interviews done with some of the road train drivers and with shots of the drivers checking their tyres, along with other salvageable footage, Donnellan's episode was eventually found to be short by two and a half minutes. John Sparkes, *A Big Country* executive producer, "liked programs to run 29.30, now that's difficult to do exactly" (Donnellan 2006). Unsure what to do and unable to stretch things any more, Donnellan called John Mabey from within the rural department unit. Mabey remarked:

> That's easy Max, have you got any more of that good footage, I said yes, he said put in some music, break it up with some nice bits of wonderful stuff of travelling along the highway and that's what we did, I got it to exactly 29.30.
> (Donnellan 2006)

Donnellan cites this as an example of the invaluable collaboration within ABC television and especially that:

> The beauty of the *Big Country* was that if you were in trouble you could always go to another producer, there was no competition, and they'd come in and say yeah that, because often you'd sat down with a film and you'd shoot for 10 days, you look at the rushes for two days for three days, then you'd sit down there for two weeks, to three weeks to edit the film and sometimes you got so involved in it, you missed it.
> (Donnellan 2006)

Moreover, he revealed an innovative idea that he, and others like him believed, was one of the best ways of testing a particular approach. If you ever "got

caught" and were unsure of the way you were going, the idea was to bring in an ABC tea-lady (Donnellan 2006). This was a unique and inventive approach because the tea-lady represented program audiences and Donnellan could tell immediately by looking and listening to them to see if they loved or did not understand things. This "meant you were being too complicated about that so you had to simplify" (Donnellan 2006). Not only was the tea-lady used as a gauge for the program approach, but also other producers could make constructive suggestions in an atmosphere of healthy competition (Donnellan 2006). "This was the success of *A Big Country* because 'Sparkesie' [John Sparkes] realised he gave many producers, directors, opportunities which they never thought they'd ever have….the camaraderie there was absolutely brilliant" (Donnellan 2006).

Donnellan was director for other *A Big Country* episodes. "Just another race" (1975), was about trotting racehorse champion, Hondo Grattan (See Pic. 9, Appendix E). Described by the ABC as, "A visit to the Loyal Trotting Stud at Bathurst, New South Wales, home of 'Hondo Grattan', Australia's most successful pacer, and his trainer/driver, Tony Turnbull" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 28), this episode focused on the horse, Hondo Grattan. The horse was going to run in its third inter-dominion race. The episode looked at how the achievements of the horse affected the family's way of life. Primarily, the episode is a family story about a wonderful horse. Evidence of the close collaborative efforts undertaken by ABC documentary filmmakers to get to know their topic and those involved was illustrated when some of the *A Big*

Country crew stayed with the family and used their property at Bathurst. Others of the crew stayed in a motel nearby and were with them on a daily basis. The trotting training process was filmed as well as scenes of the family talking with each other, and then later at the racetrack at Harris Park track in Sydney on Friday nights (Donnellan 2006).

"Sounds of country music" (1975) focussed on the Tamworth Country Music scene. Here again, the reporter was Colin Munro, who had worked with Donnellan on the Snowy Mountain brumby roundup episode. Donnellan recalled "he came up with me on 'country music', we had a lovely time trying to find people, it was very big up around Tamworth area" (Donnellan 2006). Rather than looking at the festival, this episode of *A Big Country* was looking at the people associated with country music to find out why they liked the music, what drove them to it, and the stories of individual performers (Donnellan 2006). The episode showed five different performers in a studio, at a radio station, as well as filming them out in the bush "and shot to playback" (Donnellan 2006) of their music which meant footage was taken of the performers out in the bush playing but that there was no live sound. The soundtrack was added later in the production process.

> One property further out of town that had five kids and their band was called The Big Country, so I got them to sing and they wrote a song for me called *A Big Country* which they sang at a broken down property which I put to playback and we used that as the closer.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

"Dingo Country" (1975) was the story on the dingo fence. The episode was filmed near Tibooburra in north-western New South Wales where dingo and sheep had been separated by the thousands of miles of fence that was put in

place. It questioned "whether the dingo is a killer and whether it can survive being poisoned and shot by farmers and trappers along the length of the fence" (ABC Documentary Catalogue 1993, p. 33).

> It was a book ["Dingo King" by author Iain Smith] that had been brought out, this was up at Tibooburra in New South Wales. Clifton Pugh had done a lot of painting out that area, so Clifton was the basis of the story, he was wonderful to talk to, we used the book as the basis, and that worked as *A Big Country*.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Ashton's Circus became the focus of another episode in which Donnellan was involved. Entitled "A Family Show" (1979) the episode told:

> How granddad, grandmum, the whole show itself, the family from grandchildren, how they all perform in the show, they are the base of the show, how they sell all the tickets, make all the costumes, do all the performances, do all the trapeze, do all the clown, do the lot.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

During his interview and in the several conversations that have followed, as Donnellan recalled that his years working in ABC Television in all the different areas from his early training to working in production to directing and being an executive producer, he always expressed a connection to the ABC that remains.

> We all say even though it sounds a bit funny, they were the best years of television, and not just people in my particular field. Technical officers, technical producers, lighting experience, sound, every aspect of television, that was the greatest period in those first twenty odd years was such a challenge and it was adventurous, every day was a different adventure.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Looking back, Donnellan provided a thoughtful retrospective view on what the ABC meant to him, and probably to many other Australians, and which also revealed like Steller and Walton, his continued connection with the ABC, and ABC television in particular.

> I believe that the ABC, in the years that I was there, for the majority of years, was a wonderful reflection on honest reporting, in-depth reporting. It brought to Australians, an enormous amount

> of information, areas of entertainment, education. I would hate to see this country without it. Although, it does get into trouble every now and again it is worth it. I think the ABC has a lot to be proud of what it's done. It's always been a leader in areas of technology, communication, reporting, and when it comes to things that need doing, the ABC does it, and I believe does it damn well!! I'm sure once or twice certain things have happened that maybe shouldn't have, but very rare occasions. I think this country would be lost without it.
>
> (Donnellan 2006)

Further underlining his pride in his filmmaking career and achievements over thirty-eight years, Donnellan concluded:

> I loved every minute of it; there wasn't any part of it I didn't enjoy. Maybe the last year or something I got bored when we maybe we just didn't have any money to make sporting programs, so that was getting boring. That's why I took the package and thought I'm wasting my time here and they're never going to have money to do major sport now…….When Fox came in they had all the big dough, and we had all the commercials, I think when I left sport…our budget was about $6 million, Channel Nine's budget was $85 million, you can't compete with that. $45 million of that was satellites and rights.
>
> Oh I'm glad I had the variety shows, no, no, I had a lot of fun. I liked the mixture. And it was all learning; everything was different, and watching others, how they operate. You learn from watching others. And what you do is you see people that don't handle a situation well, and what you do is you don't….you watch how other people handle that well and you say I must remember that next time maybe that will happen to me.
>
> (Donnellan 2010)

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion:

From the beginning, my dissertation sought to redress the lack of recognition for the work of early ABC social documentary filmmakers by looking at four of them: Max Donnellan, Tom Manefield, Bill Steller, and Storry Walton, who variously produced, directed and created the early ABC documentary series, *Chequerboard* (1969-1975) and *A Big Country* (1969-1992). It also sought to show the influence of cinema verite on the work of these filmmakers and the documentary films they created, and to find evidence of radicalism in ABC social documentary. Significantly, the period during which these four filmmakers worked was a socially and politically turbulent time in Australia and began with the introductory years in Australian television when everything was so new, when everyone learned from scratch about the multi level, multi faceted collaborative environment necessitated when working in television production, and reached into the years of full documentary program production.

Of paramount importance and an integral part of my dissertation are the personal narratives of ABC television documentary filmmakers. The significance of documenting the lived experiences of these four filmmakers is to acknowledge the part their work played in the history of ABC documentary filmmaking. As such, their oral histories have recorded the beginnings of their careers before

they began working at the ABC, their behind the scenes stories about work in early ABC television, and their work in the changing genre of television documentaries. The oral histories combined with content analysis of a number of individual episodes on which they worked of *Chequerboard* (1969-1975) and *A Big Country* (1969-1992) have enabled a detailed case study exploration of the filmmaking techniques and approaches used by these filmmakers. Their stories have told of their commitment to their work, their innovative filmmaking approaches, and their personal struggles as social documentary filmmakers. Emerging from their stories is a part of ABC television history and culture that until now has not been recognised.

The groundbreaking work of these four filmmakers is not only exemplified by the *Chequerboard* and *A Big Countr*y programs, but these programs also demonstrate the role played by the ABC in shaping Australian culture and identity. Moreover, an examination of the diversity of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* has shown life in urban and country Australia at its best and its worst during the 1960s, 1970s, and the 1980s. As such, these programs represent the two vastly different, yet essential and mutually beneficial, sides of Australia's national purpose and identity – urban and rural respectively.

The politics of documentary and the documentary filmmaker is another integral part of my dissertation. Since the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the work of Russian documentary filmmaker Dziga Vertov, politics and documentary have become synonymous with questioning and challenging established political mores. So too, social struggles and issues of injustice

significantly inform the content of social documentary and the function of the documentary to "clarify choices, interpret history, and promote human understanding" (Rosenthal 1980, Introduction, p.1).

In light of this, the role of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* as social documentary programs in shaping Australian identity is examined, as well as the bardic function of these programs in influencing Australians' understanding of themselves. Furthermore, an examination of the themes and issues addressed in and across both programs shows how Australian society and culture has reflected and represented by them, as well as how the milieu at the time together with the changes in technologies influenced those themes and issues covered.

Connections between programs such as *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* and earlier Australian and international documentary making have influenced the filmmakers' innovations in the development of an 'ABC style' of documentary. In addition, the part played by the ABC's early training scheme in shaping and supporting Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan as documentary filmmakers and others like them, is recognised. The significance of the creative and technical contributions of these filmmakers both within the institutional context of the ABC as well as in the broader context of Australian documentary history is acknowledged as a result.

Of further integral import are the filmmakers' views about early ABC documentary filmmaking. Filmmakers Steller, Manefield, Walton, and Donnellan have provided significant valuable personal insights about making ABC social documentaries in recalling their memories of producing, directing,

and photographing various episodes of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*. A closer examination and interpretation of the words and images of those they filmed has offered an understanding of the people and issues explored in their documentary programs. This understanding is augmented with the filmmaker's interaction and creative involvement in each episode. As well, to varying degrees, these filmmakers have revealed their political beliefs at the time they made ABC documentary films and who their filmmaking heroes were and how they were influenced by them.

The impact of being involved in and learning their craft shaped by the ABC's early training scheme was manyfold and is reflected in the filmmakers' collaborative and creative approach to filmmaking. A sense of what it was to be young filmmakers, open to learning as much as was possible about their craft and in touch with the events and issues of their time, emerged from the interviews with Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan. So too, a sense of what it was to be young filmmakers willing to be trained in an all encompassing style of filmmaking within the institutional environment of the ABC which in the long run created well-rounded skilled filmmakers with courage, capacity, and commitment to innovate when and where required. These capabilities as this study reveals are reflected in their ability to innovate "in the moment" and in having the confidence to improvise using different filmmaking techniques and approaches in order to achieve their filmic aims.

As a result of their involvement in the ABC's early training scheme these four filmmakers gained an understanding of filmmaking on all levels of production through on the job experience often in live-to-air circumstances; from working on the studio

floor to working on location, from working in live television to working with 16mm film, from working behind the camera to working as producer or director, or as editor. The all-encompassing filmmaking experiences and skills gained through the training scheme meant that they could be sent at a moment's notice to work in any position as required. The highly motivating collaborative environment which supported the trainees during their traineeships meant that many excelled in their field, while those who did not at first, were given time and encouragement to do so.

This study shows that within the ABC's institutional environment Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan received support and encouragement from management and peers alike. The training and learning environment provided a "soft place to fall"; a secure place that was also imbued with the urgency of live-to-air filmmaking circumstance within which the four filmmakers and other trainees like them could develop their filmmaking skills and techniques. Dependent on their ability to attain certain levels of skills and techniques, similar to an apprenticeship, ABC trainees were able to work on different kinds of programs produced by ABC television that might for instance include light entertainment, children's and educational programs, news and current affairs programs, documentary programs, and features and drama productions. Secondment to interstate ABC television stations was also part of the ABC traineeship process enabling trainees to attain wider on-the-job training and experience as they progressed up the traineeship ladder. Once ABC trainees successfully reached stipulated levels of filmmaking achievement they could specialise as producers or directors or editors for example, thereby developing their career preference. During the early days of ABC television and as a consequence of being involved in the ABC's

training scheme, trainees learnt not only individual filmmaking skills but also to work in a collaborative creative way in order to contribute to the overall output of early ABC television production.

The influences of other filmmakers on the filmmaking techniques and approaches of Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan emanate from across Australian and international filmmakers alike. All four filmmakers claim that it was those with whom they worked on a daily basis that significantly influenced them. When at times these filmmakers were unable to find a production or editing solution, the collaboration and support from ABC filmmaking colleagues helped them develop different or alternative filmmaking approaches specific to situations as they arose. As part of the collaborative environment within ABC television it was often those ideas from colleagues not directly involved in the production process that would be able to shed new light on another way to deal with production dilemmas.

Furthermore, the heated yet supportive arguments that occurred between Manefield and *Chequerboard* executive producer Geoff Daniels about production issues in effect created an atmosphere whereby Manefield challenged himself as a filmmaker. Manefield believed that as a consequence, their heated arguments spurred him to create a better program. Adding to this, Manefield believed that Steller's emotions and ability to emphathise and to continue to film were both major contributions to *Chequerboard*'s success as social documentary. Like many filmmakers Manefield let his films speak for him, and for others, through his treatment of their themes and images. Inasmuch as social documentary examines the lives of people living in society and enables their stories to be told, with *Chequerboard*, Manefield focused on the emotional and

relationship aspects of Australian people. As a result, the heart and soul of Australian people living in different levels within Australian society and culture was revealed as only they could they could tell.

At different times in his career Steller was influenced by those involved at different levels of the filmmaking industry. Beginning with his introduction to documentary and to the Sydney University Film Society in June of 1954 when Steller watched and was inspired John Heyer's *The Back of Beyond* (1954). While Orson Welles' use of lenses and wide angle shots from low down and the distortion of images in *Citizen Kane* (1941) inspired Steller to be more adventurous in the way he approached his filmmaking; always seeking the unusual angle and paying attention to the way lighting could enhance the tension in scenes. In this regard too, the BBC's Butch Calderwood's meticulous attention to lighting and use of key and back lighting in particular scenes were also an inspiration to Steller. From Calderwood, Steller learned that rather than using too many light bulbs, it was better to use fewer more effectively. Another who influenced Steller was Australian documentary filmmaker Gil Brealey, with whom he worked on several early ABC documentaries. This study also enabled a more intimate appreciation for Steller's skills and techniques as a filmmaker and for his ability to connect deeply, sometimes too deeply, on an emotional level with the subjects and themes addressed in his films. Steller's commitment and dedication to his craft of filmmaking has at times been detrimental to his well being. Steller's work as an ABC cameraman, director, and producer stands as a significant contribution and commitment to documenting the lives of Australian people and the scope of Australian social mores.

Donnellan's story involved his involvement working as director on another ABC social documentary program, *A Big Country* and his memories of his involvement in the ABC training scheme. Donnellan learned his filmmaking skills and techniques, primarily from those from the ABC and the BBC with whom he trained and worked. From them he also learned about the value of respect, about the ability to remain cool and calm under extreme circumstances, about the need for a sense of professionalism, and above all and particularly in the film and television industry, about the need for an ability to understand and communicate.

The story and words of documentary and drama filmmaker Walton, a contemporary of Manefield, Steller, and Donnellan, corroborate particular aspects in relation to the social, political, and filmmaking milieu of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s in which they all trained and worked. His career paralleled the careers of Manefield, Steller, and Donnellan and as a result; his story and his insights provide additional contextualisation and validation to their stories. For Walton, it was the physicality of Dziga Vertov's filmmaking and use of the large older style cameras with what Walton describes as amazing mobility, as well as his editing technique that inspired Walton's filmmaking. As excited as he was by Vertov's energy and mobility, so too Walton was exhilarated by Ken Loach's blurring of stylistic edge in his docudrama *Cathy Come Home* (1966) and John Grierson's notion "drama of the doorstep" and "the creative treatment of actuality" and admits he "devoured" Grierson's films and those of the group around him whenever he was able to view them in Australia. Other influences were derived from Flaherty's and De Sica's use of real people playing roles and

Rouch's treatment of his subjective eye and the way he used his camera in order that the audience saw "what he thought happened" (Lansell & Beilby 1982, p.16).

The impact of the social and political milieu surrounding the early years of Australian television is reflected in the political beliefs of each filmmaker, and in the themes and issues addressed by them in episodes of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*. In this respect, Manefield's story suggests his was an egalitarian approach to politics, however, unlike Steller, Walton, and Donnellan, he chose not to be drawn on the issue. Steller's story reveals that although he did not see himself as political, as a result of his Christian background and ethics to ensure that everyone got "a fair go", he believes this approach led people to believe his politics to be Socialistic, and that he was often labelled by others as a "'Pinkie'…Not quite Red!" (Steller 2009, pers.comm., 1 November 2009). Walton's story, interwoven through the stories of the others, reveals he was someone holding liberal humanist beliefs and a maturing socialist outlook, while Donnellan's story reveals his political beliefs were influenced by the Australian Labor Party (ALP). Donnellan emphasised however, that he also believes his political beliefs had little influence on his work as an ABC documentary filmmaker or on his filmmaking. In view of these insights, the perception emerges that for these four documentary filmmakers, like the era in which they worked and created, their political beliefs and influences vary. And again, like the changing perceptions of political and social terminologies of the era in which they worked and created, rather than being identified as the confronting "radical", their political beliefs are better described as imbued with liberal humanism. Liberal humanism, among other things, connotes unchanging human nature, individuality, truth, honesty, compassion, and the capacity

for human empathy, implied rather than explicit ideas, the value of "direct experience and evidence of things" (Barry 1995, pp. 17-20), and as being underpinned by a strong sense of social justice shaped by the idea of challenging for change. Like other cinema verite or direct cinema documentary filmmakers such as Albert Maysles, John Grierson, or Dziga Vertov, the filmmaking approaches of the Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan are embedded with liberal humanist tenets.

The many behind the scenes moments documented in this study shed light on the creative environment that existed during the inception, creation, and production of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* and enable Manefield, Steller, Walton, as well as Donnellan to tell of their commitment to their craft and to their cinema verite or direct cinema filming style. Inasmuch as Moran (1991) suggests truth resides only in examples and experience and "not in abstract general argument" (Moran 1991, p. 110), or Issari and Paul (1979) who suggest the filmmaker must submit to the "truth" within the framework of his own approach (Issari & Paul, 1979, p.5), these filmmakers tell their truth of their experience through examples of their cinema verite or direct cinema filmmaking and by providing specific insights into how they worked.

With their involvement in *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, these filmmakers developed their approaches and techniques in the cinema verite style documenting lived experiences of real people living and struggling within Australia's social structure; they highlighted themes and topics that were confronting to Australians at a time in Australia when many social, political, and cultural challenges emerged. By filming things as they happened using 16mm hand held cameras and innovative camera angles and incorporating extreme

close up shots that visually underline the intimate thoughts and feelings expressed by those filmed, these four early ABC documentary filmmakers showed Australians the many and varied sides of themselves as they had not been seen before. Through their compassionate non-judgemental approach and subjective camera techniques these filmmakers and these social documentary programs helped urban and rural Australians alike reveal their fundamental human strengths, frailties, and similarities and unselfconsciously tell their stories.

Chequerboard, in particular however, received criticism for its controversial documentary style which was viewed when it was first broadcast and since [Pryor (1971) and Inglis (1983)] as intrusive or voyeuristic. Today, reality television uses the same so called intrusive, voyeuristic style to great success and popularity. Though at times this style still attracts criticism reality television programs remain highly successful and lucrative both in Australia and around the world. This continued documentary filmmaking impact and influence suggests that as a social documentary program *Chequerboard* was ahead of its time.

As a way of showing the impact of programs such as *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*, at least from the point of view of the ABC, both programs are given significant recognition, among others, on the ABC's interactive 50 Years of ABC Television website where the video time line contains episode segments from each program can be accessed and viewed, at least in part. Those episodes accessible in this way are "It's Amazing What You Can Do with a Pound of Mince" (1969) from *Chequerboard* which is examined in this study, and "An

Image of Wool" (1969) from *A Big Country*. As well, *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country* continue to be put forward as examples of ABC documentary filmmaking at its best (and worst) by Lansel and Beilby (1982), Inglis (1983), or Moran (1989).

Is documentary a tool for social change? This aspect is relative to the time in which the filmmaker works and to the impact created by the filmmaker in examining those themes and issues relative to that time. Moreover, the impact is dependent upon the way the filmmaker addresses the themes and issues and in his filmmaking approach and technique, which in some way becomes, or is perceived as, a challenge to the thoughts of people, or to society, government, or institutions in relation to those themes and issues. Furthermore, it is dependent upon whether the impact initiates change in the perceptions of people, or society, or government, or institutions about those themes and issues sufficient for change to occur. Whether social documentary actually makes change happen or whether change inevitably occurs are questions to ponder yet. This study suggests however that documentary films whether radical or liberal humanist and documentary filmmakers whether radical or liberal humanist, like those of the four early ABC documentary filmmakers, Manefield, Steller, Walton, and Donnellan, planted the seed for change by challenging accepted mores.

REFERENCES

Abbott, G (ed.) 1974, *A Big Country: stories from the ABC television series about the people of Australia*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney.

Adams, P 1983, in K. Inglis, *This is the ABC- The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932 – 1983*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

Adamson, J 1991, Changing Times, in "The Big Picture: Documentary Film-making in Australia" 1994, *The 2nd Australian Documentary Conference - November 29 – December 2, 1991*, Monash University, Melbourne, pp. 1-14.

Aitken, I 1992, *Film and Reform; John Grierson and the Documentary Film Movement*, Routledge, London.

Alomes, S 1988, *A nation at last?: the changing character of Australian nationalism 1880-1988*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, N.S.W.

ACT Government Health n.d., Endeavour Community Farm, viewed 18 June 2007, http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health

Ansara, M & Milner, L 1999, The Waterside Workers Federation Film Unit: the forgotten frontier of the fifties, *Metro Magazine* v.119, p.28-30.

Australian Broadcasting Commission 1968-69, *37th Annual Report*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, pp. 4, 5, 24, Sydney.

Australian Broadcasting Commission 1972, *40th Annual Report*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, pp.6, 37, Sydney.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation 1984, *History and Development of the ABC*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, pp.2-10, Sydney.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation 1993, *ABC Documentary Program Catalogue (1960 - 1993)*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2007, *ABC Archives and Library Services, 70 Years ABC*, viewed 18 June 2007, http://www.abc.net.au/archives/timeline/1960s.htm

Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2007, *ABC Archives and Library Services, 70 Years ABC*, viewed 18 June 2007, http://www.abc.net.au/archives/timeline/1970s.htm

Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2007, *TV Documentaries – Program Makers*, viewed 15 October 2007, http://www.abc.net.au/tv/documentaries/programmakers

Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2010, *75 Years of ABC*, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, viewed 26 March 2010, http://www.abc.net.au/corp/history/75years/timeline/

Australian Literature Resource 2010, Warwick Thornton, biography, viewed 11 August 2010, http://www.austlit.edu.au/run?ex=ShowAgent&agentId=A7}s

Bakker, K (ed.) 1999, *Joris Ivens and the documentary context*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.

Barnouw, E 1993, *Documentary - a history of the non-fiction film*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Barry, P 1995, *Beginning Theory: 'Theory before theory' – liberal humanism*, Manchester Press, UK.

Barsam, R.M 1973, *Nonfiction Film – A Critical History*, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York.

Barsam, RM. 1992, *Nonfiction Film – A Critical History*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

BBC News Online 2007, *Entertainment*, 9 September, viewed 29 September 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/film/3093154.stm

Beattie, K 2004, *Documentary Screen – Non-fiction Film and Television*, Palgrave McMillan, USA.

Bell, P & Bell R 1998, *Americanisation and Australia*, University of New South Wales Press Ltd, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Berger, A. A 2000, *Media and Communication Research Methods*, Sage Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, California.

Bertrand, I 1999, Stanley Hawes: A Grierson Man, *Metro Magazine*, n.120, pp.40-43.

Bertrand, I (ed.) 1989, *Cinema in Australia: a documentary history*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington.

Bertrand, I & Collins, D 1981, *Government and Film in Australia*, Currency Press Pty. Ltd., Woollahra.

Bertrand, I & Hughes, P 2005, *Media Research Methods - Audiences, Institutions, Texts*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Biodynamic Agriculture Australia 2007, *What is biodynamics?*, viewed 31 December, 2007, http://www.biodynamics.net.au/what_is_biodynamics.htm

Bolton, G 1996, *The Oxford History of Australia: The Middle Way 1942 - 1995*, v.5. Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Borchers, W 2003, "Preserving the Dreamtime", *COMMA, International Journal on Archives*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies/Australian Broadcasting Corporation Research Preservation Project, 1991-1992 , pp. 153-165.

Borchers, W 2006, Technical Advances in ABC Television: a chronology (4th Draft).

Bordwell, D & Thompson, K 2004, *Film Art: An Introduction*, 7th Ed. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Bowden, T & Borchers, W 2006, *Fifty Years: Aunty's Jubilee - Celebrating 50 Years of ABC TV*, ABC Books, Sydney.

Breitrose, H 1954, "On the search for the Real Nitty-Gritty: Problems and Possibilities in Cinema Verite" (Three Views on Cinema Verite), *Film Quarterly*, XVII, n.4. pp. 36-40.

British Broadcasting Corporation 2010, Historic Figures – Mohandas Gandhi, viewed 11 August 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/gandhi_mohandas.shtml

City of Sydney 2007, *Inner West – Newtown*, viewed 26 June 2007, http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Development/LocalActionPlans/InnerWest.asp

Corti, L 2007, "Re-using archived qualitative data – where, how, why?" *Archival Science*, v. 7. i. 1. pp. 37-54, viewed 22 June 2009, https://commerce.metapress.com/content/5171756686717l67/resource-secured/?target=fulltext.pdf&sid=0nzxn145scdufk550kyh5d55&sh=www.springerlink.com

Cunningham, S 1987, "Nascent Innovation: Notes on some Australian features of the 1950s", *Continuum*, The Australian Journal of Media & Culture, v.1, n.1, p.1 of 5.

Davidson, C 2009, Transcription: Imperatives for Qualitative Research, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, v.8, i.2. p.10.

Drobashenko, S, in Pronay, N & Spring, D.W 1982, *Propaganda, politics and film*, 1981-1945, Macmillan, London.

Documentary production in Australia 2010: A collection of key date, ScreenAustralia, viewed 12 March 2010, http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documents/SA_publications/Rpt_DocoProd2010.pdf

Donnellan, M 2006, Resume–Maxwell Donnellan, Crows Nest, Australia.

Donnellan, M 2006, sound recording, Max Donnellan: interviewed by Christina Hunt, 5 June 2006.

Downes, J 1988, *A Big Country*, Angus & Robertson Publishers and ABC Enterprises, Sydney.

Ebert, R 2005, "Nanook of the North", Chicago Sun-Times, 25 September, viewed 2 October 2007, http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050925/REVIEWS08/509250301

Ellis, J. C 1989, *The Documentary Idea: A critical history of English-language documentary film and video*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Equal Pay Cases 1969, The Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission Act 1904-1969, Commonwealth Government of Australia. pp.1153-1159.

Fiske, J & Hartley, J 1987, *Reading Television*, Methuen, London & New York.

FitzSimons, T 2000, "Accords, Slates, Slots, Strands, and Series: Australian television takes on independent documentary", *Metro Magazine*, n.129.pp. 173-183.

Free Cinema Group 2010, British Film Institute ScreenOnline, viewed 15 August 2010, http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/444789/index.html

Gervaz, A 2008, “Grealey’s Experimental Group”, *National Film and Sound Archives Journal*, v.3, n.1, p.324, viewed 15 August 2010, http://www.nfsa.gov.au/docs/NFSAJournal-Vol3-No1-08.pdf

Gordon, E, McKibbin, K, Vasudevan, L, & Vinz, R 2007, “Writing out of the unexpected: Narrative inquiry and the weight of small moments”, *English Education*, July 2007, Research Library, pp.326-351.

Grierson, J 1932, “First Principles of Documentary”, *Cinema Quarterly*, Winter, in F. Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary*, Praeger Publishers (1971), New York.

Grierson, J 1937, in P. Davies, “The Course of Realism: Footnotes to the Film”, in F. Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary*, Praeger Publishers (1971), New York.

Grierson, J 1939, in “Metropolitan: (The City, by Ralph Steiner and Willard van Dyke): Films, v.1, n.1”, in F. Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary*, Praeger Publishers (1971), New York.

Grierson, J 1939, “Battle for Authenticity: Documentary News Letter”, in F. Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary*, Praeger Publishers (1971), New York.

Grierson, J 1941, “Education and the New Order: The ‘Democracy and Citizenship’” in F. Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary*, Faber & Faber (1946), London.

Hamilton, P 1990, “‘Inventing the self’. Oral history as autobiography”, *Hecate* 16(1/2): pp.128–133.

Hardy, F 1979, *John Grierson: A Documentary Biography*, Faber & Faber, London.

Hardy, F (ed.) 1971, *Grierson on documentary*, Praeger Publishers, New York.

Harrison B, 1982, in Pronay, N & Spring, D.W, *Propaganda, politics and film*, 1981-1945, Macmillan, London.

Hawes, S 1985, “Grierson and Australia”, in Albert Moran and Tom O’Regan (eds.), *An Australian Film Reader*, Currency Press, Paddington.

Heyer, J 1957, "A documentary aesthetic: 1957 documentary hopes", in *An Australian Film Reader*, (ed. A. Moran & T. O'Regan), Spring.

Hobsbawn, E 1999, in Bakker, K (ed.) *Joris Ivens and the documentary context*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam.

Holmes, C 1986*, One Man's Way*, Penguin Books, Sydney.

Howard J 2006, Oral History under review, *The Chronicle.com*. v53, i.12, p.A14, viewed 27 June 2010, http://chronicle.com/article/Oral-History-Under-Review/6566

Huggett, N 2007, Everyone was watching! Strategies of self-presentation in oral histories of cinema-going, *Studies in Australasian Cinema*, v.1, n.3, pp.261-274.

Hughes R, in Moran, A 1989, "Constructing the nation: institutional documentary since 1945", *The Australian Screen*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Vic.

Inglis, K. S 1983, *This Is The ABC - The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932 – 1983*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

Inglis, K. S 2006, *Whose ABC? The Australian Broadcasting Corporation 1983 - 2006*, Black Inc., Sydney.

Issari, MA & Paul, DA 1979, *What is Cinema Verite?*, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Metuchen, NJ & London.

Ivens, J 1939, Unpublished Lecture Museum of Modern Art, New York, December 13, 1939.

Kalina, P 2010, "A long way from Sylvania Waters", *The Age*, 11 March, viewed 26 April, 2010, http://www.theage.com.au/news/entertainment/tv--radio/a-long-way-from-sylvania-waters/2010/03/10/1267896812810.html

Lansell, R & Beilby, P 1982, *The Documentary Film in Australia*, Cinema Papers & Film Victoria, Melbourne.

Leahy, G & Gibson, S 2002, "The Filmmaker's voice in Australian Documentary", *Metro Magazine* i.135, pp. 90-95. (online Informit)

Leahy, G 1996, "Fidelity, Faith and Openness – Rescuing Observational Documentary", *Media International Australia*, no.82, pp.41, 42, 43, 45.

Little, J 2003, *The Man Who Knew Too Much - David Brill, combat cameraman*, Hodder Headline Australia Pty. Limited, Sydney.

Luck, P 2005, *Fifty Years of Australian Television*, New Holland Publishers (Australia) Pty. Ltd., Sydney.

MacLir A. G 2006, "The Bardic Ideal", *Gael-Darach Grove: A seedgroup of the Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids*, Minnesota, USA. viewed 1 June 2010, http://www.bardwood.com/bardic-ideal.htm

Manefield T 2006, sound recording, Tom Manefield: interviewed by Christina Hunt, 5 June 2006.

Masters, C 1992, *Inside Story*, Collins Angus & Robertson Publishers Pty. Limited, Pymble, NSW.

Manne, R 2002, "Mrs Petrov's death brings bizarre affair to end", *The Age*, 27 July 2002, p. 3 of 4, viewed 15 April 2010, http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/2007/26/1027497412417.html

Maysles, A 2010, Albert Maysles – the documentary, viewed 19 March 2010, http://www.mayslesfilms.com/albertmaysles/index.html

McKnight, C 1986, *Moving Left*, Pluto Press Australia, Leichhardt, NSW.

McMurchy, M 1994, "The documentary", in Murray, S (ed), *Australian Cinema*, Allen & Unwin, St.Leonards.

Milner, L 1999, Commos and ratbags: the origins of trade union cinema in Australia, *Journal of Australian Studies*, v.60, pp.133-139.

Moran, A & O'Regan, T (eds.) 1985, *An Australian film reader*, Currency Press, Sydney.

Moran, A 1987, Nation Building: The Post-War Documentary in Australia (1945-1953), *Continuum*, The Australian Journal of Media & Culture, v.1, n.1. p. 11 of 16, viewed 18 March 2010, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/1.1/Moran.html

Moran, A 1989, "Constructing the nation: institutional documentary since 1945", *The Australian Screen*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Vic.

Moran, A 1991, *Projecting Australia*, Currency Press Pty. Ltd., Paddington.

Moran, A 2000, "Inside Australian Media", *Inside Australian Media*, pp.50-53 & 74-75.

Moran, A & Vieth, E 2006, *Film in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne.

National Film and Sound Archives 1995, *S. Walton profile*, National Film and Sound Archives, Canberra.

National Film and Sound Archive 1997, *The Cold War: A Listing of the National Film and Sound Archive's holdings*, National Film and Sound Archive, pp 1-47, viewed 8 January 2008, http://www.nfsa.afc.gov.au/docs/collectionguide_thecoldwar.pdf

National Film and Sound Archive 2008, *The National Collection – Tom Manefield*, viewed 21 January, 2008, http://www.nfsa.afc.gov.au/the_collection/

O'Regan, T 1987, Australian film in the 1950s, *Continuum*, The Australian Journal of Media & Culture, v.1.n.1, p.3 of 21, viewed 7 January 2004, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/film/1950s.html

O'Regan, T, Shoesmith, B & Moran, A 1987, On "The Back of Beyond" Interview with Ross Gibson, Continuum, *The Australian Journal of Media & Culture*, v.1, n.1, p. 1 of 8, viewed 7 January 2004, http://wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/1.1/Gibson.html

Place, N & Roberts, M (eds.) 2006, *Fifty Years of Television in Australia*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahan, Victoria.

Propaganda. (n.d.). *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Retrieved January 31, 2009, from Dictionary.com website: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/propaganda

Pryluck C 1988, in Rosenthal, A (ed.), *New Challenges for Documentary*, University of California Press, USA.

Pryor, D 1971, "*Chequerboard*: public exposure of private lives", *The Australian*, Sydney, 5 September, p.18.

Public Access TV 2007, The Canadians, *Public Access Television* - Challenge for Change, viewed 1 January 2007, http://www.publicaccesstv.net/history02.html

Pullan, R 1986, *Four Corners: Twenty-Five Years*, ABC Enterprises for Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney.

Quint, G 2005, *Sixty years – a long and worthwhile journey*, The National Trust, viewed 19 June 2007, http://www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/files/magazine/sixtyyearsMAY-July%202005.pdf

Raymond, R 1999, *Out of the Box: An inside view of the coming of current affairs and documentaries to Australian television*, Seaview Press, Henly Beach, S.A.

Reconciliation Network 2010, *Stolen Generation Fact Sheet*, viewed 11 August 2010, http://reconciliaction.org.au/nsw/education-kit/stolen-generations/

Renov, M (ed.) 1993, *Theorizing Documentary*, Routledge, New York.

Rosenthal, A (ed.) 1988, *New Challenges for Documentary*, University of California Press, USA.

Rosenthal, A 1980, *The Documentary Conscience: A casebook in film making*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, Calif. USA.

Rothman, W 1997, *Documentary Film Classics*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Sharpless, R 2007, "The uneasy page: transcribing and editing oral history", in Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, & Rebecca Sharpless (eds.) *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology*, AltaMira Press, New York.

Shell Australia 2010, *The beginning of Shell in Australia*, viewed 19 March 2010, http://www.shell.com.au/home/content/aus/aboutshell/who_we_are/history/au/

Shirley, G 1990, Steller, Bill: Interviewed by Graham Shirley, National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, ACT, c.d. 0214835-0007.

Sir Richard Kirby Archives, *The 1969 Equal Pay Case*, viewed 31 March 2010, http://ww3.e-airc.gov.au/archives/1969equalpay

Sir Richard Kirby Archives, *Harvester Case*, viewed 31 March 2010, http://www.e-airc.gov.au/kirbyarchives/harvest

Starr, L 1984, "Oral History", in D. K. Dunaway & W. K. Baum (eds.) *Oral history : an interdisciplinary anthology*, American Association for State and Local History in cooperation with the Oral History Association, Nashville, Tenn. USA.

Steller, W 2006, sound recording, Bill Steller: interviewed by Christina Hunt, 4 June 2006.

Sterling, C.H 2010, *Reith, John C.W.*, The Museum of Broadcast Communications, viewed 5 July 2010, http://www.museum.tv/eotvsection.php?entrycode=reithjohnc

Stogner, K 2009, Life story interview and "Truth of Memory" – Some aspects of oral history from a historic-philosophical perspective, in Marta Kurkowska-Budzan, Krzysztof Zamorski, *Oral history: the challenges of dialogue*, Institute of Conflict Research, Vienna, Austria.

Stolen Generation 2007, Koorie Heritage Trust, Missions and Reserves, viewed 20 December, 2007, http://www.abc.net.au/missionvoices/stolen_generations/default.htm

Stout A 1948, in Moran, A 2000, "Inside Australian Media", *Inside Australian Media*, p.22.

Summerhayes, C 2007, *The moving images of Tracey Moffatt / Catherine Summerhayes*, Charta, Milano.

Sussex, E 1975, *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary: The story of the film movement founded by John Grierson*, University of California Press, Ltd., London.

Taylor, P.M 1982 in Pronay, N & Spring, D.W, *Propaganda, politics and film*, 1981-1945, Macmillan, London, 1982.

Thomas, S 2002, "Whatever happened to the social documentary?", *Metro Magazine*, v.134. pp.152-160, (online Informit).

Thompson, P 1988, *The Voice of the Past*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Tingwell C 'Bud' & Wilmoth, P 2004, *Bud – a life*, Pan MacMillan Australia Pty. Ltd., Sydney.

Tobias, M (ed.) 1998, *The Search for Reality - the art of documentary filmmaking*, Michael Wiese Productions, Studio City, CA.

Transdiffusion Broadcasting System 2010, *Who are we?* viewed 16 June 2010, http://www.transdiffusion.org/about/

Walker, Judge F 2003, "Out of the darkness and into the light", paper presented at the 2003 Symposium of the Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW Inc., viewed 31 July 2007, http://www.sfnsw.org.au/pdfsrfs/SAW2003_walker.pdf

Walton, S 1995, *Curriculum Vitae*, National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra.

Walton, S 2006, sound recording, Storry Walton: interviwed by Christina Hunt, 6 June 2006.

Watts, K 1988, Ken Watts: interviewed by Albert Moran, Oral History, National Film and Sound Archive, c.d. AOK005792.

Williams, D 2008, *Australian post-war documentary film: an arc of mirrors*, Intellect, Chicago.

Williams, D 1999, *Between empire and nation: Grierson in Australia*, viewed 16 March 2010, p. 6, http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/firstrelease/fr0799/dwfr7e.htm

Winston, B 1995, *Claiming the Real – the documentary revisited*, British Film Institute, London.

FILMOGRAPHY

A Big Country 1969, documentary film, “An Image of Wool”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

A Big Country 1969, documentary film, “The Buck Runners”, videotape recording, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

A Big Country 1970, documentary film, “Ten Thousand Miles from Care”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1970, documentary film, “Right Through the Shearing Time”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1970, documentary film, “Camel Catchers”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1971, documentary film, “Sleeper Cutting”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1972, documentary film, “Everything What We Belong”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1973, documentary film, “Barossa Deutsche”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1974, documentary film, “Ben Hall”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1974, documentary film, “I'll Never Change Sides”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1975, documentary film, “Just another race”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

*A Big Count*ry 1975, documentary film, “36 Wheels”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

A Big Country 1975, documentary film, “Dingo Country”, Australian Broadcasting Commision, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

A Big Country 1975, documentary film, “Sounds of country music”, Australian Broadcasting Commision, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

A Big Country 1975, documentary film, “Land Fit for Heroes”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1975, documentary film, “The Desert People”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1975, documentary film, “Be I Ever So Humble”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country 1978, documentary film, “Forgotten People”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

A Big Country, 1979, documentary film, “A Family Show”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

A Big Country 1984, documentary film, “A Winter's Tale”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Adventure Island 1967-1972, television program, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, Australia.

Annette Kluger Show, The n.d. television program, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Aust.

Australia 2008, *motion picture*, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Bazmark Films, Dune Entertainment III, Ingenious Film Partners, viewed 16 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0455824 /

Back of Beyond, The 1954, documentary film, Australian Screen, viewed 7 December 2007, http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/back-of-beyond

Battle of Midway, The 1942, documentary film, The U.S. Navy, viewed 14 March 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0034498/plotsummary

Battle of San Pietro, The 1944, documentary film, *Film notes*, viewed 14 March 2010, http://www.history.sandiego.edu/GEN/filmnotes/sanpietro.html

Bernard Heinze Story, The 1974, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Bicycle Thieves 1948, motion picture, Vittorio De Sica – Produczioni De Sica, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0040522/

Caddie 1975, motion picture, Anthony Buckley Productions, Australia.

Careers for Young Australians 1951, documentary film, made for BHP by Cinesound, Australia.

Captain Thunderbolt 1953, motion picture, Archway Film Distributors Ltd., Australia.

*Challenge for Chang*e 1966, documentary series, National Film Board of Canada, Canada.

Cathy Come Home 1966, docudrama, British Film Institute ScreenOnline 2010, viewed 15 August 2010, http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/438481/index.html

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "We're all good mates and that's it", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "I'm dealing in emotions", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "I could get married and have a family", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "It's a big day in any girl's life", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "A Fair Innings", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "To err is human", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "A palace, a fortress, a tomb", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "The policeman told me to go to bed (or Live in the space age)", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1969, documentary film, "What do you get married for", 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “Part of life”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “All my memories are in Newtown”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “At Londonderry”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “Everybody wants a plug”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “It can't last much longer”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “My brown skin baby, they take him away”, video recording, Australian Broadcasting Corporation. CQU Library, Rockhampton, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “She'd flown the coop”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “Who am I, What am I”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “I don't like to look in the mirror”,16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “A matter of supremacy”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “On the spiritual telephone”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “Same dose of treatment”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1970, documentary film, “Well worth the effort”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1972, documentary film, “It could have gone either way for Timothy”, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Chequerboard 1973, documentary film, “Something Don’t Seem Right”, Australian Broadcasting Corportion, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Chequerboard 1973, documentary film, “Once bitten, twice shy”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1975, documentary film, “I can't seem to talk about it”, 16mm film, National Film and Video Lending Service, Canberra, Australia.

Chequerboard 1975, documentary film, “Charlie 16”, Australian Broadcasting Commision, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Chequerboard 1975, documentary film, “It’s one of the better pieces of wreckage”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Chequerboard 1975, documentary film, “Your feet are aching from dancing all night”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Chequerboard 1975, documentary film, “What, and give away show business?”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Chequerboard 1975, documentary film, “You can put Sir on it like the rest of them”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Chequerboard 1975, documentary film, “The spirit of the rule”, Australian Broadcasting Commision, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

*Chequerboar*d 1975, documentary film, “Just telling them won’t stop them”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Chequerboard 1975, documentary film, “Bob and Shirley and Frank and Lorraine”, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Citizen Kane 1941, motion picture, Mercury Productions and RKO Radio Pictures, viewed 12 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0033467/companycredits

Coral Island 1983, television series, Australian Broadcasting Commision, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Countdown 1974-1987, television series, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Critics, The 1963, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Don Dunstan’s Australia 1981, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Don's Party 1976, Australian Film Commission & Double Head, Australia.

Explorers, The 1984, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Everyday Brave 2003, documentary film, Special Broadcasting Service, Sydney Australia.

Faces in the Street 1961, documentary film, National Film and Video Lending Service, viewed 5 January, 2008, http://nfvls.screensound.gov.au/htbin/wwform/076?TEXT=R25359301-25364129-/CA/WWI770.HTM

Film Night 1972, television program, British Broadcasting Corporation, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1008209/companycredits

First Fagin, The 2009, television drama, Fury Productions Pty. Ltd.

Focal Points 1986, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Food Machine, The 1952, documentary film, Shell Film Unit, Australia.

Four Corners 1964, current affairs program, "The Little Woman", ABC 75th Anniversary Timeline, viewed 31 July 2007, http://www.abc.net.au/corp/history/75years/

Four Hundred Million 1938/9, documentary film, Historians Today, Inc., France.

Gentle Strangers 1972, motion picture, Film Australia, Australia.

Grey Gardens 2009, television feature, Et Cetera Films, HBO, Locomotive, & Specialty Films, USA.

Grey Gardens 1975, documentary film, Portrait Films, USA, viewed 17 December 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0073076/

Hair – the Musical 1968, stage production, Rado, Ragni, & MacDermot, USA.

High School 1968, documentary film, Osti Productions, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0064429/

Honie 1978, documentary film, Film Australia, Sydney, Australia.

Hungry Miles, The 1955, documentary film, Waterside Workers' Federation Film Unit, Australia.

Impact 1961-1963, Intertel documentary series, Australian Broadcasting Commission & Canadian Broadcasting Commission.

I, Myself 1982, documentary film, Film Australia, Sydney, Australia.

In Real Life 1988-1989, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Irishman, The 1978, motion picture, Forest Home Films & South Australian Film Commission, Australia.

In the Wild 1976-1978, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

In Your Garden 1960s, light entertainment program, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Australia.

I, the Aboriginal 1964, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australia.

Jenny 1977, documentary film, Film Australia, Sydney, Australia.

Journey Into Japan n.d., documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Land that Waited, The 1961, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australia.

Late Night Line Up 1964-1972, current affairs program, British Broadcasting Corporation, UK.

Line Up 1970-71, current affairs program, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australia

Living Black 2006, documentary film, Special Broadcasting Service, Sydney, Australia.

Living on the Fringe 1965, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Australia.

Macbeth 1961, drama production, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australia.

Man Alive 1965-1982, documentary film, British Broadcasting Corporation, England.

Man from Snowy River, The 1985, motion picture, Cambridge Productions & Michael Edgley International & Snowy River Investments Pty. Ltd., Australia.

Man of Aran 1934, documentary film, Gainsborough Pictures/Gaumont British Picture Corp. Ltd./Rank Organisation Film Productions Ltd., UK.

Man with a Movie Camera 1929, documentary film, ZUFKU, viewed 10 October 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0019760/

Maria: Going Home 1978, documentary film, Film Australia, Sydney, Australia.

Menace 1952, documentary film, Australian News and Information Bureau, Film Division, National Film and Sound Archives Cold War Listing, Canberra.

Mike and Stefani 1949/50, documentary film, ScreenSound, Australia.

Mr Squiggle 1959, children's television program, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Australia.

My Brother Jack 1965, television drama, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australia.

Nanook of the North 1922, documentary film, Les Freres Revillon & Pathe Exchange, viewed 3 September 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0013427/

National, The 1985, current affairs program, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Nibelungen 1924, motion picture, Decla-Bioscop AG & Universum Film (UFA), viewed 3 September 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0015175/

November Victory 1955, documentary film, Waterside Workers' Federation Film Unit, Australia.

Odd Angry Shot, The 1979, motion picture, Australian Film Commission, Australia, viewed 30 December, 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0079652/

Oh, Calcutta 1969, stage production, Kenneth Tynan, United Kingdom.

Old Grey Whistle Test, The 1971-1987, television program, British Broadcasting Corporation, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0259795/

Olympia 1938, documentary film, International Olympic Committee (uncredited), Olympic Film, & Tobis Filmkunst (uncredited), viewed 6 October 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0030522/

Open Door 1973, television program, British Broadcasting Corporation, UK.

Open File 1983-1985, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Our World 1966, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Outcasts, The 1961, television drama series, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, viewed 17 November 2007, http://www.memorabletv.com/australia/tvao.htm

Overlanders, The 1946, motion picture, Ealing Pictures, viewed 16 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0038821/companycredits

Panorama 1953-2007, documentary film, British Broadcasting Corporation, England.

Peach's Australia 1975-1976, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Peach's Gold 1983, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Peach's on the Mississippi n.d., documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

People 1950s-1960s, television program, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, Australia.

Petersen 1974, motion picture, Hexagon Productions, Australia, viewed 30 December, 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071991/

Pipes of Para, The 1963, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Plough that Broke the Plains, The 1936, documentary film, Resettlement Administration (A U.S. documentary film), viewed 13 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0122662/companycredits

Psychiatry in Russia 1955, documentary film, Maysles Films, Inc., USA.

Primary 1960, documentary film, Drew Associations & Time, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0054205/companycredits

Putting a face to an issue 1975, documentary film, Film Australia, Australia.

Report from Queensland 1962, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Australia.

Richard II 1960, teleplay, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Australia.

Russian Close Up 1957, documentary film, Maysles Films, Inc., USA.

Safari 1952, documentary film, Associated Television, USA.

Salesman 1968, documentary film, Maysles Films, Inc., USA

Samson and Delilah 2009, motion picture, Screen Australia, New South Wales CAAMA Productions Pty Ltd., viewed 15 August 2010, http://samsonanddelilah.com.au/the-filmmakers.php

Saturday night and Sunday Morning 1960, motion picture, Woodfall Film Productions.

Say Bow Wow 1964, experimental film, Gil Brealey, Australian Broadcasting Commssion, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.afi.org.au/AM/ContentManagerNet/HTMLDisplay.aspx?Section=__2009_Awards_PDFs&ContentID=5759

See You in the Morning 1989, motion picture, Warner Bros, New York., viewed 30 December, 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098283/

Shiralee, The 1987, motion picture, South Australian Film Commission, Australia, viewed 30 December, 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0094546/

Sirens 1987, motion picture, British Screen Finance Ltd., UK, viewed 2 February 2008, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111201/

Soldier, The 1968, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Solitary Ones, The 1965, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Australia.

Spanish Earth 1937, documentary film, Contemporary Historians, Inc. France.

Sporting Chance n.d. television drama, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Stone 1974, motion picture, Hedon Productions, Australia, viewed 30 December 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0072209/

Storm Boy 1976, motion picture, South Australian Film, Australia, viewed 2 February 2008, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0076767/

Stranger, The 1964, television drama, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

Sum of Us, The 1994, motion picture, Australian Film Finance Corporation, Australia, viewed 2 February 2008, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111309/

Sunday Too Far Away 1975, motion picture, South Australian Film Corporation, Australia, viewed 30 December, 2007, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0073765/

Sylvania Waters 1992, documentary series, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australia.

Ten Million Strong 1961, documentary film, Intertel/Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney.

Terrific the Giant 1952, documentary film, Associated Television, USA.

This Day Tonight 1967, current affairs program, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

This Sporting Life 1963, motion picture, Independent Artists & Julian Wintle/Leslie Parkin Productions, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0057578/companycredits

Three In One 1956, motion picture, Australian Tradition Films, Australia.

Titicut Follies 1967, documentary film, Titicut Follies Distribution Company, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0062374/companycredits

Triumph of the Will 1935, documentary film, Internet Movie Database, viewed 31 July 2007, http://www.dasblauelicht.net/new_page_20.htm

Up Sunday 1972-1973, television program, British Broadcasting Corporation, viewed 14 August 2010, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0390788/

Wake in Fright 1971, motion picture, NLT Productions, Australia.

Walkabout 1971, motion picture, Si Litvinoff Film Productions,

Warragamba Story, The n.d., documentary film/video recording, Sydney Water Board, Sydney, Australia.

Women's World 1956, light entertainment television program, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Working Soviet Style 1979, documentary film, Film Australia, Sydney, Australia.

Work That Was 1980, documentary film, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Sydney, Australia.

You Can't See Round Corners 1969, television drama, Amalgamated Television Services, Australia.

APPENDIX A

SHOT LISTS - *CHEQUERBOARD* PROGRAM EPISODES VIEWED

Chequerboard
Series 1:Episode 2 *It's a big day in any girl's life* 53'36" 19/4/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: David Stiven Reporter: John Power
Ass.Prod.: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Bill Steller

GV's montage – Night time shots, people singing and dancing, serving themselves at buffet table (voiceover of groom talking about his expectations). MS sheep in pens.
MS/GV's men working sheep sorting pens.
MS Grazier riding on horseback – house, large garden surrounds.
Interview grazier (Bevan) on his concerns for wedding (eg. Rain, no champagne and the reception). He agrees it is more a woman's time than a man's – *"I've just been told to do this and do that, 'n that's all".* His father joins in interview. *"It's 38 years since I had anything to do with one".* He talks about having children – 3 or 4 – *"I'd very much like to have a daughter…and at least one son….so that I could pass on what my parents have passed on to me, and try and give him something".*
GV's interior of factory production line.
Interview another groom who earns $44/week – talks about his fiancé *Margaret "a very nice girl, sweet, good figure (he smiles), she's well behaved, an' she's well looked after and I think I can do a good job by lookin' after her too".* Talks about speech…goes into speech (word for word) he has been rehearsing, then off to the buck's party, his fiancé *"said not to get too drunk"* he says.
GV's hen's party, kitchen tea, gifts, sleepwear.
Interview with factory worker fiancée, Margaret in Mcu. She works at the same factory. She will work after marriage for about 12 months; she is looking forward to having a family *"too right I am!"* She says with a giggle. *"Not too big, peter reckons we're going to have a football team".* Talks about the proposal. *"We came home from the drive-in and he asked me…out the front in the car".* Says he helps around the house. They will be living in the same house as her mother*, "I didn't like it at first but, now that mum said that we don't have to pay any rent or anything, what more could you ask for, I really don't like living with in-laws"…"I reckon it's a big day in any girl's life'.* They will honeymoon at Curl Curl beach and in a caravan later. Making the wedding dress – dressmaker making adjustments – sewing machines in use, veil, Margaret in her dress and veil.
Grazier's fiancée (Sandra) in shop trying on wedding dress and mantilla headdress. Spanish handmade lace veil, the veil decided the dress. Interview her mother on organizing the wedding, *"just the fear of thinking you might have forgotten something".* With girlfriends – garden party. Interview with four bridesmaids – old school friends – live close in the country (50-60 miles between), her life after wedding – after the honeymoon, *"well, we're going to shear for a month, that will be a great shock, very early rises in the morning, and you know long days, and so forth, after that…water-ski, play tennis…I've been told I must learn to play bridge",* she can't water-ski she says. *"I'd like to have a four…I'd like a large family".* Large house with 24 rooms awaits her, *"a lot of furnishing to do".* Worries about wedding.

KEY:
MCU medium close up
CU close up
ECU extreme close up
GV-general view
MS medium shot
WS wide shot
LS long shot
PAN panning shot
HS head and shoulders
VS various shots

Looks at two opposing approaches to marriage ceremony: one wealthy, the other working class. Two brides from different social backgrounds. Contrasts examined about the build up and planning for their weddings. One spares no expense purchasing everything from a bridal boutique and having the reception in a banquet hall, while the other has her wedding dress and reception made and arranged by her family and friends.

In kitchen of Margaret's mum, making cake, ham and chicken salad, fish fingers, curried prawns and rice, and sausage rolls, oyster patties, cakes, fruit salad and ice-cream, cakes and tarts (she goes through the menu as she is placing fresh chicken into pot to cook. She is doing the catering herself, *"yes every bit of it! 12 chickens, 1 case of lettuce, four celery, 1 case of tomatoes, and four willing daughters to help do the job… a leg of ham, luckily I won the leg of ham in a Christmas raffle, so we kept it for the wedding"*. Cheaper than catering. Food directly from the markets. Interview with Margaret's mother, the women next door made the wedding frock, everybody helps. Everyone's helping, sister's help with money for wedding. The father is dead four year. Her husband *"came home drunk and kissed me mother and apologised to her"* (she laughs)…*funny as a two bob watch!"*

Wedding rehearsal for Bevan and Sandra in church. Cleric says he hopes she will be waring a dress, not trousers. Cu manicure, hair salon, sitting under hair dryers, facial. Interview with her mother on what she has been doing, checking to make sure everything has been done. She has talked wit her daughter about being ruined – the mother never cooks – make up being applied in salon.

Margaret's preparation at home, home hairdresser doing her hair. Peter's preparation, getting dressed at home, brushing suits for fluff, groomsmen help. Travelling with his mother in car to wedding (she is Italian, with a heavy accent). He is a good son.

Exteriors the garrison church, Sydney that founded in 1839. Guests arrive and go into church. Bevan arrives, Sandra comes in limozine, it is raining, and bells ring, down the aisle with her father. (Formal)

In local church – Margaret and Peter's casual wedding, down the aisle, cleric conducts service, ceremony filmed through until the "I will's". Wedding singer sings, signing register, bride and groom kiss. (Informal)

Bevan and Sandra (grazier) out of church, bells ringing, at reception, with guests, meeting guests, "here comes the bride", up to brides table. (Formal)

Outside Margaret and Peter's reception, appear as Mr and Mrs, applause. from friends, up to main table under marque tent, buffet food served (informal).

Formal reception and speeches for grazier. Mc toasts wedding *"don't mistake my words here, but being born and bred in the bush, I've always believed in breeding…whether this be horse, or dogs, sheep, or cattle…and don't worry yourself this works out in life…drink to the happiness of Bevan and Sandra"*, so say all of us is sung. Bevan and Sandra in MCU looking embarrassed and uncomfortable. Sandra cries, Bevan gives her a handkerchief.

Speech at Margaret and Peter's wedding, peter starts, *"on behalf of my wife and myself ….those who helped with the dresses and the bridesmaids…and for makin' the bride beautiful"*, laughter and applause.

Bevan speaks *"this is on behalf of my wife that I'm saying this"* (she laughs and smiles at him). He speaks to his mother.

Margaret and Peter's wedding, speech continue, uncle reg responds on behalf of the mothers.

The cleric makes a joke at the grazier's wedding.

Reading the telegrams at Margaret and Peter's reception. The then cut the cake, kiss, and the first dance to the Blue Danube.

Bevan and Sandra cut the cake, photographs taken, kiss, and first dance to Edelweiss.

Alternating shots of dancing at receptions, one formal, one casual, the couples leave, decorated tin cans.

Series 1: Episode 3 *A Fair Innings* 36'43" 6/5/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Mike Woolveridge Reporter: John Power
Ass.Prod.: Mary Covington Cameraman: Bill Steller

On Election Day, Female mayor, 72-year-old pensioner is made mayor of Leichhardt. The council chambers meeting in progress, voting in progress on mayoral allowance of $3000 per year, vote is carried.

Slattery, mayor of botany, he is middle aged, at home with wife and daughter at breakfast. Interview with Slattery about policies. Making change for the 'little people', *"after all I'm on of the little people myself".*

Parkinson, mayor of Mosman, is also the registrar of the pacific school of administration in Australia). Seen at home with family on Election Day. Interview with Parkinson on when he decided to run for council – (1962) – he is against high-density population in Mosman.

GV's pollster's on polling day – Cashman supports aged, seen with cigarette in teeth, white ht), voting. Interview with Cashman at polling station. The only woman in Leichhardt council says she is lonely and it given a hard time.

Parkinson at polling station on Election Day. Driving around streets of Mosman. Interviewed while driving car. Daughter electioneering for father. Parkinson talking to people in streets, wife electioneering.

GV's Mosman suburb. Interview Parkinson on his perspective on what he sees as Mosman's needs. I.e. Urban renewal, concerned about planning, impact, and community.

Slattery setting up polling station for Labor. Travelling and general shots of botany suburb. Vox pops of supporters, with Slattery political banter back and forth.

Interior polling booths, voting, interview with Mrs. Slattery after she votes on what she likes about being mayoress *"love it".*

Interview with female voter and mayoress on what the mayor has done *"all our paths for us….he's a real nice man".*

Voters on Election Day in street outside polling station. Interview Mrs Cashman on polling booth about voting Labor.

Interview with Slattery on voting through caucus, independents interfering in caucus. Party politics. *"I would prefer not to be tagged with any party".*

Supporter of the ALP? *"Yes, I always have been and always will be…as far as local government is concerned…I'm one of those people who believe that there shouldn't be any party politics whatsoever in local government".*

GV's Balmain town hall (suburb near Leichhardt).

Interview Cashman, she was married at 16; husband *"was mayor twice, of Balmain".* She has been mayor of Leichhardt for 6 years. She ran against her husband for mayor and won. Son-in-law arrives at booth. Cashman has complaints about untidy garbage men, rubbish left out (her personal attitude, friends, not sure on actual policies). Voters chat with Cashman, Labor voters love her.

Parkinson interview inside car. Talks again in urban development, other policies.

Cashman celebrates with friends at the pensioner's annual dinner, speakers at dinner. Thanks for dinner, *"it was wonderful…women dance to "if you knew Suzie"* and sing along. Interview with Cashman, congratulations on win. Has decided not to go on as mayor *"feel sad".* Declares council member mayor to carry on. Takes off robe. *"Take the chair aldermen Rockwell please"* thanks councillors for all their help during her time as mayor.

Local Leichhardt politics and those who would enter office. Who are their supporters? Why do they do it? What do they expect to achieve? Do they understand what their electorate really needs? This episode investigates politics at the grass roots level.

Series 1: Episode 4 *We're all good mates and that's it* 38'09"
13/5/1969

Producer:	Tom Manefield		
Director:	Storry Walton	Reporter:	Mike Woolveridge
Ass.Prod.:	Mary Covington	Cameraman:	Bill Steller

Ws conference meeting of prizefighters held at Moore Park. CU fighters. CU meeting called to order. GV's official photos taken, groups of men all former fighters. CU Vic Patrick (referee), Tommy burns (fighter), George Barnes (fighter) discuss former fights. All three banter back and forth. GV's restaurant kitchen activities. George Barnes is now a cook.

Interview about now being a cook. GV's kitchen activities. GV's George at home having a beer. Shows his scrapbook of memories, photos. Discusses career. *"I'd say the night I knocked Tommy Burns out at Sydney Stadium in the 11th round that would be the biggest thrill I ever had".*

Interview with Mrs. Barnes, *"yes, I saw all George's fights".* George says, *"I was very temperamental before a fight, everything had to be cooked right".* Mrs Barnes says he refused to eat broken eggs – an obsession. *"If you were cooking an egg for him, and you happen to break the egg as you were cooking it, he would look at it, he wouldn't say anything, but he would just pick it up and throw it out the back door".*

ECU George explains the difficult times when fights are stopped. Mrs Barnes quotes George with saying *"An unfit champion could always lose a fight to a mug any day".*

George discusses fights in 1953 and 1954.

GV's Tommy Burns at his riverside home. He has two cats. His flat is like a ship with round windows. Interview burns, tells story of how he changed his name from Jack Murphy to Tommy Burns. Needed another name to fight under, so that he did not lose his real job. Says his first fight was as reg burns, but changed it again for more appeal. In ECU says he did not like the sight of blood at school, "*especially my own".* On money, he says it is not important, *"how can a bloke be so bloody broke and yet be so happy, that's how it is".* He names the O'Neal-Bell fight as his best *"I would say that that was my fistic shining hour…one of the bloodiest fights, yes…both fighters seemed to have reached their peak on that same night, and they, both of them, wished not to be destroyed or defeated".*

ECU GV's Vic Patrick in his pub, with patrons, bantering back and forth. *"We're all good mates and that's it!"…I finished in 1948, boxing, all I want to do is make these fellas happy, and you can see they're happy".*

CU interview with Vic Patrick's daughter Vicki, on growing up as referee's daughter. Tough father. ECU Vic and Vicky talk about working together in pub. ECU Vicky. Patrick in pub storeroom with stock *"I like the business (boxing) its gets into you".* Patrick says he sees boxing not as a sport, but as a business. ECU *"you slug away, and you slug away until you really do see the hurt"* (in their eyes).

CU Vic recalls when he stopped the fight between burns and Barnes, *"I did think that tom had reached the end of his tether….he was getting' hit with punches he shouldn't have been hit with, and i sopped the fight, he'd got knocked down twice, so I stopped it".*

ECU Burns, Barnes and Patrick discuss fighters liking or not-liking fighting. Conference meeting continues with an in memorium held.

Champion boxers tell of their successes and failures in the ring. Interview with Australian boxing icons of the 1940s and 50s and their wives and daughters. What kept them going? What came after boxing for them?

Series 1Episode 5 *What do you get married for?* 30'20" 13/5/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: John Crew
Ass.Prod: Mary Covington Cameraman: Bill Steller

Ws women's lawn bowls game. Interview female bowler. MS "Sadie" variety show at women's bowls club. Panning shot of ball rolling. Interview Mrs Russell about social side of club. Panning Ws suburban street, zoom in to house. Interview with Mrs Russell on her life with/without her husband, she describes it as *"Typical…had to create my own interests".* Her family's needs overshadowed her ambitions to be an actor. How her life and relationship with her children have changed as they grew up. She agrees she is excluded from her husband's life, *"always excluding me, but I've accepted that role, I have been excluded, but I've accepted it".* MS woman on hospital trolley in weight loss contraption. Interview with her on the trolley about what she does while her husband is away, *"Oh, wait for the telephone to ring…I love my home"*. Ws women arrive and enter her home for card game. GV's game in progress. Cu interview Russell, says she does not have a lot of friends, but acquaintances, *"I keep myself very much to myself".* She confides in her husband only. Her happiest time? *"That's rather hard, from the moment I got married until now".* Says her husband is happy for her to work, but says she will stay at home. GV's antics at Tupperware party, then the demonstration. CU woman talks about her husband disliking Tupperware parties. He is a truck driver. She keeps busy while he is away with her interests*, "I haven't got that much time to be lonely".* She is a stay-at-home mum. Housework? *"Let's face it; it just goes with marriage doesn't it?"* Must have children in marriage, *"Let's face it, what do you get married for? It's to have children".* GV's art exhibition at fete. Miss N.S.W., GV's garden party, and shots of sunglasses, homemade hats, women, and paintings. Interview with woman who does charity work. She talks about her preparation to do the work, *"appearance means everything".* GV champagne and chicken sandwiches. Interview cu photos of her with American actor James Drury star of television's 'The Virginian', other celebrities. Ws her feeding her cats outside. Ws her house – 1920, and three storeys. Huge hairstyle. GV's interiors and furniture collection. She does not do housework. Happy she has no children. He wedding day was her happiest day. WS interview on cruiser, the huge hair and nautical hat askew, "*I want to be the bread winner myself"* she has a trotting horse, it's won four county races, *"my husband pays the bills".* She is financially independent. Her husband runs the house financially.	Revealing two sides of marriage and resultant social inclusion or exclusion. As seen here, in their own words, some women with children reveal a resignation to exclusion from the lives of their husbands after marriage, while others without children reveal a similar acceptance, but also a determination and ability to make lives for theMSelves despite such exclusion. Prompts questions about women in the workforce, and challenges accepted definitions of women in marriage.

Series 1: Episode 6 *It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince* 45'36" 27/5/1969

Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: David Stiven Reporter: Peter Grose
Ass.Prod.: Mary Covington Cameraman: Bill Steller

Factory printing room, worker watches processing. Interview MCU with Mr. Charles on how much he is paid per week. He says he clears $44.00 per week, with tax off. *"It's a bit of a push".* Opportunities do come for overtime. He pays $14.00 per week tend. Food, he is not sure (the wife does that). He gives his wife the money*, "an' she runs it from there".* CU the interview continues, says he *"Likes to do something that I'm satisfied with".*

GV's children playing in park on play equipment, mother nearby. MCU wife *"I was just twenty when I got married".* Interview in park on swing with child. Met in air force. Difficulties in making ends meet, *"hospital bills, doctor bills, that sort of thing…every penny I saved went on paying the hospital bills…"* zoom in to MCU, to CU *"I just hope there isn't anymore children…yes I am taking the pill now…it's $1.75 or something a month, I do smoke and if I haven't the money for the pill, or the cigarettes, I go without cigarettes...I have to go without cigarettes if I run out of anything for the children…although I'd love to smoke 30 cigarettes a day…I suppose I'll make sure there are no more children, and that's it".*
Cost for eczema ointment she says is $20.00 per month, they have $1.50 in the bank, bills are – gas $16.00, doctor $5.00 per week, and dinner last night was camp pie and chips. Lunch only for the children. "I never really bother with lunch. They have meat 6 out of 7 nights a week. *"I went to the family welfare when my gas was cut off, and I was expecting a baby and my husband was out of work, and I don't think I'd every go there again, I think I'd rather shoot myself before I went into family welfare again. They thought I was an animal!...I was asked to open my purse out and was asked how much my engagement ring was worth, the fact that my husband was out of work, that was my fault virtually, probably because I was so close to having a baby, I didn't know at that stage where my next meal was coming from, ..If I'd had to go about another week, I would have had a nervous break down".* Has felt like suicide.

GV's inside home, mother folding ironing, children on floor, TV on, dad arrives home, cuddles kids, greets wife, father greets baby. MS Wife interview on home, about meat meals per week *"i couldn't say when i last had steak…mince on weekend…chips are virtually a luxury…it's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince".* Stews, sausage, mince.

MS interview with husband *"you can spoil yourself with rich foods, I like plain things".*

CU wife, *"it's no good trying to hide from reality, you've got to face up to it, if I hadn't wanted children we wouldn't be in the mess we are in now, but if I hadn't had children, possibly we wouldn't be as happy as we are now, you know in a peculiar sort of way, although we don't have anything, we are happy".* Says her main source of happiness is children and a good husband. Another husband and wife in supermarket with children shopping. MS interview husband says shopping bill each week is *"About $10-11.00 for groceries, about $4.00 greens, $3-4.00 meat".* They have to do without some weeks. *"You can't afford to get everything you want to get*": MCU wife – never shoplifts. Can't go without tooth paste…*"otherwise clean your teeth with a bit of salt".* Sometimes they run out of soap.

Questions people's drive, ambition, and sense of purpose in life, challenging their choices and state of existence. In their own words, couples reveal their often-desperate financial situations as they struggle to live on the minimum wage. The camera lens zooMS in, significant comments reveal anxiety and concern for future. Their words reveal attempts to seek govt. help which at the time appear inadequate. Challenges the issue of working class poverty.

Another family struggle financially; through their words, they show a resolute determination to make the best of what they have and remain happy despite their struggles. Ongoing effects not only not having money for a family's weekly needs, but also that the children are at times kept home from school due to lack of food for lunches. Unseen ramifications of gaps in children's education as a result suggest possible future achievement difficulties, thereby perpetuating the status quo.

"We live from wage to wage". They have kept the children at home, because they had *"No food to send them with my kids are my life".*

GV's exterior house, washing on line, child rides bike through yard. Father sorting out junk. Interview with father. MS says he earns *"Just on $50.00 per week".* Does not get paid for all the hours he works, which is 40-50 hours per week. There are 6 children and his wife and him. The children are aged between 7 years and 12 months. Their rent is $12.60 per week. Bread is $3.50 per week, milk about the same, and no hire purchase". CU says, *"As a matter of fact I am a bankruptee…I'm not cleared as yet, I've still got say another 2-3 years to go".* In debt for $1000.00. MS husband talking with the yard in the background.

GV's wife putting child to bed. CU interview with wife on food, sausages, mince steak mincemeat, stewing chops, steak and kidney, shanks, rissoles, her husband does cakes. Always struggled. She came from a poor family. Goes out once a week to shop. At the moment, she has about $1.00 that has to last until Thursday, five days hence. She thinks rich people are misers. She is happy.

GV's car showroom, another husband polishes cars. He earns $50.00 per week with tax for 40-hour week and little overtime. Envy's people who buy the cars. Does not smoke. CU tried to take a second job, but wife's illness stopped that. ECU pay packet rent, does the shopping, cheap.

Exterior shots housing commission development, women hang out washing, children close by, into flat block, up stairs.
MS woman says she pays $11.50 per week in rent (she seems affected by medication). CU interview has and *"inferiority complex",* and feels down hearted, blamed for her mother leaving when she was three". Didn't feel her family loved her, her father *"used to get the stock whip out" if she stayed home from school",* she *"was put into a wheel chair"* because *"he belted me up so much I couldn't walk anymore".* Married at 18, she was pregnant, married to get away from home. Feels she has been burden to her husband. Tried to commit suicide, overdose. Still thinks about it, but the kids keep her going.

GV's children playing on floor.

MS Mrs. Sims says she pays $10.00 per week for food. Nothing for lunch. Does not think about shoplifting. CU interview says a piece of cake is a luxury to her. She had a good dinner at a friend's place. Today is her birthday, she is 22 years old, but looks 42. She smiles. ECU she feels unlucky, no regrets though. She prepares a salad on table; her husband pours her a beer and gives her a glass (to celebrate her birthday).

Interview CU with Mr. Sims – he says he came from poor family *"lived in an old mud house in Spring Valley".* He left school at 15 to help his mother. Left Bendigo to get a better life/opportunity.

CU Mrs.Sims, 3 children, she cannot have any more; she would die if she did. CU toothpaste, none in the house, costs too much, doctor told them if she got married and had children, it would help her nervous condition – he is optimistic.

GV's children crying, playing in park, in streets, a cricket game on swings.

Shows evidence of the day-to-day issues of making ends meet and families living on the minimum wage.

Shows evidence of issues that changed the lives of those concerned and which inevitably shaped their futures; the stories behind the story. The desperate situations experienced by those involved in this episode suggest a stoic determination by them not to buckle under, but to continue to survive no matter what life throws at them.

Series 1: Episode 7 *Fortune teller – I'm dealing in emotions*
44'00" 3/6/1969

Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Bill Steller Reporter: Peter Grose
Ass.Prod: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

GV's 78-year-old woman selling buttons for charity – old people and children's protestant home – on busy streets. Interview with her about selling buttons. Asked does she have any psychic flashes while selling, *"Oh yes I do…I think that's innate…"* she says.

GV's exterior old people's home. GV's interior of same. Old woman hand sewing, interview about living there. She explains she trained as a nurse at Prince Henry hospital in Sydney then became a minister's wife. She has psychic powers, but will not ask for money. Has premonitions. Will not tell bad news. Had a "feeling" about President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy assassinations. Believes the psychic messages come from god, as a feeling. Says our conscience should guide. Her daughter is a psychic too.

Another lady doing a tealeaf reading to a group of ladies in a home. GV's women at lunch table (well dressed) having tealeaf readings.

Interview with psychic reading recipient. Yes, she believes in it. She lives with witches. Does not follow it explicitly though.

Interview with daughter of old woman (Kathleen Green). They do readings for each other. Does not use powers for financial gain.

Fashion show in progress, models, guests, Beryl Cheers given psychic premonition by psychic. More shots of fashion show. Psychic talking to others as show continues.

Tarot card reading in progress at show.

Psychic in office doing tarot card reading for customer, dictating his reading to secretary. Interview on how he does a reading with the cards. Explains about tarot cards. Makes cup of tea with partner at home.

Young well-dressed woman calls at the psychic's house for a reading. Carries out reading.

Interview with same woman about her readings, what brought her there – her daughter died last year, she is lonely, and restricted in her home environment. Her husband does not know about the reading sessions. The psychic has helped her with small problems. Has been given her direction. Will not go to doctor, psychiatrists etc.

GV's at home with psychic again. Doing some house cleaning/dusting. Interview with him about being a psychic. Does not ask for payment, leaves it up to the person to establish what to pay.

GV's old woman Mrs. Green giving another card reading/her daughter doing same.

Looks at the changing face of Australian society and of the increased interest in the psychic world and séances. Challenges and question why people turn to the paranormal as an alternative to the church or medical help.

Series 1:Episode 9 *The policeman told me to go to bed or live in the space age* 35'41" 17/6/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Neil Munro Reporter: Peter Grose

GV's young people partying. Exterior night shot block of flats. Interior young people partying drinking and dancing.

GV's older neighbours checking outside through their windows. Interview Cu older woman. ECU her face.

GV's young people at party, kissing etc. MCU clock on mantle reads 2.50am. Another older neighbour makes herself a cup of tea. Interview of her husband in cu. MS husband demonstrates their sound issues. In to MCU of his face. MCU his wife speaks. GV's husband leaves the room and returns with a baseball bat in his hand. MCU their faces as they continue speaking.

GV's police arrive at party, enter house. GV's interview with another older man in flat at party, police leave.

GV's older couple in separate beds – cannot sleep. Interviewed in their beds.

GV's exterior flats next morning, broken glass. GV's interior four young men eating at table. MCU interviews around table and on lounge. GV's at home next morning young women. GV's young women in kitchen. MCU interviews. GV's young men ironing – interviews in MCU.

Older women in their flat having cup of tea in evening.

Interview older man, MCU, other women as well. CU women's faces as they speak.

GV's young men and women in their flats discussions, drinking.

Neighbourhood disputes. Differences of opinion between the older and the younger generation about noise pollution from loud parties which develop into heated and angry neighbour disputes. Challenges the loss of respect for people's piece of mind and privacy issues in the quickly changing Australian society.

Series 1:Episode 10 *To err is human* 45'00" 24/6/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: John Worrall Reporter: David Roberts
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Bill Steller

MCU interview driver on the road for 47 years, he is travelling salesman, Keith Ellis. He has travelled over 2 million miles. CU interview continues in car while he is driving.

Pan shot car moving through countryside.

Interview in car continues. Car into small town. Interview in car going to see a Joe Merton.

Keith into shop. Talks to shopkeeper. Small talk between the two. Talks to shop owner. Takes order then leaves shop. Street scenes. Keith books into hotel. WS rowing on Clarence River.

CU interview about being a travelling salesman. Talks about the effect his career has on his wife *"I suppose there are temptations that come along to a traveller, that don't come to other people you know….to err is human, you now"* (he laughs).

Keith says he believes his wife has had a happy life, despite his indiscretions through the years. He works without a contract. Has won prizes. Interview Keith's wife. Talks about his career, shows CU family photos, wedding photo album. Talks about car accident, photos of crash. MS she says the children have been the centre of her life "more or less it had to be".

MS Keith and mates talking over drinks telling stories of being on the road. GV's Keith back to his hotel room.

Interviewer asks if Keith knows many other women. Keith says he does. Interview MCU Keith says he knows 531 women. Interview about his opinion of today's male dress style. He dose not like the tight pants. He likes women's dress style. He believes women dress to impress the male.

Keith says he enjoys travelling over the three-mile limit. He explains *"Three mile from home and you're single again",* he laughs. Ws rod fishing with his mates on riverbank.

Exterior shot zoom into inside house at night time. Keith and mates reminiscing.

MS Keith's wife watches TV at home. Zoom into cu. She met Keith in Murwillumbah. She does not like him drinking. She says being on the road *"gets in their blood, it's like a sailor, they're just not happy when away from the road".* She says Keith got the better side of the *bargain "oh definitely, he's been around travelling all the time".*

GV's Keith and mates in club, drinking telling stories again. CU Keith telling story about women. CU Keith's wife. Keith comes home, kisses her. Small talk. She continues watching TV. Keith and wife sitting on cough together. CU Keith's wife on what she thought of him. ECU *"Yes he was very good looking…..well I had the two young children…I was kept fairly busy".* MS same interview continues.

ECU they both agree they get on each other's nerves a bit after about a month.

ECU Keith agrees he is selfish. ECU she says, *"I'd like to see him a little bit more often than I do".* ECU they discuss friction in their marriage *"it blows over. It's one of those things that just happens".*

Exterior shot Keith walks outside his home into front garden. Caravan in driveway. He enters caravan. GV's women's handbags decorate inside caravan. MCU interview about selling handbags from his caravan. ECU on what he has in common with his wife *"I don't know that there's much at all as a matter of fact".* Keith drives away from camera with caravan.

The life of the travelling salesman and of those he leaves behind like his wife and children. What drives them to continue travelling? Is their time coming to an end? Some say they are one of the linking pins of society keeping personal communications going across the country. Others say their days are numbered. This is one man's story which reveals he prefer to be on the road that at home. Challenges moral conceptions and trust issues in marriage.

Series 1: Episode 11 *I could get married and have a family*
48'07" 24/6/1969

Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Bill Steller Reporter: Richard Oxenburgh
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes

GV's sheltered workshop in Sydney. People from psychiatric hospital working to rehabilitate themselves. Staging post while awaiting a job.
Jeff warren working and interviewed about his work and where he came from (Morisset Psychiatric Hospital). He works for 90 cents per day in the workshop. He is looking for a job as a storeman somewhere.

GV's factory worker – Vince Calwell, 38, was in care for 6 years. He is assistant storeman. Wants to be a journalist. Interview Vince on what he has done today. Says he faced difficulties getting a job because he was seen as an *"outcast as it were"* because of being in psychiatric hospital *"oh you're just not wanted, sort of thing".*

GV's Len Hitchens, 64, mowing his lawn. Met Vince in hospital. Interview Len. What he does each day. Len fixing himself some dinner in kitchen *"My actual job in the house is, I do the cookin', and I go down and get the food, I set the table, do all the washing up, and then if there's any washing, wash the sheets, the only thing I don't do I don't do the ironing, they do that…..oh well, it's helpin' them anyhow, they're workin' hard, and when they come home they just don't like feel like getting' into cookin' tucker".*

He was in Morisset from December 1960, then went to Allenstown with nerves. Does not like taking all the pills, is worried about being addicted. He has been a cleaner all his working life *"If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well….happy go lucky, haven't got a care in the world nor a worry".* Preparing the meal.

Interview with Calwell in hospital for prolonged constipation. Doctor diagnosed him as a split personality. After his mum died he, *"tended to let me self go a bit'*. Has a deep friendship with Jeff in the workshop.

Exterior private hostel. Pays $13.00 per week board out of $16.00 per week pay. Interview Jeff. His father was an electrical engineer with the Clarence River county council. Could not live up to his father's expectations. He suffers from bad nerves. Attacked his mother and his father put him in Morisset. Says he hit is mother because he lost a card game. His mother again, and then he was charged with assault, sent off to Morisset. Did not hit his father *because "Possibly I thought he was too strong for me"* (smokes cigarette). His father left him in Morisset. Doctor's said he was okay to go out, but parents did not want him to come out. Vince is his only friend. Wants to get married *"A girl who would come to Morisset to see the other less fortunate people".*

GV's meeting. Jeff elected president of the psychiatric rehabilitation association's social club. Vince – sect; Len – vice pres; GV's members at meeting.

Interview Jeff. Has a job now too.

Members greeting each other. Will stay with Vince. Game of bingo in progress. Jeff reads numbers. Jeff at Anzac Day parade – his first since 1948. He was in air force during WWII. Jeff and others in Hyde Park, Sydney. Interview about Vince. How he helped them integrate. Interview Vince on Jeff *"He wasn't a bad bloke!"* Their first firm friendship, look after each other. Off to the footy.

The words of ex-psychiatric patients tell their stories of mental illness, exclusion, institutionalisation and their attempts to re-enter society through halfway houses and monitored medication. All reveal their need to create happy and meaningful lives for themselves into the future. Challenges mental health care practices at the time.

GV's footy game. Manly vs. Balmain at Sydney Cricket Ground. Jeff and Vince in crowd. Jeff and Vince playing cards.

Interview Max and Laurel Levite and Ron Nicholls all live in the house together. Interview Ron. Interview Lowell and Max on why he went to Morisset – had a breakdown. Max is looking for a job. Working in the Newcastle sheltered workshop. Max is happy there. He earns $25.00 per fortnight income. He says he is happy the way things are.

Exterior halfway house. Laurel making cake and pikelets. Interview Laurel on living circumstances. She is happy too. GV's wedding presents. Still wrapped, *"Keep them for a special occasion".* Christmas dinner party. People were opposed to their marriage and having a family. Her mother died and father left the five children. He father was also in a psychiatric hospital before he hit her mother. She is not worried about her children having psychiatric problems. Had to meet Max in secret.

Bar-b-q Sydney ex-patients at hospital.

Interview Max and Laurel about how they got married. No relations of Laurel's went to wedding. Married in city mission in Newcastle (non-denominational) in the chapel. Was given wedding dress, veil from smith family. Max's suit from the mission.

GV's lawn bowls game – ex-patients playing.

Society's acceptance of marriage between former psychiatric patients is challenged here with Max and Laurel's marriage highlighted

Series 1: Episode 13 *A palace, a fortress, a tomb* 45'53"
15/7/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Neil Munro Reporter: Gilly Coote
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

Aerial views Montsalvat buildings, gardens, artist colony near Melbourne. GV's families enter Montsalvat gate, older women leaning on gate as family (tourists) enter.

CU interview Mrs. Schipher talks about living on the property. She calls it a dictatorship. Her husband was the Melbourne editor of The Bulletin for many years and she says their China correspondent. *"I think most of the controlling of Montsalvat came from him* (Jorgensen), in relation to the children at Montsalvat *"They sat around the table at night listening to him".*

Panning shot group walks through the buildings, tourist's guide.

Interview MS tour guide. She originally came up to help in 1935. She was his pupil (Jorgensen*) "everyone had to work that was the reason they were allowed here".*

GV's tourists in and around buildings and gardens.

Interview Matcham, son of Mrs. Schipher, about living at Montsalvat. Tourist around. Difficulties involving tourists to keep the place running.

Ws buildings and surrounding gardens. Tourist checking the place out.

Interview Mr. Monday. The great hall built by Jorgensen and his pupils. He talks about Jorgensen's philosophies. Give an example of the controversy that surrounded it. Issues of being labelled a nudist colony he says are untrue, also that they were not a free love colony *"not really, I don't think so….not any more than other communities are".*

The Great Hall to be the place of a wedding.

GV's rock and roll music, party inside the Great Hall that night. Spanish dancing exhibition. GV's tourist in the grounds.

interview with Miss Gibbet. She is shy, but stays in the background as much as possible *"we live very cheaply".* She looks after Jorgensen.

Interview Jorgensen *"the master of Montsalvat"* speaks about what Montsalvat means to him *"well its just an idea as a sort of a dreamer architecturally, I wanted to build myself according to Phillip II of Spain "a palace in which to live, a fortress in which to defend, and a tomb in which I will eventually be buried". "When I started to build up here, I decided that I would like to see how all sorts of people would mix together,"* he says.

GV's exteriors Montsalvat. Jorgensen walking around grounds. Interview continues. Building continuing as interview continues.

MS interivew about living at Montsalvat. The honouring of Jorgensen as *"the master".* Talks about bringing up children at Montsalvat. Good, many animals, room to play etc. GV's children feeding donkeys. Interview with twin boys.

MS Timothy working. Matcham into building workshop. Matcham makes his jewellery. Tim working at jewellery making. Matcham says he owns nothing except his equipment.

Those living at Monsalvat tell their stories of their involvement and work to build and develop the artist colony under the guidance of artist Justus Jorgensen. Shows an alternative lifestyle challenging societies accepted structure, defacto relationships, and belief systems.

Jorgensen's words explain his reason for building Montsalvat

Talks about the frictions living there; about not being married to his wife; about Jorgensen as a man *"essentially I think he's a fairly cold sort of man, and very focussed on his architecture and I don't think that he really likes people very much. I think he can't bare a sort of situation that he isn't manipulating and you know, he walks over a scrap heap of materials and he's thinking, you know, what can I do with this, what sort of order can I create in all of this, and if he meets people, he thinks he sees their lives as really a possibility of using them to do something for hiMSelf. I think in this way he might have fallen down as a teacher….I think he was interested in teaching them his beliefs, and his methods, and his ideas"* Matcham felt rebellious about things when he was young.

Interview two boys about how they see themselves, are they average – twins – they talk about their father, brother, about being famous, on media report about the group.

GV's spot welding. Marcus, Matcham's son interview with Marcus. His father being dominant – what was it like growing up at Montsalvat *"it was good, it was free".* Talks about marriage "his father was against marriage, he was going against his father's belief. Talks about problems between his wife and his father *"I find myself standing up for it all the time when someone's around* (Montsalvat) – *all those arty bums up there".* He sees Jorgensen as a Christ-like figure up there, but he is not a disciple *"no, not my family, the other people mainly hang around and say 'old Jorgy's a genius' and all that sort of stuff".*

MS Jorgensen upstairs into gallery studio. Interview on opening up private gallery to public for $5.00 or so to show how his painting is done. GV's painting – self-portraits.

Questioned about the difficulties of being a dictator. He says *"well the point of the thing is you never know you are a dictator you see, and you think clearly, you think that that's how thing should be, and then you find out that people don't seem to all together agree with you, and that shouldn't be like that at all".* Talks about his marriage.

The woman "Helen" who now looks after Jorgensen interrupts interview. She objects to the questions being asked, but does not want to answer questions herself. Helen continues to object to the kinds of questions regarding who dominates whom in their relationship. Helen says the questions being asked of Jorgensen were *"trying to reduce Jorge to a completely conventional thing, you were, you have right form the beginning of your interviews here, tried to reduce the whole thing to a completely conventional common place relationship"*

Jorgensen interrupts saying, *"don't talk about it anymore, for god's sake!"*

"I will!" Helen says.

Helen becomes incensed with Jorgensen and the interviewing process. The interview is cut short.

Montage interview segments talking on their views on marriage, or no marriage and whether Montsalvat will continue. They do not believe it will because the children do not feel the same way as those that built it.

Jorgensen suggest epitaph *"I'd like to say that I had a lot of patience, and I was wishing reason to prevail….but then, I suppose everybody would say that"*

Aerial shots Montsalvat with Helen's voiceover saying, *"I assure you Jorgen, you are giving away our fortune to these people for a cheap-jack thing on Chequerboard".*

Their words reveal undercurrents of dissention; a realisation that what might have been appears to be now only a series of lost dreams and good

Confronting reality head-on, the words of Jorgensen reveal the single-mindedness of a driven man to achieve his radical architectural and social ideal, and his belief that all should think and believe as he. Not only this, but the words reveal his seeming ambivalence and puzzlement that not everyone thinks as he does.

Jorgensen's carer vehemently shows a dedication, love, and loyalty not only to the man, but also to protecting and defending the ideal of Montsalvat.

Series 2: Episode 14 *The same dose of treatment* 49'03"
17/2/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Russell Toose Reporter: Iain Finlay
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

Group of social workers talk to three people Paula (unmarried mother), Ted (businessman0, Karl (migrant), with same problem - loneliness.

ECU Paula interview. Could not discuss women's issues wit her mother. No answers from the convent either. She was sent there after stealing money – her mother called the police. CU to ECU *"I had to go away, be put in a home".* Her mother called the police before speaking to Paula. She was put in a detention home with barred windows for a few weeks *"then I went to the convent after that for four years…..I wasn't allowed to read anything except religious subjects".* The lives of the saints and the scriptures. Others there were *"very old ladies, mentally retarded girls, and physically deformed people".* Paula says her life is "still messed up" because the convent treatment distorted her development. ECU *"yes, it was distorted 'cause it's still messing up my life now".* She says she cannot communicate with men. She was 28 years old when she first slept with a man. She became pregnant with twins, but was unable to tell the man, that she wanted him to stay. Instead, she told him to go away. He went back to England. ECU says she has written and sent photos, but no answer has come. CU Paula with 2 years old twins (boy/girl). Ws exterior Paula with children feeding ducks. GV's Paula at home having a cup of tea along at home. ECU says she want "*a happy home life"* most…*"my own little family around me".* Says she is still cautious with men. Does not want to get hurt again. Cannot contemplate casual relationship (sex only) needs more substance *"the right sort of man, not just anybody, but just the right sort".* Says she became involved in this program *because, "mainly because I want these things to be known, I like people to be aware of what's going on because I think the more you know about people, and the more things you are aware of, the more you can understand people, and also yourself, and also it gives me a lot of confidence in myself as well, because I'm getting a lot of things off my chest".*

ECU interview Ted – his wife ordered him to tell his mother to leave their home. The mother was very ill but did so anyway, "she packed a few things in a case and she walked out of the gate and into middle of the road and she collapsed in the middle of the road. And I started to run to her any my wife, said if you go to her I'll scream, and I ran to her and she screamed and people came running out of their doors. That to me was a very very big disillusionment and felt completely ashamed of her". He has been married for one and a half years at the time. His mother went to live with one of his sisters. His wife became domineering in every way. This affected the intimate relationship – he believes his wife did not enjoy sex – he many have been to soft he says. He believes his loneliness stems from the lack of communication within his marriage. He does not want a divorce, because his wife has been the only woman he has been intimate with, he says his mother told him 'look Ted, I know you've put up with a lot, but she's the only woman you've ever known".

These stories reveal the effects of loneliness on different people living in the city, and how they came to be in their situation.

Their words reveal their anguish and struggle to regain their lives and a sense normalcy, home, and family.

Challenges society's acknowledg ement of those who, for whatever reason are separated from accepted social structures and conventions.

He said he hopes the effect of this program on TV *"could have possibly the effect that I would hope in that it might just be the thing that we need to just bring things back into the right perspective".*

ECU Ted speaks regarding 'Karel'. Karel disappeared before being interviewed for the program.

ECU Paula speaks about 'Karel', says Karel was hard to contact.

Reporter knocks on door of dwelling, camera filming, man opens the door, reporter asks for Karel, the man says Karel left about three weeks prior. ECU he says, *"The landlady might know".* CU reporter questions the property owner around the corner about Karel. *ECU "he left and he didn't say where he was going about a fortnight ago I think it was".* CU property owner again. GV's photo of Karel is shown around.

CU Karel reading newspaper. He said he was not sure the chequerboard interview was still going ahead, and he had to leave where he was staying because he could not pay the rent. He needed to move right away. His real name is Karel Kricik. He says he has not has a stable *background "I'm a drifter, I am frightened of it".* He says this is hard for him to admit. MCU Karel making up a cup of tea at home and listening to the radio. ECU interview. He has not had many happy times he *says "five years ago I began to feel loneliness"…*when he broke up with his wive he became desperate and lost his children as well. He shows photos of his children and talks about them especially 'Stephen'. *"I love him so much".* He has five children but never sees them now*. "What would be the good of it?"*

Karel speaks about Paula's loneliness. Says she needs *"someone who makes her feel like a women".* About Ted, he says, *"Ted needs the same",* and *"I need the same"* he says.

GV's Karel meets with Ted and Paula in home for coffee. They sit around table talking about what they have been doing.

ECU Ted, *"I understand their feelings…we more or less help each others"*

ECU Paula says she wants emotional security.

ECU Karel.

ECU Ted, says he does not like being he dominated figure.

ECU Karel, he says shifting = loneliness. He says he is forced to shift.

ECU Paula says *"I think if you change too often, or if changes are too drastic, you can lose yourself".*

Series 2: Episode 16 *My brown skin baby, they take him away* (Part 1) 52'15" 17/2/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Bill Steller Reporter: David Roberts
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

Bob Randall speaking to audience in a hall about Aboriginal women losing their babies to "the white man". CU Bob Randall singing a song he wrote, *"My brown skin baby they take 'im away"*. GV's Aboriginal babies filmed alone and intercut with Randall singing his song.

CU Randall speaking about his song writing. "My brown…" is his own story. *"Everything in that song really happened,"* he says. Moreover, mothers tried to hide their babies from the authorities.

GV's Aboriginal children marching into school in western clothing.

Interviewer David Robert's narration explains the government policy to take Aboriginal babies from their mothers (the first time this issue is raised in media). Narration over footage of Darwin streets/people.

GV's Bob Randall and his family in supermarket shopping with is wife, then; chasing pigs. (He was a gardener, driver at hospital, then administration job with mission, then a job with airways, now he is a gardener again with the welfare department. He wanted to be a social worked, but his education held him back (although some of the white social workers told him that he had not matriculated either). GV's Randall at his home in town which he rents out. He lives at his country house. GV's Randall at home singing "my brown…". GV's whites and Aboriginals singing and dancing in hotel. Randall mingling with people at the hotel. CU Randall interview says no does not drink, smoke, or gamble. He says, *"I try to practice what I read….I think it's because I live by the power of the bible".*

CU Randall speaks about the effects of civilisation on Aboriginal people, how there's *"two sets of clothing",* one for on the mission stations, and another for in town (Darwin).

CU Randall praying the Lord's Prayer at lunch with family around large table. Randall talks about the foster children he has with his family. MCU Mrs. Randall speaks about her children helping prepare the daily meal. CU Randall talks about how he got his name – he thinks his father's name was *"Randall something"… "So they kept Randall and they just put bob on it,"* he says. He says, *"all contact was broken, absolutely broken" with his real family once he was taken away…no record was kept of where we were from even; it was a complete break away from our family".* CU Randall speaks about lack of education and living on Rocker Island, then moving to Darwin. CU Randall speaks about meeting his wife. His wedding, *"nice big wedding, lots of food to eat".* Methodist wedding. She was also taken away from her mother, from Aileron near Alice Springs. Bob was taken from Conneston Station area, nearby.

Issues of relatives marrying each other due to the lack of record taking when babies were removed. Bob says, *"From what me and Amy (his wife) know now, she and I are distant cousins, we could have been brother and sister, we wouldn't have known".*

The words of Robert Randall in song and interview tell not only his personal story, but also the story of many, many, aboriginal children taken from their mother's as part of the Australian government's aboriginal policy at the time.
The words and images combine to reveal the resultant anguish and pain caused by such decisions so long ago, and which still echo today.
The lack of correct record keeping has affected aboriginal families, family structure, and personal relationships, and as Randall's words reveal familial ties were severed, sometimes never to be rekindled.

Bob and his family packing up a Holden car for the trip to Aileron, near Alice Springs meeting her mother at the camp. How difficult it was speaking in pigeon English. CU Florry, Amy's cousin, also going to Aileron to meet her mother for the first time. GV's the family sets off in the Holden car.

CU Amy interview. Speaking about her mother being found at Aileron Station. Ws car down outback road. Cut to bob singing another of his songs. CU's Amy and Florry, and Bob and the children in the car intercut with bob singing *"Who am I, what am I".*

WS car down outback road. CU Bob singing. Interior car, Amy and Florry humming the song. Bob singing, Amy and Florry join in singing.

Arriving Aileron Station, greeted by family members. Florry meets her mum for the first time; Amy introduces her mum, sister and dad. Florry's mum Rubi (she is shy and silent), meets grandson (he's reluctant), Florry sits with Rubi. Florry is overcome with emotions. Florry is awkward, shy, and has difficulty speaking about how she feels meeting her Aboriginal mother.

ECU Amy says her first meeting with her mother was the same *"quiet"*; she speaks to Florry's mother Rubi, in pigeon English. Rubi says she is happy to meet Florry and grandson (he is very blond and shy). GV's mission activities.

Bob shows around the mission which has not running water, the dame is half a mile away (drums are used to carry water). Aboriginal women see fetching water. Aboriginals in mission. Cu bob interview on trying to get group interested enough to apply for loan to help. MS cooking damper on campfire.

GV's Amy speaking pigeon. Amy talks with mother about living together maybe, maybe not.

CU Amy says communications is difficult, *"Well I don't speak Arunta, I try and speak to them in pigeon English".*

MS Aboriginal men and women sing *"Oh little town of Bethlehem"* in Arunta. Sitting on ground outside in sun. The collection is taken in an old hat. Lutheran minister prays in Arunta with same group. Panning shot Aboriginals praying.

Interview CU Eric, preacher, he went to Hermannsburg to be a preacher, has been preaching for four years, the congregation collection pay him, he does not know how old he is, his is also Florry's brother. GV's mission activities, children with unkempt hair.

GV's Florry sits with relative, *says, "It seems very strange, I didn't expect anything like this...well I thought they would live in little cottages, not in humpies like this…I think they are only fit for dogs to sleep in, not for people to live in",* CU Ruby (shy). MCU Eric speaks. Florry's dad's name was George Nicholls, a friend of Rubi's.

ECU interview Florry *says, "Won't be staying here".* He little boy was *"very frightened"…he doesn't want to stay here".* Florry feels sorry for her relatives. ECU Florry's face. ECU Florry says, *"Yes I'm happy, it wouldn't like to have been brought up like this".*

Bob interviewed on conditions – explains Aboriginal people need to be where they do not need to *"trade their will for what the European way of life is".* He explains, *"Trade their will" as self-expressions.* ECU Eric says Christianity is difficult for aboriginals.

Bob Randall talks about Eric's work to bring Christianity to Aboriginal people. GV's Aboriginal mother and children in camp. Children playing. No school in camp. Bob says aboriginal people *feel "now as just people forgotten, more than outsiders".* GV's bob singing at night around campfire, group of people listening. The song is *"Black velvet my darling".* ECU Aboriginal women and men's faces in the fire light. Bob singing until the end of scene. Faces of Amy and Florry as well.

This episode challenges the government's moves to separate aboriginal mother and child, family and relationships issues, and questions why it was necessary at the time.

Sequences reveal the influence of the Lutheran Missions on the aboriginal families. Questions and challenges the cumulative effect on aboriginal culture. Highlights through its images the immense cultural and social differences that remain between traditional aboriginal life and that now of their children raised in the white man's society.

Sequences show the return to Aileron Station of Florry and Amy and their meeting with their family members. Communication is extremely difficult because of language barriers.

Series 2: Episode 17 *Who am I, what am I* (Part 2) 41'37"
10/3/1970
(this episode is the second part of *My brown skin baby…*")
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Bill Steller Reporter: David Roberts
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

MCU Bob Randall and family travelling in car singing "Who am I, what am I". VS travelling views. CU Randall in car while driving on way to Aileron *"no I found my father and he told me that my mother died soon after they took me away from her".*

CU interview Amy about locating her family. CU interview Florry, she just smiles and says she is apprehensive about meeting her mother.

GV's WS Randall's car into aileron. The family meet under a tree.

GV's Amy and family members hug each other.

WS Forry with her son.

MCU Florry with son (blond hair), meeting with her family, her mother is not there yet.

MCU Amy introduces her mother and her sister Beryl, and Aunty Peggy and Aunty Maggie, then her father.

WS Florry's son remains "stand offish" not sure of things, he is also apprehensive.

CU Florry is embraced by her mother Ruby, who wraps her arms around her and holds her close.

CU Ruby's husband, Tommy (he is blind), stands with Ruby and Florry. They all stand silently close together.

CU Florry encourages her young son to say hello to his grandmother, but he twists away and does not speak.

ECU Florry speaks about meeting her mother for the first time. Florry *says, "Are you happy to see me?"* to her mother. Her mother says *"Yes"* very quietly. They are both smiling all the while.

CU Ruby says, *"That's mine",* and gently touches Florry and Florry's son.

CU Amy asks the boy to look up and say hello to ruby. He does not.

Ws their family sit around in a group under the shade of a tree. Ruby and Florry share a chair, Amy sits on another chair.

WS Aboriginal campsite, dwellings. Interview Randall talks about the living conditions, says *"we've got the old army type of thing, my aunties and uncles that carry the water down here, fill up the bucket and pull up the rope with the holes in the bucket….just to make some sort of a shower".*

GV the campsite. Randall explains the station people look after the Aboriginal families *"they have all the responsibility, they're might people, they've got very little to work with and other duties besides the people. They people live on the fringe of the station here, on the station land, but just borrowing it, even though it's their own tribal land".*

Randall shows some of the dwellings built by the Lutheran Church. Making damper on coal fire. MCU interview Amy speaks about what it means to her to find her people *"when I first met up with them, i was glad to see them all and to hear that they were still alive".*

With her quietly spoken words "That's mine", and gentle touch, Florry's aboriginal mother Ruby reveals that the timeless bond between mother and child remains unbroken even after their devastating separation many, many years before. They recognise each other and are able to communicate not through words so much, but through a look, a smile, a touch.

Interview Amy's mother, tells about when her other daughter's were taken away, and that Amy's father was a white man from Queensland, however, he did not stay. Amy's sister, dolly, was also his. Beryl's father was Paddy, her husband. Amy's mother wants her to live with her. ECU Amy, Paddy. ECU interview Amy. GV's group aboriginals sitting on ground dressed in European/western clothes singing in Arunta *"Oh come all yee faithfull"*, in outdoor church service. Aboriginal lay minister. They collection hat is passed around; the people give what they can. A prayer is given *"The Lord's Prayer"* in Arunta. Panning shot of gathering. ECU interview with lay preacher who learnt to preach at Hermannsburg. Says he's Florry's brother. GV's campsite, children playing, Florry and her family. She says, *"It's been very strange"* meeting her relatives. *ECU "I thought they would live in little cottages, not in humpy's like this".* ECU Ruby (very shy, whispering answers to Florry) about how many children she had. ECU Ruby appears highly embarrassed at being questioned about Florry's father (a white truck driver). ECU Florry says her son *"was very frightened, he didn't see anything like this before".* ECU Florry, says about her father, *"I didn't know, him, so it didn't worry me".* ECU Florry says, *"now that I've met them, I feel a bit sorry for them living like this".* ECU Florry says, *"No, I was brought up a European, and I always will think that way".* ECU Florry says, *"Yes, I'm happy, I wouldn't like to be brought up like this".* ECU Florry *says, "Yes, I'm thankful that I was taken away".* GV's Ws Randall and Eric (preacher) walk through main camp at Aileron. CU Randall interviews about conditions at camp, water etc. Randall says he would like to help the people at Aileron, *"that's been my life's dream and answer if I could do something for them…I'd like to come here and if it was financially possible, live amongst them how to give them ideas how to make it much easier to them, and short cuts to a better and happier life".* Overlay of women, children, and babies. Randall continues speaking on how the Aboriginals at aileron perceive themselves *"Just people forgotten, more than outsiders".* GV's Randall singing *"Black velvet"* around campfire. ECU different Aboriginal faces sitting around listening.	Florry's words reveal her confusion and disbelief at how her family live and the effect of meeting his grandmother on her young son who, as he has been brought up in Darwin, has never experienced anything like it before. The episode, like part one, questions the right and wrong of the government's actions and reveals the confusion felt by those affected.

Series 2: Episode 20 *At Londonderry* 41'53" 31/3/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: Peter Grose
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Geoff Burton

GV's children play with dog in country scene, a hot summer's day, dirt road, ramshackle dwellings nearby.

MS a woman (Mrs. Carroll) sweeping floor, children lying on bed in house, mother speaks about how they sleep in two few beds. Father holding youngest, talks about few pieces of furniture, explains about lack of electricity, broken power points.

MCU mother explains crowded sleeping arrangements for children – one bed for several – father (who is deaf) talks about problem with wall in house.

Into another room with one bed for more children.

Mother in kitchen (child on her hip) speaks about dangerous power points in house, no sewerage, no water to house, explains she has seven children.

CU another mother (related to Mrs. Carroll) breastfeeding outside during the interview, children playing with tap water, buckets, to keep cool and have some fun, children laughing and playing together, playing footy, young mother breastfeeding during interview again, she explains she has been deserted by her husband. Interview with 15 year old girl about how she affords makeup (from friends), young mother doesn't expect the father of her child to return, but she's not worried at all, living from day-to-day, young girl asked what she'll do in future, she *says "I don't know".*

WS shots of children playing with water tap on hot day again.

Interview with Mrs. Carroll about her past and her upbringing. Says her father came out of the army and bought a small farm, not able to afford a place to live, just scratching along.

CU interview Mr. Carrol about his past and his upbringing (being deaf his wife, speaks close to his ear and asks him the question) – tough life, father left mother with children, was poor, he has been poor all his life, itinerant work, he says it's *"a good life".* He was adopted. He has not worked for six years. He is 38. Mrs. Carroll is 37.

Question: why did you have so many children?

CU Mrs. Carroll says, *"I think it just runs in the family".* She says she does not believe in abortion because she is Roman Catholic. She does not believe in taking the pill. Her daughter is expecting a baby that month as well. She was annoyed with her daughter, but got over it, she says.

MCU interview with daughter again about her baby. She want a girl, is looking forward to the birth, and she has left school.

MS Mrs. Wilson carries water to her house. Mrs. Wilson works on a car outside. Small infant drinking out of a can.

MS interview with Mr Wilson about being a mechanic, what is he driving presently. He says he is working on his own car. Talks about working as an itinerant (picking peas, oranges, potatoes etc) only stead job as a labourer, cook. He says he was unable to continue because it *"got him down".*

Brings to light the issue of poverty in Australian society in 1970. The stories of two poverty-stricken families are reveals through their words as well as images of how they live and struggle to survive from day to day.

Questions and challenges beliefs that poverty no longer exists in Australia at the time. Suggests that where there is one or two families living in poverty, they are probably many more. Looks at the reasons behind why people become poverty-stricken and how they cope with little or nothing.

MS Mrs. Wilson (her hair in curlers, in a shift dress) goes into house, empties water from bucket into saucepan on fireplace, peels potatoes at table, children hanging around house, CU she is interviewed – no running water in house, she carries water for all uses, taking bather in small metal tub, (5 children share beds), toilet pan emptied by her husband *"out the back",* the garbage too. They burn it on good days. Rats in kitchen. Her father was a seasonal worker, trapping rabbits, fruit, travelling around, caravan, cherry picking, Went to school until she was 14 ½, cu says *"learnt myself to read out of that"* (a comic book). Says she taught herself to read that way.

Reveals how ingenuity and necessity turned copper wire into bread.

She has lost track of her eldest daughter. He husband of 11 years came from Redfern. Lived in a tent, he went *"off to Gunnedah"* fruit picking. She lives near her mum now. Her husband was putt off from Riverstone meatworks also. He is not working now. *"We're living on what we got out' a the potatoes last weekend",* selling scrap copper wire at Blacktown in Sydney. She says she took 3 pound (about 1/12 kilo) of copper wire and got 40 cents/pound for it = $1.20. She spends it on day-old bread. She buys it at 30 cents a loaf, this week she bought 10-12 loaves. Otherwise, she says, they might get $25/week for whatever work is around. She gets about $138.00 every three months in endowment.

CU she talks about what her children had for breakfast (her hair still in curlers), toast, Wheatbix *"then they back up on bread 'n jam"* she says with a grin. Dinner is tinned spaghetti on toast. Baked potatoes for tea tonight. She had her teeth fixed with a plate 15 years ago, but they broke, never had them fixed. She has 7 children and one on the way. Cannot afford the $3.00/month for the pill, does not like it anyway. She does not want any more kids *"we'll do somethin' this time I think"* she says with a grin. She is 29 years old.

MS GV's night time – bath time in tub for children by the light of a kerosene lamp – hot water into tub – baby takes first bath, then the other children in turn to the eldest – all in the same water.

MS GV's baked potatoes served for dinner, kids around table (room dimly lit by kerosene lamp), using spoons only – bread and jam for *"afters",* baby refuses this food.

MS interview with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson together about new coming baby. Mr.Wilson talks about parents – they worked on main roads as labourers, *"never actually starved, or went without",* he was not interested in what was at school that is, mathematics etc. He worked as a storeman and packer, lost his job, and then a succession of jobs followed, upset at losing his favourite dog on the street, he had had him for 9 years.

CU Mrs. Wilson says, *"as I said before, we've been down, right down in the dumps before, and we've come up again, and we'll probably do it again".*

CU Mr. Wilson says the thing that would help is a *"regular weekly wage".* Seasonal work is hard.

MS the children are put to bed, again by the light of the kerosene lamp.

Astounding graphic images. Like a scene out of a Charles Dicken novel, the family go about their evening meal and nighttime baths for the children by the light of a kerosene lamp.

Mrs. Wilson's words reveal a stoic resolve not to buckle in the face of poverty.

Series 2: Episode 25 *All my memories are in Newtown* 40'08"
5/5/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: John Power
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Geoff Burton

MS Mrs. Tomlinson walks dog to soon-to-be reclaimed land for building the Sydney Teacher's College. Interview about affecting her home. About houses possibly being demolished in streets nearby as well.

GV's she goes inside her previous residence to show the vandalism inside, says she is scared.

GV's at home, making tea and toast. Ceiling damaged, water leakages, catching drips from bathroom above. Apologises for the place being a bit untidy. Her husband's ashes in special basked on lounge chair. Upstairs to bathroom to view ceiling damage is cause for demolition next door. Uses makeshift rake to remove leaves from guttering to clear downpipe as she leans out the window to do so.

GV's she shows family photo. Interview about moving on to unit accommodations, she cannot take much with her *"I'm already to go".* A lovely black cat arrives on the bed *"this is my pet";* she cannot take her dog or cat with her.

CU talks about what happened to all her neighbours, they have all moved on. She is waiting for a court order to get a housing commission house. She is waiting to be evicted. What she wants is, *"at my age, and on my own, I want to be considered too...I want to be left in the city where I've got all my own interests, my companions, and near transport, my own doctor, and so forth, I belong to the welfare centre…I play bowls…I might just as well die if I haven't got an interest".* She says. *"I am alone"* – her pets are her children.

CU Mrs. Crocker, 74 years old and from originally from Scotland is another elderly woman packing up her belongings in order to move out of home. She cannot live with her daughter because there is too many steps. She has lived in this home for 47 years. Interview with her, *"You've still got your memories haven't you?"* Says she does not want to be evicted. Worried about being disorientated. GV's Newtown streets. The two women walk arm in arm down street near shops, chatting as they go. In to tearoom, other elderly women around table having meals. Mrs. Crocker says, *"I live for the centre".*

MS another elderly lady says, "*You can all go to buggery!"*

MS GV's elderly ladies view flatette at back of house. Mrs. Cooper likes her new *"digs".* She can also bring her bird. It is $15.00/fortnight rent and her pension is $34.00 per fortnight. However, she wants to stay in city amongst friends.

GV's demolished houses, vacant land. Another elderly woman speaks on being evicted *"because me heart won't take it".* She has had a bad heart for three years. Wants to be close to doctors, cannot climb up stairs. All her friends are there, cu she says *"notices to quit, they've all got 'em".* Says she's going to the courts *"I'll go when I've got a thousand pound and not before...put that in your pipes and smoke it!...I'll fight 'em".*

Issues of displacement and urban development. Follows the stories of several elderly women who have lived in Newtown, an inner Sydney suburb, all their lives. They are being forcibly evicted to make way for the building of a Teacher's College. The women fear for their futures and have already begun to feel disoriented.

Series 3: Episode 27 *Well worth the effort* 44'25"
29/9/1970
Producer: Robin Hughes Reporter: Richard Oxenburgh
Director: Russell Toose

WS pregnant woman walks down street towards camera, then into home. Brings cradle into nursery room.

ECU interview with young mother-to-be about becoming pregnant, what her family thing.

MS breathing practice with Malcolm, her husband, he says he will be there for the birth.

Jane explains birth contraction practice. ECU Malcolm talks about becoming a father. ECU Jane. They are concerned about the world today. Both left university because they could not afford to continue, but want to return.

ECU Malcolm on how he will feel as a father, says he *"has absolutely no idea, I just can't put myself in the future to that extent at all".*

They say they believe in the father being there at the birth from the very binning, and then there is bound to be more involvement later on. Malcolm has felt the baby kicking.

GV's another family with another mother-to-be, Helen, going into their home, sits down in lounge room, discusses the immanent birth.

CU interview with mother of pregnant woman about her involvement in the process. She went to a fertility clinic after having no success for about 7 years. He father says he is very happy for a healthy grand child.

GV's the baby's room, and clothes.

Helen wants to be on her own at the birth.

Interview with her husband on how they met in a country town.

GV's hospital nursery, maternity ward, mum's-to-be in hospital. Jane is in for induction.

GV's car into hospital car park. Jane and family come for check-up.

Helen goes in to see her doctor on her own.

Exterior shots of hospital.

Helen advised she has to wait another week.

GV's Jane in maternity ward with nurses.

GV's Helen in delivery ward at 5.15 am. She is having contractions, needs gas.

GV's Jane having contractions with midwife nearby. Jane's husband nearby also.

Interview with doctor on patient's conditions and procedures with older mothers (e.g. Helen is in her 30s).

GV's Jane with husband and midwives, birthing (strangely quiet, no noises, or screaming) Jane gives birth, the baby cries. Still peaceful and strangely quiet in room.

ECU Jane and Malcolm smile at each other, hold each other's hand. Midwives prepare the little girl and hand over to Jane. Midwives place baby in crib and take to nursery.

Helen in delivery room, doctors and nurses. Baby is born, a little girl, midwives prepare baby, baby cry's, Helen sees her baby, this it is taken to nursery.

GV's Helen's husband waits. He sees his baby through the nursery window.

Jane is now in the ward; her baby is brought in. ECU baby.

ECU Helen and her baby *"She was well worth the effort, I think".*

New ideas about birth are examined following two couples, one a young university couple and the other an older middle aged couple both expecting their first child. Looks at the different involvements of the fathers and what each mother expects of him during the birth. The younger opts for a silent birth with the father present, while the older chooses the more traditional birth process where the father sees his child after the event, in the hospital nursery. Challenges social conventions and promotes choice at least.

Series 3: Episode 28 *A part of life* 49'00" 6/10/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: Robin Hughes
Director: Tom Manefield
Ass.Prod: Robin Hughes

GV's hospital activities. GV's female patient leaves hospital room, farewells nurses, walks out on husbands arm into life.

MS child returns home from school greets mother in kitchen, hugs and kisses. ECU child's face as she talks to her mother just home from hospital. MS same. MS other schoolchildren say hello through the kitchen window, they are smiling. Little boy and girl greet mother also in kitchen; kiss their mother *"hello love"* says the mother. Ecu children's faces. MCU mother and children.

MS father speaks to children about taking mother out to football on weekend. Children smile. MS and GV's father collecting wood for fire, brings into lounge near mother. ECU mother. MCU Father as he sets fire. MS Mother begins knitting.

ECU mother interviewed, talks about children and talking with them about cancer. Important to send money to cancer fund, money not flowers, she says, then ECU of her as she is asked, *"What does death mean to you?"* ECU *"passing from this world to the next I suppose…I go to heaven when I die and that's it".*

She has discussed the issues with her children in preparation for death. She is glad to know how long she has to live. Has experienced unkind doctors. Her doctor is very good now. She is 45 years old and suffering bone cancer. She has had *"a marvellous life"* she has been to Lourdes in France, then Ireland. She did not expect a miracle *"I wasn't that bad…I prayed so much for everyone…my thoughts were on the children".*

Being Irish she explains, she is used to seeing death; it is a cultural thing she says. People die at home, wake, and go from home to be buried. MCU husband comes into stoke fire and talks.

CU husband on what he feels now about wife's cancer. ECU he cooks boiled eggs. ECU both talk about life changes, how he is cooking, washing, taking children to school etc. MCU wife, ECU wife talking about her husband. ECU talking about what happens after she goes. ECU she says she does not want sympathy.

GV's two women shopping for house furnishings, wallpaper etc. MCU's same.

Ecu upholsterer's chisel working fabric away from chair fixture. MCU upholsterer at work. ECU female upholsterer the same. Ws same in room.

ECU interview with shorthaired women, she is a nurse with Hodgkin's disease. She diagnosed her own condition. It is in her lymph glands, she has had it for 2 years, and she has had radiotherapy. Says all the bits fell into place for her. She is 26 years old. Says she has not accepted she has only 2 years to live. Uses all her good things now, does not keep them packed away. She did not tell her doctor, or her husband.

A revealing episode that examines the personal stories of people who are dying of cancer. In frank and matter-of-fact ways, they tell of their plans for death and what they expect will happen. Their families speak about their thoughts as well.
Opens up discussion about the often difficult subject of death, making it less confronting.

MS She did not tell anybody else *"there wasn't any point".* She could not tell anybody *"cause it didn't concern them"* into ECU. Not even her husband. ECU what does death mean to her *"mainly not being with John".* ECU is she religious *"only in my way".* ECU she says, *"This peace of mind that I've got goes beyond actually living".* She says you live on in the memory of others left behind.

Ws aircraft lands at airport. GV's tarmac activitiy.MS wife at airport. ECU wife's face watching.

Ws passengers across tarmac off plane. ECU wife's face. MS husband into terminal. MCU wife. MS husband again. MS they meet and embrace. They talk to car arm-in-arm. Together at home unpacking bags and talking in bedroom about life for husband in Mt. Isa. ECU husband says wife *"can't come back to the next one at Mt. Isa…we'll see what happens".*

GV's at seafood restaurant that night, they order meal. WS pier, at beach, walking hand-in-hand under pier with dog. ECU clasped hands. Ws husband with dog on sand. MCU interview with husband about his feelings about his wife's illness. ECU he says it is difficult for him to help her and to bolster his wife.

WS wife on sand walking, seaweed, fade in to focus on wife on beach. WS more of wife on beach (husband's voiceover).

ECU bespectacled man talks about having cancer. Had conflict within himself he says. He is a doctor. His kidneys are affected. Says he *"has had to face it head on"* being a doctor, he was more aware of his illness. Says, *"I feel liberated!"* Says he does not believe in god. Death to him, he says "is the end of me". He approached his illness rationally by self-analysis of deeper emotions and the conflict between that and the reality of his situation.

Ws walking through parkland, trees (voiceover of interview continues).

Series 3: Episode 29 *It can't last much longer* 51'31"
13/10/1970

Producer: Gilly Coote Reporter: David Roberts
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Bill Steller

Papua New Guinea man banging on metal bell. Another calls the roll.

Barry Blogg, PNG coffee planter, seen with PNG workers. Workers climb into back of truck that is driven away, they cheer. Travelling shot through village. Blogg voiceover saying the people have no conception of land ownership by others they *"don't quite get the idea that they haven't like sold the land and somebody else is living init and developing it".* He says the local people resent others coming in.

GV's workers packing coffee dressed in native and European clothes. Blogg explains to head man what needs to be done.

Interview Blogg. Says pickers paid on an incentive basis *"they get a bonus for better work, we are working a system where they get paid for three drums and then any drums over three, they get a bonus…..they seem to be quite happy with that….we've had one fellow made $1.50 a day which is not bade going".* The average was about $15.00 per month. The workers can bring their families on to the property he explains.

GV's car driving, interior car, Gus Costa in Rabaul, plantation manger/owner. He is interviewed while driving, Annie his wife, an islander, does the cleaning at plantation once a month.

Trying to start an engine, worker puts machine on back to try and start it again, it starts. Spraying coffee trees.

Interview Costa on the workers fixing the machinery. Rings bell, workers arrive. Speaks pigeon English, workers on to truck. Uses a *"boss boy"* to get work done as a go-between.

GV's at party Blogg and others (European dress, cigarette holders, dressed well) dinner drinks party. Wife, dinner dance, at pub, organ, dancing (whites only at dance). GV's party guests drinking and talking.

GV's street scene, native PNG in streets in native dress, white women shopping in supermarket.

GV's Mrs. Blogg at home with children, having a meal.

Interview Mrs. Blogg on schooling the children at boarding school. House man (PNG) helping out in home.

Annie Costa and two white women having tea talking about their art works and Annie's up coming exhibition. Annie and other women talk about the group in Rabaul. Annie is ready for trouble she says. Southerners seen as having misconceptions of life in png.

GV's Rabaul streets, Annie walking. Interview with Annie, says she is granddaughter of king of java in the British Solomon's; his name is Kamahaya*, "a very ferocious king".* Annie at food markets buying tomatoes. She talks about her upbringing and marrying Gus Costa. Talks about marrying a westerner.

GV's Annie with PNG gardener in garden, giving instructions. Doing pruning.

Examines the issue of impending PNG independence and what is to happen to those Australian's who have made their lives and livelihood in PNG. Looks at how they interact with the PNG people who work for them and investigates what the future might hold for both. Also looks at inter-racial marriages and what that means regarding the choices that need o be made by the plantation owners and their wives.

GV's Gus walking through garden to native house/hut, talks to PNG man, *"the idea is to keep 'em happy, if you keep 'em happy everybody's happy",* he chuckles. Says there is a need to him to keep the workers *healthy "if they're sick they are no good to you".*

PNG worker shovelling cocoa beans out of huge vat. GV's panning shot plantation.

Gus explains his plantation is through the soldier-settlement scheme. He explains the original loan was for twenty five thousand pound, made in three-month payments, slow returns, and eight years to get plantation up to 50 tons annually *"most memorable time was when the first cocoa pod came into the trees".*

PNG house boy serving dinner to Mr and Mrs. Costa at home and coffee later. Cost talks about houseboy and his duties.

Annie Costa says many planters are ready to walk off their places because of the native labour. Annie says she thinks the natives are starting to exploit the planters when asked if the natives are being exploited, she says *"at the moment".*

Gus thinks he will pull out in two years. Annie is keen to move out of PNG.

GV's native women with coffee beans at weighing point, men weighing buckets, PNG workers in native and western dress at bean processor.

Interview Blogg on obtaining his plantation of 700 acres. Says he started with 150 acres. Land ownership is an issue. Five years for his first coffee crop to come in.

GV's natives into village, gathering to be paid. Adding machine used. Money doled out.

Blogg sitting at outdoor lunch shed. Houseboy serves him a beer. He listens to coffee prices on ABC radio. Talks about prices, does not get enough with crops, may move on to cattle. Says he would *"hate to leave New Guinea".*

GV's PNG natives in school, timber work class. Mrs Blogg is teacher.

Asked does she ever think she is teaching Barry out of labour? She says *"not at this stage in Hagen, no".*

GV's exterior Mount Hagen primary school. Houseboy meets Blogg children, walks them home. GV's he walks hand in hand with the boys, they arrive home to mum. Mrs. Blogg, children and the houseboy drive off on trip. Ws car driving down mountain off into the distance.

Children playing in garden of grass house. Mr. And Mrs. Blogg having cup of tea at home. Interview Blogg on how pleasant the people are *"most friendly people".* Mr. Blogg says, *"I've discovered over the years that one of the best ways to spoil a good fellas work is to pay him more".* Mrs. Blogg agrees *"they do become spoiled and have a feeling that you are dependent upon them which makes them pretty well unmanageable".*

Mr. Blogg believes the natives are doing the exploiting. He is no worried about their future in PNG. Risks with independence? Mrs. Blogg says she is not sure if it will be tenable to stay in the place. It is a big worry. Mr. Blogg has done 15 years hard work; financially it would be a problem. They have been offered $100,000 for the place, but she says it is worth twice that she says.

GV's natives picking coffee and singing.

Series 3: Episode 30 *I don't like to look in the mirror* 39 35"
20/10/1970
Producer: Robin Hughes
Director: Russell Toose Reporter: Richard Oxenburgh

GV's night in the city, three men walk down sidewalk and into gym, change and being exercise work out with weights.

Bodybuilder tells how he examines himself.

Group of middle-aged women sing in meeting room. Weight Watchers weighing-in, playing tunnel ball at meeting.

Woman speaking about being in weight watchers, she loves it.

Family (middle class) eating around table. Son is worried about his father's drinking. Father disagree's (migrant) thinks it is okay to have a drink. Mother (migrant) says preparing meals is difficult. Son needs special diet, vitamins for bodybuilding. Grandfather encourages bodybuilding. Son takes $20 - $30 per month of vitamins. Says he is a dedicated body builder, but does not believe he is a fanatic. His father disagrees.

Interview Mrs. Atkinson, 44, she is grossly overweight. Her weight brings problems for clothing, bras are always altered to fit, even the largest available. Her dress is made especially for her. She takes her young son inside the house after hanging out the washing. Interior house, GV's, she is tidying up house. Says her husband is less than half her size. Says she takes over ¾ of bed. Says when you are fact, if you laugh it perhaps takes peoples mind off the fact that you are fat, if you try to be happy.

GV's a play where Mrs. Atkinson portrays a fat person, audience laughs, then claps.

Interview Mrs. Atkinson on children getting fat, she is watching it already. Would not like to see her daughters go through what she has had to go through she says. Some of the difficulties with being fact she explains are bending down, getting things from cupboards, the bus and train, she prefers the car, getting on and off the bus, finding a seat after struggling to get in the bus, and train is too small seating areas. GV's her in bus and train, waits until last to go through turnstiles at station, takes a long time to walk up or down stairs. Supermarkets are also difficult she says, cannot go through turnstiles. GV's her shopping in supermarket.

Shows photos of herself as a child, at 15, married, and in 1964 when she was pregnant. Says she is disgusted. She has had eight children, four living, other were stillborn. Says it is too expensive to have any more children.

GV's small son plays on floor with toys. She helps in play, has difficulty to stoop over. Says her family is worried about her health. She is *"very self conscious about it, very".* Children's comments hurt. Falling over is dreadful, she fell and hurt her knee this very morning, nobody can lift her, children cannot help, and she cannot get up herself, had to crawl to lever herself up on to her feet, doctor's and ambulance men cannot lift her, difficulty getting weighed in shops, goes to the Nepean District Hospital to get weighed on a weighbridge.

Issues of self esteem and physical fitness intertwine with issues of immigration and culture in this episode that looks at the changing face of Australian fitness. Size does not matter to some. Addiction does not only come from alcohol, but also vitamins and exercise. When is it too much?

Gives small son a chocolate crackle, occasionally has one herself, has difficulty staying on diets, she has only lasted up to ten days on any diet she says.

Without any sign of discomfort, she explains that sex is *"extremely difficulty".* Not sure if her husband has been upset about her sex life *"but he's never said….but it's not as it used to be".*

She says she sees herself as being fact for the rest of her life. Cannot imagine herself thinner *"I don't know whether I'd be happy".* Does not look in the mirror, *"I don't like to look in the mirror"*. Only to do her hair, *"because it's something that embarrasses me to look at myself"*.

GV's bodybuilder flexes muscles in mirror while others look on. The migrant's son David looks on. Interview bodybuilding, Carlo, wants to be Mr. Australia, he has been it two years in a row.

Julius, migrant, explains what he is doing in the mirror. David, still young, has not developed enough yet. Both are trying the bulk up. People notice they are built up. Ordinary clothes show muscles. Girls whistle, boys are jealous, they pose again in mirror for camera.

Interview David, 16 years old, picked on at school, wanted to get fit, they stay away, his father doesn't approve of it, girls tend to be a distraction and can wreck your routine/training. He is a warehouse assistant, clerical work, not hard work. Sees himself as being fit and healthy as he grows older. Wants to be Mr. World, Mr. Universe one day. He is driven to continue to achieve the best body, will not give in, he tears up, and becomes emotional about exercises. Goes to gym three times a week.

GV's muscle magazines. Arnold Schwarzenegger posing in several photos. The gym makes David feel happy, no girlfriend yet, yes, he is lonely, but still happy he says.

GV's children playing front yard at Mrs.Atkinson's. Her husband returns home. Children greet him with hugs. Mrs. Atkinson and husband into house.

Interview about his wife's weight, "I think if you want to stay fat, and be happy, will that's the way to be". Says he makes fund of his wife, but says it is not really funny. Mrs. Atkinson speaks about being embarrassed in pubs and the "two chairs story". He has learned to live with her size.

Series 3: Episode 31 *She'd flown the coop* 39'32"
27/10/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: Richard Oxenburgh
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Geoff Burton

GV's top shot children at train station meet father.

CU father and children (three boys) in car travelling and talking about their day. Sole father, boys come home, he collects two girls as well. He has been a sole parent for *"just over two years"* he says. His wife left him while he was in causality ward at Sydney Hospital *"they wanted to let me wife know and sent somebody home, and she was already gone, she'd flown the coop".*

GV's arriving home with children. Says it is ages until dinner. Plays dominos with boys pat the eldest girl cleans up and prepares meals*. "It's usually dad or I that does it"* she says.

ECU she learnt to cook watching her dad. Interview pat, she says she was glad her mother is gone because *"she belts me a lot",* but still feels lonely. Talks about being teased at school about not having a mother at home and about not getting on with her mother.

ECU interview one of the boys, how he helps get the younger boys ready in the morning, about getting into fights for not having a mum. Says he has changed a lot since his mum left. *"I've not been doing as I'm told and that".* Says he does not believe his mum is coming back *"that would keep things going, keep the happiness going".*

GV's children playing dominos. ECU interview father, drawn and thin faced, was *"completely surprised"* about his wife leaving. Child welfare had taken the children. He went to court to get them back. Talks about how children reacted to mother leaving – Stephen (the eldest boy) was most hurt. About now being out of debt. He did have a better job. He had to change his job in order to care for children. ECU *"there is no provision whatsoever for a deserted husband. A deserted wife, well they look at as if she were the queen, they can't do enough for her".*

ECU his thin bony hands as he speaks. He speaks of deserted wives he knew of who are getting the deserted wives pension, and who are still seeing their husbands regularly each week.

Exterior shots house with other children playing outside. Woman folding clothes inside. She is a deserted wife. Had been left so many times, she thought he would come back – the last time it did not worry her *"this time he didn't come back".*
She had been left with 8 children at the time *"at the time, it was around about endowment time and that was the only money that I had, and that didn't go very far, I had to go into the police station then, and get food relief".* Later she got child welfare. She says the children missed their father, and she would take him back. Now with regular money coming in, *"they weren't getting this before, and it makes a big difference".*

GV's all children in kitchen being fed, being dressed, then outside off for a swim.

ECU interview she talks with children how things are. Money coming into the house "one week I get $33.70, the next week I get $38.00" – one is child welfare and one is social welfare. Then $57.00/month childen endowment. Does not receive maintenance.

Looks at the issues of single parents. It begins with a single father caring for his four children after his wife left them. Contrasts the story of a single mother. Tells the story from both sides, that is, from the deserted father and from the deserted wife's point of view. It also allows the children to speak, to tell how they feel about what's happened to their families. From the mouths of babes…..How do they cope? What do they see for their futures? What for their children's futures?

ECU eldest daughter talking about javelin throwing. Talks about her father leaving *"well, we had mum and that was the main thing".* She has seen her father about two years ago. ECU talking about her mother and father arguing. Her father left then *"she knew it was coming, but i didn't know when".* Does not want to get married. Wants to be a PE (Physical Education) teacher.

ECU mother says she will not get married again, *"never. no change in the world of that. I'm quite happy with my kiddies now, and I know that they can eat, and they've got a clean and warm bed to go to, I'm not worrying about them".*

GV's all children enjoying swim in their dam.

Says she cannot afford to send children to further their education. ECU facility at home – had a fuel stove, now electric, carts water if it does not rain (GV's boys carrying water in milk can on cart), boys filling milk can with water from pipe, boys pull cart home along road. Nearly tips over. Cars pass by.

Series 3: Episode 34 *A matter of supremacy* 33'52"
17/11/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: Peter Grose
Director: Russell Toose
Ass. Prod: Stephen Ramsey

GV's wedding in St. Mary's, articles on marriage (sound track song 'Love and marriage').

CU interview woman on marriage

CU interview man on marriage. He did not want to get married. She did not really know (she was pregnant) *"wanted to give the baby a name"*. She is 17 years old. They have been married for 10 years, met on a blind date. He was *"just out of the navy when I met the wife".* He had intended becoming a psychiatric nurse. Arguments between them began, he gambled, MCU Pauline, has stuck with him despite everything. She is not sure if they have stayed together because of the children. Says her husband is not capable of looking after himself.

MCU resents being thought of as being one of the children. Says he might "pull up stakes and leave her on her own", he is 33 years old and doubts his future and abilities.

ECU Pauline wonders if she should respect him more, doubts she can until he changes.

ECU Neville, he feels he is on trial, feels judged by welfare *"everyone wants to crucify me at the moment, that's the way it seems to me"*. He also feels rebellious. Cu wife says he could give gambling away, this is discussed only in arguments.

ECU says Pauline has not said, *"I love you"* in years, has lost self respect.

ECU Pauline says she has no respect for him, but still loves him.

ECU he says he needs reassurances.

ECU she says, *"I think I'm frightened".*

This is the first time they have talked for years. GV's TV on (as kissing scene is running), baby on floor, child cries, mother and father playing with child in lounge room. TV still on.

CU interview with husband and wife on meeting each other, the things they used to do. Happier days.

ECU regrets she has lost his letters and poems. ECU husband says he disagrees. She tore them up he says. They have been married for 15 years. Live a rose bay, Sydney. MS couple on lounge. ECU wife on relationship in beginning. Had baby really quickly. They are Church of England and Roman Catholic, their children in both religions. Will leave it up to them, he objected to her pushing the children towards her religion.

ECU both, on arguments about religion. They argue on-camera about religion. Neither goes to church regularly.

CU he believes she broke her agreement not to push her religion onto the children; she disagrees that is how it is.

ECU she says he was jealous in the beginning.

ECU he admits this, jealous of other men.

Examines why people marry. Through interviews various couples tell of why they married each other. They discuss whether their marriage has turned out the way they expected, or not. Eventually, one couple is filmed arguing in front of the camera about just about everything. They don't appear to be able to stop themselves. Their argument continues as filming concludes. Challenges social pressures to marry and whether they are from the family or peers.

ECU she says she likes men's company

ECU he dislikes this.

ECU he is angry, he accuses her of encouraging this behaviour.

ECU she disagrees.

ECU he says he is lacking love, feels he is not getting as much as *"any other man would get".*

ECU she disagrees.

ECU he criticises her for being reticent and not vocalising her feelings.

ECU she says he plays around, but she does not mind. ECU money worries, she wants to get some new furniture.

ECU he starts to *"brow-beat"* her, and then gives up argument. Says he cannot win ever. CU the two of them on the lounge.

ECU she admits to being stubborn.

ECU she admits to *"limiting"* her affection.

ECU he says she is selfish.

ECU *"it's a battle for supremacy more than anything, laddy wants to be top dog, and he thinks that I won't let him be"* she says.

Fade out as their argument continues, shot of married couples coming out of churches

Series 3: Episode 35 *On the spiritual phone* 44'50"
24/11/1970

Producer:	Tom Manefield	Reporter:	Peter Grose
Director:	Russell Toose	Cameraman:	Geoff Burton
Ass.Prod:	Gilly Coote		

GV's an elderly woman conducts a séance in lounge room with group of men and women.

CU faces of men speaking, women MCU of gesturing with hands. Woman speaking to spirit, man speaking to spirit eyes closed, cu of faces again. Zoom out to MCU of same.

CU woman with long earrings and hair, listening intently, and then speaking. Middle aged man speaking; CU out to MCU young man, CU to MCU to CU, to MCU…continues the same for a while then cuts to exterior of spiritual church electric sign on top of doorway. Zoom in to sign. Cut to clairvoyant from earlier séance giving a dark haired woman a head massage, this is set inside the church.

GV's church small congregation watches on. CU hands on head, being specifically positioned. MCU woman washes her hands after massage in a bucket on a chair. Next, same performed on a man while he sits in a chair. CU faces of those watching, later this is repeated with another woman. Woman washes her hands again. This is the *"laying on of hands".*

ECU woman interviewed about what she does, she offers her hand to the interviewer, their hands clasp, back to interview.

MS into ECU young man in glasses speaking in the church.

ECU interview with clairvoyant. GV's the clairvoyant sets off on her moped motor bike with helmet. GV's of her riding in streets. Arrives at park, meets two other women. Proceeds to *"lay hands on"* them as well. They all talk about the procedure.

MCU the reading is completed. CU face of woman speaking. CU clasped hands of woman. MCU same. ECU woman's face as she speaks. CU she gets emotional. GV's group of people in room. CU of each.

Fade out

Infrared film segment of a séance trance shows others together in group circle in trances as well.

Explores the psychic world and séances. Asks why people, and women in particular, feel the need to contact a psychic. This is a new social trend in Australia and people are making money from it. Contains interesting footage of an actually séance, filmed with infrared film camera.

Series 3: Episode 37 *Everybody wants a plug* 54'02"
15/12/1970
Producer: Gilly Coote Reporter: Peter Grose
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Geoff Burton

Sydney announcer from 2CH in Sydney, John Mahon at studio, on air.

GV's Di Arthur, newspaper gossip columnist, at cocktail party. Looking for society people to interview, charity rounds, *"they have to pretty"…doesn't matter what suburb they come from".*

GV's meet and greet pre-wedding party, kisses all round. Di Arthur takes notes, names, Mrs. Tripp, and Beryl Cheers.

MS John Mahon chatting, *asking "am I aloud to write about this or not?"* During a conversation with man at party.

MS social photography at work. Di Arthur taking notes, with photographer.

MS interview with John Mahon on being *"someone",* and being used for publicity by the *"beautiful people of Sydney".*

LS Nola Dekyvere, socialite and charity fund raiser, at Red Cross meeting again, well-dressed, pearls, cloche caps, jewellery. Interview Dekyvere on working for charity. Talks about black and white ball.

MS Leslie Walford at interior decorating shop, showing Italian furniture, prints, materials novelty, and invitation arrives.

GV's later, at art gallery opening party, John Mahon mingling. Social photographer again. Di Arthur. Interview Di Arthur about all the parties she has to go to. John Mahon again.

Panning shot around party guests, drinking.

CU interview Mahon again on plugging. Then same with Di Arthur.

CU interview Dekyvere interviewed on social climbing.

CU interview Walford on social climbing.

CU Mahon interviewed about picking what events to go to.

Mahon's wife interviewed on being his wife.

CU Mahon on socialites in Sydney, new money people on the scene, the chevron, The Trocadero.

GV's poodles, boats, mg cars, drinking.

GV's Mahon mingling again, Di Arthur the same.

MS Walford in office talking colour schemes. Dictating letter to secretary. Talks about informing people about what they should do and how they should be *"the glitter and the glamour".*

At the races, grandstand, horses, women in hats cheering on horses. Ladies in hats drinking, fashions. Socialists talk about going to all the parties *"not really, I'd like to think of myself as part of the scene at all, but one does that things, I don't know why".*

Scott's College, Sydney, people said to be those that go to the Black and White Charity Ball.

Walford at home, dressing in evening clothes.

Night time, Sydney, people arrive at social event, Walford and guest at The Trocadero, others arrives in car and enter, general public watches from footpath outside. Police escort and Governor General of Australia meets Dekyvere and enters Trocadero.

Looks at Sydney's society world and those well known people who frequent charity parties and functions. Also looks at the society gossip columnists who follow the charity circuit around photographing and interviewing those same people. The two entities seem to exist in aid of each other, and help each other in the long run.

Di Arthur interviews guests, takes notes. Photographer at work. Dancing begins. Arthur takes notes. Harry M.Miller talking to guests. Walford again. Miller is MC. at event. Black and White Derby 1970, fun race at Trocadero.

GV's at *"Hair"* premier in Sydney, Stuart Wagstaff, Harry M. Miller, Don Lane, Nola Dekyvere, Shirley Bassey, John Mahon and wife, and Maggie Taberra, Gwen Plumb, all get on special bus, away, and out again. Di Arthur taking notes again.

GV's later at party, psychedelic music, dancing, Miiller pouring champagne at *"Hair"* after party. Robert Helpmann, Nola Dekyvere, Reg Livermore, photographs in action. Shirley bassey catching pop corn in mouth at party and laughing.

Interview Di Arthur *"that's what makes the social round, fun, fun, fun!"*

MCU Gerard Kennedy, Nola Dekyvere interviews on *"Hair".* Miller and Bassey dancing together.

Montage of Mahon, Dekyvere, Walford, and Arthur to psychedelic music.

Series 7: Episode 79 *Once bitten, twice shy* 37'36"
26/6/1973
Ass.Prod: Brian AdaMS
Director: Russell Toose, Neil Munro

MCU interview couple in Adelaide, Australia.
ECU interview couple speaking about seeing themselves as failures because they have decided to return to the UK.
WS passenger ship on harbour in UK.
WS ship docking in UK.
MS couple arriving in UK, greeted by family.
MS interview couple on return to UK (in UK). Seem happier. Panning shot other family members on lounge laughing.
MCU interview other family members about the returning couple, their reaction.
GV's loading boxes of goods to send back to UK.
CU interview couple (in Aust.) about leaving and why.
ECU couple, same, homesick, few friends made while in Australia. Her parents followed them to Australia.
GV's at Australian home, photos taken in yard, couple & child.
MS interview carol's father. Moved to Australia two years ago, bought house.
GV's exterior Australian home, pool, hard, street.
ECU wife says there is no communication in Australia "cause homes are too far apart" compared to UK – much closer, more communication with neighbours. They miss environment in UK. Bought Australian house two-three weeks after arriving. Cost $11800 - June'70.
MS Couple with child and father in garden.
ECU interview question is not this the best place to bring up children? They agree if looking for material things. UK means family even though the grandparents moved out from UK to join the couple.
WS grandfather walking holding child in yard of Aust. home.
CU interview husband and wife again, on decision to more to Aust. They do not believe they are better off living in Aust. They feel *"kind'o out of place".*
CU interview her mother on settling the other children. They seem happy.
CU couple see Australian social life as lacking, no parties. They went to church. See church as social centres of life in UK. They have been once in Aust. Their first Christmas in Aust. They do not have enough money in Aust to go out and do things. They brought out "well over $4,000, well over $5,000, but I'm not going into details on that". They expected to be more financially secure in Aust. The house is "like a white elephant…it is just a stone around our necks rally". They say "they will miss a lot of things about Australia". They have decided to go back to us *"because there isn't enough to keep us, Australia can't give us enough to make it worthwhile giving up the things that we had back home".*
ECU interview mother and father-in-law also going back. They love Australia though. They are all going to visit Glenelg before they return "it made us feel at home" as sign on shop said, *"Buy your Blackpool rock here".*

The ten pound pom…British migrants who came to Australia to find a better life for themselves and their families. This episode looks at the issue of reverse immigration where British migrants choose to return to Britain because they are not happy living in Australia, or what they found once they arrived. Looks at what they left behind in Britain, and what they will be returning to. Questions their reasons for migrating and the information they were given before they left Britain.

GV's carnival at beach. Family walking along beach front, waves, sand, open sandy beach, family looks at views, children play in sand, makes sand castle. Children run up on sand.

MS Wife shopping in supermarket. Says goodbye to shop assistant.

MS/CU interview father-in-law on advising on moving to Australia. *"There's a feeling of liveliness that you don't get in Australia",* he misses Blackpool, *"it's a fabulous place"* lots of entertainers went to Blackpool. Cheap entertainment.

Cu interview couple on living in Aust, only a shopping centre Tea Tree Plaza only, no cinema.

CU they are lonely in Australia.

CU husband *says "this is a case of once bitten, twice shy"*, they will not try another Australian town/state, the cost prohibits movement as well.

CU wife *"the things that we miss are just not in Australia…it's not the Australian's fault, its not here".*

GV's leaving Aust. Farewell's.

MS couple back in UK. They have found the *"price of houses has rocketed".* Walking down UK street. Sellers market now. Looking at around 4,000 pounds, but will have to look at 5,500 pounds for a run down house. They will have to get a small mortgage. Still looking for houses to buy.

WS to GV's couple with children, fun park on people mover, Ferris wheels, Blackpool beach , traffic, trams, cars.

GV's husband, carpentry work, his third job, refurbishing homes. In UK, he earns 50-55 pounds per week for 371/2 hours work, in Australia it was 40 pounds for 40 hours work. No overtime in UK, lots in Australia to save. He believes more opportunity in UK. Exterior house.

CU interview husband, *"feel happily settled",* will not go back to Aust. Does not believe things are better in Australia.

Panning shot UK countryside, row of semi-detached houses all the same.

CU interview wife, on house in UK *"it's smaller, more character though*". Happier in UK, neighbours, friends. Dinner is pie, no puddings.

CU interview husband, child has been in hospital, all paid for by national health. No cost to them. UK good with health. It cost in Aust. $140-170 in 9 months for medical bills. She says she sees her life as homemaker as better in UK. Lots of help from neighbours. Social life much better, in Aust. this is all limited. UK lots of parties.

GV's couple out for a night out. CU interview they believe they were *"tempted"* to go out to Aust. For $20.00. They see Australian values and culture are very different.

GV's night on the town.

Series 9 or 10: Episode ? *I can't seem to talk about it* 49'18"
?/?/1975
Producer/director: Russell Toose Cameraman: Heinz Voelzer
Reporter: Stuart Littlemore

Dramatisation bed scene, man and woman. GV's and panning shot general practitioner's world conference 1975. Issue of sexual relationships and women.

Bettina Arndt seen on panel. Doctor puts forward to male's perspective on impotency. Arndt – pressure making impact on sexuality.

Dramatisation of couple in bed. Discuss seeing a doctor about sexuality problems.

Stuart Littlemore to camera, outlines sexual education issue.

Doctor interviewed on instructions given to new GP's.

Question is, are doctors afraid of the subject?

Doctor answer: just as much any anybody else.

Exterior UNSW clinical sciences building. Speaker at classroom/students. Student discussion/training group talk about sexuality.

Prof. Neil McConnaghy, psychiatry department. UNSW interacts with group training discussion. Role play for students – patient/doctor

Interview male doctor on effect of drugs and doctor's need to be aware of their own sexuality.

Interview female doctor re sexuality and media influences. Expectations unrealistic.

Dramatised sequence: couple in bed. Seen from woman's perspective, then the man's – alternating.

Clinical psychologist, editor "Forum" magazine, Bettina Arndt speaking to camera on sexuality and relationships. Presentation of main problems that is, frigidity, orgasms, then male that is, premature ejaculation and impotence. Treatments suggested. Therapy programs available, that is Master's and Johnston, American.

GV's naked children playing on lawn with hose in summer.

Arndt continues her speech.

Dramatisation continues. Naked couple in bed, massaging each other.

Arndt continues speech. Dramatisation continues. Couple in bed, stimulating each other. Arndt continues speech.

Diagram of vagina and specific anatomical parts.

Dr. Ron farmer, clinical psychologist therapist, speaks about 'touching' and the importance of being assertive.

Interview female doctor on women being ignorant of their own bodies. The public do not want to know about their own sexuality, their bodies, she says.

Clinical psychologist again with a female trainee discusses masturbation and climaxing. Gives her a book to guide.

Doctor Elsie Koadlow, Uni. Lecturer, obstetrics & gynaecology, Melbourne, on '"touching", and assessing patients for reactions to suggestions of masturbation and touching "self".

A radical and confronting episode about sexual relationships between men and women which are examined with the aid of psychologists and doctors. Includes revealing dramatisation sequences throughout, as well as role playing by patients and doctors. Confronts very personal issues in a clinical and open manner. Challenges society to accept that both men and women have sexual desires that are not always met and which need to be discussed out in the open. The final sequence is quite a provocative step for ABC television in 1975.

Dr. Farmer again, male reaction to lack of female excitement.

Interview Dr. Koadlow again, speaking on someone with very restricted upbringing/background, gives example of a young woman/the pill/too shy to tell the doctor she needed an examination.

Stuart Littlemore and a disguised interviewee “Ann”, on intercourse difficulties/doctors unhelpful/went to psychiatrist.

Gynaecologist in surgery with patient undergoing intercourse therapy treatment.

Interview Sydney gynaecologist on curing vaginismus (fear of intercourse because it is painful).

Interview again with “Ann” and baby – success!

Interview with male GP doctor on male sexuality issues. On failure, not an adequate person…pressures on male by female to ‘perform’, solution – allay anxiety of male, to satisfy female in other ways.

Dr. Gillian Diamond, medial examiner, and others, at family medicine program, Melbourne – condoms, familiarisation of use, talk on the education of doctors. Video recording being made of discussion group.

Dr. Koadlow interviewed again on educating doctors.

Dramatisation with Arndt’s voiceover in part – couple arguing in bed.

Bettina Arndt speaks to camera. Zoom in to CU drawing of couples.

GV’s crowds in city streets, others walking arm-in-arm.

Closes with dramatisation/GV’s books on advice. Couple in bed reading these. Tape recordings. Stuart Littlemore closes to camera.

Dramatisation of naked couple enjoying sexual abandon in bed together and with feathers literally flying!

APPENDIX B

SHOT LISTS - *A BIG COUNTRY* PROGRAM EPISODES VIEWED

A Big Country
Series 2: Episode 5: *Ten thousand miles from care* 30'09"
1/5/1969
Producer: Leigh Spence Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: Bryan Todd Cameraman: John Atkinson

Images Albany, W.A. around 1826. Song overlay *"Botany Bay"* with different words. GV's Albany township, pan shots. Travelling shot Ron Iddon in car driving in outback. MS Cattle in paddock.

Interv. Middle aged migrant farmer speaking about difficulties in *England "a man can get more money not working in England, than he can working, now there's something wrong about that".*

WS Iddon and farmer waling the paddock. Interv. Talks about comparisons with Australia and England. Farmer came to Australia because land is scarce in England, *"you can't expand,"* he says.

GV's family around kitchen table. Iddon interviews farmer's wife, she loves Australia "we came out three times in twelve months, all of us" she says. She says she feels accepted and part of the countrywomen's association of king *river "we've had quite a lot of English farmers come to see us, and Australia".*

Interv. Teenage daughter. She likes Albany *"plenty for the younger generation to do, it's more of a sporty country".* Joined the junior farmers and the local tennis club. Australians accept English club members *"almost with open arms, very glad for them to join in and discuss the different things they do in England,"* she says. She is *"very happy".* Mustering sheep in Ute.

Bachelor (migrant farmer) interview about coming to W.A*., "Well, I came here six months ago…it's cooler for the English sort of person I think",* he says. Says social life is *"a bit grim",* but should improve as he meets people. GV's farmers/wife with calf.

Interv. Wife,*"Oh crums! Well I wasn't very happy, I did have to be bribed to come out here".* She says she missed her hunting horse. GV's horses. Interview continues, she says she wants to breed ponies. She misses *"a lot of the English scenery".*

Interv. Husband, says for an English farmer "*opportunities are tremendous".* He believes Australian farmers have things easier than English farmers do *"the vastness of the place was a concern initially".* He recommends English farmers actually come out and have a look at Australia, because of the lack of info. Available in England, at Australia house in London *"they tend to paint it too rosy!"* GV's passengers off plane, across tarmac.

Interv. Grazier about the wrong impression being given in England about Australia. He says uninformed English agents are giving the wrong impressions *"they're not doing a good job at all".*

Overlay of *"The Capricornian's"* song.

KEY :

MCU - medium close up
CU - close up
ECU - extreme close up
GV - general view
MS - medium shot
WS - wide shot
LS - long shot
PAN - panning shot
VS - various shots

Looks at different stories about immigration from the farmer's point of view. How have they managed to blend in to Australian country/rural life. Comparisons between farming in England and Australia. Looks at the changes in attitude needed for survival as a farmer in Australia without the subsides given farmers in England.

Bad/incorrect advertising cheap land at $6/acre, but the $6/acre is awful country. Also says information difficult to obtain, even from Australia house in London.

GV's trough-feeding cattle. Farmer working yards. Iddon highlights information problems. English farmer's wife in Australian township window shopping.

Interv. Sheepherder. One of UK's top breeders has had problems with labour. Could not keep UK employees. He is trying to get his stock to the standard he had in England. He is impressed with the amount of work that Aussie workers do. WS herd. GV's tractor at work.

Interview with English 'battler farmer', not much money, but trying to make a go of things.

Various black and white photos early migrant farmers.

GV's modern tractor at work today. GV's farmers house, interiors and exteriors. Interview immigrant farmer's wife from Devon on Australia, she is 67 years old *"I like it immensely, I love the people".* Says she likes most is *"the lack of class consciousness, very much indeed….we've been made to feel in this areas, as if we've been living here all our lives".* She misses her friends though.

Interv. Son of farmer about Australia, he *"loves the freedom mostly"* and he does not mind being called a "pom".

Series 2: Episode 6: *The Buck Runners* 25'37" 8/5/1969
Producer: Leigh Spence Reporter: Colin Munro
Director: Max Donnellan

Overdub of "The Man from Snowy River" poem. WS pan mountains and countryside region at Omeo (words of poem in pictures). WS pan men on horseback galloping through the trees and over rocks with dogs. They are shouting as they herd the horses. GV's small town of Omeo. WS whole town. Interv. MS Mervin Pearson – tells about life as a buck runner and its history. He stands with hand on hip and pipe in other. Names mentioned as buck runners are Harry Faithfull, Joe Rollinson, and Johnny Riley. Pearson states *"Johnny Riley was born in Ireland. He arrived in Omeo at an early age and he learnt his horsemanship here. Later in life, he moved over to the Upper Murray and the Jindabine District there as a rider he was to become immortalised in Banjo Paterson's poem, "The Man from Snowy River".* B&W photo of Riley on horseback wading across river. He sits straight erect, and is an athletic bushman. WS pioneer hut – Togo Pendergast sitting on step talks on knowing Johnny Riley. *"I knew Johnny Riley. Johnny Riley used to stay here in this old house"*. GV's tumbled-down old house. GV's Pendergast and dog sitting outside old hut, rolling pipe tobacco. MS Pearson interv. Continues about history of buck runners. W/S pan, slow, L/R countryside around Omeo. MS Pearson interv. Continues. W/S Omeo township and Hilltop Hotel. CU beer in glass, zoom out to horsemen in pub talking about round up to come. CU faces, H/S, smoking, leaning on bar drinking, glasses of beer, CU faces (wild sound) drinking beer, talking, dog sleeping nearby. Travelling sho in 4WD. GV's 4WD across creek, along dirt track and through bush. W/S pan R/L saddle horses are brought in by hand (in three's). GV's men and saddle horses preparing for round up, make-shift yards out of logs, camp fire at night. GV's morning at camp, men prepare to ride, saddling horses, equipment checks, farriers shoeing horses. M/S Jim Flannigan explains how a buck run is planned – a blow by blow account of procedures. He is sitting in front of an old timber lot hut, bottles, ropes, whips, rags, hang on walls behind him, old floppy hat, rolled up sleeves, cigarette in fingers. His story echoes Banjo's poem as he tells it. The rhythm of his story is like a ballad. Shot of horses corralled.	National identity through the words of an Australian iconic poem. Banjo Patterson's poem The Man from Snowy River is explored as this episode returns to the place where the poem is set. Talks to those old-timers who remember the real Man from Snowy River. The poem's words are put to picture with re-enactment sequences of the brumby round up in the Snowy Mountains of Omeo.

"….look at 'em….look at 'em…we'll have some fun at this rodeo" he says.
GV's – W/S horsemen mount horses – MS Charlie Flannigan gives instructions before the round up.
Zoom out to group horsemen listening sitting on their horses; others standing by horses.
Pan group R/L, one rider mounts a horse that instantly starts bucking and buck off into the distance.
GV's WS horses and men off into bush. WS Horses and men and dogs (barking). MS man on white horse, another on dune coloured horse, dog jumps into his saddle, WS riders on horse waiting in position for the brumbies to arrive our of the scrub.
Saddle horse become aware of brumbies by pricking their ears, long before the riders hear them.
W/S pan horses running through bush, riders chasing and cracking whips, horses running ahead of riders, voices yelling (wild sound), whips cracking, hooves thundering, dust whirling as the horses are yarded.
GV's brumbies into yards. Overdub of "TMFSRP" Poem.
GV's action shots horses, brumbies, and men working in yards.
Catching and reigning brumbies. Brumby fights ropes around his neck, rearing all the time.
CU same.
W/S horse and rider with single horse (brumby) in yard.
GV's riders at the end of the day, preparing evening meal around old bark hunt, horses lead along by reigns.
GV's riders around campfire that night singing (yodelling too) drinking beer, smoke from fire billows. CU faces lit by firelight. Iconic scenes, faces, hats, rough hardened men of the bush.
WS next morning – the bucks are taken from the high plains to be sold. Each rider leads two or three brumbies with his saddle horse.
WS zoom R/L out riding through bush and stringy bark scrub. Some horses still fighting the rope.
Overdub of poem.
Horses loaded on to trucks.
WS zoom out Omeo countrywide – song sung over scene (a yodelling song) – mountain views.

Series 4: Episode 11: *Right through the shearing time* 34'34"
18/6/1970
E/Producer: Trevor Stockley
Director: John Mabey

Shearer's cook preparing breakfast. Rings dinner bell. Serves meal open fire stove, *"this is my domain, and they don't interfere with me, and I don't go onto the board and interfere with them"* he says.

G'Vs exterior property, song overlay. Shearing shed, cars parked outside.
Truck with woo bales loaded.

Midkin station in northern New South Wales, twenty-six shearers/48,000 sheep. Is one of the largest sheds still working.

GV's shearing (just like in the film, *"Sunday too far away"*). The song, *"Click go the shears"* overlay.

CU hands of hands/shears/sheep/shearing/the boss/the tar boy/the ringer. Three hundred and twenty merino sheep the record for shearing in 1892.

GV's shearing with blades. Slow, takes up to two hours per sheep from start to finish of process, it is quiet, lonely with the "click of the shears all day". Sixty percent of sheep shorn by shears, not blades, today.

Interview shearers. Say they work on their properties when not shearing.

Archival footage, photos, shearer's strike, issue. Shear blade being made.

Continues same to end.

Once again, national identity shapes this episode with looks at sheep shearing and shearers in outback Australia. Another iconic Australian song becomes the frame in which the images are held. The episode explores the issue of changes to the shearing industry in the form of electric blades as opposed to hand shears.

Series 6: Episode 4 *Sleeper cutting* 32'00" 20/5/1971
E/Producer: John Mabey Cameraman: Terry Byrne
Director: Ken Dyer Reporter: Alex Nicol

GV's timber mill, sleeper cutting.

GV's Mendooran countryside and town. Man loads blades on to truck.

Interview sleeper cutter driving to work. GV's truck, man and axe into bushland. Chopping tree down.

GV's debarking truck. Starts buzz saw. Barry McDonald has been cutting timber since he was 18.

Tree crashes to ground, man measures tree for sleepers, says should get eight sleepers out of the tree.

GV's man, buzz saw cutting down iron bark trees for railway sleepers.

Interview cutter, says $3.20 per square would be good day, now, he gets $3.00 per square.

Truck being debarked by hand. Log being dragged by chain and truck. GV's cutter and huge circular blade machine cutting sleeper.

Sleeper cutting is dying out. GV's cu gramophone with Dean Martin singing on record. Cutter through bush on tractor. MS cutting tree with circular blade, tree falls, not truck for sleepers, travelling shots, trees falling, Mendoora railway station, train along tracks, cu sleepers. Ws pan countryside, slow zooms in to timber cutter working on sleepers with machine.

Interview Bill Frost about his family tradition. He has been cutting timber for 29 years. He is sorry he took it on. He believes *"timber cutting is a dying industry".*

His son is on tractor. Cu sleeper being removed and changed on railway line. Men working. Railway workers working. Info – there are 2640 sleepers per mile, and 400-600 sleepers are laid for rail per day.

Black and White photos old timber cutter camps. GV's different axes used, axe heads. GV's circular saw cutting out sleepers. Timber cutters sitting around talking about old times.

Sleeper in timber yard, thousands of them.

Interview timber cutter, debarking log, he thinks the new technology is *"marvellous".*

GV's bushland scenes.

National identity again becomes the frame for this episode about timber cutters in the Australian bush. Looks at the changes that have made the hand sawing of railway sleepers a thing of the past. It is all done by one machine. The old timers tell their stories.

Series 6: Episode 19 *The Camel Catchers* 30'40"
?/?/1971
Producer: John Mabey Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: John Cooper Cameraman: Sandor Siro

WS camels being rounded up by bike. Travelling shot chasing camel. WS same. GV's catching camels on horse. Interv. Bob McKechnee, exporter. GV's south Australian Aboriginal settlement, camel and dog in settlement. ECU camel's mouth. Aborginal (paddy) saddles camel, he uses the camel as his taxi. Leads camel around. GV's Dick Nunn, manager of property where camels are caught. MCU intv. Nunn on catching camel, how many? Where they are etc. Says, *"there must be hundreds of them".* Team of camels pull cart. MCU interv driver of cart about camels, he says they are *"very bad tempered".* Men on bikes in outback, riding fast, like the movie 'easy rider' style. Called camel catcher's inc. Stuart Nunn and Jim Nunn interviewed in MCU. WS and GV's catching camels. Nunn's continue their interview, sitting around campfire during daytime. GV's catching her of camels with bikes and horse. WS same. They catch a baby camel, which protests, so to its mother. McKechnee interv. Continues, says camels cost $1000/head live in U.S., plus airfare of $589, plus add on fees of catchers. Camels in yards.	A story of the descendants of the early Australian camel trains. What happened to all the camels that were let loose once road trains took over in the outback?

Series 9: Episode 5 *Everything what we belong* 32'51"
9/12/1972
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: Ron Iddon Cameraman: Sandor Siro

GV's crowds gathered for the opening of the Ord River Scheme.
Prime Minister William McMahon speech at opening
GV's pan crowd.
CU faces of Mrs. Durack (89) and daughter, Mary.
CU *"Kings in grass castles"* book, by Mary Durack, pages turned.
Ws car drives down road.
PM McMahon, kisses Mrs. Durack at opening of scheme, and introduces his wife Sonja McMahon to her.
WS Ord River Dam.
GV's outback Durack land.
Interview Mary Durack on her family's history and their development of the outback regions, their follies, selling their land, the changes, and the regrets.
Travelling shot in boat of Ord River, shoreline, and submerged trees. Mary Durack describes what lies beneath. Roofs of buildings, tank, windmills, and all submerged or partially submerged. Mary Durack speaking as her mother listens.
MCU the two women together.
Aboriginal elders singing (men and women).
GV's settlement.
Mary Durack talks to Aboriginal elder about the land's history.
Interview Mary talks about wanting to document/write about the Aboriginal history. She is amazed about their memory abilities.
Mrs. Durack senior with Aboriginal women, meeting some who remember the early days.
Mary Durack interv. continues, about the affect her father's selling up and leaving had on the Aboriginals on the property and herself. An Aboriginal explains to her she says, *"we feel we lost everything what we belong".*
GV's Galah's flying, black cockatoos in trees, rocky outcrop in bush, pan shots landscape, bottle tree, cemetery, grave on someone named Scanlon, then Neal Durack's grave, Thomas Deakin, and an engraving on grave of *"David Suttie, head stockman of Jeannie Gunn's book "We of the never never" who died January 29, 1912, aged 62 years".*
Mary Durack interview continues.
Ws birds flying, brolga's, cranes.
GV's cotton crop dusting plane at work over crop.
Mary Durack talks to American farmer.
CU cotton growing. Mary speaking about changes and small holdings being started up today.
GV's cave painting, Mary with aboriginal looking at paintings. CU paintings.
Mrs. Durack senior leaves in plane.
Mary says she feels she belongs to the country.

Pastoral history is revisited in this story of the Durack dynasty in northern Western Australia and the development of the Ord River Scheme that destroyed that history by flooding the property. Looks at the displacement caused to not only the Durack family, but also to the aboriginal people who had lived on the property all their lives. Both have retained a sense of belonging.

Series 11: Episode 5 *Barossa Deutsche* 27'24"
?/?/1973
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: John Evans
Director: David Wood Cameraman: Terry Byrne

GV's man and woman shovelling grapes. Bottles being labelled.
Interv. Winery owner's wife, she came from Australia. She says she felt at home in area because the people spoke German as well. She is Lutheran.
GV's historic graveyard of pioneers.
Interiors Lutheran Church, organist, cleric, brethren in pews, service is underway, German immigrants descendant's in gathering.
MS interv immigrant descendant on how it was working in vineyards.
Exterior derelict dwellings of pioneers.
MS interv continues about ablutions, in the creek.
GV's grape picking. GV's grape pressing.
MS interview continues.
GV's dusty wine bottles in racks, wine barrels.
GV's Ben Schiller's family home, family sits around dinner table.
Kaiser Stuell winery sign.
Schiller's wife says women are taught to know their place.
Lutheran upbringing meant that the man is seen as *"more or less the main one".*
Daughter says she would like to change this, but still realises she will have to accept this when she marries.
The son Robert is expected to take over from his father.
Old Ben Schiller working in his garden.
Young Robert Schiller working in vineyard
GV's tourists at Barossa Valley wine sales.
MS interview Rex Schiller, chairman of Kaiser Stuell winery. Sees commercial side of wine industry as being the way of the future. Says he is glad his ancestors left Germany for Australia. Does not believe he could live the way they did, he recently visited Germany.
GV's exterior Hardy's winery.
Interv. Ben continues, sings a song *"how dry we are!"*
Black and white photos of pioneers intercut.
Street parade at vintage festival of Barossa Valley. Floats, traditional dress. Grape picking contest in a vineyard. Tug-o-war, maypole dance.
CU/MS grape treading, two men in bare feet. Folk dancing.
GV's late night beer hall scenes, dancing, singing, drinking.
GV's aftermath of festival.
Church service. CU faces in prayer, organist playing, and gathering sing hymn.

The story of one immigrant family who founded a wine dynasty and the Lutheran belief system that still shapes their lifestyle in Australia through tradition and custom. The younger generation are beginning to resist tradition and to want to make their own choices in the new Australian society.

Series 12: Episode 2 *I'll never change sides* 32'16" ?/?/1974
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Bob Connolly
Director: Ian McGarrity Cameraman: Heinz Voelzer

GV's Bill Ludwig, Australian Workers Union rep. Walking then into car.
Aerials historic shearing sheds in western Queensland near Charleville. GV's same.
MS shears at work similar to that seen in *"Sunday too far away".*
Ws Ludwig arrives at shed. MS, cu shearing.
Interv Ludwig about graziers being once the *"top dog"* and *"aristocrats of the bush".*
WS car along dirt road left to right.
Ludwig in car, interview overlay, arrives at homestead, talks to sacked shearer about pay ($88.07/week) dispute. Ludwig talks about victimisation issues, shearers get $67/week for five days work; he talks about strike action as one option.
Interv. CU Mrs. Ludwig talks about what her husband does as a union man.
GV's Ludwig interv continues.
Shearers talk about Ludwig's work and how it helps.
Interiors head quarter's union office.
Ludwig on road again, out and about. Vox pops about Ludwig.
Mrs. Ludwig interv. Continues in CU. She says graziers all respect Ludwig mostly.
Inside pub, Ludwig interview continues also with Errol Hodder, about confrontations with graziers.
Union rep. Talks to shearers in shed during smoko.
Disputes how settled through negotiation rather than strike.
Hodder and Ludwig interviewed waling to court. Described as bush lawyers. Cunnamulla courthouse inside magistrates court, they win case for shearers, talk about case afterwards.
Interview with woman, who lost case previous day, has hardened her attitude since loss of case.
Ludwig travelling in car again.
Interv. Ludwig.

Unions and unionism in the bush is the subject of this episode. It follows union leader, Bill Ludwig as he travels around outback Australia talking to and representing outback workers, shearers, farm workers, in fighting for proper wages.

Series 12: Episode 3 *Ben Hall* 28'52" ?/?/1974
(Colour)

E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Shane Porteous
Director: Lloyd Capps Cameraman: Preston Clothier

Re-enactment the capture of bushranger, Ben Hall, folk song overdub. People speak about Ben Hall with fondness. Black and white photos, Forbes, 1860s. Forbes today, GV's street scenes. Black and white photos other bushrangers of the 1860s. Old man speaking fondly of Ben Hall, tells his father's story about Ben Hall *"he was a wonderful bushman".* WS wheat crop, pan shot of crop. Derelict homestead. Wheogo homestead. Interview Gordon Piper, hobby historian on homestead, and its connections to bushrangers. Drawings of Hall's homestead Continues same until end.	National identity and history shape this episode which re-enacts the life and times of bushranger Ben Hall.

Series 13: Episode 1 *The Desert People* 42'24"
?/?/1975
(Colour)
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Bob Connolly
Director: Bob Connolly Cameraman: Preston Clothier

Early morning in Aboriginal settlement, people waking up, sitting around the morning campfire.
Exterior and interior shots Baptist church service.
MS Aboriginal and white faces in congregation, worshiping.
GV's pay packets being distributed to Aboriginals.
Cu ceremonial painting on artefacts/shields.
GV's ceremonial preparations by elders, singing, cu faces.
GV's school class/teacher gives less.
MCU Aboriginal children in class.
An elder carving implement, young Lloyd watches his grandfather.
CU grandfather's face/body.
CU Lloyd with grandfather talking together.
ECU Lloyd.
GV's men around campfire.
MS interview adolescent male about being initiated. Explains process of initiation for young you, acts out movements at beginning of process of initiation. Sits down and continues, but cannot reveal some points, he is prohibited from doing so. Voice over explains other main issues.
Women are not allowed to know details of initiation process.
MS young man continues explaining what happens once the boy (now man) comes out of the bush following initiation.
GV's women singing and dancing.
MS young man continues explaining choosing a wife after initiation.
GV's women singing and dancing.
CU women, bodies being painted.
Young man continues explaining women's place in tribe.
GV's women singing and dancing.
Football team, Harry Nelson (aboriginal Baptist minister) interview around campfire about initiation and Walbiri code of conduct.
GV's the boy Lloyd, and his grandfather. Grandfather explains how he killed a man with a spear over a woman, a long time ago.
GV's & ws settlement, after the death of someone in the hospital. The campsite is moved immediately because the spirit of the deadman is believed to inhabit the old campsite.
Young man explains how a murderer is dealt with by tribal custom.
Interview Harry Nelson, also talks about tribal "skin groups" and the issue of murder, punishment, and Walbiri laws.
WS ritual battle, women go first, self-injury, the men negotiate a settlement between them.

This episode explores the issue of beliefs and tradition and looks at aboriginal tribal law and sacred initiation ceremonies. One young aboriginal man explains what happens in an initiation ceremony. Some information however is not given because it is forbidden to outsiders and to women.

Series 13: Episode 9 *Be it ever so humble* 27'50" ?/?/1975 (Colour)
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: Ron Iddon Cameraman: Preston Clothier

GV's a house being moved through the countryside/towns by a company called "country homes". GV's artist drawing dilapidated homestead. GV's exterior homestead.
Interview MCU artist in his studio, about painting.
GV's exterior veranda with rocking horse, panning shot, slow zoom out, roof areas, chimney, veranda area, women walking along veranda.
Interv. Artist talks about drawing old farmhouses and how they were built *"they had to make do with the materials they could find….comes back to basic timber".*
MS man demonstrates old timber cutting methods, big saw, two men.
Interv. about durability of old timber dwellings in 1882.
Interv. with another man, interiors of building, top shot walking through house, no roof now.
WS modern 1960s style farmhouse just next door. Several houses seen.
Builder shows plans of new style of country dwelling in workshop. New house designs becoming more familiar today. Company catalogue, modifications are available. Interv. In hardhat *"in our form of building, we don't really see that architects have got a place".* He says he believes that they build "a more common" type of home.
Various WS semi moves house down road intercut with brick suburban homes.
Int. Building. Interv. Farmer about his housing needs, they are simple.
MS interv. With farmer's wife on new types of house *"I notice a terrific difference, much cleaner, and easier to handle and that sort of thing, with the old place, well you knew there was dust up in the ceiling, for one thing, which used to come down, I've sort of lost interest in the old place...I used to be outside a lot and it kind of got away on me (laughs)…I've had old homes all me life…everything's so clean and the way I want it, how I really wanted a home".*
MCU another farmer's wife says she missed the old veranda, has a brick home, GV's exterior home.
MCU intv. Farmer, his new house has no veranda; he could not afford to put them on.
CU artist talking on the changes in houses. He believes the traditional Australian homestead features *will "probably eventually disappear".*
Walking down suburban street in Toowoomba *"much the same as they are in all sorts of cities around Australia"*, he says. Panning shot exterior new housing estate area. All brick and one and two storey.
GV's darling downs grassland. CU grass blowing in wind. Ws same.
Travelling shot down homestead road to huge homestead. GV's exterior homestead. Artist drawing homestead and interv. artist, intercut.
GV's exterior gardens of huge homestead, two storey, veranda, in ground pool, trees, fountain. GV's interior same, furniture, hallways, slow travelling shots.
WS homestead in distance.
GV's cattle with farmer walking behind.
Ext GV's old homestead, cu panning shots of timber beams, timbers etc. Corrugated iron roof, tanks, intercut with shot artist drawing.
Exterior large homestead verandas, 1888 gardens, iron work on verandas, chimney's, corrugated iron roof, timber railing, slats, awnings (beautiful shots).
Black and white photos of past times; details of homesteads emphasised.

The traditional Australian country homestead house is changing in the modern Australia. Prefabricated homes are being built replacing the old historic style of building. This episode contrasts the two, as well it talks to country people who have adopted the new style of home and to the architects who are building them.

Series 13: Episode 20 *Land fit for heroes* 29'01" ?/?/1975 (Colour)
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: David Poynter Cameraman: Julian Penney

Archival footage WWI, troops soldier settlement. Early 20th century scenes, fun parks, pig farm, chicken farm, vineyard *"within four years of war's end thirty thousand returned servicemen found themselves settled on the land"* (over dub).
Archival footage continues "one of the greatest agricultural and social tragedies of Australian history" (over dub).
Today, *"the "big lizzy" scrub clearing machine is a 60 mph monster"* (over dub).
Interview ex-servicemen talk about soldiers trying to find their blocks of land *"resented the opportunity of our future"* they say.
Archival footage.
Interv. Ex-serviceman on his experiences.
Interv. Wife remembers going to Nunga to live *"it was like the beach without the water"* she says.
Elderly woman chops kindling for fire and is interviewed about her live of deprivation.
Archival footage man and wife and baby in bush. Archival footage farm machinery.
Interv. Ex-serviceman's wife on her difficult life.
Elderly woman revisits old house which was similar to hers, now in ruins.
Interv. Woman *"this little fire was company to a lonely person".*
GV's ruined old house.
Interv. Old ex-serviceman about what he started with, nothing.
691 acres was his allotment. Pan right to left open land. Repeat same.
Interv. Ex-serviceman, on failure of crops "twenty pound as a subsidy," he says.
Archival footage, old car, the Malley.
Interv. Wife, difficulties managing financially.
Interv. Ex-serviceman, had to go off the homestead to get money to live *"anything to made money"* he says.
Interv. Wife.
B&w shots soldiers, on the land, working the farms.
Interv. Wife about divorces at the time, *"We didn't talk about that sort of thing"* she says.
Interv. Ex-serviceman tells about protest marsh outside land commission.
Evidence that the scheme had been bungled *"never a hope of success, it was a scandal"* says reporter.
Representative of the department of agriculture showing hardiness of virgin Malley and fences *overgrown "look at it, wretched stuff…the administrative heads in Sydney had no idea of the privations of these people"* he says.
Archival footage picks and shovels digging *holes "three hundred pounds of government money and left".*
GV's foggy landscape, pan left to right, zoom out, exterior ruined old house.
GV's old machinery decaying, dead trees, rusty lamps, old sings, timber houses in disrepair, and a gaggle of geese flying right to left pan.
Intv. Wife, elderly *"it's been a hard life, but it's been a good life,"* she says.
No running water until today (1975).
Old man says he had kept subtle through hard work. Old woman feels she has been deprived *"oh yes, yes"* she says. Old man sings at piano *"Round Redcliff way".* Cu aged hands playing piano.

This episode looks at a little-known history of the soldier settler. With the aid or archival photos the old-timers tell their stories of how they were given land to farm only to discover that is was arid and dry. Some stayed and struggled to make a live. The men and their wives tell their stories.

Series 19: Episode 8 *Forgotten people* 29'54" ?/?/1978 (Colour)
Producer: David Leonard Reporter: Ron Drynan
Director: David Leonard Cameraman: Julian Penney

GV's ambulance officers driving ambulance.
GV's north coast Queensland. Church service. Cane cutters.
Descendants of Kanaka cutters walking through plantation.
Talk about islander vegetables growing.
Black and white photos of Kanakas.
Cane field scenes, left to right pan.
Graphic of Queensland.
Black and white photos Kanakas and owners and ship that took the kanaka's from their island homes. Kanakas in cane fields now dressed in European clothes.
Pan left to right cane field.
Interv. Kanaka descendant. Talks about what it was like, the fights between the New Hebridian's and Solomon islanders.
Cutting cane today. MS. Descendents still cut cane for a few days each year by hand. Later the machine takes over the job.
GV's Mackay street scenes.
Black and white pictures of islanders.
Evangelical preacher, church service, islander congregation sings with hands raised. Seventh Day Adventist church.
Sherie Malnu, first to go to James Cook University, interview.
Islander women in cane fields working.
GV's Mackay streets, Sherie in street. Repeat.
Sherie and her mother talk.
Interv Sherie about being different to her family and other islanders.
She is becoming independent of her own culture she says.
School children at school. Sacred hill area. GV's mountain terrane, descendant walking, coconut palms.
Interv. Descendant tells what it was like years ago, traditions, culture of his people.
Pan left to right cane.
Descendant talks to his grandchildren tells them a story/custom. Passes on both Christian stories and his cultural stories.
Church gathering.
Interv preacher (islander) Pastor Bill Power (Assembly of God).
Power outside Proserpine church with partitioners.
Repeat. Power talks about Christianity in his family and cultural beliefs.
GV's descendants (noel) walking in cane fields.
Noel talks about lack of recognition for the efforts of his people *"we want the people to remember who we are…let 'em know that we've been here"* he says.
Black and white photos Kanakas.

Looks at the little-recognised history of the Kanakas of north Queensland and the significant part they played in the development of the sugar cane industry. What happen to them? The story of one of their descendants is told in this episode that recognises their contributions to the history of Australia.

Series 28: Episode 2 *A Winter's tale* 29'35" ?/?/1984 (Colour)
Producer: Bernice Daly Reporter: Paul Williams
Cameraman: Dennis Brennan

GV's dairy farm in Victoria. Farmer on tractor. Farmer and cows.
Exterior old cottage. Woman cuts wood. Cows into holding yard.
Biodynamics farming issue.
GV's farmer, cows. Rain on water, leaves, cows, sheep.
MS farmer walking cows.
Interv farmer talks about his belief in biodynamics.
GV's surrounding forests.
CU cow manure (unconventional)
GV's countryside, the moon.
Farmer buries cow horns filled with manure to produce a substance called *"five hundred".*
CU product from this process. Farmer shovels cow manure into machine. Farmer with bags of horns. Farmer fills horns with manure by machine. Farmer buries horns (130,000 horns altogether). Farmer explains process.
GV's cows in field. CU cows faces. GV's horns in boxes. Interview continues. CU *"five hundred"* out of horns. Interv continues. CU *"five hundred".* Repeat.
CU wheat growing. Biodynamic farmers standing in wheat field.
CU soil sample. Farmers talk about using "*five hundred".* CU soil sample. Interv. continues. GV's rice farm, farmer shows the difference *"five hundred"* has made to his farm. Interv. Rice farmer. Water wheel, rice fields, growing naturally, biodynamic farm. Farmer digs irrigation area.
GV's process of spreading *"five hundred"* to crops.
Interv. Farmer.
Farmer sprays field at night or at dawn with *"five hundred".*
Interv. Farmer about difference between conventional farming and farming using *"five hundred"* biodynamics.
GV's tree, plants.
Woman in bush picking dandelions.
GV's various plants. Continues until end.

The embryonic organic farming industry is explored in this episode that looks at the development of a radical procedure using cow manure and cow horns. At the time, it might have been seen as excentric, however, today, the product "500" is used widely in the expanding organic farming field.

APPENDIX A

SHOT LISTS - *CHEQUERBOARD* PROGRAM EPISODES VIEWED

Chequerboard
Series 1:Episode 2 *It's a big day in any girl's life* 53'36" 19/4/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: David Stiven Reporter: John Power
Ass.Prod.: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Bill Steller

GV's montage – Night time shots, people singing and dancing, serving themselves at buffet table (voiceover of groom talking about his expectations). MS sheep in pens.
MS/GV's men working sheep sorting pens.
MS Grazier riding on horseback – house, large garden surrounds.
Interview grazier (Bevan) on his concerns for wedding (eg. Rain, no champagne and the reception). He agrees it is more a woman's time than a man's – *"I've just been told to do this and do that, 'n that's all".* His father joins in interview. *"It's 38 years since I had anything to do with one".* He talks about having children – 3 or 4 – *"I'd very much like to have a daughter…and at least one son….so that I could pass on what my parents have passed on to me, and try and give him something".*
GV's interior of factory production line.
Interview another groom who earns $44/week – talks about his fiancé *Margaret "a very nice girl, sweet, good figure (he smiles), she's well behaved, an' she's well looked after and I think I can do a good job by lookin' after her too".* Talks about speech…goes into speech (word for word) he has been rehearsing, then off to the buck's party, his fiancé *"said not to get too drunk"* he says.
GV's hen's party, kitchen tea, gifts, sleepwear.
Interview with factory worker fiancée, Margaret in Mcu. She works at the same factory. She will work after marriage for about 12 months; she is looking forward to having a family *"too right I am!"* She says with a giggle. *"Not too big, peter reckons we're going to have a football team".* Talks about the proposal. *"We came home from the drive-in and he asked me…out the front in the car".* Says he helps around the house. They will be living in the same house as her mother*, "I didn't like it at first but, now that mum said that we don't have to pay any rent or anything, what more could you ask for, I really don't like living with in-laws"…"I reckon it's a big day in any girl's life'.* They will honeymoon at Curl Curl beach and in a caravan later. Making the wedding dress – dressmaker making adjustments – sewing machines in use, veil, Margaret in her dress and veil.
Grazier's fiancée (Sandra) in shop trying on wedding dress and mantilla headdress. Spanish handmade lace veil, the veil decided the dress. Interview her mother on organizing the wedding, *"just the fear of thinking you might have forgotten something".* With girlfriends – garden party. Interview with four bridesmaids – old school friends – live close in the country (50-60 miles between), her life after wedding – after the honeymoon, *"well, we're going to shear for a month, that will be a great shock, very early rises in the morning, and you know long days, and so forth, after that…water-ski, play tennis…I've been told I must learn to play bridge",* she can't water-ski she says. *"I'd like to have a four…I'd like a large family".* Large house with 24 rooms awaits her, *"a lot of furnishing to do".* Worries about wedding.

KEY:
MCU medium close up
CU close up
ECU extreme close up
GV-general view
MS medium shot
WS wide shot
LS long shot
PAN panning shot
HS head and shoulders
VS various shots

Looks at two opposing approaches to marriage ceremony: one wealthy, the other working class. Two brides from different social backgrounds. Contrasts examined about the build up and planning for their weddings. One spares no expense purchasing everything from a bridal boutique and having the reception in a banquet hall, while the other has her wedding dress and reception made and arranged by her family and friends.

In kitchen of Margaret's mum, making cake, ham and chicken salad, fish fingers, curried prawns and rice, and sausage rolls, oyster patties, cakes, fruit salad and ice-cream, cakes and tarts (she goes through the menu as she is placing fresh chicken into pot to cook. She is doing the catering herself, *"yes every bit of it! 12 chickens, 1 case of lettuce, four celery, 1 case of tomatoes, and four willing daughters to help do the job… a leg of ham, luckily I won the leg of ham in a Christmas raffle, so we kept it for the wedding"*. Cheaper than catering. Food directly from the markets. Interview with Margaret's mother, the women next door made the wedding frock, everybody helps. Everyone's helping, sister's help with money for wedding. The father is dead four year. Her husband *"came home drunk and kissed me mother and apologised to her"* (she laughs)…*funny as a two bob watch!"*

Wedding rehearsal for Bevan and Sandra in church. Cleric says he hopes she will be waring a dress, not trousers. Cu manicure, hair salon, sitting under hair dryers, facial. Interview with her mother on what she has been doing, checking to make sure everything has been done. She has talked wit her daughter about being ruined – the mother never cooks – make up being applied in salon.

Margaret's preparation at home, home hairdresser doing her hair. Peter's preparation, getting dressed at home, brushing suits for fluff, groomsmen help. Travelling with his mother in car to wedding (she is Italian, with a heavy accent). He is a good son.

Exteriors the garrison church, Sydney that founded in 1839. Guests arrive and go into church. Bevan arrives, Sandra comes in limozine, it is raining, and bells ring, down the aisle with her father. (Formal)

In local church – Margaret and Peter's casual wedding, down the aisle, cleric conducts service, ceremony filmed through until the "I will's". Wedding singer sings, signing register, bride and groom kiss. (Informal)

Bevan and Sandra (grazier) out of church, bells ringing, at reception, with guests, meeting guests, "here comes the bride", up to brides table. (Formal)

Outside Margaret and Peter's reception, appear as Mr and Mrs, applause. from friends, up to main table under marque tent, buffet food served (informal).

Formal reception and speeches for grazier. Mc toasts wedding *"don't mistake my words here, but being born and bred in the bush, I've always believed in breeding…whether this be horse, or dogs, sheep, or cattle…and don't worry yourself this works out in life…drink to the happiness of Bevan and Sandra"*, so say all of us is sung. Bevan and Sandra in MCU looking embarrassed and uncomfortable. Sandra cries, Bevan gives her a handkerchief.

Speech at Margaret and Peter's wedding, peter starts, *"on behalf of my wife and myself ….those who helped with the dresses and the bridesmaids…and for makin' the bride beautiful"*, laughter and applause.

Bevan speaks *"this is on behalf of my wife that I'm saying this"* (she laughs and smiles at him). He speaks to his mother.

Margaret and Peter's wedding, speech continue, uncle reg responds on behalf of the mothers.

The cleric makes a joke at the grazier's wedding.

Reading the telegrams at Margaret and Peter's reception. The then cut the cake, kiss, and the first dance to the Blue Danube.

Bevan and Sandra cut the cake, photographs taken, kiss, and first dance to Edelweiss.

Alternating shots of dancing at receptions, one formal, one casual, the couples leave, decorated tin cans.

Series 1: Episode 3 *A Fair Innings* 36'43" 6/5/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Mike Woolveridge Reporter: John Power
Ass.Prod.: Mary Covington Cameraman: Bill Steller

On Election Day, Female mayor, 72-year-old pensioner is made mayor of Leichhardt. The council chambers meeting in progress, voting in progress on mayoral allowance of $3000 per year, vote is carried.

Slattery, mayor of botany, he is middle aged, at home with wife and daughter at breakfast. Interview with Slattery about policies. Making change for the 'little people', *"after all I'm on of the little people myself".*

Parkinson, mayor of Mosman, is also the registrar of the pacific school of administration in Australia). Seen at home with family on Election Day. Interview with Parkinson on when he decided to run for council – (1962) – he is against high-density population in Mosman.

GV's pollster's on polling day – Cashman supports aged, seen with cigarette in teeth, white ht), voting. Interview with Cashman at polling station. The only woman in Leichhardt council says she is lonely and it given a hard time.

Parkinson at polling station on Election Day. Driving around streets of Mosman. Interviewed while driving car. Daughter electioneering for father. Parkinson talking to people in streets, wife electioneering.

GV's Mosman suburb. Interview Parkinson on his perspective on what he sees as Mosman's needs. I.e. Urban renewal, concerned about planning, impact, and community.

Slattery setting up polling station for Labor. Travelling and general shots of botany suburb. Vox pops of supporters, with Slattery political banter back and forth.

Interior polling booths, voting, interview with Mrs. Slattery after she votes on what she likes about being mayoress *"love it".*

Interview with female voter and mayoress on what the mayor has done *"all our paths for us….he's a real nice man".*

Voters on Election Day in street outside polling station. Interview Mrs Cashman on polling booth about voting Labor.

Interview with Slattery on voting through caucus, independents interfering in caucus. Party politics. *"I would prefer not to be tagged with any party".*

Supporter of the ALP? *"Yes, I always have been and always will be…as far as local government is concerned…I'm one of those people who believe that there shouldn't be any party politics whatsoever in local government".*

GV's Balmain town hall (suburb near Leichhardt).

Interview Cashman, she was married at 16; husband *"was mayor twice, of Balmain".* She has been mayor of Leichhardt for 6 years. She ran against her husband for mayor and won. Son-in-law arrives at booth. Cashman has complaints about untidy garbage men, rubbish left out (her personal attitude, friends, not sure on actual policies). Voters chat with Cashman, Labor voters love her.

Parkinson interview inside car. Talks again in urban development, other policies.

Cashman celebrates with friends at the pensioner's annual dinner, speakers at dinner. Thanks for dinner, *"it was wonderful…women dance to "if you knew Suzie"* and sing along. Interview with Cashman, congratulations on win. Has decided not to go on as mayor *"feel sad".* Declares council member mayor to carry on. Takes off robe. *"Take the chair aldermen Rockwell please"* thanks councillors for all their help during her time as mayor.

Local Leichhardt politics and those who would enter office. Who are their supporters? Why do they do it? What do they expect to achieve? Do they understand what their electorate really needs? This episode investigates politics at the grass roots level.

Series 1: Episode 4 *We're all good mates and that's it* 38'09"
13/5/1969

Producer:	Tom Manefield		
Director:	Storry Walton	Reporter:	Mike Woolveridge
Ass.Prod.:	Mary Covington	Cameraman:	Bill Steller

Ws conference meeting of prizefighters held at Moore Park. CU fighters. CU meeting called to order. GV's official photos taken, groups of men all former fighters. CU Vic Patrick (referee), Tommy burns (fighter), George Barnes (fighter) discuss former fights. All three banter back and forth. GV's restaurant kitchen activities. George Barnes is now a cook.

Interview about now being a cook. GV's kitchen activities. GV's George at home having a beer. Shows his scrapbook of memories, photos. Discusses career. *"I'd say the night I knocked Tommy Burns out at Sydney Stadium in the 11th round that would be the biggest thrill I ever had".*

Interview with Mrs. Barnes, *"yes, I saw all George's fights".* George says, *"I was very temperamental before a fight, everything had to be cooked right".* Mrs Barnes says he refused to eat broken eggs – an obsession. *"If you were cooking an egg for him, and you happen to break the egg as you were cooking it, he would look at it, he wouldn't say anything, but he would just pick it up and throw it out the back door".*

ECU George explains the difficult times when fights are stopped. Mrs Barnes quotes George with saying *"An unfit champion could always lose a fight to a mug any day".*

George discusses fights in 1953 and 1954.

GV's Tommy Burns at his riverside home. He has two cats. His flat is like a ship with round windows. Interview burns, tells story of how he changed his name from Jack Murphy to Tommy Burns. Needed another name to fight under, so that he did not lose his real job. Says his first fight was as reg burns, but changed it again for more appeal. In ECU says he did not like the sight of blood at school, "*especially my own".* On money, he says it is not important, *"how can a bloke be so bloody broke and yet be so happy, that's how it is".* He names the O'Neal-Bell fight as his best *"I would say that that was my fistic shining hour…one of the bloodiest fights, yes…both fighters seemed to have reached their peak on that same night, and they, both of them, wished not to be destroyed or defeated".*

ECU GV's Vic Patrick in his pub, with patrons, bantering back and forth. *"We're all good mates and that's it!"…I finished in 1948, boxing, all I want to do is make these fellas happy, and you can see they're happy".*

CU interview with Vic Patrick's daughter Vicki, on growing up as referee's daughter. Tough father. ECU Vic and Vicky talk about working together in pub. ECU Vicky. Patrick in pub storeroom with stock *"I like the business (boxing) its gets into you".* Patrick says he sees boxing not as a sport, but as a business. ECU *"you slug away, and you slug away until you really do see the hurt"* (in their eyes).

CU Vic recalls when he stopped the fight between burns and Barnes, *"I did think that tom had reached the end of his tether….he was getting' hit with punches he shouldn't have been hit with, and i sopped the fight, he'd got knocked down twice, so I stopped it".*

ECU Burns, Barnes and Patrick discuss fighters liking or not-liking fighting. Conference meeting continues with an in memorium held.

Champion boxers tell of their successes and failures in the ring. Interview with Australian boxing icons of the 1940s and 50s and their wives and daughters. What kept them going? What came after boxing for them?

Series 1Episode 5 *What do you get married for?* 30'20" 13/5/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: John Crew
Ass.Prod: Mary Covington Cameraman: Bill Steller

Ws women's lawn bowls game. Interview female bowler. MS "Sadie" variety show at women's bowls club. Panning shot of ball rolling. Interview Mrs Russell about social side of club. Panning Ws suburban street, zoom in to house. Interview with Mrs Russell on her life with/without her husband, she describes it as *"Typical…had to create my own interests".* Her family's needs overshadowed her ambitions to be an actor. How her life and relationship with her children have changed as they grew up. She agrees she is excluded from her husband's life, *"always excluding me, but I've accepted that role, I have been excluded, but I've accepted it".* MS woman on hospital trolley in weight loss contraption. Interview with her on the trolley about what she does while her husband is away, *"Oh, wait for the telephone to ring…I love my home"*. Ws women arrive and enter her home for card game. GV's game in progress. Cu interview Russell, says she does not have a lot of friends, but acquaintances, *"I keep myself very much to myself".* She confides in her husband only. Her happiest time? *"That's rather hard, from the moment I got married until now".* Says her husband is happy for her to work, but says she will stay at home. GV's antics at Tupperware party, then the demonstration. CU woman talks about her husband disliking Tupperware parties. He is a truck driver. She keeps busy while he is away with her interests*, "I haven't got that much time to be lonely".* She is a stay-at-home mum. Housework? *"Let's face it; it just goes with marriage doesn't it?"* Must have children in marriage, *"Let's face it, what do you get married for? It's to have children".* GV's art exhibition at fete. Miss N.S.W., GV's garden party, and shots of sunglasses, homemade hats, women, and paintings. Interview with woman who does charity work. She talks about her preparation to do the work, *"appearance means everything".* GV champagne and chicken sandwiches. Interview cu photos of her with American actor James Drury star of television's 'The Virginian', other celebrities. Ws her feeding her cats outside. Ws her house – 1920, and three storeys. Huge hairstyle. GV's interiors and furniture collection. She does not do housework. Happy she has no children. He wedding day was her happiest day. WS interview on cruiser, the huge hair and nautical hat askew, "*I want to be the bread winner myself"* she has a trotting horse, it's won four county races, *"my husband pays the bills".* She is financially independent. Her husband runs the house financially.	Revealing two sides of marriage and resultant social inclusion or exclusion. As seen here, in their own words, some women with children reveal a resignation to exclusion from the lives of their husbands after marriage, while others without children reveal a similar acceptance, but also a determination and ability to make lives for theMSelves despite such exclusion. Prompts questions about women in the workforce, and challenges accepted definitions of women in marriage.

Series 1: Episode 6 *It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince* 45'36" 27/5/1969

Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: David Stiven Reporter: Peter Grose
Ass.Prod.: Mary Covington Cameraman: Bill Steller

Factory printing room, worker watches processing. Interview MCU with Mr. Charles on how much he is paid per week. He says he clears $44.00 per week, with tax off. *"It's a bit of a push".* Opportunities do come for overtime. He pays $14.00 per week tend. Food, he is not sure (the wife does that). He gives his wife the money*, "an' she runs it from there".* CU the interview continues, says he *"Likes to do something that I'm satisfied with".*

GV's children playing in park on play equipment, mother nearby. MCU wife *"I was just twenty when I got married".* Interview in park on swing with child. Met in air force. Difficulties in making ends meet, *"hospital bills, doctor bills, that sort of thing…every penny I saved went on paying the hospital bills…"* zoom in to MCU, to CU *"I just hope there isn't anymore children…yes I am taking the pill now…it's $1.75 or something a month, I do smoke and if I haven't the money for the pill, or the cigarettes, I go without cigarettes...I have to go without cigarettes if I run out of anything for the children…although I'd love to smoke 30 cigarettes a day…I suppose I'll make sure there are no more children, and that's it".*
Cost for eczema ointment she says is $20.00 per month, they have $1.50 in the bank, bills are – gas $16.00, doctor $5.00 per week, and dinner last night was camp pie and chips. Lunch only for the children. "I never really bother with lunch. They have meat 6 out of 7 nights a week. *"I went to the family welfare when my gas was cut off, and I was expecting a baby and my husband was out of work, and I don't think I'd every go there again, I think I'd rather shoot myself before I went into family welfare again. They thought I was an animal!...I was asked to open my purse out and was asked how much my engagement ring was worth, the fact that my husband was out of work, that was my fault virtually, probably because I was so close to having a baby, I didn't know at that stage where my next meal was coming from, ..If I'd had to go about another week, I would have had a nervous break down".* Has felt like suicide.

GV's inside home, mother folding ironing, children on floor, TV on, dad arrives home, cuddles kids, greets wife, father greets baby. MS Wife interview on home, about meat meals per week *"i couldn't say when i last had steak…mince on weekend…chips are virtually a luxury…it's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince".* Stews, sausage, mince.

MS interview with husband *"you can spoil yourself with rich foods, I like plain things".*

CU wife, *"it's no good trying to hide from reality, you've got to face up to it, if I hadn't wanted children we wouldn't be in the mess we are in now, but if I hadn't had children, possibly we wouldn't be as happy as we are now, you know in a peculiar sort of way, although we don't have anything, we are happy".* Says her main source of happiness is children and a good husband. Another husband and wife in supermarket with children shopping. MS interview husband says shopping bill each week is *"About $10-11.00 for groceries, about $4.00 greens, $3-4.00 meat".* They have to do without some weeks. *"You can't afford to get everything you want to get*": MCU wife – never shoplifts. Can't go without tooth paste…*"otherwise clean your teeth with a bit of salt".* Sometimes they run out of soap.

Questions people's drive, ambition, and sense of purpose in life, challenging their choices and state of existence. In their own words, couples reveal their often-desperate financial situations as they struggle to live on the minimum wage. The camera lens zooMS in, significant comments reveal anxiety and concern for future. Their words reveal attempts to seek govt. help which at the time appear inadequate. Challenges the issue of working class poverty.

Another family struggle financially; through their words, they show a resolute determination to make the best of what they have and remain happy despite their struggles. Ongoing effects not only not having money for a family's weekly needs, but also that the children are at times kept home from school due to lack of food for lunches. Unseen ramifications of gaps in children's education as a result suggest possible future achievement difficulties, thereby perpetuating the status quo.

"We live from wage to wage". They have kept the children at home, because they had *"No food to send them with my kids are my life".*

GV's exterior house, washing on line, child rides bike through yard. Father sorting out junk. Interview with father. MS says he earns *"Just on $50.00 per week".* Does not get paid for all the hours he works, which is 40-50 hours per week. There are 6 children and his wife and him. The children are aged between 7 years and 12 months. Their rent is $12.60 per week. Bread is $3.50 per week, milk about the same, and no hire purchase". CU says, *"As a matter of fact I am a bankruptee…I'm not cleared as yet, I've still got say another 2-3 years to go".* In debt for $1000.00. MS husband talking with the yard in the background.

GV's wife putting child to bed. CU interview with wife on food, sausages, mince steak mincemeat, stewing chops, steak and kidney, shanks, rissoles, her husband does cakes. Always struggled. She came from a poor family. Goes out once a week to shop. At the moment, she has about $1.00 that has to last until Thursday, five days hence. She thinks rich people are misers. She is happy.

GV's car showroom, another husband polishes cars. He earns $50.00 per week with tax for 40-hour week and little overtime. Envy's people who buy the cars. Does not smoke. CU tried to take a second job, but wife's illness stopped that. ECU pay packet rent, does the shopping, cheap.

Exterior shots housing commission development, women hang out washing, children close by, into flat block, up stairs.
MS woman says she pays $11.50 per week in rent (she seems affected by medication). CU interview has and *"inferiority complex",* and feels down hearted, blamed for her mother leaving when she was three". Didn't feel her family loved her, her father *"used to get the stock whip out" if she stayed home from school",* she *"was put into a wheel chair"* because *"he belted me up so much I couldn't walk anymore".* Married at 18, she was pregnant, married to get away from home. Feels she has been burden to her husband. Tried to commit suicide, overdose. Still thinks about it, but the kids keep her going.

GV's children playing on floor.

MS Mrs. Sims says she pays $10.00 per week for food. Nothing for lunch. Does not think about shoplifting. CU interview says a piece of cake is a luxury to her. She had a good dinner at a friend's place. Today is her birthday, she is 22 years old, but looks 42. She smiles. ECU she feels unlucky, no regrets though. She prepares a salad on table; her husband pours her a beer and gives her a glass (to celebrate her birthday).

Interview CU with Mr. Sims – he says he came from poor family *"lived in an old mud house in Spring Valley".* He left school at 15 to help his mother. Left Bendigo to get a better life/opportunity.

CU Mrs.Sims, 3 children, she cannot have any more; she would die if she did. CU toothpaste, none in the house, costs too much, doctor told them if she got married and had children, it would help her nervous condition – he is optimistic.

GV's children crying, playing in park, in streets, a cricket game on swings.

Shows evidence of the day-to-day issues of making ends meet and families living on the minimum wage.

Shows evidence of issues that changed the lives of those concerned and which inevitably shaped their futures; the stories behind the story. The desperate situations experienced by those involved in this episode suggest a stoic determination by them not to buckle under, but to continue to survive no matter what life throws at them.

Series 1: Episode 7 *Fortune teller – I'm dealing in emotions*
44'00" 3/6/1969

Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Bill Steller Reporter: Peter Grose
Ass.Prod: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

GV's 78-year-old woman selling buttons for charity – old people and children's protestant home – on busy streets. Interview with her about selling buttons. Asked does she have any psychic flashes while selling, *"Oh yes I do…I think that's innate…"* she says.

GV's exterior old people's home. GV's interior of same. Old woman hand sewing, interview about living there. She explains she trained as a nurse at Prince Henry hospital in Sydney then became a minister's wife. She has psychic powers, but will not ask for money. Has premonitions. Will not tell bad news. Had a "feeling" about President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy assassinations. Believes the psychic messages come from god, as a feeling. Says our conscience should guide. Her daughter is a psychic too.

Another lady doing a tealeaf reading to a group of ladies in a home. GV's women at lunch table (well dressed) having tealeaf readings.

Interview with psychic reading recipient. Yes, she believes in it. She lives with witches. Does not follow it explicitly though.

Interview with daughter of old woman (Kathleen Green). They do readings for each other. Does not use powers for financial gain.

Fashion show in progress, models, guests, Beryl Cheers given psychic premonition by psychic. More shots of fashion show. Psychic talking to others as show continues.

Tarot card reading in progress at show.

Psychic in office doing tarot card reading for customer, dictating his reading to secretary. Interview on how he does a reading with the cards. Explains about tarot cards. Makes cup of tea with partner at home.

Young well-dressed woman calls at the psychic's house for a reading. Carries out reading.

Interview with same woman about her readings, what brought her there – her daughter died last year, she is lonely, and restricted in her home environment. Her husband does not know about the reading sessions. The psychic has helped her with small problems. Has been given her direction. Will not go to doctor, psychiatrists etc.

GV's at home with psychic again. Doing some house cleaning/dusting. Interview with him about being a psychic. Does not ask for payment, leaves it up to the person to establish what to pay.

GV's old woman Mrs. Green giving another card reading/her daughter doing same.

Looks at the changing face of Australian society and of the increased interest in the psychic world and séances. Challenges and question why people turn to the paranormal as an alternative to the church or medical help.

Series 1:Episode 9 *The policeman told me to go to bed or live in the space age* 35'41" 17/6/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Neil Munro Reporter: Peter Grose

GV's young people partying. Exterior night shot block of flats. Interior young people partying drinking and dancing.

GV's older neighbours checking outside through their windows. Interview Cu older woman. ECU her face.

GV's young people at party, kissing etc. MCU clock on mantle reads 2.50am. Another older neighbour makes herself a cup of tea. Interview of her husband in cu. MS husband demonstrates their sound issues. In to MCU of his face. MCU his wife speaks. GV's husband leaves the room and returns with a baseball bat in his hand. MCU their faces as they continue speaking.

GV's police arrive at party, enter house. GV's interview with another older man in flat at party, police leave.

GV's older couple in separate beds – cannot sleep. Interviewed in their beds.

GV's exterior flats next morning, broken glass. GV's interior four young men eating at table. MCU interviews around table and on lounge. GV's at home next morning young women. GV's young women in kitchen. MCU interviews. GV's young men ironing – interviews in MCU.

Older women in their flat having cup of tea in evening.

Interview older man, MCU, other women as well. CU women's faces as they speak.

GV's young men and women in their flats discussions, drinking.

Neighbourhood disputes. Differences of opinion between the older and the younger generation about noise pollution from loud parties which develop into heated and angry neighbour disputes. Challenges the loss of respect for people's piece of mind and privacy issues in the quickly changing Australian society.

Series 1:Episode 10 *To err is human* 45'00" 24/6/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: John Worrall Reporter: David Roberts
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Bill Steller

MCU interview driver on the road for 47 years, he is travelling salesman, Keith Ellis. He has travelled over 2 million miles. CU interview continues in car while he is driving.

Pan shot car moving through countryside.

Interview in car continues. Car into small town. Interview in car going to see a Joe Merton.

Keith into shop. Talks to shopkeeper. Small talk between the two. Talks to shop owner. Takes order then leaves shop. Street scenes. Keith books into hotel. WS rowing on Clarence River.

CU interview about being a travelling salesman. Talks about the effect his career has on his wife *"I suppose there are temptations that come along to a traveller, that don't come to other people you know….to err is human, you now"* (he laughs).

Keith says he believes his wife has had a happy life, despite his indiscretions through the years. He works without a contract. Has won prizes. Interview Keith's wife. Talks about his career, shows CU family photos, wedding photo album. Talks about car accident, photos of crash. MS she says the children have been the centre of her life "more or less it had to be".

MS Keith and mates talking over drinks telling stories of being on the road. GV's Keith back to his hotel room.

Interviewer asks if Keith knows many other women. Keith says he does. Interview MCU Keith says he knows 531 women. Interview about his opinion of today's male dress style. He dose not like the tight pants. He likes women's dress style. He believes women dress to impress the male.

Keith says he enjoys travelling over the three-mile limit. He explains *"Three mile from home and you're single again",* he laughs. Ws rod fishing with his mates on riverbank.

Exterior shot zoom into inside house at night time. Keith and mates reminiscing.

MS Keith's wife watches TV at home. Zoom into cu. She met Keith in Murwillumbah. She does not like him drinking. She says being on the road *"gets in their blood, it's like a sailor, they're just not happy when away from the road".* She says Keith got the better side of the *bargain "oh definitely, he's been around travelling all the time".*

GV's Keith and mates in club, drinking telling stories again. CU Keith telling story about women. CU Keith's wife. Keith comes home, kisses her. Small talk. She continues watching TV. Keith and wife sitting on cough together. CU Keith's wife on what she thought of him. ECU *"Yes he was very good looking…..well I had the two young children…I was kept fairly busy".* MS same interview continues.

ECU they both agree they get on each other's nerves a bit after about a month.

ECU Keith agrees he is selfish. ECU she says, *"I'd like to see him a little bit more often than I do".* ECU they discuss friction in their marriage *"it blows over. It's one of those things that just happens".*

Exterior shot Keith walks outside his home into front garden. Caravan in driveway. He enters caravan. GV's women's handbags decorate inside caravan. MCU interview about selling handbags from his caravan. ECU on what he has in common with his wife *"I don't know that there's much at all as a matter of fact".* Keith drives away from camera with caravan.

The life of the travelling salesman and of those he leaves behind like his wife and children. What drives them to continue travelling? Is their time coming to an end? Some say they are one of the linking pins of society keeping personal communications going across the country. Others say their days are numbered. This is one man's story which reveals he prefer to be on the road that at home. Challenges moral conceptions and trust issues in marriage.

Series 1: Episode 11 *I could get married and have a family*
48'07" 24/6/1969

Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Bill Steller Reporter: Richard Oxenburgh
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes

GV's sheltered workshop in Sydney. People from psychiatric hospital working to rehabilitate themselves. Staging post while awaiting a job.
Jeff warren working and interviewed about his work and where he came from (Morisset Psychiatric Hospital). He works for 90 cents per day in the workshop. He is looking for a job as a storeman somewhere.

GV's factory worker – Vince Calwell, 38, was in care for 6 years. He is assistant storeman. Wants to be a journalist. Interview Vince on what he has done today. Says he faced difficulties getting a job because he was seen as an *"outcast as it were"* because of being in psychiatric hospital *"oh you're just not wanted, sort of thing".*

GV's Len Hitchens, 64, mowing his lawn. Met Vince in hospital. Interview Len. What he does each day. Len fixing himself some dinner in kitchen *"My actual job in the house is, I do the cookin', and I go down and get the food, I set the table, do all the washing up, and then if there's any washing, wash the sheets, the only thing I don't do I don't do the ironing, they do that…..oh well, it's helpin' them anyhow, they're workin' hard, and when they come home they just don't like feel like getting' into cookin' tucker".*

He was in Morisset from December 1960, then went to Allenstown with nerves. Does not like taking all the pills, is worried about being addicted. He has been a cleaner all his working life *"If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well….happy go lucky, haven't got a care in the world nor a worry".* Preparing the meal.

Interview with Calwell in hospital for prolonged constipation. Doctor diagnosed him as a split personality. After his mum died he, *"tended to let me self go a bit'*. Has a deep friendship with Jeff in the workshop.

Exterior private hostel. Pays $13.00 per week board out of $16.00 per week pay. Interview Jeff. His father was an electrical engineer with the Clarence River county council. Could not live up to his father's expectations. He suffers from bad nerves. Attacked his mother and his father put him in Morisset. Says he hit is mother because he lost a card game. His mother again, and then he was charged with assault, sent off to Morisset. Did not hit his father *because "Possibly I thought he was too strong for me"* (smokes cigarette). His father left him in Morisset. Doctor's said he was okay to go out, but parents did not want him to come out. Vince is his only friend. Wants to get married *"A girl who would come to Morisset to see the other less fortunate people".*

GV's meeting. Jeff elected president of the psychiatric rehabilitation association's social club. Vince – sect; Len – vice pres; GV's members at meeting.

Interview Jeff. Has a job now too.

Members greeting each other. Will stay with Vince. Game of bingo in progress. Jeff reads numbers. Jeff at Anzac Day parade – his first since 1948. He was in air force during WWII. Jeff and others in Hyde Park, Sydney. Interview about Vince. How he helped them integrate. Interview Vince on Jeff *"He wasn't a bad bloke!"* Their first firm friendship, look after each other. Off to the footy.

The words of ex-psychiatric patients tell their stories of mental illness, exclusion, institutionalisation and their attempts to re-enter society through halfway houses and monitored medication. All reveal their need to create happy and meaningful lives for themselves into the future. Challenges mental health care practices at the time.

GV's footy game. Manly vs. Balmain at Sydney Cricket Ground. Jeff and Vince in crowd. Jeff and Vince playing cards.

Interview Max and Laurel Levite and Ron Nicholls all live in the house together. Interview Ron. Interview Lowell and Max on why he went to Morisset – had a breakdown. Max is looking for a job. Working in the Newcastle sheltered workshop. Max is happy there. He earns $25.00 per fortnight income. He says he is happy the way things are.

Exterior halfway house. Laurel making cake and pikelets. Interview Laurel on living circumstances. She is happy too. GV's wedding presents. Still wrapped, *"Keep them for a special occasion".* Christmas dinner party. People were opposed to their marriage and having a family. Her mother died and father left the five children. He father was also in a psychiatric hospital before he hit her mother. She is not worried about her children having psychiatric problems. Had to meet Max in secret.

Bar-b-q Sydney ex-patients at hospital.

Interview Max and Laurel about how they got married. No relations of Laurel's went to wedding. Married in city mission in Newcastle (non-denominational) in the chapel. Was given wedding dress, veil from smith family. Max's suit from the mission.

GV's lawn bowls game – ex-patients playing.

Society's acceptance of marriage between former psychiatric patients is challenged here with Max and Laurel's marriage highlighted

Series 1: Episode 13 *A palace, a fortress, a tomb* 45'53"
15/7/1969
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Neil Munro Reporter: Gilly Coote
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

Aerial views Montsalvat buildings, gardens, artist colony near Melbourne. GV's families enter Montsalvat gate, older women leaning on gate as family (tourists) enter.

CU interview Mrs. Schipher talks about living on the property. She calls it a dictatorship. Her husband was the Melbourne editor of The Bulletin for many years and she says their China correspondent. *"I think most of the controlling of Montsalvat came from him* (Jorgensen), in relation to the children at Montsalvat *"They sat around the table at night listening to him".*

Panning shot group walks through the buildings, tourist's guide.

Interview MS tour guide. She originally came up to help in 1935. She was his pupil (Jorgensen*) "everyone had to work that was the reason they were allowed here".*

GV's tourists in and around buildings and gardens.

Interview Matcham, son of Mrs. Schipher, about living at Montsalvat. Tourist around. Difficulties involving tourists to keep the place running.

Ws buildings and surrounding gardens. Tourist checking the place out.

Interview Mr. Monday. The great hall built by Jorgensen and his pupils. He talks about Jorgensen's philosophies. Give an example of the controversy that surrounded it. Issues of being labelled a nudist colony he says are untrue, also that they were not a free love colony *"not really, I don't think so….not any more than other communities are".*

The Great Hall to be the place of a wedding.

GV's rock and roll music, party inside the Great Hall that night. Spanish dancing exhibition. GV's tourist in the grounds.

interview with Miss Gibbet. She is shy, but stays in the background as much as possible *"we live very cheaply".* She looks after Jorgensen.

Interview Jorgensen *"the master of Montsalvat"* speaks about what Montsalvat means to him *"well its just an idea as a sort of a dreamer architecturally, I wanted to build myself according to Phillip II of Spain "a palace in which to live, a fortress in which to defend, and a tomb in which I will eventually be buried". "When I started to build up here, I decided that I would like to see how all sorts of people would mix together,"* he says.

GV's exteriors Montsalvat. Jorgensen walking around grounds. Interview continues. Building continuing as interview continues.

MS interivew about living at Montsalvat. The honouring of Jorgensen as *"the master".* Talks about bringing up children at Montsalvat. Good, many animals, room to play etc. GV's children feeding donkeys. Interview with twin boys.

MS Timothy working. Matcham into building workshop. Matcham makes his jewellery. Tim working at jewellery making. Matcham says he owns nothing except his equipment.

Those living at Monsalvat tell their stories of their involvement and work to build and develop the artist colony under the guidance of artist Justus Jorgensen. Shows an alternative lifestyle challenging societies accepted structure, defacto relationships, and belief systems.

Jorgensen's words explain his reason for building Montsalvat

Talks about the frictions living there; about not being married to his wife; about Jorgensen as a man *"essentially I think he's a fairly cold sort of man, and very focussed on his architecture and I don't think that he really likes people very much. I think he can't bare a sort of situation that he isn't manipulating and you know, he walks over a scrap heap of materials and he's thinking, you know, what can I do with this, what sort of order can I create in all of this, and if he meets people, he thinks he sees their lives as really a possibility of using them to do something for hiMSelf. I think in this way he might have fallen down as a teacher….I think he was interested in teaching them his beliefs, and his methods, and his ideas"* Matcham felt rebellious about things when he was young.

Interview two boys about how they see themselves, are they average – twins – they talk about their father, brother, about being famous, on media report about the group.

GV's spot welding. Marcus, Matcham's son interview with Marcus. His father being dominant – what was it like growing up at Montsalvat *"it was good, it was free".* Talks about marriage "his father was against marriage, he was going against his father's belief. Talks about problems between his wife and his father *"I find myself standing up for it all the time when someone's around* (Montsalvat) – *all those arty bums up there".* He sees Jorgensen as a Christ-like figure up there, but he is not a disciple *"no, not my family, the other people mainly hang around and say 'old Jorgy's a genius' and all that sort of stuff".*

MS Jorgensen upstairs into gallery studio. Interview on opening up private gallery to public for $5.00 or so to show how his painting is done. GV's painting – self-portraits.

Questioned about the difficulties of being a dictator. He says *"well the point of the thing is you never know you are a dictator you see, and you think clearly, you think that that's how thing should be, and then you find out that people don't seem to all together agree with you, and that shouldn't be like that at all".* Talks about his marriage.

The woman "Helen" who now looks after Jorgensen interrupts interview. She objects to the questions being asked, but does not want to answer questions herself. Helen continues to object to the kinds of questions regarding who dominates whom in their relationship. Helen says the questions being asked of Jorgensen were *"trying to reduce Jorge to a completely conventional thing, you were, you have right form the beginning of your interviews here, tried to reduce the whole thing to a completely conventional common place relationship"*

Jorgensen interrupts saying, *"don't talk about it anymore, for god's sake!"*

"I will!" Helen says.

Helen becomes incensed with Jorgensen and the interviewing process. The interview is cut short.

Montage interview segments talking on their views on marriage, or no marriage and whether Montsalvat will continue. They do not believe it will because the children do not feel the same way as those that built it.

Jorgensen suggest epitaph *"I'd like to say that I had a lot of patience, and I was wishing reason to prevail….but then, I suppose everybody would say that"*

Aerial shots Montsalvat with Helen's voiceover saying, *"I assure you Jorgen, you are giving away our fortune to these people for a cheap-jack thing on Chequerboard".*

Their words reveal undercurrents of dissention; a realisation that what might have been appears to be now only a series of lost dreams and good

Confronting reality head-on, the words of Jorgensen reveal the single-mindedness of a driven man to achieve his radical architectural and social ideal, and his belief that all should think and believe as he. Not only this, but the words reveal his seeming ambivalence and puzzlement that not everyone thinks as he does.

Jorgensen's carer vehemently shows a dedication, love, and loyalty not only to the man, but also to protecting and defending the ideal of Montsalvat.

Series 2: Episode 14 *The same dose of treatment* 49'03"
17/2/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Russell Toose Reporter: Iain Finlay
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

Group of social workers talk to three people Paula (unmarried mother), Ted (businessman0, Karl (migrant), with same problem - loneliness.

ECU Paula interview. Could not discuss women's issues wit her mother. No answers from the convent either. She was sent there after stealing money – her mother called the police. CU to ECU *"I had to go away, be put in a home".* Her mother called the police before speaking to Paula. She was put in a detention home with barred windows for a few weeks *"then I went to the convent after that for four years…..I wasn't allowed to read anything except religious subjects".* The lives of the saints and the scriptures. Others there were *"very old ladies, mentally retarded girls, and physically deformed people".* Paula says her life is "still messed up" because the convent treatment distorted her development. ECU *"yes, it was distorted 'cause it's still messing up my life now".* She says she cannot communicate with men. She was 28 years old when she first slept with a man. She became pregnant with twins, but was unable to tell the man, that she wanted him to stay. Instead, she told him to go away. He went back to England. ECU says she has written and sent photos, but no answer has come. CU Paula with 2 years old twins (boy/girl). Ws exterior Paula with children feeding ducks. GV's Paula at home having a cup of tea along at home. ECU says she want "*a happy home life"* most…*"my own little family around me".* Says she is still cautious with men. Does not want to get hurt again. Cannot contemplate casual relationship (sex only) needs more substance *"the right sort of man, not just anybody, but just the right sort".* Says she became involved in this program *because, "mainly because I want these things to be known, I like people to be aware of what's going on because I think the more you know about people, and the more things you are aware of, the more you can understand people, and also yourself, and also it gives me a lot of confidence in myself as well, because I'm getting a lot of things off my chest".*

ECU interview Ted – his wife ordered him to tell his mother to leave their home. The mother was very ill but did so anyway, "she packed a few things in a case and she walked out of the gate and into middle of the road and she collapsed in the middle of the road. And I started to run to her any my wife, said if you go to her I'll scream, and I ran to her and she screamed and people came running out of their doors. That to me was a very very big disillusionment and felt completely ashamed of her". He has been married for one and a half years at the time. His mother went to live with one of his sisters. His wife became domineering in every way. This affected the intimate relationship – he believes his wife did not enjoy sex – he many have been to soft he says. He believes his loneliness stems from the lack of communication within his marriage. He does not want a divorce, because his wife has been the only woman he has been intimate with, he says his mother told him 'look Ted, I know you've put up with a lot, but she's the only woman you've ever known".

These stories reveal the effects of loneliness on different people living in the city, and how they came to be in their situation.

Their words reveal their anguish and struggle to regain their lives and a sense normalcy, home, and family.

Challenges society's acknowledg ement of those who, for whatever reason are separated from accepted social structures and conventions.

He said he hopes the effect of this program on TV *"could have possibly the effect that I would hope in that it might just be the thing that we need to just bring things back into the right perspective".*

ECU Ted speaks regarding 'Karel'. Karel disappeared before being interviewed for the program.

ECU Paula speaks about 'Karel', says Karel was hard to contact.

Reporter knocks on door of dwelling, camera filming, man opens the door, reporter asks for Karel, the man says Karel left about three weeks prior. ECU he says, *"The landlady might know".* CU reporter questions the property owner around the corner about Karel. *ECU "he left and he didn't say where he was going about a fortnight ago I think it was".* CU property owner again. GV's photo of Karel is shown around.

CU Karel reading newspaper. He said he was not sure the chequerboard interview was still going ahead, and he had to leave where he was staying because he could not pay the rent. He needed to move right away. His real name is Karel Kricik. He says he has not has a stable *background "I'm a drifter, I am frightened of it".* He says this is hard for him to admit. MCU Karel making up a cup of tea at home and listening to the radio. ECU interview. He has not had many happy times he *says "five years ago I began to feel loneliness"…*when he broke up with his wive he became desperate and lost his children as well. He shows photos of his children and talks about them especially 'Stephen'. *"I love him so much".* He has five children but never sees them now*. "What would be the good of it?"*

Karel speaks about Paula's loneliness. Says she needs *"someone who makes her feel like a women".* About Ted, he says, *"Ted needs the same",* and *"I need the same"* he says.

GV's Karel meets with Ted and Paula in home for coffee. They sit around table talking about what they have been doing.

ECU Ted, *"I understand their feelings…we more or less help each others"*

ECU Paula says she wants emotional security.

ECU Karel.

ECU Ted, says he does not like being he dominated figure.

ECU Karel, he says shifting = loneliness. He says he is forced to shift.

ECU Paula says *"I think if you change too often, or if changes are too drastic, you can lose yourself".*

Series 2: Episode 16 *My brown skin baby, they take him away* (Part 1) 52'15" 17/2/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Bill Steller Reporter: David Roberts
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

Bob Randall speaking to audience in a hall about Aboriginal women losing their babies to "the white man". CU Bob Randall singing a song he wrote, *"My brown skin baby they take 'im away"*. GV's Aboriginal babies filmed alone and intercut with Randall singing his song.

CU Randall speaking about his song writing. "My brown…" is his own story. *"Everything in that song really happened,"* he says. Moreover, mothers tried to hide their babies from the authorities.

GV's Aboriginal children marching into school in western clothing.

Interviewer David Robert's narration explains the government policy to take Aboriginal babies from their mothers (the first time this issue is raised in media). Narration over footage of Darwin streets/people.

GV's Bob Randall and his family in supermarket shopping with is wife, then; chasing pigs. (He was a gardener, driver at hospital, then administration job with mission, then a job with airways, now he is a gardener again with the welfare department. He wanted to be a social worked, but his education held him back (although some of the white social workers told him that he had not matriculated either). GV's Randall at his home in town which he rents out. He lives at his country house. GV's Randall at home singing "my brown…". GV's whites and Aboriginals singing and dancing in hotel. Randall mingling with people at the hotel. CU Randall interview says no does not drink, smoke, or gamble. He says, *"I try to practice what I read….I think it's because I live by the power of the bible".*

CU Randall speaks about the effects of civilisation on Aboriginal people, how there's *"two sets of clothing",* one for on the mission stations, and another for in town (Darwin).

CU Randall praying the Lord's Prayer at lunch with family around large table. Randall talks about the foster children he has with his family. MCU Mrs. Randall speaks about her children helping prepare the daily meal. CU Randall talks about how he got his name – he thinks his father's name was *"Randall something"… "So they kept Randall and they just put bob on it,"* he says. He says, *"all contact was broken, absolutely broken" with his real family once he was taken away…no record was kept of where we were from even; it was a complete break away from our family".* CU Randall speaks about lack of education and living on Rocker Island, then moving to Darwin. CU Randall speaks about meeting his wife. His wedding, *"nice big wedding, lots of food to eat".* Methodist wedding. She was also taken away from her mother, from Aileron near Alice Springs. Bob was taken from Conneston Station area, nearby.

Issues of relatives marrying each other due to the lack of record taking when babies were removed. Bob says, *"From what me and Amy (his wife) know now, she and I are distant cousins, we could have been brother and sister, we wouldn't have known".*

The words of Robert Randall in song and interview tell not only his personal story, but also the story of many, many, aboriginal children taken from their mother's as part of the Australian government's aboriginal policy at the time.
The words and images combine to reveal the resultant anguish and pain caused by such decisions so long ago, and which still echo today.
The lack of correct record keeping has affected aboriginal families, family structure, and personal relationships, and as Randall's words reveal familial ties were severed, sometimes never to be rekindled.

Bob and his family packing up a Holden car for the trip to Aileron, near Alice Springs meeting her mother at the camp. How difficult it was speaking in pigeon English. CU Florry, Amy's cousin, also going to Aileron to meet her mother for the first time. GV's the family sets off in the Holden car.

CU Amy interview. Speaking about her mother being found at Aileron Station. Ws car down outback road. Cut to bob singing another of his songs. CU's Amy and Florry, and Bob and the children in the car intercut with bob singing *"Who am I, what am I".*

WS car down outback road. CU Bob singing. Interior car, Amy and Florry humming the song. Bob singing, Amy and Florry join in singing.

Arriving Aileron Station, greeted by family members. Florry meets her mum for the first time; Amy introduces her mum, sister and dad. Florry's mum Rubi (she is shy and silent), meets grandson (he's reluctant), Florry sits with Rubi. Florry is overcome with emotions. Florry is awkward, shy, and has difficulty speaking about how she feels meeting her Aboriginal mother.

ECU Amy says her first meeting with her mother was the same *"quiet"*; she speaks to Florry's mother Rubi, in pigeon English. Rubi says she is happy to meet Florry and grandson (he is very blond and shy). GV's mission activities.

Bob shows around the mission which has not running water, the dame is half a mile away (drums are used to carry water). Aboriginal women see fetching water. Aboriginals in mission. Cu bob interview on trying to get group interested enough to apply for loan to help. MS cooking damper on campfire.

GV's Amy speaking pigeon. Amy talks with mother about living together maybe, maybe not.

CU Amy says communications is difficult, *"Well I don't speak Arunta, I try and speak to them in pigeon English".*

MS Aboriginal men and women sing *"Oh little town of Bethlehem"* in Arunta. Sitting on ground outside in sun. The collection is taken in an old hat. Lutheran minister prays in Arunta with same group. Panning shot Aboriginals praying.

Interview CU Eric, preacher, he went to Hermannsburg to be a preacher, has been preaching for four years, the congregation collection pay him, he does not know how old he is, his is also Florry's brother. GV's mission activities, children with unkempt hair.

GV's Florry sits with relative, *says, "It seems very strange, I didn't expect anything like this...well I thought they would live in little cottages, not in humpies like this…I think they are only fit for dogs to sleep in, not for people to live in",* CU Ruby (shy). MCU Eric speaks. Florry's dad's name was George Nicholls, a friend of Rubi's.

ECU interview Florry *says, "Won't be staying here".* He little boy was *"very frightened"…he doesn't want to stay here".* Florry feels sorry for her relatives. ECU Florry's face. ECU Florry says, *"Yes I'm happy, it wouldn't like to have been brought up like this".*

Bob interviewed on conditions – explains Aboriginal people need to be where they do not need to *"trade their will for what the European way of life is".* He explains, *"Trade their will" as self-expressions.* ECU Eric says Christianity is difficult for aboriginals.

Bob Randall talks about Eric's work to bring Christianity to Aboriginal people. GV's Aboriginal mother and children in camp. Children playing. No school in camp. Bob says aboriginal people *feel "now as just people forgotten, more than outsiders".* GV's bob singing at night around campfire, group of people listening. The song is *"Black velvet my darling".* ECU Aboriginal women and men's faces in the fire light. Bob singing until the end of scene. Faces of Amy and Florry as well.

This episode challenges the government's moves to separate aboriginal mother and child, family and relationships issues, and questions why it was necessary at the time.

Sequences reveal the influence of the Lutheran Missions on the aboriginal families. Questions and challenges the cumulative effect on aboriginal culture. Highlights through its images the immense cultural and social differences that remain between traditional aboriginal life and that now of their children raised in the white man's society.

Sequences show the return to Aileron Station of Florry and Amy and their meeting with their family members. Communication is extremely difficult because of language barriers.

Series 2: Episode 17 *Who am I, what am I* (Part 2) 41'37"
10/3/1970
(this episode is the second part of *My brown skin baby…*")
Producer: Tom Manefield
Director: Bill Steller Reporter: David Roberts
Ass. Producer: Robin Hughes Cameraman: Geoff Burton

MCU Bob Randall and family travelling in car singing "Who am I, what am I". VS travelling views. CU Randall in car while driving on way to Aileron *"no I found my father and he told me that my mother died soon after they took me away from her".*

CU interview Amy about locating her family. CU interview Florry, she just smiles and says she is apprehensive about meeting her mother.

GV's WS Randall's car into aileron. The family meet under a tree.

GV's Amy and family members hug each other.

WS Forry with her son.

MCU Florry with son (blond hair), meeting with her family, her mother is not there yet.

MCU Amy introduces her mother and her sister Beryl, and Aunty Peggy and Aunty Maggie, then her father.

WS Florry's son remains "stand offish" not sure of things, he is also apprehensive.

CU Florry is embraced by her mother Ruby, who wraps her arms around her and holds her close.

CU Ruby's husband, Tommy (he is blind), stands with Ruby and Florry. They all stand silently close together.

CU Florry encourages her young son to say hello to his grandmother, but he twists away and does not speak.

ECU Florry speaks about meeting her mother for the first time. Florry *says, "Are you happy to see me?"* to her mother. Her mother says *"Yes"* very quietly. They are both smiling all the while.

CU Ruby says, *"That's mine",* and gently touches Florry and Florry's son.

CU Amy asks the boy to look up and say hello to ruby. He does not.

Ws their family sit around in a group under the shade of a tree. Ruby and Florry share a chair, Amy sits on another chair.

WS Aboriginal campsite, dwellings. Interview Randall talks about the living conditions, says *"we've got the old army type of thing, my aunties and uncles that carry the water down here, fill up the bucket and pull up the rope with the holes in the bucket….just to make some sort of a shower".*

GV the campsite. Randall explains the station people look after the Aboriginal families *"they have all the responsibility, they're might people, they've got very little to work with and other duties besides the people. They people live on the fringe of the station here, on the station land, but just borrowing it, even though it's their own tribal land".*

Randall shows some of the dwellings built by the Lutheran Church. Making damper on coal fire. MCU interview Amy speaks about what it means to her to find her people *"when I first met up with them, i was glad to see them all and to hear that they were still alive".*

With her quietly spoken words "That's mine", and gentle touch, Florry's aboriginal mother Ruby reveals that the timeless bond between mother and child remains unbroken even after their devastating separation many, many years before. They recognise each other and are able to communicate not through words so much, but through a look, a smile, a touch.

Interview Amy's mother, tells about when her other daughter's were taken away, and that Amy's father was a white man from Queensland, however, he did not stay. Amy's sister, dolly, was also his. Beryl's father was Paddy, her husband. Amy's mother wants her to live with her. ECU Amy, Paddy. ECU interview Amy. GV's group aboriginals sitting on ground dressed in European/western clothes singing in Arunta *"Oh come all yee faithfull"*, in outdoor church service. Aboriginal lay minister. They collection hat is passed around; the people give what they can. A prayer is given *"The Lord's Prayer"* in Arunta. Panning shot of gathering. ECU interview with lay preacher who learnt to preach at Hermannsburg. Says he's Florry's brother. GV's campsite, children playing, Florry and her family. She says, *"It's been very strange"* meeting her relatives. *ECU "I thought they would live in little cottages, not in humpy's like this".* ECU Ruby (very shy, whispering answers to Florry) about how many children she had. ECU Ruby appears highly embarrassed at being questioned about Florry's father (a white truck driver). ECU Florry says her son *"was very frightened, he didn't see anything like this before".* ECU Florry, says about her father, *"I didn't know, him, so it didn't worry me".* ECU Florry says, *"now that I've met them, I feel a bit sorry for them living like this".* ECU Florry says, *"No, I was brought up a European, and I always will think that way".* ECU Florry says, *"Yes, I'm happy, I wouldn't like to be brought up like this".* ECU Florry *says, "Yes, I'm thankful that I was taken away".* GV's Ws Randall and Eric (preacher) walk through main camp at Aileron. CU Randall interviews about conditions at camp, water etc. Randall says he would like to help the people at Aileron, *"that's been my life's dream and answer if I could do something for them…I'd like to come here and if it was financially possible, live amongst them how to give them ideas how to make it much easier to them, and short cuts to a better and happier life".* Overlay of women, children, and babies. Randall continues speaking on how the Aboriginals at aileron perceive themselves *"Just people forgotten, more than outsiders".* GV's Randall singing *"Black velvet"* around campfire. ECU different Aboriginal faces sitting around listening.	Florry's words reveal her confusion and disbelief at how her family live and the effect of meeting his grandmother on her young son who, as he has been brought up in Darwin, has never experienced anything like it before. The episode, like part one, questions the right and wrong of the government's actions and reveals the confusion felt by those affected.

Series 2: Episode 20 *At Londonderry* 41'53" 31/3/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: Peter Grose
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Geoff Burton

GV's children play with dog in country scene, a hot summer's day, dirt road, ramshackle dwellings nearby.

MS a woman (Mrs. Carroll) sweeping floor, children lying on bed in house, mother speaks about how they sleep in two few beds. Father holding youngest, talks about few pieces of furniture, explains about lack of electricity, broken power points.

MCU mother explains crowded sleeping arrangements for children – one bed for several – father (who is deaf) talks about problem with wall in house.

Into another room with one bed for more children.

Mother in kitchen (child on her hip) speaks about dangerous power points in house, no sewerage, no water to house, explains she has seven children.

CU another mother (related to Mrs. Carroll) breastfeeding outside during the interview, children playing with tap water, buckets, to keep cool and have some fun, children laughing and playing together, playing footy, young mother breastfeeding during interview again, she explains she has been deserted by her husband. Interview with 15 year old girl about how she affords makeup (from friends), young mother doesn't expect the father of her child to return, but she's not worried at all, living from day-to-day, young girl asked what she'll do in future, she *says "I don't know".*

WS shots of children playing with water tap on hot day again.

Interview with Mrs. Carroll about her past and her upbringing. Says her father came out of the army and bought a small farm, not able to afford a place to live, just scratching along.

CU interview Mr. Carrol about his past and his upbringing (being deaf his wife, speaks close to his ear and asks him the question) – tough life, father left mother with children, was poor, he has been poor all his life, itinerant work, he says it's *"a good life".* He was adopted. He has not worked for six years. He is 38. Mrs. Carroll is 37.

Question: why did you have so many children?

CU Mrs. Carroll says, *"I think it just runs in the family".* She says she does not believe in abortion because she is Roman Catholic. She does not believe in taking the pill. Her daughter is expecting a baby that month as well. She was annoyed with her daughter, but got over it, she says.

MCU interview with daughter again about her baby. She want a girl, is looking forward to the birth, and she has left school.

MS Mrs. Wilson carries water to her house. Mrs. Wilson works on a car outside. Small infant drinking out of a can.

MS interview with Mr Wilson about being a mechanic, what is he driving presently. He says he is working on his own car. Talks about working as an itinerant (picking peas, oranges, potatoes etc) only stead job as a labourer, cook. He says he was unable to continue because it *"got him down".*

Brings to light the issue of poverty in Australian society in 1970. The stories of two poverty-stricken families are reveals through their words as well as images of how they live and struggle to survive from day to day.

Questions and challenges beliefs that poverty no longer exists in Australia at the time. Suggests that where there is one or two families living in poverty, they are probably many more. Looks at the reasons behind why people become poverty-stricken and how they cope with little or nothing.

MS Mrs. Wilson (her hair in curlers, in a shift dress) goes into house, empties water from bucket into saucepan on fireplace, peels potatoes at table, children hanging around house, CU she is interviewed – no running water in house, she carries water for all uses, taking bather in small metal tub, (5 children share beds), toilet pan emptied by her husband *"out the back",* the garbage too. They burn it on good days. Rats in kitchen. Her father was a seasonal worker, trapping rabbits, fruit, travelling around, caravan, cherry picking, Went to school until she was 14 ½, cu says *"learnt myself to read out of that"* (a comic book). Says she taught herself to read that way.

Reveals how ingenuity and necessity turned copper wire into bread.

She has lost track of her eldest daughter. He husband of 11 years came from Redfern. Lived in a tent, he went *"off to Gunnedah"* fruit picking. She lives near her mum now. Her husband was putt off from Riverstone meatworks also. He is not working now. *"We're living on what we got out' a the potatoes last weekend",* selling scrap copper wire at Blacktown in Sydney. She says she took 3 pound (about 1/12 kilo) of copper wire and got 40 cents/pound for it = $1.20. She spends it on day-old bread. She buys it at 30 cents a loaf, this week she bought 10-12 loaves. Otherwise, she says, they might get $25/week for whatever work is around. She gets about $138.00 every three months in endowment.

CU she talks about what her children had for breakfast (her hair still in curlers), toast, Wheatbix *"then they back up on bread 'n jam"* she says with a grin. Dinner is tinned spaghetti on toast. Baked potatoes for tea tonight. She had her teeth fixed with a plate 15 years ago, but they broke, never had them fixed. She has 7 children and one on the way. Cannot afford the $3.00/month for the pill, does not like it anyway. She does not want any more kids *"we'll do somethin' this time I think"* she says with a grin. She is 29 years old.

MS GV's night time – bath time in tub for children by the light of a kerosene lamp – hot water into tub – baby takes first bath, then the other children in turn to the eldest – all in the same water.

MS GV's baked potatoes served for dinner, kids around table (room dimly lit by kerosene lamp), using spoons only – bread and jam for *"afters",* baby refuses this food.

MS interview with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson together about new coming baby. Mr.Wilson talks about parents – they worked on main roads as labourers, *"never actually starved, or went without",* he was not interested in what was at school that is, mathematics etc. He worked as a storeman and packer, lost his job, and then a succession of jobs followed, upset at losing his favourite dog on the street, he had had him for 9 years.

CU Mrs. Wilson says, *"as I said before, we've been down, right down in the dumps before, and we've come up again, and we'll probably do it again".*

CU Mr. Wilson says the thing that would help is a *"regular weekly wage".* Seasonal work is hard.

MS the children are put to bed, again by the light of the kerosene lamp.

Astounding graphic images. Like a scene out of a Charles Dicken novel, the family go about their evening meal and nighttime baths for the children by the light of a kerosene lamp.

Mrs. Wilson's words reveal a stoic resolve not to buckle in the face of poverty.

Series 2: Episode 25 *All my memories are in Newtown* 40'08"
5/5/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: John Power
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Geoff Burton

MS Mrs. Tomlinson walks dog to soon-to-be reclaimed land for building the Sydney Teacher's College. Interview about affecting her home. About houses possibly being demolished in streets nearby as well.

GV's she goes inside her previous residence to show the vandalism inside, says she is scared.

GV's at home, making tea and toast. Ceiling damaged, water leakages, catching drips from bathroom above. Apologises for the place being a bit untidy. Her husband's ashes in special basked on lounge chair. Upstairs to bathroom to view ceiling damage is cause for demolition next door. Uses makeshift rake to remove leaves from guttering to clear downpipe as she leans out the window to do so.

GV's she shows family photo. Interview about moving on to unit accommodations, she cannot take much with her *"I'm already to go".* A lovely black cat arrives on the bed *"this is my pet";* she cannot take her dog or cat with her.

CU talks about what happened to all her neighbours, they have all moved on. She is waiting for a court order to get a housing commission house. She is waiting to be evicted. What she wants is, *"at my age, and on my own, I want to be considered too...I want to be left in the city where I've got all my own interests, my companions, and near transport, my own doctor, and so forth, I belong to the welfare centre…I play bowls…I might just as well die if I haven't got an interest".* She says. *"I am alone"* – her pets are her children.

CU Mrs. Crocker, 74 years old and from originally from Scotland is another elderly woman packing up her belongings in order to move out of home. She cannot live with her daughter because there is too many steps. She has lived in this home for 47 years. Interview with her, *"You've still got your memories haven't you?"* Says she does not want to be evicted. Worried about being disorientated. GV's Newtown streets. The two women walk arm in arm down street near shops, chatting as they go. In to tearoom, other elderly women around table having meals. Mrs. Crocker says, *"I live for the centre".*

MS another elderly lady says, "*You can all go to buggery!"*

MS GV's elderly ladies view flatette at back of house. Mrs. Cooper likes her new *"digs".* She can also bring her bird. It is $15.00/fortnight rent and her pension is $34.00 per fortnight. However, she wants to stay in city amongst friends.

GV's demolished houses, vacant land. Another elderly woman speaks on being evicted *"because me heart won't take it".* She has had a bad heart for three years. Wants to be close to doctors, cannot climb up stairs. All her friends are there, cu she says *"notices to quit, they've all got 'em".* Says she's going to the courts *"I'll go when I've got a thousand pound and not before...put that in your pipes and smoke it!...I'll fight 'em".*

Issues of displacement and urban development. Follows the stories of several elderly women who have lived in Newtown, an inner Sydney suburb, all their lives. They are being forcibly evicted to make way for the building of a Teacher's College. The women fear for their futures and have already begun to feel disoriented.

Series 3: Episode 27 *Well worth the effort* 44'25"
29/9/1970
Producer: Robin Hughes Reporter: Richard Oxenburgh
Director: Russell Toose

WS pregnant woman walks down street towards camera, then into home. Brings cradle into nursery room.

ECU interview with young mother-to-be about becoming pregnant, what her family thing.

MS breathing practice with Malcolm, her husband, he says he will be there for the birth.

Jane explains birth contraction practice. ECU Malcolm talks about becoming a father. ECU Jane. They are concerned about the world today. Both left university because they could not afford to continue, but want to return.

ECU Malcolm on how he will feel as a father, says he *"has absolutely no idea, I just can't put myself in the future to that extent at all".*

They say they believe in the father being there at the birth from the very binning, and then there is bound to be more involvement later on. Malcolm has felt the baby kicking.

GV's another family with another mother-to-be, Helen, going into their home, sits down in lounge room, discusses the immanent birth.

CU interview with mother of pregnant woman about her involvement in the process. She went to a fertility clinic after having no success for about 7 years. He father says he is very happy for a healthy grand child.

GV's the baby's room, and clothes.

Helen wants to be on her own at the birth.

Interview with her husband on how they met in a country town.

GV's hospital nursery, maternity ward, mum's-to-be in hospital. Jane is in for induction.

GV's car into hospital car park. Jane and family come for check-up.

Helen goes in to see her doctor on her own.

Exterior shots of hospital.

Helen advised she has to wait another week.

GV's Jane in maternity ward with nurses.

GV's Helen in delivery ward at 5.15 am. She is having contractions, needs gas.

GV's Jane having contractions with midwife nearby. Jane's husband nearby also.

Interview with doctor on patient's conditions and procedures with older mothers (e.g. Helen is in her 30s).

GV's Jane with husband and midwives, birthing (strangely quiet, no noises, or screaming) Jane gives birth, the baby cries. Still peaceful and strangely quiet in room.

ECU Jane and Malcolm smile at each other, hold each other's hand. Midwives prepare the little girl and hand over to Jane. Midwives place baby in crib and take to nursery.

Helen in delivery room, doctors and nurses. Baby is born, a little girl, midwives prepare baby, baby cry's, Helen sees her baby, this it is taken to nursery.

GV's Helen's husband waits. He sees his baby through the nursery window.

Jane is now in the ward; her baby is brought in. ECU baby.

ECU Helen and her baby *"She was well worth the effort, I think".*

New ideas about birth are examined following two couples, one a young university couple and the other an older middle aged couple both expecting their first child. Looks at the different involvements of the fathers and what each mother expects of him during the birth. The younger opts for a silent birth with the father present, while the older chooses the more traditional birth process where the father sees his child after the event, in the hospital nursery. Challenges social conventions and promotes choice at least.

Series 3: Episode 28 *A part of life* 49'00" 6/10/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: Robin Hughes
Director: Tom Manefield
Ass.Prod: Robin Hughes

GV's hospital activities. GV's female patient leaves hospital room, farewells nurses, walks out on husbands arm into life.

MS child returns home from school greets mother in kitchen, hugs and kisses. ECU child's face as she talks to her mother just home from hospital. MS same. MS other schoolchildren say hello through the kitchen window, they are smiling. Little boy and girl greet mother also in kitchen; kiss their mother *"hello love"* says the mother. Ecu children's faces. MCU mother and children.

MS father speaks to children about taking mother out to football on weekend. Children smile. MS and GV's father collecting wood for fire, brings into lounge near mother. ECU mother. MCU Father as he sets fire. MS Mother begins knitting.

ECU mother interviewed, talks about children and talking with them about cancer. Important to send money to cancer fund, money not flowers, she says, then ECU of her as she is asked, *"What does death mean to you?"* ECU *"passing from this world to the next I suppose…I go to heaven when I die and that's it".*

She has discussed the issues with her children in preparation for death. She is glad to know how long she has to live. Has experienced unkind doctors. Her doctor is very good now. She is 45 years old and suffering bone cancer. She has had *"a marvellous life"* she has been to Lourdes in France, then Ireland. She did not expect a miracle *"I wasn't that bad…I prayed so much for everyone…my thoughts were on the children".*

Being Irish she explains, she is used to seeing death; it is a cultural thing she says. People die at home, wake, and go from home to be buried. MCU husband comes into stoke fire and talks.

CU husband on what he feels now about wife's cancer. ECU he cooks boiled eggs. ECU both talk about life changes, how he is cooking, washing, taking children to school etc. MCU wife, ECU wife talking about her husband. ECU talking about what happens after she goes. ECU she says she does not want sympathy.

GV's two women shopping for house furnishings, wallpaper etc. MCU's same.

Ecu upholsterer's chisel working fabric away from chair fixture. MCU upholsterer at work. ECU female upholsterer the same. Ws same in room.

ECU interview with shorthaired women, she is a nurse with Hodgkin's disease. She diagnosed her own condition. It is in her lymph glands, she has had it for 2 years, and she has had radiotherapy. Says all the bits fell into place for her. She is 26 years old. Says she has not accepted she has only 2 years to live. Uses all her good things now, does not keep them packed away. She did not tell her doctor, or her husband.

A revealing episode that examines the personal stories of people who are dying of cancer. In frank and matter-of-fact ways, they tell of their plans for death and what they expect will happen. Their families speak about their thoughts as well.
Opens up discussion about the often difficult subject of death, making it less confronting.

MS She did not tell anybody else *"there wasn't any point".* She could not tell anybody *"cause it didn't concern them"* into ECU. Not even her husband. ECU what does death mean to her *"mainly not being with John".* ECU is she religious *"only in my way".* ECU she says, *"This peace of mind that I've got goes beyond actually living".* She says you live on in the memory of others left behind.

Ws aircraft lands at airport. GV's tarmac activitiy.MS wife at airport. ECU wife's face watching.

Ws passengers across tarmac off plane. ECU wife's face. MS husband into terminal. MCU wife. MS husband again. MS they meet and embrace. They talk to car arm-in-arm. Together at home unpacking bags and talking in bedroom about life for husband in Mt. Isa. ECU husband says wife *"can't come back to the next one at Mt. Isa…we'll see what happens".*

GV's at seafood restaurant that night, they order meal. WS pier, at beach, walking hand-in-hand under pier with dog. ECU clasped hands. Ws husband with dog on sand. MCU interview with husband about his feelings about his wife's illness. ECU he says it is difficult for him to help her and to bolster his wife.

WS wife on sand walking, seaweed, fade in to focus on wife on beach. WS more of wife on beach (husband's voiceover).

ECU bespectacled man talks about having cancer. Had conflict within himself he says. He is a doctor. His kidneys are affected. Says he *"has had to face it head on"* being a doctor, he was more aware of his illness. Says, *"I feel liberated!"* Says he does not believe in god. Death to him, he says "is the end of me". He approached his illness rationally by self-analysis of deeper emotions and the conflict between that and the reality of his situation.

Ws walking through parkland, trees (voiceover of interview continues).

Series 3: Episode 29 *It can't last much longer* 51'31"
13/10/1970

Producer: Gilly Coote Reporter: David Roberts
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Bill Steller

Papua New Guinea man banging on metal bell. Another calls the roll.

Barry Blogg, PNG coffee planter, seen with PNG workers. Workers climb into back of truck that is driven away, they cheer. Travelling shot through village. Blogg voiceover saying the people have no conception of land ownership by others they *"don't quite get the idea that they haven't like sold the land and somebody else is living init and developing it".* He says the local people resent others coming in.

GV's workers packing coffee dressed in native and European clothes. Blogg explains to head man what needs to be done.

Interview Blogg. Says pickers paid on an incentive basis *"they get a bonus for better work, we are working a system where they get paid for three drums and then any drums over three, they get a bonus…..they seem to be quite happy with that….we've had one fellow made $1.50 a day which is not bade going".* The average was about $15.00 per month. The workers can bring their families on to the property he explains.

GV's car driving, interior car, Gus Costa in Rabaul, plantation manger/owner. He is interviewed while driving, Annie his wife, an islander, does the cleaning at plantation once a month.

Trying to start an engine, worker puts machine on back to try and start it again, it starts. Spraying coffee trees.

Interview Costa on the workers fixing the machinery. Rings bell, workers arrive. Speaks pigeon English, workers on to truck. Uses a *"boss boy"* to get work done as a go-between.

GV's at party Blogg and others (European dress, cigarette holders, dressed well) dinner drinks party. Wife, dinner dance, at pub, organ, dancing (whites only at dance). GV's party guests drinking and talking.

GV's street scene, native PNG in streets in native dress, white women shopping in supermarket.

GV's Mrs. Blogg at home with children, having a meal.

Interview Mrs. Blogg on schooling the children at boarding school. House man (PNG) helping out in home.

Annie Costa and two white women having tea talking about their art works and Annie's up coming exhibition. Annie and other women talk about the group in Rabaul. Annie is ready for trouble she says. Southerners seen as having misconceptions of life in png.

GV's Rabaul streets, Annie walking. Interview with Annie, says she is granddaughter of king of java in the British Solomon's; his name is Kamahaya*, "a very ferocious king".* Annie at food markets buying tomatoes. She talks about her upbringing and marrying Gus Costa. Talks about marrying a westerner.

GV's Annie with PNG gardener in garden, giving instructions. Doing pruning.

Examines the issue of impending PNG independence and what is to happen to those Australian's who have made their lives and livelihood in PNG. Looks at how they interact with the PNG people who work for them and investigates what the future might hold for both. Also looks at inter-racial marriages and what that means regarding the choices that need o be made by the plantation owners and their wives.

GV's Gus walking through garden to native house/hut, talks to PNG man, *"the idea is to keep 'em happy, if you keep 'em happy everybody's happy",* he chuckles. Says there is a need to him to keep the workers *healthy "if they're sick they are no good to you".*

PNG worker shovelling cocoa beans out of huge vat. GV's panning shot plantation.

Gus explains his plantation is through the soldier-settlement scheme. He explains the original loan was for twenty five thousand pound, made in three-month payments, slow returns, and eight years to get plantation up to 50 tons annually *"most memorable time was when the first cocoa pod came into the trees".*

PNG house boy serving dinner to Mr and Mrs. Costa at home and coffee later. Cost talks about houseboy and his duties.

Annie Costa says many planters are ready to walk off their places because of the native labour. Annie says she thinks the natives are starting to exploit the planters when asked if the natives are being exploited, she says *"at the moment".*

Gus thinks he will pull out in two years. Annie is keen to move out of PNG.

GV's native women with coffee beans at weighing point, men weighing buckets, PNG workers in native and western dress at bean processor.

Interview Blogg on obtaining his plantation of 700 acres. Says he started with 150 acres. Land ownership is an issue. Five years for his first coffee crop to come in.

GV's natives into village, gathering to be paid. Adding machine used. Money doled out.

Blogg sitting at outdoor lunch shed. Houseboy serves him a beer. He listens to coffee prices on ABC radio. Talks about prices, does not get enough with crops, may move on to cattle. Says he would *"hate to leave New Guinea".*

GV's PNG natives in school, timber work class. Mrs Blogg is teacher.

Asked does she ever think she is teaching Barry out of labour? She says *"not at this stage in Hagen, no".*

GV's exterior Mount Hagen primary school. Houseboy meets Blogg children, walks them home. GV's he walks hand in hand with the boys, they arrive home to mum. Mrs. Blogg, children and the houseboy drive off on trip. Ws car driving down mountain off into the distance.

Children playing in garden of grass house. Mr. And Mrs. Blogg having cup of tea at home. Interview Blogg on how pleasant the people are *"most friendly people".* Mr. Blogg says, *"I've discovered over the years that one of the best ways to spoil a good fellas work is to pay him more".* Mrs. Blogg agrees *"they do become spoiled and have a feeling that you are dependent upon them which makes them pretty well unmanageable".*

Mr. Blogg believes the natives are doing the exploiting. He is no worried about their future in PNG. Risks with independence? Mrs. Blogg says she is not sure if it will be tenable to stay in the place. It is a big worry. Mr. Blogg has done 15 years hard work; financially it would be a problem. They have been offered $100,000 for the place, but she says it is worth twice that she says.

GV's natives picking coffee and singing.

Series 3: Episode 30 *I don't like to look in the mirror* 39 35"
20/10/1970
Producer: Robin Hughes
Director: Russell Toose Reporter: Richard Oxenburgh

GV's night in the city, three men walk down sidewalk and into gym, change and being exercise work out with weights.

Bodybuilder tells how he examines himself.

Group of middle-aged women sing in meeting room. Weight Watchers weighing-in, playing tunnel ball at meeting.

Woman speaking about being in weight watchers, she loves it.

Family (middle class) eating around table. Son is worried about his father's drinking. Father disagree's (migrant) thinks it is okay to have a drink. Mother (migrant) says preparing meals is difficult. Son needs special diet, vitamins for bodybuilding. Grandfather encourages bodybuilding. Son takes $20 - $30 per month of vitamins. Says he is a dedicated body builder, but does not believe he is a fanatic. His father disagrees.

Interview Mrs. Atkinson, 44, she is grossly overweight. Her weight brings problems for clothing, bras are always altered to fit, even the largest available. Her dress is made especially for her. She takes her young son inside the house after hanging out the washing. Interior house, GV's, she is tidying up house. Says her husband is less than half her size. Says she takes over ¾ of bed. Says when you are fact, if you laugh it perhaps takes peoples mind off the fact that you are fat, if you try to be happy.

GV's a play where Mrs. Atkinson portrays a fat person, audience laughs, then claps.

Interview Mrs. Atkinson on children getting fat, she is watching it already. Would not like to see her daughters go through what she has had to go through she says. Some of the difficulties with being fact she explains are bending down, getting things from cupboards, the bus and train, she prefers the car, getting on and off the bus, finding a seat after struggling to get in the bus, and train is too small seating areas. GV's her in bus and train, waits until last to go through turnstiles at station, takes a long time to walk up or down stairs. Supermarkets are also difficult she says, cannot go through turnstiles. GV's her shopping in supermarket.

Shows photos of herself as a child, at 15, married, and in 1964 when she was pregnant. Says she is disgusted. She has had eight children, four living, other were stillborn. Says it is too expensive to have any more children.

GV's small son plays on floor with toys. She helps in play, has difficulty to stoop over. Says her family is worried about her health. She is *"very self conscious about it, very".* Children's comments hurt. Falling over is dreadful, she fell and hurt her knee this very morning, nobody can lift her, children cannot help, and she cannot get up herself, had to crawl to lever herself up on to her feet, doctor's and ambulance men cannot lift her, difficulty getting weighed in shops, goes to the Nepean District Hospital to get weighed on a weighbridge.

Issues of self esteem and physical fitness intertwine with issues of immigration and culture in this episode that looks at the changing face of Australian fitness. Size does not matter to some. Addiction does not only come from alcohol, but also vitamins and exercise. When is it too much?

Gives small son a chocolate crackle, occasionally has one herself, has difficulty staying on diets, she has only lasted up to ten days on any diet she says.

Without any sign of discomfort, she explains that sex is *"extremely difficulty".* Not sure if her husband has been upset about her sex life *"but he's never said….but it's not as it used to be".*

She says she sees herself as being fact for the rest of her life. Cannot imagine herself thinner *"I don't know whether I'd be happy".* Does not look in the mirror, *"I don't like to look in the mirror"*. Only to do her hair, *"because it's something that embarrasses me to look at myself"*.

GV's bodybuilder flexes muscles in mirror while others look on. The migrant's son David looks on. Interview bodybuilding, Carlo, wants to be Mr. Australia, he has been it two years in a row.

Julius, migrant, explains what he is doing in the mirror. David, still young, has not developed enough yet. Both are trying the bulk up. People notice they are built up. Ordinary clothes show muscles. Girls whistle, boys are jealous, they pose again in mirror for camera.

Interview David, 16 years old, picked on at school, wanted to get fit, they stay away, his father doesn't approve of it, girls tend to be a distraction and can wreck your routine/training. He is a warehouse assistant, clerical work, not hard work. Sees himself as being fit and healthy as he grows older. Wants to be Mr. World, Mr. Universe one day. He is driven to continue to achieve the best body, will not give in, he tears up, and becomes emotional about exercises. Goes to gym three times a week.

GV's muscle magazines. Arnold Schwarzenegger posing in several photos. The gym makes David feel happy, no girlfriend yet, yes, he is lonely, but still happy he says.

GV's children playing front yard at Mrs.Atkinson's. Her husband returns home. Children greet him with hugs. Mrs. Atkinson and husband into house.

Interview about his wife's weight, "I think if you want to stay fat, and be happy, will that's the way to be". Says he makes fund of his wife, but says it is not really funny. Mrs. Atkinson speaks about being embarrassed in pubs and the "two chairs story". He has learned to live with her size.

Series 3: Episode 31 *She'd flown the coop* 39'32"
27/10/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: Richard Oxenburgh
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Geoff Burton

GV's top shot children at train station meet father.

CU father and children (three boys) in car travelling and talking about their day. Sole father, boys come home, he collects two girls as well. He has been a sole parent for *"just over two years"* he says. His wife left him while he was in causality ward at Sydney Hospital *"they wanted to let me wife know and sent somebody home, and she was already gone, she'd flown the coop".*

GV's arriving home with children. Says it is ages until dinner. Plays dominos with boys pat the eldest girl cleans up and prepares meals*. "It's usually dad or I that does it"* she says.

ECU she learnt to cook watching her dad. Interview pat, she says she was glad her mother is gone because *"she belts me a lot",* but still feels lonely. Talks about being teased at school about not having a mother at home and about not getting on with her mother.

ECU interview one of the boys, how he helps get the younger boys ready in the morning, about getting into fights for not having a mum. Says he has changed a lot since his mum left. *"I've not been doing as I'm told and that".* Says he does not believe his mum is coming back *"that would keep things going, keep the happiness going".*

GV's children playing dominos. ECU interview father, drawn and thin faced, was *"completely surprised"* about his wife leaving. Child welfare had taken the children. He went to court to get them back. Talks about how children reacted to mother leaving – Stephen (the eldest boy) was most hurt. About now being out of debt. He did have a better job. He had to change his job in order to care for children. ECU *"there is no provision whatsoever for a deserted husband. A deserted wife, well they look at as if she were the queen, they can't do enough for her".*

ECU his thin bony hands as he speaks. He speaks of deserted wives he knew of who are getting the deserted wives pension, and who are still seeing their husbands regularly each week.

Exterior shots house with other children playing outside. Woman folding clothes inside. She is a deserted wife. Had been left so many times, she thought he would come back – the last time it did not worry her *"this time he didn't come back".*
She had been left with 8 children at the time *"at the time, it was around about endowment time and that was the only money that I had, and that didn't go very far, I had to go into the police station then, and get food relief".* Later she got child welfare. She says the children missed their father, and she would take him back. Now with regular money coming in, *"they weren't getting this before, and it makes a big difference".*

GV's all children in kitchen being fed, being dressed, then outside off for a swim.

ECU interview she talks with children how things are. Money coming into the house "one week I get $33.70, the next week I get $38.00" – one is child welfare and one is social welfare. Then $57.00/month childen endowment. Does not receive maintenance.

Looks at the issues of single parents. It begins with a single father caring for his four children after his wife left them. Contrasts the story of a single mother. Tells the story from both sides, that is, from the deserted father and from the deserted wife's point of view. It also allows the children to speak, to tell how they feel about what's happened to their families. From the mouths of babes…..How do they cope? What do they see for their futures? What for their children's futures?

ECU eldest daughter talking about javelin throwing. Talks about her father leaving *"well, we had mum and that was the main thing".* She has seen her father about two years ago. ECU talking about her mother and father arguing. Her father left then *"she knew it was coming, but i didn't know when".* Does not want to get married. Wants to be a PE (Physical Education) teacher.

ECU mother says she will not get married again, *"never. no change in the world of that. I'm quite happy with my kiddies now, and I know that they can eat, and they've got a clean and warm bed to go to, I'm not worrying about them".*

GV's all children enjoying swim in their dam.

Says she cannot afford to send children to further their education. ECU facility at home – had a fuel stove, now electric, carts water if it does not rain (GV's boys carrying water in milk can on cart), boys filling milk can with water from pipe, boys pull cart home along road. Nearly tips over. Cars pass by.

Series 3: Episode 34 *A matter of supremacy* 33'52"
17/11/1970
Producer: Tom Manefield Reporter: Peter Grose
Director: Russell Toose
Ass. Prod: Stephen Ramsey

GV's wedding in St. Mary's, articles on marriage (sound track song 'Love and marriage').

CU interview woman on marriage

CU interview man on marriage. He did not want to get married. She did not really know (she was pregnant) *"wanted to give the baby a name"*. She is 17 years old. They have been married for 10 years, met on a blind date. He was *"just out of the navy when I met the wife".* He had intended becoming a psychiatric nurse. Arguments between them began, he gambled, MCU Pauline, has stuck with him despite everything. She is not sure if they have stayed together because of the children. Says her husband is not capable of looking after himself.

MCU resents being thought of as being one of the children. Says he might "pull up stakes and leave her on her own", he is 33 years old and doubts his future and abilities.

ECU Pauline wonders if she should respect him more, doubts she can until he changes.

ECU Neville, he feels he is on trial, feels judged by welfare *"everyone wants to crucify me at the moment, that's the way it seems to me"*. He also feels rebellious. Cu wife says he could give gambling away, this is discussed only in arguments.

ECU says Pauline has not said, *"I love you"* in years, has lost self respect.

ECU Pauline says she has no respect for him, but still loves him.

ECU he says he needs reassurances.

ECU she says, *"I think I'm frightened".*

This is the first time they have talked for years. GV's TV on (as kissing scene is running), baby on floor, child cries, mother and father playing with child in lounge room. TV still on.

CU interview with husband and wife on meeting each other, the things they used to do. Happier days.

ECU regrets she has lost his letters and poems. ECU husband says he disagrees. She tore them up he says. They have been married for 15 years. Live a rose bay, Sydney. MS couple on lounge. ECU wife on relationship in beginning. Had baby really quickly. They are Church of England and Roman Catholic, their children in both religions. Will leave it up to them, he objected to her pushing the children towards her religion.

ECU both, on arguments about religion. They argue on-camera about religion. Neither goes to church regularly.

CU he believes she broke her agreement not to push her religion onto the children; she disagrees that is how it is.

ECU she says he was jealous in the beginning.

ECU he admits this, jealous of other men.

Examines why people marry. Through interviews various couples tell of why they married each other. They discuss whether their marriage has turned out the way they expected, or not. Eventually, one couple is filmed arguing in front of the camera about just about everything. They don't appear to be able to stop themselves. Their argument continues as filming concludes. Challenges social pressures to marry and whether they are from the family or peers.

ECU she says she likes men's company

ECU he dislikes this.

ECU he is angry, he accuses her of encouraging this behaviour.

ECU she disagrees.

ECU he says he is lacking love, feels he is not getting as much as *"any other man would get".*

ECU she disagrees.

ECU he criticises her for being reticent and not vocalising her feelings.

ECU she says he plays around, but she does not mind. ECU money worries, she wants to get some new furniture.

ECU he starts to *"brow-beat"* her, and then gives up argument. Says he cannot win ever. CU the two of them on the lounge.

ECU she admits to being stubborn.

ECU she admits to *"limiting"* her affection.

ECU he says she is selfish.

ECU *"it's a battle for supremacy more than anything, laddy wants to be top dog, and he thinks that I won't let him be"* she says.

Fade out as their argument continues, shot of married couples coming out of churches

Series 3: Episode 35 *On the spiritual phone* 44'50"
24/11/1970

Producer:	Tom Manefield	Reporter:	Peter Grose
Director:	Russell Toose	Cameraman:	Geoff Burton
Ass.Prod:	Gilly Coote		

GV's an elderly woman conducts a séance in lounge room with group of men and women.

CU faces of men speaking, women MCU of gesturing with hands. Woman speaking to spirit, man speaking to spirit eyes closed, cu of faces again. Zoom out to MCU of same.

CU woman with long earrings and hair, listening intently, and then speaking. Middle aged man speaking; CU out to MCU young man, CU to MCU to CU, to MCU…continues the same for a while then cuts to exterior of spiritual church electric sign on top of doorway. Zoom in to sign. Cut to clairvoyant from earlier séance giving a dark haired woman a head massage, this is set inside the church.

GV's church small congregation watches on. CU hands on head, being specifically positioned. MCU woman washes her hands after massage in a bucket on a chair. Next, same performed on a man while he sits in a chair. CU faces of those watching, later this is repeated with another woman. Woman washes her hands again. This is the *"laying on of hands".*

ECU woman interviewed about what she does, she offers her hand to the interviewer, their hands clasp, back to interview.

MS into ECU young man in glasses speaking in the church.

ECU interview with clairvoyant. GV's the clairvoyant sets off on her moped motor bike with helmet. GV's of her riding in streets. Arrives at park, meets two other women. Proceeds to *"lay hands on"* them as well. They all talk about the procedure.

MCU the reading is completed. CU face of woman speaking. CU clasped hands of woman. MCU same. ECU woman's face as she speaks. CU she gets emotional. GV's group of people in room. CU of each.

Fade out

Infrared film segment of a séance trance shows others together in group circle in trances as well.

Explores the psychic world and séances. Asks why people, and women in particular, feel the need to contact a psychic. This is a new social trend in Australia and people are making money from it. Contains interesting footage of an actually séance, filmed with infrared film camera.

Series 3: Episode 37 *Everybody wants a plug* 54'02"
15/12/1970
Producer: Gilly Coote Reporter: Peter Grose
Director: Bill Steller Cameraman: Geoff Burton

Sydney announcer from 2CH in Sydney, John Mahon at studio, on air.

GV's Di Arthur, newspaper gossip columnist, at cocktail party. Looking for society people to interview, charity rounds, *"they have to pretty"…doesn't matter what suburb they come from".*

GV's meet and greet pre-wedding party, kisses all round. Di Arthur takes notes, names, Mrs. Tripp, and Beryl Cheers.

MS John Mahon chatting, *asking "am I aloud to write about this or not?"* During a conversation with man at party.

MS social photography at work. Di Arthur taking notes, with photographer.

MS interview with John Mahon on being *"someone",* and being used for publicity by the *"beautiful people of Sydney".*

LS Nola Dekyvere, socialite and charity fund raiser, at Red Cross meeting again, well-dressed, pearls, cloche caps, jewellery. Interview Dekyvere on working for charity. Talks about black and white ball.

MS Leslie Walford at interior decorating shop, showing Italian furniture, prints, materials novelty, and invitation arrives.

GV's later, at art gallery opening party, John Mahon mingling. Social photographer again. Di Arthur. Interview Di Arthur about all the parties she has to go to. John Mahon again.

Panning shot around party guests, drinking.

CU interview Mahon again on plugging. Then same with Di Arthur.

CU interview Dekyvere interviewed on social climbing.

CU interview Walford on social climbing.

CU Mahon interviewed about picking what events to go to.

Mahon's wife interviewed on being his wife.

CU Mahon on socialites in Sydney, new money people on the scene, the chevron, The Trocadero.

GV's poodles, boats, mg cars, drinking.

GV's Mahon mingling again, Di Arthur the same.

MS Walford in office talking colour schemes. Dictating letter to secretary. Talks about informing people about what they should do and how they should be *"the glitter and the glamour".*

At the races, grandstand, horses, women in hats cheering on horses. Ladies in hats drinking, fashions. Socialists talk about going to all the parties *"not really, I'd like to think of myself as part of the scene at all, but one does that things, I don't know why".*

Scott's College, Sydney, people said to be those that go to the Black and White Charity Ball.

Walford at home, dressing in evening clothes.

Night time, Sydney, people arrive at social event, Walford and guest at The Trocadero, others arrives in car and enter, general public watches from footpath outside. Police escort and Governor General of Australia meets Dekyvere and enters Trocadero.

Looks at Sydney's society world and those well known people who frequent charity parties and functions. Also looks at the society gossip columnists who follow the charity circuit around photographing and interviewing those same people. The two entities seem to exist in aid of each other, and help each other in the long run.

Di Arthur interviews guests, takes notes. Photographer at work. Dancing begins. Arthur takes notes. Harry M.Miller talking to guests. Walford again. Miller is MC. at event. Black and White Derby 1970, fun race at Trocadero.

GV's at *"Hair"* premier in Sydney, Stuart Wagstaff, Harry M. Miller, Don Lane, Nola Dekyvere, Shirley Bassey, John Mahon and wife, and Maggie Taberra, Gwen Plumb, all get on special bus, away, and out again. Di Arthur taking notes again.

GV's later at party, psychedelic music, dancing, Miiller pouring champagne at *"Hair"* after party. Robert Helpmann, Nola Dekyvere, Reg Livermore, photographs in action. Shirley bassey catching pop corn in mouth at party and laughing.

Interview Di Arthur *"that's what makes the social round, fun, fun, fun!"*

MCU Gerard Kennedy, Nola Dekyvere interviews on *"Hair".* Miller and Bassey dancing together.

Montage of Mahon, Dekyvere, Walford, and Arthur to psychedelic music.

Series 7: Episode 79 *Once bitten, twice shy* 37'36"
26/6/1973
Ass.Prod: Brian AdaMS
Director: Russell Toose, Neil Munro

MCU interview couple in Adelaide, Australia.
ECU interview couple speaking about seeing themselves as failures because they have decided to return to the UK.
WS passenger ship on harbour in UK.
WS ship docking in UK.
MS couple arriving in UK, greeted by family.
MS interview couple on return to UK (in UK). Seem happier. Panning shot other family members on lounge laughing.
MCU interview other family members about the returning couple, their reaction.
GV's loading boxes of goods to send back to UK.
CU interview couple (in Aust.) about leaving and why.
ECU couple, same, homesick, few friends made while in Australia. Her parents followed them to Australia.
GV's at Australian home, photos taken in yard, couple & child.
MS interview carol's father. Moved to Australia two years ago, bought house.
GV's exterior Australian home, pool, hard, street.
ECU wife says there is no communication in Australia "cause homes are too far apart" compared to UK – much closer, more communication with neighbours. They miss environment in UK. Bought Australian house two-three weeks after arriving. Cost $11800 - June'70.
MS Couple with child and father in garden.
ECU interview question is not this the best place to bring up children? They agree if looking for material things. UK means family even though the grandparents moved out from UK to join the couple.
WS grandfather walking holding child in yard of Aust. home.
CU interview husband and wife again, on decision to more to Aust. They do not believe they are better off living in Aust. They feel *"kind'o out of place".*
CU interview her mother on settling the other children. They seem happy.
CU couple see Australian social life as lacking, no parties. They went to church. See church as social centres of life in UK. They have been once in Aust. Their first Christmas in Aust. They do not have enough money in Aust to go out and do things. They brought out "well over $4,000, well over $5,000, but I'm not going into details on that". They expected to be more financially secure in Aust. The house is "like a white elephant…it is just a stone around our necks rally". They say "they will miss a lot of things about Australia". They have decided to go back to us *"because there isn't enough to keep us, Australia can't give us enough to make it worthwhile giving up the things that we had back home".*
ECU interview mother and father-in-law also going back. They love Australia though. They are all going to visit Glenelg before they return "it made us feel at home" as sign on shop said, *"Buy your Blackpool rock here".*

The ten pound pom…British migrants who came to Australia to find a better life for themselves and their families. This episode looks at the issue of reverse immigration where British migrants choose to return to Britain because they are not happy living in Australia, or what they found once they arrived. Looks at what they left behind in Britain, and what they will be returning to. Questions their reasons for migrating and the information they were given before they left Britain.

GV's carnival at beach. Family walking along beach front, waves, sand, open sandy beach, family looks at views, children play in sand, makes sand castle. Children run up on sand.

MS Wife shopping in supermarket. Says goodbye to shop assistant.

MS/CU interview father-in-law on advising on moving to Australia. *"There's a feeling of liveliness that you don't get in Australia",* he misses Blackpool, *"it's a fabulous place"* lots of entertainers went to Blackpool. Cheap entertainment.

Cu interview couple on living in Aust, only a shopping centre Tea Tree Plaza only, no cinema.

CU they are lonely in Australia.

CU husband *says "this is a case of once bitten, twice shy"*, they will not try another Australian town/state, the cost prohibits movement as well.

CU wife *"the things that we miss are just not in Australia…it's not the Australian's fault, its not here".*

GV's leaving Aust. Farewell's.

MS couple back in UK. They have found the *"price of houses has rocketed".* Walking down UK street. Sellers market now. Looking at around 4,000 pounds, but will have to look at 5,500 pounds for a run down house. They will have to get a small mortgage. Still looking for houses to buy.

WS to GV's couple with children, fun park on people mover, Ferris wheels, Blackpool beach , traffic, trams, cars.

GV's husband, carpentry work, his third job, refurbishing homes. In UK, he earns 50-55 pounds per week for 371/2 hours work, in Australia it was 40 pounds for 40 hours work. No overtime in UK, lots in Australia to save. He believes more opportunity in UK. Exterior house.

CU interview husband, *"feel happily settled",* will not go back to Aust. Does not believe things are better in Australia.

Panning shot UK countryside, row of semi-detached houses all the same.

CU interview wife, on house in UK *"it's smaller, more character though*". Happier in UK, neighbours, friends. Dinner is pie, no puddings.

CU interview husband, child has been in hospital, all paid for by national health. No cost to them. UK good with health. It cost in Aust. $140-170 in 9 months for medical bills. She says she sees her life as homemaker as better in UK. Lots of help from neighbours. Social life much better, in Aust. this is all limited. UK lots of parties.

GV's couple out for a night out. CU interview they believe they were *"tempted"* to go out to Aust. For $20.00. They see Australian values and culture are very different.

GV's night on the town.

Series 9 or 10: Episode ? *I can't seem to talk about it* 49'18"
?/?/1975
Producer/director: Russell Toose Cameraman: Heinz Voelzer
Reporter: Stuart Littlemore

Dramatisation bed scene, man and woman. GV's and panning shot general practitioner's world conference 1975. Issue of sexual relationships and women.

Bettina Arndt seen on panel. Doctor puts forward to male's perspective on impotency. Arndt – pressure making impact on sexuality.

Dramatisation of couple in bed. Discuss seeing a doctor about sexuality problems.

Stuart Littlemore to camera, outlines sexual education issue.

Doctor interviewed on instructions given to new GP's.

Question is, are doctors afraid of the subject?

Doctor answer: just as much any anybody else.

Exterior UNSW clinical sciences building. Speaker at classroom/students. Student discussion/training group talk about sexuality.

Prof. Neil McConnaghy, psychiatry department. UNSW interacts with group training discussion. Role play for students – patient/doctor

Interview male doctor on effect of drugs and doctor's need to be aware of their own sexuality.

Interview female doctor re sexuality and media influences. Expectations unrealistic.

Dramatised sequence: couple in bed. Seen from woman's perspective, then the man's – alternating.

Clinical psychologist, editor "Forum" magazine, Bettina Arndt speaking to camera on sexuality and relationships. Presentation of main problems that is, frigidity, orgasms, then male that is, premature ejaculation and impotence. Treatments suggested. Therapy programs available, that is Master's and Johnston, American.

GV's naked children playing on lawn with hose in summer.

Arndt continues her speech.

Dramatisation continues. Naked couple in bed, massaging each other.

Arndt continues speech. Dramatisation continues. Couple in bed, stimulating each other. Arndt continues speech.

Diagram of vagina and specific anatomical parts.

Dr. Ron farmer, clinical psychologist therapist, speaks about 'touching' and the importance of being assertive.

Interview female doctor on women being ignorant of their own bodies. The public do not want to know about their own sexuality, their bodies, she says.

Clinical psychologist again with a female trainee discusses masturbation and climaxing. Gives her a book to guide.

Doctor Elsie Koadlow, Uni. Lecturer, obstetrics & gynaecology, Melbourne, on '"touching", and assessing patients for reactions to suggestions of masturbation and touching "self".

A radical and confronting episode about sexual relationships between men and women which are examined with the aid of psychologists and doctors. Includes revealing dramatisation sequences throughout, as well as role playing by patients and doctors. Confronts very personal issues in a clinical and open manner. Challenges society to accept that both men and women have sexual desires that are not always met and which need to be discussed out in the open. The final sequence is quite a provocative step for ABC television in 1975.

Dr. Farmer again, male reaction to lack of female excitement.

Interview Dr. Koadlow again, speaking on someone with very restricted upbringing/background, gives example of a young woman/the pill/too shy to tell the doctor she needed an examination.

Stuart Littlemore and a disguised interviewee “Ann”, on intercourse difficulties/doctors unhelpful/went to psychiatrist.

Gynaecologist in surgery with patient undergoing intercourse therapy treatment.

Interview Sydney gynaecologist on curing vaginismus (fear of intercourse because it is painful).

Interview again with “Ann” and baby – success!

Interview with male GP doctor on male sexuality issues. On failure, not an adequate person…pressures on male by female to ‘perform’, solution – allay anxiety of male, to satisfy female in other ways.

Dr. Gillian Diamond, medial examiner, and others, at family medicine program, Melbourne – condoms, familiarisation of use, talk on the education of doctors. Video recording being made of discussion group.

Dr. Koadlow interviewed again on educating doctors.

Dramatisation with Arndt’s voiceover in part – couple arguing in bed.

Bettina Arndt speaks to camera. Zoom in to CU drawing of couples.

GV’s crowds in city streets, others walking arm-in-arm.

Closes with dramatisation/GV’s books on advice. Couple in bed reading these. Tape recordings. Stuart Littlemore closes to camera.

Dramatisation of naked couple enjoying sexual abandon in bed together and with feathers literally flying!

APPENDIX B

SHOT LISTS - *A BIG COUNTRY* PROGRAM EPISODES VIEWED

A Big Country
Series 2: Episode 5: *Ten thousand miles from care* 30'09"
1/5/1969
Producer: Leigh Spence Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: Bryan Todd Cameraman: John Atkinson

Images Albany, W.A. around 1826. Song overlay *"Botany Bay"* with different words. GV's Albany township, pan shots. Travelling shot Ron Iddon in car driving in outback. MS Cattle in paddock.

Interv. Middle aged migrant farmer speaking about difficulties in *England "a man can get more money not working in England, than he can working, now there's something wrong about that".*

WS Iddon and farmer waling the paddock. Interv. Talks about comparisons with Australia and England. Farmer came to Australia because land is scarce in England, *"you can't expand,"* he says.

GV's family around kitchen table. Iddon interviews farmer's wife, she loves Australia "we came out three times in twelve months, all of us" she says. She says she feels accepted and part of the countrywomen's association of king *river "we've had quite a lot of English farmers come to see us, and Australia".*

Interv. Teenage daughter. She likes Albany *"plenty for the younger generation to do, it's more of a sporty country".* Joined the junior farmers and the local tennis club. Australians accept English club members *"almost with open arms, very glad for them to join in and discuss the different things they do in England,"* she says. She is *"very happy".* Mustering sheep in Ute.

Bachelor (migrant farmer) interview about coming to W.A*., "Well, I came here six months ago…it's cooler for the English sort of person I think",* he says. Says social life is *"a bit grim",* but should improve as he meets people. GV's farmers/wife with calf.

Interv. Wife,*"Oh crums! Well I wasn't very happy, I did have to be bribed to come out here".* She says she missed her hunting horse. GV's horses. Interview continues, she says she wants to breed ponies. She misses *"a lot of the English scenery".*

Interv. Husband, says for an English farmer "*opportunities are tremendous".* He believes Australian farmers have things easier than English farmers do *"the vastness of the place was a concern initially".* He recommends English farmers actually come out and have a look at Australia, because of the lack of info. Available in England, at Australia house in London *"they tend to paint it too rosy!"* GV's passengers off plane, across tarmac.

Interv. Grazier about the wrong impression being given in England about Australia. He says uninformed English agents are giving the wrong impressions *"they're not doing a good job at all".*

Overlay of *"The Capricornian's"* song.

KEY :

MCU - medium close up
CU - close up
ECU - extreme close up
GV - general view
MS - medium shot
WS - wide shot
LS - long shot
PAN - panning shot
VS - various shots

Looks at different stories about immigration from the farmer's point of view. How have they managed to blend in to Australian country/rural life. Comparisons between farming in England and Australia. Looks at the changes in attitude needed for survival as a farmer in Australia without the subsides given farmers in England.

Bad/incorrect advertising cheap land at $6/acre, but the $6/acre is awful country. Also says information difficult to obtain, even from Australia house in London.

GV's trough-feeding cattle. Farmer working yards. Iddon highlights information problems. English farmer's wife in Australian township window shopping.

Interv. Sheepherder. One of UK's top breeders has had problems with labour. Could not keep UK employees. He is trying to get his stock to the standard he had in England. He is impressed with the amount of work that Aussie workers do. WS herd. GV's tractor at work.

Interview with English 'battler farmer', not much money, but trying to make a go of things.

Various black and white photos early migrant farmers.

GV's modern tractor at work today. GV's farmers house, interiors and exteriors. Interview immigrant farmer's wife from Devon on Australia, she is 67 years old *"I like it immensely, I love the people".* Says she likes most is *"the lack of class consciousness, very much indeed….we've been made to feel in this areas, as if we've been living here all our lives".* She misses her friends though.

Interv. Son of farmer about Australia, he *"loves the freedom mostly"* and he does not mind being called a "pom".

Series 2: Episode 6: *The Buck Runners* 25'37" 8/5/1969
Producer: Leigh Spence Reporter: Colin Munro
Director: Max Donnellan

Overdub of "The Man from Snowy River" poem. WS pan mountains and countryside region at Omeo (words of poem in pictures). WS pan men on horseback galloping through the trees and over rocks with dogs. They are shouting as they herd the horses. GV's small town of Omeo. WS whole town. Interv. MS Mervin Pearson – tells about life as a buck runner and its history. He stands with hand on hip and pipe in other. Names mentioned as buck runners are Harry Faithfull, Joe Rollinson, and Johnny Riley. Pearson states *"Johnny Riley was born in Ireland. He arrived in Omeo at an early age and he learnt his horsemanship here. Later in life, he moved over to the Upper Murray and the Jindabine District there as a rider he was to become immortalised in Banjo Paterson's poem, "The Man from Snowy River".* B&W photo of Riley on horseback wading across river. He sits straight erect, and is an athletic bushman. WS pioneer hut – Togo Pendergast sitting on step talks on knowing Johnny Riley. *"I knew Johnny Riley. Johnny Riley used to stay here in this old house"*. GV's tumbled-down old house. GV's Pendergast and dog sitting outside old hut, rolling pipe tobacco. MS Pearson interv. Continues about history of buck runners. W/S pan, slow, L/R countryside around Omeo. MS Pearson interv. Continues. W/S Omeo township and Hilltop Hotel. CU beer in glass, zoom out to horsemen in pub talking about round up to come. CU faces, H/S, smoking, leaning on bar drinking, glasses of beer, CU faces (wild sound) drinking beer, talking, dog sleeping nearby. Travelling sho in 4WD. GV's 4WD across creek, along dirt track and through bush. W/S pan R/L saddle horses are brought in by hand (in three's). GV's men and saddle horses preparing for round up, make-shift yards out of logs, camp fire at night. GV's morning at camp, men prepare to ride, saddling horses, equipment checks, farriers shoeing horses. M/S Jim Flannigan explains how a buck run is planned – a blow by blow account of procedures. He is sitting in front of an old timber lot hut, bottles, ropes, whips, rags, hang on walls behind him, old floppy hat, rolled up sleeves, cigarette in fingers. His story echoes Banjo's poem as he tells it. The rhythm of his story is like a ballad. Shot of horses corralled.	National identity through the words of an Australian iconic poem. Banjo Patterson's poem The Man from Snowy River is explored as this episode returns to the place where the poem is set. Talks to those old-timers who remember the real Man from Snowy River. The poem's words are put to picture with re-enactment sequences of the brumby round up in the Snowy Mountains of Omeo.

"….look at 'em….look at 'em…we'll have some fun at this rodeo" he says.
GV's – W/S horsemen mount horses – MS Charlie Flannigan gives instructions before the round up.
Zoom out to group horsemen listening sitting on their horses; others standing by horses.
Pan group R/L, one rider mounts a horse that instantly starts bucking and buck off into the distance.
GV's WS horses and men off into bush. WS Horses and men and dogs (barking). MS man on white horse, another on dune coloured horse, dog jumps into his saddle, WS riders on horse waiting in position for the brumbies to arrive our of the scrub.
Saddle horse become aware of brumbies by pricking their ears, long before the riders hear them.
W/S pan horses running through bush, riders chasing and cracking whips, horses running ahead of riders, voices yelling (wild sound), whips cracking, hooves thundering, dust whirling as the horses are yarded.
GV's brumbies into yards. Overdub of "TMFSRP" Poem.
GV's action shots horses, brumbies, and men working in yards.
Catching and reigning brumbies. Brumby fights ropes around his neck, rearing all the time.
CU same.
W/S horse and rider with single horse (brumby) in yard.
GV's riders at the end of the day, preparing evening meal around old bark hunt, horses lead along by reigns.
GV's riders around campfire that night singing (yodelling too) drinking beer, smoke from fire billows. CU faces lit by firelight. Iconic scenes, faces, hats, rough hardened men of the bush.
WS next morning – the bucks are taken from the high plains to be sold. Each rider leads two or three brumbies with his saddle horse.
WS zoom R/L out riding through bush and stringy bark scrub. Some horses still fighting the rope.
Overdub of poem.
Horses loaded on to trucks.
WS zoom out Omeo countrywide – song sung over scene (a yodelling song) – mountain views.

Series 4: Episode 11: *Right through the shearing time* 34'34"
18/6/1970
E/Producer: Trevor Stockley
Director: John Mabey

Shearer's cook preparing breakfast. Rings dinner bell. Serves meal open fire stove, *"this is my domain, and they don't interfere with me, and I don't go onto the board and interfere with them"* he says.

G'Vs exterior property, song overlay. Shearing shed, cars parked outside.
Truck with woo bales loaded.

Midkin station in northern New South Wales, twenty-six shearers/48,000 sheep. Is one of the largest sheds still working.

GV's shearing (just like in the film, *"Sunday too far away"*). The song, *"Click go the shears"* overlay.

CU hands of hands/shears/sheep/shearing/the boss/the tar boy/the ringer. Three hundred and twenty merino sheep the record for shearing in 1892.

GV's shearing with blades. Slow, takes up to two hours per sheep from start to finish of process, it is quiet, lonely with the "click of the shears all day". Sixty percent of sheep shorn by shears, not blades, today.

Interview shearers. Say they work on their properties when not shearing.

Archival footage, photos, shearer's strike, issue. Shear blade being made.

Continues same to end.

Once again, national identity shapes this episode with looks at sheep shearing and shearers in outback Australia. Another iconic Australian song becomes the frame in which the images are held. The episode explores the issue of changes to the shearing industry in the form of electric blades as opposed to hand shears.

Series 6: Episode 4 *Sleeper cutting* 32'00" 20/5/1971
E/Producer: John Mabey Cameraman: Terry Byrne
Director: Ken Dyer Reporter: Alex Nicol

GV's timber mill, sleeper cutting.

GV's Mendooran countryside and town. Man loads blades on to truck.

Interview sleeper cutter driving to work. GV's truck, man and axe into bushland. Chopping tree down.

GV's debarking truck. Starts buzz saw. Barry McDonald has been cutting timber since he was 18.

Tree crashes to ground, man measures tree for sleepers, says should get eight sleepers out of the tree.

GV's man, buzz saw cutting down iron bark trees for railway sleepers.

Interview cutter, says $3.20 per square would be good day, now, he gets $3.00 per square.

Truck being debarked by hand. Log being dragged by chain and truck. GV's cutter and huge circular blade machine cutting sleeper.

Sleeper cutting is dying out. GV's cu gramophone with Dean Martin singing on record. Cutter through bush on tractor. MS cutting tree with circular blade, tree falls, not truck for sleepers, travelling shots, trees falling, Mendoora railway station, train along tracks, cu sleepers. Ws pan countryside, slow zooms in to timber cutter working on sleepers with machine.

Interview Bill Frost about his family tradition. He has been cutting timber for 29 years. He is sorry he took it on. He believes *"timber cutting is a dying industry".*

His son is on tractor. Cu sleeper being removed and changed on railway line. Men working. Railway workers working. Info – there are 2640 sleepers per mile, and 400-600 sleepers are laid for rail per day.

Black and White photos old timber cutter camps. GV's different axes used, axe heads. GV's circular saw cutting out sleepers. Timber cutters sitting around talking about old times.

Sleeper in timber yard, thousands of them.

Interview timber cutter, debarking log, he thinks the new technology is *"marvellous".*

GV's bushland scenes.

National identity again becomes the frame for this episode about timber cutters in the Australian bush. Looks at the changes that have made the hand sawing of railway sleepers a thing of the past. It is all done by one machine. The old timers tell their stories.

Series 6: Episode 19 *The Camel Catchers* 30'40"
?/?/1971
Producer: John Mabey Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: John Cooper Cameraman: Sandor Siro

WS camels being rounded up by bike. Travelling shot chasing camel. WS same. GV's catching camels on horse. Interv. Bob McKechnee, exporter. GV's south Australian Aboriginal settlement, camel and dog in settlement. ECU camel's mouth. Aborginal (paddy) saddles camel, he uses the camel as his taxi. Leads camel around. GV's Dick Nunn, manager of property where camels are caught. MCU intv. Nunn on catching camel, how many? Where they are etc. Says, *"there must be hundreds of them".* Team of camels pull cart. MCU interv driver of cart about camels, he says they are *"very bad tempered".* Men on bikes in outback, riding fast, like the movie 'easy rider' style. Called camel catcher's inc. Stuart Nunn and Jim Nunn interviewed in MCU. WS and GV's catching camels. Nunn's continue their interview, sitting around campfire during daytime. GV's catching her of camels with bikes and horse. WS same. They catch a baby camel, which protests, so to its mother. McKechnee interv. Continues, says camels cost $1000/head live in U.S., plus airfare of $589, plus add on fees of catchers. Camels in yards.	A story of the descendants of the early Australian camel trains. What happened to all the camels that were let loose once road trains took over in the outback?

Series 9: Episode 5 *Everything what we belong* 32'51"
9/12/1972
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: Ron Iddon Cameraman: Sandor Siro

GV's crowds gathered for the opening of the Ord River Scheme.
Prime Minister William McMahon speech at opening
GV's pan crowd.
CU faces of Mrs. Durack (89) and daughter, Mary.
CU *"Kings in grass castles"* book, by Mary Durack, pages turned.
Ws car drives down road.
PM McMahon, kisses Mrs. Durack at opening of scheme, and introduces his wife Sonja McMahon to her.
WS Ord River Dam.
GV's outback Durack land.
Interview Mary Durack on her family's history and their development of the outback regions, their follies, selling their land, the changes, and the regrets.
Travelling shot in boat of Ord River, shoreline, and submerged trees. Mary Durack describes what lies beneath. Roofs of buildings, tank, windmills, and all submerged or partially submerged. Mary Durack speaking as her mother listens.
MCU the two women together.
Aboriginal elders singing (men and women).
GV's settlement.
Mary Durack talks to Aboriginal elder about the land's history.
Interview Mary talks about wanting to document/write about the Aboriginal history. She is amazed about their memory abilities.
Mrs. Durack senior with Aboriginal women, meeting some who remember the early days.
Mary Durack interv. continues, about the affect her father's selling up and leaving had on the Aboriginals on the property and herself. An Aboriginal explains to her she says, *"we feel we lost everything what we belong".*
GV's Galah's flying, black cockatoos in trees, rocky outcrop in bush, pan shots landscape, bottle tree, cemetery, grave on someone named Scanlon, then Neal Durack's grave, Thomas Deakin, and an engraving on grave of *"David Suttie, head stockman of Jeannie Gunn's book "We of the never never" who died January 29, 1912, aged 62 years".*
Mary Durack interview continues.
Ws birds flying, brolga's, cranes.
GV's cotton crop dusting plane at work over crop.
Mary Durack talks to American farmer.
CU cotton growing. Mary speaking about changes and small holdings being started up today.
GV's cave painting, Mary with aboriginal looking at paintings. CU paintings.
Mrs. Durack senior leaves in plane.
Mary says she feels she belongs to the country.

Pastoral history is revisited in this story of the Durack dynasty in northern Western Australia and the development of the Ord River Scheme that destroyed that history by flooding the property. Looks at the displacement caused to not only the Durack family, but also to the aboriginal people who had lived on the property all their lives. Both have retained a sense of belonging.

Series 11: Episode 5 *Barossa Deutsche* 27'24"
?/?/1973
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: John Evans
Director: David Wood Cameraman: Terry Byrne

GV's man and woman shovelling grapes. Bottles being labelled.
Interv. Winery owner's wife, she came from Australia. She says she felt at home in area because the people spoke German as well. She is Lutheran.
GV's historic graveyard of pioneers.
Interiors Lutheran Church, organist, cleric, brethren in pews, service is underway, German immigrants descendant's in gathering.
MS interv immigrant descendant on how it was working in vineyards.
Exterior derelict dwellings of pioneers.
MS interv continues about ablutions, in the creek.
GV's grape picking. GV's grape pressing.
MS interview continues.
GV's dusty wine bottles in racks, wine barrels.
GV's Ben Schiller's family home, family sits around dinner table.
Kaiser Stuell winery sign.
Schiller's wife says women are taught to know their place.
Lutheran upbringing meant that the man is seen as *"more or less the main one".*
Daughter says she would like to change this, but still realises she will have to accept this when she marries.
The son Robert is expected to take over from his father.
Old Ben Schiller working in his garden.
Young Robert Schiller working in vineyard
GV's tourists at Barossa Valley wine sales.
MS interview Rex Schiller, chairman of Kaiser Stuell winery. Sees commercial side of wine industry as being the way of the future. Says he is glad his ancestors left Germany for Australia. Does not believe he could live the way they did, he recently visited Germany.
GV's exterior Hardy's winery.
Interv. Ben continues, sings a song *"how dry we are!"*
Black and white photos of pioneers intercut.
Street parade at vintage festival of Barossa Valley. Floats, traditional dress. Grape picking contest in a vineyard. Tug-o-war, maypole dance.
CU/MS grape treading, two men in bare feet. Folk dancing.
GV's late night beer hall scenes, dancing, singing, drinking.
GV's aftermath of festival.
Church service. CU faces in prayer, organist playing, and gathering sing hymn.

The story of one immigrant family who founded a wine dynasty and the Lutheran belief system that still shapes their lifestyle in Australia through tradition and custom. The younger generation are beginning to resist tradition and to want to make their own choices in the new Australian society.

Series 12: Episode 2 *I'll never change sides* 32'16" ?/?/1974
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Bob Connolly
Director: Ian McGarrity Cameraman: Heinz Voelzer

GV's Bill Ludwig, Australian Workers Union rep. Walking then into car.
Aerials historic shearing sheds in western Queensland near Charleville. GV's same.
MS shears at work similar to that seen in *"Sunday too far away".*
Ws Ludwig arrives at shed. MS, cu shearing.
Interv Ludwig about graziers being once the *"top dog"* and *"aristocrats of the bush".*
WS car along dirt road left to right.
Ludwig in car, interview overlay, arrives at homestead, talks to sacked shearer about pay ($88.07/week) dispute. Ludwig talks about victimisation issues, shearers get $67/week for five days work; he talks about strike action as one option.
Interv. CU Mrs. Ludwig talks about what her husband does as a union man.
GV's Ludwig interv continues.
Shearers talk about Ludwig's work and how it helps.
Interiors head quarter's union office.
Ludwig on road again, out and about. Vox pops about Ludwig.
Mrs. Ludwig interv. Continues in CU. She says graziers all respect Ludwig mostly.
Inside pub, Ludwig interview continues also with Errol Hodder, about confrontations with graziers.
Union rep. Talks to shearers in shed during smoko.
Disputes how settled through negotiation rather than strike.
Hodder and Ludwig interviewed waling to court. Described as bush lawyers. Cunnamulla courthouse inside magistrates court, they win case for shearers, talk about case afterwards.
Interview with woman, who lost case previous day, has hardened her attitude since loss of case.
Ludwig travelling in car again.
Interv. Ludwig.

Unions and unionism in the bush is the subject of this episode. It follows union leader, Bill Ludwig as he travels around outback Australia talking to and representing outback workers, shearers, farm workers, in fighting for proper wages.

Series 12: Episode 3 *Ben Hall* 28'52" ?/?/1974
(Colour)

E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Shane Porteous
Director: Lloyd Capps Cameraman: Preston Clothier

Re-enactment the capture of bushranger, Ben Hall, folk song overdub. People speak about Ben Hall with fondness. Black and white photos, Forbes, 1860s. Forbes today, GV's street scenes. Black and white photos other bushrangers of the 1860s. Old man speaking fondly of Ben Hall, tells his father's story about Ben Hall *"he was a wonderful bushman".* WS wheat crop, pan shot of crop. Derelict homestead. Wheogo homestead. Interview Gordon Piper, hobby historian on homestead, and its connections to bushrangers. Drawings of Hall's homestead Continues same until end.	National identity and history shape this episode which re-enacts the life and times of bushranger Ben Hall.

Series 13: Episode 1 *The Desert People* 42'24"
?/?/1975
(Colour)
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Bob Connolly
Director: Bob Connolly Cameraman: Preston Clothier

Early morning in Aboriginal settlement, people waking up, sitting around the morning campfire.
Exterior and interior shots Baptist church service.
MS Aboriginal and white faces in congregation, worshiping.
GV's pay packets being distributed to Aboriginals.
Cu ceremonial painting on artefacts/shields.
GV's ceremonial preparations by elders, singing, cu faces.
GV's school class/teacher gives less.
MCU Aboriginal children in class.
An elder carving implement, young Lloyd watches his grandfather.
CU grandfather's face/body.
CU Lloyd with grandfather talking together.
ECU Lloyd.
GV's men around campfire.
MS interview adolescent male about being initiated. Explains process of initiation for young you, acts out movements at beginning of process of initiation. Sits down and continues, but cannot reveal some points, he is prohibited from doing so. Voice over explains other main issues.
Women are not allowed to know details of initiation process.
MS young man continues explaining what happens once the boy (now man) comes out of the bush following initiation.
GV's women singing and dancing.
MS young man continues explaining choosing a wife after initiation.
GV's women singing and dancing.
CU women, bodies being painted.
Young man continues explaining women's place in tribe.
GV's women singing and dancing.
Football team, Harry Nelson (aboriginal Baptist minister) interview around campfire about initiation and Walbiri code of conduct.
GV's the boy Lloyd, and his grandfather. Grandfather explains how he killed a man with a spear over a woman, a long time ago.
GV's & ws settlement, after the death of someone in the hospital. The campsite is moved immediately because the spirit of the deadman is believed to inhabit the old campsite.
Young man explains how a murderer is dealt with by tribal custom.
Interview Harry Nelson, also talks about tribal "skin groups" and the issue of murder, punishment, and Walbiri laws.
WS ritual battle, women go first, self-injury, the men negotiate a settlement between them.

This episode explores the issue of beliefs and tradition and looks at aboriginal tribal law and sacred initiation ceremonies. One young aboriginal man explains what happens in an initiation ceremony. Some information however is not given because it is forbidden to outsiders and to women.

Series 13: Episode 9 *Be it ever so humble* 27'50" ?/?/1975 (Colour)
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: Ron Iddon Cameraman: Preston Clothier

GV's a house being moved through the countryside/towns by a company called "country homes". GV's artist drawing dilapidated homestead. GV's exterior homestead.
Interview MCU artist in his studio, about painting.
GV's exterior veranda with rocking horse, panning shot, slow zoom out, roof areas, chimney, veranda area, women walking along veranda.
Interv. Artist talks about drawing old farmhouses and how they were built *"they had to make do with the materials they could find….comes back to basic timber".*
MS man demonstrates old timber cutting methods, big saw, two men.
Interv. about durability of old timber dwellings in 1882.
Interv. with another man, interiors of building, top shot walking through house, no roof now.
WS modern 1960s style farmhouse just next door. Several houses seen.
Builder shows plans of new style of country dwelling in workshop. New house designs becoming more familiar today. Company catalogue, modifications are available. Interv. In hardhat *"in our form of building, we don't really see that architects have got a place".* He says he believes that they build "a more common" type of home.
Various WS semi moves house down road intercut with brick suburban homes.
Int. Building. Interv. Farmer about his housing needs, they are simple.
MS interv. With farmer's wife on new types of house *"I notice a terrific difference, much cleaner, and easier to handle and that sort of thing, with the old place, well you knew there was dust up in the ceiling, for one thing, which used to come down, I've sort of lost interest in the old place...I used to be outside a lot and it kind of got away on me (laughs)…I've had old homes all me life…everything's so clean and the way I want it, how I really wanted a home".*
MCU another farmer's wife says she missed the old veranda, has a brick home, GV's exterior home.
MCU intv. Farmer, his new house has no veranda; he could not afford to put them on.
CU artist talking on the changes in houses. He believes the traditional Australian homestead features *will "probably eventually disappear".*
Walking down suburban street in Toowoomba *"much the same as they are in all sorts of cities around Australia"*, he says. Panning shot exterior new housing estate area. All brick and one and two storey.
GV's darling downs grassland. CU grass blowing in wind. Ws same.
Travelling shot down homestead road to huge homestead. GV's exterior homestead. Artist drawing homestead and interv. artist, intercut.
GV's exterior gardens of huge homestead, two storey, veranda, in ground pool, trees, fountain. GV's interior same, furniture, hallways, slow travelling shots.
WS homestead in distance.
GV's cattle with farmer walking behind.
Ext GV's old homestead, cu panning shots of timber beams, timbers etc. Corrugated iron roof, tanks, intercut with shot artist drawing.
Exterior large homestead verandas, 1888 gardens, iron work on verandas, chimney's, corrugated iron roof, timber railing, slats, awnings (beautiful shots).
Black and white photos of past times; details of homesteads emphasised.

The traditional Australian country homestead house is changing in the modern Australia. Prefabricated homes are being built replacing the old historic style of building. This episode contrasts the two, as well it talks to country people who have adopted the new style of home and to the architects who are building them.

Series 13: Episode 20 *Land fit for heroes* 29'01" ?/?/1975 (Colour)
E/Producer: John Sparkes Reporter: Ron Iddon
Director: David Poynter Cameraman: Julian Penney

Archival footage WWI, troops soldier settlement. Early 20th century scenes, fun parks, pig farm, chicken farm, vineyard *"within four years of war's end thirty thousand returned servicemen found themselves settled on the land"* (over dub).
Archival footage continues "one of the greatest agricultural and social tragedies of Australian history" (over dub).
Today, *"the "big lizzy" scrub clearing machine is a 60 mph monster"* (over dub).
Interview ex-servicemen talk about soldiers trying to find their blocks of land *"resented the opportunity of our future"* they say.
Archival footage.
Interv. Ex-serviceman on his experiences.
Interv. Wife remembers going to Nunga to live *"it was like the beach without the water"* she says.
Elderly woman chops kindling for fire and is interviewed about her live of deprivation.
Archival footage man and wife and baby in bush. Archival footage farm machinery.
Interv. Ex-serviceman's wife on her difficult life.
Elderly woman revisits old house which was similar to hers, now in ruins.
Interv. Woman *"this little fire was company to a lonely person".*
GV's ruined old house.
Interv. Old ex-serviceman about what he started with, nothing.
691 acres was his allotment. Pan right to left open land. Repeat same.
Interv. Ex-serviceman, on failure of crops "twenty pound as a subsidy," he says.
Archival footage, old car, the Malley.
Interv. Wife, difficulties managing financially.
Interv. Ex-serviceman, had to go off the homestead to get money to live *"anything to made money"* he says.
Interv. Wife.
B&w shots soldiers, on the land, working the farms.
Interv. Wife about divorces at the time, *"We didn't talk about that sort of thing"* she says.
Interv. Ex-serviceman tells about protest marsh outside land commission.
Evidence that the scheme had been bungled *"never a hope of success, it was a scandal"* says reporter.
Representative of the department of agriculture showing hardiness of virgin Malley and fences *overgrown "look at it, wretched stuff…the administrative heads in Sydney had no idea of the privations of these people"* he says.
Archival footage picks and shovels digging *holes "three hundred pounds of government money and left".*
GV's foggy landscape, pan left to right, zoom out, exterior ruined old house.
GV's old machinery decaying, dead trees, rusty lamps, old sings, timber houses in disrepair, and a gaggle of geese flying right to left pan.
Intv. Wife, elderly *"it's been a hard life, but it's been a good life,"* she says.
No running water until today (1975).
Old man says he had kept subtle through hard work. Old woman feels she has been deprived *"oh yes, yes"* she says. Old man sings at piano *"Round Redcliff way".* Cu aged hands playing piano.

This episode looks at a little-known history of the soldier settler. With the aid or archival photos the old-timers tell their stories of how they were given land to farm only to discover that is was arid and dry. Some stayed and struggled to make a live. The men and their wives tell their stories.

Series 19: Episode 8 *Forgotten people* 29'54" ?/?/1978 (Colour)
Producer: David Leonard Reporter: Ron Drynan
Director: David Leonard Cameraman: Julian Penney

GV's ambulance officers driving ambulance.
GV's north coast Queensland. Church service. Cane cutters.
Descendants of Kanaka cutters walking through plantation.
Talk about islander vegetables growing.
Black and white photos of Kanakas.
Cane field scenes, left to right pan.
Graphic of Queensland.
Black and white photos Kanakas and owners and ship that took the kanaka's from their island homes. Kanakas in cane fields now dressed in European clothes.
Pan left to right cane field.
Interv. Kanaka descendant. Talks about what it was like, the fights between the New Hebridian's and Solomon islanders.
Cutting cane today. MS. Descendents still cut cane for a few days each year by hand. Later the machine takes over the job.
GV's Mackay street scenes.
Black and white pictures of islanders.
Evangelical preacher, church service, islander congregation sings with hands raised. Seventh Day Adventist church.
Sherie Malnu, first to go to James Cook University, interview.
Islander women in cane fields working.
GV's Mackay streets, Sherie in street. Repeat.
Sherie and her mother talk.
Interv Sherie about being different to her family and other islanders.
She is becoming independent of her own culture she says.
School children at school. Sacred hill area. GV's mountain terrane, descendant walking, coconut palms.
Interv. Descendant tells what it was like years ago, traditions, culture of his people.
Pan left to right cane.
Descendant talks to his grandchildren tells them a story/custom. Passes on both Christian stories and his cultural stories.
Church gathering.
Interv preacher (islander) Pastor Bill Power (Assembly of God).
Power outside Proserpine church with partitioners.
Repeat. Power talks about Christianity in his family and cultural beliefs.
GV's descendants (noel) walking in cane fields.
Noel talks about lack of recognition for the efforts of his people *"we want the people to remember who we are…let 'em know that we've been here"* he says.
Black and white photos Kanakas.

Looks at the little-recognised history of the Kanakas of north Queensland and the significant part they played in the development of the sugar cane industry. What happen to them? The story of one of their descendants is told in this episode that recognises their contributions to the history of Australia.

Series 28: Episode 2 *A Winter's tale* 29'35" ?/?/1984 (Colour)
Producer: Bernice Daly Reporter: Paul Williams
Cameraman: Dennis Brennan

GV's dairy farm in Victoria. Farmer on tractor. Farmer and cows.
Exterior old cottage. Woman cuts wood. Cows into holding yard.
Biodynamics farming issue.
GV's farmer, cows. Rain on water, leaves, cows, sheep.
MS farmer walking cows.
Interv farmer talks about his belief in biodynamics.
GV's surrounding forests.
CU cow manure (unconventional)
GV's countryside, the moon.
Farmer buries cow horns filled with manure to produce a substance called *"five hundred".*
CU product from this process. Farmer shovels cow manure into machine. Farmer with bags of horns. Farmer fills horns with manure by machine. Farmer buries horns (130,000 horns altogether). Farmer explains process.
GV's cows in field. CU cows faces. GV's horns in boxes. Interview continues. CU *"five hundred"* out of horns. Interv continues. CU *"five hundred".* Repeat.
CU wheat growing. Biodynamic farmers standing in wheat field.
CU soil sample. Farmers talk about using "*five hundred".* CU soil sample. Interv. continues. GV's rice farm, farmer shows the difference *"five hundred"* has made to his farm. Interv. Rice farmer. Water wheel, rice fields, growing naturally, biodynamic farm. Farmer digs irrigation area.
GV's process of spreading *"five hundred"* to crops.
Interv. Farmer.
Farmer sprays field at night or at dawn with *"five hundred".*
Interv. Farmer about difference between conventional farming and farming using *"five hundred"* biodynamics.
GV's tree, plants.
Woman in bush picking dandelions.
GV's various plants. Continues until end.

The embryonic organic farming industry is explored in this episode that looks at the development of a radical procedure using cow manure and cow horns. At the time, it might have been seen as excentric, however, today, the product "500" is used widely in the expanding organic farming field.

APPENDIX C

SHOT LIST - *THE SOLDIER* PROGRAM VIEWED

The Soldier 53'22" 12/3/1968
Exec.Producer: Kip Porteous
Producer: John Power Narrator: Richard Oxenburgh
Director: John Power Cameraman: Bill Steller

Montage: young man and woman walking by the seaside with small dog - overdub of rhythmic running/stomping boots on pavement. CU travelling shot of soldiers boots stomping/running - cu face of Guy Holloway (20 years old). Freeze-frame his face.

CU travelling shot uniformed legs with heavy boots running again on paved road. MS travelling shot soldiers running, boots sounding. CU travelling shot boots, legs running, and stomping on road. Travelling shots visually impacting, boot on road sounds - title *"The Soldier"* appears.

CU officer's face (senior instructor) at training camp talks to troops.

GV's troops training, sergeant is yelling, "*Give us twenty push ups"* and *"next man!"*

MS Uniform requisitioned to Holloway - his voiceover talks about going to Vietnam.

GV's Holloway training at Canungra.

CU behind uniformed, booted legs walking through scrub. GV's rifle fire heard, men hit the dirt, hide in undergrowth, others seen walking slowly through trees towards camera, rifles at the ready. CU boots, slow zoom out to legs and full shot soldiers with rifle ready to use and then they walk through bush.

CU same. Holloway continues to speak about going to Vietnam.

CU soldiers in bush in camouflage gear. Gunfire in jungle. *"Cease fire!"* Is heard.

GV's the *"enemy"* is killed and captured.

GV's back at the mess, soldiers served meal and jugs of beer. Holloway voiceover continues.

CU jugs of beer. *"one more day to go mate to go home hey!"*

Pan WS Canungra training camp, tents, on morning of the last day for troops. Troops sit around on ground talking casually. CU faces.

WS pan R/L soldiers training under live fire. Running across empty paddock. Machine gun fire and bombs heard. Rifle shots heard, order being yelled. Troops struggling under barbed wire. Order being yelled, *"get the gun firing!"*

Troops run forward, smoke, through obstacle course; troops arrive back, having some fun jumping off tower into water. GV's WS troops throw officers and themselves into the water, clothes and all, in fun.

Officer addressed troops afterwards*, "you go out of here as soldiers, not as the rabble you marched in as".* The troops jeer this comment and laugh.

Ws trooper Holloway shouts orders to troops to talk *"quick time"* - they jeer in response. Troops away from camera into distance. Sounding off heard *"right, right, left, right"* as they disappear into distance.

KEY:

MCU - medium close up
CU - close up
ECU - extreme close up
GV - general view
MS - medium shot
WS - wide shot
LS - long shot
PAN - panning shot
H/S - head and shoulders
VS - various shots
Travelling shot - moving
R/L - right to left
L/R - left to right
Aerial - from air to ground.

Christina Hunt
Q45006868

CU man in mask. Sunday in Sydney in the domain. Holloway and fiancée, Robyn, walk arm in arm through the domain. Holloway's voiceover about Vietnam. He says he is not sure we should go. GV's crowds listen at domain.

MS babies pushed in pram, children playing at domain. CU protest sign displayed *"we object to the Vietnam War, join us".*

CU face woman sings protest song with guitar at domain, crows listens quietly.

Pan shot Holloway and fiancé mingle with crowd. Holloway voice over*. "I feel sorry for the people of Vietnam; they've been involved in war for over twenty years. There doesn't seem to be an end to it".*

Zoom in to CU face of protester at domain who is being heckled. He shouts, *"Well ladies and gentlemen, is the United States concerned with the lives of individuals?"*

A heckler answer's *"yes".* Protestor replies, *"He said yes, he said yes! But I say no!"* - Heckler asks *"why?"* - Protestor continues, *"Because the untied states has shown by its very actions, by the type of weapons it uses in Vietnam, that it isn't the least concerned about the Vietnamese people's lives".*

CU Holloway and others learning colloquial Vietnamese at an army intelligence school in Sydney.

Three weeks later – in Hobart before embarkation for Vietnam. GV's Hobart scenes, parks, city streets, suburbs. Holloway voice over speaking about his mum, she is shown working in her garden. GV's mother gardening.

WS Holloway's father walking with cane zoom in to CU his face. WS walks away from camera.

GV's interior Holloway family home. Pictures, furniture. Holloway in photos, graduation certificate.

CU Holloway's mother, smiling, hand on cheek.

GV's Holloway at home, showing slides to family.

Pan R/L beach of south west Tasmania. Jack Thwaits (scenery preservation board member), and Holloway walk along beach in wind gathering debris. Holloway voiceover speaks about Thwaits.

Thwaits and Holloway walk down beach away from camera Holloway voiceover conts.

WS mountain scene. Aerials mountain scene.

Group of people in house singing *"If you knew Suzie",* dancing and singing at family party in Sydney. Holloway and Robyn are getting engaged. GV's Robyn opens gifts. Speech about engagement by her father. Holloway speaks/thanks Robyn's parents for support. Welcome home his future brother-in-law, Ken Podmore. Song *"For they are jolly good fellows".* GV's hugs and kisses all round.

At airport, – Holloway leaving for Vietnam – mother and fiancé crying – jet engines sound merge into sound of helicopter propellers.

Travelling shot troops in jeep R/L at speed, in Vietnam.

CU face of Holloway in jeep (his voice over).aerial shot ms of inside helicopter travelling at speed over villages, palm trees, cattle through village, dirt roads below, people walking through village areas (Phuk Tui province).

GV's troops travelling in jeep at speed, travelling shot R/L from helicopter.

Aerial shot jeep down dirt road through town.

GV's soldiers armed, travelling in jeep, children run after jeep yelling. ECU children surround soldiers, plead with hands outstretched, looking up. ECU same. Holloway voiceover. GV's Holloway walks down village road, his voiceover, *"it's a rather strange feeling when one walks into a village as to whether they are for you, or against you. Whether they might be going to pick up a weapon and shoot at us or, assisting the Viet Cong in some way".*

GV's beach scene in Vietnam, boats, fishermen.

This documentary looks at the story of one soldier about to go off to the Vietnam War, his family, his army training, and thoughts about conscription. It then follows him to the battlefront in Vietnam. Bill Steller's innovative camerawork filming the marching soldiers and the troops in the field and air-to-air footage from helicopters during battle is significant for its improvisation and visual impacts.

CU face of Holloway on beach meeting South Vietnamese government soldiers who are trained by Australian, with US and NZ advisors. South Vietnamese officer addresses his troops, New Zealand advisor inspects them. GV's Holloway's briefing at H.Q. with Captain Paul Mensch at Australian taskforce HQ.

Air-to-air shot of helicopter in flight. Holloway sitting inside helicopter with Mensch.

Aerials same, repeat shots. Song overdub sung by two troopers in camp with a guitar.

GV's curfew ends in morning. Vietnamese people at army road block. Vehicles inspected by Australian troops. Soldiers speak Vietnamese to an elder woman.

WS road block scene. Pan roll-call troops – shirtless.
Holloway is now a platoon commander. He addresses troops on weapon safety and handling. Pan troops listening.

GV's troops patrol village Sui Nay, meaning the village of new life, children walk alongside troops down road. Village for refugees – CU children smoking, soldier speaks to children, villagers in the back of trucks driven away.

CU and GV's troops in jungle, rifles, talking in lowered voices, helicopter sounds in background.

Helicopter overhead lowers big artillery and supplies into jungle positions.

Cu Holloway talks to troops in jungle. Gives pep talk to troops. Warns troops to be more vigilant, *"start switching on".*

Pan L/R ground-to-air shot of "the flying juke box" propaganda plane which broadcasts to troops below.

WS big gun fires, smoke.

CU army chaplain gives prayer, gun fire in background, big fun is fired, troops kneel and pray in field.

CU troops play cards, listen to radio (us armed forces radio), gun firing all the while, troops resting, reading, and writing. Platoon makes camp for the night in jungle.

GV's troops in undergrowth. Holloway reassuring soldier on guard. Holloway walks through camp, speaks to other troops, *"now remember, tonight be very quiet, are you ready for this...yes…okay".*

WS campsite and troops in position.

GV's back at H.Q. – officers sing *"The twelve days of Christmas",* but with different words. Gun fire heard at night. Holloway singing, more gun fire. Morning arrives. Soldiers in jungle leave location.

GV's troops back at main camp line up, shirtless again, with rifles, being ordered to stand at ease. Officer briefs troops on next exercise. GV's and CU troops read letter in camp.

WS Vietnamese rock and roll band singing at hotel as entertainment for troops, *"My baby does the hanky panky".* CU guitars, playing, high heel boots, off duty soldiers drinking and partying, European/western women in short skirts and bikinis with troops off duty, partying singing *"Oh how I wanna go home",* troops clapping in time and singing.

Holloway voiceover. He say's he is at odds with his mother about going to Vietnam. WS Holloway and Thwaits walking on Tasmanian beach. His mother gardening, the engagement party overlay. *"I don't remember what mum said exactly, but, she was very, very, upset indeed. She feels that it is wrong for young people to be dragged away from their home life, and not really to have any say in the matter. I felt perhaps it would be better to leave the engagement until i came back. But being engaged meant more to her and I can see her point now, I'll be thinking about the marriage".*

ECU eyes, face of Holloway – voiceover – on his thoughts about being on patrol in Vietnam. MS troops at camp HQ. Troops go out on patrol. Holloway talks about killing that day.

APPENDIX D – PROGRAM EPISODE TITLES LIST

Chequerboard titles include:

Series 1969

- Gina -They don't even say hello
- It's a big day in any girl's life
- A Fair Innings
- We're all good mates and that's it
- What do you get married for?
- It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince
- Fortune teller - I'm dealing in emotions
- Too much for Maloney
- To err is human
- I could get married and have a family
- This is our front patio light which is very nice, I don't think
- A palace, a fortress, a tomb

Series 1970

- The same dose of treatment
- You can't have a child that looks ugly
- My brown skin baby, they take him away
- Who am I? Who am I?
- A different kind of love
- If you spread your arms and you legs wide
  you're going to fall like bowler hats
- At Londonderry
- We have so many marriages it's a joke
- We ain't going nowhere
- That in-between age - not one thing and not another
- I've never had cause to pull the trigger
- All my memories are in Newtown
- There's nothing to be excited about, is there?

Series 1970-71

- Well worth the effort
- Part of life
- It can't last much longer
- I don't like to look in the mirror
- She'd flown the coop
- I think perhaps I wanted to go and hide in the theatre
- The Australian actor is like a cactus plant – he's living in a desert

- A matter of supremacy
- On the spiritual phone
- Knock on every house door
- Everybody wants a plug
- I wanted my mother to talk to me
- If we don't go we'll never know, will we?

Series 1971

- Fifty eight point nine seconds
- They don't give a **** about your ability
- Mummy, they're staring at us
- Iren
- Heaven will be our reward
- Whether you're married or whether you're unmarried, you’re still a mo
- A year in the life of John Proctor
- I don't mind how I get the results, as long as it’s legal
- Sisterhood is powerful
- A sort of journey into darkness
- All the love in the world

Series 1972

- It could have gone either way for Timothy
- It's a natural high - I'm up all the time
- We were happy to go
- I reckon I'm an average Australian
- I'm sort of in between middle class if you like
- I don't like to say anything, but there could be a bit of prejudice here
- The one bit of paper
- Love is merely a four-letter word
- Close the book and go on from there
- It's not very hard to take at all
- Can I be this soldier?
- It's just like waiting for the end of the war
- I've got to have an audience - they bring something out in me
- I am concerned
- It's like being on a treadmill
- I was definitely addicted to it
- Look love, you're in for a few shocks
- What makes people tick fascinates me
- This just happens to be part of me
- You've gotta have a laugh

- What's so wrong with having a little opinion from an astrologer?
- It's a community effort and it's coming from the community
- I hate looking up to people

Series 1973

- And I like to think I'm art
- I kept telling them, their cheese tastes like soap
- If it wasn't for national health
- On the outer
- Having to compromise
- Once bitten, twice shy
- Something don't seem right
- With the best of intentions
- It's easier in the country
- The star spangled dream
- Forget your sawdust and banana skins
- A change is a holiday
- The charity dollars
- A part of progress
- You just can't lose and that's the end of it

Series 1974

- My first reaction was to buy a gun
- Be careful, be conservative
- I don't think I know how to make a paper kangaroo
- I have Turkish blood in my body, how can I put it off?
- I'm a marked criminal now
- One wonders it one could be more significant
- Thank you for a lovely day
- I'm in a hurry to become an adult
- They don't want to be carbon copies of their parents
- I think it's been an extremely valuable time
- You hit a kangaroo and a cow occasionally
- Tis all a chequerboard
- It wasn't going to happen to me
- What do you do for a living?
- It's monopoly money
- That's in the agreement
- No one else represents the public
- What's a girl like you
- I've forgotten how to relax

A Big Country titles include:

Series 1969

- Buck runners
- Wee Waa cocktail
- On Thursday
- The first Territorians
- A labour of love
- Jolliffe
- Peninsula people
- Snowy Mountain riders
- A race of their own
- The Gondwanaland Project
- Everyone's invited

Series 1970

- The drinking of wine
- The country rag
- Journey to Big Rock

Series 1971

- Hard rock hard cash
- Flying machines
- Doctor in the air
- A bush bishop
- They call me R.M.
- Beyond the beach
- The law at Finke

Series 1972

- King for a day
- Filling in the emptiness
- This river is our river
- Head office is a long way away
- A bit of good dirt
- The people versus the roo
- Buffalo
- Call of the bellbird
- A lions holiday

Series 1973

- A dream of opal
- Best of both worlds
- The chairman
- Marlin
- A place like Strathmore
- How high is up

Series 1974
- Stag license
- Ben Hall
- Lost culture
- Mario Il Pescatore
- The desert people
- The contract

Series 1975
- Dingo country
- The gambler
- Just another race
- Sounds of country music
- The commander
- The commissioner
- 36 wheels

Series 1976
- The Equaliser
- Undermining control
- I'll go down fighting
- Project Survival
- She simply wanted to fly
- Flinders Preserve
- On the hook
- Camp 84
- Kalumburu

Series 1977
- Robin Hood
- Papa wati: dingo people
- Looking ahead
- The enterprise
- The man in the red hat
- Trust a dingo
- Playing second fiddle
- The time of his life
- The Lakeland Experiment
- Coming of age
- King of the one horse sports
- Monte cristo
- The net fisherman
- The curry sale
- The magicians
- A brush with royalty
- Music makers

- The taipan man
- North west patrol

Series 1978

- The ultimate wave
- The forgotten people
- The Boulia Triangle
- Rather fight than feed
- Skyship
- Bert and Shayne
- Amy
- Off the beat
- A deadly purpose
- The women
- Man in a jigsaw
- The islander
- Shark catchers
- Spirit of Olga's
- Exmouth dreaming
- Project N
- The Bergin and McHugh expedition
- The legend of Jimmy Governor

Series 1979

- The diving doctor
- Perkins navy
- A family show
- Surf shaper
- The challenge of Lake Eyre
- A harvest of dragons
- The prices
- Peacemakers
- A little bit like yesterday
- Outback assignment
- The drivers
- Three for the tucker box

Series 1980

- Once a Territorian
- Following the flow
- Greenough women
- Billinudgel
- The auctioneer
- Targets
- Uncle Pete
- Bowhunter

- Tommy
- Hands upon the rock
- The paddocks
- Glove hustler
- The showman and the breaker
- Lowenstein and Hills
- The drivers
- La Volpe
- Outward bound
- You can keep your bows and arrows
- The white rose
- The Quilty
- A letter from Colleen

Series 1981

- Charters Towers gold
- One man's view
- The search
- Bogong High Plains
- Akin to the sea
- Young tom
- Riding the boom
- The drover
- Matilda country
- Paying back
- Spirit of the never never
- Touch of colour
- Midgley and Midgley - the old firm
- Our new Italy
- Clowning about
- The Darceys of Mallapunyah
- Musicians in uniform

Series 1982

- The prickle farm
- The darks
- Dingo
- Old racers
- The champion
- Promised land
- The bullfighter
- Gulf battlers
- Diamantina
- Quieter place

Series 1983

- Eleanor and John with love
- Cashmere
- 25 years in country
- Pushing the limit
- The pioneers
- The other side of Kosciusko
- The way it breaks
- Matilda country
- Luck of the chinaman
- Cherry tree hill
- The harpsichord maker
- The right clock
- Kare and son
- Softening the edges
- Tuna chasers
- 1891 - a time for heroes

Series 1984

- The give
- The city girls
- Dick's time

Series 1985

- Big sickness

Series 1991

- Something old, something new
- Circus
- Big things
- A fighting chance
- Good morning Alice
- The call me the slave driver
- The Toishan
- Dumped
- The kiwi shed
- Chainsaw
- Henderson's daughters

Series 1992

- Koala bears and chorus lines
- Diamonds are a girl's best friend
- Belly dancer
- A family in paradise

APPENDIX E - PHOTOGRAPHS

Pic. 1 Bill Steller 2007

Pic. 2 When in Rome…*Chequerboard* film crew filming an episode about a nudist colony titled “There’s nothing to be excited about, is there?” (1970).

Bill Steller Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 3 Filming a scene from *My Brother Jack* (1967) – Frank Parnell, Eric Lomas.

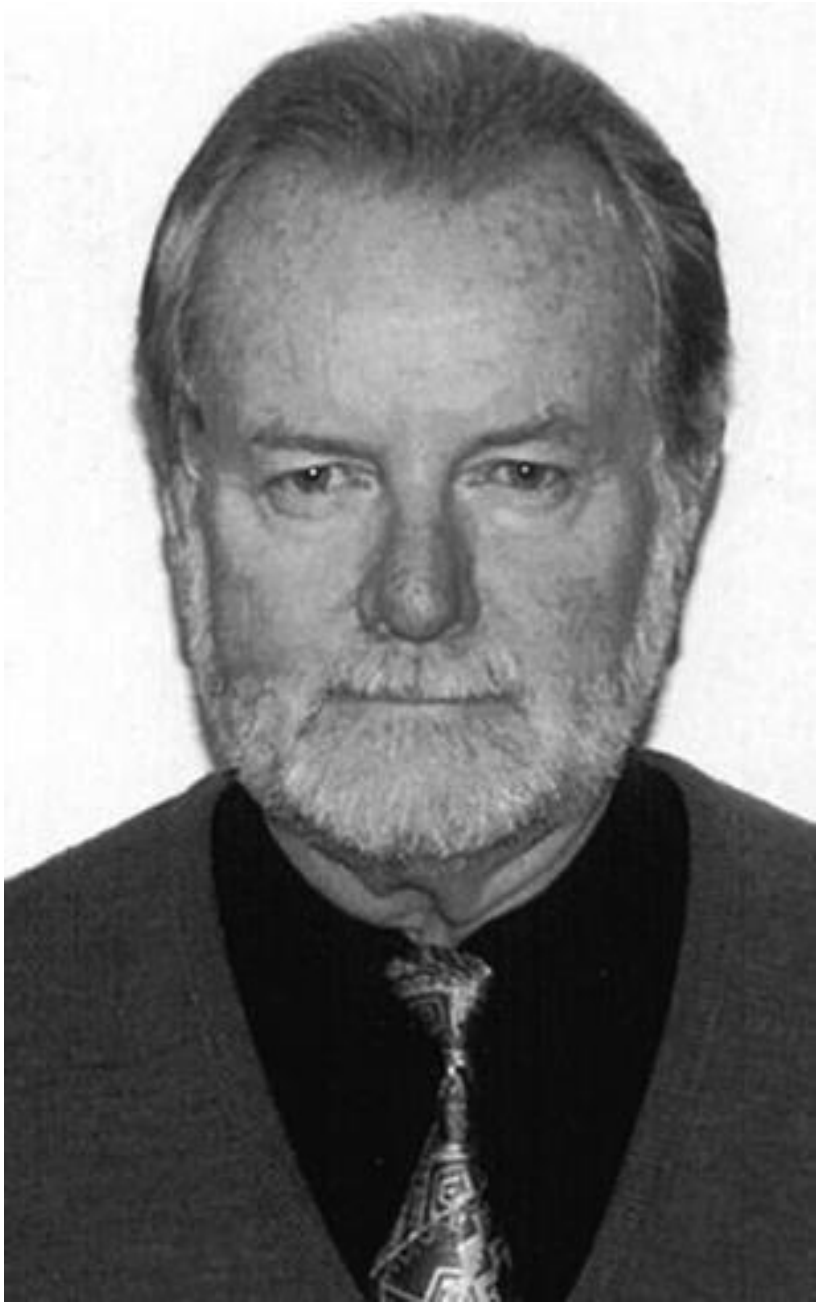
Bill Steller Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 4 Filming scene from *Over There* with Jack Thompson (ABCTV 1972).

Bill Steller Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 5 ABC Cinecamera Department men – early 1960s.

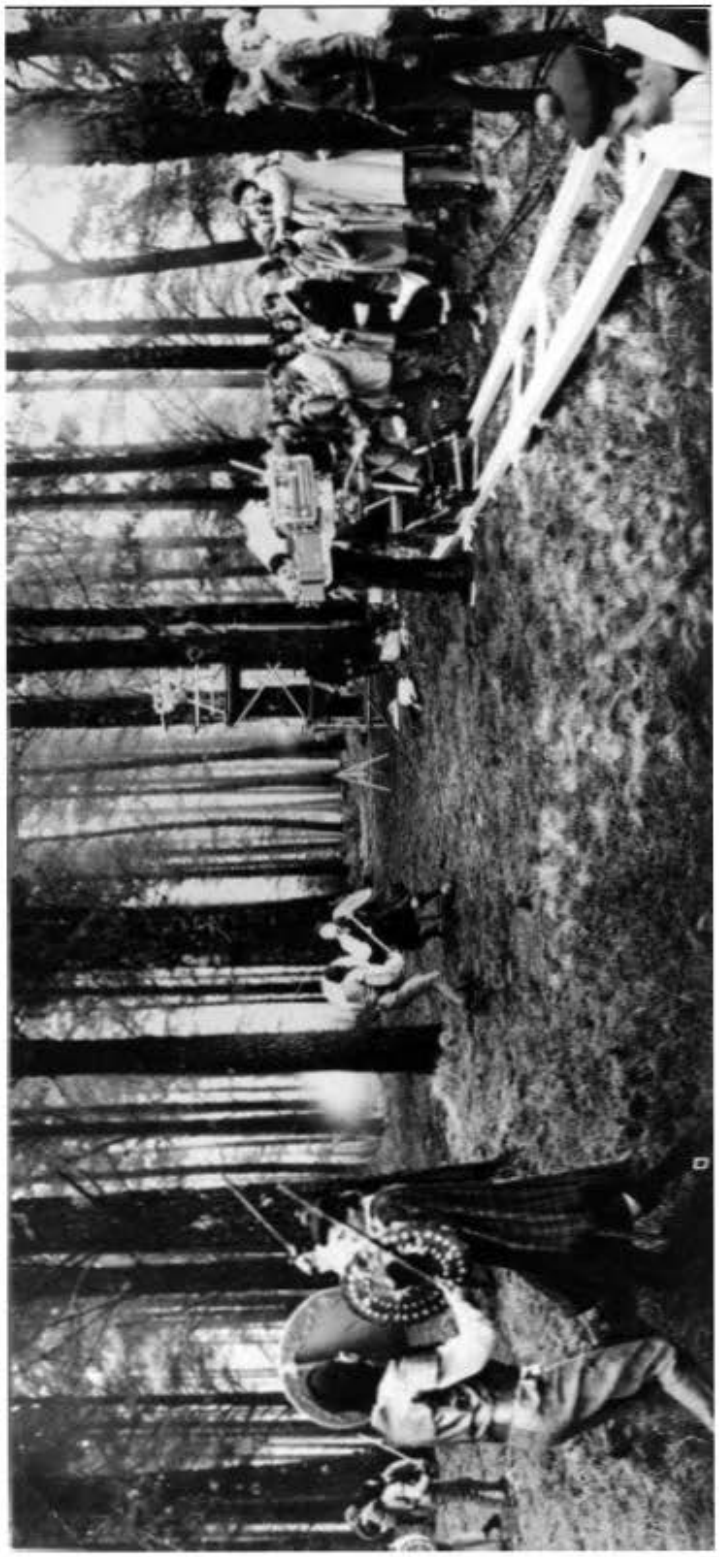
Bill Steller Collection. Photographer unknown.



Pic. 6 Max Donnellan - 2007

Pic. 7 Max Donnellan with Vicki Hammond when he was Floor manager in Melbourne on the *Vicki Hammond Show*. circa 1966.

Max Donnellan Collection. Photographer unknown.

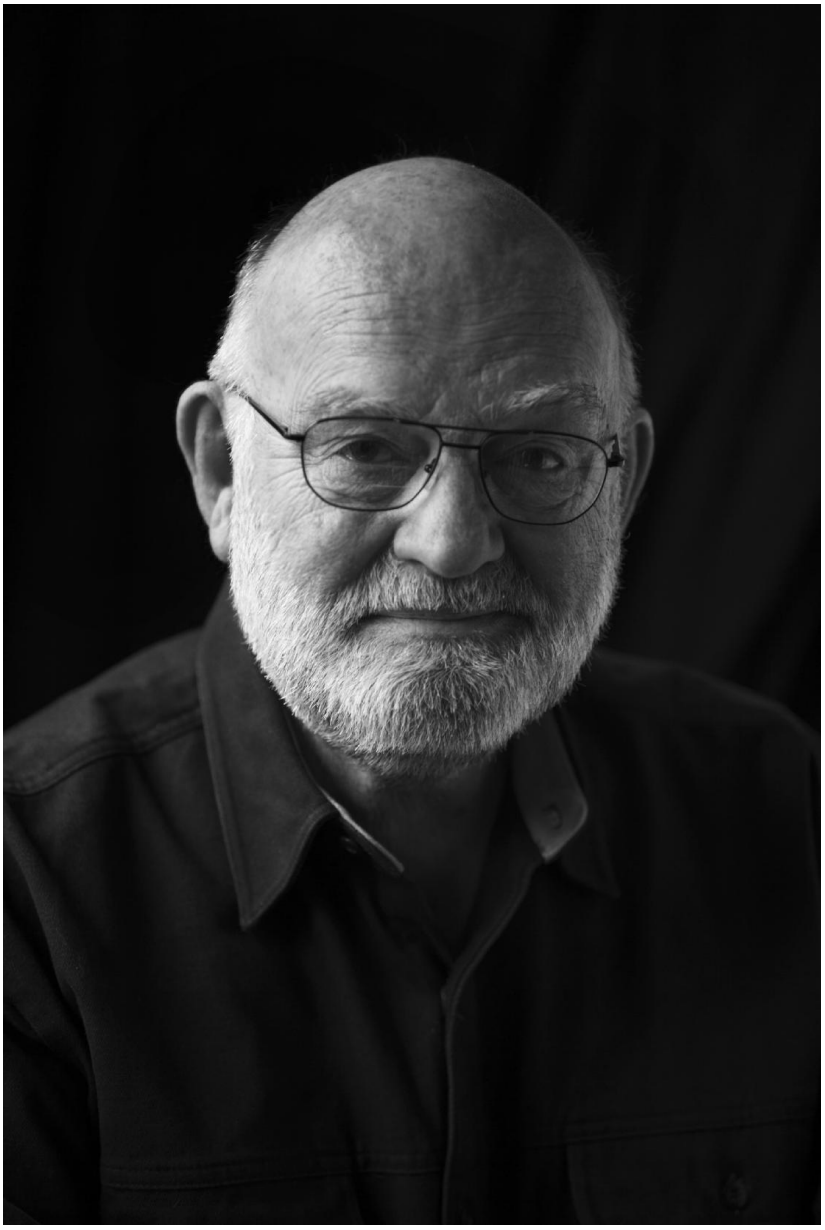


Pic. 8 On location on Mt Macedon in 1961 shooting scene for *Macbeth*. Max Donnellan is seen holding the megaphone on the rhs of photograph.

Max Donnellan Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic 9 Shooting scene for *A Big Country* episode "Just Another Race" in 1975. Left to Right: Tony Turnbull's son; Tony Turnbull; Ron Iddon interviewing; Max Donnellan directing; and an unknown cameraman.

Max Donnellan Collection. Photographer unknown.



Pic. 10 Storry Walton 2007

Pic. 11 Filming scenes for *My Brother Jack* (1967). Left to Right: George Johnston, author *My Brother Jack*; Ed Devereaux who played Jack; Storry Walton, Producer/Director.

Storry Walton Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 12 *My Brother Jack* on location (1967). Left to Right: Storry Walton, producer/director; John Heath, sound supervisor; Chris Christiansen who played Dad, partly obscured.

Storry Walton Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 13 Filming scenes in Sydney for *My Brother Jack* (1967). This production still includes many people who made distinguished careers in the industry in later years. Left to Right: half-framed, unknown; Alby Thoms, production assistant; Norm Hill, electrician (back to camera); unknown (on boom); Christopher Penfold, production assistant; June Thody seated in car, who played Sheila; Bill Steller, clapper; Storry Walton, director (back to camera); Gil Brealey filmed scenes, director (with megaphone); Ed Devereaux who played Jack (behind car); Bob Ellis in foreground, production assistant; Frank Parnell, cinematographer (partly obscured at the Mitchell camera); Elizabeth Knight, production assistant; Bill Grimmond, director of photography; Dorothy ?, wardrobe; Dick Brennan, production assistant (seated on ladder); Joan Minor, make-up; unknown; Charmian Clift, screenwriter of *My Brother Jack*.

Storry Walton Collection. Photographer Unknown.

Pic. 14 *Across the Equator* (1966) was one of the ABC's first live satellite programs. The only pre-recorded items were the filmed greetings between the Prime Ministers of Australia and Japan. The program caused uproar in Australia, but not in Japan, because in the live transmission the navel of a go-go dancer was briefly seen, offending many authorities in Australia. Filming the prime ministerial greeting: Left to Right: Storry Walton, director; Sir John Gorton, Prime Minister

.

Storry Walton Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 15 Filming *Across the Equator* (1966). Left to Right: Storry Walton, Director; Sir John Gorton (back to camera); Bill Steller, Cinematographer; unknown; Sue Milliken, script assistant.

Storry Walton Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 16 Filming scenes for a program on artist Jon Molvig in his studio in The Valley, Brisbane for *Six Australian Painters* ABCTV circa 1963, presented by Laurie Thomas, Director Queensland Art Gallery. The series was presented in black and white as colour television had not yet arrived. Left to Right: Bill Grimmond, cinematographer; Jon Molvig; Storry Walton, director.

Storry Walton Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 17 The 50 minute documentary *This Dreaming Spinning Thing* (1967), celebrated artist Sidney Nolan's 50th birthday, and took him to many locations of his early career including Melbourne, the Kelly Country around Glenrowan, the Wimmera, and Central Australia. The film was notable for the quality of its photography. Cinematographer Ron (Stringy) Lowe, was an early and skilled user of the lightweight handheld camera. Filming at Nolan's retrospective exhibition at the Art Galley of New South Wales. Left to Right: Sidney (later Sir Sidney) Nolan; Ron (Stringy) Lowe; unknown assistant; Storry Walton, director.

Storry Walton Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 18 Location shoot for children's drama/science fiction program *The Stranger* (1964).

Storry Walton Collection. Photographer unknown.

Pic. 19 The Steenbeck 16mm editing desk used as part of the author's research process in viewing and shot listing episodes of *Chequerboard* and *A Big Country*.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH TOM MANEFIELD
(*CHEQUERBOARD* CREATOR, PRODUCER)
JUNE 5, 2006. ARTARMON, SYDNEY

Hunt: Can you tell me how you first started working at the ABC, was *Chequerboard* the first thing

Manefield: Oh no, lord no, no I started working at the ABC in (gee that book that I had down there would have had all that) in 1967, and after…when the ABC started on air I started with the ABC as a floor manager, and I was a floor manager for two weeks and then I was a produces, you know, my aim was to be a producer. So that I was making programs at the ABC from the time they started I'd be considered one of the original producers

Hunt: Would that be 1957 rather than 67?

Manefield: 57, 57 sorry! And so that after working then on programs like everybody in those days our ambition was to go off the England and to work for the BBC because that was the Mecca of all good program making. And in about 1965, I went on the big trip to England and I worked in the music and arts department because that to my mind was sort of the Mecca or where the most forward looking program being made. Gee there was a very famous British program director, Hugh Weldon, have you heard of Hugh Weldon?

Hunt: No.

Manefield: If you were my age you would have heard of Hugh Weldon, and Hugh Weldon promoted lots of very clever young people including a young man called Humphrey Burton, whom he promoted to the head of the music and arts department and I'd done a lot in that area, but I was wanting to move into that area into documentary making so that was really what I wanted and I worked in the music and arts department under Humphrey Burton for a year or two and after I'd been in the BBC for a couple of years this new program started. I was living in Hampstead and we were watching it with my wife and mother who was staying with us at the time and it was called *Man Alive*. And as soon as I saw it I thought 'That's it!", that's where I've got to work. And you know I worked on the fringes of *Man Alive* and soon afterwards Ken Watts

Hunt: Oh yes

Manefield: You've heard of him

Hunt' Yes I have

Manefield: the head of programs, a very bright man and a great promoter of people, of the people he wanted to promote, I was lucky to be one of them. Ken Watts, he's not alive anymore. Ken Watts came to England for a visit and I said Ken Watts have you seen *Man Alive* and he said yeah I have I just watched it last night, and I said well look that's what I'd to do, I'd love to come back to Australia and start *Man Alive* in Australia. He said when are you coming back? So I came back to Australia, but it took him about a few months, maybe even six months to set up all the administrative wherewithal to get *Man Alive* started in Australia, and *Man Alive* started in Australia was *Chequerboard*- directly derivative of *Man Alive*.

And I worked with may of the bright, the two bright people who were in *Man Alive* in those days, let me just think of their names, Hugh Weldon, and (it'll come the names), but *Man Alive* didn't have a faceless interviewer, and I was critical of it myself in England because the interviewer, and particularly one whose name won't come, was very much promoting of himself as well as the people. So that I said to Ken at the time when we came back, well we're going to do this with faceless interviewers we don't want the interviewer to be intruding, or to be a personality of the whole thing. So we came back and Ken promoted it in completely, he put his eggs in the basket he had some resistance in the ABC at the time from the top administrators, one of the most resistant people was Clem Semler.

Hunt: Why was that?

Manefield: He was resistant to everything, he was the negative No man. But Clem Semler and a few others, they were saying Australian's can't talk, they can't communicate and I was saying bull shit! You know since I was a child my mother would stand at the back fence or be with her friend over the street and they were talking themselves blind. My father was builder and I'd go on to jobs with him and my father talking to plasters, carpenters, tilers, they were talking themselves blind, Australians can talk and they love to talk. And that was all new thoughts to them for somebody to say this that Australians, weren't the laconic Australian, but that they had verbal diarrhoea was the 'thing' I used. And Ken agreed with me, but other people in the ABC didn't and they were only convinced when they started to see the early *Chequerboards*. Ken was wanting to set up a documentary unit, there was no unit. And he used this group that he set up around us as really the backbone of that documentary unit. And he gave use, well right from the start he was there, Geoff Daniels, as an executive producer, and he was exactly that that's not a producer in any way with the content, it's the money getting the staff arranging to get us here there and anywhere else, first class, we couldn't have done better. And he and I were the closest of team, we had lots of big rows, but they were but they

were big rows about constructive things that led to the programs being better.

Hunt: You need that don't you?

Manefield: Yeah I thought you did. Because I'm one of the people that believe in you know hard critical climate, some people used to think that I was a difficult bugger you know, but I don't think that I was a difficult bugger

Hunt: I think if you're not passionate about something, it's not worth doing. It's the passion…

Manefield: Yes and I know one thing for instance Geoff had admired that too he'd recognised my passion and he went along with it, you know and encouraged me in my passion. And we built a team, this is the team is all here (looking at program info list).and most of them of course, became quite dedicated to the concept, a few sort of really couldn't buy it and found it a little bit difficult, the intrusiveness. And the other thing that I was saying is and we're not going to be worried about what we ask people, we will ask them anything we want to ask them that we think is of value you know to understanding the program. And so this first program here, *Gina*, it scared people. Gina was blind, and she was about 16 or 17 and during the course of the interviewing we asked her about her first period, and she, nobody had told her about periods, she'd got to that age, living with a grandmother and an aunt, and nobody had mentioned to her about periods, and she found what she thought was probably blood running down her leg while she was at school and she had no understanding of it

Hunt: It would have been terrifying…

Manefield; Yes. And so she told us in very clear terms that, well that of course set the world on fire, here we are with a harmless blind girl and we're straight away asking her about her period.

Hunt: discussing women's issues….that's a very personal question….

Manefield: Yes…we were of course were concerned about how she was coping with living with being blind and the periods just came into it as a part of it, but it indicated that we were willing to ask anybody about anything that we thought was important.

Hunt: but that's also the issue isn't it, people sometimes may not even realised that people who are handicapped have things like that they have to cope with

Manefield: Oh yes. We thought it was a very important point that this person have never been properly educated in the normal ways

Hunt: basically being a woman.

Manefield: Yes, I don't know if we need to go into the nemesis of it……..

Hunt: I've seen a few, as I mentioned on the phone, not many at this stage but I've ordered a few that you suggested – *A matter of supremacy* and others…*It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince*,

Manefield: Yes, that's a MUST.

Hunt; Well that's on the way, I'll be seeing that when I return.

Manefield: Yes here No. 6 and it's directed by David Stiven, a fabulous director, and David Stiven directed the first program with Gina, its only a matter of a man with David's humanity that you would trust with doing things like that because he's not doing it to be sensational in any way he's got to do it in a feeling full way so that the audience will not feel offended by the sensational. David was a great find for us in setting up the way the programs were going to develop. Now David Stiven also did *It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince.* Setting up the early team there were some clever script assistants and people that worked around us I had worked with that I'd never thought had been properly extended in any way about making programs and this was another new development, I grabbed those people and made them researchers…and the researchers to my mind were the backbone of the program, they had to be willing to go out……and before I get to the whole team we were lucky that on that first program Mary Covington had come to Australia to work, and she'd been recommended into our team and she'd worked on *Man Alive*, you see so we gave Mary the first program to research and then to interview and that was really very important because it set up for the whole team, what we were going to be about.

Hunt: the tone….

Manefield; yes…I knew what it was going to be about because I'd worked on it all and I had a clear concept of what *Chequerboard* was to be, and that's what it became you know.

Hunt: Was it an exact copy of *Man Alive*, or did you put your own twist on it

Manefield: Oh no we got rid of the interviewer

Hunt: Apart from that though

Manefield: Oh no we were much better than *Man Alive* really because when it came to international criticisms of it, we were clearly recognised as much better than *Man Alive* because we went more I think deeply into the subject matter. They were good *Man Alive*, they were restricted themselves to half hours too and that's a big restriction. We made as you will see here no time restriction – 38, 53, 36, 38, 30, 45, 44, 48

Hunt: And there was no problem with the programming that you could have….

Manefield: No, no we got that established quickly when they saw the nature of the programming and we were on at 8.30 at night too so we were taking up a prime spot. Because the other thing was as soon as we hit air, we hit ratings, you know, and this pleased the ABC of course, well it pleased Ken Watts because he was seen as taking big risks by the bigger program people around him, but when those ratings came in,

Hunt: they were all for it…

Manefield: Ken Watts was made…and he was never off side with us, never, he promoted us, encouraged us, there were sometimes in some subject matter we though we might be a bit risky in doing or not doing that, and then we'd find a way and he'd say go ahead….he trusted us.

Hunt: One of them I was talking with Bill about was *At Londonderry* which I have seen.

Manefield: Oh that's a great, that is my favourite program.

Hunt: I was stunned, I picked it just randomly and I sat there dumbfounded.

Manefield: Well, that's my favourite program because it was a good film. Not only was it a *Chequerboard* that never claimed to be good films – the jump cuts in between interviews that was apocryphal to filmmakers then, but I said bugger 'em you know we're just interested in the content

(TAPE TWO SIDE A, THE NEXT DAY, 6.7.06, ARTARMON, SYDNEY)

Manefield: When you were in the start of my career, we didn't cover that very well

Hunt: No well if you can go over that, that'd be terrific if you've got time.

Manefield: Yes. Well you know as I said I started in the ABC the year it started

Hunt: And 57, is that the…

Manefield: 57 yes

Hunt: yes we figured that one out.

Manefield: yes March 57

Hunt: okay you didn't have a month…

Manefield: The ABC, it was a really funny story, as I start my first job, I'm an entomologist by training.

Hunt: Wendy said you were a doctor, but she didn't know what of

Manefield: yes well I'm a scientist, and I started off as, I was district entomologist for North Queensland when I retired, and I think I held the world's record I was the only entomologist in the world who loathed insects…and that's a fact, I really loathed insects.

Hunt: oh goodness me!

Manefield: And I always wanted to be in theatre and so I was in little theatre groups wherever I was living in North Qld. and we won a couple of national drama festivals, one in Adelaide and one in North Qld, with stuff that I directed, and I acted in a lot. But that was what I really wanted to do. But in families in those days being in the theatre was not nice

Hunt: Frowned upon

Manefield: yes. And my family was sort of you know upper middle class on my mothers side working class on my fathers side, but with here. Any my father too actors were poofters, and you just not nice, and as well as that I'd got top passes in school

Hunt: don't waste yourself in the theatre sort of thing.

Manefield: and at university, and I got a university medal and so they thought that my wasting my time, but it was of course my great love, and my thirtieth birthday was coming up and I thought now or never and I was far enough away in Queensland in Innisfail for my parents not to worry and I upped and resigned and I came to Sydney.

Hunt: good on you

Manefield: And that was…I started work at Channel 7 and I'd been employed there by the managing director, a recently retired judge, his son's still a judge, anyhow that judge was head of the network, but he and Rags Henderson

whose a famous name in Channel 7 as the manager, fell out, and everybody that the judge employed was sacked! So I was sacked having hardly started at Channel 7, and I walked out of Channel 7 up at Epping, I lived in, I was born in Epping, Epping's my home town. And I walked out of there and I got on the phone to the ABC and the fellow who answered it, I was put on to this Jim Hall who was in charge of Gore Hill in those days that's where the studios were, he said oh well can you come and see me, I said of yes I could come early next week if you like, he said no I mean now, so I got on a bus from Epping to Gore Hill and went to see him and after talking to me for a while he rung up the then administrative head of the ABC Tal Duckmanton and say to Tal you know you want to talk to this man, and I said oh well I can go in next week (this was Thursday I think), and Talbot Duckmanton said not can you come in tomorrow. So I went in the next day to talk to Talbot Duckmanton and they said you know can you start work, I said when, they said now!, And that was before it (ABC) went to air, they were recruiting to train me as a producer, they knew…they put me in as a floor manager to just know they way studios worked and that was a good idea, but I was only there a fortnight and I was quickly..that Jim Hall who was in charge of the operation at Gore Hill he took to me you know I could see he took to me and as a matter of fact a few months later when he had to move on, not move on, but just go to the other states to open the television channel, I was made boss of Gore Hill. But that's not what I wanted to do, what I wanted to do was produce and then when it came that Duckmanton wanted me to go on to a administrative job I knocked it back to stay in production, and once Duckmanton had said later on oh no Manefield had his chances at administration, and I stayed where I was.

Hunt: and you were fine

Manefield: In the early days, my cap was like everybody else's, like Storry's , was on working drama because this is where my background had been that I wanted to be a drama producer and the ABC pushed me into making documentaries. There was one series that I made called *The Desert Campaign*, and then the ABC got mixed up in a co-production with the BBC *The Great War* series, and I was the Australian producer on *The Great War* series which took me to England, and there I then met Hugh Weldon was the name of the fellow who was the administrator and the young fellow I mentioned on the tape before, Humphrey Burton, was under him. Now both of those very bright men. But Humphrey Burton impressed me enormously, he was younger that I was but he was really with it and then I moved on to *Man Alive*, and the Ken visited England and (I went through this) and that's then well in the 60s. Because I think I moved on to *Chequerboard* after I'd come back – I went to England for three or four years and then I came back to Australia and it was about 67 when we started

Hunt: and *Chequerboard* started 69

Manefield: Oh that's when it went to air

Hunt: yes

Manefield: but all the pre-production and planning of it, so I think that then covers all the background

Hunt: yes that's good because that was not quite clear last night

Manefield: yes, and then the first days on the job – there's nothing there that's of interest to you, you know it was just the first days of television, but I was trained in television but then when I moved on to *Chequerboard* this was then film production, not videotape production. So that I had little interest in the technical side of videotape production because I was then a film man.

Hunt: Yes well I'm particularly interested in *Chequerboard* because that's the focus of what I'm wanting to write about.

Manefield: Yes well that was all film, everything about it. And you know when I said to you that we were better than the *Man Alive*, there were a few times that our things were entered in overseas awards and we walked away from BBC and David Attenborough was then head of production in the BBC had seen these programs I was making in Australia and I had met him in England, I'd met him actually at Cambridge I'd been there as a student, and David Attenborough came to Australia to offer me the job as the head of the science unit in the BBC, but *Chequerboard* was being all the thing and winning awards and I was having a ball…

Hunt: yes and why would you leave…

Manefield: yes well I was totally consumed in getting *Chequerboard* going and what we were doing and the team we'd built were a very close knit team they were great people to work with

Hunt: Were they the pick of the bunch of the industry at the time

Manefield: Well of course, oh yeah I picked out the best cameraman, Bill Steller, and his assistant was Geoff Burton, and then Geoff, after Bill became a director before the end of the first series, yes Geoff Burton then became the cameraman and Geoff was a promising young cameraman then and of course he's now a top Australian cameraman. A lot of these people were, Tony Wilson worked as a cameraman, and anyhow all the names of the

people are down there. Yes and I chose the best sound man this is where Geoff (Daniels) is absolutely…he would me sure that we got Bill Steller and he would make sure

Hunt: he was a mover and a shaker and you were a creator

Manefield: yes. That we got the best cameraman, if I wanted a certain person to be a director, like David Stiven at the start, and there were a lot of people when we started even like Storry or John Power who were interested in what we were doing and they were quite interested to come in a do a program some of them didn't last long. There's another name there of course, that's Neil Munro – he was an early director and there were the top…see Neil Munro (looks at program info) edited the first couple of programs and he did *What do you get married for?* And then he edited *It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince*. Which is as I would say in the first series that's what really established us because then the politicians stood up and took notice, and Geoff was absolutely invaluable he got us the men we wanted and people I suppose some of the really fought to get on to *Chequerboard*

Hunt; from the beginning or did that take a while to happen

Manefield: well from soon after the start because I think they knew that I was back from England and had worked on *Man Alive* and I knew what I was on about. I don't think that I was regarded always as an easy person to get on with and I think that related to my drive……(begin again – soup incident) ….producer of *Man Alive* and he was the producer with Desmond Wilcox. Desmond Wilcox was a very well known English front man and flamboyant fellow but Bill Morton was the fellow I said to Storry make sure you see Bill Morton and then ..he told you he worked on three or four *Man Alive* programs.

Hunt: yes…we've gone through the early days you spoke about last night and getting the program started and on making the particular programs – you talked about the researchers having great input into getting the people you wanted to do the stories on, did you have anything to do with, obviously you would have had final decisions and things like that, but did you become involved in the research the analysis, or the actual initial conversations with the people, or did the researchers do all that.

Manefield: Absolutely. That was the original part of the brief, I would brief them to send them out and what they were doing and of course mostly these researchers as I told you yesterday were young inexperienced people what I thought in most cases and Geoff as well just had talent and of course they were keen to be on it because pretty soon *Chequerboard* was getting well known. Now for instance David Stiven who did these early programs

he was a young director at the time, or wanting to be a director, so he was a keen as anything to be on it this new type of program. And as I told you Mary Covington had come back from England, and that was fortuitous but she was only around for about a few months and then she, she'd come out to Australia because he boyfriend was here and after a few months she married him and went off to have babies.

Hunt: Your researchers learnt from her, the techniques that she used on *Man Alive*?

Manefield: No. oh she helped them and they watched her programs, but know they learnt from me, and then from Robin Hughes. Robin came on to the program as a researcher and interviewer, and she's here on the 8th program about the ex-priest *Too much for Maloney*. Robyn was bright programming person who'd had experience in BBC radio and she was back in Australia, and I remember Tom Hayden, she was working in the science branch where Jenny Pockley's husband was in charge of it, and through that I got on to Jenny Pockley as a researcher, and she brought the program *Too much for Maloney*, she knew the ex-priest Maloney and she came with that program. Well Robin was really very much attuned very quickly to what we wanted to do and sort of hung on every word and in the briefings and Robin took over the co-ordinator of research and so that Robin then would take over the briefing of people, this is by about the second series anyhow, and Robin's contribution to the program was invaluable she was a bright psychology major and intellectually a bright person and they all had respect for Robin.

Hunt: Well it wouldn't work otherwise would it?

Manefield: No. And Jenny Pockley had come from New Zealand and she also was an academic sort of person, but mostly they weren't. There were a lot of people too, as I said, in the ABC that wanted to get on like Dick Oxenburgh, he wanted to get on the program

Hunt: Did he do many?

Manefield: No , he only did the one. And David Roberts was a find early, he was a new trainee in the ABC, a new graduate and, Ken Watts said to me I think you would be interested in this young fellow and I met David and he was brand newly employed and I said yeah I'm interested, so he started work in the ABC on *Chequerboard*.

Hunt: tremendous start.

Manefield: yes. And he turned out to be one of our start performers. Peter Grose made an important, Peter Grose was a well known journalist from *The Australian*, and he made an important contribution early

Hunt: *The Policeman Told Me To Go To Bed*…..

Manefield: yes. And his interviewing was very intrusive,

Hunt: Bill was telling a little bit about that one I think,

Manefield: was he yes…Peter Grose he was a good interviewer to us then, see John Crew was another man who was a well experienced ABC newsman and he only made the one program and sort of he really couldn't see the difference in *Chequerboard* from the news program. So these people, oh and John Power was here for two programs, interviewing two programs, the wedding program *It's a big day in any girls life*, and *A Fair Innings*, the mayors….

Hunt: Yes I've seen that, when you asked me that last night I said no, but, I knew it as that, *A Fair Innings*, so I have seen it and that was quite interesting and the poor old lady who was the Mayor of Leichhardt or wherever it was, and basically what the hec was she doing there….

Manefield: Exactly! It was the point of the program. She was the front man for Lenny McPherson, Lenny McPherson was Mr. Big in Sydney.

Hunt: And she didn't seem to realise it,

Manefield: No….

Hunt: or if she did it was just so clever that….it was a big of a worry especially the interview on the footpath on election day when she's talking, she's got her friend by her side sort of thing and all these friends would come up and chat to her and the interviewer is trying to ask her questions and she gets lost in all the whatever that's happening around her, totally blocks out whatever the interviewer asks her. You know, you are Mayor you're supposed to be able to answer these questions like that and it was very, a bit disturbing.

Manefield: Yes. In the early day's camera veritas, cinema veritas was the sort of buzz thing around. I never thought of cinema vertae as what we were doing I thought of it as free camera techniques that the camera could move freely and zoom freely, and it was on the shoulders and they walked into the action.

Hunt: Is that the Éclair camera, is that what is was called, it was very portable, or was that later?

Manefield: Oh no we were into more portable cameras. There were a couple of different ones, Bill would've….

Hunt: Yes he was talking about something like that and Storry said he introduced the Éclair to Australia or something.

Manefield: Storry did did he?

Hunt: Yes Storry said that Bill did, so

Manefield: Yes well I think that would be right, and that would be on *Chequerboard*.

Hunt: Yes absolutely at that time that's when Bill did it.

Manefield: Yes.

Hunt: Yes, it was interesting because Storry was saying the camera was able to be, it had this sort of manoeuvrable lens or something or rather, you could have it here facing that way, and you had a viewer so you could really be filming behind you. So I thought hmmmm….very clever, you know they think you're filming there when you are actually filming there, a very clever idea of the camera, but whether it's ethical or not…but that was just about that particular technology

Manefield: But know as I said the stuff that was going on about cinema verite I suppose applied very much to us, but I like to think of it as I said, free camera techniques.

Hunt: That sort of camera technique seems to have come up more recently in drama in television and it's very disturbing it's almost like subjective camera – it's hard to watch but it's interesting just the same.

Manefield: Yes

Hunt: And maybe you were saying *Chequerboard* did that from the beginning

Manefield: Yes.

Hunt: An innovator, as it were, even then.

Manefield: Yes. Now where should we go to from here.

Hunt: Well, if you can, I mean I don't want to take up a lot of your time, rather than go through all this, we did answer some of the stuff last night about the radicalism side of things that I'm interested in. Corporatisation you weren't there for from what I understand so that's fine, we don't need to worry about that.

Just one question really, you went on to Film Australia after the ABC is that correct.

Manefield: Yes

Hunt: Can you explain from a filmmaker's point of view, was there any difference in working say the ABC as an institution and Film Australia as a, I think it's a semi-institution, or is it government run or assisted

Manefield: Yes it's a government agency, the government filmmaking organisation

Hunt: So you had similar controls, restrictions, or similar freedoms, everything was the same, was there any difference?

Manefield: I was employed there…..I had left the ABC to do some freelance work and when Film Australia needed a new director/producer they actually new that I was freelancing and they thought that they would put an offer out for me. I'm actually surprised in many ways that I took it because they offered me they top salary, but it was a lot lower than I was earning.

Hunt: What was the reason in the long run, did you every think why?

Manefield: Why I took it?

Hunt: Yes was it just another opportunity, or different direction

Manefield: Yes just another opportunity and I could see it would give me an opportunity to do some more programs. I did a number of short programs this is what I was trying to sell at the time to the Education Department but they wouldn't come up with the funding for it, and to make short stimulus films, 10 – 12 minutes like little parts of episodes of *Chequerboard* as stimulus, discussion starters for educational purposes in the social welfare area of education. Well Film Australia in that original offer I took what I wanted to do, and they said well come and make them with us. So I made a whole body of these short stimulus films, some about migrant education, and some about sex education. They were very successful films, and quite lauded, some of them are still in use in the Education Department.

Hunt: Do they have an umbrella title or are they all just separate.

Manefield: There probably was umbrella title

Hunt: I could look it up, that's alright.

Manefield: And then, I was again immediately being very successful, I had people from *Chequerboard*, Jan Sharp, David Roberts, coming to work for me at Film Australia, yes to do these things on contracts.

Hunt: So they still worked at the ABC

Manefield: No they were then working on contracts and they came and did contractual work for me at Film Australia. They make a series of films every year or two, they've always got them on the go, and they'd made a series in Indonesia, which I thought was a top series.

Hunt: What was that?

Manefield: 'Cause I made the next one in Russia. They have an overall title for these series on international countries.

Hunt: That's alright I can check it out.

Manefield: And the Indonesian one's I thought were great, and I used to used them as a model for the type of documentary when I was showing some people things, can't think of who produced

Hunt: It's alright it'll be out there I'll just so some research

Manefield: See they weren't mine, they were made before I went to Film Australia, but then the next international series Up the Russians, and of course they wanted me to go and made the series in Russia, and we made three series in Russia, called *The Russians,* and the director was one of their top directors, Arch Nicholson, and Arch and I went to Russia to research these and then make them. They sold and played on Channel 7 at 8.30, that's really break-through stuff. And then after *The Russians* they asked me to do the series in Japan, and I went researched the series on Japan and that's when I got the sack.

Hunt: Oh dear!

Manefield; Yes over *The Russians*, I'd made a second series besides the three programs for school education, we made six programs for school education on various aspects of Russia – I was just looking at it in there I could dig out material if you want it – and *The Russians*, I forget exactly why, I didn't refuse duty, oh the Catholic education system saw these as

propaganda and I was asked to answer their criticism, and I said no that's justifiable criticism their good Catholics they see it that way, and the boss instructed me to write a rebuttal, and I said no that's fair, if the Catholics want to see it that way and publish it that way let them go ahead I – write about that what the series is about. And he said that was a refusing a duty and he sacked me and I took him to court and won it hands down.

Hunt: Terrific!

Manefield: Yes…and of course, the boss left soon. Ken Watts was then the head of the Film Commission, he'd left the ABC and was head of the Film Commission, and Denys Brown who was the boss at Film Australia was taken to task. I'm surprised that Ken Watts let Denys Brown sack me, but then when he lost of course he took Denys Brown apart, because really I think (and I wouldn't say this publicly), but I made fools of them.

Hunt: And rightly so, that's censorship

Manefield: Yes. And so I was reinstated and given three months worth of pay and paid my legal fees, and then the head of production there at the time, Tim Read, he was moved. But when you take your bosses to court and you beat him you're not in a good situation anymore.

Hunt: Well no, but if you don't do it they're going to continue on the same way aren't they, the next one and the next…

Manefield: The whole thing was stupid, Denys Brown was not a man like that I don't know why he did what he did, bit I know for instance, I know he never like me, I think he thought of me as an upstart and I think he just goofed by sacking me.

Hunt: Now Tom, I want to go back to a few *Chequerboards*…and I'm going to be seeing these particular episodes when I return. So if you can just elaborate on them a little, whatever you can remember, one you suggested I look at when I spoke to you before I came down was *A matter of supremacy* about marriage two couples and conflicts and crisis between, yes can you talk about that a bit. What do you recall.

Manefield: I remember it was very difficult to research. I think Jilly Coote was the researcher of it, I can't find it here,

Hunt: 1970

Manefield: What number program

Hunt: 0072675, that's the ABC number here. You did say it was one that I…

Manefield: Oh here it is it's program number 34 *A matter of supremacy*, oh no it wasn't Jilly Coote, it was Joanne Penglaze she was a girl we brought on she was the daughter of one of my previous life girlfiends and Joanne was a new graduate a very bright girl and she worked for us for quite a while and did very good work. *A matter of supremacy* was a difficult one for them to find people who would actually argue all the time in front of camera and she finally found them but…

Hunt: How did you do that did you just place a camera in the home with them You just lived with them?

Manefield: You no the team went along.

Hunt: Like reality TV.

Manefield: Yes. And Joanne just started to talk to them, and as Joanne found these people and as soon as they started to talk they started to argue.

Hunt: Incredible

Manefield: Oh yes, it was incredible.

Hunt: Like push a button

Manefield: Yes Joanne did it very well. It was interviewed by, I knew it was done early because it was interviewed by Peter Grose who I told you was this journalist and he was you know the provocative sort of a fellow who would have stimulated them to argue quite easily.

Hunt: A bit of a stirrer.

Manefield: Yes. He was a provocative journalist yes. He went to England as part of a large publishing firm. And more than that I don't think I've got a lot to say just see the program, I thought the whole thing was hysterical, seeing the rushes when ever the camera started rolling they were at one another.

Hunt: That's incredible, I wonder if they are still together, poor things, maybe that's what they lived on, that kept them going. And the other one that I have seen is *I Can't Last Much Longer* about PNG coffee planters, do you remember that one at all?

Manefield: Yes I do.

Hunt: Because I thought that was extremely interesting, a bit like Leahy's story.

Manefield: I had to take over the interviewing and directing in that because it didn't all work out in the rushes and we bought John Procter down Australia, he was then married and with his New Guinea bride, Wahe, was living in Balmain and we had to take them to an area that would look like and do a whole lot of interviewing to tie up the New Guinea footage, so I had a lot to do with that. It was a very difficult program to make because Wahe was almost inarticulate you know her New Guinea language.

Hunt: Is that the right one, I support it is.

Manefield: What's it called?

Hunt: It can't last much longer.

Manefield: And you see Jilly Coote and Bill Steller and David Roberts. David Roberts went to New Guinea. Jilly Coote was to be the director you see, and I've got Bill Steller down there as being a cameraman

Hunt: It says here director, this is the ABC stuff

Manefield: Yes he was the director as well as David Telfer. Bill Munro was the editor, It can't last much longer I forget why that title related to it.

Hunt: I think they were talking about whether they'd stay on because they were having issues with the indigenous workers just taking off when they felt like it and not getting enough productivity continuing with the coffee plantation operation and they'd been there for a long time and they were a bit worried as to whether they would be able to get out before

Manefield: All I remember was that it didn't all tie together until I got Wahe and John Procter and we filmed them at Ball's Point in the bush there on a big rock area in the bush to get the footage that would tie all the New Guinea stuff together. Just meaning it was a difficult program to make so I actually took over directing part of that as well. Another program here you'll see that I directed totally the interviewer was Robin Hughes and Connie Chobanian was an American academic who was being in Australia who wanted to work on *Chequerboard*.

Hunt: What's the program called?

Manefield: *A Part of Life*. This was death, these were people who were dying now none of the directors wanted to direct it, so I said oh bugger I'll direct it myself and Robin was exactly the same and she said well I'll interview it, so we were the guns, we took the program over. And I think *A Part of Life* is one of the top programs too.

Hunt: I'll try and get to watch that one too.

Manefield: But lets just go back to the start and I'll walk through ones that I think are the most…..No.2 *A Big Day in any girls life* – that's where the bride fell in love with David Stiven. See that. Then No. 6 - and that really set the style of *Chequerboard*. I think No. 2 set the style of *Chequerboard* too. *Too Much for Maloney* – That's Robin's first job and this is the priest leaving priesthood and wanting to marry.

Hunt: A very significant issue

Manefield: Oh that was very big at the time

Hunt: Wasn't the whole change of the Catholic Church

Manefield: Yes. The Church totally opposed it and. *The Policeman told me to go to bed* – about neighbours, that's neighbours that argue all the time.

Hunt: We have a lot of that on programs like *TodayTonight* don't we and programs like that today?

Manefield: Yes. The only one that in which there were some real problems in *Chequerboard* amongst the people was this program No. 10. *To Err Is Human.*

Hunt: Oh yes that's the other one that I wanted you to talk about – commercial travel who was supposed to be a womaniser.

Manefield: Yes was he ever. The commercial travel (we haven't got his name there), the program was introduced to us by one of the people who'd come to research, Bob Ellis. Have you heard of Bob Ellis.

Hunt: Yes I have.

Manefield: Right a notorious fellow. We sacked Bob Ellis from *Chequerboard* over all of that and his research was totally unreliable. There was one research we were doing on a program that he was on about people who were afraid to go out, agro phobia, and people who just couldn't go out, and when we got there to interview and film on his research the woman that never went out to the shop and sat a home playing the piano was down at the local shopping centre shopping. And there were other things, his research was totally unreliable it was all in his head the way he wanted it to be, and we got rid of him. Now Bob Ellis' father was the travelling salesman in this program, and the major thing about that program was also the difference between the father and the mother how much she put up with all this sort

of womanising, and I thing the major motivation in Bob is he didn't like his mother and he loved and admired his father and wanted to get square.

Hunt: Goodness it's all very Freudian isn't it?

Manefield: Yes. And therefore it became a very difficult program and we had to get rid of Bob Ellis and he tried, because Bob Ellis was flamboyant character that was well known and he tried to usurp the crew, but anyhow. I wouldn't make that a very good program, it's not bad and it worked – to having this man admitting to how man fucks he'd had you know a night….

Hunt: It's an interesting subject to be brought out into the open and it's always one of those things that's always talked about

Manefield: yes commercial travellers…

Hunt: As I said last night….so that's another radical view I guess, here it is in front of you.

Manefield: And the next one, program 11.

Hunt: I've seen that one

Manefield: Have you seen that?

Hunt: I have yes.

Manefield: Yes well that was one of the most difficult programs to research and get going as well because these people were 'maddies'.

Hunt: And if they weren't on their medication it would have been difficult.

Manefield: Exactly. And sometimes in the program they weren't being on their medication. Now Liz Fell who directed that was a university lecturer and in the subject matter. And so she was invaluable.

Hunt: Okay, I was wondering when I was viewing it that you would have had to have somebody to know how to approach in case they fly off the handle or something

Manefield: Yes, well we got Liz Fell on that one. *Our Patio Light Which is Very Nice I Don't Think* –that's a very funny program

Hunt: Yes Bill spoke about that one, I haven't see it yet

Manefield: That's a very funny program. Now the next one 13 is I think a program you should see – this is a Montsalvat which is an artists colony outside of Melbourne, and it's sort of looking at the incredible people of Montsalvat.

Hunt: Is that where Tom Roberts painted, that group?

Manefield; Yes. With that group. This is the people who owned Montsalvat. On that one incidentally one of our previous editors and they wanted to be come, here you'll see him on basic wage and on this women program Neil Munro and on the weddings program, and on *Gina*, Neil Munro wanted to be a director and that was his first directing job. Jilly Coote researched it and Robin Hughes researched it as well and I think that's one you ought to see. Neil Munro it was his first directing job. It's quite a bizarre program……

….you know bought an academic thrust to the programs all the time and Robin and I would be on a different plane to most of them there and from Geoff, but Geoff brought an everyman's right wing perspective to what we were doing.

Hunt: Like a melting pot of…

Manefield: Yes he never, I don't think he every stopped us because I think often Geoff was quite entranced with working with these quite academic people as well. And the young David Roberts who was a brand new graduate, but a bright boy. And Jenny Pockley you know a top graduate. But there were others coming so that that he was in a melting pot mixing with these people. But Bill bought the emotionalism to the program.

Hunt: This is a very important content.

Manefield: Yes he was able to go into the emotionalism and keep his cameras rolling you know, he was a very brave man, and of course as a cameraman he was an artist.

Hunt: I've seen some of his work that he's done at home beautiful stuff, the photography thing is a different thing altogether, but just his basic art work – beautiful, very talented.

Manefield: Yes and Liz Fell of course was another one who bought an academic, she was an academic, she only came to work on that one program we used her because I think she was at the University of NSW and this was her field and she was one of the mob with us but when she started to do this program about ex-psychiatric patients, I think I said why don't we get Liz Fell. There was the Gladstone, have you ever heard of the Gladstone days

Hunt: No.

Manefield: The Gladstone was a hotel in William Street.

Hunt: Oh yes Storry's mentioned it.

Manefield: Well a lot sort of intellectually happened in the Gladstone. Robin didn't like it very much because she doesn't like the old boys sort of pub network, it's not her milieu. Her and her husband, David's a professor at Macquarie. Robin appreciated it wouldn't be staying for long, but the others a lot of the whole program, the nature, Tom Hayden also a producer there in the ABC the time, and Storry Walton, and John Power and all our producers offices were in Williams Street and we went down to the Gladdy after work, and I suppose I drank too much.

Hunt: That's the thing with journalists, and obviously filmmakers, but journalists a lot of the stories that they end up covering have come from that particular atmosphere haven't they.

Manefield: Yes. Somebody could almost make a series about the Gladdy's because not only was it the *Chequerboard's* mob, but it was the news department's hangout. And they were great days.

Hunt: No that's tremendous

Manefield: I was supposed to have walked naked on the bar

Hunt: Oh I see, well alright then, hopefully nobody had cameras!

Manefield: Yes nobody had cameras

Hunt: Oh dear, well look Tom I'll leave it there if I may

Manefield: No please do.

Hunt: And if I need to verify anything if I can contact you one way or the other, letter or phone

Manefield: Yes sure.

Hunt: I probably won't but just in case that would be really good.
And I really appreciate your time I mean it's wonderful. I mean to have the creator of the program that I'm looking at its…

Manefield: I don't really like talking about it much I'm passed it, but I think I probably should talk about it to people who are going to write about it.

Hunt: I think you should

Manefield: Because it was a land mark in Australian documentary making, it was the break-through.

Hunt: I'm hopefully writing a paper on archives….I'm trying to with this as well is to give more significance to the ABC's archives it doesn't get enough recognition I don't think outside and access to it is difficult because it costs an awful lot to access anything as an outside researcher.

Manefield: Not only that, but you know when you take it over the course of fifty years there's so much material

Hunt: Extraordinary, but even to access it to research

Manefield: And this is why Wendy. And there's another girl who worked here on *Chequerboard* from the start, she works with Wendy at the ABC – Adelaide Beavis – Adelaide she was my sort of a personal assistant and a top person – she was like the script assistant, the typist, the secretary, and for Geoff as well but mostly for me. Adelaide then when after she married she came back to the ABC years later and worked with Wendy, and I think that you'll find that Wendy will speak in the highest regard about Adelaide, she is a top lady. See and if people wanted to go into ABC archives about *Chequerboard*, Adelaide was sitting there and had worked on all of them.

Hunt: I must try and ring her or contact her through Wendy, and see if she's willing to talk. But that's the other thing the fact that you can't get access to the stuff as I say only certain ones at the moment seem to be available through the National Film and Video Lending Collection Service which is part of the National Library. Because even Wendy said to me they (the National Library) don't have a complete collection. So I hope I can get the ones that you've selected.

Manefield: Geoff told me that he lodged them all
Hunt: And I'm hoping that's the case.

APPENDIX F INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

MISSING SECTION OF INTERVIEW RECOVERED JAN 2010.

MANEFIELD….INTERESTED in the content…and we are going to move it along and jump cut it as we like, as long as we are moving it along with the content. Now the way I cut and got "Londonderry" together, it was a film, there was not just the roughness of all other Chequerboard's, it was like a film. I'm now speaking as a filmmaker. I pride myself on being a filmmaker because I had also before Chequerboard had started I made many good documentary films with or without jump cuts. So that I knew the craft of filmmaking. And you know well of course Ken Watts identified this because I was then at the stage…but "At Londonderry" as I said was my favourite of all the films. Because the husband was just so mindblowing! The honesty of what he was saying. He was a simple minded defenseless fellow, but I don't think that we exploited him at all

HUNT ..which one is this, is this the one who was a bit deaf of the younger one?

MANEFIELD…..well I can't think of the first family then, you'll have to remind me….but the husband was really pretty dumb who used to you know used to take his dogs out, and he has the line, his dogs were his mates…

HUNT…..that was the younger one….the other one had the wife with dark hair and he was a bit deaf, she had to repeat the questions

MANEFIELD….oh right I remember, they the first family

HUNT….yes, the all had lots of children

MANEFIELD…yes…that came about because "It's amazing what you can do with a pound of mince", when that went to air people said 'oh what a great expose of poverty' and that incensed me! Because it was NOT about poverty!!! (impassioned comment, emphatically expressed), it was about people living on the basic wage, and people living on the basic wage are not poor and the concepts of poverty.

HUNT….but the children were brilliantly happy

MANEFIELD…yes but they were all poor! Absolutely poor. Then we made, and they said this about the basic wage… I said they're not poor!, now we'll show 'em poor people. The researcher on it I think was Judy Fist, no it wasn't it was the girl from New Zealand who's husband ran the science unit….Julie Fist was half of the research the other half was Jenny Pocklie. Jenny Pocklie's husband was head of the science unit, Dr Peter Pocklie. And Jenny only did a bit of work for us but Jenny was an intellect too you know, I thing she might have had a PhD.

HUNT…an academic

MANEFIELD….yes, academic. But Jenny, you know, I kept sending people back to find the poor people, poor people, Jenny actually found those two families who were really

poor. They were as poor as people could be in an Australian context these days, because the second family I'm talking about they didn't even have the sense to claim what social welfare they were entitled to claim.

HUNT…yes I was watching and I thought I'm sure there must have been something they could claim

MANEFIELD….yes that's in the script that they are saying. That's another thing too, no script. This is the great difference to Man Alive. The faceless interviewer and they used a script to relate to all the story. We had to get the story, this is the "B" thing to all of them, out of the mouths of the people we were interviewing. No script was to happen. And that of course, to tell a story without a narrator….

HUNT….let the people tell their own story

MANEFIELD…..That's it, because I didn't want the program to be appearing to take a point of view. I wanted it to be the point of view of the participants, but I will admit of course, that editorial policies, that was me, I was frequently structuring the film that was making clear academic points. So that it's naive of me to claim that it was just the point of view of the participants…

HUNT….well that's documentary anyway isn't it, you've got to drive the story ahead, and that's one way of doing it

MANEFIELD…yes, but I think Chequerboard made a breakthrough in that we got away from the narrators, and so that we were not taking a position.

HUNT. ….non judgmental

MANEFIELD….yes, well I think we were non judgmental, but some of the criticism didn't think we were non judgmental….well they were criticizing their own point of view, yes they were brining their own point of view and making criticism…and it wasn't us they were necessarily talking about it was themselves.
Mary Covington did about four of the first six programs. So she was very important. The other person I was saying were people we were getting in from the teams were, Jilly Coote, and Judy Fisk. These were people who were just script assistant, and I knew Jilly Coote was a highly intelligent emotive person who had not very highly educated, she went back to university later on and after Chequerboard I think she is a lecturer at the university that's part of the city here in Sydney, a top university based in Sydney. UTS. Well Jilly had basic intelligence and she also had a great feeling for people and she was picking up on it right away and gave us beautiful material.

HUNT…she had an empathy

MANEFIELD….oh yes….but Mary Covington did the first program then the third one also with Judy Fisk was one about mayors, and then she did the boxers program, and then

the women's "What do you get married for?" and then again here she is in the basic wage program. Now that would have been the end of Mary Covington, she then got married and went and had children. In fact, I think she may have died a few years ago, but her research was excellent. Now in these things too (program lists) you'll see that Mary is with Judy Fisk, Jilly Coote, so they were picking up from Mary Covington's background in 'Man Alive'. And then Robyn Hughes comes into it. There's Jenny Pocklie coming in for the first time and there working with David Roberts on a program about neighbours. I wanted to make a program about neighbours that argued a lot, I wanted to get some argumentative neighbours, and that's "The Police told me to go to bed", they called in the police and the police told them to go to bed. The researchers, often there were two or three researchers in the program because we couldn't get all the material for the program just from one, Coote, Fist, Roberts. Roberts came in early, and he's one of our top researchers. David's a producer, a did Jilly Coote in their own right.

HUNT…..the one's that I've seen are things like "I'm dealing in emotions", "I don't like to look in the mirror", " I could get married and have a family", "A Fair innings", "All my memories are in Newtown".

MANEFIELD….yes, well "All my memories are in Newtown" was shot by Bill Steller, researched by Jilly Coote, and the director was John Power. John Power was a producer/director in his own right. And some of these people came and did single programs for Chequerboard. Russell Toose, David Stiven. Bill STeller became a director even during the first series.

HUNT….he was cameraman before that

MANEFIELD…yes..he was a cameraman on "The Salesman", that program I wouldn't sort of recommend to you because it was a director who didn't really understand the concept and didn't like the interviewing style. David Roberts of course was excellent…..oh no that program actually was much better than I'm making out….but it wasn't much to do with David Worrall, John Worrall. John Worral's now dead. The program was really made between David and me and then I fully edited. I supervised the editing of all these programs. They just shot it and then brought it in to the editing room it was between the editor and me. I structured the program. After I left, the director (we were training the directors), because Geoff never took that program interest in, that was his métier, and he wanted his directors to be handling that part of the editing of the program, which is normal filmmaking. I was only doing it because I was the one who understood Chequerboard or what it had to be.

HUNT….you obviously always wanted to make documentary films is that a silly question

MANFIELD…..no, but no I didn't always want to, I wanted to be a drama producer and it was only when I got mixed up with documentaries that documentaries took me over.

HUNT….what was is that was really different to drama

MANEFIELD …oh you are dealing with the people and giving it dramatic form. See one of the strong points I made about Chequerboard style right from the start, I said it would have a dramatic form and a dramatic structure. And if you've seen any Chequerboard's you know what I mean. Because I build the drama during the structuring of the film and it sort of took me over. And I left Chequerboard and went on to make some other films. I went to Film Australia and then they sent me to Russia, and they sent me to Japan, and they weren't the types of films I wanted either, but I did them, and they were highly successful. I was there by '72 I think. The first series of Chequerboard stated in '69, yes '69. I was out of Chequeboard by '72. I had nothing to do with the '72 series, I was then making other documentaries in the ABC and Geoff took over the role of watching the rushes and then was very much with the directors. The director structure the film, but Geoff was making critical input to them very heavily all the way through the rest of the series. Geoff played a very important role in the structure.

HUNT….did you see that a good development

MANEFIELD…it didn't worry me, I attempted when I left Chequerboard to be no longer interfering in anyway…I didn't want to be seen…so I kept myself apart from criticism of programs to them..I was so close to them all…

HUNT….did you thing sometimes that's what they should be doing…

MANEFIELD….well I watched it on air sometimes thinking ohhhh, or oh great, but I never enjoined that debate….sometimes people who I had great respect for would ring me, I would give them some criticism, but I attempted not to be in anyway able to be quoted too in the team, because I felt that my influence was over and finished. And I didn't want to ever be seen as in a situation where I was being quoted critically, that's just not me, that's not the thing to do.

HUNT….its like when you have a child you've got to let the reigns go at some stage

MANEFIELD….yes…so that at the end of '71 I had finished with Chequerboard.

HUNT….what about technological change that happened in the period that you were the program, did it change at all when you were there
MANEFIELD…..oh no we were on film…..the other thing too you couldn't make programs of the structured content and the quality, except on film. Television cameras were too cumbersome, I think now that they use small cameras, but in those days television cameras were big things, editing equipment was cumbersome, and we were making films, filmmaking getting right away from the television side of the media and we were filmmakers, and we saw one another as filmmakers, and we were in the classic filmmakers role – producer, director, cameraman, editor, sound man. The sound man's not mentioned much but he's very important in all of this.

HUNT….all working for the same goal as it were…

MANEFIELD….yes…and once I had left Chequerboard the style of Chequerboard was totally dictated, it was made, you know people understood and that that's Chequerboard, and then we had other series like A Big Country starting off adopting the style we had.

HUNT….with CHequerboard, the close up on the face…

MANEFIELD….oh that was another thing the big close up. I sort of always said that the eyes were the mirror of the soul, well I mean you've got to look at the eyes to see what people are thinking, if they are going to lie it's going to show in their eyes straight away. So you've got to be in close up, so that big close up….in "Gina" she was blind and we went right in close on Gina. As a matter of face I think that a few of the close ups on Gina were too close. I wouldn't say that because I was pushing in, 'get in' you know, and I was on the cameraman and the directors all the time as the early rushes were coming in – 'you've got to get in close we're not really seeing what their soul is about' you know, unless you get in close. But once they picked up everybody else got what that was about.

HUNT….In watching "At Londonderry" in particular, it was what struck me, the eyes of the women in particular were so beautiful, and even the younger man with the dog, his eyes were stunning. If you didn't have to see anything else that was enough, the expression in all of the eyes was amazing, or palpable.

MANEFIELD….well that was part of the part that I say that was a great film. That fellow actually was a very good looking man for a hey seed at that time, he really was a very good looking man.

HUNT….yes, I looked at those eyes and thought gosh if only you'd had another start in life where would you be

MANEFIELD….oh educationally it didn't matter, he was culturally poor, everything about his life was culturally poor.

HUNT….they'd all come from poor families

MANEFIELD….yes. and they had no cultural background, I'm not talking about going to operas and that, I'm talking about they were culturally deprived, that was what that program was about when I said we were going to show people that were really poor, I wanted to show the culturally deprived people who also didn't have any money.

HUNT ….how they made do, but they could've done better if they'd know to go and get more money through welfare, they were either too proud or didn't know any better.

MANEFIELD….or even know how to spend what little money they did get particularly in the case of the second family.

HUNT ….Yes, buying the day old bread, and then the tin of spaghetti, that was great meal but she didn't know now to cook a really good spaghetti meal which would have been better for her children.

MANEFIELD…..Just what I've been cooking before you arrived. – sausages and spaghetti for dinner.

HUNT….I view Chequerboard as radical in its day….

MANEFIELD …Well the word radical never came to our minds. We certainly wanted to look at issues that often shouldn't be thought about or shouldn't be done and we wanted to go in depth into things in questions much further than other people in program making

HUNT…well that to me is radical because you are questioning the status quo, I don't mean anything political, I just mean questioning what everybody thinks is the norm, in actual fact you were showing what wasn't the norm and was still part of the whole mix if society in Australia at the time.

MANEFIELD….yes, well we were trying to show that that was Australian society at the time, the values

HUNT…..that to me is radical, radical can be put on all sorts of things as you know.

MANEFIELD….yes well that's your word there you can write it as you see it, fine, I've got no criticism of that. The other thing too, we were seen by a lot of people that wanted to question that we were being 'lefties'. But I don't think we were being lefties at all….

HUNT….in the early days wasn't there a lot of criticism

MANEFIELD …oh yeah! But see that was part of Ken Watts he wanted that program and we were just taking the most critical look at society that had been done on the ABC. A lot of the ABC's programs have been pandering to the Government.

HUNT…..So if there was radicalism not in Chequerboard, but say maybe it went into investigative journalism, Four Corners, and came out there do you think

MANEFIELD….yes, well we weren't seeing ourselves as investigative journalists, I admired investigative journalism, but we weren't seeing ourselves in any way as journalists, we were being much more about people and people values. Storry produced one Chequerboard,…..The Boxers: We're all good mates and that's it"….oh he was interviewing that, he didn't direct it, it was directed by Mike Wolveridge and it wasn't….Mike Wolveridge wasn't happy with what Storry was doing (now Storry might know that) but Mike Wolveridge didn't think that STorry was handling it well, and Mike was right. And it was a difficult program for Mike because he wasn't getting the material the way we'd liked to have got it. And it was unfortunate because he didn't go on anymore Chequeboards. And John Power directed "The Wedding"…no he interviewed

the “Weddings” program, that was directed by David STiven, that’s one of the best programs we made, I told you about that one the second program. We really thought this one was going to tell people what Chequerboard was about, but because of “Gina” and the intrusiveness of asking her about her periods and a right big close up of her eyes going like this, we put that one on first because it was more startling it would knock people about. But we thought that the program that was going to be definitive for Chequerboard was “The Weddings”. It was a beautiful program and it was only as it was, and I’ll tell you this now because the girl in the rich wedding really took a shine on the director, David Stiven, David Stiven is a beautiful man and he’s easy to take a shine on, I always felt very close to him myself! You know because he’s such a lovely man, and the bride in the rich wedding really fell for David. And we were shrieking at times at the rushes

HUNT ….did the groom have a clue

MANEFIELD…..no the groom was a nice man but I don’t think he had a clue. But that was a marvelous program, it was the poor people versus the rich and they all end up doing exactly the same thing, but the stars of the program are the poor people. The mother of the poor people who threw the wedding herself and did all the cooking, the other one was the Hotel Australia….you’ll laugh at it….”The Weddings” too was clearly making a sociopolitical statement in that poor or rich or anything the can just enjoy themselves just as much as anybody else, and you don’t have to be rich to be showing basic human values, and the poor people were definitely being admired by the audience more than the rich people, well that’s a political statement. The subtexts…are powerful

TAPE ENDS……

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH BILL STELLER – JUNE 4, 2006 – WOY WOY, NSW.

Hunt: …..we'll just sort of take it from there and get on to the more specific stuff later on.

Steller: Well as I was saying, you make cheesecakes and John Crew and his wife Laura opened a little restaurant at Crows Nest called Laura's and we used to go there for lunch, do you remember that?

Hunt: yes..

Steller: Well Laura was John Crew's wife and she was invited to one of our Chequerboard parties we used to throw, because I think we made 13 series of Chequerboard….sometimes I've got to be helped Christina because my, I don't know if it's the Big A or what alzeimers , the Big A….

Hunt: laugh

Steller: and she made this cheesecake and we used to call it 'Chequerboard cheesecake' and we all got the receipts from Laura and I think I have and if we can find it, if Isabelle can find it I'll email it to you (you've got to give me you email address).

Hunt: that'd be terrific, yes for sure, that would be incredible – so did it look like a Chequerboard? Or was it just a particular recipe?

Steller: no, no, just a how's your father cheesecake, but it was because it always appeared at every Chequerboard party, so it was called a Chequerboard cheesecake

Hunt: so were those parties held annually, or just whenever?

Steller: I think they were more at the end of every series

Hunt: Fair enough, they would have been pretty exciting I would think

Steller: yes we used to bring difference people home…and Di Fisher used to turn up there with Humphrey, because Humphrey was Head of TV Features, and Geoff Daniels was el-supremo, and Manefield was the producer/editor, that was his title Producer/Editor.

Hunt: and you began together with Tom at the very beginning of the program.

Steller: yes, as a matter of fact it was I think through Geoff Daniels, because Geoff Daniels knew my work as a cameraman and they kind of insisted that I come to Chequerboard, I'm pretty sure that they got me to Chequerboard.

Hunt: I also was to ask you – can you tell me how you came to work at the ABC in the beginning, how did you enter the ABC, did you have experience before that they….

Steller: yes, I started off…..alright I'll take you back….from the age of 12 I was interested in photography, my brother in law, now this is back in India

Hunt: whereabouts in India

Steller: in Bombay, and I'm not going to call it Mombai

Hunt: no that's alright, well I say Ceylon, I have a friend who comes from Sri Lanka he's like 27 and

Steller: and you still call it Ceylon and you…

Hunt: occasionally I do

Steller: anyway, Cyril Oscar was his name he was the general manager of Westrex Sound in India, which was an American firm in India. And he had his own enlargers and all of it and I used to go down there after school and clean the enlargers for him and then try to talk him into doing some enlarging and all that. And that's how I got my love for it because you know the magic of putting a piece of paper that was exposed in a negative form and you'd put it in this juice, the developer, and then slowly see the magic effect, always used to happen…. Yes Yes !!! you know, especially if you gave it the right exposure. And that kind of had my interest and I had little box cameras that I used to play with and all that and when I came to Australia in 1948, I was to continue school because no-one knew about Senior Cambridge which was my qualifications

Hunt: What's that mean?

Steller: Senior Cambridge was like what you had here was Leaving School Certificate, and people didn't know about - ' I've got a Senior Cambridge Certificate' - 'what's that' – so my brother Tony, who was the other Steller in the country. We sent another brother Larry, we sent off two brothers first the test the waters

Hunt: Into the New World!

Steller: yes, to test the waters…and then the rest of the Steller's came, I came here with my mother, but then my mother had to go back because Dad got very ill with pleurisy and all of that so she went back home. So I was left here with my two brothers and I was registered to go to Burwood High, but when mum went back and I was just about to get my uniform, and books and all of that, my brother Tony came up to me and said to me (he used to call me Willy, later on they called me Bill), but Willy he said I

don't think that I can keep you in school and keep you in the thing there because dad's crook and besides that I've got to send money home

Hunt: So this was like a private school, not a public school?

Steller: no this was Burwood High

Hunt: oh what shame

Steller: anyway, so I didn't go to Burwood High, so then one of Tony's friends said why doesn't he go to the vocational guidance at Granville or something like that and we were staying at Yagoona at that stage and the people were very impressed with what I could do with putting a cross in one square and a dot each in the two square because a drummer in school so I used to do it with both hands, while the other kids were going, boom, boom, boom…so I was used to doing both hands….they said oh your very dexterous you know, I said oh yeah, I didn't tell them I was drummer and then they gave you blocks to fill in and gave you maths which was very elementary maths. So then we had to go to the interview, and they said what do you want to do, well I said I'd like to be a radio announcer, oh they said you've got a very nice voice to be a radio announcer, but we don't think we can get you in that, and they said what's you next thing, I said okay I'd like to be a sound and projection engineer like my brother in law Cyril who I admired so much, oh they said I don't think we even do that, and they said listen you're interested in engineering to a certain extent, I said yeah, so they sent me off to Warren Engineering in a place called Marylands as a fitter and turner apprentice. Okay!

Hunt: that's so sad….oh well yes but where did that lead you

Steller: anyway I went there and I started to go to Tech, if was not TAFE then not Tech, and I had a bit of soft metal that I had to make three steps out of and file it and chip it and I thought what the hell am I doing here – anyway the foreman came and said the boss want's to see you (Mr. Warren I think his name was – oh by the way he was the one that accepted me because he was educated in Darjeeling India and he knew about Senior Cambridge, and that's why he hired me as a fitter and turner apprentice) and he said now you've got to sign this indentured form, I said look my father and mother aren't here and I was told not to sign anything, oh he said but you've got to sign this, I said no I'm not going to sign it, he said well if you don't sign it you can't be an apprentice, so he said one of the labourer's the police have come and taken him away he said I need a labourer to sweep the floors and do whatever, and I got very friendly with the boiler maker who was an old Scotman and he's standing behind the boss shaking his head from side to side with a pipe stuck in his mouth, and I'll give you five pound, I was getting thirty shillings a week, that's like what one pound…it was like three bloody dollars…so anyway look I'll put it up to seven pound, my brother was only getting eight pound working at what was it called one of the stores that turned like into Woolworths, and the old Scotsman (actions shaking head), so I said No, I said anyway I'll give you a week's notice and I'll be leaving in a week. He said oh well if that's what you want go, so when he went I said to the Scotsman 'what are you shaking your head saying no, I could have got seven bloody

pound a week!' he said 'seven bloody pound a week for the rest of your life.' When I had to go out and help him as the boiler maker to life up these big metal plates, I used to get the chalk that ..and I used to draw faces and things like that, draw him and his bloody pipe and all that…he says 'do something in the art line',….so I left in a week got the Herald saw a job for…..geez I'm being long winded here…….and I saw a job for a cadet, darkroom assistant and a cadet ship in photography for a place called Commercial Advertising

Hunt: And where was that

Steller: that was in Sydney in Castlereagh Street…and I went there on Monday and I started on Tuesday, and that's when I started with the photography. And I had after about nine or ten months there I had a row with the bloke in charge there and it was nothing else but it was he was doing the wrong thing with the landlady and a boy of seventeen took him on

Hunt: oh very brave of you

Steller: he was only about twenty four himself, so I had it out. The boss a lovely fellow. I was part of the advertising section where we used to do little prints and they used to stick it on and they used to send it to the printer..

Hunt: like copy for ads that sort of thing

Steller: yes, yes, and they didn't want me to leave, and I just walked straight out of there and I saw another job which I thought it would be nice I knew what makes this camera tick and all that, so I went with a fellow called Scales and Matthews, they were camera repairers they were off George Street, opposite Anthony Horderns, and I worked with them for about a year and that's where I met people like Bob Dyer and all of that. That would have been about 1949.

Hunt: and so meeting people from the industry did that spur you on to look further again, or did things just happen

Steller: no, while I was there a fellow came in and said look my brother in law, Royston Fairfax, Royston Fairfax Studios in King Street, is taken very ill and having talked to you I think you could come in and run the Studio….

Hunt: Wow!

Steller: …only 18! So I went there and did a bit of photography there, he had contracts to take photographs for the army with the Cenotaph, but there was a place called Patterson, Lang and Bruce, where they used to for the salesman..the salesman used to take an album or portfolio of hats and dresses and underware and all that, so these models used to come there and I had to photograph them, and some of them used to

change their bra without going into the change room, it was very difficult for a young boy…..

Hunt: oh goodness

Steller: especially a Catholic boy you know!

Hunt: goodness, too much to take!

Steller: and anyway I was there for a while and Royston came back he had a problem with ulsers and he came back and we worked for a while together, then he says Bill I'm too sick I'm going to close down, but look find another job but at your leisure, anytime. But I met a bloke down the bottom there, on the lower floor, (his name escapes me at the moment it might come back later), anyway I just kind of met him, my brother got married at St Mary's Cathedral he took the photographs there (I should start to write down these names because I'm slowly starting to forget them) and he had the studio underneath me. So I went there and I used to have little lunch there with my sandwiches down there to get away from the studio and started to talk to him, and he said to me, I rent film gear and things like that 16mm and 35mm and the Water Board have got a beautiful big photographic section there and they're starting to do a bit of movie work and they're kind of hiring it out to people….and I started to talk to him and then I told him look I've got to leave this place, he says look I know these people pretty well would you like a job with the Water Board? He said and I'll tell you what if you want to learn the trade because you haven't really done a proper cadetship or anything this is where you learn it, at the Water Board because they've got two ex-RAAF photographers there who are the bosses there and they know their work.

Hunt: so did you have to do everything, like know everything, rather than just focus on just one thing

Steller: no, that's where the experience in the Water Board….by the way he said I'll ring them up and you go and see them, so he rang me up and said they want to see you, and interview you, be very careful, they're all Masons! You know and I'd never come across all this, I mean I lived in India with Muslims and Hindus and all, and all this kind of 'be careful', so anyway I went there and they were two lovely people and they, and just like the other one, can you start tomorrow? So I started the next day with the Water Board and I was with the Water Board for nine years.

Hunt: so when are we talking now

Steller: I'm talking from about late1950 to the mid 60s when I join the ABC. But over there I had to do everything, I had to work on a big machine called the barcrole (?) where I had to photograph these big plans and reduce them and do them on paper that wouldn't shrink - it didn't shrink or it didn't stretch this was very expensive paper – and then I had to put all those plans into one big plan and then photograph that, so that they would have all those plans…it was terrible, terrible work, sometime I would have to do it

because when I finally gave it to them they'd say oh oh it's a hundredth of a millimetre…you've got to do it again…that was only one thing….and then I would have to go and photograph accidents and things like that and they used to do progressive photographs of whatever things they were doing at Prospect of anything like that, but then Warragamba Dam was starting to be built, okay, so I used to go up there about three days a week to film progress of….

Hunt: the building, construction

Steller: so that the Board when they met could see the progress

Hunt: I remember walking across that when it was opened

Steller: so then I was telling them (this was in 55) that I was getting married and I was looking for a home. They came back to me and said listen how would you like to be the resident photographer at Warragamba Dam, and I said 'love it', so Isabelle and I moved up there, we got married and in 1955, October, we went to Warragamba Dam and had a great life, and that's when it really all happened then for me. They sent up a Bolex camera because now they wanted to do like a movie kind of report rather than the Board just sitting down and handing out the pictures looking at one another, they could sit back and look on a screen and they could get the report of what was happening at Warragamba Dam and all that. And by the way, the people that were making that film, this fella was renting the equipment to, made a thing called (I know the producer was Dudley Barr, and the cameraman was …)

Hunt: those films would be in their Archives too

Steller: I'm sure they would…..and then later on when I started to use the camera there and all of that I started getting interested in the cine route. And I loved it and I was kind of teaching myself, but using the same principles of my still photography you see……I'm sure you're going to ask me what really made me want to do still photography…

Hunt: absolutely

Steller; there used to be, I don't know what they used to call it, the University Film Club, or something or other, and Dr. McCylass(?) used to run it and I was in Sydney and they said Bill would you like to come to one of the nights one of the meetings. And I went there and I saw a film, a documentary film made by the Shell Film Unit 'Back of Beyond' by John Heyer.

Hunt: oh of course, yes! Absolutely! Caching!

Steller: and I thought 'hey! That's what it's all about'. So anyway I plugged on, did all sorts of things in my spare time I did high speed photography to see how a rat would behave when it was going to be caught in a trap (laugh), I used to set all these

contraptions up, experimentation I used to do that, but I learnt so much there because over there I was on like a grade three photographer, then I had to go up to different grades and every time you went up a grade you had to do a theory test and a practical test. And the practical test would photography this tape recorder or go and photograph these nuts and bolts and things like that you know, which I did very well, but I was struggling through the theory let me tell you, because it was very into a chemistry thing about the juices you had to make up the developer and all these kind of things, but I managed.

Hunt: you went on your natural ability

Steller: yes, and I would say I worked my way to about the third in charge of the department because there was this Dodd, and another fellow called Jim Nicholson who was a lovely lovely man who used to come and spend time with me and coach me and tutor me

Hunt: like a mentor

Steller: he was mentor in that way, Gordon Dodd was pretty good too, but Jim Nicholson was the big one that helped me. Then the Water Board wanted to make a film of their own, after their Water On Tap, that was the first one, and it came out to be The Dam Builders. And I shot a lot of the stuff because part of it was a hydro section and I filmed all that the installation, like Transfield, they were the company that put it in, and I filmed all that. One of the things that wasn't so nice there was being on site I had to do all the photographs of the accidents for the accident reports.

Hunt: were there many in your time

Steller: it was the dog watch, it was from eleven o'clock at night until seven in the morning, it was the dog watch, and these fellows used to sometimes go down and have a few beers and things like that and about two or three o'clock in the morning they'd be a bit sleepy and do stupid things, and some of them would be a bit gory to film and photography you know what I mean, but that was part of the job. And then anyway, The Dam Builders was finished, I could see that the Dam was going to be finished very very shortly, and I'd bought a little block at Springwood and started to build a little home there and then I saw this add in the paper for a cameraman and a camera assistant in the ABC. So I didn't quite tell Isabelle I just wrote and applied for the camera assistant, not the cameraman, because I thought I still had a lot to learn (I'm not going to push myself as a cameraman when I wasn't sure of myself), unbeknown to me a gentleman called George Pasczuk, who was more editing, he applied for the cameraman's position. So anyway, when I went for interviewing I don't know whether it was Kip Porteous or Burt Nicholas, said to me and what have you done there, I said oh well I've done a lot of photography, and I did some movie work and some of my movie work is a thing called The Dam Builders, and they said strange you should say that there was a gentleman here before you that said HE was the cameraman on that, and I said well I was a resident at Warragamba Dam, so I leave it to you who would have been

Hunt: in the right place at the right time

Steller: yes…in the situations when the situations occurred. So anyway, then I heard back in a couple of days that I had the job as an assistant cameraman

Hunt: what year would this have been

Steller: I can tell you it was October 1960

Hunt: right a the very beginning

Steller: practically. I think they started in about 57 didn't they

Hunt: yes just prior to that,

Steller: 56, 57. and it was strange you know, the other young photographer was Brian Morelli, and he didn't come up to Warragamba as much but when we were for the first five years working together in Sydney, I got very friendly with Brian Morelli, and he got in touch with me and he say hey I'm getting out of here of the Water Board and joining Channel Nine. And Brian Morelli was the one that finally started to produce the cricket for Packer, so he went into Channel Nine and I went into Channel Two.

Hunt: okay and what was you first job there, when you got to the ABC what program did you start working on

STeller: oh well one of the first things you do is you work on News and all that, and one of the first news jobs I did, Dennis Langford came up to me and said you're working with me tomorrow, I said yeah, I didn't want to really because it was the opening of Warragamba Dam, the grand opening with Cahill and all of them there, he said I've got to cover the opening of Warragamba Dam and he said I knew you'd worked there so I've asked for you, so I said fine, so the next day I came there and I brought my little tin hat with photographer written on it and we went up to Warragamba Dam and Channel Nine weren't allowed there and Channel Seven weren't allowed there, but because I put my hat on, they all said ' hey Billy come in here where do you want to go' 'I want to go up there' 'well go for it', and Dennis said boy this is terrific so I took him to all the spots that I had to film the Dam in its best aspects and things like that. So that was one of my first news assignments, but I worked on News for a while as an assistant and then you become what they call a shooting assistant, so that's like on the weekends when there's not enough cameramen there they give you a Bell and Howell and a hundred feet of film and set you off and they give you sheet, the assignment sheet, and off you go.

Hunt: so it was just up to you to shoot wild..

Steller: no they tell you what they want out of the story and you go out and shoot it, and that was great because you didn't have anyone telling you what to do so you had

to use you own imagination and all that, and I was asked when I became a cameraman (I'm jumping now), and it was Dennis Langford who actually said to me how come you've become a cameraman so quickly from being an assistant, and I said Dennis you go out on an assignment and you take a hundred feet of film and you shoot a hundred frames, I said as a still photographer I had to go and photograph and accident, I said I hand to tell the whole story with one picture, so you had to really think about where you're going to, and that you won't believe Christina how much that helps you when you are doing camera work. Which is what I call the choreography, where to be at what time, the car's arriving there, you can see the equerry standing there and he's going to open the door so which will be better, this way the sun's coming, bang that'll be the best spot so you get there, with car coming and bang sure enough the door opens and its right next to you, you've got to think that kind of thing, and that's what came from being a pretty good still photographer. It keeps your thinking process going

Hunt: like composing the whole picture, getting the essence of everything, rather than just sort of a big panning shot and getting to the crux of the matter as it were in a short space of time

Steller: that's right

Hunt: I want to start talking about documentaries, but how long were you with the News first,

Steller: it was a break into what you could say was a type of documentaries was Weekend Magazine

Hunt: Rex Clayton

Steller: yes, and John Tingle, Tingles we used to call him and I can remember we went with Tingle to cover the South Pacific Conference in Lai. Don McAlphine was my assistant and letting us lose on Tingle was terrible. Poor Tingles life, he came back and he said his feet never touched the ground he was being sent up all the time

Hunt: at least he realised it, it would've been awful had he not

Steller: well he knew that we got on pretty well with Tingle and as a matter of fact we used to get on pretty well with everyone, the only time that we, Don and I, had another assignment Tingle said to me (because all of you went and worked on documentaries, or your sporting – you see there was all the different departments, there was Religious Department, Rural Department, you know you worked for all, but then you'd come back and you'd work for News)

Hunt: ok okay I understand

Steller: much to you're dismay….you thing I don't want to work on News

Hunt: so you were seconded to the documentary section and that was it, or the News section and that was it

Steller: that all came later. Yes because in the early days there wasn't things like this the documentary section or something like that, that came later. …..For instance they didn't have a proper Sound Department everything was done on film, you know either optically or with mag stripe. Then we started, I can remember working on Four Corners as an assistant, and we had reel to reel sprocketed tape you know you had to put the clapper on and all of that and I can remember working with that on Four Corners. And it was at that time when I was working with Four Corners, I can remember doing an assignment Peter Layden was the cameraman, and Ron Bowman came up to me and said hey you better go back to the office, you've won, you're going to be a cameraman. But later on, it was Geoff Daniels, that came in and started the sound department and that's when we became on a professional footing. Now, I was going to say to you, all the different departments you work with a camera, I marched on Anzac Day because I went to Vietnam a couple of times, once for Four Corners and another time to make a documentary with John Power

Hunt: What was that called

Steller: The Soldier, that was with John Power God love him. And there I am marching and I can't see it but everyone says we saw you on the Anzac march and you were named, so I rang up my mate Kinsey McDonald (a producer), and its John Moore, Left Tennant Colonel John Moore, and I worked with John Moore when he was in the Rural Department, you see so it all comes back….

Hunt: you can't get away can you

Steller: I know I'm digressing because I'm firing this off like a shotgun here, but one of the things that helped us tremendously as cameramen and all of us, was that some of the people that used to come, we had to work, say we went and worked for the Rural Department, most of them came from the Hawkesbury Agriculture College, they knew nothing about film, but they knew about their part of the business, so we used to go and say what do you want here, they'd say that's important, and we'd say okay, and then put it in the picture for them, and that was great grounding of when I used to say to people they say how do you think, tell me what you've got in your mind and I will put it into pictures

Hunt: you interpreted their…

Steller: yes, talk to me, talk to me and I'll put it into pictures

Hunt: that's a gift to be able to that, do get it exactly, the interpretations

Steller: yes, but that came from looking at all the films and looking at a lot of pictures, because one of the things that you do when you're a still photographer, that was part of the training in the Water Board, was that you used to analyse a picture – why do you like that photograph, go to the art gallery, why do you like that painting, why don't you like that painting, what's wrong with it, is the lighting wrong, is the balance is the composition hopeless, all these things, composition, balance, colour, all of that is going to go through your mind. You try to make a perfect picture. And you know even if we talk to Don McAlphine, he will tell you the same thing, he was similar to me, he started off with a little Box camera and did all that kind of thing, we're very similar and we're very very good mates. But that's how it when, so anyway we're going through all these different departments and what have you, and it caused a bit of angst with some of the senior cameramen and all of that and I used to get accused of going to producers and saying you've asked so and so to be on, I said no, you bring the producer here now he's asked me to be on the program.

Hunt: So what the senior cameramen thought that they could choose where they wanted to go rather than the other way round

Steller: yeah because they would have their favourites, whereas one of the first people that really kind of saw in me was Gil Brearly. And I did quite a bit of stuff for Gil Brearly – the first was a lovely thing called The Pipes of Para

Hunt: oh yes, tell me about it

Steller: The Pipes of Para, well pipes is a measure for wine, but its also the handmade organs that the Germans in the Barossa made, so it was a play on the…

Hunt: yes of course

Steller: so The Pipes of Para. And it was all the old churches and pipe organs and all of that and giving you some kind of feel. Now, see that kind of documentary that we used to make in the early stages that was kind of practically scripted and things like that, you know this is what we're going to do and you work out all your shots. I mean that's fine, I like doing that, and I was like a second cameraman on that, Lex Allcock was the cameraman. Lex would go and light the churches and all that and the organs for the interiors, and while he's doing that for a night shoot, Gil and I would go out and do the 'pretty pretties'.

Hunt: is like what they call second unit stuff in feature filmmaking

Steller: yes, yes it would be like second unit stuff, but then Gil was so pleased with what I was composing for him and doing an all that, that when, I don't know, you remember Intertel….

Hunt: yes

Steller: right, I did one Intertel as an assistant, and John Grier was the director, and George Hollands (?) was the cameraman, and once again I was kind of a shooting assistant there, but when Gil did his Intertel's one was on Malta I did that for him, and then the other one was on Israel called After the Miracle, that was very nice film and it was pretty relevant to what's happening today to a certain extent

Hunt: well history just tends to repeat itself all the time

Steller: that's right

Hunt: again and again

Steller: so that was Gil Brearly. Another thing as a cameraman called Butch Calderwood, he was BBC trained, and he came on the scene in about 61. I just did a little bit of assisting with him with a thing called Faces in the Street. And Doug White was the director. And I was really taken with the way Butch, and I realised that Butch at one time was a still photographer, well you could tell by the lighting and the way he approached the lighting, and then it was the start of the Documentary Film Unit it was called and it was in Chandos Street along the Pacific Highway. Rod Adamson was the editor of the thing and Butch, and we did a thing called Queensland Reports and I was the assistant again and a shooting assistant

Hunt: was this a one off thing

Steller: it was going to be a series – Waiting for the Crush – On the Move which is about cattle, the other one was about sugar, then there was something about Dig, which is about Mt. Morgan, but it was Queensland Report, it was all about Queensland (and I'm trying to think of the name of bloke that directed them but anyway), and that was like the start of the Unit

Hunt: what year would this have been, vaguely, have you got an idea

Steller: that would've been in about 61. Then, Dan Farson came onto the country here with a company called Rediffusion. And Dan Farson used to do the Guide to the British which was a big big thing in England, so he same in to do the Guide to the Australians

Hunt: this is for the ABC

Steller: for the BBC mainly. And I was fortunate to be with Butch, and Rola Gamble (an English director from Rediffusion) was the director of it with Dan Farson, and we were together for nearly three months travelling from Cairns down to Perth, through Canberra, Cooma, doing all little little stories, you know, and they were just like not quite documentaries but they were just like talking heads, meet these people, they are different

Hunt: like a postcard type journal

Steller: yes. And make sure you got a bit of the…..this is all in black and white days…well that was all kind of a grounding for me and you see the same thing with John Power, he was the one who sussed me out to go to Vietnam with him.

Hunt: In Vietnam, what did you end up doing, I know you did The Soldier

Steller: yes but before that I went for Four Corners. I was diverted from Singapore, I was in Singapore at the time, and Bob Moore was the executive producer and he got a telex in those days (I think it was called) to immediately go to Vietnam. So I had Don was my assistant and we went straight to Vietnam and we covered the coup, when Thieu and Key overthrew Kan. And that's the beautiful thing about Four Corners once they got you there then you had to do the advisers, we hadn't had a commitment there yet (Australia), so they had the advisers, and then they had the Caribou's. so we did additional stories for that you see. And then we came back. I must tell you about this too, when we were in Singapore, and I got the message, this might be irrelevant, but I thought, just to tell you, some of the pressures that are put on you.

Hunt: well that's what I want to know

Steller: I already had at that stage (this was in 65), I think I had about three or four kids then okay, and when I had to go I just wrote out a note to Isabelle saying I'm going to take care of myself, but if anything happens to me don't negotiate, sue. Okay. And I have it to one of the clarks, Singaporian clark in the ABC office, and then I sent a telex to Burt Nicholas saying for Don McAlphine and Bill Steller, Lloyds of London, War Zone, Insurance Coverage of fifty thousand pounds – or would it have been dollars

Hunt: no it would have been pounds in those days, 66 was the change over

Steller: fifty thousand pounds. Now, when I got back Burt Nicholas was at the airport to meet us, he was the senior cameraman then, and he welcomed me and he said – you had no right and Don to go to Vietnam – I said what do you mean I am a cameraman, you know I said that's what I'm here for, and if the powers to be say you've got to go there, because when I got the job as an assistant, I can remember Kip Porteous saying to me if you're told by the director to climb that flag pole to get a top shot you've got to do it because you're a cameraman, and if you're Catholic or what, if you're rostered to work on Christmas Day, you will work on Christmas Day, so I said that's the brief I got from the start, and when we get the thing from Bob Moore to say to go to Singapore, we go to Singapore, I said anyway I sent you a telex say to insure us, and he said yes, and I went to the Finance Department and showed it to them and they said what the hell are they doing there there's a hundred ……- it was them and us as far as the Finance Department

Hunt: not much support at all it seems

Steller: not really, I mean when we go away we had to show every penny spent you know. You can't say five pounds on beer, you couldn't put that, they try to make a bloody liar out of you, you had to say it was on something else, gratuities to somebody or something like that, you couldn't say anything like that. I'll give you an example, Hank Vandercort had to do his, what do you call it when you come back

Hunt: acquittal

Steller: yes, and he ended up in front, sixpence!

Hunt: and what happens

Steller: he gets a cheque for sixpence, from the Commonwealth what ever you call it, so he stuck it on the locker at work and everyone used to laugh at it, and say Hank when are you going to cash your sixpence and we can all go and have a beer. Then he gets a memo, saying he hasn't cashed it! I mean that's how piddly

Hunt: bureaucracy

Steller: the bureaucracy was, it was shocking! Anyway and sometimes when you go away and you get your TA, your travelling allowance when you're going away, they would say to me, I'll never forget this fellow said to me – ha going on another bloody holiday Mr. Steller! One of the clarks, so I took everything out then and threw it on his desk and said you bloody go! …….. You know sometimes we carry twenty seven pieces of equipment with you lights, your camera, your film, twenty seven…..

Hunt: and you're going into danger zones too…the concept of just going there let along taking everything with you, and having to get a story and film it and under all those conditions is extraordinary…

Steller: yes. Well while I'm talking about Four Corners and all that to show you how I get emotional not only as a director, maybe its because I was born in India you know, we were pretty well protected, my mother every time I went there was always an older brother you see, where ever you went in India. And I went back to do the Patma Beha famine, I would love Wendy to get me that because it was the saddest thing for me. And I went there and I saw poverty like I've never seen it, two little girls that I filmed in the evening, when I went there in the morning saying maybe I could take them a couple of buns from the table from the dark bungalow we used to live in, which was about twenty miles away, and there's a sequence there where a bloke that was taking us round, a Ghandiite fellow, was talking about the lack of food and the supply and all of that, and there was a women sitting in the front of hut with a child and he bends down and he grabs the little child, a little baby, it was not a child, it was a baby, with its feet between his thumb and his forefinger and the other foot like that, and he lifted the baby handing like that, and then he held the head and put it towards my lens, and he said look at the dips and the bulges in this baby's head, he said that's lack of protein, he said even if you give it all the protein in the world now it's going to grown up a moron, its already damaged,

he said I ought to hit the skull against the rock, and then he gently put the baby back…..I was crying….

Hunt: you would be, it's hard to work under those circumstances, this is where….

Steller: and even now I'm emotional about it

Hunt: yes….I'm feeling it too….

Steller: it was those things that run through your mind when you're doing things, like when I started to do Chequerboard and I'm doing the poverty here…and I felt sorry for them, but it's not the same sorrow I felt because this poverty wasn't the same kind of poverty, I mean how can you have two different kinds of poverty, if its poverty its poverty, but there is

Hunt: oh there definitely is…

Steller: I mean in your heart you feel it you know. I mean these people aren't dying here, those people were dying, And that's the kind of thing you have and the same thing when you go into a war zone and things like that. And this kind of….it took its toll on me

Hunt: how's that….I can understand….

Steller: Chequerboard, we'll have to jump to Chequerboard

Hunt: when you talk about poverty, the first one I've looked as that I've be able to view at this stage is At Londonderry.

Steller: At Londonderry..yes

Hunt: and I thought this is wonderful, I really enjoyed that

Steller: that's when I started..

Hunt: can you tell me about that

Steller: that's when I started to direct and Geoff Burton was my cameraman. Now Londonderry is a story that's always close to my heart because we shot it exactly how it was, they had no electricity, they didn't have any running water and I had to kind of direct it that way so that you can see it as is. Now the research was absolutely terrific, I think it was Gillian Coote, now how did that story come up does anyone tell you how that story came up, I don't think Tom will remember. Gorton was in power at that stage, Gorton, and he said there'll never be poverty again, like all of them say…but I can remember Gorton saying that…and I think it was Gillian Coote said that's utter bloody

rubbish. Because sometimes it doesn't matter how my money you give the poor, they'll still be poor, it's the education they need of how to

Hunt: change, progress

Steller: yes…and that program was to kind of show that, because although she got what $800 or whatever in child welfare

Hunt: less than that I think

Steller: she didn't know how to use it, they'd buy a bloody car for $90 or something like that and it doesn't go and its in the back yard, so what are they going to do, they are going to take all the copper out of it and the lead and sell it…

Hunt: which is what she did, made some money and bought some loaves of bread, stale

Steller: something like that, stale bread

Hunt: day old bread and

Steller: and he couldn't cry about their situation, but he cries about a bloody dog! And those are the kinds of things. And Chequerboard (I'll jump here) Chequerboard was accused of its questions that we used like a bloody surgeon's scalpel that we went in there and we were looking for the vein, it wasn't really like that, the questions were there for you to get the feeling, you know, and the premise of the whole show was – people and the situations that are shaping their lives, theses people are poor how does it affecting them, but more than anything else how is it affect you – we've got to go into you

Hunt: is that one of the reasons that a lot of it was filmed in close up

Steller: well I don't know if that came by accident or what, it was when we were filming the blind girl, Gina, and Gina's eyes, she was blind from birth, and here eyes were going from side to side, rolling around and all of that, so in true Four Corners story I did it practically in profile, and in a subtle what I call a kind of half tie shot, and then they saw the rushes, and Tom said to me 'great this is another Four Corners story what's new!' and that was the first story that we did – I was a cameraman then, and I said okay give me another go, so they said alright, Mary Covington was the English reporter who was working on Man Alive, and she came and we did it again and said okay bugger it and I practically sat the lens on her shoulder looking past her right ear, and I thought bugger it her eyes were rolling around, but after a while that's irrelevant you listening to what she's saying, right, and that's when I thought no, and when she started to say anything important (its like when you're in school and you've got a history book and all that and the history teacher says this is very important underline it) well that's what I used to use the zoom as, a red pencil to underline, go in there this is important, listen to it, and the human face is the best piece of geography, you know it tells you so much

Hunt: the eyes in particular

Steller: and the eyes, you know, I had a dear old grandmother Portuguese, very superstitious lady, Maria Falcal (?), my grandmother, and she always say if you're speaking to someone that can't look you in the eye, don't trust them, and if he licks his lips all the time……they're telling lies, they telling lies…..all this kind of stuck to me and this was when I was what eight, nine years old, I was very close to my grandmother….so in I went with about an inch above the eyebrows and about half an inch below the bottom lip and I held it there and Bob Ellis called that the Chequerboard close up.

Hunt: I've noticed that every time you go into those crux of the matter scenes…..

Steller: now another thing, the old stodgy blokes in the film department hated that, 'oh filming another set of nostrils today are you?' you know, they hated it, the absolutely hated it, as a matter of fact in the early stage they didn't think Chequerboard was going to work, it was radio with still pictures, so something like that

Hunt: oh yes radio with pictures…

Steller: and all of that, and not only the film department, but I'll also tell you somebody from current affairs met me in the canteen one day and said, Jesus you're a bunch of sick buggers', I said why is that, I'd just done a program that went to air about dwarfs, now those poor buggers, the only time you see them is Christmas time and they're doing Snow White and they're tumbling around the stage

Hunt: in those days in particular

Steller: yes, yes. And that's how I started the thing with them doing the snow…anyway and he said to me you're sick fancy, doing these things about that

Hunt: but if that's the way it is

Steller: I said to him have you ever thought about what those poor buggers have got to put up with, what their life's like, you know, they get into a car their feet won't reach the peddles, no one makes anything out for them to do that, today now you've got things for arthritis, for people to open taps, and open cans for dinner, they did nothing for them, and the little one is that little woman I think a little over two feet tall, she said to me and I don't know if I used it in the film, do you know what it's like to go on to the toilet with a penny in your hand(those days you had to put a penny in the lock and open the lock to go into the toilet) and she said you can't reach the slot, and you're dying to go to the toilet….no one thinks about those things….and she says…….crossing the Grand Canyon when you're getting off the train between the platform and the train there's this huge gap and I've got to try and get across……so I mean those are little things but

Hunt: that's the essence I feel of the ones I've seen of Chequerboard that you get to those specific things that nobody seems to think about and everybody takes for granted that you know…and you focus on those

Steller: exactly! And we made people aware of situations. Even the funny ones which became a little bit funny because you couldn't help laughing about neighbours that couldn't get on with one another and want to hit one another on the head with…. What's it like living next to these people

Hunt: well they do that thing now don't they on current affairs programs, but not in those days

Steller: yes, but not in those day, it was all new and different, we broke completely new ground and it was a program and rated really very very well. But coming back to At Londonderry, the research was terrific I think I had about maybe twenty couples to choose from

Hunt: how did you contact them, how was that done, do you know

Steller: the researchers would go in there and maybe look at St Vincent's de Paul, the Salvos and find out where, because if you remember there, and I'll never forget Peter Grose was doing the thing and the woman said 'but I don't know how we would go if it wasn't for the Lions meat on Friday', and I was thinking the zoo coming in a van and giving them the meat that they were going to give the lion, so I whispered to Peter ask them what's the bloody lions meat? And it turns out it's the Lions Club that comes in and gives them the meat

Hunt: charity. Mm people have no idea. I was very impressed by the women in the story, how they made do for their children.

Steller: yes. Most of the women did the talking in Chequerboard if you look at all the one's, they were the one's that would come up front 'bang'

Hunt: there were beautiful eyes in those people, even the men, the most expressive extraordinary eyes, you know if you could only block out all the rest you would have no idea what life they live

Steller: well the way, I don't know if Tom remembers it like this, but the pressures with Chequerboard right, now I did about four or five Chequerboard's as a cameraman

Hunt: can you member what one's they were in particular

Steller: oh yes, there was The Weddings, there was Gina, A Pound of Mince (I was the cameraman on that) that's three, I don't what the others were, but, the way it used to happen was Tom was the producer/editor, now the researchers would come and say oh Bill theses are the….and we'd sit and talk… and she'd say I reckon these are the

one's you should go for. She'd come with me and we go down and look maybe at five of them, then we'd come back and say I'll go for the three of them, so with that I'll read all the research she's give me, then we go and film it, and Tom used to give us about a week to film all of those things, just one week to film, because in that one we filmed the Charles family, we filmed the one which was the ex boxer, but we took the Charles family and we put it in another one, we only used the two I think

Hunt: yes there were only two families

Steller: we'd go film it, then I'd come back and I'm starting to edit it, as I'm editing it, I'm getting the research for the next one, now when I edited it I edited it in a long cut, then I'd sit with Tom and say this is it, and Tom says fine leave it with me, then I would go off on the next one, and as I said go with the researcher, film, shoot and by the time I've done that Tom's already fine cut that one, it was like (I was going to say it was like a sausage machine) but it was like that, boom, boom, boom….no matter how the pressure was you hadn't to forget the premise 'how its shaping their lives' look for the thing you know. And I remember when I was working only as an assistant, Rola Gamble saying to me when you're making something 'my little love' he used to call me 'little love, piece of gold, you've got to place a piece of gold in there', but I used to call it 'the Ethel' saying 'hey Ethel get a load o' this!', so it's 'the Ethel' element you have to have in your documentary. Just one thing that grabs you, now if you look at some of those things you realised that there's not one there's quite a few that some of them say 'shit come and have a look at this when she's walking around with the lantern at night'

Hunt: bathing the children

Steller: bathing the children and putting them to bed

Hunt: that was a most magical scene

Steller: that's a magical scene, but it's sad

Hunt: but to me the joy of the children in the circumstance

Steller: the end of story…. Well we did that okay…it goes to air about week later Geoff Daniels calls me to the office and he said Bill I got the mayor of Penrith on the phone and he said you have really done the wrong thing by them, you've only gone and picked on one or two couples and shown them up in a bad light… I said can I speak to him…no he said you tell me what do you want to say to him… and I said you tell him I'll get a Commonwealth car and I'll drive up to his office and I will take him to anything up to forty couples there that are living like that, he didn't take it, he said no. Okay, then another couple of weeks go by and I'm called into the office again and it's Geoff Daniels saying a real estate agent just rang me and said these people came into the office with a little baby, because she was expecting a baby during the film, and they're looking for somewhere nice to live, and they told me they're on Chequerboard and the authorities came and took all the children away from them because of that Chequerboard, well Jesus

I was so upset, I got straight into a car and I drove up to the old house there was no one there it was really derelict at that stage, so I went to the post office and I said please tell me and she said I can't tell you because I really don't know but the mother lives….so I went there and I knocked on the door and the mother came and I told her…she said oh it's alright she says they're living here..and she took me around the side of the house out the back and they were living in the chicken shed….I didn't see the husband, but it was just her and the baby….and she came out with that toothless smile and said its so good to see you and I've got bloomin' tears in my eyes and I'm tight in the chest and I said look I'm terribly sorry, she says don't it wasn't your fault, I said what do you mean, she says I sent the children to school and I only had dry bread to give them for lunch and the headmaster saw it and called the authorities in….I think that was before the says of DOCS…..anyway and they took the children and he left me with the little baby…..now go back years…..Andrew Clark god rest his soul he was working for Four Corners and he came up and he said Billy were you looking for that family and I said well they should be around Londonderry…anyway I meet him in the canteen again and he says you won't believe…..he says one of the boys hit the jackpot, lottery, and they're all doing fine!

Hunt: oh! That's a wonderful ending.

Steller: oh boy! What load off my shoulders, I thought it was great. If no one did something for them, the big boy in the sky did something about it.

Hunt: well I did think when I was watching it 'I wonder what on earth those poor people are doing now?'

Steller: now you know

Hunt: now I know!

Steller: and I think, now I tell how important some of the Chequerboard was – out of the blue, I don't know whether Wendy (I should charge Wendy she's an agent of some sort) – Ben Cheshire rang me from Australian Story, and he said what Chequerboard's do you think I could do and kind of revisit, this is before even Aviva Zeigler, and I said Ben one of the stories its now become a bit of a thing about it, the stolen generation. I said I did that in 1970 – with 'My Brown Skinned Baby'. So he went back and he did that, with Bob Randle, he went back to Bob Randle re-did the..

Hunt: I'll have to check that out, I've seen the original one you did it's the only one we've got in the library at the university.

STeller: Brown skinned baby,

Hunt: on video yes

Steller; You see when I did that one I rang Geoff and said Geoff there's a terrific story (David Roberts did a lovely job on that finding them in the first place, he was an

anthropologist and he was interested and said we've got to get an aboriginal story and he went up there and found this one), now when we finished with this Darwin segment he said oh I'm going to Elleron, we've found Amy's mother there, so I rang Geoff and said Geoff there's a part two here – a search for identity – because they were taking Florry with them – now did you see the part with Florry

Hunt: I saw it a long time ago, I've got to watch it when I got back so my memory's a bit vague, tell me all about it

Steller: Florry, yes, so they sent me more money through the post office and then we drove down there to Elleron, (spooky here I've got to tell you), I kept telling Bob Randle how will they know we're coming, because it was a spur of the moment thing he was going to do for me you see, I said how will we tell them that we're coming, he said they'll know, I asked him about three times because we drove over night from Darwin to Elleron, so when we get to the Elleron, I said to Geoff Burton, Geoff you drive in there quietly and set up, not close, far, so you can use the long end of the lens, set up there an see what happens, so I gave him about ten minutes start, and I said to Bob Randle 'let's go' and as we entered there under the big tree they were all waiting for him….and Geoff shot that…the meeting….it was 'dodidoodoo' (twilight zone theme)

Hunt: they are an extraordinary people, their connection

Steller: yes and after that program it became a thing not only with Chequerboard, but afterwards when I did programs for the ABC on aboriginal people, the Real Life and all of them, Papunya Artists, and Fight Fire with Fire, then I did another one in Perth really about racism in the suburbs….

Hunt: I was trying to look at the issues of possible radicalism and that sort of thing, I know you've got to define it before you want to talk about it, but things that were against the status quo an alternative perspective and at that time it seems to me that it was the aboriginal perspective was one that was alternative, it was one that wasn't recognised as much, so do you see Chequerboard as coming in as a spokesman for that particular view point in a big way

Steller: I'm sure it was. And the main thing was to go in there and in a clear, simple, but truthful way, is to let them tell their story, and not to manipulate them in any way. Never give the answers, but plenty of 'why's?' that has to remain in your heart when you see it, after you see 'My Brown Skinned Baby' you're goin' to say Why?! We did say that this was better, but one of the things I want to tell you about is when Florry meets her mother and sits there amongst the dogs in the humpy, David Roberts asks her 'would you like to stay with your mother?', look at her face, she doesn't really say no, but she say (like this makes a face – with the dogs!). That asks a lot of questions. Are we right or wrong taking them away? Or what?

Hunt: by doing it putting her in that position so she's got to a hard choice, you know she's between world's

Steller: between world.

Hunt: Cecil Holmes did a film called, I think it was called Faces in the Dust, I think, and it was his look at four different stories from the aboriginal viewpoint

Steller: his one was, I, the Aboriginal wasn't it?

Hunt: that's right. And he did a similar thing in looking at four different stories of four different style of life within the aboriginal culture and those that had maybe gone to Darwin to find work, to those that stuck with the traditional side of things – he was also at a point trying to let them have their own voice in that I've been told by Bud Tingwell and I've read Bob (Raymond's) 'Out of the Box' he wrote out of the box after he retired…anyway he was a filmmaker with Cecil (you'd know him I just can't remember)

Steller: not Bob Connolly

Hunt: no Bob Connolly, no they worked together, anyway, he also said that Cecil had done the same thing in that he given in the Kimberley's a particular a particular aboriginal tribe, a news camera like a basic news camera of the day and given them a few instructions and said here do you own thing basically, and he went back later on and collected the film, and it was very rudimentary stuff, not professional obviously, but it was them filming themselves, telling their own story through the camera. I think he did it he was with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commission….so he was of that same belief as you in order to try to let them tell their own story, but he went that little step further in given them the camera…

Steller: so they can get images through the thing…now when I did the thing called Fight Fire with Fire it was in Yeundemu that they were trying the get their own television station going, and showed me some of the stuff they had

Hunt: have you read this article 'A Hundred Shots a Aboriginal Community' by Eric Michaels? He mentions you in it, that's why I was asking.

Steller: oh yeah! He died of AIDS.

Hunt: Michael's did he?

Steller: he didn't like me.

Hunt: I wondered when I read that I was going to ask you about that

Steller: and I don't think I liked him.

Hunt: fair enough

Steller: because we had trouble to do that story there

Hunt: tell me.

Steller: I had to go to the, what do you call it, the committee, the tribal council and he was sitting on the tribal council and he was advising them not to let me in to do the thing

Hunt: why was he doing that

Steller: because I think he wanted it all to himself, you know, so he'd be the big wallah there, although I did use him in the film, and Harry Jackamurra was in the council, and I think I'm going to get thrown out, and he yelled from the back 'hey I know this fella he did a good story on my brother Michael, he does honest story', I was in. Then I went there, this fellow didn't help us at all, except that when I said I'd like to interview 'you' about it then he came as the expert. But that wasn't a Chequerboard that was a Real Life, if it was a Chequerboard I would've gotten to him a bit harder. But he said it was all a bit old fashioned kind of things and all of that, but once again, old fashioned is simple, old fashioned –why do you want to make a big wiz bang story about people like aboriginals who simply have a story to tell.

Hunt: why complicate it

Steller: yes why complicate it in any way and

Hunt: yes I was just interested in that when I read it, and I wanted to see what your side of the story was basically.

Steller: and I was very worried about, even when…it was white single blokes there running the co-op for the painters and there's always little young kids around and they used to make friends with the little young kids which is easy to do, they are lovely little kids, but I always thought because you've seen so much of this, and I used to see needles around so…you know….

Hunt: alright, yes….

Steller: so I don't know whether they were introducing needles into there or not but….this fellow dies with AIDs then….

Hunt: yes well I don't know anything about the man at all but just came across it and I thought well….that's cool,…I needed to know what your point of view was on that because there only minimal comments about things in there I don't know if you've read it at all yourself but

Steller: I read it. I don't mind good criticism, but that wasn't good criticism, I think if I remember rightly it was old fashioned and all this and you know nothing innovative and

Hunt: well you are right it seem to be that he wanted to control things rather than you, so that was the impression that I got. One of the other one's that I've see that I (sorting through papers)….oh yes 'All my memories are in Newtown'. Do you remember that one.

Steller: that's one of the cameraman I was on.

Hunt: they've given you director here....this is the Teacher's College

Steller: oh that's right I directed it and John Power was a reporter. It was one of the early one's that I did

Hunt: about the old ladies being displaced

Steller: displaced because of the university (teacher's college)……

Hunt: how was that, because to me that's what I remember of my grandmother living in Redfern the same sort of little old ladies living alone you know

Steller: once again this really bought the premise of Chequerboard out, people and a situation, these were people who lived all their lives there and now the were going to be uprooted

Hunt: by a Big Brother organisation coming to move them out

Steller: yes, we could see this in the aboriginals, but they were such sweet people, it saddened me to see that – you see this runs in my veins, India was great to me and all of that, but when they got independence they said all you whites quit India, and they had quit India riots, I saw my friend being jostled pushed and that and his pith hat burnt and then they came towards me but I was bit quicker than them and managed to run home. And then when I see these people being displaced,

Hunt: you empathise with them

Steller: yes. That all runs into you I mean….and I think with every kind of documentary there's little bit of your life that it touches

Hunt: does that drive the way you look and approach a story

Steller: yes, yes, it does, I mean I never went in with preconceived ideas, this is why I liked documentaries too a certain extent. Look early documentaries were

practically scripted and I couldn't call that a documentary. Have you ever read a book called 'Special' by David Yellan

Hunt: no, but I've read Eric Barnouw's book

Steller: about Fred Freed

Hunt; no I haven't read that one

Steller: it's American, but it's the early days of American television and they would call it documentaries and they were all done in the studio….most of them….not all of them….a lot of it was done in the studios, but then they would go out and maybe do something with LBJ somewhere else and all of that and then finish it in the studios and they would call that documentaries. Why I didn't like drama so much was the take one, take two, take three…..well it was the immediacy of documentary making is that you've got to be when the camera rolls and we had ten minutes loads, the film runs for ten minutes, and its ten minutes especially when we're doing all the hand held stuff and things are happening in front of you, and I was pretty handy with a camera on my shoulder, and this is why people like John Power used to get me, and when you look at The Soldier, I would say a lot of it was hand held. You know even to the point of the scene opens with these soldiers double quick time and then there's a close up of their feet, clump clump, there's only three of us, John Power, the sound recordist and myself, and what did was I opened the back door lay on the ground between the front seat and back seat, with my Elclair hanging down

Hunt: at ground level

Steller; yes…the sound recordist practically lying on me to get the noise of their boots and I chose it where it was running down hill so we didn't have to have the engine running, and John Power got onto the car, released the handbrake, rolled, and just gently braked to keep in time with these fellers running down the….and that's how I got the shots… and this is the things we had to use because you know we didn't have dolly's and all of that

Hunt: I was just going to say that's like a dolly shot, but a manufactured dolly shot

Steller: yes, this is what you had to do most of the time. You know when I was in America, Don invited me to come and stay with him when he was doing 'See you in the morning' in New York, and Alan Pakula was the director, and after lunch Don was called in by the first assistant to check something or other, and I was left alone with Alan Pakula and I said of all these big American name cameramen, how come you got Don McAlpine, he said well he's economical, he's quick, to do some of the things I've asked Don to do the American would hire thousands of dollars of extra lighting, he says Don does it without that, and that's the training we got in the ABC. The ABC didn't have all the lighting gear that Channel Seven and Channel Ten had all the latest stuff because it was

the latest one to come online, and now if I was filming you I'd use this light coming in here and just enhance it with a back light, only one light just to light up your hair, so we used a lot of available light

Hunt: improvisation

Steller: yes! All of that. I mean with The Soldier I used mainly four clip lights which is four 500 watters clipping them on picture rails and things like that and using fast stop and that's how we got away with it

Hunt: that's that old 'necessity is the mother of invention'

Steller: yes and that's what we did

Hunt: to me it seems the Australian film industry as whole, television and feature, work that way and that's why it's most valued around the world and the people who've worked in it, you know because of their ability

Steller: yes, you know one of the things (I don't know how you're gonna do this because I'm running round all over the) coming back to 'My Brown Skinned Baby', you see the thing is we broke complete new ground, we broke new news, I mean, no-one knew that was a Government

Hunt: the stolen generation, is that what the…

Steller: that's what we call it now, but then it was just you know 'take the creamies away, all the half castes', now that was done in 1970, but they'd been doing it in 60 – 65, but it never hit the news!

Hunt: well see, that's the radicalism. That's a radical issue perspective that's been put out there

Steller: that's where I'm coming to, I mean, I always felt that it was my wish to bring to people something they hadn't thought about or they didn't know about, and to submit it to them in a honest, simple way. Simple way, and then make them – think, you know

Hunt: to enlighten as well I think, that's the whole thing with documentaries in particular you can enlighten people, they can learn, if they are willing to listen, and watch, and watch closely.

Steller: and the other thing if anything, you know I sit here now in this lovely place as you called it, its beautiful, and I'm content when I think about things, Chequerboard, I made people socially aware, then with Billy Peach, I made Australian's aware of the beautiful country they've got, because I can remember filming, where was it, at Pyrmont, the boats going out with people throwing streamers, and the girls just

finished school you know she's come from SCEGGS or whatever, and she's going to England because that's the big thing….and they haven't even gone over the Blue Mountains to see what's on the other side of the mountains, but they go to England, and that's what I thought with Billy Peach, we'd show them,

Hunt: before you go look at this

Steller: hey you want to see snow, go to Kosiosko, you know you've got it here. And then with Harry Butler,

Hunt: In The Wild, was that the one

Steller: yeah, In The Wild you've got all the flora and fauna, you've got this beautiful country, and then later on when I had a quadruple by-pass, and I can remember I was recovering at home, and Bruce Buchanan he said Bill I think I want you back, I said well I've got a month off, he said well can we hurry it up a bit, he said because we are doing a Peach's Gold and I'm not quite happy with the way its going. So I went there and I saw they did and it was just kind of interviews and looking at things and all of that, so then I went in with Bill and I said Bill can't we do something about that, and then Bill knows every bloody gold digger song and poetry, and using T.S. Gould's and the gold field artists and things and we integrated it all in as song, art,

Hunt: the whole culture

Steller: but using different mediums you know and I think if you look at some of the Peach's Gold they are very well done, that was docodrama and even then we didn't completely script because I hate that completely hard script, I don't want them sticking by scripts

Hunt: because as you say it's not documentary really in the true sense

Steller: that's right. And we did Explorers as well. Which once again should be in all the public schools

Hunt: that was dramatised a bit too wasn't it

Steller: yes, yes.

Hunt: they were really enjoyable because it brought history to life. What I wanted to ask you, going back to Chequerboard, was one that surprised me somewhat, it was 1975 and it was called 'I just can't seem to talk about it'. I don't know if you recall, I'm not sure if you actually on that, but it was about sexual relations between men and women and Bettina Arndt, Sydney University…

Steller; that wasn't me

Hunt: that wasn't you

Steller: no, because I had gone by then. Because I went then and Tom Manefield got me in again to the Music Department and I did the Sir Bernard Heinz Story, which was going to be all dramatized by Tom, but by the time Tom then left, and left me with it and I looked at the finance, there's no way I could have dramatized the whole thing, so I made it into a docodrama and brought Sir Bernard Heinz into it and had him fill in the gaps because I couldn't dramatize……

Hunt: well I'm not sort of looking at docudrama but that's another section isn't it of documentary that took at least anyway……..'I could get married and have a family' its about the ex-psychiatric patients…do you recall much about that one

Steller: Dick Oxenburgh was the reporter

Hunt: that's right and Robin Hughes

Steller: Robin Hughes was the producer, yes that was once again that was something completely new – Morrisett had sent out these few I think there was five of them and put them in a house

Hunt: a half-way house

Steller: yes, and I it was very hard to do, I had to go back they'd be great, but if they haven't taken their pills they were off with the thing…..and I think dear Tom was very tolerant and he gave me another extra 3000 feet to go on because he didn't think we had a story, then finally it came with this man I think, who had a fight with his over cards,

Hunt: over cards, yes with his mum and his father put him in a

Steller: put him in an institution and never took him out

Hunt: and kept him there

(tape change)

Hunt: oh right but it was part of Chequerboard

Steller: it was part of Chequerboard, but I'm just saying as far as the authorities were saying it was a kind of a trial and a one-off, and what's happening now. This is the thing that's is a worry that after 'Brown Skinned Baby'

Hunt: what changed

Steller: it didn't even make a ripple in the papers no-one went and stirred the government, twenty years later the aboriginals themselves wakeup and then its we're a stolen generation…and it's the same thing with the psychiatric – look at these poor fellows in the street now we've got them now in the Hawkesbury here in the caves

Hunt: really

Steller: yes not only that, but our parrish raise money the kids go down there and feed them in a bbq every Friday night after school big boys from St. Edmonds at East Gosford, they go down there and with a few of their parents go and feed those fellows.

Hunt: its so sad that they've been ostracised basically, and still feel ostracised, or totally displaced, there's that word again. I guess attention might have been brought to it then changes were made that they've got to be put out in society, they're not prepared a lot of them. I mean the one's in the story here were going through a process of learning how to become part of the community again, but even they, as you say, if they didn't take their medication, and one of them admitted it, if he didn't take his medication he'd be off the air, he wouldn't be able to, so and self medication for people the crux of them continuing of or. But that's why I find that story really interesting because, as you say it was a first at the time, but that whole question of how do people like them get into society today.

Steller: Today, if Four Corners did a story like that it would make news. Right. But then the thing that happens to day which didn't happen then is, TodayTonight from Channel Seven would take it up and do something else and so on, and so it becomes a big noise. But in those days there was only us. And I don't think Four Corners was really doing those kinds of stories

Hunt: not in those days no, that's the thing. Another thing I wanted to ask you too, you were talking about handheld cameras and things – the technologies that came in that period, can you talk a bit about how that changed through the time that you were working on the programs.

Steller: well yes. When I first started, they were so cumbersome some of the cameras we hand, and it was inhibiting to do certain things, to get different angles, and this was another frustration for me because as a still photographer I could lie on the ground, do the things, get in between things, with my still camera, but with these big cameras you couldn't do that. So we did different things, a couple of sound recordists will remember this, the Araflex, the ST Araflex, was a very noisy camera, and I made out of carpet and feltex in those days, I made a kind of blimp, and by using a long lens I could stand back and if the sound recordist moved in there, you could here it going like a zzzzzzzzzz like a silent sewing machine, but very silently, and used to do some of that because I was sick and tired of carrying these big Pro600's and big cameras with me. Now I can remember, it was the Ari BL, it's another quite a silent camera, it was self-blimped

Hunt: these are 16mm cameras

Steller: all 16mm. the boys that used to come, the old stodgy blokes, used to call it spaghetti because they were used to 35mm you see, ……so it was the Holt and Calwell elelction – and it was John Power once again was the producer on Four Corners and he wanted one cameraman to follow Calwell and one to follow Holt, and then after a while swap them so you know so that you can get the same sort of……anyway I think Fred Richardson was one cameraman, and I said to John Power, John a couple of new cameras are coming here, they are called Eclairs, they're very handy, so anyway he went out to the camera section and asked can we have these Elcairs to do the story, they said oh no we allocate them, he said we're going go to the Four Corners budget and buy. Now the moment that 'buy', 'budget', it was you're taking it out of our hands…so anyway they relented and they gave us that – and that started my handholding techniques that I started with the Éclair. After a few years I got called into the office and they said listen you've got to get that camera onto a tripod

Hunt: that restricts you doesn't it

Steller: of course. You can't get in there, go down and….do all these kind of things…..and I said why, has someone…and he said no you're using it like a fireman's using a hose! I felt like saying but I've got to do it with purpose, if you don't pour the water in the right place you don't put the fire out

Hunt: wonderful!

Steller: but I didn't say anything I just kept quiet – but has there been a complaint from Four Corners, they said no, well I said look my name comes on the bottom of Four Corners every time I film a show for them, now they wouldn't put it there if they weren't happy with my work, they wouldn't ask me to keep working for if they weren't, and I said, we here in the film department are a service department are we not? So we are servicing Four Corners, so if we can't give them the service that they want, they want this kind of freedom of camera, getting in there and doing things, I said I don't think you should have a complaint here. I said if you don't like it go to Four Corners and talk to them, because they agree with my techniques.

Hunt: so the control at that point, you had to struggle against the institution

Steller: that's right, that what I say all the time

Hunt: the creative freedom wasn't there probably

Steller: yes and then when I became a producer it was the same thing to a certain extent. You know, we used to have transcripts and this is after Tom left I think, and it was the one 'It could've gone either way for Timothy' – (Chequerboard)

Hunt: that's the title of it…

Steller: a boy who died from an overdose of drugs. Tristram Miall did the research for that one, but we were doing one on suicide but this became such a compelling story that we decided to do it because we didn't know whether he committed suicide of whether he just took an overdose. Now, I was called into the office of the Head of Television, Sir Humphrey, and he said can you bring your transcripts with you, so I went back and got the transcripts and he said, 'yes here we are, I'd like you to take that out' (motioning crossing out portion of script), I said why, he said I will write my reasons out for you later, so I went back to my desk and I thought well this is the first time this has happened from Humphrey, I mean Tom and I used to talk about this all the time but we could discuss it with Tom. So I get my (his secretary brought the thing back) and he said something about television doesn't change people it just strengthens their prejudices.

Hunt: that's what he said

Steller: yes. And he said I don't want this to be a hand book for school boys tiptowing through the drug scene.

Hunt: you still hear that today when controversial issues are put out there don't you

Steller: yes, but I didn't give up

Hunt: good

Steller: I went back and I said Humphrey can we go through this again and we talked about it, and we compromised, I didn't get it in toto but I managed sneak in a couple of things. Do you want me to tell you what it was….

Hunt: yes please

Steller: The boy that died had a very good friend and they started off with cough losengers to get their kick, then they went into marijuana, then they went into (what do you call it)

Hunt: heroin

Steller: no they used to pop them

Hunt: Uppers and downers

Steller: yes. Then they were in the Cross and they got onto pot, so they decided to try Melbourne scene, so they go down to Melbourne, so while they're in Melbourne, (now I'm filming this fellow in Yattla Jail) okay, and in the true Chequerboard thing we get right into him and talking about how did you get on to this – well we met these fellas and they said oh what are you taking, we're taking barbiturates or whatever you call it,

how are you taking it, we're popping them, you pop them, yes, you mean you don't shoot up, no we don't shoot up, and while he's saying this, every time he spoke he looked up, 'we take barbituates' (motions looking up)…….you take 'em – he looks down – 'yes' , you don't shoot up 'no we don't shoot up' (looking up) – and he did this on his own every time spoke, in other words you've got the different levels within the drug scene. Now he's got to try to climb up to them, and that's when they started to shoot up because he want's to be like the big boy ……and Humphrey said I don't want that because he could see it, it was them and us,…….anyway I managed to get one or two ups and downs before because as I said it's important to the story that we say this. Another one now was the one that I started to produce towards the end of my career there, in the late 80s, I'd had my operation and I was slowing down a little bit, and I got an idea, I must have read it somewhere about things that happened in the past and there still people here

Hunt: how do you mean

STeller: they are still alive, they saw it, eyewitnesses of great events

Hunt: oh I see of course

Steller: so, I talk to one of the researchers, Prue Charlton, she is in Windsor Castle she works, and Prue was a pretty switched on kid, and a lovely girl and she went out and came back, and said there was a few, one was the people who were displaced when they build the pylons of the Harbour Bridge…….

Hunt: I've just had a dejavu, because two seconds before you said that, I'm thinking my father, because he was one of the masons who built the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge…..that's weird! Of all places for you to chose…..yeah go on….

Steller: then there was another, do you know Broom was bombed during the war

Hunt: of in the war and Darwin

Steller: no Darwin was, but not a lot of people know Broom was, and there she brought me this cutting from one of these magazines where there was this Dutchman who was telling the story where they took these refugees from Indonesia to Broome in sea planes (there was about five or six of them), they stayed the night there, then they had them all refuelled, the planes, with the people on it, but the day before the Japanese reconnaissance plane came and saw them, and the next morning when they were all sitting in the planes ready to take off to Perth, bang, the article said only eighty people were killed, and he was saying it's a lot of balderdash (I was going to say bullshit but I thought I'd better not),

Hunt: say what you mean Bill, and mean what you say!

Steller: and he said he had to swim through flames, the water was all aflame because all the fuel, and he said hundreds bloody died and he was talking about how the

militia were the first to flee bloody Broome and leave the poor civilians in the lurch……great stories….and he was in the embassy, Dutch Embassy in Canberra. But Prue came up and said Bill you know the Rothbury riots during the Depression (you know the Hunter Valley), and it was called a lock out and the management locked the miners out and the miners when on a kind of strike so they went to Sydney and hired scab labour and they brought them up and put up in tents, then all the miners met a Greta and then marched towards Rothbury and they brought the police out and they opened fire on them and it's the first time union blood was shed on this land….yeah a fellow called Brown got shot

Hunt: and this was a story that was done

Steller: I did it. So I went there and they said okay do it (Stuart Scowcroft was in charge of that then) and he said go ahead and do it, he gave us a limited budget, very limited budget and Prue wanted a go, so I said okay Prue you direct it, you've done the research, I'll just kind of watch you, and we did the thing 'Rothbury Riots' and we put it together a little half hour thing, submitted it to him and came back, he didn't even write me a memo that I could keep, he just came back and he said I don't think we are interested in this old kind of stuff man, history its done, its finished, and walked away!

Hunt: and this is Humphrey Fisher

Steller: no, no Scowcroft

Hunt: that's like cencorship almost isn't it

Steller: yes. Anyway I'll tell you what I'll do, if I can find a copy of it. Oh Wendy now is actually helping a bloke who rang a solicitor mate of mine who he met somewhere but knew he was on the Central Coast and said do you know where Bill Steller is, and he said yeah, so he said okay give me you number and I'll give it to Bill, and if Bill wants to…….what's his name, Greg something, from Newcastle is actually going to do the story, and he's going to call it 'Lock Out'.

Hunt: good. As a doco or

Steller: no as a feature

Hunt: oh feature!

Steller: or feature doco, I don't know. But he took it to some Scottish television company and they are interested, I don't know, I haven't heard from him but he's emailing me all of the time and updating me on what's happening. I'll have to get in touch with him. But those are the kinds of things you had to put up with – I was going to call it 'Reflections' – these people reflecting on that time. And as I said at the moment we had 'Broom', 'Rothbury', and 'The Harbour Bridge', because we found people that had

never been compensated for being displaced and thrown out of their homes and all of that, and then I'm sure we could have found others.

Hunt: oh yeah a myriad of stories out there – but if you don't get encouragement to continue what do you do

Steller: yes and another thing too, even before Aviva Ziegler, (now I'm talking about while I was there), this would have been in about 87, 88 – I went to him and I actually put it on paper, that there is a gold mine in our archives and I said, you know there's A Big Country and all of those things, but I said there is Chequerboard, I would like to do Chequerboard Revisited. And he just said no, no don't worry about that (I don't know if I've still got the memo – his secretary came with the memo and said read this Bill but don't show it to anyone please because it's my life, he had submitted to Head of Television that we should do Chequerboard Revisited, signed by …

Hunt: him

Steller: yes…….

Hunt: that would be, if you've still got it, would be terrific, because that's taking……..

STeller: that happened quite a lot,

Hunt: that's what I was wondering

Steller: that happened quite a lot ideas would be taken from you and the head, the executive producer would say I think we should be

Hunt: taking the cudos

Steller: yes, yes – because once you sit in a conference like that and you put an idea out

Hunt: but you were given credit for it

Steller: there's no copyright on an idea, I learnt that

Hunt: well intellectual property or something like that isn't it particularly with the Internet there's a lot of that copyright issues

Steller: but in those days……

Hunt: there was nothing like that, and they went ahead and did it anyway

Steller: yeah with Aviva

Hunt: with no accreditation to yourself in anyway shape or form

Steller: no, but although Aviva used to ring me up and ask me about things and all of that you know, the same thing with Graham Shirley, god love him, do you know when we were going to go (what were we going to set up but it fell through) the ABC, I don't know if another television station….

Hunt: like the merger between SBS

Steller: no, no. and Graham Shirley used to ring me for hours and say Bill how far back can you go, I can go back to documentaries like 'Jackaroo' which Gil Brearly made and and what's his name, White, who was then working for A Big Country was the executive producer

Hunt: Graham

Steller: Graham White, he was working, he came from the Rural Department and he was there, so I can go back to 'Jackaroo', 'Tent of Blue' Frank Parnell shot that, and the first thing they every did was Shirley Abacare (?) that was done on a Pro600 – you know the zither player – now I came on the tale end of that but I didn't work on it, and Gordon Landsdown was the cameraman and Bill Constable was the assistant and they shot it on single system magnetic

Hunt: so Gordon was the father of Chris wasn't he, Chris Landsdown

Steller: yes

Hunt: I just remember him from working there

Steller: Gordon was a thorn in my side because it was him who used to call me into the office and say stop telling producers you want to work for them and all that kind of thing.

Hunt: oh okay

Steller: I think he was very very jealous about cameramen that were successful because I don't think he was ever a success

Hunt: such a shame isn't it

Steller: yes.

Hunt: I was going to say, getting back to the issues of radicalism or topics or themes or what not, do you think when documentaries went into other issues, not so

much radical issues, that the radicalism ended up going into say Four Corners, did they take up the gammit and run with it there

Steller: Sure it did. I think that. I think there was a slow kind of transition from radical documentary filmmaking to handing it over to current affairs or

Hunt: as current affairs grew and Four Corners expanded

Steller: correct. And that kind of handed the baton over to them, just like now I think ABC's handing the baton over to SBS.

Hunt: Absolutlely! I watch documentaries on that and I think why isn't that on the ABC, you know it's wonderful its shown anywhere, but the fact that the ABC haven't got first dibs on it, or maybe they do and they decided not to run I've no idea.

STeller: I don't know, but I'm watching SBS now sometimes a little bit more than I'm watching ABC

Hunt: yes same here – because they are incredibly stirring issues that they tackle, they are bought in the documentaries aren't they, or they seem to be

Steller: yes, but also people like Negus

Hunt: George yes

Steller: George and using my old mate David Brill

Hunt: yes I've got his book

Steller: well he mentioned me in it a little, he mentions me in the book, well he lionised me, haven't you read it I think its on page 40

Hunt: not complete, give us break, I've got so many books to read! But he talks about being a cameraman, and how being a cameraman in the war zone over a number of years

Steller: I haven't got the book, I've read the book, but I haven't got it

Hunt: okay I've got it and I haven't read it completely

Steller: 'The Man Who Saw Too Much'

Hunt: that's it exactly

Steller: the life of a combat cameraman

Hunt: yes

Steller: yes but he's his own publicist you know that

Hunt: well you know that's the thing, when talking about getting stories and personal perspective from people like yourself,----- yes this point you know you were talking about David Brill, working as you did yourself, within an institution you didn't get to have a voice so much as like you can write a book yourself, whereas when you're an independent documentary maker you can do your own book from your own production, like David Bradbury for instance and its self promotions I guess its all part of gaining budgets for future projects all of that sort of thing. But within institutions like the ABC there was never an opportunity or were you ever encouraged to do anything outside the box as it were.

Steller: never.

Hunt: yes, that's the shame of it I think because of the incredible contributions people like yourself have made.

Steller: yes that was never encouraged. I mean Don McAlpine and I sometimes think we should get together and write a book, because you see Don had a working wife that could support him so that he can freelance, because when he didn't have a job well his wife was there. But I had a different kind of philosophy where I wanted my wife, and she wanted to be with the kids you know, so she said when the last ones go to school I'm out you know, I'm going to do things, so therefore I had to stick with job I had and at that stage I can remember my friends saying to me when I used to come up here on the weekends when I started to get bad angina and all of that, and he said to me Bill why don't you give bloody ABC away they're killing you, because the pressures you had all of the time and not only that, I'll come to that in a minute, and I said to him, leave the ABC what am I gonna do, this is the only thing I know to do, still photography a thing like that and what's in Gosford at that time what can I do in Gosford, but luckily that's when this making these education tapes for home study video, but now they are called Future School because they've gone into interactive cd's and they're online and this stuff.

Hunt: well you still should get royalities, I believe

Steller: well as a matter of fact they spoke to me the other day and said they are having another conference, there's three directors and a new CEO, and the four of them are going to discuss what they are going to do with me because I actually kicked them off, you know they were completely lost and they didn't know how to do it

Hunt: and they wouldn't be there without you

Steller: yes. Where was I……yes not being able to tell our own stories, Don and I – Don actually said to me that given the same opportunity that he had we might have both been working in America on big films.

Hunt: how do you feel about that

Steller: oh, Don's making about ten times the money that I ever made, but that didn't worry me. See one of the things (as Tom I would like to know about this, ask Tom), was it Gyngle asked us to come over with Chequerboard, I think he discussed this with me, but we decided No, we don't want to have the restrictions and things like that that commercial television puts around you. You know if we wanted to have a go at someone and they were one of those bloody sponsors of the program and all that, what the hell can you do – although we cried about it we had freedom in the ABC to a certain extent (ask Tom)

Hunt: that's interesting – I will

Steller: because we did and I always felt that the other commercial stations weren't doing, and documentary was my life. The blood rush you get, you know, the adrenalin when you are in there and there it is and you say I hope she's going to say this this is going to be the piece of gold, she's got to say it, this kind of things and the things that are happening – and that's what I loved about documentary making. Even when we used to do the kind of ones that you knew – I used to sit with Bill (Peach) and we'd make the skeleton of the program that we're going to do, 'The Nullabor' we're going to be visiting this place and that and in this place we hope to see that and, but we wouldn't write what we're going to say, except I would say to Bill it would be nice if you did a voice piece here, okay, and he would sit down and write the voice piece out and do it. But with the Chequerboard we would go and Tom would leave, not what you would call a set up, but to give you a look at the environment that these people were living in

Hunt: like the overall picture of where you were going with the story

Steller: the poorish middle class, with the flying ducks on the wall, just a quick cut away of that and come down to them and things like that, Tom used to leave us to that, but we would sit and discuss what questions we should be asking them to get this story out,

Hunt: well you have to do that don't you, you are working within a time frame aren't you, and that's the thing with television as well

Steller: and besides the bit about the time frame, I did a program 'Something Don't Seem Right', with Robin Hughes, we did a trilogy on children from various social economic, and a little poor boy from Alexandria, near Redfern, Timothy, was very very touchy to do that one, because the father was neurotic, absolutely neurotic, he was bloody psychotic at some stages

Hunt: was he abusing the child

Steller: no, no, no. His mother rang about 2 – 2.30 in the morning, and I interviewed Timmy's brother, George who was in …. Institution, George has jumped the wall and the coppers are after him and he won't talk to anyone but he'll talk to you. So I spoke to the welfare officers, and they said listen piss off out of the way Billy you don't know this is not your field, hand him over to us, where is he, you know this kind of thing, and that's when it started to tell on me, and that's when Isabelle said I think you've had enough.

Hunt: too close, too involved

Steller: too involved. And Isabelle said…..alright I'm still working on the last Chequerboard, and Timmy rings me, now when we used to show these films oh! We used to get a response from the people, one would send them money, one would send them fruit, one would send them flowers, and we used to say hey you send them to us and we send it to them – oh we want to talk to them okay you give your number, we'll give it to them, the people in the office used to handle it, and one fellow got through. He was an oldish fellow, and young Tim rang me and said 'he's a cat', I said Tim I don't know what a cat is, he said 'he likes little boys'. I said Timmy have you told your father, he says yeah dad wants me to keep going out with him because he brings in money and fruit and things like this anyway, so I handed it over to the welfare.

Hunt: you can't do anything. That's the borderline

Steller: But then you're looking at yourself and saying well shit what am I doing with these stories, you know am I really ruining lives instead of helping them

Hunt: I don't think so.

Steller: but that goes through your mind Christina

Hunt: yes of course, it must do as a human being it must do

Steller: and that's when I left and then Tom called me over to do Sir Bernard Heinz, and then he left me with the bag……!

Hunt: a totally different kettle of fish!

(stop for lunch)

Steller: we were talking about putting something down and I said that Don and I did think about should we write a book but we definitely decided on the title, and the title was going to be (it was going to be about our camera time not about me producing directing, our times as a cameraman), and we were going to call it 'You Should Have Been Here Yesterday Mate'. The amount of times we'd be there driving through the dust and everything and you get to this fellow and you know on his door and the farmer comes out and its raining and he says g'day I know you were coming but you should have been

here yesterday mate, it was a beautiful day! And you think oh shit I need to know that like a……so anyway that

Hunt: well keep it going because I think it's a brilliant title

Steller: yes because the tricks that Don used to play on me in things like in Vietnam and the times we had I can't put it on tape but

Hunt: that's the fun of filmmaking I guess, the camaraderie that builds up over time

Steller: yes, we met another bloke called Peter Layden who used to work in the ABC but then he used to work for the American Broadcasting and we met in the Caravelle Hotel when we went there in 1965, and Frank Bennett was talking and all that, and Peter and I we kept drinking and drinking and we were a little bit full and then we, I think it was about 11 o'clock, we got up and said, we were in the hotel around the corner past the Continental, the Alfarna Hotel, and we get out of the hotel and a bloke says no, no, white mice, white mice, and I said what's that, and he said police, its curfew night you can't go, and I said to Don we've got to go I've got to get my cameras ready to film tomorrow morning because we were doing the coup! So anyway he said I'll tell you, wait, wait, wait, and then a white jeep with these police in white, that's why they were called white mice, they went past and then he opened the gate for us, and I took off and I had to run across the square to get to the site of the Continental, and I couldn't hear any footsteps behind me, and there's like pools of light from the light from the top, like a Chequerboard of lights down on the little square, and I'm half way in it and I stopped and I was just about to turn around when there 'BANG', and I took off, it was Don he put his hands to his mouth and went 'BANG' like that, and when I get to the Alfarna, its gates are closed and I'm trying to get in I'm shaking, and he comes around the corner laughing and he said Steller you looked like those cartoons where Goofy goes up and his legs go diddlely diddlely… and you hit the ground and zzzzzhhhhhoooo and there's a pile of dust, he said you took off! Because he'd told us that a woman on a bicycle had been shot the night before because she wouldn't stop and they told her to stop. So those were the kind of things that bloody McAlpine did to me, so you can imagine when we were with Tingle and the two of us were working on Tingle, it got even worse..

Hunt: he didn't have a hope did he! That's fabulous.

Steller: ….anyway something serious now….

Hunt: well this question you might have already answered but anyway,….to what extent do you think radicalism played a part in the overall issue of identity and representation in ABC documentaries……you may have already answered it I guess with talking about the aboriginal issues that they approached and poverty and……

Steller: I think racism I think that we broached, no one would ever own up that we were a bunch of bloody racists till we did that program in Perth. And Bobby Sykes, do you remember Bobby Sykes

Hunt: yes

Steller: I interviewed her there and she was in Perth at the time doing something, stirring up something there, and I (I've forgotten the name of the story), the story it was this women who was a creamy but she was more creamy than coffee, if you know what I mean, and she'd go to the real estate agent, and he said yes come in tomorrow and I'll give you the key of the flat and the next day she went in with one of her children who was black, and he said oh look I'm sorry but…..and that was what we took on about….and we talked to Bobby Sykes about it (I'm pretty vague on that one)

Hunt: okay but they weren't afraid at looking at those sorts of issues

Steller: there was no sacred cows in Chequerboard. If there was something that had to be done to bring to the notice of people, because most of it was hidden under the carpet, and you want to drag it out and say hey! Look at it okay! And we would put it to them in such a way that they would have to ask the questions why, why is it so? Like Sumner Miller would say you know what's happening, why is it so? You work it out.

Hunt: that to me is, like we were talking about Dalton Trumbo earlier, the way he worked, he didn't say it very blatantly or out there, he was very subtle. Put the question subtly in the subconscious.

Steller: we never really ever put the boot in, but it was a soft shoe shuffle

Hunt: but a powerful one

Steller: yes, hey this is happening! And sometimes the images and as I said, the eyes of the people, I mean, in the one that I was telling you about 'It could have gone either way for Timothy', (I'll tell you something a bit later about this and I thing David Telfer was my cameraman), and I interviewed the mother and she was saying I had an appointment to take Tim to the psychiatrist, then I got the news that Timmy had died so I had to ring up and cancel the appointment and she started to cry. And I just squeezed Telfer's hand to say 'keep rolling' and I ended with that – that was the last shot on the screen. And now it kind of leaves a bad taste in your mouth, and says hey what are we doing about this.

Hunt: absolutely, its often those things that are unsaid that are more powerful than the word sometimes.

Steller: yes, and there was a lot of things happening in it. You know if you see you son with drugs what are you going to do, what are you going to do? What did she do? She rang the police. And that didn't help her son, if anything it threw him further into it. Now you've got to think is this payback to Mum or what, you have to think about it. We didn't say it.

Hunt: well that's it, you can't be judgemental that way can you

Steller: no.

Hunt: because you lose the impact

Steller: On of the magazines, came to Chequerboard, Tom might tell you about that, And they wanted to know what kind of reaction did we get from the talent (for want of a better word) for our subjects we used, what did we do to their lives and all of that. And they spoke to me and I said alright go and see these people and one of them I said go and see Mrs. Robinson. And Mrs Robinson said to the reporter, no as a matter of fact if it wasn't for Chequerboard I wouldn't know exactly what my son was up to. She said, if ever you've got a problem, don't hire a private detective, hire the Chequerboard people, because our research was so good. You know. And I played it like (I don't know if you remember that detective series Magre)

Hunt: oh yes

STeller: he'd go from one to the other, and we used to go to the school teacher, the school teacher talked about his mate in school, we'd go to his mate, then his mate tells us about something, then we'd go back to his mate, then we went to the mother, then from the mother to the uncle, and the uncle talked about the Chinaman who came up to him and said I think Timmy's on drugs. And slowly, slowly the bits, the story came

Hunt: build the story

Steller: the story came together you know. And it ended up with the uncle who owned the provodos store in the markets there in Sydney, he said Timmy went with one of the Provodo trucks to do a delivery in Newcastle, and the fellow came back and he said I think there's something wrong with Timmy, he must have daihorea or something, he kept wanting to stop and go to the toilet, and anyway he said and Timmy came to work and looked a bit funny and all that but I didn't take any notice, but then I wanted him and I couldn't find him, and someone said he's gone to the Provodos toilet opposite across the road, and when I went there I saw one of the door locked, I knocked, Timmy, Timmy, no answer, I looked underneath I could see his boots, then I pushed open the door, I couldn't pull the door because the door pushed in and then when I pushed in, it hit Timmy's legs, and Timmy moved over to the side, and there was the needle hanging from his arm (tape change)…….and a what do you call it

Hunt: crowbar

Steller: yes a jemmy, and opened the door and pushed his feet. And I can only remember one letter that came, and it said why don't they make toilet doors open outwards?

Hunt: and that's all they were really worried bout

Steller: not this program had a social impact on me, or what do we do about the drugs and the…….but that's what Timmy was doing stopping at all the service stations he could stop at and he was shooting up and he was shooting coke, cocaine – and then I cut to the mother after the Provo scene I was (if I remember rightly). But as I was saying the schedules were so tight you never had time to glow in, or as some would say bask in a success if you had one and most of those Chequerboard's were a success because you were getting through to a certain extent what you wanted to say that's how we chose the story what are we going to say. Are we going to say here that poverty is not a lack of money you know, and that's your premise and that's what you go with. But you never have time because you're off on the next story because you were getting the research. I learned a trick that I used to watch television with Isabelle and maybe one of my sons and I'd be reading the transcript as well and marking up here, or I'd be reading the research for the next one. And Isabelle would be asking me a question, and I'd look at my son and he'd tell me whether to nod yes or no, because I hadn't heard what Isabelle was asking…..trying to do too many things at the one time. Chequerboard to me was the most fruitful years both as a cameraman, although I only did five, but to me we set…..and we one awards…..the Chequerboard awards….there's one somewhere here a Penguin…..(shows me where the award is on shef)
Hunt: Oh that's terrific,…Personal Effort Award…….brilliant, yes

Steller: maybe we can keep that, maybe give me some inspiration…..it fell over and we had to get it fixed

Hunt: its not made of gold?

STeller: no, plaster….anyway, one of the one's I filmed, I think Tim Bowden got it wrong when he said that 'Brown Skinned Baby' was one of the first Chequerboards I did, it wasn't, that I directed, I was filming a salesman and it was 'To Err Is Human'. Have you seen that one.

Hunt: not yet no.

Steller: It's Bob Ellis' father. Who are a travelling salesman. And I won't mention the director's name, and I filmed but it was Burton saying listen I'll never become a cameraman if you keep directing from behind the camera, he's here as a director let him direct. So I kept saying where do you want the camera, what shot do you want, the usual thing, is this what you want – maybe I was mean to him because normally I would assist like an assistant director to a director, but this one I thought I know what Burton says….and when we brought the stuff back Tom Manefield looked at it and he said there's no bloody story here, there isn't a story here, so Bob Ellis came up to me and said hey what's wrong, the research was there my father's it's a terrific story, I said you tell me about it you father is a terrific story, and I said I know because my brother Tony, who I love so much had become a travelling saleman and he used to tell me they used to call themselves the knights of the road –so I left it at that the next minute I get called into the office and Geoff Daniels and Tom were there and they tell me you think there a story

here, I said yes, so why isn't there a story here, I don't know it's directed I did what I was asked to do, they said do you think you can make a story out of it, and I said yeah so they gave me an extra 3000 feet of film and Geoff and I and I think it was Fred Pickering was the sound recordist – we went back and as I was leaving Bob Ellis gave me one sheet of extra research, and in it it said what a womaniser his father was,

Hunt: there's your story

Steller: so I went with that. But other things came out of it, I really made it a nice about how is relationship with the storemen in Kempsey and they went fishing and the fellow would lock up the store and go fishing with him, and some of the jokes that he was saying in the RSL and him, anyway I got him a bit piddly and took him to the motel room – flick can, he said these bloody mosquitos and he sits down and he gets his books out to do his books, and then we went in and we interviewed him and we came up to the womanising, and David Roberts was the interviewer, I love working with David, and David asked him about your women, was it 140, he says it wasn't 140 it was 200! He corrected him. He said he had a bet with another bloke to see how many women they could have in a year…….anyway……I come back and his words were 'To Err Is Human'….because that's another thing in Chequerboard, every title came from the words from one of the character's mouths……and Tom and I used to have quite a lot of discussions about

Hunt: which one

Steller: yes…..I did the rough cut, and I said to Tom (I don't know if Tom remembers all this), but I said to Tom I don't think we need this bit about the women, and Tom says oh that's the story.

Hunt: because that's the myth isn't it of travelling salesmen that they have affairs along the road, but they say of no we don't.

Steller: anyway it went to air, and it barely finished air and I got a phone call – it was Ellis senior, Bill you know you're not to blame you were doing what you had to do and maybe what you were told to do, he said that you tell Manefield and Daniels, because there's one question you never asked, you asked me what a good footballer I was, but you never asked me what my prowess in the army was, he says I was a marksman, a crack shot. If that goes to air again I will shoot Manefield and Daniels.

Hunt: ooowah!

Steller: As soon as he got off the phone I rang Daniels, that is one of the programs that it never was repeated. It was never repeated.

Hunt: you took him at his word

Steller: oh yes. Because he was a man like that he was a strong willed man. But talking about getting titles from the things.

Hunt: they're magic

Steller: yes. Everyone of them, I think it was the Provodo said it could have gone either way for Timmy.

Hunt: yes that's when you said that, I said is that a title. Like its amazing what you can do with a pound of mince, I remember my mother saying that such a saying that's always around.

Steller: now the other one we did like suicide sports you know, rock climbers and sky divers, and one of the one's we used 'if you spread your arms out wide and your feet wide you come down like a cocked hat' – the other one he said 'it's the greatest orgasm you can have with you pants on' – I said to Tom that's the title! And the other one was I did one on socialites 'everybody wants a plug' –

Hunt: I've seen that, that's funny

Steller: But I wanted to call it when Nola Dekavere said about the black and white balls and she says 'the days of the big balls are over'…..now that was going to be my title…..the days of the big balls are over……and Tom said you can't do that, so we called it 'everybody wants a plug'.

Hunt: its funny, when I was watching that the social journalist that was doing the interviews, whatever her name is I can't remember

Steller: Gene Arthur, not Gene, it was something Arthur

Hunt: Di Arthur, anyway she's in a club wherever it was, and she's got these few socialists sitting she's about to interview, or just talking casually, and one of them says something to her and you've got a shot of her alone as one of these socialites, and I looked and I said that's my girlfriends mother, Mrs. Tripp. She didn't do much else in the program, but it was just her in this shot, I thought that's Debbie's mother, and I nearly fell flat on the floor, it was really funny!

Steller: But that was funny, but there was this group of ladies all they wanted to do was get their in the back pages

Hunt: yes society pages

Steller: social pages

Hunt: yes, well she was married to a surgeon or something like that….

Steller: yes so that's how we got most of the titles

Hunt: they are priceless, when you go back through the list

Steller: the wedding one's a nice one to see

Hunt: I haven't see that one, what do you get married for, is it that one

Steller: no, no, it's a happy day in any woman's life,

Hunt: no I haven't seen that one yet

Steller: Weddings was the working title, it was a lovely thing

Hunt: A Big Day In Any Girls Life

Steller: that's the one….I was the cameraman on that…..and I can remember doing that one and I tried to bring out the happiness and when it went to air people said you're trying to show up the rich people, because the speech was 'I'm glad he's marrying'……the man that was making the speech to the bride and the groom….'it's all a matter of breeding'….and I'm filming this thing and thinking you silly bugger you're being sent up here mate you know

Hunt: yes that's for sure. My sister's talked about that, she married a grazier, and she was there to have the children, and he bred cattle and that's how she felt.

Steller: another one which was directed by Russell Toose who's past away. And it was the one about the nun. I think it goes by the name of her name and whatever her name is I've forgotten, and although I didn't do it I thought that was a good program. It was very emotional. And that's one of the things you've got to try besides what I'm saying is the 'Ethel' factor, and the little piece of gold, is also is to know what emotional button, once you get emotionally into the viewer, then you can start to tell him, give him the….

Hunt: they are receptive

Steller: and that's one of the things we tried to do. Tom was a great teacher. He knew what he wanted and he guided us into that kind of air.

Hunt: just this one, we may have already covered it, we've covered so much – was there a significant shift in attitude and approach to ABC documentary filmmaking during that time, particularly say from the beginning to say 85 when the corporatisation thing happened, were there more restrictions. You said earlier that is was fairly free in the beginning to a certain extent, as time went on were there more restrictions put upon you as a filmmaker or were you just let to do pretty much as you always had done, did restrictions come in at all.

Steller: except for what I was saying to you earlier about towards the end which I'm talking about in the very late 80s that we had people that you couldn't really look up to – although Tom was kind of mad and carry on, you looked up to Tom because Tom in his own right was a good producer and had produced good things. For the Music Department and what have you and things like that and he had a resolve about him, he knew his target and he went with it and backed up by Geoff Daniels. And later on you had people that you'd think does he know what he's talking about. In other words maybe if it was guidance, support, there was a lack of that towards the end. I'll never forget two things, I applied for a full-time (although I used to act as executive producer and acted senior series producer and all that), they wanted to do half hour documentary (I won't tell you who the director as at that stage) I went for my interview and they gave it to someone from This Day Tonight (TDT) or 7.30 Report (I don't know which was going on then), and he said to me Bill do you understand if I made you an executive producer, I'm taking one hell of a productive producer of the line.

Hunt: you were more valuable where you were than to be put in an executive position. That's what I'm wondering were the executives less filmmakers, they weren't filmmakers

Steller: that's what I'm saying because some of them were from current affairs that's where he brought this fellow from current affairs. And anyway three months later there was hardly anything done and I get called into the office and he said Bill listen how would you like to be executive producer of a thirty minute program. And I said I'm sorry but you've just signed my long service leave, I'm going on long service leave, oh he said look why don't you just take three months of long service leave, think of what you'd like to do for half hour documentaries and then come back and take over. And I said no look I'm not even going away to think about it, I'm doing it, and that's what I say. And then I came here and I built this house with my mate, went back, and then resigned.

Hunt: yes well I can understand. When you're given a slap in the face like that and they you're basically asked to turn the other cheek……

Steller: and the other one I've got to tell you was I came out of the interviewing room and one of the people on the selection board followed me out a bloke that I had worked with a lot, or worked under a lot, and said to me, you know Bill you're not going to get this position because you don't have it in you to sack a bloke have you, you couldn't sack a bloke could you, and I said is that the criteria for this job, I said then I don't want it and walked away. But that's the kind of thinking that was going on in it

Hunt: and this would have been when the corporatisation was happening so they were changing the whole ethos of the ABC as such from a film creative entity into a business.

Steller: yes, money was a big thing, you were being screwed all the time and you went up and said look I can't do that. Like the Peach's thing they were done on like

budgets of like $40,000 and they were dramatized one hours – Peach's Gold. I mean sure that's the above line.

Hunt: A couple of little questions at the end…..the documentaries you worked on in particular, I want to know do you see them as a mirror for their times, reflecting a fair and balanced identity overall.

Steller: It certainly was. Your talking to me as a director, not as a cameraman.

Hunt: well can you answer differently for both. Well what about just as a filmmaker

Steller: as a filmmaker yes, they were very relevant – See I think Four Corners for instance where I worked as a cameraman a lot on that, it was before it's time, we broke completely new ground on that. I worked with the original Bob Raymond

Hunt: that's the fellow I was talking about who worked with Cecil Holmes. – Out of the Box he wrote.

Steller: ah Bob Raymond. I've got a couple of his books here too. Yes I worked with Bob. We used to laugh because he knew a smattering of Portuguese and we used to talk in Portuguese a few little things. And working with Four Corners you know you were bringing some of the things out there back into Australia. When I used to go overseas, like I was saying, I went to Vietnam, I went there for the Patma Beha, then I can remember doing heads of state, we did Indira Ghandi, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and Lee Kwan Yew, but we couldn't get Sukharno he refused, but we got Subandrio who after the interview disappeared. He was under house arrest because one of the things he was talking about was getting the atomic bomb or working on the atomic bomb and I think that didn't go down too well, and he was under house arrest. And I went back and I said where's Subandrio, no one knows, but I knew he was under house arrest. And then in Chequerboard it was a nice warm feeling to say hey you people haven't heard about this but yeah you're going to hear about it now, these are things that are happening around and you don't even know about. And even from the very first program as a cameraman, I filmed Gina, the one that was blind, and what gave that story substance even as a cameraman, they didn't just do Gina, they did another boy who was blind at the age of twelve. Now! In your mind, we never said it, but is it better to be blind at birth, or have some sight, and know what you're looking at.

Hunt: which would be worse

Steller: if I had a say in it I'd say I want to be born blind. Because this fellow when you asked him what his mother looked like it was like she looked like fifteen years ago, he still have those kind of, and he acted like a child because he had those childish memories of a boy of twelve and he was twenty one, twenty two. So that's what I'm saying with Chequerboard, we didn't have to tell you by the selection of the talent and the questions that were asked of them, you work it yourself, or you feel it yourself. So

that with Chequerboard was great. Then the other one's like the Peach's, the Journey's Into With, its like brining travel to you in your chair with Keith Adams, Journey Into Japan, and Journey Into India, Journey Into Himalayas, I didn't work on all of them but I worked on a couple of them. Then of course the Peach's, the Harry Butler's,

Hunt: Its all recognising Australian's identity

Steller: and this is your country and you're part of it, and this is your wildlife, and if you don't look after it, and we keep saying now we're killing it, so, then of course the other ones which was a personal thing working with Gil doing the Intertel's. I worked on three Intertels – one was the Federation of Malaysia, then Malta, and Israel. Then I did another one with Keith Adams which was for the Fijian people it was the installation of Ratu Mara as paramount chief – I did that one and that was great fun because they'd never done it for years and they had to drag some book out of the library and Ratu Mara would have to be filmed reading at the same time, this is what we have to do tomorrow.

Hunt: the ceremonial procedures basically

Steller: yes.

Hunt: they had to learn out of a book

Steller: out of a book, that's what I said, because you had to go to all the different island. The other interesting thing was I directed a thing for Attenborough and Keith was the interviewer on Michael Leay

Hunt: in PNG

Steller: yes. About the explorer and they discovered the Wahgee (?) Valley – that was a very interesting thing about showing you somehow our connection with New Guinea through the Leay brothers. So bringing all those things to you in your loungeroom.

Hunt: sort of positioning Australia in its geopolitical whatever at that time, you know we are part of the whole world, not just isolated and alone any more and that's the whole thing in that era.

Steller: Intertel was a marvellous idea, how it didn't keep going, because each of the countries, each one had to make a one hour documentary about another country or aspects of another country, and you had to give a free copy to every one of them. So in the end it turned out for the price of one, you got five. Five one hour documentaries. And they were very very interesting ones made by Canada, and the BBC, I don't know who the other…….

Hunt: I have to look into those.

Steller: They were very very interesting and it kind of opened you eyes about – I look at the Israel one its called 'After the Miracle' – and I look at that and I think it hasn't changed.

Hunt: that's the thing, the more you read about history, the more you realise nothing has changed

Steller: then 'Malta' was very interesting especially for me because I'm a practicing Catholic and to hear how the Labor Party was treated in Malta by the church, if somebody went and confessed and the priest would say oh by the way do you belong to the Labor Party, and he said right alright go! He wouldn't listen. No wouldn't give him absolution.

Hunt: a godless person

Steller: go with your sin you bloomin' labourite! And if you died you weren't buried in the consecrated ground, you were buried outside there. So it was a very interesting thing to see, you know you read about them, but to see the conflict between state and religion.

Hunt: that's one of the other things, I haven't really asked the question as such but just on the political side of theme and issues that were put in documentaries that you've been involved in, were there any, like we were talking about radicalism earlier, radical politics in Australia at that time, was it thinking more of it as a liberal politics, you know like American liberalism, instead of conservative politics as opposed to that – I don't think Chequerboard would handle that

Steller: No. not in a Chequerboard, this is where we were talking about when it was all kind of morphing into current affairs.

Hunt: that's what I'm saying maybe Four Corners took that up

Steller: that was when Four Corners came – see Chequerboard would not do the Rainbow Warrior thing for instance, that's definitely Four Corners, you know we couldn't do something like that.

Hunt: no that's fine because I'm trying to look at social documentary and this (Chequerboard) is social documentary

Steller; that was all social documentary (Chequerboard), but the other one's we used to dub as travel and adventure that's Billy Peach, the other one would be history to a certain extent when you are talking about gold. Now see another thing is that Billy Peach and I'm very fond of Bill

Hunt: He's still around isn't he

Steller: oh yes. I'm very fond of Bill. And we got on extremely well together and I'm still a mate of his and we go to the football together, to the rugby, and we wanted to make another one after the success of 'gold' we wanted to make 'wool'

Hunt: oh yes!

Steller: on the sheep's back, and that was knocked on the head

Hunt: oh really

Steller: yes. Then do you remember Bob Sander's People – it was studio

Hunt: oh People yes.

Steller: I wanted to do one because with our travelling with Billy Peach we used to me like you used to get in the Reader's Digest, unforgettable characters, oh they were full of them outside there, and I wanted to do a thing called 'Peach's People'. You know just say two people in Australia or somebody visiting, like if Ray Charles was visiting we'd bring Ray Charles in and it would be cheap and be all studio based, it would be Billy Peach asking the questions, because Bill was very popular then, but anyway that was knocked on the head.

Hunt: was this budgets or weren't interested or

Steller: just between you and me I think there was a jealously about Bill Peach, you politics. I mean at one stage I can remember a producer saying to me Bill was doing Peach's Australia and at the same time he was doing Holiday, fronting Holiday, plus he was writing books and getting his thing…..

Hunt: how dare he (joking)

Steller: I think that's when I wanted Peach's People as another thing, and they said no, he's made enough bloody money out of the ABC. You see that's another thing, its not a case of whether you can get a good program out of good person, its he's making more money than me isn't he. So you know, get rid of him we don't want him. That's what I felt.

Hunt: that's criminal isn't it, really

Steller: yes.

Hunt: that's sort of artistic censorship really, stifling the creative person

Steller: yes. And that same person was the executive producer when I started to produce these tapes. And they needed salesmen and all that, they had another auxiliary company called VAL, video aided learning and it was at Chatswood. So from here we

produced them and then Chatwood was selling them and they wanted me to go there and film a little promo to put at the start of the tapes, and there he was one of the salesmen and I thought 'I've got me sergeant major workin' for me now' (laughs).

Hunt: I'll always remember I read in Marlon Brando's book 'Songs my mother taught me', where he was expelled from many school but this one in particular was a military school he was sent to by his parents and he was expelled from that and his head master said 'you'll never make anything of yourself' one of those sort of statements you are worthless, you are nothing, and he said I thought of this when I was sitting on my island in Tahiti sipping a pineapple juice and laughed his head off. They're the sort of moments I think 'oh yes!'. Finally Bill, just a last one – its probably a bit of twisty one you may have a negative or positive I don't know but – with the benefit of hindsight which is not always a good thing I guess – was the reflections as I was talking about whether it was fair or balanced identity issues, was it flawed in any way, were there things that may be should have been said that represented or is it generally okay…….

Steller: are you pertaining to our social documentaries – I think when one's in there in the hot spot doing it you fair I suppose if you're being truthful and as I said earlier that's one of the first things I tried to do to keep it simple, clearly as you can, and truthfull as you can. And that's what I think we did, we didn't hide anything we brought it to the front. If you didn't do that you'd have we'd be sitting in a corner now in my old age saying why did I do it,

Hunt: or why didn't I do it

Steller: the why didn't I are the stories that came after that and I tried to get through and couldn't get through which would have brought another phase of Australian life and as I said the people that were there eyewitnesses that saw things in those days that a fading from our memory and we say hey Charlie Brown was there he saw it. Because coming back to the Rothbury riots that I was going to do we actually interviewed a bloke that was standing at the side of the bloke that got shot and he showed me the mark he got shot in the neck, and he's got the scar on his neck which affects the way he talks, he's dead now. But I got it on tape. I think Wendy would have it because…..so that's one of the programs that never ever,…….I didn't do it I helped, because I won't take anything from her shes' a lovely girl, that Prue Charlton, but it never made the air because some bloke thought history was a no no. So those are if anything the gripes I have. But my years, I worked in the halcyon days of the ABC, we were innovative we were doing new things. When I talk to my grandchildren, I say never get a job that's a grind, I say my feet used to hit the floor in the morning and I think I've got to get to work because there's something happening there's going to be something new, there's going to be something exciting, it was like a bit….

Hunt: adrenalin rush

Steller: all the time. And working with people like Tom, and Geoff Daniels, hard task masters, but they kept the adrenalin flowing. And another thing is they might

bollocks you like mad but they always stood by you. And that's the kind of thing that you need and you needed that protective thing so that you can go out and do what you have to do. You know Tom was always there, he'd stand, belt the shit out of you but he'll take the blows when they came

Hunt: stand up for you

STeller: yes. And wouldn't throw it on to you. I told him he could do that.

Hunt: and independent filmmakers they haven't got that support system behind they are basically out there on their own aren't they, so within the institution or the mechanism of the people helped you in working within the institution, or they feel they can protect you.

Steller: yes and another thing is I did a thing on jerry builders I think its 'this is the front patio light its very good I don't think' – now there's a title for you –

Hunt: that's a humdinger!

Steller: I selected that one for Tom. And he kept naming Huxley Builders and we had to keep bleeping him out he sounded like a bloody canary when we went on air you know, but what we do is that's another protective thing you have that you don't mind doing it is that you can bring in the legal eagles, the ABC legal eagles, and they'd say oh you'd better blip them out, or oh you can get through with that – so you had that kind of protection which helped you a lot in producing and directing.

Hunt: it would give you confidence that you could go in that direction

Steller: yes. and then come back and see whether you can get away with it or work around it. But you know you've got that backing there. But that's one of the things that working with the ABC was great.

Hunt: definitely advantages, the camaraderie and support systems built the freedoms that existed to a certain extent, the negatives are the lack of support in later years, budgetary constrains.

Steller: yes, and I think sometimes they didn't have the depth of some of the earlier producers and directors and all that we worked with they seem to be a lot shallower, and they couldn't look ahead at what we should be doing in a month, because everyone could see that the kind of social documentaries, the way we were going in, everyone kept saying as I said it was radio with pictures, and who the hell would be wanting to look up other people's nostrils, those were all the negative things. Now if we were thin skinned and if we didn't have someone like Tom with purpose, we would have said shit lets stop lets call it a day. But we went ahead and slowly they suddenly realise hell these people have got something to say we've got to sit and listen, and I think…..

Hunt: the determination to continue, a focus of perspective as far as where you want to take the program as a whole.

Steller: I don't think Tom…….and other beautiful thing about this, we used to sit down whenever we could everybody the researchers, the cameramen, Tom and all of us, Robin Hughes, we used to sit at a big table and there'd be arguments galore for the whole morning (then we'd all go and get pissed, No), and things used to come thick and fast the ideas

Hunt: bouncing off each other

Steller: yes, so you weren't getting an old staid person saying this is what we ought to do you've got young blood coming up saying this is what we ought to do, like I was saying about poverty – one of the researchers says Gillian Coote, hey that's a lot of bullshit 'as long as you don't have proper educations you're going to have poverty'. And that's the premice of the program that we went with.

Hunt: and that's where Cecil Holmes who I've mentioned before, his career sort of didn't…not down the tubes, but he wasn't about to work as much as he should have because of political issues and what not that he encountered, but when he worked for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission making ethnographic documentary, about the aboriginal issues and in 1978 he was about one of the few that actually wrote feature articles for The Australian newspaper on the issues that were facing the aboriginals at that time, and they were health and education, and social issues. Nothing has changed in all those years. They are still the three major issues. He was trying to bring that to the fore then with his documentaries and that's where some of these Chequerboard programs cover the same types of issues. I just wondered what if had he be able to continue working at the ABC or within an institution would he have….

Steller: I met him in the ABC when he was making I, the Aboriginal. Another good documentary filmmaker was a fellow called Ian Dunlop.

Hunt: I remember the name

Steller: you see a lot of his work especially with aboriginals, I think it was Ian Dunlop to film the last tribe to come out of the desert

Hunt: was it Tidbinbilla…..Pititjinjara

Steller: Pititjinjara

Hunt: I had to do a whole lecture the other day on aboriginal names and cultures and my god father – before I started I said I hope I get these name right……but as I say they were issues of their time, in their time, and…….actually what if they started making that sort of program again the ABC, in a series, not just a one offs

Steller: I think they are to a certain extent – Australian Story – it would be the Chequerboard of today, I don't know

Hunt: I don't think it's a hard hitting as Chequerboard, to me.

Steller: no, no. I don't know whether we are getting punch drunk or we're getting too much of it you know. I look at just so I can get angry, I look at TodayTonight with that woman with big long straight hair coming down, and I'm looking at it and I'm saying 'how boring', its either neighbours having a row, or someone cheating on their tax, or the food being, all mundane bloody things

Hunt: they seem to repeat things too

Steller: yes. I think to a certain extent sometimes, I thought one of the stories that moved me, a couple of ones, in the Australian Story, is the whistleblower copper, that was very touching how they all turned on him and his life is buggered

Hunt: he became a scapegoat

Steller: yes. Because he talked the bloody truth, to me that was a good program, what happens when you tell the truth. Well his work mates kept coming to him and putting the finger to his (a gun motion) and going click, you're gonna get it mate! And another one was about the girl and she's flying now and she lost her legs and she's still flying, that shows you the courage……

FINIS

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH STORRY WALTON
ON 6/6/2006 at RYDE, SYDNEY

Hunt: …..on the 6th of the 6th, 06….

Walton: a lot of 6s

Hunt: its going to be a good one….now Storry you've already given me a heap of information already which is fantastic and exactly what I was wanting, there are a few things I'd like to ask you if I may…I want to ask you in capacity you worked in when you first began working at the ABC, you say you were a specialist trainee…what did that entail exactly, what were your duties..

Walton: In the 50s the ABC like a lot of other organisations in industry and commerce had traineeships and there were pretty serious affairs, they were advertised nationally and in the case of the ABC you came in as a specialist trainee in a particular field, so you came in as a specialist trainee in drama and features, as John Croyston and I did for instance, or your came in as a specialist trainee in talks.

Hunt: and Talks was a documentary radio or something like that was it?

Walton: in Radio Talks yes it did incorporate documentary. For instance it was in the Talks department that the celebrated John Thompson made his one our political documentary

Hunt: and he was your mentor?

Walton: oh absolutely extraordinary documentary maker…So you were then assigned to a department and they had the responsibility of training you and in John's case and in my case to become what they then called Producers, I think today what we'd call Directors. And a traineeship as I recall had no finite conclusion, but it was generally understood to last two years. But we all galloped through much quicker, and one of the reasons for that was, I mean there was no idea of a long period of discussion, lectures, theory – we were actually in the studio I think three days, it might have been four days after we arrived at the department.

Hunt: learning as you work almost

Walton: straight to the microphone, and straight to script editing, straight being assigned the film censor. Even documentary programs had to be classified so the ABC had a clever system, the Chief Censor allowed the ABC to

attend its screenings so that the ABC departments would know very quickly, they'd know within an hour of the classification how to program the following two or three weeks so we were bound to secrecy, we couldn't say what the classifications were, but we'd go down for a morning session with the Censor, (often very funny), and then walk back up to Williams Street and tell our bosses that Boyd QC had been banned completely for instance, because it was about a club foot….and a classification was given and then that was passed through to Presentation for programming. But the traineeships were prized jobs to be in broadcasting, there weren't a lot, but they brought in trainees more years as I recall.

Hunt: okay, and that was like an apprenticeship type thing

Walton: apprenticeship is a good way of looking at it because it was on the job training and it was about the craft of broadcasting, so apprenticeship's good!

Hunt: and didn't actually get a ticket or anything like that it was just that you were able to apply for other positions at a higher level if they came up that sort of thing.

Walton: yes, we were actually posted to jobs to begin with there was, it was along time before we swam into the business of applying for jobs.

Hunt: so there was no choice at that stage for you

Walton: no, and you'd been set on your course by becoming a trainee, so industrially, looking back it's quite interesting, you got your traineeship, or your apprenticeship as you mentioned, and your were really set up, and you really had to be pretty bloody stupid not to fulfil…

Hunt: take advantage of what was offered

Walton: ….your possibilities. So that we were quickly posted in to Radio and then into Television, and while still being in the drama department our fate was determined by the program department who assigned us programs to do – women's programs, children's programs 'Mr Squiggle' or whatever it was

Hunt: this was like a pool?

Walton: yes. It was a pool. (Storry's son Ben departs the apartment)…once the formalities of the traineeship were over and in our case it was only a year and half I think, and once we'd done our training course (in my case it was one week with Royston Morley from the BBC), we were transferred into the pool and that was a great big puddle full of the most interesting people

working in every single television programming area in the ABC, except the most elite which was drama and opera. And you had to earn your spurs to do that.

Hunt: what were the spurs to enter that, say drama specifically

Walton: in my case it was to become an assistant director to an established director (in my case it was assistant director to Ray Menmuir) and it was straight into the most demanding television. The first thing that I did as an assistant director to Ray, still very green, was his three studio, live to air, 'Richard II' – an amazing thing to look at. And for actors of course it was still similar to being in the theatre because they had to know their lines down. And I didn't do very well on that, I don't think I was a very good assistant director, but here's another characteristic of the ABC in those days, once they made the investment in you carried you, and I got better, but I mucked up things, except the studio part that I was good at. But the film part I was terrible…..

Hunt: that's the way you learn

Walton: and you learn and we learnt by falling off horses and picking ourselves up and getting back on

Hunt: well in a way its better because you are more open to learning and accepting other ideas rather than if you've got a rigid sort of 'I went to school I learnt it this way'

Walton: yes, and there's an urgency about it….if you muck up for no other reasons that for your own prestige you've got to do better the next time and very, very, quickly. So that within a very short time I was making both film documentaries and television live to air drama and I did them in parallel, it was possible though not usual, but it was possible in the flexibility in those early years of television to work in more than one field. I haven't clarified the pool…….the pool was where you really started and you were graded so you went into the pool, specialist trainee into the pool as a grade one producer and you did everything. I did at one stage six or seven live to air program's a week and you got a fantastic amount of experience. I did music recitals, 'Mr Squiggle', two religious programs on Sunday, rural programs 'In Your Garden' and 'Roundabout', so you dealt with snakes and children and puppets and icing cakes in women's programs, and music

Hunt: did you ever get them confused…

Walton: we must have come to the end of some weeks wondering what we'd been doing….but the big thing then was to become a Grade 2 - that meant you began to specialise say in children's programs; Grade 3 – you were half

way there and it was a bit like school you got to intermediate stage at Grade 3; Grade 4 – was a fantastic to get to, and Grade 5 – some never got to. Grade 5 was the top. That was the top producer, nearly always but not always, certainly doing drama, certainly doing opera, and like Ron May doing the top sporting programs which involved not only doing directing and producing but really being an executive producer, he was a fantastic organiser. So that was the thing, and after Grade 5 that was as far as you went.

Hunt: So what happened after that did you just continue on at that level or whatever

Walton: well looking at the trajectory of most people, some went into program management, Colin Dean, who had been an enfanterrible (?) of the film industry before he came in as an early drama director in television, went on to be a program director. But overwhelmingly most went overseas. In the fifteen months in which I left for Britain I had said in a publication recently that fifteen directors went to Britain, but I had another look at the figures and it was eighteen, eighteen ABC top directors many of them I might add getting out of Australia to get away from their mates all finished up in London looking at each other across a pub bar we couldn't escape each other. So it was in fact a spring board for a numbers of years, just for those early years it was a springboard to Britain.

Hunt: many came back as well

Walton: yes quite a number came back, but many did not, Kevin Shine didn't come back, Ken Hannon didn't

Hunt: where did they go on to BBC or something like that

Walton: BBC or to commercial television in Britain or to Canada in the case of Kevin Shine. And you went to Britain because it was simply the one place on the planet where the finest television was being made.

Hunt: yes I understand, well it still is, isn't it the BBC is still held in high esteem in whatever they do really all over the world

Walton: yes, yes, and it was a natural jump too….this sort of conversation wouldn't have passed our lips, but I think that tacitly we moved to Britain because we were compatible children of the Reithian ideal (?) Lord Reith's noble idea of public broadcasting as having an enormous responsibility to educated and to entertain and to inform and to depict the lives of the citizens of a country above all commercial considerations. We were, I don't know any who weren't really imbued with that belief. And

I'll say more about that too because I was surprised when we were joined occasionally by directors who had been recruited from commercial television because I think we thought that commercial television was really the top thing they were the fast, speedy, competent, well paid people and we were the woozy ABC still tied to the apron strings metaphorically of Aunty. But I've never forgotten Ken Hannon coming into the control room in Studio 21 when I was doing an episode of 'The Stranger', and afterwards saying he's never seen such attack and verve in the studio before, and what I was doing was in no way exceptional, it was just the way we'd learnt to work. So I think we were good.

Hunt: well you must have been, I mean anybody who's come out of the ABC as far as I've been able to understand and from my own experience is highly trained, highly professional, extremely experienced and they end up as these days, the one's that I worked with anyway, as the icons in journalism in particular the one's that I worked with. So, there's got to be something there and they've gone on to feather their own nests in commercial obviously, that's the way things happen, and good luck to them I guess, but you wonder is that sort of ethic still happening in the ABC, are we still producing that level of stuff. I don't know it remains to be seen I suppose down the years. Anyway, I feel very strongly about the ABC as all people who ever work at the ABC or ever have, have a very soft spot in their heart for it., It never goes away does it, this is the thing….

Walton: no it doesn't go away and I reflected some years ago that it was years since I worked at the ABC, I've done a hundred things since then, and yet, I still think of myself at the age of seventy, as an ABC person. That's still the definition I have of me and I've done so many other things so it marked me indelibly and I suppose it was a place in which you invested a great deal of your young beliefs and altruism as well of course. Don't forget that.

Hunt: no absolutely, and do you think that it was that camaraderie of people who were like minded, like thinking, working together for the same goal, and no one-upmanship really, I mean there might have been office politics occasionally or what not….

Walton: there was a lot of office politics and there was a lot of rivalry, but that competitive thing was not necessarily destructive, there was such an energy to produce and to produce a lot of things, and to do new things, and to be given room to do new things to try out, that in fact that competitive thing for the most part, produced good results and didn't make enemies of each other.

Hunt: and from management there weren't any real controls were there.

Walton: there were controls, I mean budgetary control was very big, for instance, just talk for a moment about budgetary control, that was insistently strong and by the living Harry you had to come in on budget and you could divide produces into two classes for a while – those who came in on budget and those who went over - and those who went over were not well regarded although they might do some great things and there was of course a devilish idea that if you go over budget and get away with it because you made a good program. But that stood every Australian producer and director in good stead because when they went to work in the BBC where the budget were much bigger there was much more latitude in spending and I found at the BBC that I was repulsed by the profligacy of the financial regime, I was angry when my crews took extra days to come home off a foreign assignment just for fun I'd never known that and I thought it was wrong I still do. And my program boss at *Man Alive* when I left after doing ten documentaries gave me a wry smile and said your one of the few people, but it's always Australians, who've spent time here and always come in on budget. But it wasn't a compliment, it was just a wry observation that we insisted upon doing it, it wasn't an expectation it was just what we did because everybody else

Hunt: was doing the other

Walton: well they did half as many programs as we did and they often went way over budget and there was the tolerance for it, probably isn't the case now. But we were on the whole very good financial managers of our artistic work I think.
But with regard to other controls – yes there was, the ABC was already a bureaucracy and there was always a great deal of energy put into beating the system at the ABC. And there were people who were disappointed because of bureaucratic interference with hours and so forth, those were things that you struggled against.

Hunt: time contraints. Creative time.

Walton: oh yes. Time and battling to get rehearsal time, and battling to get bigger budgets, and having to write reports

Hunt: were there any restrictions on topics that weren't really encouraged

Walton: in my experience there were no restrictions in topics, but a great deal of weariness about them. It would be good to talk to Tom Manefield about the attitude of the ABC to the kind of topics that *Chequerboard* tackled because that deeply worried many people in the ABC, and I think that *Chequerboard* was able to keep going because little bit by little bit the public and the reviewers particularly began to applaud the courage of some of the topics on sex and sexuality in marriage, and poverty and all

those sort of things. My main brushes with conservatism were quite predictable for instance with My Brother Jack, there was first of all a concern that the book had been written by an extremely left wing writer, that caused a great deal of concern in political circles, but Neil Hutcheson always won out on behalf of his producers

Hunt: that was a brilliant series too I remember seeing it when I was younger

Walton: yes, but they were worried about language in a way that is incomprehensible today. After a lot of discussion I was rationed to I think it was two 'bloody's' a half hour, and there was a ration on the number of 'damns' that we could use, and I was forbidden to use the work 'mick' to describe a Roman Catholic.

Hunt: that's interesting

Walton: I disobeyed the last one

Hunt: that changes the text of the book

Walton: yes but I don't think we were awfully obedient to that (laugh)……but topics, I think probably in the current affairs area there might have been

Hunt: more or less like Four Corners might have taken up the….

Walton: yes that might have been, but that's outside my experience. My experience of these early years in television was that there's lots of room to have a go – both artistically, technically, and conceptually with the topics that we chose. In fact there was real encouragement to it.

Hunt: that's terrific, that at least leaves you to approach topics with out being – and self censorship you had no worries with that

Walton: yes, take the case of the documentary program on the RSL that Alan Ashbolt made, and that was of course celebre because the view of many politicians in the RSL that it was a slur and shouldn't have been made, but it was made. No one stopped it being made. And maybe that's one of the things worth investigating, I don't know how many programs were stopped from being produced, but a lot of controversial programs were made and the ABC took the flack.

Hunt: you've mentioned one here about Doc Evatt was banned.

Walton: that was a radio documentary by John Thompson

Hunt: even so, do you know why, what was the issue that they

Walton: no I don't but it will be well know, and in fact Peter Thompson (John's son who does the morning program Channel Nine reviews and who comes down every week to Sydney from Byron Bay), Peter would have chapter and verse on that, and in fact I think he might be the custodian of some of the programs.

Hunt: okay I'll try and talk to him, but he's not an ABC person that's the thing

Walton: but he was in the ABC for a wee while in the film department with Gil Brearly

Hunt: oh yes, I tried to contact Gil, but he doesn't answer his phone, then I think you

Walton: he might be away, I gave you two numbers

Hunt: and Anne Whithead, did you mention Anne Whithead to me

Walton: and Anne, did I have you Anne

Hunt: I think it was you, I've written it down, but I'll have to try when I get back, I tried before I came down, but I haven't heard back so I'll just try again

Walton: I haven't tried to speak to Gil for a while, he may be away, they go to Europe

Hunt: ok okay, the phone answers but it's a message machine etc….but I've still got time, I've got eighteen months or more at least anyway at least to catch up and I'm only half way through – last year I spent gathering the info and this year doing interviews and looking at the programs as much as I can. Further on in your notes you talk about creative and entrepreneurial flair and open mindedness of certain program bosses of the day at the time was terrific, - in the time that you were there did that change at all, did you notice any change or did it continue

Walton: when I first left the ABC in 1968 it was because nothing was happening, nothing excited me at all, I have tried desperately to do a follow up with Charmaine Cliff of a series which was going to be documentary drama series set in a block of flats (sounds all very predictable nowadays) about going from flat to flat the interrelations and the personal stories based on Charmaine's observations some of which found their way into her wonderful pieces for the Sydney Morning Herald, she was a wonderful observer of things around her, sharp, fresh, perceptive view of people. And the Brother Jack had been a success and they were celebrities it

looked as though it was possible but Neil Hutchison had left his position for instance, those little shifts of command made a big difference in the ABC , he had gone and there was no great interest in doing it and that view was shared by a number of other people in the drama department and that's one of the reasons why so many of us left. But that was at the end of my little cycle at the ABC – looking back over the cycle it was always a period in which there were opportunities to do new things. There was always somewhere a director, a producer, a program head, that you could appeal to I appeal to John Appleton who was head of Children's, who had no authority as a program director to make expensive drama, but he talked to Neil Hutchison and between the two of them we did a Children's drama 'The Stranger', a science fiction thing. So then John Appleton was entrepreneurial in that sense, Alan Ashbolt was highly entrepreneurial, there was a wonder head of the Rural Department called John Douglas who left the ABC, a red headed Celt, loud a buggery, and he left the ABC to go and work for the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, but he…..see all the program departments were in William Street. So everybody interacted it was like a broadcasting precinct, the pubs were alive with discussion been rural broadcasters and drama people, between teachers and philosophers, and so on. John Douglas had no qualms in the rural department of calling me up one day and saying "I want you to do a rural drama" and he had it all worked out he said its going to be about fourteen year old kid whose running away from his parents, we don't know why but we'll work that out, and he goes right round Australia an we do a story, he said it's partly drama and when we get to Rockhampton we do a thing about the rural industries of Rockhampton and that could be a drama or it can be a documentary. Now looking back on it it's a bloody good idea.

Hunt: did it get off the ground

Walton: no it didn't get off the ground, but not because of any lack of interest, there wasn't the money to share resources at the time, but instead something else got off the ground a series of documentaries about rural things which I came back to do some years later called *'Directions'*. By that time Graham White was…….the point I'm making I suppose is that in my period up until 1968 there was plenty of entrepreneurial and flexible rather daring program heads.

Hunt: yes good'o, that seems to be the case from what I understand….later on things seem to have changed, and even worse when you get into the corporatisation era

Walton: that's my impression to, but I wasn't there

Hunt: further on you talk about different programs that you've worked on, and one you mention was *Man Alive*

Walton: yes in Britain

Hunt: yes, and I understand that was the catalyst for *Chequerboard* as it were, can you explain or talk to me about your experience on *Man Alive* and then go on to *Chequerboard* or the programs you made for *Chequerboard* that'd be terrific

Walton: my experience was in reverse order, Tom Manefield has come back from Britain where he'd watched *Man Alive*, I don't think he worked on *Man Alive* but he observed it and he had a lot to do with its instigator Desmond Wilcox. And in the pub, in The Gladstone in William Street we talked a lot about it and Tom was on fire to do a social documentary series, there was nothing like it on television in Australia at the time, and the big discussion in the pub with Tom Haydon, Ken Hannon, and Ray Menmuir and
Bill Bain,(*check spellings*) all of us was whether a program which focused basically on close ups of people talking about their lives would be of any interest and Tom would throw his fist on the bar and say there's nothing more interesting that the geography of the face, there's nothing more compelling than the person who passionately believes in what they're saying. It's riveting cinema, its riveting television, he convinced us of this and he's seen *Man Alive* he knew what he was talking about. And my recollection is that it took twelve months or maybe longer to persuade the program bosses to go ahead with it. My impression is that Ken Watts was never against it, but he needed some strong convincing and he needed some strong arguments to support it, and Tom was very persuasive, he sometimes got up people's noses because when God was making him he forgot to put a filter between his brain and his tongue, so he said exactly what he meant, but he was well on the way to getting the idea up but there was still reservations, and my most vivid recollection of the beginnings of *Chequerboard* was when Tom asked me to accompanying him to the Head Office of the ABC in Elizabeth Street for a meeting with Ken Watts the program director, with Colin Dean, and someone else I can't remember (Tom will tell you), but that other person was higher up and was much more in control and although we weren't briefed I think we were there to sell the program and Ken I think had already decided it should go. A lot of discussion about it and a magic word tumbled out

Hunt: what was that

Walton: neither Tom nor I can remember who said it, it doesn't matter, but to the objections about the program showing the seamy side of life and tough lives and 'people wouldn't want to watch that'. Tom or I said the key

thing about *Chequerboard* will be that it will be a compassionate view of Australian people and life. And the word 'compassion' did the trick. And it always was, when you look at *Chequerboard's* programming from its amusing ones to one which are searingly sad and tragic they all have that stamp of that strong quality not of sentimentality or of pity, but of compassion

Hunt: and non-judgemental

Walton: non-judgemental and it's a way of putting yourself in the shoes of other people that's what compassion is about and to Tom's great credit he never allowed that strong ethic to wain, it never became sentimental, it never became romantic, and as a result I think it dignified many strata of Australian people and many strata of Australian life in a way that they've never been dignified before

Hunt: and from what I understand *Man Alive* had an interviewer, and he cut out the interviewer

Walton: *Man Alive* had an off-screen interviewer whose questions were usually, but always, heard, but never seen. I did ten *Man Alive* documentaries and on about half of them the interviewer's voice was excluded if it was possible to do so. But your question was about in *Chequerboard* was the fact that there was not an interviewer a problem, in my view not at all. The great skill, the marvellous invisible skill of *Chequeboard* and the people that Tom trained to do it, was that they knew how to ask questions in a way that would allow people to start talking about things in a way that you could edit and cut. That's a long story about how you do that, but that's how it was made. And the effect of that was of course to remove the intrusion of the third party, the interrogator, the interlocutor. And the programs gave the appearance that the people were in fact speaking for themselves. You see *Chequerboard* was only a step away from a lot of the community based *A Challenge for Change* programming which was happening simultaneously in Canada when a then young Michael Loubo (spelling) an Australian from Sydney who was one of the most celebrated innovators, *A Challenge for Change* went the extra step it removed interviewer completely and handed the camera to the community. And the director and sometimes another person who would have otherwise been the interviewer stood along side and to help technically as a guide so they weren't complete free of the interference, if that's the right word, the influence, of the filmmakers and the community made their programs and *A Challenge for Change* is an interesting comparison with what was going on with *Chequerboard*. But *Chequerboard* was a revolution and it was a revolution which the Australian public didn't say 'oh this is a revolution I'm finding this difficult to watch because technically it was different', the Australian population tuned into *Chequerboard* to see themselves

being portrayed unselfconsciously and without all the apparatus of the media around them

Hunt: yes it seems like a bit of a key hole view of lives that maybe the average person doesn't see….the programs that I've seen e.g. *At Londonderry*, that's the first one I saw recently and others and that in particular was almost to me encapsulating a radical view…I want to look at this *Chequerboard* really was a radical program, like the liberal views you mentioned, that's how I see it and it offered the questioning the status quo, putting questions up to people not directly making them think about things and questioning their own ideas and perspective on things, that's how I see *Chequerboard* as being a radical series of an example of radicalism in the ABC, put it that way. Do you think that or not

Walton: I see what you mean, I'm always a little weary of the word radical because its defined in so many different ways, but in the sense of fresh, or being fresh or new, it was doing that, politically *Chequerboard* is very interesting simply because it gave a voice to those who had no voice in the past, but secondly and more insidious if you like, it showed that those who we thought were most inarticulate when approached in the way in which you approach people in the pub or if you know them or love them very much, those same people are highly articulate about their lives, they don't use the polished sentences necessarily of other people, but if you stay with people then you will see them much more clearly. And of course on of the radical approaches of *Chequerboard* was that it didn't just fly in and fly out of people's lives it lived alongside them for quite a long time, it's researchers got to know the people over a long period of time, so you could say quite reasonably that one of *Chequerboard's* radical things was that it relied upon a bond of trust that was genuinely built between the program makers and the people, not a confidence trick like many Today type programs do today where they con people by pretending to be trustworthy. So this was a genuine and empathetic and compassionate relationship of people with a view not to exploiting them but with a view to letting them tell their own story in their own words even if it surprised you even it if wasn't what you set out to do. And that's another thing that's I suppose radical about *Chequerboard*, today I'm often deeply concerned when program companies like Film Australia, ask documentary filmmakers before they give them the money to give them a script. But social documentaries it's impossible to have a script, you can have an objective and in the case of *Chequerboard* the program was the question, the program was the question. Like who are the people at Londonderry, what is it like to living in this kind of poverty, what do they think about us, the program making is the question, and that's a radical idea. But of course in the end if you are looking at radical, radical doesn't necessarily mean that you are postulating in the program a radical view, *Chequerboard* was much more subtle than that – if it was radical it was

simply because it showed things and people and views that weren't otherwise shown to Australia, it put it out in front of people, put it out in front of the community, it put it out in front of politicians, and it put it out in front of local government officials – this is how it is – it didn't say, I never used the word 'should' , it didn't say 'you should fix this up' , it never said 'this is a disgrace', it did say, it allowed the people in the program to talk about their lives and how they were and that's a subtle form of radicalism at the time.

Hunt: it's almost like a subtle education I guess of the audience to what else is out there apart from their own small worlds that they exist in, that there are other people who are struggling

Walton: yes. I mean you could look at the difference with *Four Corners* or *TDT* at the time faced with a situation of poverty for instance like that, would have a brief which said something like an investigation into the scandal of poverty in current day Australia. It would always be value to being with and the investigation would be to, the investigative thing would be to show that it was outrageous, *Chequerboard* never used words like outrageous, or scandal or things like that, all it said was, we found people living poor, in very poor conditions and no one seems to know very much about them, we'd like to find out more about it, from their own view point, not from psychologist, not from sociologists, not from politicians, and not from do-gooders, just from them.

Hunt: that's why I think it's an absolute gem in Australian television documentary making in particular. You've got *A Big Country* which is also social documentary but it didn't go into the hard issues of social issues, as *Chequerboard* did. I seemed to run concurrently at the time for a period until *Chequerboard* finished *A Big Country* continued, but ABC social documentary seems to have ebbed away or softened once *Chequerboard* finished, that's what I have gleaned at least anyway and understood.

Walton: I agree with that, and now I have to speak as an ex-documentary maker and as a viewer and what is spectacularly lacking in Australian life at the moment is a continuing hard look at the underbelly of our life. And in a country where, I speak politically now and socially, where the gap between the rich and poor is growing wider 22% of Australian are estimated to be poor, 800,000 people are estimated to be poor in New South Wales out of a population of 6.4 million (a very high number) – very little is being show of the causes of that and the effects of that, as well as all the phenomena of contemporary life, there's a lot talked about high employment but very little very few programs made about the casualisation of work and how that works out in a family life and there's

not a program which can carry that kind of commentary. I think as a nation we are impoverished by the lack of social documentary.

Hunt: mm its been taken over by infotainment and the lifestyle programs, and the 'you've gotta have this and you've gotta have that', what if the people can't get anything! Not even food to eat.

Walton: yes, people will be horrified, Tom will be furious with me for saying it but the program at the moment which probably best is sociologically the most interesting on Australian morays, is *Big Brother*.

Hunt: oh yes, okay, yes. I find that difficult to what just because a different generation….

Walton: but you see the problem with that is the people there are set up to perform

Hunt: exactly well that's what happens when you put a camera up in front of someone anyway – with *Chequerboard* that didn't seem to happen because as you say the approach was completely different, so that's why its so special, the early programs in particular, I don't know whether the program itself changed over time right through the thirteen series or whatever, toward the end, '75 was the last year it ran. There were issues there, I saw a program which was 1975 called 'I just can't seem to talk about it' I didn't have any documentation on it so I had to contact the ABC, and I was sitting there watching it and it was about sexual relations between men and women, a married couple, and Bettina Arndt was the sociologist and Sydney University was having a conference on sexuality, so the program was her talking about what she did and they had a psychologist talking to a pseudo patient going through how therapy is done, but interspersed with that and the very first shot in the program was the couple in bed, a dramatisation, so it was a mixture. And then by the end of the program the couples sexuality has been changed and improved and they're both on the bed absolutely starkers – and I'm thinking this is 1975 in Australia at 8.30 at night and I found it extraordinary that that would be allowed on television, but it was.

Walton: Australia always allowed more on television, we think of ourselves as conservative but we always allowed more on television certainly much more than the United States more than Britain.

Hunt: particularly ABC I was surprised I suppose

Walton: from early documentary. It reminds me that it would be worth asking Tom Manefield about a series that he made for Film Australia after *Chequerboard* in which he had teenagers talking about their lives in the country and the city and that was equally daring. It was made for schools

and my memory is that it was banned for a long time from being show to its target audience because the problem was that the thirteen year olds were more open more candid and less troubled about talking about sex and sexuality than the older people were. But they were very find program. I don't know what they were called but he will remember. But as a kind of a postscript to the story of *Chequerboard* it might be quite important because that's where he next went

Hunt: well if I don't do it today it's on the tape anyway and it will remind me when I go and do the transcribing. Your program you made for *Chequerboard* was it just the one

Walton: I didn't make one for *Chequerboard*

Hunt: weren't you interviewing for something called '*The Boxers'*

Walton: Oh I did, yes I did, I interviewed very badly for one on the boxers, I've never seen it since

Hunt: no, I haven't seen it yet so can you tell me anything about it, do you remember much about the experience

Walton: only that I found the experience extremely….(tape change)…I actually was not the interviewer, the interviewer was Ray Alchin. Who know a lot about boxing and I made a very significant mistake in that program in that I thought that he was interviewing too slowly that he wasn't asking the hard questions of the boxers and I stood him down in one interview and interviewed myself. But the fact was that he was doing better, he knew that these people were not quick with words and that if he stuck to his quiet questioning he'd get what he wanted and I had a greater sense of urgency and I also committed serious mistakes I commented on their answers at one stage, I think I even finished a sentence at one stage, so I quickly retreated to my world behind the camera where I was better. But Ray Alchin was the interviewer.

Hunt: I remember the name Ray, no it's just that they've got you here as director, this is one called 'We're all good mates and that's it' is that the one

Walton: I don't even remember the title

Hunt: this program looks at some of the boxers of yesterday notably Tommy Burns, George Barnes, and Vic Patrick what happened to them what are they like now we see them in their present situations and recall through the use of vintage films their moments in the ring – that's the ABC précis.

Walton: I don't think that that's the one that I did, I see that John Crew is the reporter (oh wrong one)….and Mary Covington…..Mike Wolverige beg your pardon I said Ray Alchin, Mike Wolverige yes he was the reporter…..well I must have been the director, sorry I don't remember it very well at all, it must have been 196….

Hunt: 69

Walton: the thirteenth of May it was a few days before, no I'd already left Australia

Hunt: well that's transmitted

Walton: oh that's transmitted, I had left Australia

Hunt: that's probably why you don't remember it, you probably just made and took off

Walton: yes because I left in 68 so yes…left it and took off….that's right (laugh)

Hunt: okay I just wanted to double check that because I will hopefully get to see it because anything there would be nice. Now you've spoken to me about Bill Steller with the Elcair here as well, can you tell me of your experience of using the technologies and any changes that you encountered at the time.

Walton: I never actually picked up a camera myself I wasn't a director camera person, I wish I had been, but I've written in my notes to you about the concurrent effect of these new light weight professional cameras and the social changes that were happening in Europe and in Australia at the time and they worked for each other as you know the social historians began to give us a new review of history through the lives of ordinary people and the May revolutions in Paris, the Hippie era

Hunt: totally different views

Walton: yes and the cameras were there to capture that restlessness

Hunt: because they were so

Walton: portable I think I talked about them as being playful, insidious,

Hunt: yes, tell me about that camera you were explaining when I first came in you can film from behind

Walton: the Elcair the camera had an extension view finder, a flexible extension view finder, and it was possible to tuck the camera under your arm and point it backwards or put it on your shoulder even and point it backwards, give all the appearance that you were taking notice of the events but actually be filming…..

Hunt: that's incredible isn't it…..does that cross any lines of ethics (laughs)

Walton: yes, it probably did!

Hunt: but then sometimes that's the only way to get the story I guess if your making yourself invisible to a certain extent

Walton: yes sometimes it might not have been the correct thing to do, but I mean the question about the ethics in those days is was if the film showed any behaviours that might embarrass people whether the people were shown it afterwards or told about it or asked permission to show.

Hunt: did this happen….on the programs that you made…the *Chequerboard* one's anyway, were there any programs that had to be shown to people or were they just totally free of that

Walton: I don't know the answer to that you'd have to ask Tom, it's a very good question. In the case of *Man Alive* we didn't show them to the people at all

Hunt: because that's the old thing with journalist you don't say 'read this is this okay' its okay they've told you their story and you understand all that anyway…*(general conversation about watching the time in order to get to next meetings)* …okay there's only a couple of quick thingys here at the end anyway…because you've given me so much before…..you say a question which always hangs in the air is whether the ABC TV was too much reflection on middle class values and lives….do you have any personal ideas on that at all, in the case of *Chequerboard* I think we've talked about that….

Walton: I think that's a terrifically interesting question to probe to the extent that it falls within the field of your dissertation….it would be interesting…my sense of the ABC radio was that it was middle class, my sense of television was that there were forces in television as a popular medium and visual medium there were forces always operating in television to force it to be less middle class and the general opinion that I grew up with was that we were a middle class organisation and that the radical elements in the ABC were always fighting against it, hence the constant debates politically and in the media about you know left wing bias and so forth. The ABC was an overwhelmingly conservative

Hunt: at the very beginning all the way through or just

Walton: in my time it was. But you see there's a thing about a conservative organisation that's big and it has a noble ideal as the ABC did is that sometimes out of the stability of a conservative, a stable and conservative organisation, sometimes is able to allow a number of radical experiments and radical views to be portrayed and the ABC did that. But Alan Ashbolt's a great example of a political radical in the ABC who had terrible problems as a person and as a broadcaster in the ABC but still succeeded in doing terribly important work with Four Corners and with his one-off dramas and documentaries. (what does that lead me to say) that at the time that I worked in the ABC, the people around me and in programming departments were generally of a conservative, I don't mean politically conservative, but they were suits, they conservative people and the producers and directors were probably fifty fifty mixture of highly radical and conservative people.

Hunt: okay so as you say the atmosphere allowed for the radicalism to come out

Walton: that it allowed it to happen

Hunt: and that's very democratic when you think about it the whole thing, rather than saying okay no you're not.

Walton: yes I don't think thought about it as being democratic, I think we just simply we couldn't recruit journalists who weren't radical. And you couldn't recruit into even television drama people who weren't interested in the social aspects of life and who were interested in the drama of the streets and of life and who hadn't been influenced by the long school of social realism in Australian drama for instance. You couldn't recruit them there were so many you couldn't help but recruit such people and to the extent that they were good ideas people you brought them on.

Hunt: yes there was one….I did my Honours on an Australian filmmaker called Cecil Holmes.

Walton: oh wonderful! Wonderful Cecil, I knew Cecil

Hunt: did you, yes. My supervisor worked with him on *Gentle Strangers* which was a film which he did in his late career, I just looked basically at *Captain Thunderbolt*, *Three In One*, and concentrated on those two films as his feature films is what I was looking/counter analysing Dalton Trumbo in that they were both radical filmmakers who were victimised

Walton: mmm very good…

Hunt: and that sort of thing, it was just the most satisfying…it gets me chocked up talking about it…it was wonderful….and I grew to…okay from a personal point of view my father was a socialist so that a lot of what he (Holmes/Trumbo) was saying resonated in my knowledge, my being,…anyway he was one who had strife in the beginning in the 60s getting fulltime employment and particularly at the ABC (he did *I, the Aboriginal, An Airman Remembers*)…he was director on *I, the Aboriginal* and *An Airman Remembers*…Cecil, not my father……with Kingsford-Smith doing the piece to camera…and then he was dismissed and he gave evidence in his book that he wrote, *One Man's Way*, saying that he was dismissed because Duckmanton at the time said because he was a card carrying Communist, which in his book he refuted, but he was dismissed just the same, and its such as shame you know because in the early sixties it was still impacting on him

Walton: mmm yes, Australia was worried about Communists and the idea about Communist infiltration and that's why people like…..and Tom will talk about that too as well…that's why Alan was regarded with such suspicion and some journalists

Hunt: that's what I'm saying in the early days there was always that fear and mistrust dribbling over from the fifties wasn't it

Walton: it was always there

Hunt: anybody who questioned

Walton: very much so. And again I keep referring to the pubs because that's where the political life of the ABC was well reflected those discussions about the left wing and the right wing thing were always on, I mean we had discussion as to whether some of the dramas in *Australian Story*, the half hour one, whether our bosses were worried that they were in fact too radical, showing radical views, I don't think that they particularly were

Hunt: when you say *Australian Story*, do you mean *Chequerboard*

Walton: no that was another series, yes half hour dramas that David Goddard instituted, but the radical thing is always there.

Hunt: well I mean that's the thing it's like a thorn in the side of society is the one that does the questioning and it makes people think and that's the importance of it I think, rather than become complacent and say oh everything's wonderful

Walton: the great problem today filmmakers is that in their political debate is that just to ask questions is thought to be left wing, I mean once it was the

essence of liberalism, but now just to ask a question people think oh he's a left winger

Hunt: and it's awful to have that judgement put upon people who just want to know (whooooo laughsss). Oh it gets my dander up! I think that was about it, oh yes and you've talked about aboriginal life in *Chequerboard* which is terrific

Walton: those are questions that I ask at the end to which I don't know the answers, but they're question which I think are worth pursuing

Hunt: I think that they are very valid, particularly because where are those documentaries today on the ABC I'm talking about, and Cecil was doing those, but not for the ABC.

Walton: yes, post scriptum, they are about Aboriginal life and I don't think Aboriginal life was much portrayed at all and to that extent the ABC might be able to let itself off the hook by saying that there was no great consciousness of Aboriginality in Australian life at the time. I'm not inclined to let the ABC off the hook about that, I think that in a way *Chequerboard* pushed the boundaries and *Chequerboard* went way beyond conventional views or conventional ways of reporting. The ABC should have been looking at Aboriginal life and politics years, and years, and years ago the political voice of Aboriginal life in Australia was emerging with an organisation called Federation of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the 60s. And I don't accept myself that the ABC can let itself off the hook for not having had a vigorous program. And the other post scriptum is that if you want an example, then look at SBS which has been running simultaneous two weekly programs of Aboriginal life with Aboriginal broadcasters and has been of great assistance to generate what I think is only the second film movement in Australian history, that is the Aboriginal film movement at the moment. The first is the Waterside Workers Federation Film Unit which was a movement in the sense that all the films were shaped around a common ideal and philosophy. And the second one is Aboriginal and some of the most exciting, most original, most challenging films being made at the moment are by Aboriginal film makers.

Hunt: yes I've seen some of the program, it's so intriguing, there's such a freshness

Walton: yes, and away from SBS at lot of those people are making independent documentaries and independent drama now and

Hunt: it's just a shame that an organisation like the ABC hasn't grabbed hold of that, they've had their Aboriginal film unit and *Message Stick* and things

like that, but its still not enough I don't think. So yes you are right…..they did *My Brown Skinned Baby They Take Him Away* that one was shocking and very significant too. But that was just one of many

Walton: yes well also there this great gulf between all outback and rural life and the cities now with so few people living in the bush, and we tend to sentimentalise the bush instead we should what *Chequerboard* was doing which is showing what's happening what's happening out there.

Hunt: well the that the last thing I want to know do you think that a program like *Chequerboard*, not *Chequerboard Revisited*, but today would it work

Walton: yes unquestionably and the reason because the one thing that doesn't change over time is people's interest in other people. People who are passionate about what they are talking about will always be watched. You see you can even make big feature films

Hunt: *The Proposition*

Walton: yes! *Twelve Angry Men*, *Goodnight and Goodluck*, which is all about behaviour its all about argument, if you can do it on feature film, you can do it on documentaries – so the answer is an emphatic yes! Of course people will watch them and there's a little program on SBS which stylistically proves the point which is called *Face Up* and its made with two people, a report and a camera/sound person, and it in my view is the proper success, it is the child of *Chequerboard*. It went another step forward it reduced the crew to two and without research the conceit of the program is that the reporter walks onto the street and starts talking to people and such is his skill and charisma that usually he finds himself being invited back to lunch and the story develops – and its one of the most beautiful panorama's of the intimacy of Australian life that we've produced.

Hunt: I must try and catch it because, I haven't caught that one, but I have cause *The Cutting Edge* that's really brilliant documentary making but I'll try and catch up with that one as well. Storry I think that's enough

Walton: any other follow ups you just let me know, I'll be around and I'll give you my address in Wagga because I'll be down there for a while…now we must get on our way…

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH MAX DONNELLAN
JUNE 5, 2006 AT CHANDOS STREET, SYDNEY

Hunt: Max, can you first tell me how you came to work in television for instance?

Donnellan: Well I was in Melbourne, I was 17 and I was living in a boarding house and I was working at a place called Jarvis Walker Fishing Rod Factories in Deepdean (??) and in the next suburb I played football for Bourne and I was pretty tired and bored with the particular work I was doing at the fishing rod assembly factory and two of the chaps in the football team were working at the ABC – one in building sets and the other one in staging – and they gave me the name of someone and suggested I give them a call – who was head of staging and make an appointment, because they were hiring stagehands and it sounded very interesting and a lot of fun and exciting a new adventure so I did that, eventually had an interview and waited for two weeks and heard nothing, so I thought I well I'll call them, I rang them on a Friday, got on to the chap and he said oh haven't you been told yet we want you to start on Monday, at 7.30. So that was pretty exciting.

Hunt: And so what year was that?

Donnellan: I started on the 17th of August 1959, I remember the day, the date, the time, like it was yesterday, because it changed my whole life, it gave me direction. I started at 7.30, I met a mate of mine who is still a friend of mine an colleague,

Hunt: Who's that

Donnellan: Barry Crook., on the first day I was there, The first day it was 7.30 start I was introduced to all the other chaps, and we were doing a program called The Annette Kluger Series it was a final show, which was a light entertainment series, and at 4. o'clock – my shift was from 7.30 until 3.30 but at 3.30 they realised they were short to work the studio that night on the show, they asked if I would stay until 11.30, which I did and worked the show which was the first experience I had on live entertainment.

Hunt: How was that?

Donnellan: Most exciting thing I'd ever done, it was just great fun, I realised that I'd found my niche, I love it, it was a big family event, there was a party after, we all went away and had a few drinks, and I couldn't wait to come back to work the next day. And for the next three years I enjoyed getting up and going to work. It was great fun!

Hunt: What sort of things…you say light entertainment…

Donnellan: It was, oh bringing in sets and putting sets behind people and flying in screens with different lighting on them. It was live, everything was live in those days, so they'd rehearse it a couple of days beforehand. And so I actually helped put the set in, work the show, and pulled the set out.

Hunt; And this was Sydney

Donnellan: This was Melbourne, Melbourne was my first encounter with the ABC. There were three shifts we used to work from 7 til 3.30, from 3. til 11.30, and 11 through til 7.30 the next morning. The early shift was the set the studios up for the days jobs which was children's programs, the second one was to come in and work the shows throughout the evening and afternoon, and third one was to come in take the sets out during the night and put all the sets in for the next day.

Hunt: So you did this on a rotation type thing

Donnellan: Rotation system, 24 hours the studios used to work.

Hunt: Rotation and a roster

Donnellan: Rotation and a roster and it was pretty exciting stuff.

Hunt: you learnt everything I suppose along the way

Donnellan: we learnt how to rig the studios, put the sets in, you ended up dressing sets, you became a props man. The advancement in that particular period was great because people kept moving on to other jobs. And if you showed any potential in any particular field you were given open to opportunity to go and do that.

Hunt: Was there a system that you had to go through to achieve

Donnellan: Basically yes, there was staging and then there was props and then sometimes you to be a floor manager which was the person in control of the studio on the floor – you were basically the producer's mouthpiece on the floor and directed talent and directed changing of sets. And then from there you could become a presentation controller which means that you used to run some of the station at night by putting programs to air, and things went up to a studio supervisor when you basically in charge of the whole transmission of the network and in those days of course, Melbourne was running itself, Sydney was running itself, there were no coax cables there were very few links

Hunt: Stand alone types

Donnellan: So it was a stand alone, every state stood on its own.

Hunt: And this is like a promotion thing

Donnellan: oh it was.

Hunt: after a period of time

Donnellan: you'd end up acting in the job for something like 12 months before you could even apply for it, and then you could apply for it and you'd have half a dozen other people tyring to put in for it as well. Eventually you became a permanent officer, but you could sit in a job acting because people used to go on leave and you'd be put up behind them to try you out for three weeks while they were away, you used to get higher duties, so if you did a good job by the,…you'd have to way for someone to move out, or resign, or go to Sydney, or whatever and then you'd fall in behind them and do the job. So it was pretty exciting stuff. They encouraged you every inch of the way.

Hunt: excellent. And that was for the first three years you say

Donnellan: that was for the first three or four years, I had reached being Floor Manager which was great! Running incredible amount of different sort of shows, education, children's, dramas, light entertainment, news, gardening, women's programs, women's world, Panorama, religious, People programs, interviewing people live in the studio

Hunt: so was it like a pool of…

Donnellan: there was a pool of floor managers, there was a pool of staging people, there was a pool of stage hands, a pool of props men, all doing rosters and all doing a variety of shows – it was quite a large crowd I mean there was something like ten or fifteen floor managers. There were that many shows going, there were two major big studios, one smaller studio that used to look after news and children's programs, and then the two big studios looked after light entertainment, drama, Women's World, you were continually changing sets 24 hours a day almost 7 days a week.

Hunt: a fabulous training ground

Donnellan: it was a brilliant training ground, it was the best teaching/training ground you could possibly get. You couldn't learn that sort of stuff out of books.

Hunt: and it doesn't happen today like that

Donnellan: It doesn't. The place is all tightened up, we used to have a training department but they got rid of that 10 years ago because there was no money, money got tighter and tighter and unfortunately a lot of this went out the window. But in those day's of course they had placed like Rockhampton and Townsville which were radio and television and a lot of reporters and people like myself were sent up there for a period of 10 – 12 months where you were doing your own thing you were basically the regional

producer, working with a three camera studio or two camera studio and a lot of first class reporters came out…Andrew Olle was in Townsville, Alan Hogan was in Rockhampton,

Hunt: Chris Masters

Donnellan: Chris Masters, all these people got the opportunity to try themselves and find out what they were capable of doing then immediately recognised by executive producers down here who were in current affairs programs and said gee that was a good report, and when a vacancy became here or someone here was appointed to go overseas to act in a position, they'd bring them down first up, put another potential trainee who showed potential in behind that person. So the opportunity for advancement so long as you showed that you were capable, was just enormous.

Hunt: well that drives your passion too, if you know there's something at the end of the rainbow…

Donnellan: absolutely! Because we all say even though it sounds a bit funny, they were the best years of television, and not just people in my particular field but technical officers, technical producers, lighting experience, sound, every aspect of television, that was the greatest period in those first 20 odd years was such a challenge and it was adventurous, every day was a different adventure

Hunt: things were changing every day weren't they with the technologies

Donnellan: absolutely.

Hunt: I want to talk a bit about that later

Donnellan: and we even bought about the change at times. We came up with some idea, lets try this one, what good idea.

Hunt: innovation

Donnellan: we were based on the BBC style of television, we learned that very very quickly, but then we did a lot of our own improvisation and particularly in sporting coverage we became very very adventurous in our coverage of sport we had coverage everywhere…

Hunt: can you give an example

Donnellan: well I mean in the early days of television the commercial networks were mainly buying programs from overseas rather than making many programs. And the ABC sporting department had a monopoly on basically on all the sports in this country – from Australian Rules, to rugby league, to rugby union, to swimming championships, to surfing carnivals, to golf, and ABC was basically the master of coverage of sport throughout Australia and then all of a sudden the commercials realised the potential –

there were two responsibilities – one they had to do a certain amount of Australian coverage to cover their charter and two we were getting damn good ratings for it and the commercials realised that they better start doing something themselves because they could kill two birds and then they got

Hunt: sponsors

Donnellan: sponsorship which meant that they could go over and beat out offer for contracts and that's when we started losing things like the cricket coverage and many other coverage's and that that all happened over a period of about thirty years.

Hunt: So back to…you would have finished about 1964

Donnellan: 1964/65 I applied for a job in Brisbane as a presentation officer, it was a 16month temporary appointment, I was single, I was 23 years of age, what a great opportunity I could do the work with my eyes closed and they paid my way up there, they covered my cost for living mainly up there, not all of it, but some of it, and I got to work there for 15 – 16 months. During that period the program director was an ex Rural officer from Melbourne, Peter Dell, and he realised what I was capable of doing and within two or three months of doing the presentation job he gave me a job as a producer which I never had before which immediately open the other door of doing studio programs, making programs there, doing outside broadcasts, motorcanas, church services, doing cricket. So that was a wonderful opportunity. It was incredible. Then a vacancy for three months came up Townsville, a Senior presentation officer up there was taking long service leave, and I was asked if I'd be interested in doing that for three months, which I did immediately, because again it was a paid holiday, and I had a wonderful time doing my own thing up there and loved it and again it was a team effort everything was a team effort. It was like a big family. The whole ABC during that period and the early days of 59 when I was there right through for the next 10, 15 to 20 years was a big family. And we learnt from each other and we helped each other.

Hunt: like minded people working together

Donnellan: absolutely. Working for something we were very proud to be with. You never worked for the ABC for money, that's for sure. You worked there because you believed what it was doing and you loved the people that you were doing it with. I had three months there I then returned I went back to Melbourne, got bored very quickly in Melbourne, but the word had got around that I'd been producing in Brisbane and a vacancy came up down in Tassy for three months, meanwhile I'd applied for a permanent position in Townsville, I went down to Tassy and worked on a current affairs program down there called 'Line Up' as a studio director/producer alternatively did the show five nights a week, which was again family effort, tremendous stuff, ground breaking material, then I was appointed to the job in Townsville so I went up there and worked there for the next 18 months. And then I came back, they were short of a director in Brisbane and I sent down there directing on TDT (ThisDayTongiht), where there was

Kerry O'Brien, Andrew Olle, Alan Hogan, so many chaps who were on the brink of making their own way into the television industry.

Hunt: was Peter Luck there at that stage

Donnellan: No Peter Luck was in Sydney. And then a vacancy for a director came up down here (Sydney), and I was asked would I be interested in coming down and directing a new program called…(can't think of the name…) but it was a current affair with Peter Ross and I came down and did that. But I also came down and while I was working here and did a thing for the rural department called "Look Out', which was a live outside broadcast from shopping centres

Hunt: What was that about

Donnellan: it was looking at what was available in shops, there was a gardening segment in it, but I'll wait until I get onto the Rural department before I talk about….So what I did I was working on TDT here (Sydney) as a director then I went in to do this program with Peter Ross 'Night Cap'. It wasn't working. I could see it wasn't working

Hunt: why do you think that was

Donnellan: because it was too early for its time. It was an open ended program sitting down having discussions in the studio about the arts and crafts, about sometimes political interviewing, authors, its was a high tech… it just wasn't the right time and I don't think the presenter was the right person……Peter Ross……yes it just wasn't working, and it had a lot of enemies people didn't like seeing money being spent on it particularly because it came in under the Features Department and that's when Chequerboard was going and other people doing other programs saying why are we wasting money on this show we should be putting it into other….because this is not working. When I realised it wasn't working I decided that if it does fail I would be going back to Brisbane and probably would be there for the rest of my life which did not turn me on, so I decided to take 12 months leave….it was 1972…..and I decided to take 12 months long service leave because colour was coming in '74 and I wanted to go overseas to see if I could get some colour experience before it came here. I then put in for 12 months, I had two weeks attachment to the BBC which was arranged by management here, and found my way over there stayed with some friends for the first couple of weeks, did my two weeks attachment which was marvellous, conned another two weeks out of the BBC rather than the ABC, the ABC paid me for two but I got an extra two weeks from the BEEB, and I was with a program called 'Line Up' which was again an open ended type program that went to air at 9.30 at night and it discussed everything, it was opened ended, people could phone in,

Hunt: interactive television

Donnellan: Interactive television

Hunt: Way back then

Donnellan: it was, in 1972….and they had seven directors for seven nights a week, so the chances of getting a job there were very difficult, however, one afternoon they wanted to do a quick interview in the studio there was no one around they said to me you've done this sort of stuff before, I said yes I have, they said would you mind directing this one for us, I said not at all, thoroughly enjoyed it, obviously they were pleased with what I did, they said look there's nothing around at the moment but put your details and send them to us you never know. So I gave them my address etceteras and a friend who I was living with, he was an editor with the same program, film editor, about three or four weeks later he came home and said I've been talking to so and so they're short of directors and he wanted to know what happened to your application…I said why…he said well they need somebody and realised that you work for them, so I immediately raced my application down and was working with them a week later. Now when I got there there were four directors, they'd lost three, I had a month's contract, in that month three more directors went off and that left two of us directing for seven nights a week

Hunt: what was the….

Donnellan: because they were being promoted to positions…

Hunt: not that there was an issue.

Donnellan: no. Again in the BBC this opportunity was knocking every moment, different programs staring oh we'll get so and so to direct that would you mind going to Bristol and direct that, no!...and that was amazing…

Hunt: incredible

Donnellan: at the end of my month contract I said on the last day, drinks are on me at lunchtime and they all said oh beaut! And the executive producer came up with a mob of about 15….Max is shouting up the bar!!!!!.....so we were standing there and one of the EP's said is it your birthday….I said no I just wanted to thank you people very much for the opportunity of working here….he said what do you mean….I said my contract finishes today….and he literally went white!.....he said my god! Because he thought I've got one director seven nights a week….and he said my god! I didn't know he said are you going away have you got plans,….I said no…he said would you like to stay….I said yes please….he said three months contract okay…I said that'd be fantastic….he said do not go away….he went away he got somebody with the paper in their hand and I signed the contract on the bar….and they all bought me a drink!

Hunt: laugh…very well done!!

Donnellan: and they just continually renewed my contract for the next fifteen months.

Hunt: tremendous!

Donnellan: until eventually, I was only on 12 months leave, I wanted to extend that so I had to write permission to Ken Watts, Federal Director of Programming, to see if they'd extend it for 12 months saying that there was a new series of program starting, I'd be right in on the beginning of these program, 12 months would be fantastic, they conceded 6 and said yes but we want you back after 6.

Hunt: meet you halfway

Donnellan: during that time of course colour was slowly inserting itself here, it wasn't being transmitted then, but they were building colour studios and the person responsible for that was called Ray Mcdonald, who I happened to run into in the BBC Club Bar, he looked at me and what the hell are you doing here!!!! Because I worked with him, he was a studio supervisor in Melbourne years ago…I said I'm working for the BBC…he said my god! What are you doing….I said I'm directing this…he said that's fantastic!.... he said you'll have a job in colour as soon as you come back….

Hunt: Oh Max!

Donnellan: so the right person at the right place at the right time….so it opened doors and I did it all on my own to gain that experience, I took a gamble, but I just happened to be there a just the right place and right time and it worked. So when I came back here I'd had colour experience, I had documentary experience in a form, live studio commitment, So I was on the list of sort of saying well we need this done we know who to get.

Hunt: an enormous asset to them when you came back.

Donnellan: yes.

Hunt: and so what did you come back to

Donnellan: well I actually came back, they wanted me to be the director of news which was the only program which was being transmitted out of a colour studio, but not transmitted in colour. And the head of news at the time who's name I forget and probably best I do, told me he was looking forward because the reporters were looking forward to coming up with their ideas of presenting the news. And said well look that doesn't operate in colour you have a standard way of presenting it….you cannot have a different reporter coming in and saying how you are going to present a studio production.

Hunt: can you explain – I don't understand that myself

Donnellan: well as you see in news now there's a reporter with a standard background of chroma key….they wanted their people to bring in their different ideas and try to trick with colour and I said that doesn't work you must have a standard function so everyone

fits in and around that….anyway I withdrew my application from that and other doors opened for instance I started doing studio stuff…..I then became director on TDT working with all the guys

Hunt: what year's this now

Donnellan: this is in the 70s yes, and then I went across to work for…..no it was '73/'74….and I had 12 months there and then the Rural department was run by a chap called John Sparkes…who I used to work with in Melbourne. I used to do gardening with him and used to do To Market To Market in the days of black and white when I was a stage hand and he was a presenter. And I'd also made A Big Country before I went overseas in black and white called The Buck Runners.

Hunt: can you tell me a bit about that

Donnellan: that happened before I went down to Tasmania. Because I'd come back from Brisbane with producing experience they put me into a producing school and John Sparkes was the executive producer of this program, was responsible for it, and realised that I'd had some experience and he requested I A Big Country on a story we'd heard about in Omeo where a bunch of chaps get together, experienced horsemen, and go up into the Omeo Dargo Ranges for three or four days and catch wild horses.

Hunt: Brumbies

Donnallan: Brumbies…and the logistics of that was of course enormous, was enormous. So I went of a survey with Colin Munro, who was to be the reporter, he was marvellous! Wonderful sense of humour got along with everybody absolutely everybody. He and I went up to the Omeo Hotel we spent three days there getting to know these people who go catching wild horses. And we told them we were interested in making A Big Country documentary, they were all very keen, I think one of the leaders was a bank clerk, we told them the dates, we asked them when it was they went, they gave us dates, we told them there'd be a film crew we'd need to get up with these people, they said they can get four wheel drives into the mountains, they could set up some form of accommodation, for instance tents for sleeping out with the horses….and so we arranged it, so film crew, Bob Feeney came down from Sydney with his crews of assistant cameraman, who was Colin….he was an editor, had the little dogs….

Hunt: Colin Thompson

Donnellan: Colin Thompson

Hunt: Really Colin…out in the boonies!!!!!

Donnellan: Colin…he was the assistant to Bob….which worried us a bit with these butch blokes!!!!....it had us very worried….

Hunt: good on him!!!

Donnellan: and there was a sound guy called Johnny Borne, his first exercise, and we picked them up at the airport handed them a car for themselves an drove up to Omeo and for the first day we went around and just let them meet people and get to know people and Bob was wonderful he fitted in brilliantly.. and everybody did, and so after two days of preparing we went up into the mountains. And we had four days up there with them and it was the most exciting moment of documentary making that I'd ever been involved in and also for Bob Feeney who'd shot a lot of stuff as well. I ended up having to shoot one of the cameras because offcourse when you drive wild horses down through a gully you don't get a second chance, and so we realised they'd got a few horses, they'd captured them up there, and I set up a camera behind a big log, Bob put his camera somewhere else, and the assistant cameraman…so we had three difference angles…everywhere….and we got this massive charge of these horses coming down the mountain…a helicopter would have been brilliant, but there was no budget and I suggested to John Sparkes, shoot it in colour because it was absolutely beautiful, but it was a year before colour and they just couldn't afford the cost of colour.

Hunt: what about power, how did you go for power

Donnellan: batteries or generators

Hunt: so you had a generator with you

Donnallan: yes we had all that….and we had one of the most brilliant adventures of all….I mean we shot this, came back with a terrific documentary, they were thrilled…it was called Buck Runners, it was made 1968/69 before I went to Tassy and then up to Townsville. So John had had that experience, and back when I was in '74 he like the work that I'd done on that one, and he got me back to make some more A Big Country's, so I did a thing called 36 Wheels on roadtrains…..

Hunt: tell me about that one

Donnellan: up and down the Sturt Highway…..that was very hard, brilliant photography ….Preston Clothier was the cameraman on that…we had nine road trains in a row, these road trains pulled two very long trailers there should be anything up to a hundred cattle, we had nine in a row, and to shoot these on a 20/1 zoom with a road that was at least two miles straight or four miles straight, the photography we had was superb, the difficulty we had the people that drove these trucks we not very good in conversation. You'd ask a question and you'd either get 'Yep!' 'No', 'Dunno".

Hunt: how did you deal with that

Donnellan: we had real problems and Ron Iddon was the reporter and we were really concerned. We interviewed the owner, Buntine himself of the Buntine Roadtrains, he was

good value, but you could use him for half a hour because it would be a big promo for him….So I came back with some of the stuff I couldn't use, most of it I couldn't, we were told that there was a chap that worked up in Victoria Downs that was a great conversationalist….so we brought him down he was an ex-roadtrain driver, and he was a great conversationalist, we set him up in camp put a few tinnies there a fire, had some of his mates sitting around and he started telling us experiences that they'd had on road trains and we stopped after a minute and a half…and I said to him look this is going to go out on air and I'm going to have trouble cutting out all those 'F' words….oh,oh…he could not express himself without swearing and that was the humour of his stories. Now we had another shot at it and he realised that he was losing the crowd that was around him because he wasn't himself and he started swearing again, and Preston pulled his eye out of viewfinder and looked at me, and I stopped again, and I said look terrific stuff but…we…oh he went terribly sorry got carried away chat chat…one more crack at it…again…every second word was "f…" you name it! There wasn't a word he didn't know about he was very entertaining, Preston pulled the eye out of the view finder and said do you want me to keep shooting and I just said forget it…cut the throat…but we sat around there and had one of the best nights we ever had of our life….So when I got back I had wonderful footage, one good interview, what could I do, I couldn't even send the tapes to be transcribed because of the language on it, so I got a writer in, Marcus Cooney, and said look I want to create a fictional character

Hunt: oh okay!!

Donnellan: and what I did I got him to sit down and listen to all these people and their stories or bits and pieces with all the language and he wrote a character that you never really had to see. So the voice was…well when I first started driving road trains I was only 18….you know and all these things….he told the stories but I put different guys faces up

Hunt: so who was the narrator though

Donnellan: oh it was an actor..I got an actor to come in

Hunt: do you remember who it was

Donnellan: I cannot remember the chaps name…but I auditioned a few and I got this voice that you didn't necessarily need to see, but it was a good voice.

Hunt: it fit the story

Donnellan: it fitted the story beautifully. So we actually made a program, I did interview some of these guys walking round the trucks checking their tyres…oh just checking the tyre…that sort of stuff, that's all I ever got out of them…..what are you doing now…oh going for a piss….you know that sort of stuff was just…but I integrated it with that sort of comment, so I mixed a whole lot, I was short by….Sparkes liked

programs to run 29.30..now that's difficult to do exactly…I was 25 or 26.30…I was about two and half minutes short..and I didn't know what to do, I couldn't stretch it out any longer and I thought what am I going to do, so I called John Mabey in, who was another major person in the unit, he and Ron Iddon were the two solid reporters, and John had a look and said that's easy Max have you got any more of that good footage, I said yes, he said put in some music, break it up with some nice bits of wonderful stuff of travelling along the highway and that's what we did, I got it to exactly 29.30. Now the beauty of the Big Country was that if you were in trouble you could always go to another producer, there was no competition, and they'd come in and say yeah that, because often you'd sat down with a film and you'd shoot for 10 days, you look at the rushes for two days for three days, then you'd sit down there for two weeks, to three weeks to edit the film and sometimes you got so involved in it, you missed it. And one of the best ways if you ever got caught that you weren't too sure which way you were going was to bring in a tea lady.

Hunt: really the tea lady! Tremendous

Donnellan: someone like that, and you'd bring them in and you'd say I want you to have a look at this and they sit there and she'd say oh I loved that bit, but I didn't understand that, which meant you were begin too complicated about that so you had to simplify ….

Hunt: she was your audience

Donnellan: she was your audience…and it worked…or you bring in another producer….often I'd go in with other chaps work and they'd say there's something wrong here Max tell me what it is….and not having know what was behind that scene you'd look at it and say such and such…and he'd say oh why didn't I see that…so there was a health competition. And this was the success of A Big Country because Sparkesie realised he gave many producers, directors, opportunities which they never thought they'd ever have. Some of the names that came out of that area they were forerunners of their time and reporters as well. The comeraderie there was absolutely brilliant. The documentary maker who worked with his wife up in Papua New Guinea

Hunt: Bob Connolly

Donnellan: Bob Connolly, Peter Luck was there,

Hunt: Bob Raymond was he in it

Donnellan: I don't know whether Bob did any of that I think he was more Features and current affair type reporting or Four Corners type stuff…but I'd need time to think but there were many good directors that came out of it…..David Pointer he was in there, a better program maker than he was a boss…he was a good program maker but he was a terrible boss which happens to people

Hunt: yes you can't be both can you

Donnellan: sometimes it doesn't work that way, he made some good programs he did some very nice work, but when he because a supervisor I think he was not the same person which happens to a lot of people even in places like editing and videotape, very good editors but you put them in charge of that editing and they become monsters. So there were a lot of very good directors that came out of that area, and reporters. And it was a social exercise, 36 Wheels was one, I did another one on Hondo Gratten the horse that was going for its third inter dominion race we went up there we did a social thing on the family how the horse had affect their way of life, it'd already won two major races the Inter dominion and it was going for its third inter dominion. That was a family story about a wonderful horse. We used their property up at Bathurst

Hunt: so you stayed with them

Donnellan: oh we stayed with them or within a motel in there we were there with them on a daily basis

Hunt: filming them each day

Donnellan: watching their training, watching them tlking to each other, and the following them down to the race track out here in Sydney

Hunt: at the crack of dawn

Donnellan; whatever time, evening mainly, the trotts were Friday nights. I then did something on country music which was up at Tamworth, Colin Munro again was the reporter for that and he came up with me on country music we had a lovely time trying to find people, it was very big up around Tamworth area

Hunt: and that was the country music festival at that time

Donnellan: it wasn't the festival, it was more looking at people that were associated with country music….why, what drove them to it, individual performers, I brought them into the studio, the radio studios, got them to sing a song then I took them out into the bush and shot 'em to playback

Hunt: was this on every program or was there a separate program on each

Donnellan: there was one program, a half hour, and we had about five different performers, so it was about different people. One chap had a property and a farm and he played guitar and he was a good singer but he was basically a farmer, there was another property further out of town that had five kids and their band was called The Big Country, so I got them to sing and they wrote a song for me called A Big Country which they sang at a broken down property which I to playback and we used that as the closer. Dingo King was the story on the dingo fence, it was a book that had been brought out,

this was up at Tippa Burra and Clifton Pugh had done a lot of painting out that area so Clifton was the basis of the story, he was wonderful to talk to, we used the book as the basis, and that worked as A Big Country, and finally the last one I did was Ashton Circus, which was the thing called A Family Show about how granddad, grandmum, the whole show itself it family from grandchildren how they all perform in the show they are the base of the show, how they sell all the tickets, make all the costumes, do all the performances, do all the trapeze, do all the clown, do the lot.

Hunt: its like a heritage

Donnellan: one man family almost single family

Hunt: dynasty

Donnellan: a total dynasty thing, that was good. And then I left that, when was that ’76….I then was asked if I’d be interested in going to sport because I’d had a sporting background and multi camera experience so I then went across as an executive producer in sporting about ’77 sometime then and stayed with them from then on. Any my main scene was multi camera

Hunt: can you talk about that a bit

Donnellan: well multi camera was all that we had in the early days of television, because everything was live to air, you had four or five cameras in the studio and you’d be editing live to air basically, then we got out OB vans in which you could put six cameras into and you’d go out a cover the football, every camera had a responsibility and they were the days of rack lenses where to get a close up you had to switch round to another lens, 40” lens, to get a tight shot

Hunt: and that took time

Donnellan: that took time and sometimes they did it when they were on air so you saw accidentally many times the camera lens going round to a proper lens, and this happened on live dramas continually, happened on live entertainment shows because all the studio cameras were rotating lenses as well. I think the lenses were 2” which was fairly wide, 3” was tighter, 5” was a bit tighter, and then and 8” was a close up, but you didn’t have to move the camera. Then again you got to a stage where you would never dolly your camera on an 8” because it was too tight, you’d dolly your camera on a 2” which gave you a wide shot and more flexibility. And that was a multi camera experience so you were actually editing the program as it was going to air.

Hunt: gosh you would have to be pretty on the, up with it

Donnellan: its like anything, its training, and I never thought I’d ever get near it, but all of a sudden it became second nature to me. And when someone told me originally you’re going to do a documentary I was petrified because I only had one camera, and I

thought how the hell am I going to do it, how am I going to do editing, so I found, this was Buck Runners, so I went to the person I heard was going to edit the program and I said what do you need as cutaways and we sat down and we did a whole list of cutaways so that could be edited, and I spent two days…..

Hunt: filmed them separately

Donnellan: filmed them separately cutaways, because I had to get the action, but I put in shots of legs going into stirrups, close ups of horses hooves, everything so that the editor had a lot to use as an exercise.

Hunt: and the cameras used in those days were pretty heavy and

Donnellan: they were they were 16mm Ari's

Hunt: what about the changes in the style of cameras that you used over the period

Donnellan: well this is electronics….well eventually one of the things that changed cameras in particular in the studio was the new lens they got they got a 2-8" lens which was a zoom so it did everything that the four lenses could do on that camera and you never had to change and it was a zoom in and zoom out, So you could come out to a wide track you could zoom in whatever so that stopped a lot of the turret turning on air that was sometimes still used but there was always one of the cameras in the studio that had a 2-8". So that changed your shooting patterns a times and it gave you much more flexibility and freedom and that helped. And then cameras got a bit smaller, easier to handle, they slowly improved on the dolly machine which made it easier and every time one came out it was much more flexible, it was easy to push, it was easy to maneouver.

Hunt: did it make producing programs quicker

Donnellan: it made it quicker, it sped up the exercise of making programs. Eventually we got to be everybody had to be tied to the wall and what I mean by that all cameras had a cable running into a wall somewhere anybody that had earphones had to have a lead going into the wall and when you've got cameras running across a studio floor many a time a camera would go over out lead which would bounce the camera and you'd see that on air it would happen to be tracking on air, and also nine times out of ten it would cut your lead and you'd lose communication and the only way to talk back was to go to a squawk box on the wall. Eventually they got compact hearing so that there was no lead required

Hunt: what radio…

Donnellan: radio earphones, and walkie talkies and all that sort of thing, so that improved everything, but you still needed cabling for the cameras.

Hunt: even the lighter weights they needed to be connected they weren't separate

Donnellan: still needed cable, but then again you always had a cable dragger

Hunt: what's that

Donnellan: a human being looking after your cable

Hunt: oh okay(laugh)

Donnellan: a bod, somebody whose responsibility was after they'd set the studios up and done all that he'd look after the cable, or sometimes if they had a big job, and the studios were quite large, there'd be two cable draggers winding them up and making sure they didn't get criss-crossing…

Hunt: so there was one person or one person per camera or

Donnellan: it was originally one person, but sometimes it was two depending on….the crane nearly always had two because that did a bigger coverage of area and there were people just winding it back in and winding it out, because again everything was still pretty live in those early days of television. The electronics grew over the years, 20 years, the vision mixer was something like the machine that actually hit the buttons that put the pictures up, you had a choice of say ten pictures you'd select one for a vision mixer, and then you'd go to another one which was editing on air live. The size of these was sometimes 4 foot long and 2 foot wide and eventually they came down to 2 foot long and 1 foot wide and yet they could do twice as much as the one that was 4 foot, so you were learning all time..

Hunt: this is computerisation coming in

Donnellan: absolutely…by the time you learnt how to do one particular machine, they had another new one coming round that could do four times as much and yet took four times a long to learn.

Hunt: you didn't get any training….was it learn as you did

Donnellan: basically, I mean everyone had a particular contribution in a studio, you had a technical producer who was responsible for the overall technical quality of the show, and he had under him a lighting person, a sound person responsible, a vision mixer responsible, a person that was in control of the CVU's which was light and adjusting the quality of the pictures, everybody had a responsibility, people down on the floor, cameramen had a responsibility, the assistant had a responsibility, and all of that came together as a team. So the TP was the person and the producer/director was the other person, he could only call the shots, the person on the floor the floor manager was in charge of everything on the floor to make sure that floor functioned exactly how it was planned. Because all this was planning you couldn't do it without it. The only things that

weren't particularly planned were outside broadcasts because you were never too sure what was going to happen you knew basically covering a football match cameras would go in a certain position, one of the cameras would have the long lens on it, he would be there for getting the close ups, so they'd all have that responsibility.

Hunt: you say planned, were there meetings before programs, everybody have to be involved

Donnellan: oh yes, technical people, technical producers involved and sometimes the senior camera particularly if it was a drama or light entertainment show, TP, lighting, and sometimes the talent, the lead talent of the program, certainly the director, certainly the floor manager, and depending on the complication of moves sometimes the props person if there was a lot of prop changing because they used to rehears the shows for two weeks with the basic talent in a hall somewhere,…you'd mark out the set with tape on the floor, you'd then go to a studio on a Monday the set would be put in, it would probably go in on the Saturday/Sunday so that by Monday the set was available, you'd rehearse the show with the talent, with costumes, with lighting, with cameras, all day Monday all day Tuesday, you'd then go in there Wednesday afternoon and do a last rehearsal, full dress rehearsal of the whole show as if it was live to air, and then you'd go live to air at 8 o'clock that night.

Hunt: gee that's fast isn't it not time for error really is there at all

Donnellan: there is not. And if there were major props changes while they were doing one scene you would be in there and it was all live to air.

Hunt: incredible pressure

Donnellan: it was and these actors had to know 90 minutes of dialogue

Hunt: that's amazing, I can't understand how you could because week after week having to retain stuff and then forget stuff and you must have a cross over sometimes…were there moments like that…

Donnellan: oh there were,…at the time in 1974 I was doing a correspondence course on the Leaving Certificate and English literature was Macbeth, and we found that they were coming down to Melbourne to make Macbeth and a guy called Alan Burke was the drama director out of Sydney, and because I was doing Macbeth.. I was asked would I be interested in floor managing well of course I was, and he was a wonderful guy Alan Burke to work with. And often during rehearsals because they were only small scenes the floor manager would play that particular role, so we'd get an idea of timing, so I played many of the particular roles like the three witches, all that sort of stuff you'd be playing various roles because you couldn't bring these people into read two or three lines it was just too costly you'd only get them in when they had two or three lines. Well we shot the battle scene between the English and the Scots we needed an outdoor scene so we took an OB van up to a place called Mount Macedon in Victoria and there was a wonderful area

that had these huge pine trees (and I have a photo of it which I'll show you later), where we set up a track with a camera where we had forty odd English forty odd Scotish we're looking down this archway of trees and mist and just out of shot everyone was choreographed on the right hand side were the English, and just out of shot on the left hand side were the Scots, and I had a loud hailer to speak to them and I said there will be two queues, one will be for blood curdling calls and the next queue will be for action. Choreographed action does everyone get that, yeah fine....everyone understood, so what you saw was the picture came up, Alan Burke went back into to van, up came the picture, he said stand by to queue, and there's this magnificent scene of this mist and these huge pine trees, this vast area, and I queued once and there were blood curdling calls of one Scotsman who came running to the centre and stood there and realised looking around, so you had this scene of hundred people screaming yelling murder and this one chap with a sword and a skirt and no one to fight……it was the funniest sight we'd ever seen in our lives everyone broke up in the van, Alan Burke laughed himself out of the van, and I pulled the loud hailer out and I just said to this chap still standing there, I said for those who (TAPE CHANGE OVER MISSED THIS BIT UNFORTUNATELY).

Donnellan: (continues)…… as much fun making the programs although we were very committed to what we were doing we enjoyed it thoroughly and you couldn't swap it for anything else. It was just better than working as a clerk in a bank and driving a taxi or driving bus or, every day every single day you never knew exactly what was going to happen in those first twenty or thirty years.

Hunt: and that's what makes the adrenalin rush that that created was….

Donnellan: absolutely, you never knew no matter what you did, outside broadcasts, you could plan to a certain extent but often you couldn't plan it to the nth degree.

Hunt: particularly with 'those' moments that happen, they are so priceless

Donnellan: absolutely they just happen to happen. I ended up doing a coverage of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial March in Canberra that had anything up to 1000 people involved in that exercise of marching troops, infantry, there was a big memorial held down Anzac Parade, I had 11 – 12 handheld cameras, I had aerial cameras, I had a camera in a chopper, did all that…

Hunt: oh okay, so the budgets increased a bit you could use a camera in a chopper

Donnellan: Gary Tieshurst….well this was special….this was a memorial to the Vietnam Veteran's and so money was of not concern and I think money came from the government to assist them…it went for four hours….I eventually had the Vietnam Veteran's the bikies came in, a lot of them were veteran's, I had camera boys riding on the back of their bikes which was never planned they just jumped on the bike and said get on. So these were the shots, you see an opportunity, you grab it. You can plan a basic coverage that we don't miss important things that are going to happen in this four hours,

but there are things that are going to happen that you haven't planned for and you've got to be flexible enough to get a shot of it. And if a cameraman sees it he'll throw it up to you.

Hunt: you are open to ideas from them

Donnellan: absolutely.

Hunt: it's not like they are waiting for you to say something

Donnallan: no, their door is open all the time, they know they've got a commitment to cover this guy because he's speaking at a certain time, or that person walking putting flowers there, but anything in the time between that they're free to create as much as they want to.

Hunt: so it's a collaborative effort, but I mean you have basic control

Donnellan: yes, you have to, but basically it is a combined efforts from every aspect, from cameramen even when someone's dragging someone's cable he sees something he'll tap the cameraman and say look at that, cameraman can't look at two places at once he can only look down the eye of a camera or not. So other people can be his eyes. And the word gets out, a floor manager can see a brilliant shot, the producer or director in the van can say there's a great shot on camera four get camera four to pan right.

Hunt: well handheld would be brilliant for that sort of flexibility

Donnellan: but of course, only on close up stuff because you can't be on a zoom with a hand held because it'll wobble too much it'll magnify the wobble.

Hunt: oh okay I understand, I'd no idea about all that technical stuff

Donnellan: well hand held is terrific – if I'm a camera you're there, but if you were down there and I was a camera I wouldn't like the hand held because this wobble if I'm wide you won't see it, but if I'm zoomed in it'll magnify it.

Hunt: what about in later times, I don't know if it was in that period you're talking about those one's that were basically….

Donnellan: steadicam

Hunt: yes, whatever they were yes. Was that later on

Donnellan: oh that was very later on, that didn't come in until only in the last 10 years.

Hunt: oh true, I thought it was earlier than that.

Donnellan: no, no, you're looking in the 90s maybe the late 80s, they were experimenting for a while, but now they're brilliant, nearly every hand held camera's got one and they've worked out straps for them, again something comes out they improve on it.

Hunt: the history of communication is a subject I teach – is communication driven by need or by culture as it were

Donnellan: well driven by need, it has to be very flexible, but the simple thing is that you're going to make everything as easy as possible to capture. You can never get away from the most important thing with anything and that is the story. You can use every effect under the sun, but if you don't get the message through then you've lost it. All effects, in my opinion, are there to enhance, not to distract. And often sometimes people distract with effects, or with technology, rather an enhancing it with technology. Technology is there to improve the story, to enhance it. Like things like rock shows now the cutting of rock shows the moving of cameras that is now a style that has been accepted. You did that forty years ago you'd be shot! Or twenty years, every thirty years ago. But things like the rock show Melbourne used to have (Robby Weekes used to run it I can't think of the name of it)

Hunt: not Countdown

Donnellan: yes Countdown…that started like that and that's where they could try everything. Cameramen could do just about anything they wanted and it was acceptable. The wilder the better. In the early days when I was talking about the Annette Kluger Show no way in the world, that would never have been……it's a growth what's accepted. And the people that accept it and the people that make the judgement on it are the viewers. If the viewers don't like it they won't accept it. So they're the people that finally make the decision on whether it's acceptable or not. Not the producer's, they'll try things out without question that's they're responsibility, producers/directors that's they're role, but if it doesn't work that will only be recognised by the public, not by necessarily. Some people might say I think that's brilliant, but other people might say oh it's too busy for me, it's all a matter of personal interpretation.

Hunt: that split screen stuff that came in as well, a lot of people didn't like it, but then filmmaker's today are bringing it back.

Donnellan: yes, well colour television opened another door of electronics because you could use a variety of different colours to key in various aspects of other feedbacks. The three basic colours are yellow, blue, and green, which make up all the other colours any way. And the blue is the chromakey which is, or the green, any colour can be keyed in – but the blue and green that are mainly used, because they are stronger definition. And this opened doors by putting in other pictures behind people etc etc….chromakey ….and brought in a lot of experiementation. Electronics and what it can do now in editing is….

Hunt: phenomenal

Donnellan: unbelievalble! People can do this stuff at home on computers now. And the other thing television had done is made aware politicians responsibilities how their image is important how they rely…..years ago before television there was radio and you could hear somebody talk but you never saw them…and sometime if you only saw these people you'd see them on a Visnews or something, or a Movietone news, the Prime Minister or someone like that, otherwise you'd never see these people. When television came out every politician realised they had to look better, they had to dress property, some of them even had lessons on how to speak. One of the terrible failures of Arthur Calwell, a brilliant wonderful politician, terrible for television. He spoke through his nose, and he was up against a man like Menzies who was a wonderful orator, not necessarily a brilliant politician but a wonderful orator. So he was the image they wanted to represent Australia rather than poor old Arthur.

Hunt: it can make or break a leader I guess

Donnellan: very much so.

Hunt: you know the interpretation of what the man really is and he may not be anything like what he's….

Donnellan: well I think the guy in Melbourne, Kennett, I think the industry he just didn't use it properly, he abused it. He threw sand at cameraman and did all those sorts of things.

Hunt: true. For goodness sakes

Donnellan: oh yes there's a shot of him doing it. He treated the media as very low.

Hunt: that seems ridiculous, why

Donnellan: well he did, there's a shot of it. The Japanese were putting in a tree and he was helping to put it in and he picked up a handful and sprayed SBS cameraman. I think he had a bad image on media.

Hunt: yes…that's an assault

Donnellan: you also know well yes he was the Premier at the time, but you also see how people change in their appearance. Johnny Howard now fluffs his hair.

Hunt: image is everything

Donnellan: yes image is everything, looks, etc. etc. and they know where the cameras are and they know how important is it to know where the cameras are.

Hunt: there are PR people now, media managers for the politicians and things like that

Donnellan: absolutely they've been there for ages. The other thing about television, and particularly ABC, is that it's a political football the ABC. It always has been, the party that's in power blame the ABC for keeping it out, and the party that's out believe the ABC put them out. So left or right….but it's a thorn in any government's side and it has to be, it has to be. No government would ever get rid of the ABC completely because they'd lose power because it's still the people's network. Anyway but that's politics..

Hunt: But I need to know that because I want to look at the restrictions on you as a filmmaker that might have been put there by the institution….did you feel there were any restrictions

Donnellan: there were restrictions re advertising. When I was working in sporting we did a series called the Winfield Snooker which was Eddie Charlton who was Australian Champion used to get the best snooker players around the world and get them here, Winfield used to sponsor them coming out here putting them up at the Manly Hotel paying for any fees etc and the set actually had signs that said Winfield Snooker which was the same colour as a Winfield packet of cigarettes. Now we did a series of that and there was call for, the managing director at the time was David Hill, and he was having a bit of a fight because we were doing the Winfield Saturday afternoon football and they used to spray the ground with a Winfield cigarette sign, and David was trying to get rid of this he was very upset of it. Anyway the head of my department came to me and said we've been approached to do another Winfield Snooker, he said can you just check it out and see what we can do, I said are you sure because I think that there'd be some objection because of David Hill having a punch up with the people that organised (metaphorically)…he said its definitely going ahead, I said what about management, he said well I'll be talking to them about…so I did all the research, I had meetings with the Winfield people, they wanted everything the same as it was, the same set, but I got a real scare I thought something's not working here I'm afraid….the head of my department was a chap who was sort of a bit naive into the politics of the ABC, so I drafted a letter saying we've been approached to do another Winfield Snooker on the understanding that the same set design etc etc would be part of the program and I'm enclosing a copy of last years grand final so you can remember how it was done, I did it all I got him to sign it (Kevin Berry was the head of department's name), and we went it across to Fort Knox which was head office,…I think Graham Reynolds was the boss at the time…

Hunt: that's a Gore Hill I remember now, Fort Knox

Donnellan: that's where the program director used to be…so I kept asking the boss, he'd go and meet them and I said what did they say, he said oh I'm going to ask today finally, I said I've got Winfield saying they've got to know now otherwise because they've got to organise everything and book everything…so he came back to me and is said how did you…he said do it we're going ahead, I said are you sure! He said yep! I said have you got that in writing, he said don't need writing, he said I've spoken to

Graham, it's on go ahead….So I got hold of Winfield I said its on, I said I'm surprised because I know David's…..so they organised it we brought out the top players around the world, we got down here at an RSL club, got the venue, shot 13 top programs, edited it all together, put the first show to air that night and about 10 minutes into the first show David Hill was on the phone to the person, he said what the hell is this! Who authorised this? Take that off immediately….so it hit the fan the next day….very heavily….I was called…by this time the head of my department had gone…and I was the executive producer of this exercise so I came in the next day, and I was told Graham White wants to see you this afternoon at 2. o'clock….I knew what it was about, I knew exactly what it was about…and I thought Jesus they're going to try and hang someone for this and they're going to try and hang me….so I went across, there was Graham White who I'd sent the letter to with a copy, he was at one end of the conference room, Mike Shrimpton who was in charge of scheduling, and David Hill. And David Hill said now I realise that it was not your fault Max, but I want to know how come the show got to air, and I said well I don't know, I was told to go ahead and make a program and I made one….well I'm taking it off the air….I want you in this afternoon to see me I'm going to make a press statement at 4. o'clock…..I said fine. That was it go you're dismissed. So I then rang up the people and told them the program was coming off the air and they were very upset because they had put all this money $500,000 into it….I then went in that afternoon to David Hill's office and he had a chap looking after him called Tony Ferguson who he admired and respected enormously….Tony said to me he said look don't worry too much about it…I told him the problem I told him the politics of it, and he realised what the politics and he said well leave it with me ring me tomorrow he said David will go out to night have a nice bottle of wine forget about it…..so I called him the next day I've got him on my shoulders I said what do I do, he said hang on I'll go and talk to David, he came back he said it's okay its back on…..I said terrific

Hunt: what happened

Donnellan: well I don't know but he said it's back on, I said oh terrific. I put the phone down next moment the phone rang Michael Shrimpton needs to see me, he's the head of programming, so I went over there to see Michael Shrimpton, he said now about this program coming off air, and I said I believe its not coming off air, what do you mean it's not coming off air, I said well I've been told it's not coming off air, who by!?, I'm the program maker I'm the person who puts programs to air and the last I heard it was…..I said I just spoke to Tony Ferguson who works with the managing director who said the show can go ahead…..I know nothing about this and he abused me…I was the meat in the sandwich….anyway it went to air the next week….and Hill had then had a big blow up and he said no the whole series is coming off now and he took it off again….so everything died the programs were put together and sent off to SBS, they were going to re-edit it and they could run it because they were doing advertising. Anyway, about a week or two weeks later Mareka Steffans who worked in our department said oh Max Michael Shrimpton wants to see you at 10 this morning and I thought oooohhh this is where they're going to hang someone and the head of the department's gone see this is where someone's going to cop the blame. So I thought the first thing that I'm going to do is get the file out because I know that that letter that I sent was put in the main file in the

boss's office which is the head of sport. I went in there I asked the girl for the files she went and couldn't find the file anywhere, missing, went right through his office couldn't find anything, the file had disappeared, gone…and I thought how the hell…she didn't know who or where it had gone….so I remember I kept a copy of that letter in my file so I went and got my copy I went across at 10 o'clock in the morning Michael Shrimpton called me into his office, he had his offsider there and said would you like a cup of coffee I said that would be very nice milk and one sugar thanks very much, so I sat down his minder was there and Shrimpton now I really want to get down to want happened here this is not good enough, I said no its not actually, he looked at me a bit surprised, and he said well I'm very unhappy, I said so am I, I said I've just lost a series of programs that I got permission to go ahead and do, he said what do you mean you got permissions, he said I was told that that was a go ahead, he said I've got no proof of that here, I said well when this subject was first broached I said I wrote a letter to the federal director of programming which the head of my department signed and I sent a copy, he said well I don't know, I said well here's my copy, and I gave him a copy and he looked through this, and I could see the look on his face change completely all of a sudden Graham Reynolds was responsible because he got the letter but he never said to anybody that he'd received the letter pointing out the implications of doing a Winfield Snooker, the set and all that stuff, he then said to his little offsider, he said I've never seen this before why haven't I seen this before, and his offsider said oh hang on I've seen that, went under his chair like that and pulled out the missing file that was missing from the head of sports department went through and showed it to him, and Shrimpton looked at that and looked at me and looked at his offsider and looked at that and said well that's fine Max there's no sense going on with this any further, I said thanks very much I didn't even finish my coffee….that was it! I went out but I'd covered my arse, covered my arse completely….and he realised that the person that didn't cover their arse was Graham Reynolds who never looked or acted on that letter that was sent to him or anything never mentioned it.

Hunt: what happened to him

Donnellan: he got the arse! Eventually he was sacked

Hunt: not over that but something

Donnellan: oh that and many other things, but that's what happened, but the politics was enormous and that was a sporting program imagine what it's like in current affairs.

Hunt: and you are a filmmaker, a creative person, you are not a politician and you've got to contend with that as well as make a program of high quality, that's incredible.

Donnellan: and that's I'm not the only one….everybody that you meet has had that sort of thing happened to them, buck passing all that sort of stuff. But I'd been in the industry long enough to CYA (cover your arse), and that's exactly what I did.

Hunt: thank goodness you did. Journalists know that too

Donnellan: yes they do but that's why they have executive producers, that's why they have meetings together. I recall working on TDT in Brisbane, Derek White was the EP and there was a guy there called Valentine, he was a reporter, very Labor orientated chap, and Derek of course was once I believe the secretary of the Liberal Party of Queensland – a very Liberal man. And after a story was done we'd go down for the mix, the editor who had done the story would go down for the mix for the commentary and a little guy called Tom used to be the mixer and he'd come up and he'd say – he knew that Derek would come down and watch the mix, and he knew that the report was done by a very Labor orientated guy and the story was a political story, and he'd say 620.

Hunt: what do you mean

Donnellan: 620 feet into the mix the shit would hit the fan.

Hunt: and that was his code

Donnellan: and that was his code. He'd say whatever footage he knew…because he'd heard the commentary down there but it hadn't been put together, and I'd be watching 610, 615, 17, 18,….fuckin' stop!!!! And Derek'd be up like a rocket screaming at us you can't say that!!! And Tom would turn around and go – told you 620 feet! And he used to be right every time. On all the stories that were done between that guy and this guy.

Hunt: how did you get a fair and balanced report then

Donnellan: well he'd go and then change it and say you can't say that suggest it or whatever but you can't started telling that, you've got no facts…..the barnies they used to have we used to walk out and have a cigarette while they were going hammer and tong.

Hunt: that's personal politics involved in getting the truth out thought

Donnellan: it was, I mean, you had a situation where a lot of that was influenced, what you can say, what you can't say, very difficult stuff particularly with a current affairs because immediately there's a biasness. You can say things that have an influence, I mean it certainly happened, but it happened on both sides. It wasn't just a one sided affair.

Hunt: there was always that thing about the ABC being too leftist in the beginning, now its too rightist

Donnellan: yes exactly.

Hunt: it goes through a period of change

Donnellan: it does, and it'll happen continually

Hunt: yes because Four Corners got hauled over the coals and in the courts and stuff in the beginning didn't they with certain stories. There was one that wasn't even allowed to go to air – program in Western Australia (I can't remember what it was called but I've seen it in my research) and I thought they weren't going to put it to air.

Donnellan: There's a thing – they didn't put anything to air here on a documentary that was made (I can't think of it, Wendy knows the name of it) because it was still in courts all that sort of thing. But that only happens in areas like current affairs, it never happened in The Big Country style, which was social documentary.

Hunt: yes that's what I want you to talk about as far as representation

Donnellan: yes it was showing people in different ways of Australian life

Hunt: the Australian identity

Donnellan: that's right. Chequerboard was different, that was a radical sort of change, challenge, very confronting, I mean the issues we drugs, sex, and rock and roll all those sorts of things and that was excellent stuff because a lot of the networks wouldn't go near it, too dangerous for them.

Hunt: and do you think that was because the ABC had the freedom of being a government institution whereas the others were

Donnellan: influenced by advertising

Hunt: yes they couldn't do things because the sponsors would pull their money and

Donnellan: that was part of it, there was no question that they thought of that, there's no doubt

Hunt: but the ABC there was more freedom

Donnellan: a lot more freedom, a lot more political influence, meaning people like managing directors getting…I mean MD's must have hated TDT and Four Corners because a politician would be on the phone to them next day and he'd be saying I felt that was biased. Being managing director would have been a hell of a job.

Hunt: so the ABC wasn't influenced by the government in power at the time

Donnellan: no.

Hunt: so they were separate, they were trying to be balanced at least

Donnellan: well yes, I believe that all our reporters definitely realised that they had to be as balanced as possible, but how you say things how you influence something or phrase something can be an affront to someone who doesn't agree with you. So its that influence all the time. When the Liberal Party were in power they put their own people in to be chair people, the Labor Party did it when they were in power.

Hunt: so as a filmmaker you were aware of this sort of thing happening

Donnellan: yes, but only in areas of current affairs, not necessarily areas of documentary, social issues or things of that matter.

Hunt: were there issues in say A Big Country as being say strong, not just pretty pictures, or social issues that

Donnellan: no, A Big Country never really had politics, it was a story of Australians. People that you'd never get to meet like Ashton Circus, like the guys that drive these road trains, it was their story, it's a bit like the program that's going to air now on Monday night

Hunt: Australian Story

Donnellan: Australian Story. That's what it was, I mean that's very much A Big Country style, no one can really take an offence to it no matter what you do, because it's a social story of people's lives. And That's what A Big Country was all about. And it was very popular because a lot of people couldn't get out to the bush.

Hunt; well that's it, showing the city people what the bush is really like, what the real Australia is all about.

Donnellan: it did a lot of good, it was probably the best television documentary series we ever had

Hunt: could it happen now

Donnellan: well it is happening now with Australian Story

Hunt: well yes, I guess I see it a more really personal stories, but A Big Country had beautiful cinematography, cameramen going out and filming fabulous scenes and stuff incorporated in it, to sort of give a broader picture, as I recall.

Donnellan: yes it did, it did.

Hunt: but could they do that today, would it be too expensive to do

Donnellan: I just thing people are probably just not all that interested in that anymore.

Hunt: do you think infotainment has taken up that bit

Donnellan: it think it has.

Hunt: with the advertising and travel shows

Donnellan: and Big Brother's and all that sort of stuff, and stuff they buy in overseas. Its cheaper now, I mean A Big Country used to run on a budget I think it was around about $10,000 a program

Hunt: and that was film

Donnellan: and that was film. And if went over that…and you looked at a ten to one shoot – ten to one was pretty good. Ten to one meaning that if you well …. A half hour program was approximately about 1100-1200 feet final, to get all that material you'd shoot 10-12 thousand, and cut out all the other stuff that you didn't want – that was a ten to one shoot. For instance, you were doing an interview with someone and you weren't getting anywhere, you could start again, or you had to edit that interview down because the first bit was good, the middle was rubbish, but the end bit was terribly important – you'd have to cut that bit in the middle out to work out some way and let it flow, you'd either put commentary into it or you'd jaunt it by putting a different shot in or a cut away or whatever. So you are looking at a ten to one shoot. Some shoots ran fifteen to one, but some shoots had to be like that because it was all vision and you had now control of organising that vision you just had to shoot from the hip when it happened you got it and that's all you could do.

Hunt: and what happened to that footage was it just junked or

Donnellan: junked.

Hunt: really.

Donnellan: junked yes. Thousands of feet. It was of no value to the program, then no value to anybody.

Hunt: they couldn't store it I suppose because its film, whereas with video they could record in digital its more easily stored isn't it

Donnellan: it is. They kept the program

Hunt: oh yes

Donnellan: but you could not, you'd have to throw it all out.

Hunt: it seems criminal but I can understand

Donnellan: so a ten to one shoot, ten to fifteen to one you went over that they'd be asking why

Hunt: I'll just check these other question, I'll just read through these quickly we've covered an awful lot. Maybe I'm just wondering about…you finished about what was it 70 late 70s you finished at the ABC

Donnellan: no late 90s. I finished in '97 I think.

Hunt: alright so you were there when the corporatisation. Can you talk about the effect of that upon you as a filmmaker

Donnellan: it didn't really have a great effect on me as a program maker. Well I was working in sporting for the last 10 – 15 years and we were just not able to compete with commercial networks. When I left sport in about 95/96 I then sat for another two years working in a marketing area. There just wasn't enough work for two executive producers in sport, and we were down a producer, I mean Melbourne used to have to executive producers and four producer/directors in the sporting department. When I left there was no executive producers and one producer/director in sport in Melbourne.

Hunt: so that's as a result of corporatisation or just how things were

Donnellan: well it was just how the commercial networks and free to air the pay tv (Fox), two major channels of sport and the money came in. When I left sport I think the budget in sporting was around about $5 – 6 million for all of Australian television, and Channel Nine's budget was $85 million. They used to spend $40 million alone on contracts and satellite feeds before we event got near them. We just couldn't compete. Nine just walked in and say this is how we are going to go. We had a contract that finished, when Nine came in they bought in, but our contract had three more to go, and we used to get….the priority was once they came in they had priority for their cameras. So there'd be three different coverage's, there'd be Channel Nine's coverage, our coverage, and the ground coverage for all the actual MCG or Sydney Cricket Ground. Channel Nine had first pick for every spot, we were next, so we'd have to go next to them and the local coverage at the venue was third. And I recall Channel Nine came in, they had a crew, they had 12 cameras and a crew of about 50; we had seven to eight cameras, and a crew of about 25. And yet we were doing as good if not…..but they almost had a video tape for every camera, they just came in with all the technology, they just got bigger and bigger. Sport became very very popular and we just couldn't afford the budget anymore, and priority was because we were getting less and less money from the government which ever government it may have been, less and less money could be spent on sport. Radio sport will always maintain a good budget because it's very good. Well television sport now is purely netball, basketball, bowls- you see Jack High, we used to be top for the bowls but that became commercial, everything has gone commercial. And that's where it is. You can't take a shot of a ground without seeing some advertising going on. It's impossible and that's what screwed sport for us particularly visual, in radio

they can go out and do a coverage without them seeing all the signs around the ground and that's why they are better off.

Hunt; is that a thing you think might change in the future with the ABC that they will have to bring in advertising, or are they that's it no advertising

Donnellan: I'd hate to see it happen seriously, I think it'd lose it's independence enormously. You see SBS now, they've got the best of both worlds, they not only get a budget from the government, but they've got money coming in from commercials, and it is politically safe because no politician wants to get into an ethnic…doesn't even want to tread near that…so they can just about get away with anything

Hunt: well The Cutting Edge documentary series is brilliant. I'm astounded every week with the shows that go on there, and I'm thinking years ago that would have been ABC.

Donnellan: yes it would have, yeah you are right.

Hunt: but its not, I mean thank goodness SBS is there for those docos to go to air but that's where ABC's lost out

Donnellan: SBS are laughing all the way to the bank. They've got no problems, where the ABC continually have got a lot of problems and will have.

Hunt: but there's still in the current affairs, the high standard of current affairs I think, and news.

Donnellan: yes but Kerry O'Brien's contract concludes this year I think and I'll be very interested to see….will it be renewed…they may change the whole program..the politics is that they maybe rearrange the whole show.

Hunt: that's a real gamble because you can lose your whole audience if it doesn't work

Donnellan: but there's still a massive amount…..both sides of the House….no government likes paying an organisation money that keeps questioning what they're doing whether you are left or right and that's their attitude, they hate the idea of giving $400- $500 million to an organisation that's continually giving them a hard time. It's normal isn't it.

Hunt: we supposed to be living in a democracy aren't we!

Donnellan: yes, but look television is a great industry to be in and in the early years it was just so exciting.

Hunt: you wouldn't miss it for quids as they say

Donnellan: oh no great years

Hunt: can I just ask finally a could of little things I've mentioned there are other docos or the one's that you've worked on in particular, can you talk about them reflecting a fair and balanced identity of Australia – A Big Country, probably hands down

Donnellan: I would say so. It exposed to the city people different ways of life in and around the country – lighthouse keepers I remember Keepers of the Light was one and that was only done because we had a particular vault where storage would come on a continual basis although we knew what story we wanted to shoot, but sometimes a story would fall through and we'd go to the closed drag it out get the files out and see what hadn't gone through and happened I was working on a program to do with lighthouses, but I had to shoot another story before that and I think Bob Connelly's story, or I can't remember who did it, I think it was Bob Connelly, a story that he was working on completely went down the drain and a crew and four or five days that he had no story, and the work ran out and they were short of a story and I said well why don't you try this one and it was going around to various lighthouses – because the lighthouse was being phased out because of computers and everything else, so we went round and it was a great story. Beautifully shot as only he could do. But it was a reflection on social that the people in the city never really believed existed.

Hunt: were one's from the other direction, like of the people in the city their lives

Donnellan: there were but not many it was mainly rural orientated, farmers, bush people,

Hunt: because I'm just think the bush people might be interested in what the city people do but

Donnellan: yes but I mean get caught up in traffic jams, drive buses, you'd rather drive a road train than a bus, so there wasn't deal maybe one in ten programs, an unusual job in town say. In a series of thirteen – oh that's right, a series of thirteen was because two series would be 26 which was half a year, so you do a series of 13 break for 13 weeks and then another series of 13. But out of those 26 there may be one or two stories that would be city orientated but it'd be blokes working down the drains or something, that wasn't the focus, the focus was rural because it was run by the rural department, and as I said they were so powerful, I mean the word was out that the place was run by the rural mafia.

Hunt: all the National Party thing is that what you're talking about

Donnellan: yes

Hunt: so where the people in the country have a voice and that's it, well that's fair enough too because it's always been the thing in Australia, the country and the city people never quite agree on things there's always a bit of an issue there, you know we're better than you type thing, or you can't do without us you'd never survive, all that sort of thing which is true!

Donnellan: that's always been there, but it was a wonderful way to expose the country people, expose meaning in a kind way to show the city people what the country people were like and what was behind their reasoning and so they did heaps and heaps of programs.

Hunt: so in the early stages Chequerboard was being made simultaneously wasn't it, at the same time so maybe that focused on city people issues so maybe that's where

Donnellan: yes it did, nightclubs and drugs and that was that other side

Hunt: so maybe there was a balance cross programming

Donnellan: yes, they did a thing on a nudist colony, there's a photo round somewhere where they've got the whole crew standing there with their backsides to the camera interviewing a lady that's naked.

Hunt: well I looked at a Chequerboard program, 1975 which was the last year it was made and it was in colour and I didn't have any information about it and it surprised me and I thought 1975 – I Just Can't Seem to Talk About It is the episode – and its about sexual relations between men and women and this is 1975, there was Bettina Arndt, Sydney University

Donnellan: oh yes expert always get Bettina Arndt if you are going to talk sex

Hunt: well she was very good and very young and very radical in those days

Donnellan: and a nice looker too

Hunt: oh yes if you're a bloke ----the open shot of the program is this couple in bed and I'm thinking Chequerboard this looks like a feature film, and the wife is not talking to the husband and he's got all huffy because she's not responding and then the title comes I Just Can't Seem To Talk About It, and the program then goes to the phychologist talking with patients and related interviews with people having issues with sexual relations and then Bettina Arndt gives a speech and there's a conference going on and all that sort of thing, anyway between all these shots is this dramatisation and it progress from I don't want you – and then rapidly they're on top of the sheets and they are completely nude – and I'm thinking this is 1975, 8.30 I suppose

Donnellan: pretty radical stuff

Hunt: well that what I thought and there's not much info about it and I'm wondering why, but the actress is Corneilia……wonderful actress these days, she's in Home and Away if you ever watch that – Alf's sister, lawyer sister, and she's very young obviously with long hair and I'm thinking gosh that Corneilia……I can't remember who the fella is but it was completely obviously rehearsed but it was very natural the whole thing. I was just surprised that that sort of thing was being made and shown on the ABC if anywhere, more likely art house movies

Donnellan: in that year. Well Chequerboard you wouldn't miss out on it, people in the industry you never knew what they were going to do and that was the most amazing thing about Chequerboard. They got away with absolute bloody murder! They did, and the person who can tell you that is Tom (Manefield). Tom was wonderful, I mean god! The executive producer of Chequerboard, Bruce Buchanan I think it was…no no a sound bloke, yes he was an ex floor manager….

Hunt: Geoff Daniels

Donnellan: Geoff Daniels he was an ex film man for gods sake. But the head of the department was a guy Humphrey Fisher – a bit of a dork – so you could pull the wool over his eyes anytime of the day. And there was other documentaries that Mike Dailey used to make Science documentaries which were very interesting stuff.

Hunt: yes I got and the info from the ABC and I thought there's no way there's so many, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds so I had to focus in on the social documentary only and then pick two programs.

Donnellan: well Tom Manefield will be very good

Hunt: yes I'm looking forward to that too

Donnellan: and also Bill Steller

Hunt: yes oh he was wonderful yesterday, gosh it was three hours (more actually) he was just extraordinary

Donnellan: yes he's got a lot to talk about he made 40 odd programs all on social issues of on sort or another.

Hunt: yes and one's that made you think about what was in front of you on the screen they were just pretty pictures.

Donnellan: groundbreaking stuff, groundbreaking stuff. I mean the ABC in those days you would read the headlines of the paper every morning was something out of TDT, just about, I mean we were making news not just reporting news, in those days the ABC was making news.

Hunt: that's like Philip Knightley says that journalist today are more opinion orientated than actually telling you actually facts of the story.

Donnellan: Four Corners still does it every now and then or that late night LineUp

Hunt: Lateline

Donnellan: that down and again does it, I'm not terribly wrapped in his style of reporting I find him to aggressive and probably gets us into a lot of trouble politically, but he also comes out with some winners as well so how much do you put up with that. A lot of people don't like him, the way he handles interviews and the way he speaks to people

Hunt: I must admit I'm like that

Donnellan: I'm not wrapped in his style, but every now and then there's someone on that worth

Hunt: it's obviously working

Donnellan: and they've all got to go on these bloody politicians, you look at how they age once they been in the job you go back to when they first hit and look at them now, bloody bags under their eyes, grey

Hunt: yes it doesn't take them long does it the stress levels

Donnellan: they'd be being interviewed at midnight and they're getting interviewed on Good Morning Australia the next day at 7.o'clock. it's terrible.

Hunt: just one little final question Max, with the benefit of hindsight, were the reflections of the ABC flawed in any way to do you think, representation, or of identity, or of people, national identity- any sorts of things that maybe they didn't show for one reason or another

Donnellan: I believe that the ABC, in the years that I was there, for the majority of years, was a wonderful reflection on honest reporting, in depth reporting, it brought to Australian's an enormous amount of information, areas of entertainment, education, I would hate to see this country with out it, although it does get into trouble every now and again it is worth it, I think the ABC has a lot to be proud of what it's done, it's always been a leader in areas of technology, communication, reporting, when it comes to things that need doing the ABC does it and I believe does it damn well! I'm sure once or twice certain things have happened that maybe shouldn't have, but very rare occasions – I think this country would be lost without it.

Hunt: this is it, it's a very important part of the whole democratic process in Australia.

Donnellan: everyone can make up their own mind what they feel but this country without the ABC, we would not be the same country, I believe it shaped in many ways the people how they think today the kids today their education, their way of life, what's good what's not good, their strength, in every respect and the ABC's been a major role in that area, more than commercial because the commercial's there to flog and make money. The ABC because of its grant and its independence had been a fantastic contributor and you can go to any politician today that says, particularly country people, ABC was they would have been lost without it. It was their only link even today they still rely on it enormously because commercial radio in country areas don't necessarily supply the information that they need and require. So as an identity it's up with the BBC or any other broadcasting network in the world.

Hunt: that's what I find with the lack of ABC television in Rockhampton just getting on to the other project that I'm doing – that went in 85 and there's a big drop in the ocean you've got nothing there there's WIN Television that's the only which is Nine now. We've got ABC Radio but there's no visual representation of the area.

Donnellan: the reason that happened was colour. I only know this because

TAPE ENDS